

Session 12 Union With God: What It Looks Like (Jn. 14:12-24)

I. REVIEW: THE UNION OF THE FATHER AND SON (JN. 14:10-11)

A. One of Jesus' primary themes in John 14 is how God's people are to relate to the Father. We are called to *participate in the family dynamics of the Trinity* as described by Jesus in John 14:7-24 and applied in John 15:1-11. Jesus' life revealed what the Father's personality is like and how He relates to His people. Jesus described how He related to the Father *as a man* (14:7-11), and then applied it to His people who are to relate to the Father in a similar way by the Spirit (14:12-24).

B. The disciples found it difficult to believe that a *human* could relate to the transcendent God of Israel in an intimate way. They believed Jesus was the Messiah, but did not understand that He lived as the model man, according to God's original design. He modeled how a person filled with the Spirit is to relate to God.

⁷***“If you had known [understood] Me, you would have known [understood] My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen [understood] Him.” (Jn. 14:7)***

C. In John 14:7-11, Jesus described His relationship with the Father *as a Man*. John 14:7-11 is not a doctrinal lesson about Jesus' deity, but His humanity. His statement in John 14:10 must have shocked the disciples, when He described this relationship as a deep union, telling them that He was “in the Father” and the “Father was in Him.” It is not perplexing that Jesus *as God* is in union with God—but that Jesus *as man* is in union with God. In John 14:20, He made a more dramatic statement, describing His disciples as being in union with God.

¹⁰***“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?... ²⁰At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” (Jn. 14:10, 20)***

1. The *mutual indwelling* of the Father and Son involves their Spirit and words and acts, etc. John's gospel highlights at least five aspects in the union between the Father and Jesus—their *mind* (thoughts), *heart* (feelings), *will* (values), *words*, and *works* (actions). In other words, they think, feel, value, speak, and act in ways that are in unity with each other.

2. When Jesus said, “I am in the Father,” He was saying, “My thoughts, feelings, values, words, and actions resonate in and move the Father's heart, and what He thinks and says resonates in Me.” The Father is moved by what Jesus thinks and says, and vice versa.

D. John 14:20 is one of the most dramatic and “extreme” statements in the Scripture—Jesus applied the relational reality that the Father enjoys with Him as a man to our relationship with God. We are called to deep union with God—this glorious unity will never include equality (in deity).

²⁰***“At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” (Jn. 14:20)***

1. ***You in Me:*** Born-again believers are “in” Jesus. We abide in Him by talking with, trusting in, and obeying Him (Jn. 15:5), and by our words and thoughts being in His heart.

2. ***I in you:*** Jesus is “in” a believer. He abides in us by His Spirit dwelling in our spirit and by releasing the Spirit's activity in our heart and His words living in our heart (Jn. 15:7).

- E. In this passage, three things come together— *answered prayers* or talking to God (v. 12-14), *obedient love* (v. 15), and enjoying *God’s manifest presence* (v. 21-24) by the power of the Spirit (v. 16-20). This describes the transforming union that is glorious, yet simple and available to all.

II. ANSWERED PRAYER (JN. 14:12-14)

- A. Jesus applied the truth of how He related to the Father *as a man* to His people (Jn. 14:12-14). Answered prayer and partnership in Jesus’ power flow out of participating in the transforming union that parallels how the Father related to Jesus in His humanity, as seen in John 14:10-11.
¹²“...he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”
(Jn. 14:12-14)
- B. Prayer, or talking to God, is the core activity in participating in union with God as Jesus set forth in John 14:10-11, 20. Prayer is not about informing or persuading God, but about connecting with Him in relationship. Jesus called us to pray continually (Mt. 7:7-8; Lk. 11:8-10; 18:1, 7). Jesus spent whole nights in prayer to commune with the Father, not to get more power.
- C. We do not *earn* answers to prayers by our persistence or obedience, but we position ourselves to grow in transforming union with Jesus by cultivating an ongoing conversation with Him.
- D. **Ask:** A foundational principle of the kingdom is that God releases more blessing if we ask for it. God knows all our needs (Mt. 6:32), but requires that we ask Him for them. Asking causes us to connect with His heart and to associate specific blessings from God as His answer to prayer. Answered prayer causes us to know that what we say moves God’s heart.
²Yet you do not have because you do not ask. (Jas. 4:2)
- E. **In My name:** This means asking for that which Jesus can endorse and which expresses His heart.
- F. **That the Father may be glorified:** This is the primary condition for answered prayer.

III. OBEDIENT LOVE (JN. 14:15)

- A. Jesus connected prayer with the power to love and obey Him. Jesus highlights the primary prayer focus that glorifies the Father—to be empowered to love Jesus with a spirit of obedience.
¹⁴“If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. ¹⁵If you love Me, keep My commandments.”
(Jn. 14:14-15)
- B. Jesus defined loving God as being deeply rooted in a spirit of obedience (Jn. 14:15, 21, 23). He calls us to love God on God’s terms or by His definition of love. He is the most qualified to define love, since the essence of His being is love (1 Jn. 4:16) and because He loves so lavishly. There is no such thing as loving God without seeking to obey His Word. The sentimental definitions of love in our culture that minimize obedience to Jesus are a deception and delusion.
- C. Prayer is no substitute for obedience, because sin hinders our love for Him.

