

CHAPTER FOUR

LOVE IN UNION

JOHN 15:1-16

INTRODUCTION

We are making a study of the Love Story in John 13-17.
Thus far we have seen

LOVE SERVING in washing the disciples feet

LOVE HURT in the betrayal of Judas Iscariot

LOVE COMMUNICATING in Jesus answering the questions of Peter and Thomas and Philip and Judas Thaddaeus Lebbaeus.

They have now left the upper room and they are heading toward the Garden of Gethsemane. I believe that the experiences of these verses probably took place just after they left the gate of the old city and started down the Kidron Valley toward the Garden of Gethsemane. Christ probably stopped at a vineyard along the way and shared these insights with them.

In these verses, we are going to be considering love's oneness that produces the fruit that the Lord desires to produce in us and through us.

Frances Schaeffer in his book Death in the City says, "The Bible tells us plainly that Christ promises to bear His fruit through us. In Romans 7:4 Paul says a very striking thing, 'Wherefore my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ in order that you should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead in order that we should bring forth fruit unto God.' This verse says that each of us as a Christian, is feminine. At conversion, we are married to Christ, who is the bridegroom. And as we put ourselves into His arms, moment by moment, He will produce His fruit through us in the external world. That's beautiful and overwhelming. Just as with the natural bride who gives herself to her husband and puts herself into his arms, there will be children born into a home. The bride can't just stand with the bridegroom at the wedding ceremony. She must give herself to him, existentially, regularly and then children will be born

to him through her body into the external world. As an example, let us think of Mary and Christ's birth. When Mary heard the annunciation, she did not say to the angel, I won't give myself to God in order that the Messiah may be born. What would Joseph think? It would have been reasonable to say that because we know that Joseph was indeed later disturbed. On the other hand, she did not say, Now you've told me what is to happen. I can do it on my own. Mary herself could no more bring forth that baby than any other girl can will a virgin birth. She said the one thing she could say that could be right, I am your servant. I give my body into your hands. Do with it as you will. This was an active passivity. She was passive in that God brought forth the baby. But she was not passive in her will. One can say it this way and I say it with great care, God would not have raped Mary. She put herself into His hands and He was the one who produced this marvel of the virgin birth. Of course, the virgin birth of Christ to Mary is totally unique, but it can be a profound example to us. In a very different way, the same situation holds with each of us as Christians. If I will put myself into Christ's arms moment by moment, He will bring forth His fruit through me into this poor external world; and if I'm not acting upon that, I am sitting in the chair of unfaith."

J. Vernon McGee points out, "It has been the belief of many expositors that our Lord gave this chapter in a discourse down in the Valley of Kidron or on the side of the Mount of Olives because we know that at that time, there was a vineyard in that area which covered that Valley. We also know that it was full moon because it was the time of the Passover. He may well have spoken these words as they walked through the vineyard. It would have been an appropriate place."

Wilson points out, "There is a marked difference in the discourse of Chapter 14 and that of Chapter 15. One was inside, the other outside. The theme of the former was RELATIONSHIP; that of the latter RESPONSIBILITY. First His work for us; second our work for Him. This is the method of the Apostle Paul in his epistles. First, doctrine and then devotion. Chapter 14, we are brought into the sanctuary; chapter 15, we go out in service and testimony.

what a pointed passage for Peter because he hadn't learned yet to turn it over and let the Lord! Still trying and failing.

Wiersbe points out, "Life is your most precious possession. Don't take it for granted. Right now, you are either wasting your life, spending your life or investing your life. It is you who determines which course to follow. Jesus said, 'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they might have life and might have it abundantly.' The thief, who is he? Ultimately, of course, he is Satan, the enemy of God and of good. But the thief always has assistance from people and circumstances. One man is robbed of life because of impatience. He always jumps the gun only to find that the gun is aimed at him. Another is robbed of abundant life because of selfish indulgence, food, sleep, sex, alcohol, you name it. Yes, there are many thieves that would like to keep us from enjoying Christ's abundant life. Memories of past failures, fears of the future, a feeling that you're not important, and that nobody cares. How tragic going through life and really not living. But abundant life can be yours, inasmuch as you've got the vine and the branches. Jesus Christ points out five spiritual secrets that lead to abundant life. Please take these five spiritual secrets to heart. They do work."

The five secrets of living are:

1. The secret of living is FRUIT BEARING
2. The secret of fruit bearing is ABIDING
3. The secret of abiding is OBEYING - Give God Your will
4. The secret of obeying is LOVING - " " " heart
5. The secret of loving is KNOWING - " " " Mind

Summary
of
Passage!!

You can see how these four elements work together with the five secrets I have been sharing with you. The secret of living is fruit bearing and the secret of fruit bearing is abiding. What is the secret of abiding? It is obeying. Give God your WILL. What is the secret of obeying? It is loving. Give God your HEART. What is the secret of loving. It is knowing. Give God your MIND. In other words, when you surrender heart, mind and will to God each day, you are able to abide in Him and draw upon His spiritual power. When you yield Him your body, He can work through you to produce the spiritual fruit that He wants you to bear. Instead of being conformed to this world, you are transformed by His power and you glorify His name.

When you surrender will, heart + Mind each day you are Abiding.

Johnston points out, "One primary emphasis is that Jesus is now instructing the eleven as to how His ministry will continue in spite of His physical departure. There's going to be a new relationship to Him and it is concerning that new relationship that He now instructs them. This instruction rests upon the preceding discourse which exemplified love, trust and peace. Abiding is the topic of the instruction now and is concerned with effective service in light of Christ's departure. The questions and answers are:

Now that you realize that I am leaving, how will my ministry continue?

What are you, my disciples, going to do?

Wecks points out, "In Chapter 14, Jesus sought to bring comfort and confidence to His troubled disciples in the face of His impending death and departure. Comfort comes from knowing the believer will be in heaven in the Father's presence with Jesus forever someday. Until then, every believer may be confident in the midst of this world because of Jesus' promise of His power in prayer, His presence in the Spirit and His peace in the world. Now that Jesus has told His disciples in chapter 14 all that He will do for them, in chapters 15 & 16, He stresses what the disciples are to do for Him. Beginning with an illustration in Chapter 15:1-17, He teaches that the full enjoyment of the believer's new relationship to Jesus Christ is conditional on obedience to His new commandment to love other Christians. The full enjoyment of the Christian life comes in fulfilling the purpose for which God had saved men. That purpose is that Christians bear fruit. Fruitfulness for Christ is possible through close fellowship with Jesus Christ and fellowship with Christ is promoted through Christ-like love for one another."

