***Session 12 Union With God: What It Looks Like (Jn. 14:12-24)***

1. review: the union of the Father and son (Jn. 14:10-11)
   1. One of Jesus’ primary themes in John 14 is how God’s people are to relate to the Father. We are called to *participate in the family dynamics of the Trinity* as described by Jesus in John 14:7-24 and applied in John 15:1-11. Jesus’ life revealed what the Father’s personality is like and how He relates to His people. Jesus described how He related to the Father *as a man* (14:7-11), and then applied it to His people who are to relate to the Father in a similar way by the Spirit (14:12-24).

*John 14 is a most significant passage of scripture concerning how we relate to God the Father. In review from our last session, one of the primary themes of John 14 is how the Father wants His people to relate to Him in our physical bodies by the Holy Spirit in this age.*

*In this passage, Jesus describes the way He relates to the Father as a Man in a physical body under the anointing of the Spirit in this age. The reason He describes how He relates to the Father is because later on in the chapter He says, “Now this is how you are going to relate to the Father because I am about to go away in death, and I am going to be taken away from you. Your relationship to Me is going to shift, but it is actually to your advantage because your relationship to Me is actually going to be deeper and more powerful.” So that is the theme of what Jesus is saying in John 14.*

*In verses 12-24, He describes the way* ***we*** *relate to the Father, which parallels the way* ***He*** *relates to the Father, as a Man in a physical body under the leading of the Holy Spirit. This is how He related to the Father.*

*This passage of scripture, John 14:12-24, is the most practical and detailed statement in the Bible on the first commandment. So if you are a first commandment person, this is a must-read chapter, a must-understand chapter. There are more details and more practical insight on how to walk out the first commandment in John 14 than anywhere else I know in the Bible.*

*In this chapter, Jesus revealed a significant part of His ministry assignment for the three-and-a-half years. Not the entire assignment, but the core of His ministry assignment before the cross and the resurrection, that He was to reveal what the Father's personality was like. That is not the entire assignment; there was more that He had an assignment to make known.*

*He was to make known how God's people were to relate to God in a physical body under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. So He communicated, “This is what God is like, and here’s the way I live, but this is also how God wants to relate to people who are in obedience to Him, who are following the leadership of the Spirit.”*

* 1. The disciples found it difficult to believe that a *human* could relate to the transcendent God of Israel in an intimate way. They believed Jesus was the Messiah, but did not understand that He lived as the model man, according to God’s original design. He modeled how a person filled with the Spirit is to relate to God.

7“If you had known [understood] Me, you would have known [understood] My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen [understood] Him.” (Jn. 14:7)

*The disciples found it difficult to believe that a human could relate to the transcendent God of Israel in this kind of intimate union. They knew that Jesus was the Messiah. They believed He was the King of Israel and the Son of David. But as a Man, that He could describe His relationship to the transcendent God, the Almighty God, the most powerful God—I mean Israel could not look on the face of God, and many would not even say the name of God.*

*Jesus says, in effect, “Well, things are different than you think. I relate to that God in this type of intimate way,”— and the reason that He is making that point in verses 12-24 is because He is going to say—“and now you are going to relate to God in that type of intimate union from your heart.”*

*In John 14:7, He said, “If you had known Me,”—and what He means is “if you would have understood Me and My mission.”*

*Because they knew Him, they could have said, “Jesus, we have been friends for three years. What do You mean? We know You. We have had multitudes of dinners with You. We walked for hours with You. We know You well.”*

*Jesus could have answered, “Well, you do not really understand the message that I am making known to you.” This is even before the cross. “You do not really understand Me, and therefore you do not understand My Father. You do not understand how He wants to relate to you because, by this time tomorrow I am going to be dead, and My relationship with you is going to shift. You are not going to be relating to Me in My physical body like you are used to doing for the past three-plus years. Afterwards you are going to relate to Me by the Spirit, and I need to show you what this is about.”*

*John 14:7-11 is where Jesus describes His relationship to the Father, again as a Man under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. These verses, verses 7-11, are not doctrine about Jesus’ deity, but are a doctrinal statement about His humanity. That is what He is talking about here. Jesus is God—fully God—always has been, always will be, but that is not the point that He is making right here.*

* 1. In John 14:7-11, Jesus described His relationship with the Father *as a Man.* John 14:7-11 is not a doctrinal lesson about Jesus’ deity, but His humanity. His statement in John 14:10 must have shocked the disciples, when He described this relationship as a deep union, telling them that He was “in the Father” and the “Father was in Him.” It is not perplexing that Jesus *as God* is in union with God—but that Jesus *as man* is in union with God. In John 14:20, He made a more dramatic statement, describing His disciples as being in union with God.

