

## **Session 9 The Superior Pleasure of Obedient Love (Jn. 15:10-11)**

*“Let me drink from the river of Your pleasures as I delight in Your beauty.” (Ps. 36:8; 37:4)*

### **I. REVIEW: TWO GLORIOUS TRUTHS AND ONE COMMAND (JN. 15:9)**

*Tonight we are looking at session nine in our Intimacy with the Trinity from John chapter 15 series. I am calling this: **The Superior Pleasures of Obedient Love**, walking in obedience and love with the Lord.*

- A. Jesus declared that His love for His disciples was as intense as the Father’s love for Him (Jn. 15:9). In John 15:9, we see the two most important truths and the most important command in the Bible. The way God loves God (15:9a) is the greatest love story—it overflows to His people (15:9b).

***9“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love...” (Jn. 15:9)***

*Just to review from my last session, which would be session seven, I looked at John 15:9. I never tire of saying that it is my favorite Bible verse, John 15:9, together with John 17:26. So I got to spend a whole hour on it two weeks ago and just really enjoyed it. I will give a really quick review. In this one verse, there are two glorious truths and one commandment. I am identifying this because, if this is your first time here, you might miss it at a quick read. In this passage in verse 9—we are reviewing verse 9 because verse 10 builds on it. Verse 10 is counting on you understanding verse 9—Jesus declared His love for His disciples was as intense as the Father’s love for Him. This is just an indescribably glorious statement. This is one of the most dramatic and significant statements ever uttered in human history. It really is.*

*Here we are, and the uncreated God in a human form is saying the way or the intensity of how His Father loves Him is how He loves us. This is just indescribably glorious. I cannot exaggerate the importance of this. The way that God loves God, the Father and the Son love each other, is the way that God loves people.*

*This is the greatest love story imaginable. For billions of years, God will love people like God loves God. For billions of years, this will unfold. It will never come to an end. I will give just a quick summary. I will just say it again: in John 15:9 we see what I consider the two most important truths of the Bible. I qualified this when I gave the session. I said that there are arguably maybe eight or ten more verses you could choose or put in that category. But in my opinion, these are the two most important truths. This is, I believe, the most important commandment with all three phrases in one verse. The reason I am saying that is so that if John 15:9 is new to you, you might stop and say, “What? The most important? I got your attention. That is what I was trying to do.*

1. **Truth #1:** The Father’s love for Jesus (15:9a) points us to the reality of how God loves God.

*Truth number one: Jesus says, “The way the Father loves Me.” He is not limiting this reality to just how the Father loves Him. It is how He loves the Father, how the Spirit loves Jesus, how Jesus loves the Spirit. Truth number one is this vast reality of how God loves God in eternity past in perfect happiness in Their relationship.*

2. **Truth #2:** Jesus loves His people (15:9b) in the same intensity that the Father loves Him.

*Truth number two: this is how God loves His people with the same intensity.*

3. **The command:** To abide or live focused on understanding and expressing God’s love (15:9c). We do this by engaging in conversation with Jesus around the two truths in John 15:9a, b. We search them out by prioritizing time to study, reflect on, and pray them often.

Number three: the commandment, which I believe is the most important commandment in the Bible. He says, “Abide in this love.” What that means is to stay focused on this. A lot of folks kind of appreciate this truth. They think, “Wow,” then move on pretty quickly.

Jesus is saying in essence, “Stay locked into these two truths.” Don’t move on past them. Even though there will be seasons of your life in the Lord where He will cause you to focus on various truths and various assignments, never do it at the expense of letting go of these two truths. When He says, abide, He means to live in, stay locked in here. Prioritize time to search out these two truths to study them, reflect on them, pray about them often.

If you stay locked in and abide in these two truths of how God loves God and how God loves people, Jesus is going to tell us in verse 10 that you are going to be empowered to obey. Then, verse 11, you are going to be empowered to walk in joy, but it is contingent on abiding in these two truths. It is just human nature, but it is the enemy’s tactic when the Body of Christ moves on quickly and lets those true truths just stay in the background.

- B. God is love (1 Jn. 4:16): the nature of God and the essence of His being is wholehearted love. The only way that God loves His people is with *all of His heart*. The Lord never changes (Mal. 3:6). He always loves in fullness because His actions and feelings are always 100% true to who He is.

*Paragraph B. God is love. We focused on this a couple times in this series—the nature of God. When John says God is love, His nature—the very essence of His being—is wholehearted love. He does not just love. He is love. He is wholehearted love. The only way that God loves is with all of His strength. He always loves in fullness because He cannot deny Himself. He cannot change.*

*The point is the way that God loves God. We can grasp that with all of His heart, His strength, all of His mind—I mean Jesus loves the Father with all of His mind—God cannot deny Himself. That is the only way He loves. Therefore it is believable He loves people that way. Well, if that is true, He loves you that way. If that is true, you want to lock into this. You do not want to move on past this truth. Again, we study other truths, and we search out other truths, but never letting this one drift to the background in our conversation with the Lord.*

## **II. THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF OBEDIENCE—AS EVIDENCE OF SALVATION**

*Roman numeral two, the power in pleasure. We are going to look at verse 10, walking in obedience to the Lord Jesus. I want you to really pay attention to the language of verses 10 and 11. Every phrase is important. You can kind of read this fast and really miss the significance of what Jesus is laying out here. Pay very, very close attention to every phrase. That is why we are taking an entire session on verse 10 and a little bit on verse 11, but mostly on verse 10.*

- A. Jesus connected His command to “abide in love” (15:9c) to walking in a spirit of obedience (15:10). He declared truths in 15:9 that empower us to obey God (15:10) and walk in joy (15:11). There is a dynamic connection of grasping God’s love to being empowered to obey God and to walk in joy.  
***“...abide in My love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love...<sup>11</sup>that My joy may remain in you.”***  
***(Jn. 15:9-11)***

*Jesus connected the command in verse 9—where He said to stay focused on this love, stay locked into this love—He connected it to walking in a spirit of obedience in verse 10. Look at verse 9. Let’s go back and look at verse 9 again. At the end of verse 9, He says, “Abide in this love.” That is, “Stay locked in; stay focused. Keep this truth in your conversation with Me.” He went on, in effect, “I want to tell you something, a qualifier, a very important condition. If you keep My commandments, you will be able to stay locked into this realm of love. If*

*you keep My commandments, you will be able to stay connected to this love and grow in it just as I kept My Father's commandments and I stay connected to His love. I stay engaged in it in My conversation with Him and receiving it and returning it back to Him." Then He goes on in verse 11, and says, as it were, "I told you all these things because I want My joy to be released as a result of your interacting with me according to these truths."*