James Rosscup in his book Abiding in Christ says, "Why does Christ refer to the vine and the branches? Perhaps the cup of wine caused Him to think this way as Christ looked down at the cup during the last supper and took His object lesson from the fruit of the vine. The second possibility would be the closeness of the disciples as they are huddled together for the Passover meal. The other possibility would be a branch in the window or a vine in the moonlight as they are making their way down to Gethsemane; or the vine on the temple gate. The other possibility would be the pruning fires of Kidron."

v. 1 I am the genuine vine and my Father is the tiller of the soil.

Jesus says, He is the genuine vine, not a false one; and His Father has the function of creating a climate for maximum productivity for the vine. He is the tiller of the soil.

McGee points out, "These disciples had Jewish concepts and their thought patterns had been governed by the Old Testament. He is telling them now that the nation Israel is not the genuine vine and their identification with Jewish nation and the Jewish religion is not the essential thing. 'I am the genuine vine.' The important thing now is for the disciples to be related to Jesus Christ. That was revolutionary. Our Lord used a marvelous figure of speech and He made it very clear that it is not your identification with a religion or a ceremony or an organization that is essential. We are to be identified with Christ, we are in Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit the moment we trust Christ as our Saviour and are born again as a child of God."

*Not Israel
Any more!!
Not organization
but Christ*

Watchman Nee in his book The Normal Christian Worker says, "He has the resources to transform our characters even as He transformed Peter's. He can deal with every type of weakness that mars our lives and can so reconstitute us that we become suited to His purpose."

X

Keller in his book A Gardener Looks at the Fruits of the Spirit says, "Lastly use the three great words that spell out growth in godliness:

1. ACKNOWLEDGE. Oh, God you are very God. You know exactly what you are doing with me. It is for my best. All is well.
2. ACCEPT HIS MANAGEMENT. Herein lies peace and rest. No longer will I resist or resent your work in my life. You are the good gardener.
3. APPROVE OF CHRIST'S ARRANGEMENT OF YOUR AFFAIRS. It is your intention I should become fruitful. Under your good hand, this will happen. Thanks for everything. This will turn pouting into praise, grumbling into gratitude. It is the key to releasing all the energies of God, the Holy Spirit to move fully and

*How do I
let Him
Function?*

freely through my daily life. He will do exceeding more than I can ever ask or think. Eph. 3:19-21

v. 2 Every branch in Me not bearing fruit He is taking away (lifting up) and every branch bearing fruit, He is cleansing (pruning) it, in order that it may keep on bearing more fruit.

He speaks of the negative first and then the positive. The branches that are not bearing fruit, He treats one way and the branches that are bearing fruit, He treats another way. First of all ① those branches not bearing fruit, He is taking away or lifting them up; and the ② branches bearing fruit He is cleansing or pruning them. And His purpose in this action is in order that they may keep on bearing fruit.

Keller points out, "We are identified and known by the SORT of fruit, the QUANTITY of fruit and the QUALITY of fruit born out in our daily conversation, conduct and character. There is no greater criterion for Christians. It is the paramount gauge of God's people."

Lest the reader be discouraged, let it be said here again that fruit production in our Christian experience just as in an orchard or garden is not something that goes on with great fanfare, noise or theatrics. From the opening of the first tiny bud under the impulse of spring sunshine to the perfect ripening of the fully formed fruit beneath late Indian summer skies in the fall, the whole process goes on quietly, serenely and surely. It is the Spirit of God who by His presence within guarantees growth, maturity and conformity to Christ. So gently, so gradually does this divine work of the good gardener proceed that often, we ourselves, are unaware of the changes occurring in our characters, our conversation or our conduct. But others around us are aware. They will notice the transformation taking place and they will be aware of the ripening fruits of the Spirit in our lives. And by this, they will know this garden is coming under Christ's control.

Wilson points out, "The Lord mentions three branches, each with a deep spiritual meaning.

THE FRUITLESS BRANCH

THE FRUITFUL BRANCH

THE WITHERED BRANCH

It should be emphasized here that the teaching has to do with fruit bearing and witness. It has nothing to do with salvation and eternal security."

Wiersbe points out, "These then are some of the different kinds of fruit God wants us to bear in our lives.

WITNESSING and WINNING SOULS

HOLINESS OF LIFE

CHARACTER

SHARING GOOD WORKS

PRAISE AND TESTIMONY

But our Lord also makes it clear that this fruit bearing is to be a continuous experience; fruit, more fruit and much fruit."

Not Bad:

① Father

② Lot

③ Ish.

④ ISAAC.

The abiding Christian is not constantly dealing with bad things. He is often dealing with good things. God told Abraham to leave his home and family. ① But Abraham took his ① father along. The father had to die before God could continue His work in Abraham's life. ② But Abraham took his nephew ② Lot with him. Lot also had to be cut away. ③ Then it was his son ③ Ishmael whom he fathered through Hagar and then it was his beloved son ④ Isaac who was given to him by the Lord, though God gave him back. Expect to be pruned if you abide in Christ.

Song of Solomon 2:15 "Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards while our vineyards are in blossom."

Shulamith tells Solomon that it should be their common commitment to catch the foxes that are spoiling the vineyard of their relationship just as it's beginning to blossom and before it bears fruit.

The little foxes spoil the vines, so watch for them and kill them. Name the sins, confess them and ask for God's forgiveness. Never feed a little fox. He will grow up and devour you. It takes diligence and dedication to

bear fruit for God. Once we become lazy and careless, we cease to bear fruit. Solomon paints a meaningful picture of this truth in Proverbs 24:30-35:

A little sleep, a little slumber, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards.

Macauley points out, "As has often been pointed out, three degrees of fruit bearing are hinted in this passage. In the terms fruit, more fruit, much fruit; in keeping with the thirtyfold, sixtyfold and a hundredfold of our Lord's parable of the sower and the four soils in Matthew 13."