10“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?… 20At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” (Jn. 14:10, 20)

* + 1. The *mutual indwelling* of the Father and Son involves their Spirit, words, acts, etc. John’s gospel highlights at least five aspects in the union between the Father and Jesus—their *mind* (thoughts), *heart* (feelings), *will* (values), *words,* and *works* (actions). In other words, they think, feel, value, speak, and act in ways that are in unity with each other.
    2. When Jesus said, “I am in the Father,” He was saying, “My thoughts, feelings, values, words, and actions resonate in and move the Father’s heart, and what He thinks and says resonates in Me.” The Father is moved by what Jesus thinks and says, and vice versa.

*Now He takes it to another level. He said, “If you understood Me (verse 7-9), you would understand how I relate to the Father, and you would understand how the Father wants to relate to people on the earth.”*

*In John 14:10, He makes a shocking statement to them. He says, “I know you do not believe this right now, but I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me.” Now He is sitting across the table, they are sharing a meal, and He is saying, “In My physical body, I am* ***in*** *the transcendent God of Israel. He is* ***in*** *Me.”*

*I can just imagine them going like, “head tilt”, like what? What do you mean You are in Him and He is in You? You are here with us.*

*Jesus says, “You do not really understand the nature of how I relate to Him, and you need to because”—look in verse 20 because He is now going to apply this to them—because fifty days from now at the day of Pentecost when the outpouring of the Holy Spirit comes, and they receive the Holy Spirit—“actually you are going to relate to God by being in God and God in you.”*

*Now they do not get this at all. They do not even get—verse 10—that He is in God and God is in Him. That already is perplexing them. The reason Jesus tells them verse 10 and describes His relationship is because He is going to apply it to them, which really is verse 12-24.*

*The most dramatic statement of all is right here in John 14:20. He is saying, “At that time”—that is fifty days later on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the cross. He says, in effect, “Well, though you have a physical body on the earth, by the Holy Spirit you will be in Me, and I will be in you.”*

*Again, I just imagine them thinking, “We do not have any idea what You are even talking about.” Now it was not perplexing to them that Jesus as God is in union with God the Father. It is not a challenge to think of God being in union with God. What was a challenge was that a Man was in union with God. That is the part that was causing them a great challenge.*

*Jesus said in verse 10, “I am in the Father, and the Father is in me.” That is what theologians call the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son. Now this mutual indwelling has several components or several aspects to it. Number one, the Spirit of Christ is in the Father, and the Spirit of the Father is in Christ, and that is as deep as I get on a subject that is beyond my ability to fully grasp all its nuances. One God, three persons, the mystery of the Trinity—again that is as deep as I go on that subject too.*

*There is more to the mutual indwelling than the fact that the Spirit of God is in the Father and in the Son. Another dimension of this mutual indwelling is that the very words of Jesus were also deeply lodged in the Father’s heart. The words, the works, the actions—we looked at this in our last session—what Jesus thought, what Jesus felt, what Jesus did on the earth as a Man, moved the Father deeply because the Father was in complete union with Him. What the Father thought and felt and did was being expressed through and resonated in Jesus as well, so much so that the two were acting as one. There is one God in three persons; three distinct persons in the Godhead acting always in perfect unity, not just acting. Jesus’ heart is filled with and moved deeply by what is in the Father’s heart. So there is this other dimension of being in the Father and in the Son where their very thoughts and words and deeds were lodged, carried, felt, and experienced in one another's heart. Now again, the reason Jesus is telling them about this relationship in John 14:10 is because in verse 20 He is going to say that they are going to relate to God in a way parallel to the way that He did.*

*Now Jesus is always God, and so though there is unity with us and Him, there is not equality. We are never God. There is always uniqueness in His relationship to the Father as God, but as a Man under the anointing of the Spirit the parallel is meant to be understood and applied in our life.*

* 1. John 14:20 is one of the most dramatic and “extreme” statements in the Scripture—Jesus applied the relational reality that the Father enjoys with Him as a man to our relationship with God. We are called to deep union with God—this glorious unity will never include equality (in deity).