²²And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. (1 Jn. 3:22)

- D. Obedience is an expression of loving God. Jesus takes it personally when we resist sin because of our love for Him. Denying our lustful desires is the way God chose for us to express our love to Him. Each of us has a different struggle according to our personality and circumstances. Thus we each have a different “assignment,” from which we offer our gift of love to God.
- E. The Spirit’s first agenda is to establish the first commandment in first place in the Church (Mt. 22:37-38). Jesus defined loving God as the first commandment, thus identifying it as the highest priority to God and the first calling in our life and for every ministry. Because of how He feels about us, He wants us to respond to Him with all our love.

³⁷Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment.” (Mt. 22:37-38)

- F. Loving God is to be the primary preoccupation of our life before, during, and after revival. We do not need to wait for revival or special seasons of visitation to deeply engage in this reality.

IV. BY THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT (JN. 14:16-20)

- A. Jesus is so committed to us loving Him that He sent us the Spirit to supernaturally teach and empower us to love God with a spirit of obedience and to participate in union with God (v. 20). He is our divine source to empower us to participate in the family dynamics of the Godhead.

¹⁶“I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper...¹⁷ the Spirit of truth...He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you...²⁰At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” (Jn. 14:16–20)

- B. The Spirit will teach, empower, and lead us to the degree that we desire Him to by asking Him. Jesus comes to us today by the indwelling Spirit. We can have a closer relationship with Jesus than the apostles had before Jesus’ resurrection. We can experience God’s presence on our heart and be empowered to love in a greater measure than the apostles knew before Jesus’ death. Jesus will not leave His people as orphans, as those without direction, help, or relationship.
- C. The Spirit desires to teach us the glorious truths of how to love (v. 15), related to seeing the Father’s relationship to Jesus and their relationship to us (v. 20). As we study the way that God loves God, we are empowered to love with obedience. The Spirit is the Helper who teaches us to the degree that we ask Him. He usually waits until we begin the conversation with Him.
- D. The Holy Spirit wants to lead and help us in developing the same five elements in the union between the Father and Jesus—their *mind* (thoughts), *heart* (feelings), *will* (values), *words* (speech), and *works* (actions). We are to intentionally seek to think, feel, value, speak, and act in ways that are in agreement with God, knowing that this deeply moves the Father’s heart. Over time, what He thinks, feels, says, and does will fill our hearts and powerfully move us.

V. GOD’S MANIFEST PRESENCE (JN. 15:21-24)

- A. Jesus linked obedient love to our capacity to experience God’s manifest presence (v. 21-23). Only in the context of obedient love will Jesus reveal the deep things of His heart to us. Jesus will manifest love to us to the degree that we show we value it by obeying Him.
- ²¹“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him”...*
- ²³“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴He who does not love Me does not keep My words...”*
(Jn. 14:21-24)
- B. Our capacity to see and feel love increases as we love God by obeying Him. The more we love, the more capacity we have to see and experience God’s presence. This cycle continues forever.
- ⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see [experience] God.” (Mt. 5:8)*
- C. Obedience brings our mind, emotions, and will into agreement with God’s, so that we actually become like Him. We must not see obedience as merely outward conduct that is our duty. Obedience transforms our mind and emotions so that we are like Jesus, who is the most beautiful, fascinating, interesting, happy, and satisfied person who ever walked the earth. When we live in agreement with Him through obedience, even our feelings change.
- D. By prayer and obedience, we position ourselves so that our spiritual capacity increases, so that our mind and emotions feel God’s presence in a greater measure. We can do nothing to *earn* His presence. He gives us the free gift of access to His presence because of the blood of Jesus.
- E. The nature of God’s love is that it increases when it is received and returned (Mk. 4:24-25). Our initial capacity to receive and return love increases as we increase in our obedient love for God. Sin causes us to stop talking (abiding), and it defiles and dulls our heart. Compromise diminishes our capacity to see or experience God’s presence. The price of non-discipleship is very high.
- ²⁴“With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. ²⁵For whoever has, to him more will be given.” (Mk. 4:24–25)*
- F. ***My Father will love him***: Jesus seems to be saying, “God will love you because you love Him.” This is different from what Scripture teaches elsewhere (Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:19), but Jesus is not contradicting the Scripture. The Father will openly display His enjoyment and pleasure of the relationship and lifestyle of those who value His love as evidenced by a life of obedience. The Father loves everyone in the sense of valuing, caring for, and pursuing them. However, He only loves the lifestyle, choices, sacrifices, and fruit of those who pursue 100-fold obedience.

VI. QUESTIONS FOR SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION (*i.e., FCF FRIENDSHIP GROUPS*)

1. Which point in this session would you like more understanding of?
2. Which point most inspired or challenged you? Why? What will you do differently to apply it?
3. Which point do you want to impart to a younger believer? Why? How will you elaborate on it?
4. What is one point in this session that needs to be emphasized to the larger Body of Christ? Why?