*The reason it is so important is so many believers complain, and I am not saying it in a negative way, but they are desperate and complain about being weighed down with a spirit of heaviness. They have no joy, but a spirit of despair and depression.*

*The Lord is saying that He really wants you to know this thing is available to you. I think verses 9-11 is one of the most important passages for the Body of Christ in the earth right now, because so many in the Body of Christ are weighed down with heaviness, fear, and depression, and all kinds of negative, dark emotions are dominating their life. Jesus is saying, as it were, "I am telling you here: there is a way out of that, but there is no other way, besides My way." A lot of folks kind of go quickly over verse 9, 10, and 11, and then they are confused why joy is so minimal or almost absent in their life.*

- B. *If you keep My commandments:*** The essential requirement in abiding or living in the power and reality of His love includes the commitment to walk in a spirit of obedience to Jesus' teachings and leadership. The word, "if," implies that this essential condition is easy to overlook. Many believers are confused why they rarely feel joy but instead feel weighed down with heaviness and despair. In 15:1-10, Jesus tells us the **only** reliable way to experience His joy.

*Paragraph B. He says, "If you keep My commandment." The word you do not want to miss is the word "If." It is a very important condition. He is implying by saying the word, if, to His apostles, He is implying it is easy to overlook this thing of keeping His commandments. Everybody throughout history knows conceptually we are supposed to keep His commandments. Our own lives can bear witness to that it easily gets lost in the conversation in our walk with God. It is kind of on the back shelf. Every now and then when there is an issue we are looking at, and the Lord says, "This is absolutely front and central to Me. This is critical to empowering you to walk in joy. It is critical."*

*It is one of the essential requirements to abiding in love or to living in the power of it. That is what it means to abide in love: to live in the power and the reality of this. One of the essential commandments is to walk in a spirit of obedience. It is absolutely essential. It sounds like I am pounding on people, but that is not really my heart to do that. It is just we need a wakeup call because so many believers are confused why they do not have joy in their life. Jesus makes it abundantly clear, but they say, "Yeah, but..." and they move on. There is no other path forward outside of this. I mean, this is critical. There are other elements in the progression of our faith, but there is no substitute for what He is saying here.*

1. Just moments earlier, Jesus linked loving God with obeying God—He emphasized it five times (14:15, 21, 23, 24, 31). He defined loving God as being rooted in a spirit of obedience. We must love God on His terms—by how He defines love. He is the most qualified to define love.

***15If you love Me, keep My commandments...21He who...keeps them, it is he who loves Me... 23If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word... (Jn. 14:15-23)***

*Paragraph one. Just moments earlier—because we are in John 15:10, so just a few moments ago in John 14—five times in John 14 Jesus linked loving God with obeying God. He says it five times in a row, and we discussed that in the earlier sessions. I love to say that John 14 is actually the most detailed chapter in the Bible on the*

*first commandment on walking in love for God. There are all kinds of important truths in John 14. At a quick read, you wouldn't catch them, but that is the most detailed chapter in the Bible of walking out the first commandment to love God with all of our hearts. So whatever we do, we want to know John 14. I do not mean just know it conceptually. We want it to be a part of our conversation with the Lord.*

*Here I will just give you just a few of the passages. He says it five times, but I am only going to mention three. Here He said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." John 14:21, "If you love Me, if you keep them you love Me." Verse 23, "Anyone who loves Me keeps them." He says that over and over, kind of like rapid fire. He just says, as it were, "Do you get what I just said?"*

*He defined loving God as rooted in a spirit of obedience. We must love God on God's terms. We must love God according to how He defines loving God. Today in the culture, particularly in the last ten or twenty years, but even the last few years, there are these new arguments that are rising up in the culture defining love in ways different than God does. We have to love God on God's terms. The cultural definitions are more and more getting stronger, and the voices are getting louder, but they are in direct opposition to what Jesus talked about walking in love. The reason we must love God on God's terms is because Jesus is the most qualified person to talk about love. There are all kinds of human arguments and debates about what love, and justice, and mercy, and honor, and value are, but Jesus is qualified to define it second to no man in history.*

2. There is no such thing as loving God without seeking to obey Him. The distorted grace message promotes sentimental definitions of love that minimize obedience—it is a deception.

*Paragraph two. I just want to say it really clearly. Though we know it, it is good to hear it, and my prayer is that you will say it, not just that you will hear me say it, but that you will get this into your passion for people. I say these things in my passion for people. Jesus said these things because He is contending for the greatness of His people, for their liberty, and for their breakthrough. Jesus is not teaching these things because He is mad at them. He is teaching these things because He is jealous for them. He loves them dearly. I say these things because I love people. In loving people I want them to hear the truth because there is no other way forward around this, no matter what the culture says or how much false grace rhetoric is in the dialogue and conversation of the church today.*

*Here it is in number two: there is no such thing as loving God without seeking to obey Him. That is an absolute deception. The idea that there is another way to love Him that is outside of this is a deception. Now I want to highlight the word—and I say this regularly—the word **seeking** to obey Him. I did not say **attaining** it with maturity. I am talking about the setting of the heart because you set your heart to obey many times, time and time again, before the obedience breaks through to attainment. I am not even talking right now about attainment. I am talking about sincerely setting it in your heart to obey in that area or two or three that are challenging your heart and your mind.*

*There is what I call the distorted grace message. Some call it the hyper-grace message. I call it the distorted grace message that today is growing so popular. Many, many ministries are promoting a sentimental definition of love that minimizes obedience to the One who is love. It is an utter deception, but its popularity is growing. Many are being taken unaware by it because they are not grounded in the Word of God. Now the good news is God is going to have a billion-soul harvest, and a massive number of people are going to lay hold of this with all of their heart. So I am convinced the true gospel of the kingdom is going to win, but there is a drawing back in the midst of millions and millions of believers right now. They are drawing back with a false confidence. They are unaware of how serious what they are grappling with is.*

- C. **You will abide in My love:** He promised the obedient disciple a breakthrough of love in their heart. If we keep His commandments, we will progressively “abide in” or experience more of His love. Thus, live in the tenderizing influences of His love via an increased insight in His love for us and an increased impartation of love in our heart for Him. There is a “love-cycle” that progresses in us—the more that we understand His love for us, the more it empowers us to love Him. Then the more that we love Him, the more we obey Him. And the more we obey, the more we understand His love. Affection-based obedience is the most reliable—compared to duty-based or fear-based obedience. Do not try harder to love God but thank Him more for His love and ask for greater insight into it.