20“At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” (Jn. 14:20)

* + 1. ***You in Me*:**Born-again believers are “in” Jesus. We abide in Him by talking with, trusting in, and obeying Him (Jn. 15:5), and by our words and thoughts being in His heart.
    2. ***I in you*:**Jesus is “in” the believer. He abides in us by His Spirit dwelling in our spirit and by releasing the Spirit’s activity in our heart and His words living in our heart (Jn. 15:7).

*We are going to look at verse 20 again. It is one of the most dramatic, extreme statements in the whole of the Bible. He says, “At that day”—in other words, fifty days from the cross while they have a physical body on the earth—“you will know I am in the Father. You will know you are in Me and I am in you.”*

*What is happening, Jesus is saying, is that we are extending an invitation to the redeemed to participate in the family dynamics of the Father, Son, and the Spirit. Beloved, this is beyond our comprehension—the glory of this! We need to contend for this kind of relationship. I am talking about* ***in this age****.*

*I do not know how far we will go, but we want to go a lot farther than we are now. Jesus was giving them a vision in John 14 of how they would live in their hearts before God. This needs to be the primary life vision of every sincere believer—to walk in the first commandment as verses 12-24 break down in such detail—to participate in this kind of union, this transforming union with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

*Here in John 14:20, Jesus says “You are in Me, and I am in you.” Now He is talking about after the day of Pentecost. He says, “You will be walking on the earth with your body, your physical body like you are now, but you will be in Me and I will be in you.”*

*They are thinking, “What does that mean?”*

*Well, a few moments later, in John 15, He elaborates on what that means. He says, “I will be in you; you will be in Me.” He is with us in two distinct ways. He dwells in us in two ways, and we looked at it in our last session.*

*Number one, the moment we are born again the Holy Spirit dwells in our human spirit, and the union is perfect; it is complete. Our spirit man is made new, a new creation in Christ. We possess His very righteousness as a free gift by the blood of Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes to live in our spirit, and the Holy Spirit could not live in our spirit if our spirit had any sin in it whatsoever.*

*So the union is perfect and complete at the spirit level. The problem is that through our mind, emotions, and will, through our soul, our personality, through our five senses we cannot discern our spirit. We cannot measure or feel it; we cannot get a handful of it. It is difficult for us to grasp the glorious reality of God dwelling with us in perfect union in our spirit, so there is a second aspect of Him abiding in us that Jesus is going to develop right here in John 14:20.*

*In verses 21-24 He is actually going to develop what it means that He dwells in us—not just in our spirit, but in our mind—and our emotions are energized and transformed, and they reflect the likeness of Jesus. Our emotions do—our mind, emotions, and will—that is what He is going to elaborate on from verse 21 to 23. This glorious reality that He is actually in us, not just in our spirit instantly at the new birth, but actually the activity of God energizing our heart.*

*Again I have more notes on this that I gave out last week, and, if you are interested in that, you can get it on the internet if you are saying, “Now what? What is all this about?” Well, that has all been review this first ten minutes; now we are going to move into some new material. It is pretty straightforward material.*

* 1. In this passage, three things come together— *answered prayers* or talking to God (v. 12-14), *obedient love* (v. 15), and enjoying *God’s manifest presence* (v. 21-24) by the power of the Spirit (v. 16-20). This describes the transforming union that is glorious, yet simple, and available to all.

*He has just described His relationship to the Father as a Man in John 14:7-11. Now in verses 12-24 He is going to apply it to the disciples and therefore to all of the redeemed after them. There are three things that are going to come together in this passage. I want to say first that Jesus is continuing to talk about how we relate to the Father, but He shifts the focus from how He relates to the Father, verse 7-11, to how we relate to the Father, verse 12-24. He is on the same topic, how we relate to the Father while we have a physical body on this earth.*

*Now when I read this passage, verses 12-24, to me it is the most detailed instruction on how to walk out the first commandment, and was probably the most important exhortation in the disciples’ entire life, right here in verses 12-24. It is elaborated in John 15 and the rest of the Bible. Still, this is probably the most significant teaching He gave them.*

*When I think of how God has designed the relationship for the redeemed with Him by the Holy Spirit, I think of the kindness of God even to want this kind of relationship with us. There are three distinct parts to verse 12-24. Most of this I am going to leave to you to read the notes later, but there are three distinct parts, and it is quite direct and simple. It is within the reach of everyone. I do not mean so simple that we grasp it all in fullness, but I mean the three activities or the three things that happen in us and how we respond to the Lord. Those three are within the reach of every single believer by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

