

November 8, 2020 – Study Guide 10

LOVING BY SERVING

Bible Background – JOHN 15:4-17

Printed Text – JOHN 15:4-17

⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

⁵ “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

⁶ Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned.

⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!

⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

⁹ “I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love.

¹⁰ When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my

Father’s commandments and remain in his love.

¹¹ I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!

¹² This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.

¹³ There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command.

¹⁵ I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn’t confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.

¹⁶ You didn’t choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.

¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

-----New Living Translation

Lesson Introduction

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5, KJV). This verse introduces the theme of this lesson study. The lesson goal is to examine the metaphor of the vine and the branches and how it applies to Jesus and those who follow Him. Ultimately, we will see that to abide in Jesus is to keep His commandment of love for one another.

Background: In John chapters 13 through 17, Jesus privately teaches His disciples. This is their last time together before His crucifixion. Jesus spends His last hours in His final preparation of them, explaining how to know and practice intimate fellowship with God. He taught first by example; He humbled Himself and washed their dirty feet (John 13:4-10). He told them about His departure, their future in heaven, the coming of the

November 8, 2020 – Study Guide 10

Comforter, the Holy Spirit, and how to experience real peace. Jesus gives the secrets of successful Christian living. He tells how we can have peace, joy and answered prayer by abiding in Him. As we begin today's study, Jesus teaches His disciples about the relationship they must have with the Father, with Him, and with one another. Unless they abide in the Father and in Him, the disciples would not be able to bear fruit or love one another, which would show the world they belong to Him. As Jesus and the disciples get up from the table to walk to the Garden of Gethsemane, He continues to speak words of encouragement. He instructs His disciples about the needed connection between Him and the Father, and Jesus and His followers. As we abide in Jesus, we can "bear fruit" (John 15:8) and love others as He commands us.

-----*Precepts for Living*, the UMI Annual Commentary 2020-2021, p. 116

The Father's Provision

John 15:4-8: To abide" (Gk. *meno*, to remain or to not depart) is the core of the metaphor of the vine and the branches in this passage. A believer's connection to Christ is vital to their very existence just as a branch will wither if its connection to the vine is compromised. Therefore, to abide in Christ is to maintain that vital connection to the True Vine—Who is our only true source of spiritual life and nourishment. Furthermore, a branch is expected to bear much fruit. The Greek word (*karpos*) translated as "fruit" here can also refer to "works." So without the steady supply of nourishment provided by the connection to Christ, one cannot expect to produce an abundance of good works.

Whether to "abide" in Christ or not to abide is not viewed as an "option" for true Christians. It is a necessary state of existence throughout the Christian journey. The Master Gardener ensures that every born-again Christian receives nourishment and produces fruit for his or her entire life. When one is attached to the Vine, God's nourishment flows as surely as the Holy Spirit indwells us (v. 7). This connection to Jesus also allows us to be connected to and to be within God's will. Therefore, under these conditions, we are free to ask of God and to be confident that it shall be done. But make no mistake that abiding in Christ means that our prayers must align with the will of God.

◆ *When have you experienced the importance of being attached to Christ?*

Abiding in Love

John 15:9-11: Jesus likens His love for the disciples to the Father's love for Him. Obedience to the commandments of God is how Jesus showed His love for the Father and how the disciples showed their love for Jesus. To continue in that type of love, all believers must reflect the relationship that Jesus had with the Father. Through our obedience to the commands of God, we share in the fellowship that Jesus has with the Father.

The love, demonstrated through steadfast obedience to God's commandments, also leads to our sharing in the joy of Jesus more fully. This is the kind of joy that enabled Jesus to endure the Cross (Hebrews 12:2), James writes that we should consider trials as pure joy (James 1:2). Nehemiah

states that for believers, the joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). Love demonstrated by total obedience to Jesus has the earthly and heavenly rewards of His great joy.

◆ *What would need to happen in our lives so we can abide in the Father's love?*

Abiding as Jesus' Friends

John 15:12-17: Love is the commandment. Love is the foundation of the relationship believers should have for one another. As He loved His disciples and as He loves us, we should hold to that type of love in our relationships to each other. We certainly worship Jesus as our Lord and Savior, but in Christ, our relationship with Him goes even further. We are sons and daughters (2 Corinthians 6:18). And He calls us friends—friends for whom He would lay down His life. Notice, that Jesus' perfect love not only caused Him to die for friends, but He also died for His enemies. As a matter of fact, He died for *us* while we were still His enemies. So when Jesus commands us to love our enemies also, He speaks from personal experience (Matthew 5:44).

Love requires sacrifice and surrender. In the Scriptures, we are repeatedly exhorted to make love the highest priority. We are to pursue love and to allow love to transform us into the image of Christ, who is love. In 2 Peter 1: 5-7 we are told that of all the fruit of the Spirit, love is the highest attainment, because love most closely resembles Christ.

◆ *How deeply do you yearn to be known as a friend of Jesus? How do you portray this level of love and friendship in your life?*

Conclusion

For many Christians, faithfully setting aside one day each week for corporate worship is the most important aspect of obedience to God. Even if that were all God expects (and it is not), the current pandemic has altered that possibility for many congregations. However, God expects us to continue to walk in His light daily. We are still called to actively share, reach out and build Godly relationships in spite of these challenging circumstances. Therefore, it is vital to prayerfully plan ways to continue to produce Spiritual fruit through good works by sharing Christ's love with others.

Sources:

Banks, M. (Ed.). (2020). Love For One Another. *Precepts for Living*, 23(Fall Quarter), 112-122. The Urban Ministries, Inc. Annual Commentary 2020-2021.

Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation, Carol Stream, Illinois.

November 8, 2020 – Study Guide 10

Lesson for Next Week – November 15, 2020 – Study Guide 11

CONFIDENT LOVE

Bible Background ♦ 1 JOHN 3:11-24; 2 JOHN 1:4-11; 3 JOHN 1:5-8

Printed Text ♦ 1 JOHN 3:11-24

Devotional Reading ♦ HEBREWS 13:1-8

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Example of Faith and Obedience

(1 Thessalonians 2:1-10)

TUESDAY

Then Darkness, Now Light

(Ephesians 5:8-16)

WEDNESDAY

Live by the Light

(John 3:16-21)

THURSDAY

Children of God Love One Another

(1 John 2:28-3:10)

FRIDAY

Walking Faithfully in the Truth

(3 John 1:1-4)

SATURDAY

Imitate What is Good, Not Evil

(3 John 1:9-12)

SUNDAY

Believe Jesus Christ; Love One Another

(1 John 3:11-24)