*Paragraph C. Jesus said, “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love.” I want you to circle or highlight the word will. This is an important promise. Do not lose the promise here. You will, eventually. Eventually there will be a breakthrough of love in your heart. If you keep reaching for a spirit of obedience, eventually the love that God has for you, the revelation will break through more and more, and your love for Him will break through more and more. There is a breakthrough. Jesus says, “If you will keep My commandments, you will actually live in this love.” It will be progressive and maybe slow before it really accelerates, so stay with it because this is a promise. Now we abide in His love, or we remain in His love. I am just going to repeat this for emphasis, meaning we remain under the influence of His love.*

*That is what it means to abide in His love, to remain under the influence, the tenderizing knowledge that He loves us and in that impartation we love Him back. Both of those dimensions grow slowly, but they grow steadily over the months and years as we reach in an intentional way to walk in a spirit of obedience before Him and as we keep the love subject to truth in our conversation with the Lord. It is not enough just to reach for obedience. We abide in love by staying in the conversation, thanking Him for the truth and searching it out and asking for greater revelation and never moving on past that conversation.*

*I mean, we have many other things in our conversation with the Lord, but not at the expense of this one or as a substitute for this one. There is a love cycle that builds, that progresses in us. That is kind of a strange way to say it, but the more that we understand His love, the fact that He tenderly loves us in our weakness, the more we are empowered to love Him back and obey Him.*

*I wrote a book years ago, about thirty years ago or so called Passion for Jesus and so for many years, people have asked, “How do you get passion for Jesus?”*

*I say, “Oh, I know. I know for sure.”*

*They ask, “How? What is the secret?”*

*I say that it is not really a secret. Study His passion for you because when you understand His love for you a little bit, it awakens love in you back to Him. You cannot grit your teeth and grow in love. You do not try harder, but you stay more focused in the conversation with Him, and your heart awakens. There is a love cycle. The more you understand verse 9, that He really feels about you the way the Father feels about Him, the more you are empowered even a little bit more to love Him back. Then the more you are empowered to love Him, the more you obey Him. The more you obey Him, the more you understand He loves you. I mean, it is the rich get richer, as the cycle keeps building. The more you understand He loves you, the more awakened you are to love Him back. The more that you love Him back, the more you obey Him. The more you obey Him, the more you know He loves you. It is a cycle that just keeps building forward, but we cannot miss any one of those points. We cannot just push delete on them and move on.*

*I like to say this, and it is a strange sentence: affection-based obedience is the most reliable type of obedience in the Scripture. There is duty-based obedience, and it is real. Duty-based is we have to obey this to get qualified*

*and prepared to do that. It is we obey because we have to get qualified for various things, and that is biblical, but it is not the most reliable or the most powerful.*

*Then there is fear-based obedience, which is very biblical. “If you do not obey Me, then you go to hell.” Oh, whoa! “If you do not obey Me, I will discipline you.” Whoa! That is fear. There is nothing wrong with that. It is just not the most reliable or the most sustainable type of love.*

*Affection-based love: Seeing His affection for us awakens affection in us back to Him. That is the kind of love that is the most reliable. It is not the only kind that is biblical, but it is the most reliable. I live in all three of them. I do some things because I know I need to get ready and prepared. I do some things because I do not want to get in trouble. There is nothing wrong with those, but I know those are not the strongest. Why am I saying this to you? So that you would prioritize verse 9, searching this out. That love cycle when I understand love for me, then I have a little more tenderized love back. When that happens, I have a little bit more motivation for obedience and the cycle just keeps growing.*

- D. Serving Jesus and denying our lustful desires are “the theater” that God chose for us to express our love to Him. Lust includes covetousness, anger, bitterness, retaliation, complaining, slander, and more. Each of us has a different struggle according to our own personality and life circumstances. Thus, we each have a different “assignment,” from which we offer our gift of obedient love to God.

*Paragraph D. Serving Jesus faithfully and denying our lustful desires is the theater that God has chosen for you to express, for all of us to express, our love to Him. This is a big statement. Serving Him faithfully, that is really positive. We walk in our divine assignments in our home, in the marketplace, in the university, wherever our assignment is. We typically have a few areas of assignments in our life that we are serving the Lord. It starts in our families and our friends in our circles that are close to us. That is not all; it is also denying lustful desires. The Lord says, as it were, “This is the theater of life that I have chosen for you to show your love to Me. When we show our love for Him in these ways, He takes it very personally. It moves His heart.*

*Now when I say lustful desires, well, when some people think of lust, they think of immorality. Lust is much bigger in the Bible, in the New Testament, than just immorality. Covetousness is a form of lust. Anger is. Retaliation, complaining, slandering, speaking about people outside of a process of being redemptive to help them. All of these are, and there are many types of lusts of the flesh. So when we deny those urges to speak that way or to have covetousness, bitterness, retaliation, all these ways, not just immorality, we are actually expressing love back to Him. The reason I am saying that is because that moves His heart.*

*Every person, everyone in this room, everyone in the Body of Christ, we each have a different struggle than others, than the person next to us. Your personality and your life circumstance is different even from everybody in your family and your home. Even though your life circumstances may have some similarities when we are in the same family, but still it is unique to every single person. My point is, that is the assignment God has given you in your seventy, eighty years on the earth. He is saying that is the assignment He has given you: to give Him the gift of your obedient love. A lot of folks think they are going to show their love for God by doing some heroic service, some ministry service in some real heroic way. There are moments where that might happen, but the Lord is saying, as it were, “I see you in your family. You don’t feel loved. There is negativity. There are all kinds of pressures. Your body feels this way. Your money is that way. The people around you are saying this, and your heart is, ‘Ugh,’ but you are choosing to deny yielding to that. Even though you yield sometimes, you are signing back up, saying, ‘I want to love you.’” The Lord would say that you give Him your gift of love in that context. I am wanting to frame out obedience to Him in a practical way so it is not just ethereal, but it is really practical.*

- E. Jesus takes our obedience personally as love for Him. He esteems, remembers, and rewards all that we do because of love (Mt. 10:42). Obedient disciples are part of His love gift to the Father. The apostles had great joy when their disciples walked in obedience to God (1 Thes. 2:19; 3 Jn. 4).