Before going further, we ought to inquire what is this fruit we are to bear as branches of the vine. Speaking negatively first, it is not church work. We must surely affirm in all honesty that much activity going by that name is not fruit but fungus. Fungus is a parasite and so is much church work. It is not only foreign to the true purpose of the church but actually killing the church in its testimony. Then too much legitimate and necessary activity may be fungus because it springs from pride and selfishness and ambition rather than from the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The search light of the Holy Spirit will reveal the true nature of all of our activities if we allow Him to search. Dr. Torrey has told of the leading soprano in his choir in Chicago, who being searched by the fire of the Holy Spirit confessed that she had till that time sung only for her own gratification and not for the glory of God. And a minister acquaintance of mine made a similar confession regarding his preaching. Fruit or fungus?

Macauley points out, "It is a very interesting thing, a remarkable thing that in this world God sometimes seems to treat His best friends worst and He treated his own Son worst of all. And so, when we have to pass through great trials, deep waters and many sorrows, it is not an evidence that He does not love us, that He does not care for us. He loved His own Son, shall I say, if it were possible more than He has ever loved Him when Jesus cried, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?'

But oh, the precious fruit of His death of pain and sorrow.
So like unto His birth
Which would no glory borrow
No majesty from earth.

* Wecks points out, "Fruit is anything that is produced by God in the life of the believer, for the glory of God." * * This would include the fruit of the Spirit and all those character qualities which are Christ-like. Fruit also includes areas of Christian service and the winning of souls. Such fruit bearing is the responsibility of each believer because of his relationship to the vine, Jesus Christ."

Van Doren points out, "Paradise has no trees that were barren. Genesis 2:16. The tree drinks its life from the air, light, heat and water."

"He purges or cleanses it." The explanation of so much that is painful and severe in the life of the true Christian. A reference to those divine judgments such as overtook the disciples in the passion night. "Whom the Lord loves, He chastens." Hebrews 12:6 "Not that God takes pleasure in afflicting, but He looks to the end." Hebrews 12:10 God had one Son without sin, but none without sorrow.

F. B. Meyer points out, "Measure thy life by loss instead of gain. Not by the wine drunk but by the wine poured forth. For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice and whoso suffers most has the most to give."

* Mark 4:19 "And the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word and it becomes unfruitful."

The branch becomes unfruitful when one of two things has happened.

- ① SIN
- ② stubbornness
- ① First, the Holy Spirit is grieved by sin or disobedience
- ② Or, the Holy Spirit is quenched by our unwillingness to surrender and to be submissive to Him.

* What does it mean when it says the Lord is lifting up the branch or taking away the branch not bearing fruit? I'm sure this can be described as whatever action on the part of the Father that is necessary to restore the branch to position of fruitfulness.

whatever:
① Crucifixion
② chastening
③ Come on Home.

This can involve God's three point program for recovery.

1. Stirring up the circumstances around us to get a proper response.

2. Chastening from the hand of our loving Father to get us to respond. Hebrews 12:11 - "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful, yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."

3. Come on home in physical death. This is where Christ blows the whistle and pulls you out of the game and shuts you down and brings you home in physical death.

The one thing the Lord wants from our lives is Fruit!!

How does He cleanse or prune the branch that is bearing fruit in order that it may keep on bearing fruit?

Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit of both joints and marrow; and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

Psalm 119:9 & 11 "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee."

One writer pointed out that the Father's hand is never closer to His child than when He is pruning him.

Beth Jameson in her book Hold Me Tight says, "We are so painfully becoming aware of being caught up in this constant parade of horrors, all going in the same direction."

"God, I'm just now getting to know you, aren't I? All these years I only thought I knew you. It was more an acquaintanceship than a friendship. An acquaintance one is aware of. A friend one knows. An ideal one strives and works for. A father one trusts and lives for. A saviour, one loves in total individual commitment. Dear God, my friend, Father, Saviour, how complex are your ways as I ponder my own

2 Cor. 11:2

existence in the enormity of your universe. I do feel your presence in this faith snatching situation, God. I feel your quiet prodding of trust me, trust me. Despair is presumptuous, but it is so hard to let go and let God when I've been used to leading instead of following.

Guy King in his book Brought In says, "There must be some purpose, some reason for God's allowing the knife of suffering to operate in our lives. Nothing ever happens haphazard in a Christian's life. We shall, I think, not be far wrong if we stick to our 15th of John and say with the second verse that the object is fruit and in the same verse, more fruit and in verse 8, much fruit. And way on in verse 16, lasting fruit, that your fruit should remain. And all this for the supreme end, 'Herein is my Father glorified.' verse 8. We recall the same thought in Isaiah 61:3:

'That they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.'

Are we as anxious to bear fruit for Him as He is to see it? Are we as careful to avoid anything that would hinder fruit bearing as we ought to be? Every now and then, Christians ask, Is it wrong for a Christian to do something, to go somewhere? The answer might very well be, No, not wrong in itself. But it would spoil the quality of fruit. In which case, let it be cut out."

Stedman in his book Secrets of the Spirit says, "I struggled for a while with this word 'prunes' because in the Greek, it is really cleanses. It seemed to me that cleansing away debris was a far cry from pruning back the branches until I learned that in the usual practice of viticulture, the care of vines, the branches are pruned back each year in order to cleanse them. A vine produces certain shoots called 'sucker shoots', which start to grow where the branch joins the stem. If allowed to continue to grow, they would dissipate the life of the vine through so many branches that the vine would produce little or no fruit, but would produce leaves instead. So every vine-dresser knows it is important to prune away these little sucker shoots in order that the vine may produce more fruit. And since these grow where the branch joins the stem, creating a tight cluster where dirt, leaves and other debris collect, the pruning is therefore a cleansing process. This is what our Lord has in view. The Father's work is to find

a branch which is beginning to bear fruit, beginning to produce the likeness of Christ and to cut it back, trim off the shoots, so that it may bear more fruit. You can see what a beautiful analogy this is to the Christian experience, for in our lives, we have that within us which produces the fruit of the Spirit. We do not have to work at it, we do not have to agonize and struggle to produce these qualities or characteristics. They are brought about naturally by the vine. Did you ever see a bunch of grapes struggling to hang on to the vine, trying to grow larger? No, it simply stays on the vine and lets the life of the vine produce the fruit. Yet, when this starts, the Father must trim back the branches. Our evil nature, our fallen Adamic nature, produces in us those characteristics which are different from the fruit of the Spirit--resentment, anger, bitterness, selfishness, egocentricity, love of praise--qualities which tend to arise within us so frequently. The Father is at work to cut them off, to prune them back."

v. 3 You already are clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

2 Corinthians 7:1 "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Psalms 119:9 & 11

Ephesians 5:25

John 13:10 & 11 "Jesus is saying to him, 'He who has been bathed is not having need except to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean but not all of you.' For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, 'not all of you are clean.'"

v. 4 Be abiding in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch is not able to be bearing fruit from itself, unless it keeps on abiding in the vine, so neither can you unless you keep on abiding in Me.

