***Session 6*** ***Loving Others: By Seeing God’s Glory (Jn. 15:12; 17:22)***

1. Review: the priority of love
	1. Review: God is love (1 John 4:16). The very being of God is wholehearted love. Wholehearted love is of first importance in God’s personality and in all relationships in His kingdom.
	The love burning in God’s heart has at least five distinct expressions that are deeply interrelated.
	1. ***God’s love for God***: Each person in the Trinity intensely loves the others with all their heart.
	2. ***God’s love for His people***: He loves His people with all of His heart, mind, and strength.
	3. ***Our love for God***: God’s very own love is imparted to His people by the Spirit (Rom. 5:5).
	4. ***Our love for ourselves***: We love ourselves in God’s love and for God’s sake. .
	5. ***Our love for others***: We love others in the overflow of experiencing God’s love (1 John 4:19).

*I am continuing a series called Abiding in Love. It comes from a phrase in John 15:9 which I believe is the primary, main exhortation of the whole Bible. If I had to pick one phrase to sum up what God wants us to do in terms of our life, it would be “to abide in love.” It is the highest calling. It is the most liberating lifestyle. It is the thing that God values the most.*

*I have some review here, and I do not apologize for the repetition. Until truth gets into our conversation, it does not transform us. You can hear truth, you can underline it in your Bible or on a handout, and yet it will not move you, it will not change you. Until it gets into your conversation with God—called prayer—or until it gets into your conversation with people—called ministry or fellowship—it will not transform your heart. So I want to continue to remind us of these amazing principles in the Bible so it actually gets into our conversation with God and with one another.*

*God is love. He is wholehearted love. The very being of God, the essence of His being, is wholehearted love. Love is the number one issue in terms of God’s personality. It is of the greatest importance in His personality, and it is His highest priority in all of His relationships within His family.*

*I have listed five different expressions of the love of God. First God loves God; the Father loves the Son with all of His heart, etc. Then God loves us; the Father loves us like the Father loves Jesus with all His heart. Then number three, it is only natural He says, “I want you to love Me with all of your heart,” because that is the culture of the family dynamics in the relationships within the Trinity. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit love each other with all of their heart, and they love us in the same way. So though our all is small, the Holy Spirit beckons us to enter into the relationship with all of our heart. So we bring our all into the relationship. Then next we love ourselves, because we love our neighbor like we love ourselves in the grace of God.*

*Then number five—on which we focused in the last session and will again today—our love for one another. It is the very same love that flows between the Father and the Son, and it flows through us. He wants it expressed to other people.*

* 1. God loves us with the same intensity that God loves God (Jn. 15:9; 17:23). Abiding in love includes taking the initiative to love others. He *empowers* us to love others by receiving His love and His sacred commission to express His love to people that He loves like the Father loves Him. Do not wait passively, with a spirit of *entitlement*, for someone to pursue and befriend you.

9“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love…12This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (Jn. 15:9-12)

*Here is the primary verse that we have been looking at—John 15:9. It is so remarkable that Jesus is speaking this at the Last Supper, the night before He would go to the cross. He says, and I am paraphrasing, “In the same intensity of love that the Father loves Me, in the same way that the Father loves Me, in that same intensity I love you, in this very way.” Then He calls us to abide in this love. Again I consider this to be the primary exhortation in the whole Bible in terms of our lifestyle.*

*In verse 12 He said, “Here is the commandment. I want you to love one another,” and He does not leave it there. He says, in essence, “I want you to love one another in the same intensity that I love you.” Wow! This is quite a statement that the way the Father loves Jesus is the way that Jesus loves us! And Jesus says, “I want you to love people in the same way I love you.”*

 *Now the good news is that every command of God has the promise of enabling. Every command of God has the promise of His enabling. The Holy Spirit wants to mentor us in this kind of lifestyle. We know that before the Lord is finished with the church—well, He is never finished with the church—but we know that the Lord is going to bring the church to this reality because Ephesians 5**says when Jesus returns, He will come for a church filled with glory. John 15:12 describes that glory. It will be people loving one another in the very overflow of the way Jesus loves them.*