*Paragraph E. I like to say this sentence. Jesus takes our obedience personally. It touches Him. He remembers it. He esteems it. He rewards it. You give a cup of cold water in His name, He said in Matthew 10:42, “Truly, truly I say, you will get that reward. I promise you, if you will obey Me, I will remember it. It moves Me, and I want to reward it.”*

*Remember, when Jesus gives His rewards on the last day, it is not about earning anything. It is about Jesus showing how He feels about the way you loved Him in this age. He is so generous. He has so much. He says, as it were, “I just want to show you how I feel about the way you love Me.”*

*I mean there are all kinds of situations. I think of some women particularly in the most difficult family circumstances imaginable with all kinds of resistance and negativity and, you know, the whole list. Yet they are staying steady and saying, “Lord, I want to show love to You. I want to serve even in this context.” I am thinking all over the world, in the Middle East, in marriage, just everywhere. I think of so many godly women. They are going to get the shock of their life when the Lord shows them what their love for Him meant to Him, because they thought, “I am just kind of hanging in there. I am not doing anything big. No one even knows me. No one even likes me.” The Lord remembers every single time you denied your lustful desires in order to obey Me consciously. You are doing it to obey Me.” There are many different scenarios I could point out. That obedient woman is part of Jesus’s gift to His Father. She does not even know that. Jesus is going to say Father, “Look what I did in the way she loves You, because I touched her.”*

*Beloved, you are part of Jesus’s gift to His Father. The apostles talked about the great joy they had when their children, their disciples, their children in the faith, obeyed God. Jesus has great joy when His disciples obey Him. I don’t mean they are well-known. Maybe no one ever hears them. Maybe they never make a big impact anywhere, but in the secret place of their heart they are constantly signing up to bless with their mouth and to connect with Him, even in difficult circumstances, and to stay in the conversation the best they can.*

- F. Our love (and resistance of sinful lusts) is often weak and flawed, but it is still valued and honored by the Lord. Weak love is still real love—it is genuine. Our love is not only real when it is mature.

*Paragraph F. Even when our love is weak and flawed—truly my love is always weak and flawed—it is still valued by the Lord. Don’t imagine that the only kind of love that is real is mature love. Weak love is still real. It is still genuine. He did not say when you are as mature as Paul the apostle that it counts for love. I want to encourage people, even the small movements of their heart are important to the Lord.*

- G. Obedience to Jesus is not optional. Jesus had just warned that some who follow Him would be “cast out” as unfruitful branches (15:6). Obedience is the evidence of one who is born again. About 18 months earlier (summer AD 28), Jesus gave a sober warning of the delusion and false confidence that many have—even those who prayed the sinner’s prayer without repentance (Mt. 7:21-27).

*<sup>2</sup>“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away...<sup>6</sup>he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.” (Jn. 15:2, 6)*

*<sup>21</sup>“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father...<sup>22</sup>Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name...?’<sup>23</sup>I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you...’” (Mt. 7:21-23)*

*Paragraph G. Now we are in John 15:10. He is telling them that: “If you keep My commandments, you will live in love. You will have a breakthrough. You will abide in love. You will have a breakthrough of understanding My love. It will break through more and more. You will have a breakthrough of impartation of My love in you and it will overflow to other people”—you will have a breakthrough in loving people too, but that is in verse 10—“If you will obey and keep My commandments, you will abide. You will break through in love.”*

*Go back a couple of verses to verse six. Just a moment ago, probably a minute earlier, who knows, He had given the apostles a very sober warning. What I want to do is point out the seriousness of obedience. It is just not in the conversation of the Body of Christ almost anywhere. It might be in thousands of ministries, but out of millions. I mean, the percentage is really small. We need to have obedience in the center of our conversation, but it is not just obedience. We need a kingdom view of obedience, not just the drudgery dutiful, self-denial dutiful “I will obey You and on and on,” not that kind of obedience. That is not what I am talking about.*

*The kingdom view of obedience is actually extremely positive. We need to have obedience in the center of the conversation, but the right kind, the kingdom view of obedience, not the religious view that has become popular. You know, some people are into holiness in places and ministries, but there are some who are just mean. You know it is just like, “Whoa!” I do not want to talk about the angry holiness thing. I am talking about a joyful heart, the tenderized approach to what I call the superior pleasures of the gospel, feeling the joy in the interchange with the Lord.*

*But anyway, I want to point out the warning that many in the Body of Christ are deaf to. They are just not paying attention at all to it. They do not even believe it, but He had just told them in verse 2 and verse 6—I have it right there—He said, “Every branch in Me, if they do not stay connected to Me, they will be taken away.” That is in verse 2. In verse 6, He said that they will be like a branch cast out. They will not even be in the vine. That is a very troubling reality, but it is a very real one.*

*We spent an hour on this some weeks ago; I can’t remember when. The message is this: obedience to Jesus is not an optional thing. It is a very important thing, not only obedience, but the kingdom perspective of obedience or the right approach to obedience. Earlier in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave warnings of the delusion and the false confidence that many people will have when they stand before Him on the last day.*

*You know, the preacher who told them that if you pray this prayer, you are guaranteed to be in the family of God whether you repent or anything. Just pray the prayer, then it is fine. They prayed the prayer. They never repented. They never walked in obedience. They think, “Well, that guy told me years ago if I came forward and prayed that prayer... and they gave me the Bible in the meeting afterwards.”*

*Jesus said in Matthew 7, and you know the passage well, He said, “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord.’ Many will say, ‘I did miracles,’ et cetera.” He will say, “I don’t know you. I don’t know you.” I mean, the word is, “many will say.” In other words, this is not a small issue to the Lord. The Lord is actually approaching it in verse 10 and 11 as the way to liberty and to greatness and to joy and, and those things.*

*He says, as it were, “But do know, though that is a very positive approach to obey Me, there is a real serious part of not obeying Me.” Again, we hardly hear it ever mentioned. Often if it is mentioned, it is mentioned in kind of an angry tone. You know, like one preacher said, “That old guy was preaching. He was like shaking them over hell on a rotten stick, kind of hoping the stick would break, you know.” That kind of approach is not going to get the job done. I mean, warnings are real, but it is tender warnings when we are contending for their greatness in their breakthrough, in their place, in God’s heart.*



- H. **Just as I have kept My Father’s commandments:** We remain in Jesus’ love in the same way that Jesus remained in his Father’s love—by His obedience (Jn. 4:34; 5:19, 30; 6:38; 8:29; 14:31; 17:4). Jesus’ own life magnified the value and beauty of obedience and vindicated it as the best, wisest, and most noble lifestyle. He proved the reality of superior pleasures of radical obedience to God.