This verse begins with the command to 'be abiding in Me' and Christ in us. And then He gives an illustration just as the branch is negatively not able to be bearing fruit from itself unless it keeps on abiding in the vine, so He makes the application, neither can you unless you keep on abiding in Me.

The Lord Jesus is now going to give them the key to fruitfulness.

The first is our RESPONSIBILITY, abiding in Him

The second our RESOURCE, he abiding in us.

How is it possible for us to know that we're abiding in Him? There are three things that characterize the abiding life.

First, we are drawing upon all that He is.

Second, we are depending upon all that He can do

Third, we are developing into His image.

✱ Ephesians 3:17 "So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith and that you, being rooted and grounded in love."

Mind = Decide this is what you need to do.
Emotions = He loves you + wants what is best
Will = Go For it! Give it to Him.

✱ Galatians 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Guy King points out, "We are on the word 'in' again, our pregnant preposition. Already, we have seen that we are

in the faith for salvation

in the family for life

in the book for assurance

in the body for service.

Now we remember that we are in the VINE FOR FRUITFULNESS, not just on the vine as if a bunch of grapes were tied on

but in the vine as a branch and fruit grow naturally out of it. Such is, from a still further aspect, the believer's blessed situation.

Stedman points out, "This is an extremely helpful passage. Notice that our Lord divides it into two sections.

There is an ACTIVITY which is to be done and a PASSIVITY which is to be acknowledged.

An active and a passive voice. We are to abide in Him. That is active. Something we do. And we are to let Him abide in us. That is passive. Something we allow Him to do. Both these relationships are absolutely essential. Not one as opposed to the other, but both together."

Math.
11-28-30

What a joy there is, just to know the rest, the relaxation, and the release from the responsibility by abiding in Christ.

v. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who is abiding in Me and I in him, this one is bearing much fruit, because apart from Me you are not able to be doing anything.

Christ says here, "I am the vine." In verse one He has said, "I am the genuine vine." You, the disciples are the branches. He goes on to say, "The one who is abiding in Me and I in him, (which he has described as the secret to fruitfulness in verse 4) this one is bearing much fruit." Back in verse 2, we had the bearing of fruit. Now we have the bearing of much fruit and the reason given is because "apart from Me you are not able to be doing anything."

Bill Bright in his book Revolution Now says, "We do not produce apart from Christ's strength any more than the branch produces fruit apart from the vine. It is the life-giving sap that flows up from the roots through the vine, the overflow of the vine's life that produces the fruit. So it is in the life of the believer. It is the Holy Spirit working through the vine which is Jesus Christ, overflowing into the branches, Christians producing the fruit. I have never led anyone to Christ in my life. I never shall. There's nothing of which I can boast. I have been an instrument through whom the Spirit of God has drawn thousands to Himself.

But He has done it. It is the availability that He uses. It is the faith that He honors. It is the obedience that He blesses. It is the Spirit of the living God who does the work through us."

In The Life and Diary of David Brainerd we read, "I never saw the work of God appear so independent of means as at this time. I discoursed to the people and spoke what I suppose had a proper tendency to promote conviction, for God's manner of working upon them appeared so entirely supernatural and above means that I could scarce believe He used me as an instrument, or what I spoke as means of carrying on His work. It seemed as I thought to have no connection with nor dependence upon means in any respect. Although I could not but continue to use the means which I thought proper for the promotion of the work. Yet, God seemed as I apprehended to work entirely without them. I seem to do nothing and indeed to have nothing to do, but to stand still and see the salvation of God. I found myself obliged and delighted to say, Not unto us, not unto instruments and means, but to thy name glory. God appeared to work entirely alone and I saw no room to attribute any part of this work to any created arm."

Stephen Alford points out in his book I'll Take the High Road "God pleases to operate when we stand with eyes clear to see his vision, ears clear to hear his voice, and hearts clear to know His victory."

Annie Johnson Flint has a poem called "The Pruned Branch."

It is the branch that bears the fruit that feels
the knife.
To prune it for a larger growth and fuller life.

Though every budding twig be lopped and every grace
Of swaying tendril springing leaf be lost a space.
Oh, thou whose life of joy seems reft of beauty shorn
Whose aspirations lie in dust all bruised and torn.

Rejoice, though each desire, each dream, each hope
of thine
Shall fall and fade, it is the hand of love divine
That holds the knife, that cuts and breaks with
tenderest touch.
That thou, whose life has born some fruit, may now
bear much.

When we are speaking of the subject of fruit, we need to think of it in five ways:

1. CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER - Galatians 5:22 & 23
"But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, self-control."
2. CONFESSION OF PRAISE - Hebrews 13:15 - "Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name."
3. CONTRIBUTIONS - Philippians 4:17 & 18 "Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the fruit which increases to your account, but I have received everything in full and have an abundance. I am amply supplied having received from Epaphroditas what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God."
4. CONDUCT - Colossians 1:6 "Which has come to you just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth."
5. CONVERSIONS - I Thess - 2:19, 20

J. Hudson Taylor said, "Christians in whom these dispositions are once firmly fixed go on calmly as the infant born in the arms of its mother. Christ reminds them of every duty in its time and place; reproves them for every error; counsels them in every difficulty; excites them to every needful activity, in spiritual as in temporal matters they take no thought for the morrow, for they know that Christ will be as accessible tomorrow as today and that time imposes no barrier on His love. Their hope and trust rests solely on what He is willing and able to do for them and nothing that they suppose themselves able and willing to do for Him. Their talisman for every temptation and sorrow is their oft repeated childlike surrender of their whole being to Him."

Butler points out, "We might logically ask the question, What does it mean to abide? Perhaps this illustration will be helpful. The sun in the sky says to the little earth planet, Abide in me. Resist the temptation to fly into space. Remain in the solar sphere and I will abide

in thy vegetation and all living things. Abide in me says the ocean to the bay. Keep thy channel unsilted and open and twice in every 24 hours I will pour my fulness up to thy farthest shore. Abide in me, says the air to the lung, that I may administer oxygen to thy cells. Abide in me, says the artist to the novice, that my skills shall be yours. Abide in me, says the Thomas Edison to the young Faraday, the preacher to the student. Abide in me says the vine to its branch and I will supply you with life and fruit and purpose and joy and contentment. Did you realize how indispensable Jesus is to your life? Other things and people seem so important, but only Christ is indispensable. This is graphically illustrated by the following words entitled "In This World No Man is Necessary."

