

## The Joy of the Lord and God's Love

Scripture Reading: John 15:9-13

Consider John 15:11. *“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”* As Christ was teaching His disciples, in John chapters 13-16, He was preparing them to operate with a joy that the world could not give them. This joy of the Lord is not natural. This joy would not be understood until after Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection. In John 15:1-21 we are going to examine five elements of this joy that the Lord wants to give His people.

### **The Elements of Joy found in John 15:1-21 (Key verse: John 15:11)**

- Fundamental crucial connection with Christ – John 15:1-7,16
- Fruitful living as we follow Christ – John 15:8,16
- Focus on Christ's love / Faithfulness to His primary commandment of love – John 15:9-13,17
- Friendship with Christ – John 15:13-15
- Fractured relationship with the world for Christ's sake – John 15:18-21

In this lesson we will look at the third element of this list.

### **Focus on Christ's love / Faithfulness to His primary commandment of love – John 15:9-13,17**

When Jesus said to *“abide in me”* (John 15:4,7) that would include abiding in His love (John 15:9-10). The security of Christ's love is stabilizing and is the basis for having a joy with no fear. Worldly, fleshly love is unstable – subject to change. People often profess love and then later they may abandon that love – a love which was only affection, passion, lust, or an attempt at a mutually-beneficial relationship. The stability of the love of God through Christ creates a totally safe environment for us to dwell. God does not lie. God does not change His mind. His love, grace, and mercy endure forever. You can depend on it. His love is a foundation on which you can build. A permanent shelter in which you can be protected from the assaults of man or devil. God's love gives us joy in the truth and in all that is righteous and holy (Romans 8:31-39; I John 4:16-19 cp. I Corinthians 13:4-7; Galatians 5:22-26; John 14:15; I John 5:3).

Look at these precious promises and instructions about the priority and power of God's love:

- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have worked and are working to give us forgiveness of sins, victory over sin's power, victory over Satan's attacks and temptations, and victory over all the evil that is in the world. We have a bright prospect for the future. We have an inseparable relationship with God's love through Christ (Romans 8:1-39; John 16:33; I Peter 1:1-5; I John 4:1-6,14-16; 5:1-5).
- Staying focused and applying the principles of Christ's love will cause you to be filled with the fulness of God – which includes His joy as your strength (John 15:9-13, 17; Ephesians 3:14-19 cp. Nehemiah 8:10; Psalm 16:11).
- Dwelling in the environment of God's love will help us cast out fear and bring a confidence into our life – confidence before God and man (Romans 5:1-5; I John 4:7-21; Jude 1:20-21 cp. II Timothy 1:7; Psalm 27:1).

Now let's look at John 15:9-13, 17 and see the relationship of Christ's love and fulness of joy:

- Focus on Christ's love – John 15:9-11

The Father loves His Son. The Son loves the Father. The love life between them produces harmony and joy. This results in the Son honoring the Father and keeping His commandments. We are to abide in the same kind of love life. This too will result in joyful harmony (Philippians 3:1-3). We will seek to honor the Father and His Son and keep their commandments (John 14:15-21, 23; 13:12-17 cp. I John 2:1-6, 18-27). If we love God, we should also love the things of God. If we say that we love Christ, we should also like Him enough to be involved with that which pleases Him.

- Be faithful to His primary commandment of love – John 15:12-13, 17

The source for our ability to love with godly love is God. This love is the primary force and motive for all acts of love that we demonstrate to others. When God's love is flowing through you to others, His joy is also flowing through you to others. Without the love of God motivating us, our desire for joy is just self-serving entertainment. The joy of the Lord is something we receive and then share with others. See I John 4:16,19 cp. I John 3:16-18; II Corinthians 5:14-15; Romans 5:1-5; 13:8-10; 14:1-19; I Peter 1:8; Philippians 4:1-5; Hebrews 12:1-3; Philippians 1:25-26; 2:17-18.