*Paragraph H. Jesus said in verse 10, “Just as I kept My Father’s commandment,” He went on, “you keep My commandments. Abide My love like I kept My Father’s commandment and abide in His love.” This is a really big statement, the one He just made. What Jesus is saying here is magnifying the value of obedience. What He said is vindicating the wisdom of it. He said, “I am telling you to obey Me and you will stay connected to love.”*

*As a man—though He is fully God in His humanity—He did this, not because He had to—well, He did have to—but it was because He saw the glory and the beauty and the wisdom of it. Jesus in His lifestyle of radical obedience magnifies the value and the wisdom of obedience like nothing else. His life does. He is the only man that would ever live on the earth who had not one regret ever in His life with God, not one regret. He proved by His choices that the most noble, wise, joyful way of life is obeying His Father. He would say, “I did it because it is the best, because it is glorious. I proved it to you as a man with temptations like you.” So the point of His saying this is He is magnifying and vindicating the wisdom of obedience. That is the statement He is making.*

### III. THE KINGDOM VIEW OF OBEDIENCE: SUPERIOR PLEASURES OF THE GOSPEL

*Roman numeral three, the kingdom view. It is not just enough to emphasize the importance of obedience. We need to have the kingdom view of obedience. The phrase I have used for many years—I probably got it from ten other people. I can’t even remember because I have used it for so many years and read just anything I can read on this subject—I call it the “superior pleasures of the gospel.” The kingdom view is not that clear to many in the Body of Christ, that kingdom view of obedience. They look at obedience as a drudgery, as a kind of a necessary negative they have to do to be in the kingdom. The enemy is constantly attacking and wanting to obscure the true kingdom view of what obedience is.*

- A. It is essential to cultivate a kingdom view of obedience. The enemy works to obscure this reality. The greatest pleasures available to the human spirit are the spiritual pleasures that come to us as **God reveals God** to us. We are freed from the **inferior pleasures** of sin by experiencing the **superior pleasures** of the gospel. When we feel the superior pleasures of the gospel (even a little), we are liberated from the dominion of dark emotions related to the inferior pleasures of sin.

**<sup>14</sup>He [the Spirit] will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. (Jn. 16:14)**

*Paragraph A. This is a fact: the greatest pleasure available to the human spirit—and there are many pleasures available to us—the greatest pleasure available to the human spirit is spiritual pleasure. It is when God reveals God to the human heart. There is nothing more exhilarating in this age or the age to come than that. God is a God of pleasure. There are a number of maybe five or six or seven natural pleasures that God was the author of. The devil counterfeits them, but God was the author of those pleasures. The enemy counterfeits them, but the most exhilarating pleasure ever in this age or the age to come is when God reveals God.*

*When the Holy Spirit reveals the Father’s glory, Jesus’ beauty, His love, His tenderness, His goodness towards us, there is something in us that is like, “Oh, I want more of this!”*

*The Lord would say, “Stay with it, stay with it. That is the pathway to obedience.”*

*We are freed from the dominion, meaning the overwhelming power of the inferior pleasures of sin, by experiencing the superior pleasures of connecting with God. Many people look at sin, the inferior pleasures,*

*because they are still pleasurable. I am not just talking about immorality or drunkenness or whatever though. It could be gossiping, venting, wanting to tell the story out of God's will about somebody else. Those are sinful pleasures. People get something out of that.*

*A lot of folks think they want to obey God. They say, "I want to obey God. I really want to do that." So they kind of determine they are going to grit their teeth and say no to the inferior pleasures. It is like, "No, no, no!" They fall. "No, no!" But they fall.*

*The Holy Spirit taps them on the shoulder and would say, "Turn your attention around. Begin to seek the superior pleasures of connecting with Me and you will have power over these other dark emotions. They will not have the same dominion over you."*

*You are never going to overcome those dark emotions by the gritting of your teeth. Turn your focus around and touch the superior pleasures of the gospel. Again, John 15:9, the way God loves God, the way God loves us, just His goodness, His plan, the way He is using us, the way He remembers every cup of cold water. We have many, many facets of how God reveals God to the human spirit. When we are spiritually bored and when we are spiritually dull, we are far more vulnerable to the inferior pleasures of sin. For a spiritually bored believer, which there are millions and millions, it is really difficult for them to turn down temptation, whether it is immorality, whether it is covetousness, whether it is just retaliation and just venting their anger. They are so much more vulnerable to it when they are spiritually bored.*

- B. It takes spiritual understanding to see obedience as the way to true liberty, greatness, and joy.

*Paragraph B. It takes spiritual understanding—Paul called it the spirit of revelation in Ephesians 1—to see obedience. Obedience, again, is not just drudgery. It is the way to liberty. It is the way to a life of greatness. It is a way to joy in **this** age, not just the age to come when we see obedience in that path, I mean that way that is the kingdom view of obedience. That is how Jesus presented obedience. He said, "It is My food to do God's will. I get strength from it. I get refreshed in My heart. I get pleasure in the knowledge that I am obeying Him and He is watching and me smiling. It builds Me up." That is the kingdom view of obedience.*

- C. Many see obedience or holiness as the drudgery of self-denial. Holiness is almost a bad word today. The truth is that His holiness is the most pleasurable quality of life in existence. It is how God lives.

*Many see obedience, or we call it holiness, almost like a bad word today. I tell you, holiness is a very important word. Holiness is out of style in the Body of Christ. So is the word, obedience. It is just, "Everything is grace," but there are so many different definitions when the word grace is being used. So much of it is not the biblical definition. I am confident God is going to put obedience and holiness back in the center of the conversation of the lovesick church, with the bride overcoming, prepared in the first commandment to love to walk with God and just fearless before even death itself. The truth is that holiness, God's holiness, is the most pleasurable, exhilarating way to live. It is the way God lives. We can live in this fascination. I do not mean we are overwhelmed constantly, but a little bit of this goes a long way. A little bit of this goes a long way.*

- D. We can live fascinated in the pleasure of loving God that overflows in loving people. Holiness or obedience equips us to enjoy life with God—it does not keep us from spiritual pleasure. The power of holiness sets us free from vain imaginations and the dullness of lust and bitterness.
- E. Holiness is not just a good idea for the distant future. It is possible to live with a holy preoccupation with the beauty of Jesus today. The battle for holiness is the battle to become fascinated with Jesus.

*People might look at the idea of obedience or holiness—I am using those words interchangeably, and some people might have some nuance or difference of how to use each word—and in the general sense they think, “Okay, I am committed to obedience. Maybe in the distant future. I mean, one of these days I am going to get there, for sure in the age to come.”*

*I have good news for you. It is possible for a young believer to begin to live in a new preoccupation with Jesus and how He feels about them. That new preoccupation is the key. Again, it is John 15:9. They can begin to see the way God loves God and the way God loves them, the way God remembers the very movements of their heart, the way God’s generosity is towards them. God has good plans for their life. God is reaching for them. He is chasing them down. He has so much goodness stored up in His heart. The battle for holiness really is a battle to be preoccupied with the beauty of Jesus. The battle of holiness is not overcoming all these dark emotions. The battle for holiness is getting preoccupied and fascinated with the beauty of Jesus. Again, I do not mean fascinated to such a degree that is not even realistic. I am talking about a little bit of this goes a long way. A little over this goes a long way.*

- F. Jesus never apologized for calling His people to obedience or holiness as if it was “negative.” His commands are not burdensome but are designed to lead us to joy, liberty, and greatness. John exposed Satan’s lie that God’s commandments were burdensome. The litmus test of our genuine love for people from God’s point of view that we love and obey God. John did not allow a false dichotomy of choosing between loving people and loving and obeying God (1 Jn. 5:2-3).