"In this world no man is necessary. There are many men who if they were taken away would be missed; but there is no man but what we may say of him, as useful and valuable as he may be, that we cannot do without him. It is a truth we do not like to admit. We like to believe that things would not go on exactly the same without us. But this world has only seen one being, Christ himself, who could say that it was absolutely impossible to go on when separated from Him. The little child believed when his mother died that without her, he could do nothing. But now the child, a grown busy man, hardly seems even ever to remember at all, her whom the heart-broken child missed so sorely. And the mother, when her little one is called to go, may believe without that little one, she can do nothing. But time brings its wonderful easing and though not forgetting, she gets on much as before. And it's the same way in every other earthly relation. The husband comes to do without his dead wife and the wife can do without her departed husband. The congregation that missed their minister for a while, comes at length to gather Sunday after Sunday with little thought of the voice that once was pleasant for them to hear. The state comes to do without its departed hero, and we learn in a hundred ways that no human being is absolutely necessary to any other human being. We may indeed, miss our absent friends, sadly and long. But we shall come at last to do without them. Man's greatest need and indispensable need is Christ. Without Me, says Christ, you can do nothing."

Christ is alive, adequate and available to live in us and to produce the fruit through us.

Johnston points out, "The word 'abiding' may be defined as drawing one's total life sustenance from Christ. He sufficiently supplies all that is needed in power for an effective ministry."

Van Doren points out, "The branch apart from the vine has not only no fruitfulness, but no being; for it has no original source of life. The branch of itself is lifeless and only fulfills its functions by connection with the vine. From the vine flows the vital sap to every part. All the parts live, move and have their being from and by the vine. The vine receives nothing from the branches but gives them all. The believer apart from Christ has not source of life and fruitfulness, nothing without Him; everything in connection with Him."

Boice points out, "When our Lord says, 'abide in me', he's talking about the will, the choices, the decisions we make. We must decide to do things which expose ourselves to Him and keep ourselves in contact with Him. This is what it means to abide in Him. We have been placed in Christ by the Holy Spirit. Now we must choose to maintain that relationship by the decisions we make. Decisions to expose ourselves to His word in order to learn about Him, and to relate to Him in prayer wherein we converse with Him. Decisions to relate to other believers in body life experiences, that is bearing one another's burdens and confessing our faults and sharing in fellowship with one another, wherein we learn about and see Christ in one another. All of this is designed to relate to Him, 'abide in Me.' If we do that, we are fulfilling this active, necessary decision of the will to obey His word, to do what He says and to stay in touch with Him."

Summarize →

To here →

v. 6 If anyone is not abiding in me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they are gathering them and they are throwing them into the fire, and they are burned.

~~Out of Fellowship~~

The verse begins with the words, "If anyone is not abiding in me." This is a believer who is not willing to surrender and submit to the expressed will of God in His word. And when this happens, the Lord graphically describes it in five ways:

1. He is thrown away as a branch. I Corinthians 9:27 "But I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly after I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."
2. The branch dries up. Psalm 32:3 & 4 "When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long, for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer."
3. They are gathering them. I take this as 2 Corinthians 5:10 "That we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."
4. They are throwing them into the fire.
5. They are burned.

1 Corinthians 3:11 "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident for the day will show it; because it is to be revealed with fire. The fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire."

Peter wouldn't let Him wash his feet
You will have no part w/ me.

Lovett points out, "This discussion has to do with abiding, not salvation. If there is no abiding, there is no fruit-bearing. Non-productive Christians are cut off. If not from salvation, what then? From intimacy with Christ and the entire operation of the vine. The Lord put it to Peter just like that when he refused to allow Him to wash his feet. It is impossible to enjoy close fellowship with Christ and to be disobedient. Many today are churchy, but few are involved in the thrills of fruit bearing. They are

not abiding, hence they are cut off from the whole purpose of the vine. Not only do they forfeit the great adventure of their own faith, but they will be sorry when they stand before Him and the judgment. The non-productive Christian will regret his wasted life when he sees his works go up in smoke like a pile of dried out cuttings."

Shrink
Away in
Shame

3 "T's" Turn, Trust, Thank

Really
"Key"

To be abiding in Christ is an experience of continually learning how to turn over to our Lord the complete control of our lives, and to trust Him to do His good work and to work all things together for good; and to thank Him for the blessings He bestows. It is when we fail to turn it over to Him, to trust Him and to thank Him for what He is doing that we are no longer abiding in Him.

Abiding is
Entering into
His Rest !!

Because the children of Israel were unwilling to turn over the conquest of the land of Canaan to God and to trust Him and to thank Him for the promises that He had made that the land was theirs, they wandered for forty years in the wilderness, never entering into the rest which the Lord had made available to them.

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my load is light."

v. 7 If you are abiding in me and my words are abiding in you, ask whatever you are desiring, and it will become yours.

In the first part of the verse, we have the conditions stated and then the prayer promise is given in the latter part of the verse. In the first part, it says, 'if you are abiding in me' that is, in fellowship with the Lord, 'and his words are abiding in you' that is, His words were found and you did eat them; and His words are the joy and rejoicing of your heart; and you are meditating in His word day and night; and you are being careful to observe all that is written therein, then His word is abiding in you. The promise is given, 'ask whatever you are desiring and it will become yours.'

Psalm 37:4 "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart."

Hannah Hurnard has a beautiful thought in The Mountain of Spices when she says, "We will plant it again and make it of greater fruitfulness than would otherwise have been possible, for the ashes are making the soil still more fertile and are preparing it for resurrection life." What she is saying is that after the burning, there is the blessed potential of greater fruitfulness.

*After Burning there is the blessed potential of Greater Fruitfulness...
2Pe 4:12,13*

The Lord goes on to say, 'if you are abiding in me and my words are abiding in you, ask whatever you are desiring and it will become yours.'