12“…he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. 13And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

(Jn. 14:12-14)

*The first is found in John 14:12-14 where He talks about answered prayer. That is, the subject is answered prayer, but the real subject, the bigger subject, is the ongoing dialogue with His heart. If you read verses 12-14, you will think answered prayer is the theme, but there is a bigger point He is making. He is saying, in one sense, “I want the dialogue with your heart and My heart, with your heart and the Father's heart, to be like dialogue with the Father and Myself in My earthly life” (“If you* ***ask*** *anything in My Name, I will do it.” John 14:14)*

*Second, He goes on in verse 15, “After you talk much to Me…If you love Me, keep My commandments.” The next point He wants to make is the call to obedient love, that we would love Him with all of our heart—that is the first commandment—and that love is evidenced in a spirit of obedience.*

*The third part is the fact that we would have this transforming union, that we would actually experience the manifest presence on our mind and on our emotions. The disciples might say, “Wow, this is quite straightforward what you are talking about, Jesus, but this seems like it is going to be hard to maintain this conversation with You, to walk in this obedient love, and to believe You for this manifest presence touching our mind and emotions.” Well, it is more than our mind and emotions—I am just saying it in an abbreviated way.*

*If they thought it was out of reach, Jesus said in John 14:16-20, “I have something new to tell you. There is going to be a Helper coming to you. He is God, the Holy Spirit. He is as much God as the Father and the Son. He is going to come and live inside of you. He is going to be your Teacher. He is going to energize your mind and your heart, and He is going to escort you into the ocean of My love and the glory of God. He will be your divine escort. He will take you by the hand, and He will empower you, train you, and guide you right into this union, this reality.”*

*So they are thinking, “We don’t really get what You are saying.”*

*He says, “I know, you do not really get it, but I tell you,”—verses 16-20—“help is coming,”—and that help will be here fifty days from now, on the day of Pentecost.*

*Now this union is so glorious, and it is really quite simple: one, two, three. We talk to Him much, we respond in obedient love, and we believe Him for His manifest presence touching our mind and emotions, and we will not back away until we walk in it. That is what we are aiming for; that is the goal of our lives.*

*Those three things, verses 12-14: talk to me a lot, respond in obedient love, believe Me for My manifest presence to touch your mind and emotions, and I will help you each step of the way. He says, “If you do those three things, you will actually experience in part the way I as a Man relate to My Father.”*

*Now, Jesus was at a whole other level in His perfection, but He is the pattern, and there are similarities. We do not walk in the fullness of it until the age-to-come, but there is so much more to walk in, in this age, in terms of our relationship with God.*

1. Answered prayer (Jn. 14:12-14)
   1. Jesus applied to His people the truth of how He related to the Father *as a man* (Jn. 14:12-14). Answered prayer and partnership in Jesus’ power flow out of participating in the transforming union that parallels how the Father related to Jesus in His humanity, as seen in John 14:10-11.

12“…he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. 13And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

(Jn. 14:12-14)

*The first activity, again, is in John 14:12-14, where the theme is answered prayer. Again, the larger subject is the ongoing conversation with God. That is what I am talking about from verse 12-14.*

*God is so zealous for relationship with us; this is remarkable to me! He is so zealous for a relationship that He has connected your spiritual growth, your physical needs, and your circumstantial blessings to you talking to Him; it is called “prayer.” God says, “If you talk to Me, you will have more blessings in your circumstances, you will grow more spiritually, and you will have your physical needs met. If you do not talk to Me, there will be a diminishing of that which I would have given you.” There will be a withholding of it is a better way to say it. He is saying, “I am going to tie your welfare to you talking to Me, not because I am lonely, but because I am love, and I am zealous for the relationship.”*

*I mean, can you imagine? He designed the whole economy of His kingdom where the needs are met, and the world is changed, revival is released and justice established in context to His children talking to Him because He wants conversation! He wants relationship.*

*Look at verses 12-13, “He that believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also and greater works than these because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in My name that I will do, that the Father may be glorified.” Well, He makes this promise of greater works, and I could talk a few minutes on that, but I want to be brief on this. The first greater work that we can all do is the fact that we are born again and can lead other people to a born-again experience.*

