

John 15:9-17 *Abide in the True Vine*

In this passage we are reminded that we are loved with the richest, fullest, deepest, purest love imaginable: the Love of Christ. We are called to remain in this love by continuing on the straight and narrow path of obeying Christ's commands. By abiding in Him, we are filled with His love so that our lives can overflow with sacrificial love towards others. When we love because He first loved us, we prove that we have experienced His love and are truly His disciples. The Father is glorified and delights to hear and answer our prayers.

Read John 15:9-17

1. What verse stands out to you the most in this section? Write out the verse below. Ponder the verse and respond to the Lord in prayer.

Read John 15:9

2. Soak in this fact for a minute. You are loved by Jesus with a love that is incomprehensible. Read Ephesians 3:16-19 & Romans 8:38-39. Record any observations.

What other loves have you been seeking to be 'filled by'? Why do you think we run to these 'other loves' when Jesus' perfect love is offered to us?

Read John 15:10

3. How are we to remain in a place of continually receiving the outpouring of His love?

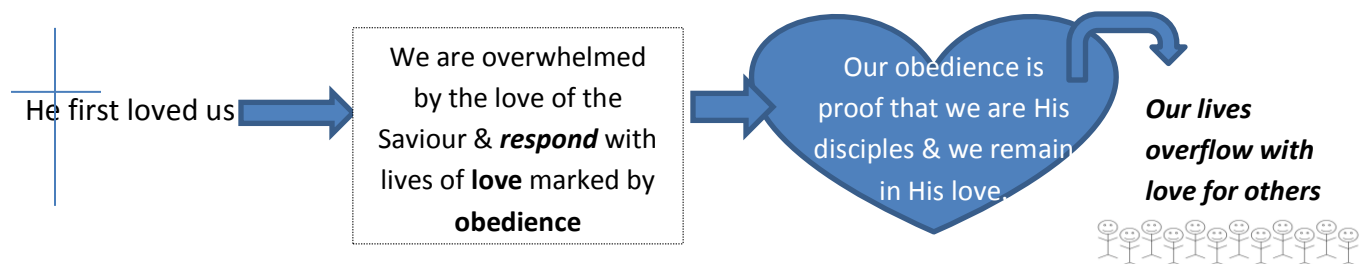
How is Jesus *an example* for us to imitate? See John 14:31 & John 12:49.

Read John 14:21.

We remain in His love by obeying in His commands. This is also how we show our love for Him. We do not obey in order to be saved (or loved). We have been saved by grace and our rightful response is obedience out of gratitude and love.

Read Romans 5:8. Does he first love us *because* we obey him? Do we *earn* his love?

Christ died for us while we were *still* sinning against Him! Our obedience does not earn His love. He graciously loves us even while we were His enemies living self centered, rebellious lives. He saves us, and we respond with love and obedience out of gratitude for his gracious salvation.



Read John 15:11

4. Read verse 11. Jesus wants us to know and abide in his love by obeying His command so that his _____ may be in us and that our joy may be _____.

Do you long for this fullness of joy in your life? How might your life look different with the fullness of Jesus' joy in you?

Read John 15:12

5. Have you ever pondered that true and complete joy is connected to obeying Christ commands?

Read Psalm 19:8.

Which specific command is given by the Lord to remain in his love and receive the fullness of His joy in us?

Where have you searched for joy/happiness/comfort in your life? Did it satisfy? Did it last?

What is the one source of true joy that can remain in any circumstance?

“You must count yourself desolate in this world however great the prosperity of your lot may be. The scales must have fallen from your eyes and you must see clearly that no matter how great your earthly circumstances become, they can never bring you the lasting peace, happiness, and consolation that are found in Christ.” - Augustine

Read John 15:13

6. Christ is our Saviour and Lord. He is also our example. He shows us what the greatest expression of love is. What extend did *He* go to show his love for us?

What is the greatest obstacle to loving others in our lives?

Selfishness is a great enemy to love. Why?

“If we empty our hearts of self, God will fill them with His love.” Spurgeon

Is true biblical love a feeling or an action? See 1 John 3:16-17.

7. Read Luke 9:23 Why is the command to deny ourselves and take up our cross essential to our growth in love?

Although we may never die for our friends as Jesus did, we can figuratively ‘die daily’ by placing other’s needs before our own.

Application: What does it look like to ‘die to self’ so that we might love others better? What are some practical ways to live this out on a daily basis?

Read John 15:14-15

8. No longer do I call you _____....but I have called you _____.

What is the servant unaware of that has been made known to the friends? See verse 15.

Application: Who is your best friend? Why? What makes somebody a good friend? See Proverbs 18:24.

What would change in your life if you took this friendship with the Lord more seriously than any other relationship?

As Christians, we have been purchased by the blood of Christ. We are not our own, we were bought at a price and we *are* most definitely servants/slaves of Christ. This calling as a servant of Christ is a high calling in which we are exalted into the very service of the King. But it doesn't stop there. We are also exalted in the very heart of the King as He entrusts Himself to us as His *friends*.

What a friend we have in Jesus!

Read John 15:16

9. Did you choose Jesus or did He choose you? See John 6:44 and Ephesians 1:4.

We most definitely choose Jesus willingly and joyfully as you can attest by your own experience, but at the deepest level, we choose Him because the Father first chose us and drew us to Jesus.

10. What did Jesus choose and appoint us for?

What fruit does the Lord want to bear in you and through you to make you more like Jesus?

What person/people has the Lord placed in your life to disciple, evangelize and/or pray for?

God did not merely forgive us of our sin and give us eternal life (though that is no small thing!). He has a calling for each of us here and now and desires to work in us a life that is eternally productive and fruitful. This fruitfulness involves becoming more like Jesus and seeing others come to know Him and grow in Him.

11. "I chose you...[to]...bear fruit....SO THAT _____."

Remember the context. This is the last gathering that Jesus has with His disciples before His suffering. He wants His disciples to know how they will get things done once He is gone. It is clear that the only way to accomplish His purpose and mission is to be united with Him by faith and to be in continual communion with Him through the Word and prayer. Look up every instance that Jesus mentions our prayers in the Farewell Discourse: John 14:13-14; John 15:7, 16; John 16:23-24.

What is the significance of prayer for accomplishing our mission as the church?

Why do you think that God wants to accomplish His work through our prayers? Who gets the glory?

Read John 15:17

12. Jesus has been clear that we cannot abide in Him, as branches connected to the vine, unless we LOVE ONE ANOTHER. Look up another instance in the upper room where Jesus speaks of this command: John 13:34-35. Why is this command paramount?

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, & whoever loves has been born of God & knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us & sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us & his love is perfected in us." 1 John 5:7-12

Father, thank you for this study & for the opportunity to be encouraged to seek You in the Word & in prayer. We pray that you would grant us the grace to abide in Jesus, the true vine, & to know the sap of His spirit working through us to bear the fruit of love. May we abide in His love, cherish His commands & be filled with the abundance of His joy. May His love be perfected in us for other's good & Your glory. We pray this in the name of Jesus, our beloved Saviour. Amen.

**Use this space not simply to record answers, but to respond to the LORD in prayer.*

ADORATION: How can I love & praise God on the basis of these verses? What do I see here that I can praise Him for?

REPENTANCE: How do I fail to realize this in my life? What wrong behaviour, harmful emotions or attitudes result when I forget this?

GOSPEL THANKS: How can I thank Jesus, the ultimate revelation of this attribute of God (reflected on in #1) and the answer to this sin or need of mine (reflected on in #2).

ASPIRATION: How does this show me what I should or could be or do? How would I be different if this truth were powerfully real to me?