The word translated 'continue' in John 8:31 is the same word that is in John 15:7 translated 'abide'. There Christ said, 'if you abide in me and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.' What is it to abide in Him and have His word abide in us? The word 'abide' has in it the idea of drawing from something that which sustains life. The plant is abiding in the ground when it is so related to its environment, the ground, that it is drawing from the ground, that which nurtures and sustains the life of the plant. The fish is abiding in the sea, not when it is afloat upside down in the ocean, but when it is so related to its environment that it is drawing from that environment sustenance for life. The bird is abiding in the air when it is drawing from its environment that which sustains its peculiar kind of life. When there is a break between that living thing and its environment so that it is not being sustained by it, it is no longer abiding. A believer is abiding in Christ when his life is being nurtured and sustained by Jesus Christ. A believer is abiding in the word when he is drawing from the word that which sustains his life, that which controls his thinking, that which controls his speech, that which controls his actions, that which determines his goals in life and his habits. When every area and phase of his life is controlled by the word of God, the individual is living in the word or abiding in the word, or dwelling or continuing in the word.

Wiersbe points out, "Your Father wants to answer prayer. If you are abiding in Christ and if His word abides in you, then you will pray in His will and He will answer.

And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.' 1 John 5:14 It has well been said that prayer is not getting man's will done in heaven, but getting God's will done on earth. It is not overcoming God's reluctance but laying hold of God's willingness."

Barnhouse points out, "If we are abiding in Him, we shall not have the throne of our hearts occupied by idols. We shall not ask amiss for our own pleasures. We shall be in the will of God and shall know what it is to have a life of prayer power.

Holy Spirit, truth divine
Dwell within this heart of mine.
Cast down every idol throne,
Reign supreme and reign alone.

Van Doren points out, "Often, also, He takes from us the desire of our hearts that He may bestow upon us far greater mercies."

v. 8 In this my Father is glorified, that you are bearing much fruit. So shall you become my disciples.

Here is how the Father is glorified. He is glorified by much fruit being born in our lives. The result, "So shall you become my disciples."

Van Doren points out, "The one aim of our Lord's life was to glorify His Father. This was the 'joy set before Him, for which He endured the cross, despising the shame.' Hebrews 12:2. The Father is eternally glorified in the work of the Son and in all the blessings to mankind hence accruing. The first object to be accomplished by granting the disciples prayer is the glorification of the Father."

The ultimate objective of the Father for our lives is to bear much fruit.

v. 9 Just as the Father loved me, I also loved you; abide in my love.

Christ is saying that the Father's love for Him was the kind of love that He had for us. It is the same love. And then He gives us a command, "Abide in my love."

Immediately, we ask ourselves the question, How is this command to be fulfilled? I believe it is seen in the four F's.

1. FOOD from His table by feeding upon His word.

2. FELLOWSHIP with Him on a daily basis by submitting and surrendering to His direction in our lives.

3. FAITHFULNESS "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Hanging in there with an obedient heart.

4. FRUIT which is the result of the Spirit's activity in our lives producing it.

Horiz-Vertical

Abide in my love !!

Marcus Rainsford says, "Were there no trial of faith and hope and love, how could faith or hope or love be exercised and strengthened? But when Christ left us in the world, He gave us this comfort. 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Continue in my love.' For circumstances will arise to lead you to question my love. You will oftentimes feel alone, deserted, utterly weak, apparently forgotten. Oh, remember that my eyes are always on you, my heart always with you, my arms always around you. Trust still in me, hope still in me. I change not. I will never leave you or forsake you."

Don't let Anything Affect Love in Relationship . . .

James 1:12 "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial, for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

v. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love; just as I have kept the commandments of my Father and I am abiding in His love.

The key to abiding in His love is obedience.

Submissive
to
His will
Obedient
to
His word

One is reminded of the old gentleman who sings on the Praise album, "The Longer I Serve Him, the Sweeter He Grows". As we are submissive to His will and obedient to His word, the more deeply do we experience the love of Christ in our relationship with Him.

Wiersbe points out, "Obedience releases power". When the scientist obeys the laws of science built into nature by God, then he can release power. The farmer who obeys the laws of growth will release power and produce fruit. And when we disobey these laws, the power that is released will destroy us and not help us. Disobey the laws that govern electricity and you may kill yourself and others. Obey them and you will abide. But obeying is one of the most difficult things in the world. There is something perverse and selfish in our very nature that tells it, Do it your own way, don't bow down to anybody else. We inherited the stubbornness from our first parents and they got it by listening to Satan."

It is a fundamental law of the universe, ordained of God that obedience leads to abiding. The person who obeys the laws of health will abide in health. The farmer who obeys the laws of nature will abide and enjoy the fruits of his labor. The scientist who obeys the laws of science will abide and be able to accomplish things. God has written certain laws and principles into this world and we cannot disobey them without suffering.

Too many Christians settle for an intellectual experience. They study the Bible, learn facts and definitions and try to explain doctrines, but they never obey what God tells them. Other believers have only an emotional experience. They try to generate and cultivate spiritual feelings that help them enjoy the Lord. While sincere emotion is certainly a part of the Christian life, it is not the only part. We must realize that the will is the center of the Christian life. We obey God, not because we feel like it, but because it is the right thing to do and we should graduate from obeying because we have to into obeying because we want to.

Lovett points out, "Here is a warning for obedience. If they wish to continue in a real love fellowship with Jesus, they will have to obey Him. The commandments of Jesus include all the precepts, warnings, promises and instructions He has given for the regulation of our lives. To abide in a

love fellowship with Him, these must be taken to heart. The Lord wants heart obedience, a joyous submission to His word. Love obedience is not conformity to a set of rules, it is given because a man wants to, not because he has to. A different Greek word expresses the obedience of a slave to a ruler. Jesus doesn't want that kind. **Our obedience to Him is to be like His to his Father, loving, voluntary and hearty.** "

Johnston points out, "This is the normal relation of the branches to one another which has as its condition the normal relation of each one to the vine. Earlier, in v. 9, Christ commanded the disciples to abide in His love. His love is the source of the love they will show to others. In v. 10, the Lord relates how they can abide in His love by obedience to His commandments. Christ is the supreme example of obedience as He kept the Father's commandments. As faith leads to abiding, so abiding leads to obedience."

Van Doren points out, "Fidelity is proved by obedience in little things as well as in the great. The keeping does not originate love, love yields obedience. And obedience opens up greater glories to the soul. Love produces obedience and obedience-love; for in keeping His commandments there is great reward."

v. 11 These things I have spoken to you, in order that the joy which is mine may be in you, and your joy may be made full.

