***Session 5 How the Lord Feels About a Believer: 7 Principles***

1. the assurance of being enjoyed by God
	1. God enjoys us even in our weakness during the process of maturing spiritually. It is easy to believe that God enjoys us ***after*** we mature, but He enjoys us each step of our journey.
	2. The assurance that God enjoys us is one of the primary emotional needs of all humans. With this truth, we run to God in confidence instead of away from Him in condemnation when we stumble. Some wrongly believe it is a form of humility to feel unsure in their relationship with God.
	3. Our heart is empowered when we are confident that God enjoys us and receives our love for Him as genuine. Some fear that people with confidence in God’s love will become careless in their approach to holiness. However, it has the opposite effect. Condemnation causes us to close our heart to the Lord with shame. Confidence causes us to open our heart to receive much more.
	4. God loves and blesses unbelievers even when they rebel against Him. We are not to mistake His love and blessings on them as His approval or enjoyment of them. He sees their refusal of His leadership, salvation, and relationship with Him as enmity against Him (Rom. 5:10).

16God so loved the world that He gave His only…Son that whoever believes… (Jn. 3:16)

45He makes His sun rise on the evil and good…sends rain on the just and unjust. (Mt. 5:45)

* 1. How does God feel about us when we sin? God loves everyone but He has different emotions based on our responses. Some live confused without knowing whether God is *mad*, *sad* (grieved) or *glad* at them. To think God is mad at us when He is enjoying us is to live in condemnation.
		1. He is ***angry*** with the rebellious who disregard His leadership.
		2. He is ***grieved*** with believers who persistently live in known compromise.
		3. He ***enjoys*** the relationship with believers who have sincere intentions to obey Him.
	2. Some believe that God only enjoys believers after they are spiritually mature. This would mean that He is mad at many of them throughout their life. Earthly parents enjoy their children while they are still immature in obedience. How much more can God who is the “very fountain of love” enjoy us while we are growing?

13If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? (Lk. 11:13)

* 1. To have a willing spirit is to set our heart to sincerely love God as evidenced by repenting each time that we compromise. Sincerity is defined as setting our intention to obey God. A sincere yet immature believer shows their sincerity by quickly repenting and renewing their war against the sin they just stumbled in. Repentance means to come into agreement with Jesus’ leadership.

41The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Mt. 26:41)

1. Principle #1: spiritual immaturity is not rebellion
	1. Spiritual immaturity is not the same as rebellion. At times they look the same outwardly, yet they come from very different heart responses. A hypocrite is not someone who fails, but one who says one thing and does not *seek* to obey it.
	2. Sheep and swine both become stuck in the mud, but have different reactions to it. When pigs get out of the mud, they immediately look for another mud hole. When sincere yet immature believers stumble in sin, they are grieved and they set their heart to war against their sin.
	3. Our obedience and love for God are sincere even while they are weak and flawed. Weak love is not false love. The *intention* to pursue full obedience is different from the *attainment* of it. The attainment of mature obedience comes later.
2. Principle #2: God enjoys sincere yet immature believers
	1. God enjoyed His relationship with David on the day that he repented after 16 months of compromise in Ziklag (1 Sam. 27-30). David wrote Psalm 18 on the day the Lord delivered him from Saul.

19He delivered me [David] because He delighted [enjoyed] in me… (Ps. 18:19)

* 1. David “seemed” to commit more serious sins than Saul, but God’s favor continued with David. Why? When David sinned his heart was wounded because he grieved God’s heart. He cared more about his relationship with God than the consequences of getting caught by man. Saul gave an outward show of repentance while planning to continue in rebellion (1 Sam. 15:22-23).
	2. God delights in showing us mercy (Jer. 9:24). He wants us to run to Him instead of from Him.

18He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy. (Mic. 7:18)

* 1. When does God enjoy His prodigal children? The moment they repent. The father immediately gave the prodigal favor as seen in giving him the best robes (v. 22). This occurred before the prodigal matured in his obedience. God enjoyed the prodigal the moment he repented or came into agreement with the Spirit’s leadership or when he intended to obey as seen in verse 18.

18 I will…say to him, “Father, I have sinned…” 20He arose and came to his father. When he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 22The father said, “Bring out the best robe and put it on him...” (Lk. 15:18-22)

* 1. We can stand with confidence in His favor and have a new beginning by “pushing delete” after we sincerely repent. This is different from “pushing delete” on the process of emotional healing.