*Now let’s look at that again in verse 9. This is the ultimate statement of our worth. The reason you are so valuable is because Jesus loves you the way the Father loves Him. Beloved, that gives you value, that gives you glory, that gives you greatness beyond what we can really grasp in this age.*

*The problem is that though Jesus loves us in this intense, comprehensive way, most believers in the Body of Christ do not feel the power of that truth. The truth of His love is not lessened even though so many do not feel the intensity of His love. And the Lord says, “I have a strategy to help My people enter into the truth of John 15:9. I have a desire that they would feel the power of this truth. My plan and My strategy is verse 12. I am going to raise up people who are so grateful for experiencing My love and so energized by it, they are going to be the conduits. They are going to be the vessels of My love.”*

*Paul called this “joints of supply.” God is saying, “My people are going to be the supply of My love to other people. I am going to so stir them up in verse 12, and then I am going to mandate that they go love the others who cannot feel the power of this. In doing this, the others will be touched, renewed, and awakened.” That is kind of a master plan of what He wants for the Body of Christ or for the Church of the Lord Jesus.*

*Now in verse 12, the response that He wants from us, and the solution that He has for people who cannot feel the love of God, is that we would be energized with His love, and we would express it to them. For so many people, it is quite a dilemma that God loves them in this kind of intensity, yet they cannot feel it at all. They feel the pain of their loneliness, though they are born-again believers loved by God, destined for a resurrected body, in the family of God now and forever, but that power just bounces right off them. They cannot feel the joy of that at all.*

*They live unnoticed. They are unnoticed in the Church, they are unnoticed at the workplace, and they are unnoticed in their neighborhood. They go to the mall, and they are unnoticed. Nobody notices them, and they feel the power of that painful feeling of loneliness. There is no one to rejoice in their victories, and no one who will stand with them and know their sorrows. What a terrible way to live! So much of the human race lives that way.*

*God says, “That is not okay with Me, and particularly in the Body of Christ, when I love them so much, but they can not feel the power of it. I notice them. They are so dear to Me.” But like the little child said to his mother, “Mommy, I want God with skin on.” That is the plan God has—God with skin on, meaning God revealed through the fellow members of the Body of Christ connecting with people. That is how they can feel love of God in a more direct and more powerful way.*

*There are three ways we receive from God in a most general sense. Number one, we can receive directly from the Word and the Spirit. We read the Bible or the Spirit stirs us. That is obvious.*

*The second way we receive is through people. It is God with skin on. People minister to us by loving us, and we feel the love of God.*

*The third way we receive the love of God is actually by giving it. It is a remarkable reality! You go and pursue somebody to love them, and you will gain insight into the love of God yourself* ***while*** *you are loving others.*

*So we receive it directly—number one. We receive it from others—number two. And we receive it by giving it—number three. The plan for this is called the local church so that in every geographic area in the world, every tribe and tongue, the gospel will be preached before Jesus returns.*

*One of the reasons that will happen—there are several reasons—one reason there will be a local expression of the family of God in every tribe and tongue which will show forth the truth of the Father heart of God is so that the heart of the Father will be manifest in the way the people treat one another and love one another so that even unbelievers will see it and conclude that God is real. This is one of the main ways that Jesus said unbelievers will conclude God is real.*

*Now there are two ways to read verse 12 wrongly and miss what Jesus is saying. Number one, it is very normal to read verse 12—the command to love one another—with a spirit of entitlement. People read it and think, “Hey, the Bible says people should love me, so how come nobody loves me? I am mad. I am mad at the Church. I am a little bit mad at God. I deserve to be loved. It is in the Bible. Why won’t people finally wake up and start loving me?”*