These things' refers back to the first ten verses of this 15th chapter. His purpose in speaking these things to them was 'in order that the joy which is His may be in them, and then that their joy may be made full.'

Neh. 8:10

Joy is the flag that flies when the king is in residence.

1 John 1:4 "And these things we write so that our joy may be made complete."

The ultimate evidence of a life walking in fellowship with the Father is a joy which has been made full.

Joy is the evidence of present blessing and fulfillment and future anticipation.

I think it is altogether significant that these words are spoken just a few hours before the cross. It helps us see that the joy of the Lord is not dependent upon outward circumstances. It might be gory now, but it's going to be glory later, and so we're filled with joyful expectation.

Romans 8:18 "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

2 Corinthians 4:17 & 18 "These little troubles which are really so transitory are winning for us a permanent, glorious and solid reward, out of all proportion to our pain. For we are looking all the time, not at the visible things, but at the invisible. The visible things are transitory. It is the invisible things that are really permanent."

Wiersbe points out, "The first symptom of backsliding or not abiding in Christ is a loss of joy. When David sinned and tried to hide it from God, he ceased to sing and praise the Lord. 'When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all the day long.' Psalm 32:3. When David finally confessed his sin, he prayed, 'Restore to me the joy of thy salvation.' Psalm 51:12. Spiritual joy is the result of abiding in Christ. Loss of that joy is an evidence that we are not abiding in Christ. The only way to restore that communion and the resulting joy is through confession."

Tasker points out, "The words translated, 'that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full' probably means that you may continue to share the joy I already possess. That is, the joy that accompanies loving service, and so find your own joy completed. They could also mean that I may have joy in you, and that because of this your joy may be complete."

Phil. 4:1

Van Doren points out, "Strange to find Him speaking of His joy at this moment, when on His way to Gethsemane and the cross. His joy arose from the consciousness of His love to the Father and the Father's love to Him and was so deeply seated in His soul, that outward circumstances however appalling could not disturb it. Similarly, His people, conscious of His love for them and theirs to Him can rejoice evermore. The brightness of that joy lit up the darkest hours of His life; and He wills that it shall light up ours. No sorrow can overcome this joy, for 'it is the joy of Jehovah and it is our strength.' Nehemiah 8:10."

Boice points out, "When joy linked to fruitfulness, love and obedience is found in the life of a Christian, all can see it and know that the source is divine. We can never produce these things. We cannot produce the Spirit's fruit. We cannot produce love. We cannot produce joy; but Jesus can do it as we abide in Him."

Love → Obedience → Fruit = Joy

It is John Powell who said "But the waters of pleasure are always bright on the surface, but sadly only one inch deep. We always come up with sand in our mouths."

1 Thessalonians 2:19 & 20 "For who is our hope, or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? For you are our glory and and joy."

Who can measure the joy of abiding in Christ? And out of that fellowship seeing the Spirit of God produce joy within us. And then the joy of fulfillment in seeing fruit born through our lives and reaching others with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is what Christ is speaking about here. He has said these things to them so that the joy which is Christ's in fulfilling the Father's will would be our joy; and that it would be made to the full. I would say this joy involves the five F's:

1. FELLOWSHIP. The Lord will produce a joy within us as we walk in close oneness and fellowship with Him.

2. FAITHFULNESS. The more consistent we are in our walk with Him, the more joy is in evidence.

3. FRUITFULNESS. The joy of just seeing others come to Christ through our life and witness.

4. FINISHING. What a thrill to be able to say, I fought a good fight, I finished the course, I kept the faith. Henceforth, there is a crown of righteousness laid up for me.

5. FUTURE. To think of the fantastic future that is in store for each of us in our Father's house should bring great joy to our hearts.

v. 12 This is my commandment, that you keep on loving one another, just as I loved you.

John 13:34 & 35 "A new commandment I am giving to you, that you should be continually loving one another even as I loved you, that you also be loving one another. In this way all will know that you are my disciples, if you are having love for one another."

The measure of this love which He is commanding here again is His love. In verse 17 of this 15th chapter, we're going to read again, "This I am commanding you that you should be loving one another."

Peter, you might have missed it the first time, but I'm going to emphasize it again, that love is a part of the abiding life.

In verse 11, it is joy and in verse 12, it is love.

Throughout this love story, we see the Lord constantly returning to this key facet, this key ingredient to our relationship with Him and our relationship to each other. Thus far in our study, we have seen:

LOVE SERVING as Christ washed the disciples feet.

LOVE HURT as Judas betrays our Lord.

LOVE COMMUNICATING, as Christ patiently answers the questions of his followers.

And now we see:

LOVE IN UNION, and out of this union, the Spirit of

God produces the fruit of His presence which is love, joy, peace and all the other manifestations of Galatians 5:22 & 23.

Chose the son of thunder to write this mandate on "agape" love.

v. 13 Greater love than this no one is having, that anyone lay down his life on behalf of his friends.

* The intensity and extent of love is revealed by how far it will go in the giving of itself for the one which is loved.

* I reveal the depth of my love by my willingness to sacrifice and to be spent.

* Paul could say, "If my life be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all."

Someone has said that sacrifice is the sheer ecstasy of giving the best we have to the one we love the most.

Ephesians 5:25 "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her."

Modern manifestations know very little of sacrifice. I would say if you were to try to characterize the love that is demonstrated between men and women and between friends in our generation, is we are plagued more by selfishness than we are by sacrifice.

It is well described in John Denver's song, "Seasons of the Heart".

Of course, we have our differences,
You shouldn't be surprised.
It's as natural as changes
In the seasons and the skies.

Sometimes we grow together
Sometimes we drift apart.
A wiser man than I might
Know the seasons of the heart.

And I'm walking here beside you
In the early evening chill,
A thing we always loved to do
I know we always will.

We have so much in common,
So many things we share
That I can't believe my heart
When it implies that you're not there.

Love is why I came here in the first place
Love is now the reason I must go.
Love is all I ever hoped to find here.
Love is still the only dream I know.

So I don't know how to tell you,
It's difficult to say,
I never in my wildest dreams
Imagined it this way.

Sometimes I just don't know you,
There's a stranger in our home.
When I'm lying right beside you
Is when I'm most alone.

And I think my heart is broken,
There's an emptiness inside.
So many things I've longed for
Have so often been denied.