**<sup>2</sup>By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.** **<sup>3</sup>This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. His commandments are not burdensome.** (1 Jn. 5:2-3)

*Paragraph F. Jesus never apologized for calling people to holiness or obedience, never,. He did not perceive it as negative. He did not see it as them losing something, but He saw them as gaining something. So we have to have this kingdom perspective of holiness. John would go on later to say in 1 John 5: 3 that God’s commandments are not burdensome. They are not burdensome. God’s commandments are designed that when we commit to them—and again we are not even mature in them yet. We haven’t fully attained, but we are reaching, we are reaching we are in that right conversation—that is the pathway where joy breaks out in our life. That is where liberty comes to the inner man. John said His commandments are not burdensome. Today in the culture, the enemy’s lies say that God’s commandments are burdensome.*

*Well, John was dismantling that lie 2000 years ago. It has been around for 2000 years. Look at this. This is a really glorious verse. John, the same one who wrote John 15, is really developing some of the ideas he said in John 14 and 15, etc. Look at 1 John 5:2. Now follow this because this might be an unfamiliar passage to some. He said, “By this we know that we really love people, that we love God’s people. Here is how we know our love is genuine. It is because we love God and we obey God. For this is the love of God.” John says it unashamedly. He is emphatic that we obey Him, and he goes on to say it is not burdensome to obey Him.*

*That it is burdensome is a lie. There is this false dichotomy in some ministry conversations, different circles. “You know, in our church we are really into loving God, but that church [over there] is really into loving people.” That is a false dichotomy. John would not allow that to happen. He said, “You know you are genuine in loving God and loving people if you obey God.” He said, “You are not choosing God or loving people.” You may not please people, but you are actually loving them when you obey God. It does not mean that you are pleasing them and everyone is appreciating every act of obedience that you have with the Lord. That is not what he is saying here.*

*So do not allow that false dichotomy. I have heard it over the years. I have heard people say, “Mary is at the feet of Jesus. Martha is in the kitchen all day working. I am a Martha; she is a Mary.” No, Jesus was not rebuking Martha because she served. He said the greatest of all is the servant. He was rebuking Martha because she served with the wrong spirit, not because she was serving. Loving people and loving God is one reality. There is no dichotomy. As a matter of fact, the truth about your genuine love for people is if you obey God’s commandments. That is what empowers you with discernment and motivation to love, according to God’s way. You will be far more discerning and empowered to love if you do it in a spirit of obedience to God,*

- G. The enemy promotes the lie that seeking to obey the Lord in a wholehearted way is burdensome—that it is even a harmful type of legalism. This lie is manifested in validating sinful choices with the rhetoric of “grace”—yet God is raising up those who will *contend for the true gospel* (Jude 3-4). We are called to walk in liberty from fear, accusation, addictions, and other dark emotions.

<sup>3</sup>*...exhorting you to **contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.***

<sup>4</sup>***Certain men have crept in unnoticed...who turn the grace of our God into lewdness.** (Jude 3-4)*

<sup>13</sup>***You...have been called to liberty; do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh...** (Gal. 5:13)*

*Paragraph G. The enemy promotes this lie that seeking to obey God wholehearted—radical Christianity, different terms, whatever—is burdensome. Some will go as far to say, and many do, that it is more than burdensome, but it is harmful. It is legalism to do that. This lie manifests itself by validating sin in all kinds of good conversations in the Body of Christ. I am trying to be helpful to people. I am saying do not validate sinful choices by using the rhetoric of grace language. Most people that I know who are validating their selfishness and sinful choices are covering up and dressing it up with “grace” language.*

*What it says here in Jude verses 3 and 4, Jude says, “I exhort you to contend for the true apostolic faith, because,” verse 4, “some people are in your midst. You do not even recognize them. They are distorting the grace of God. They are turning it into lewdness,” meaning they are preaching the grace, but they are giving license to live in a lewd way and calling it grace. He said in verse 3 that God is raising up people who will contend for the real message because the ones that are giving the false message have crept in your midst unnoticed. Because they had all the biblical language you did not know they were validating sinful lifestyles with grace language.*

*Paul said the same thing in Galatians 5. He said, “You are called to liberty, but liberty does not mean liberty to walk in immorality.” Liberty means liberty in the heart from fear, accusation, and dark emotions. We are called to be liberated from fear, liberated from dark emotions, liberated from the devil’s condemnation and accusations against us. That is the liberty. We are not liberated to live in a little bit of immorality, a little bit drunkenness, a little bit of slander, a little bit of covetousness. That is not the liberty Paul is talking about. He is talking about the heart being liberated. He said, “Do not use the doctrine of liberty as an opportunity to indulge your flesh.”*

*There are folks that are living on the edge out there, and it is millions today who are using grace language as an opportunity to give expression to a fleshly lifestyle. Again, I am only saying it because I care. I love you. I am contending for your greatness. I am contending for your breakthrough. There is no reality there. That is a lie that ends up really bad in their heart and in their standing before God when they stand before the Lord. It is not good. Their heart never gets free. They never enter into their inheritance of joy in liberty in this age, all the while proclaiming grace.*

- H. Obedience to Jesus is the only reliable pathway to true spiritually, emotional rest, and lasting joy. Being yoked to obey Jesus' leadership is the place we find emotional rest from the weariness of "option fatigue," and the fear of missing out, perpetually guessing what will make us happiest, and how to be successful in men's eyes. No one puts on a yoke to rest physically. Jesus promised spiritual and emotional rest to those who surrender themselves to His truth and loving leadership. Jesus' yoke is easy because of His loving leadership. The yoke of self or sin is very hard to bear; its penalties are severe. God's truths and commandments are the "user manual" for the human heart.