*Jesus never led anybody to be born again before the cross; at that point in time no one is born again. You might say, “Well, that does not sound like a greater work.” Beloved, the Triune God living in a human forever—nothing is bigger than that! That is the ultimate greater work.*

*In John 6:29, He said, “This is the work of God: that people believe in Me”—they engage with Me, that is the work of God, that is the ultimate work, but it does not end there. Throughout 2,000 years of church history, there are testimonies—some are not true, but there are true testimonies—of people that have done works that have exceeded, in terms of dramatic impact and the power of God being manifest, that have superseded the natural order even more than the miracles of Jesus. There are a few of those examples through history.*

*Even then, by the virtue of the fact He put this verse in here, He is telling us, “Believe Me, at any time I might do this through you.” Do not relegate it to a few examples in history. This is part of our relationship. We are going to partner in the power of God to establish the Father’s purposes.*

*You know, some guy says, “Well, I am really tired today, and I am in a bad mood.” Well, good news! The Holy Spirit is not tired, and He is not in a bad mood, so it is not about you getting psyched up and believing for it. I mean you could be tired, in a bad mood, and you could mumble out your prayer in the name of Jesus, and the power of God can still operate.*

*It is not about how focused and amazing and concentrated we are. It is about the power of God. And there is another dimension to these greater works. The final three-and-a-half years before the Lord returns, the miracles of Moses, the miracles of Jesus, and those of the book of Acts are going to be combined and multiplied on a global level.*

*You can read Revelation 8-12 to get a snapshot of miracles being released on the earth through the Body of Christ that are actually greater in magnitude in terms of superseding natural laws. They* ***will*** *be taking place. Just read Revelation 8-12. I mean there are a lot in the book of Revelation, but it does not end there, beloved. You will have a physical yet resurrected body, and you will live on the earth, and you will continue 10,000 years from now and forever to operate in this verse.*

*So the greater works are not exaggeration. It is not just for the age-to-come; it will happen in this age in a way never seen before, and it actually is happening even now through church history here and there. And the born-again experience is another dimension of this.*

* 1. Prayer, or talking to God, is the core activity in participating in union with God as Jesus set forth in John 14:10-11, 20. Prayer is not about informing or persuading God, but about connecting with Him in relationship. Jesus called us to pray continually (Mt. 7:7-8; Lk. 11:8-10; 18:1, 7). Jesus spent whole nights in prayer to commune with the Father, not to get more power.

*Prayer is talking to God. Prayer, or talking to God, which is the theme of John 14:12-14, is the core activity in participating in this relationship. Prayer is not about convincing God or informing God of anything. We do not pray to let God know something. We do not pray to talk Him into it. He is talking us into it. We are the ones who need convincing, not Him. We do not earn anything by prayer.*

*The very design of prayer is the Father’s zeal for relationship with His children. Jesus spent the whole night in prayer a number of times. Here He is, the most powerful Man ever to walk the earth, and He spends entire nights, after long days, communing with the Father in prayer. Not asking for more power—He did not need any more power. He operated in the* ***fullness*** *of power. He is communing with His Father because that is the value of relationship, and that is what Jesus is actually talking about here in verse 12-14.*

* 1. We do not *earn* answers to prayers by our persistence or obedience, but we position ourselves to grow in transforming union with Jesus by cultivating an ongoing conversation with Him.
  2. ***Ask*:** A foundational principle of the kingdom is that God releases more blessing *if we ask for it*. God knows all our needs (Mt. 6:32), but requires that we ask Him to meet them. Asking causes us to connect with His heart and to associate specific blessings from God as His answer to prayer. Answered prayer causes us to know that what we say moves God’s heart.

2Yet you do not have because you do not ask. (Jas. 4:2)

*God will release more if we will talk to Him. He will release revival, He will change the earth, but He wants to do it through the conversation. It is His power. It is His idea, but He waits for the conversation* ***so that we are participating with Him*** *as He is releasing His power across the earth.*

* 1. ***In My name*:**This means asking for that which Jesus can endorse and which expresses His heart.
  2. ***That the Father may be glorified*:**This is the primary condition for answered prayer.