*Jesus would say, “Well, that verse was not meant to stir up a spirit of entitlement so you would have the pain and anguish of how many people neglect you. Rather it is* ***to empower you to love****.” That is what He is calling us to do. He says, “I am empowering you. I am commissioning you to be joints of supply.” Again that is a phrase from Ephesians 4 where Paul says every member of the Body of Christ is to be a supply of the goodness of God and of the ways of God to the other members.*

*So the first way we can misread John 15:12 is through entitlement, passively waiting for somebody to finally wake up and love us. Jesus says, “No, that is not what I am saying here. I am stirring you up to see others that need the love of God.” He wants the strong to pursue the weak—I am talking about spiritually weak—****and*** *He wants the spiritually weak ones actually to take initiative too, because in loving other weak ones they will actually discover the love of God themselves in a new, surprising way.*

*Now the dilemma of this verse is that we can read* ***love one another*** *and think, “Wow, that is kind of neat,” and we can get kind of an idealistic, rosy picture of what that would look like. The truth is, the people who were mandated to love and show God’s love according to the way God loves them, they are flawed people. It is us! It is people who by nature are selfish, people who by nature are grouchy. They are moody. They are ungrateful. You can even pursue them to love them, and they might respond in a critical way, “You call this love? I do not call this love.”*

 *You say, “Whoa! You know, I do not know about this.”*

*So this group we are called to love, they are flawed and broken people. Therefore do not get an idealistic picture of what this looks like. But the thing is, when we do it, we mirror and display the way the Father is, what the Father is like.*

*There is a second way we can misunderstand this verse. A lot of folks will say, “You know, I want to love my own group of eight or ten people with whom I am comfortable.” They limit the scope of verse 12 just to the comfort zone of a few people they are familiar with, people that are like them, people that like the same things they like. They are the same age. They look the same, they dress the same, and they like the same entertainment. It is good to love that group of people. But, verse 12 is not limited to us loving eight or ten people who like the same movies we like and like the same recreation and entertainment. It is good to do that, but this is a mandate in verse 12 to go outside of the scope of that which we are comfortable with and to love those outside it.*

*Find the people who have nobody pursuing them at all. The Lord says, “I love them, and I love them as much as I love you, and I love you as much as I love Jesus. I am committed to raising up people to pursue these ones, to show them how I feel about them and to give a display of their value to Me.” So I encourage people that we have got to love outside the comfort zone of the eight or ten people we might be familiar with, who like the things we like and are the same age, the same orientation, the same focus of life.*

*The Lord says, “I want your scope bigger than that.” He wants us loving outside the cool zone. What I mean by the cool zone—it is whomever you think is cool. They are easy to love. And I do not even know what cool means; it means something different to everybody. We have a tendency to think, “Well that group is cool. I want to love them.” That is good, and that is biblical, but we do not want to be limited to the people we know and the people who are cool.*

*In a few minutes, when we end, I am going to encourage you to pray, and our prayer is this—we are going to ask the Holy Spirit to highlight to us over the next thirty or forty days three people in our midst. I am talking about the church loving the church right now.*

*Now we need to love the lost, and that is another subject that is very important, but that is not my focus today. I am talking about in our midst there is always about thirty percent in the Body of Christ—I have seen this over the years and that is kind of a “guess-timation” number—that are the outside of the circle of anybody pursuing them. They come to the church, they go to the meetings, they go to home groups, they go to friendship groups, and still nobody pursues them there. I am just guessing about thirty percent. They are just frozen in the pain of their loneliness. They are frozen in the tyranny of lies about how big of a failure they are, that they do not have a future, they are hopelessly a failure, nobody desires them, there is no future for them, there is nobody interested in them, nobody wants them on the team.*

*I remember talking to a woman once, a born-again believer. She was crying, and she said, “Nobody on the earth loves me.” It was the most terrifying statement.*

*I said, “What?”*

*She was just weeping so desperately. She said, “Nobody loves me. I have been part of a particular church for thirty years,” she said, “and no one in that church loves me.”*