<sup>29</sup>**"Take My yoke upon you...find rest for your souls.** <sup>30</sup>**My yoke is easy..."** (Mt. 11:29-30)

*Paragraph H. So that is why I am really talking about verse 10 here, chapter 15:10 where He said, in effect, "If you walk in My commandments, you will abide. You will have breakthroughs in love. You really will. I promise you, you will if you stay with it, because I did it. I walked in His commandments, and My life is a proof of how wise obeying God is. I am a proof to you."*

*Jesus talked earlier about being yoked to Him. He said, "Take My yoke upon you. You will find rest." The illustration is the two oxen. There is the lead ox and the new ox, and they are yoked together so they work together. Jesus said, in effect, "I am the lead ox. Be yoked to Me. Go where I go, and do what I do." He says that if you do, you will have rest, and He is talking about emotional and spiritual rest. A lot of folks misunderstand that.*

*I have heard this verse in arguments over the years. People think rest means a careless, sloppy, lazy lifestyle. That is the rest they are talking about. They are thinking He is talking about a lot more free time to just chill. That is what rest is. No, He is talking about emotional and spiritual rest. He is not talking about physical rest, although physical rest is good. That is just not the topic right here. Being yoked to His leadership is freedom from—and here is what we get rest from. I want you to see this—the weariness of option fatigue. It is so fatiguing emotionally to have so many options and not know which one to pick. We all need rest. Get yoked to Him. Say, "I am burning the bridge. I will obey Him. I am going to go where He goes and do what He does."*

*The fear of missing out, more believers have more anxiety over the fear that they are missing out if they do not go do this and that. It is like, "If I spend more time with the Lord, and I am just in godly fellowship with people, I might miss something." Well, have you so far? "Well, no, that other stuff wasn't that great, but what if I miss something later?" They are perpetually guessing what might make them happiest. Beloved, the question of life is not what will make you happiest. The question of life is what is the path to faithfulness?*

*There is just this idea of well, if I do this, I might be more happy. I might have more friends. I might have more money. I might have more popularity, but if I do that, I might have more money the other way. Now if I do that, more people might like me. Get rid of all that. Yoke yourself to Him and obey Him and all of this internal confusion. I call it this emotional bandwidth that is just overtaxed. Jesus says, in effect, "I want to give you rest. I want to give you rest, come and surrender. Do what I tell you to do and trust My evaluation." Jesus is the only reliable pathway to spiritual rest.*

- I. Obedience to Jesus is the only reliable pathway to true greatness. He calls one's life choices "great" as they love and obey Him. This is attained without regard for outward achievements and impact. It is based on the size of one's heart response to Him. We are not left guessing what He calls great.

<sup>19</sup>**Whoever breaks [consistently] one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does [consistently] and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.** (Mt. 5:19)

*Paragraph I. Jesus is the only reliable pathway to greatness. He tells us here in Matthew 5—and He is talking about born-again believers in the age to come—in Matthew 5:19, He said that some will be called least. We are talking about: they are in the kingdom in the age to come. They are standing before the Lord. The Lord will evaluate some believers and will say, “Your choices were least.” He will evaluate others, “Your choices were great in My eyes.” They are all in the kingdom. So He is not talking about believers and unbelievers here.*

*We have the absolute reliable pathway to a life that God calls great. Beloved, that is awesome. We are not guessing. The world is guessing, and many even in the church are guessing, but if you are a Bible person, we are not guessing. I know what the pathway to greatness is.*

*I tell the Lord, “Lord, shock me now. Do not shock me then. We have billions of years after we stand before You. I want to have reliable confidence that I am on the right pathway now, the one that You are going to say those choices were great.” He is so gracious, and we have all made plenty of choices that aren’t great, but we repent of those. We sign back up for obedience. Beloved, you can know. Obedience to Him is the reliable pathway to greatness. It is the reliable pathway to spiritual rest, the reliable pathway to joy. It really is the only reliable pathway.*

- J. **My commands:** We are to be loyal to and cherish His commands, even those that carry a stigma. One aspect of abiding in love includes treasuring, guarding, and contending for Jesus’ commands (Jude 3), even as Jesus cherished and guarded His Father’s words (Jn. 12:49-50).

***<sup>49</sup>For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. <sup>50</sup>And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.” (Jn. 12:49-50)***

*He talked about His commandments. He said, “Obey My commandments. I obeyed My Father’s commandments.” So we are talking about God’s commandments. Here is the point we want to make. We have His commandments, and the fact that the human race has the commandments of the Genesis 1 God and the Genesis 1 God has opened up His heart and told us what He likes is awesome. It is not like, “Oh, that sounds like a bummer.” No it is, “If that is what You like, and You are all love, and You are being patient with my weakness, I don’t necessarily like all those things, but you know what? I am setting my heart because I know I will like them when I figure out how smart and wise You are.”*

*His commandments are so valuable to have. They are a reliable guide to spiritual maturity, meaning all these different conversations about grace and arguments, much of it is not a reliable guide to true spirituality. They are detours. They are false paths. We have a reliable guide to what true spiritual maturity is that will hold up in God’s eyes and shows what true greatness is.*

*Jesus is talking about those who keep His commandments. Instead of obeying them, I am going to use the word, keep, and I am going to put a different application on it. He is saying that these are the people who keep My commandments. They obey for sure, but more than obey, they treasure My commandments. They contend for My commandments. Like the verse I read—Jude 3—the Lord says, I want you to earnestly contend for the gospel, the apostolic gospel.*

*They guard His commandments, you know, in the social debates and in the who gets likes and who does not get likes. Lord, I am standing with Your commands. I do not care if they are mad at me. I like it if they are not mad at me, but I am going with You. I treasure, I contend for Your commandments. I will die for Your commandments. I will keep Your commandments.*

*He says, “Oh yes, you will abide in My love. You will actually have breakthroughs in My love in your life.”*

*I have written John 12:49-50 here. Jesus cherished, He guarded His Father's commandments, and it was the Father's teachings that got Jesus killed, by the way. I mean, Jesus actually offered Himself on the cross as a willing sacrifice, but my point is that He was hated in the society because of His Father's teachings.*

*He said, "I only say what My Father says," and the Father said some really intense things. Jesus said, as it were, "I cherish what He says. I will stand for it. I will guard it. I will contend for it." God is raising up a people that will keep His commandments, not only in the obedient sense, but in the cherishing and standing no matter what it costs us even in the public arena. That is the point I am making.*

1. The teachings of Jesus are one of the primary issues that is attacked globally in the end times. David prophesied that the nations would rise up in anger against Jesus' leadership (Ps. 2:1-3), seeking to remove the influence of His Word from society (2:3). Many secular leaders will see God's Word in a negative light, as though it were *bonds* enslaving them and hindering "human potential," and as *cords* binding them to His morality, godly ways, and truth.

<sup>2</sup>***The kings...and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD...saying,***

<sup>3</sup>***"Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us." (Ps. 2:1-3)***

*Paragraph one. Psalm 2—I have shared this many times so I really will not go into it, but—David talked about a time and that time is right now actually. David gave a prophecy 3000 years ago in Psalm 2. He talked about the time when the kings of the earth and the rulers of the culture, whether it is the market leaders, the media leaders, the athletic leaders, you know, whoever, the decision makers of the culture or the rulers are going to stand against God. What they want to do is verse 3 of Psalm 2.*

*They want to cast the Word of God out of the culture because they see the Word of God as bondage. They say, "We want to take God's bondage—His commandments—and throw them out of the culture. Away with the sanctity of life and the sanctity of marriage and the sanctity of sex! Away with the authority of the Word of God! Away with the one way of salvation with Jesus! Away with all of that! It is bondage. Let's take His Word and break ourselves free from it." Yet God is raising up people who know the Word of the Lord,*

2. We are to be loyal to Scripture as the only perfect and reliable guide to true spirituality. We stand for the authority of God's Word, for the sanctity of life, marriage, and sex, etc.

