

## Love and Joy Perfected

**John 15:9-14** *"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."*

Jesus tells us how much He loves those who abide in His love. As God the Father has loved Jesus, so the Son loves us. Jesus kept His Father's commandments and tells us that if we keep His commandments we will abide in His love. If we follow Him, His joy will remain in us and our joy will be full. Jesus loves us unconditionally. As we obey Christ's Word and abide in His love, we will come to experience and understand His love for us more and more.

According to Ephesians 3, as Christ dwells in our hearts by faith and being rooted and grounded in love, we may be able to comprehend the love of Christ which far surpasses our human understanding and be filled with all the fullness of God.

**Ephesians 3:14-19** *"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God".*

In verse 11 of John Chapter 15, *"That our joy may be full"* is an expression peculiar to John as he describes a believer's experience of Christ's love: complete joy! We find reference to this joy in **John 3:29**, *"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled."*

**John 16:24**, *"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full"*.

**John 17:13**, *"And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves"*.

**I John 1:4**, *"And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full"*.

**II John 1:12**, *"Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full"*.

To abide in Christ we must obey, as we are told in verse 10 of Chapter 15, as Jesus obeyed His Father's commandments. In **John 14:15**, Jesus tells us, *"If ye love me, keep my commandments"*.

It is very clear in verse 12 of Chapter 15 that to obey, a believer must love others. We find this command also in **John 13:34-35**, *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"*.

**I John 3:11**, *"For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another"*.

In verse 13 Jesus says that there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for his friends. In rashness and confidence Peter had offered to lay down his life for Jesus. In actuality he was not ready to die for Jesus; he was not even ready to live for Him. **John 18:17** *"Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not"*.

**John 18:25-27**, *"And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not. One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew"*.

Jesus is our model for love. Intimacy is the motive for loving as He loves. If believers obey His command to love, they will enjoy the intimacy of His friendship. Friendship, unlike sonship, is not a once for all gift, but develops as a result of obeying Jesus' command to love. By having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ our Savior we will have a meaningful and purposeful friendship with the Lord, abiding in Him and He in us, enjoying the union and communion that will make our joy complete!

*Prayer*

*Heavenly Father, help us to abide in the intimacy of Your Son Jesus Christ, to obey His commandments just as He obeyed Your commandments. Help us to love one another as You would have us do. We thank You for the sacrificial love and the supreme example of love of Jesus' humility and service to You, God in laying down His life for us on the cross. Help us to know the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

*In Jesus' name,*

*Amen*