*“That the Father may be glorified”—that the fame and the name of Jesus would fill the earth, that the Father would ultimately be all in all across the earth in the whole created order. What a privilege to participate in the fame of His name and His beauty being made known, and savored, and relished in, and delighted in, and participating with Him not only in the relationship, but also in the mission of filling the earth with the beauty of God, the glory of God!*

*Now this glory of God filling the earth involves everything related to the first and second commandments and the Great Commission. That we would love God in the way God loves God—that is the first commandment. We would love people the way that God loves people—that is the second commandment. That we would fill the earth with His ways, with His power, with His fame, and with the very revelation of the beauty of God—that is the Great Commission. And we participate in it. Jesus puts that as the centerpiece of the dialogue, so we do not take it out of its context and go in a different direction from where He was taking it.*

1. Obedient love (Jn. 14:15)
   1. Jesus connected prayer with the power to love and obey Him. Jesus highlights the primary prayer focus that glorifies the Father—to be empowered to love Jesus with a spirit of obedience.

14“If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. 15If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

(Jn. 14:14-15)

*Let’s read John 14:14-15 together so that you can see the obvious connection. In verse 14, “If you ask Me anything, anything, I will do it, anything in My name”—and in His name means what He can endorse, what expresses His character, what reveals His heart, what promotes His purpose—that is what it means to pray in His name. It is not just a little phrase we throw in at the end of a prayer. It means more than just saying that phrase.*

*He says in verse 14, “If you ask anything,” and in verse 15, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” What the obvious connection that Jesus means to make is that anything that we are believing God for by engaging our faith—the “anything” is not just things; it is not just external blessings. It is biblical to pray for external blessings, to pray for needs, to pray for the provision of God to be released—but the very first thing Jesus says after He opens it up and says, “Anything in My name,” He says, in essence, “Pray that you would walk in the grace of God to fulfill the first commandment in your life. Pray for the anointing in your life to be manifest that you would love Me with all of your heart.”*

*Many people engage their faith for external blessings and for power in ministry, and again, it is biblical to have their needs met. But He is saying here in verse 15, “Engage your faith* ***first*** *for an anointing to walk in the love of God, so you would love Me with all of your heart.” There is a connection between those two right there.*

* 1. Jesus defined loving God as being deeply rooted in a spirit of obedience (Jn. 14:15, 21, 23). He calls us to love God on God’s terms or by His definition of love. He is the most qualified to define love, since the essence of His being is love (1 John 4:16) and because He loves so lavishly. There is no such thing as loving God without seeking to obey His Word. The sentimental definitions of love in our culture that minimize obedience to Jesus are a deception and delusion.

*He says that if you love Me, you will keep My commandments. Jesus defined loving God as being rooted in the spirit of obedience. Now we must love God on God’s terms, by His own definitions. Jesus is the most qualified Man to define love. Therefore there is no such thing as loving God outside of a spirit of obedience. That is deception.*

*There are a lot of definitions of love in the Body of Christ that have seeped in from the culture which are wrong about what love is. Just settle it in your own heart for your own life and even in your ministry as you speak the Word to others—there is no such thing as loving God that is not rooted in a spirit of obedience.*

*Now what I mean by spirit of obedience is the sincere intention to obey, I mean we have the sincere intention to obey, and yet we stumble. James. 3:2 says that we all stumble in many ways. Just because we stumble does not mean our love is insincere, though it is weak. It does not mean it is not genuine. Weak love is still real love; it is still genuine.*

*Here is what a spirit of obedience means—that we set our hearts to obey, and when we come up short, we call it sin. We do not rationalize it. We say, “That was sin.” We declare war against it, we renounce it, we receive the forgiveness of God, we push delete, and we stand. We get back into the conversation with full confidence in God, in the grace of God.*

*What I mean by a spirit of obedience is not that we attain, but that we war against every area where we do not attain obedience. We never just make peace with an area of compromise in our life. We are always contending against it and always calling it what it is and resisting it.*

*Now there are a lot of sentimental definitions of what love is, and I am not saying that love does not have any sentimental dimension to it, but it is more than that. The sentimental definitions minimize the truth about loving God. Like some people have this idea that if they go to a worship service, and if they really are fervent in the worship service—I mean they sweat, they injure their vocal chords, they fall down, they roll over, they whatever—then they say, “I must really love God.” But when they go out of the worship service, they are at peace with or are passive about the area of compromise in their life. They are not committed to war against it.*

*I mean they worship, they jump, they shout, they scream, they sweat, they do all of this, then they go out of the worship meeting, and they go look at pornography. They go out of the worship meeting, and they go slander somebody or gossip. They go out of the prayer meeting, out of the worship set, and they are dishonest with their finances.*