22His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning… (Lam. 3:22-23)

* 1. God smiles over our life in a general sense, while He deals with particular sins in us. Several areas of immaturity do not define our entire relationship with God.
	2. Guilt says that our *actions* are wrong. Shame says *we* (our whole personhood) are wrong.
1. Principle #3: God's enjoyment of us is not the same as His full approval
	1. God enjoying us does not mean that He *approves* all that we do or overlooks areas needing transformation. He loves us when we need His rebuke because of failure to repent in an area.

19As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. (Rev. 3:19)

* 1. We must not confuse His patience with His approval. He has patience for a season even when we refuse to fully respond to Him. Jesus gave Jezebel and her disciples in Thyatira time to repent.

21I gave her [Jezebel] time to repent of her immorality… (Rev. 2:21)

* 1. God patiently suffers long with us. He woos us to repent in areas of failure in our life.

4Love suffers long and is kind…7bears all things…endures all things. (1 Cor. 13:4-7)

4Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Rom. 2:4)

1. Principle #4: God's correction is not rejection
	1. God delights in those He disciplines. His correction of us is not rejection. It is proof of His love.

12Whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights. (Prov. 3:12)

* 1. He corrects the areas that He disapproves of so that He might remove all that hinders love in us.

10He [disciplines us] for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. (Heb. 12:10)

* 1. God does not discipline us to the degree we deserve nor changes the way He feels about us.

10He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy. (Ps. 103:10-11)

* 1. To be disciplined means God cares and has not given up on us. It is a terrible thing to “get away with” sin long term because that means God is giving that person over to their sin.

24God gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts… (Rom. 1:24)

32When we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. (1 Cor. 11:32)

1It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father’s wife…4In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together…5deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. (1 Cor. 5:1–5)

* 1. God will manifest His jealousy over us by requiring our wholehearted love and obedience. He zealously insists on that which deepens our relationship with Him and results in our greatness.

5Do you think the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit…in us yearns jealously"? (Jas 4:5)

1. Principle #5: God is grieved at persistent sin in His people
	1. God feels saddened by His people who are persistently unresponsive to His leadership.

30And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God. (Eph. 4:30)

* 1. Jesus spoke of “vomiting” lukewarm believers out of His mouth. He does not despise them, nor has He lost interest in them. His “heart is sick” with concern over them and their loss in their relationship with Him. He feels like vomiting or His “stomach hurts” over their condition.

16Because you are lukewarm…I will vomit you out of My mouth. (Rev. 3:16)

* 1. The Father continues to consider us as His dearly beloved even in times when He is grieved. When we do not confront sin in our life we are not loved less by God, but our relationship with Jesus is enjoyed less and we suffer loss in several ways—we minimize our ability to experience joy, the spirit of revelation and fellowship with God and others, and to receive eternal rewards.

7I have given the dearly beloved of My soul into the hand of her enemies. (Jer. 12:7)

1. Principle #6: Spiritual disciplines do not earn us God’s enjoyment
	1. Spiritual disciplines (prayer, fasting, meditation on the Word, etc.) are ordained by God as a way to posture our heart to freely receive or experience more grace (Mt. 6:1-18). We set our cold heart before the “bonfire of God’s presence.” These activities do not earn us God’s favor. The power is in God’s presence not in disciplined activities that position our cold hearts before Him.
	2. God gives to our heart on the basis of how much we *hunger* for relationship with Him not on how much He loves us (Mt. 5:6). God honors the value we put on the relationship by giving us more according to our spiritual hunger, but He will never love us more (Mal. 3:6).

6Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (Mt 5:6)

1. Principle #7: maturity allows us to be entrusted with more
	1. God loves and anoints us all to do His works. Yet, He entrusts a greater measure of “what He sovereignly ordained” for a person’s life as they mature. This measure is different for each one. Our obedience positions us to walk in whatever that full measure is. He gives each a different amount of “talents” of gifting or influence, etc. (Mt. 25:14-30; Lk. 19:12-27) and each responds differently. Some bring forth 30-fold of fruitfulness and others 60-fold or 100-fold (Mt. 13:23).
	2. People with greater measure are not loved more by God. The gifts of the Spirit are given to us by faith (Acts 3:11-12; Gal. 3:5). They are not earned by our discipline. Our spiritual maturity provides added protection from temptation and the counterattack of Satan (Lk. 14:30-32).
	3. ***Summary:*** God ***loves*** everyone (believers and unbelievers). He ***enjoys*** a believer who sets the intention of their heart to obey Him. He is ***patient***with those who need correction. He is ***jealous***for immature believers and disciplines them to remove things that hinder them. He ***entrusts***a mature believer with the fullness of His purpose and is ***grieved***at any persistent compromise.