<sup>7</sup>***The law of the LORD [God's Word] is perfect...enlightening the eyes [to truth] <sup>10</sup>More to be desired are they than gold...<sup>11</sup>In keeping them there is great reward. (Ps. 19:7-11)***

*Paragraph two, this is David again. He said, "It is perfect. The Word of the Lord is reliable." The Word of God, you can count on it being reliable. It will hold up when we stand before God on the last day.*

- K. We set our heart to stand for Jesus' truth and commands regardless if they are unpopular.

<sup>60</sup>***Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying..."***

<sup>61</sup>***When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?...<sup>63</sup>The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life...."***

<sup>66</sup>***From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more...<sup>68</sup>Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." (Jn. 6:60-68)***

#### IV. THE PROMISE OF JOY (JN. 15:11)

- A. Jesus was informing—even alerting them—that these truths in 15:1-10 were essential to empower them to receive joy. He promised a breakthrough of joy in the heart of those who would persevere.

***<sup>11</sup>These things I have spoken...that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.***  
(Jn. 15:11)

*Roman numeral 4. I will bring this to an end here, empowered by joy. Now there is a lot more to say about joy, but I am just kind of introducing it because this is the end of walking in obedience. My real heart was talking about the glory of obeying and the wisdom and the necessity of obeying. It is not just the wisdom. It is the necessity as well, but the wisdom too. The reliability of that being a wise way to live is the real point I am making, and the assurance that, if we keep His commandments, we will have a breakthrough. We will abide in love; we will have a breakthrough in love.*

*Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy might be in you.” Here is my point. Jesus says, in essence, “What I have told you”—in verses 1-10, the ten verses before here, but particularly verses 9 and 10, but really 1-10—“these truths are essential if you are going to walk in joy.” You have to grasp these truths. He is alerting us. I mean He is even alerting when saying, “Do you understand”—the last ten verses, particularly the last two verses, verse 9 and 10—“that this is the way to joy? Do you understand that?” A lot of believers, again, are all confused why they do not have joy. In those ten verses there is gold, phrase after phrase after phrase. We do not want to run past John 15:1-10 quickly*

- B. ***These things I have spoken:*** Jesus is referring to what He said in 15:1-10 with a special emphasis on what He just said in 15:9-10. Our experience of God’s joy is anchored in our growing in our understanding of the intensity of how the Father loves the Son and how the Son loves us (15:9-10).
- C. ***My joy:*** Joy is a deep sense of well-being in God’s presence with confidence in His goodness. This joy is not the “natural happiness” that is sought in favorable circumstances and relationships.

*Paragraph C. He says, “My joy.” Now joy is that deep sense of well-being. There are many ways to say it. There are so many ways to talk about the joy, but it is that deep sense of security and confidence in His good leadership and His leadership over your life. This joy is not the same thing as natural happiness. I am not against natural happiness, but it is a delusion. What I mean is it is very common in the whole human race so I mean, it is very natural, and they are seeking to have happiness through favorable circumstances and favorable relationships. If I get people and the love and the relationship, it is really good.*

*I might have the best friends. I have the best marriage. I have the best kids, and it is really going good. I have a happy circumstance in the ministry or the marketplace, the money is there, and my body feels good. Things are working right. I am happy. That does not fulfill the heart. I like all those things. I ask the Lord, “Give me a double portion of all of them,” but I do not have any delusion that that is where joy is. Joy is in interacting with the God-man on His terms. That is where joy is. I remember years ago that I decided I was not going to try to find that empty spot in my soul fulfilled by having great relationships and blessed circumstances, though I love all those things. There is one way. It is in verses 1-10 of John 15. That is the way to His joy.*

- D. ***Your joy may be full:*** Our experience of God’s joy comes as momentary impartations of the Spirit. In time, His joy becomes the lens by which we view our life. His joy marks us progressively so that it becomes our joy or part of our mindset and emotional make up. His joy sparks our heart until joy becomes more dominant in our heart than dark emotions (despair, fear, rejection, lust, anger, etc.).



*Paragraph. D. He said that your joy may be full. Your joy may be full. I think I will pick this up a little bit more next week because it starts off as His joy, but it becomes our joy. There is a little distinction to it, but I think I will just end with that right now. We will pick up on the subject of joy. There is a lot to say about God's joy, and God's pleasure, and God's delight. There is so much about His personality in this. So I think I will just end it with that.*

*Let's stand before the Lord and just ask Him to come and touch our hearts.*

*Father, here we are before You. Lord, we just say, I love Your Word even though I do not understand it all. I am going for Your Word. If You say it, I am going to stand for it. I want to stand for it. I do not want to be in the popularity contest of the culture. You are the only one whose way is perfect and reliable.*

*Settle it tonight. It sounds like I am picking on the young people, particularly the young people, but the old people too, my people, the old people too. When I met the Lord in 1971, so a long time ago, I met the Lord in high school and we did not have the same arguments that I am hearing in the culture today, maybe a little bit. The seventies and eighties were quite a bit different. The nineties started and the two thousands got a little worse, and what the average twenty-year-old is facing in the cultural conversation is so much more intense than what I was facing. So I have real mercy, but I have zeal to be helpful. I am just saying, settle the issue. We are Word of God people. We believe it. We are not looking for or are not in the rat race of popularity to get people to like us. We are not virtue signaling, trying to get people say, "Wow, you are so amazing!" We are trying to be faithful to the Lord. We are settling that. When you get that anchored in your soul, you get stable, and it keeps you steady in it.*

*So, Father, here we are before You. Lord, we believe You for this. Father, we believe You for this.*

*Now all over the room, I am asking you to make a decision, to be committed to what God says in terms of standing for it and number two, you are going to seek to obey it. Those one or two or three areas that are hitting you, and you are saying, "Lord, I am not breaking through yet, but I am not quitting. I am going to keep signing back up to obey You." The Lord calls that the spirit of obedience. You will get a breakthrough if you stay with that. You stay with that. All over the room, you are making that determination right now. I am going to press through all that area that I am stumbling in and I am going to stand for truth, no matter what it costs me.*

*Here we are, Lord. Here we are. Lord, we love Your Word. We want to obey You and be with You.*