*Now I am not saying that those things throw you out of the kingdom, but when we do not repent of them and call them sin, there is something significantly deficient about our walk with God. Yes, we still stumble, but we declare it as sin, and we war against it.*

*So the guy who worships, then goes to watch pornography, and at the end he says, “Well you know, boys will be boys,”—I am telling you, the love is not genuine, it is not real. We need to come to grips with it no matter how much you sweat in the worship service and how you loud you are, how much you shout and injure your vocal chords.*

*I have had this particular conversation a number of times over the years. You know the young couple, and they are in love. They are going to get married one of these days, and they are involved sexually with each other. I ask the question, how do you think the Lord feels about it? I have had this conversation a number of times over the years, and some will say, “Well, you know it is like this: I love Jesus, we are sincere, we go to church, we are in a home group, we go on outreaches, we go on mission trips, and we feel at peace about it.”*

*That is a peace that is rooted in their emotion and is not rooted in the Word of God, and because I love them, I will tell them that it is a spirit of deception; it is a spirit of delusion. The reason you have the peace is because your conscience is defiled and dull. That is why you feel peace in it, but it is not real.* ***There is no love for Jesus that is not rooted in a spirit of obedience.***

* 1. Prayer is no substitute for obedience, because sin hinders our love for Him.

22And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. (1 John 3:22)

* 1. Obedience is an expression of loving God. Jesus takes it personally when we resist sin because of our love for Him. Denying our lustful desires is the way God chose for us to express our love to Him. Each of us has a different struggle according to our personality and circumstances. Thus we each have a different *“assignment,”* from which we offer our gift of love to God.

*Obedience is an expression of loving Him. Jesus takes it personally. When the force of temptation touches our mind or our emotions or our body—I mean the force of temptation: our mind is stirred up, and not all temptation is sexual when I say even touching your body, and it touches our emotions. Even the temptation of anger and bitterness—that is a temptation—when that touches our body, and we resist it because of love, and we engage with the Holy Spirit in that process, number one, Jesus takes that very personally. He says, “You do love Me. I see you warring against the force of that temptation because you love Me and you engage with the Spirit.” I tell you, every time we do that, we shift forward, and we are going forward in terms of our souls being transformed.*

* 1. The Spirit’s first agenda is to establish the first commandment in first place in the Church (Mt. 22:37-38). Jesus defined loving God as the first commandment, thus identifying it as the highest priority to God and the first calling in our life and for every ministry. Because of how He feels about us, He wants us to respond to Him with all our love.

37Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. 38This is the first and great commandment.” (Mt. 22:37-38)

*Jesus made it clear with His own words that the first commandment is of first priority to God. It is the highest priority of God for your life in this age and the age-to-come. Why does God want us to love Him with all of our hearts? Because He loves us with all of His heart and He wants us to bring our all into the relationship. Now our all is small, but He wants our all in the relationship.*

* 1. Loving God is to be the primary preoccupation of our life before, during, and after revival. We do not need to wait for revival or special seasons of visitation to engage deeply in this reality.

1. By the power of the Spirit (Jn. 14:16-20)
   1. Jesus is so committed to us loving Him that He sent us the Spirit to teach and empower us supernaturally to love God with a spirit of obedience and to participate in union with God (v. 20). He is our divine source to empower us to participate in the family dynamics of the Godhead.

16“I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper…17the Spirit of truth…He dwells with you and will be in you. 18I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you…  
20At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.”

(Jn. 14:16–20)

*In John 14:16-20, Jesus in essence was saying this, “You think this is out of reach? You’ve got help coming your way. You have a divine Helper. He is as much God as the Father and the Son. He will be your Teacher. He will be your Escort into the ocean of God’s love. He is coming your way, and He will help you.”*

* 1. The Spirit will teach, empower, and lead us to the degree that we desire Him by asking Him. Jesus comes to us today by the indwelling Spirit. We can have a closer relationship with Jesus than the disciples had before Jesus’ resurrection. We can experience God’s presence on our hearts and be empowered to love in a greater measure than the disciples knew before Jesus’ death. Jesus will not leave His people as orphans, as those without direction, help, or relationship.