Still, I wouldn't try to change you,
There's no one that's to blame.
It's just some things that mean so much
That we just don't feel the same.

Sermon on the Mount -
Love your enemies
do good to those
who are persecuting
you.
"You are you hurt"

- God's love involves
- ① Sacrifice
 - ② Sharing + serving
 - ③ stick-to-iveness (stability)
 - ④ Surrender - "set you free"
 - ⑤ Security
 - ⑥ SELF-image

Jacob served Seven Years Seemed Few Days!!

1 John 3:16 "We are knowing love by this, that He laid down His life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

1 John 3:18 "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue but in deed and truth."

It is awfully easy to say I love you with words and to speak those words with the tongue. But God's kind of love is seen in deeds and truth, that is, actions and attitudes of the heart that are transparent in its motives.

If I really love, I will give all. The apostle Paul says, "I counted all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." And this involves even the willingness to give of one's life.

Van Doren points out, "The self-sacrificing element in His love is the point upon which He would fix their minds."

In this passage, it's been quite obvious that their love has not been sacrificial, but selfish. In the upper room, they wouldn't wash feet. Judas has already gone on his way to hurt that love by perpetrating his betrayal. And in all of their questions they're only asking the Lord to give of Himself further in satisfying their need for information. So, the sacrificial element of love hasn't been demonstrated yet by these men.

Feet
Judas
Peter
"But they will..."

The joy of it all is that ultimately, they'll catch this and will even sacrifice their lives and be spent for the glory of God demonstrating this love in the remainder of their biographies.

It is John Powell who wrote, "Under every crucifix depicting the Lord with His heart open and his hands stretched out as if to embrace all the weak and the wounded of this world, there should be a caption reading, "This is what I mean when I say I love you."

But He would die, as He has loved, unconditionally loving.

What a demonstration of unconditional and eternal love is about to be manifest to these men in just a few hours as He hangs upon a cross and gives His life for the salvation of mankind.

Michael Harper in his book The Love Affair says, "Returning to what Jesus said in John 15:13 about laying down our lives for our friends, we need to see that here, too, Jesus is speaking in the context of a love which is obedient. In the very next verse, Jesus said, 'You are my friends, if you do what I command you.' Earlier in the same discourse, Jesus had said, 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments.' And 'If a man loves me, he will keep my word.'

So, true love issues in an obedience to God. If that obedience calls for the supreme sacrifice, the laying down of our life, then that will be the most loving thing we can possibly do. For there's nothing greater that we can give than our life, or do than to lay it down in sacrifice. But sacrifice itself, without an obedience which springs from love, is as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13 'useless'."

v. 14 You are my friends, if you keep on doing what I am commanding you.

It is interesting that our Lord speaks of obedience as the foundation for abiding in His love and that if the obedience involves sacrifice, we would be willing to do that. Out of obedience flows the loving heart.

The Lord Jesus in these verses provides for us a framework for fellowship. It will be evident by joy and by love and by obedience.

v. 15 No longer am I calling you slaves; because the slave is not knowing what his master is doing; but you I have called friends, because all things which I heard from my Father I made known to you.

The reason He is no longer calling them slaves is because a slave negatively is not knowing what his master is doing. But by contrast, you I have called friends. He has mentioned this word 'friends' back in verse 13 'when you lay down your life on behalf of your friends' and in verse 14 'you are my friends if you keep on doing what I am commanding you. And now in verse 15 he says, you are not slaves, but friends; and the reason is because all things which I heard from my Father, I made known to you.

It is James Grindley Small who gives us the following poem:

I've found a friend, oh such a friend
 He loved me 'ere I knew Him.
 He drew me with the cords of love
 And thus He bound me to Him.

And round my heart still closely twine
 Those ties which naught can sever
 For I am His and He is mine
 Forever and forever.

v. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you in order that you might keep on going and keep on bearing fruit and that your fruit might keep on remaining, in order that whatever you might ask the Father in my name, He may give to you.

He chose them to be w/ Him.

Here in this concluding verse in our section on Love In Union, Christ says negatively, You did not choose me. But by contrast, I chose you. And not only did I choose you, but I appointed you and my purpose in mind was in order that you might keep on going and keep on bearing fruit; and that your fruit might keep on remaining. And the purpose for this is in order that whatever you might ask the Father in my name, He may give to you.

J. Vernon McGee points out, "Now notice 'you have not chosen me but I have chosen you.' A great many people do not like the doctrine of election but it is wonderful and practical. Many a discouraged Christian has cast himself on the Lord saying, Lord, you called me and chose me and I am your child. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan said, 'He chose me, therefore I am His responsibility.' That is trust."

* A Negro preacher who had been converted late in life had been guilty of stealing before he was saved. After he had just started preaching about his Saviour and was still a new Christian, he passed a hen house on his way home from church one night. It was a great temptation for him, but he stopped and prayed, 'Lord, your property is in danger and I don't mean the chickens.' It's wonderful to call upon the Lord like that.

Stedman points out, "Isn't it interesting that the ones whom Jesus healed would not stand with him through the test of the cross, but that when His disciples went out and preached in the power of the Spirit, they won converts by the thousands all across the length and breadth of the Roman Empire? When the testing came, these men and women won by the preaching of these disciples, were willing to face lions, to endure torture, to be pulled apart on the rack, to be bound up in skin bags and thrown into the sea, to be burned as living torches, to be mangled and mashed and twisted and torn apart rather than to deny Jesus. 'Your fruit will remain.' Those are the greater miracles, aren't they? Anything done to the spirit of man is permanent, but that which is done to the flesh is merely temporary. All those whom Jesus healed or raised from the dead, died again."

CONCLUSION

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1 It is the function of the Father to create a climate for maximum productivity.

LESSON #2 The Father's hand is never closer to His child than when He is pruning him.

LESSON #3 The branch has one purpose and that is to bear fruit.

LESSON #4 The Father is glorified when we are bearing much fruit.

LESSON #5 Love, joy and obedience are evidences of abiding in Christ.

LESSON #6 Christ's joy is independent of external circumstances.

Lesson #7 "Surrender & Submission Are the Keys to Abiding".

One poet wrote the following piece called "He Chose You."

He chose you not to bitter tears,
 Though dark your life may seem,
He chose you not to foolish fears,
 And not to sit and dream:
He chose you in his loving grace,
 To action, patience, trust,
To show upon a smiling face
 What God can do with dust.