*Beloved, we can have a closer relationship with Jesus than the disciples had. I mean now. Jesus told them in John 16:7, “It is better for you that I go away and send you the Holy Spirit.” Because though they could have dinner with Jesus every night, the Holy Spirit was not moving on the inside to energize their emotions and illuminate their minds.*

*Jesus could have said, “I know you love having dinner with Me and walking with My arm around you. I know you love that, but that does not change you on the inside like when the Spirit comes.” John 16:7—He says, “It is going to be better for you.” Remember that Jesus said He was going to die—I mean He said it multitudes of times. Then when He died, they were all confused because they did not have the Teacher on the inside yet.*

* 1. The Spirit desires to teach us the glorious truths of how to love (v. 15) related to seeing the Father’s relationship to Jesus and their relationship to us (v. 20). As we study the way that God loves God, we are empowered to love with obedience. The Spirit is the Helper who teaches us to the degree that we ask Him. He usually waits until we begin the conversation with Him.
  2. The Holy Spirit wants to lead and help us in developing the same five elements in the union between the Father and Jesus—*mind* (thoughts), *heart* (feelings), *will* (values), *words* (speech), and *works* (actions). We are to seek intentionally to think, feel, value, speak, and act in ways that are in agreement with God, knowing that this deeply moves the Father’s heart. Over time, what He thinks, feels, says, and does will fill our hearts and powerfully move us.

1. God’s manifest presence (Jn. 15:21-24)
   1. Jesus linked obedient love to our capacity to experience God’s manifest presence (v. 21-23).   
      Only in the context of obedient love will Jesus reveal the deep things of His heart to us. Jesus will manifest love to us to the degree that we show we value it by obeying Him.

21“He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him”…  
23“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. 24He who does not love Me does not keep My words…”

(Jn. 14:21-24)

*John 14:21-24 is that transforming union when our emotions, our mind, and our will are energized by the indwelling Spirit as we talk to Him often, verse 12-14, and as we commit our life to obedient love, verse 15, the first commandment.*

*Look what He says in verse 21, “He that has My commandments and keeps them, that is the one who loves Me, and he who loves Me,”—now notice, this sounds different—“will be loved by My Father, and I will love them. Now that sounds strange. Jesus is saying, “The one that loves Me, My Father and I will love them.”*

*“Well,” you might say, “Lord, that sounds different than how and what you said in other times in the Word.”*

* 1. Our capacity to see and feel love increases as we love God by obeying Him. The more we love, the more capacity we have to see and experience God’s presence. This cycle continues forever.

8“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see [experience] God.” (Mt. 5:8)

* 1. Obedience brings our mind, emotions, and will into agreement with God’s, so that we actually become like Him. We must not see obedience as merely outward conduct that is our duty. Obedience transforms our mind and emotions so that we are like Jesus, who is the most beautiful, fascinating, interesting, happy, and satisfied person who ever walked the earth. When we live in agreement with Him through obedience, even our feelings change.
  2. By prayer and obedience, we position ourselves so that our spiritual capacity increases so that our mind and emotions feel God’s presence in a greater measure. We can do nothing to *earn* His presence. He gives us the free gift of access to His presence because of the blood of Jesus.
  3. The nature of God’s love is that it increases when it is received and returned (Mk. 4:24-25). Our initial capacity to receive and return love increases as we increase in our obedient love for God. Sin causes us to stop talking (abiding), and it defiles and dulls our heart. Compromise diminishes our capacity to see or experience God’s presence. The price of non-discipleship is very high.

24“With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. 25For whoever has, to him more will be given.” (Mk. 4:24–25)

* 1. ***My Father will love him*:** Jesus seems to be saying, “God will love you because you love Him.” This is different from what Scripture teaches elsewhere (Jn. 3:16; 1 John 4:19), but Jesus is not contradicting the Scripture. The Father will openly display His enjoyment and pleasure of the relationship and lifestyle of those who value His love as evidenced by a life of obedience. The Father loves everyone in the sense of valuing, caring for, and pursuing them. However, He only loves the lifestyle, choices, sacrifices, and fruit of those who pursue 100-fold obedience.

*Here’s what Jesus is saying in essence. First, He is not talking about, “God so loves the world… God loves us first, that is why we love Him,.” That is clearly doctrinally true. John himself wrote that in his writings. What John is recording that Jesus is saying here is that the Father will enjoy the relationship, the Father will love your life choices, He will love what you daydream about, He will love how you spend time and money, He will love the sacrifices you make. The Father will actually enjoy and love the relationship, which is different than how God so loves the world, Amen and amen!*