*I thought, number one, that I did not believe her. But number two I thought, “What a powerful negative emotion!” There is, I am guessing, usually about thirty percent of the Body of Christ that feels that way.*

*The Lord is telling the other seventy percent, “You are My strategy to expose the lies in their heart and to liberate them from the tyranny of those lies. You are My plan to show them how I feel.”*

*So when we read verse 12, we do not want to read it with a sense of entitlement, and number two, we do not want to read it in too limited of a scope, thinking of just a few people that like what we like and look like us and do what we do. We want to have the eyes of the Holy Spirit.*

*I am going to ask us all to say, “Holy Spirit, show me three people in the next thirty or forty days whom I can lock into, and together with a few others we can pursue them and we can include them in our world and we can include them in our relationships.” They may be fifty years older or fifty years younger than you. They may have a different skin color; they may like entirely different kind of recreation and entertainment. That is not the point.*

*You know different ones have said to me, “Well, I do not really feel drawn to that guy.”*

 *I said, “So what? The Father feels drawn to that guy. He has got a human spirit, he is born again, he is eternally in the family, and that is enough for us to value them and go after them.”*

*It is not about only liking the people that like us. Again as I mentioned, these are flawed people like us; we are all flawed. We get this idea that we will love people as long as they respond rightly, as long as they are fairly gracious in return, in the response of returning our love back to us. If they are moody or grouchy, if they complain too much, they do not appreciate it, or they do not respond, we think, “You know, forget them! I will move on.”*

*The Lord would remind us, “Well, you are moody, you are grouchy, you do not respond rightly, you complain against My leadership, you do not talk to Me very much even though I want to talk to you, but I do not move on. I keep pursuing you. I want you to pursue people the same way.”*

*Now another part that is so remarkable about this commandment is that He wants us to love people again outside of the comfort zone of our familiar eight or ten or whatever that number it might be, and outside of the cool zone, outside the people that we think are really would be fun to be with.*

*We are talking about the stronger ones pursuing the weaker ones spiritually. We are talking about pursuing people who cannot enhance your popularity. They cannot enhance your status. They cannot enhance your profile. They cannot enhance your economic base. They cannot enhance you in any way whatsoever in the natural.*

*Again the Father could remind us, “There is nothing you do that enhances My natural resources at all. You do not help My economic situation. You do not help My popularity. You do not do anything in the natural, but I love you because I am love and you are so dear to Me.”*

*So I am talking about having the eyes of the Lord when we are looking at this commandment to love one another and not just being nice and helpful to the eight or ten people who do what we do and look like we look and like what we like. I am talking about something far more dynamic than that.*

*Again Jesus mentions several times that, when people love that way, unbelievers are deeply impacted. Jesus said unbelievers will conclude God is real when believers love each other. The reason why unbelievers will see this is that they will reason; they take a step back and look, and when love is consistently shown—I do not mean a one-time outreach; I am talking about for years and decades where the stronger ones pursue the weaker ones. Where the stronger ones pursue those who can not give anything back to them in the natural, where the weaker ones are not responsive, they are not happy, they are not fun to be around, but the stronger ones spiritually say, “That is okay with me because that is how God loves me”—unbelievers take a step back, and they say, “This is quite remarkable. We have watched this happen for some years.” Again this is more than a one-time outreach and everybody gets saved because they see the love of God. It is a consistent lifestyle of the local church, the Body of Christ. Unbelievers conclude this is very unnatural for the stronger ones to give so much to weaker ones when the weaker ones are unresponsive, they have bad attitudes, and they do not give anything back.*

*So they conclude that your God must be a Father, that your God who is inspiring you to sustain this kind of unnatural value system, the One who is inspiring you, must have loved you this way and empowered you to stay with this. They conclude this God is the real God and not only that, but also that He is a Father God because He is designing the whole operation of His kingdom for people loving and pursuing and valuing those who cannot find value themselves. It is a marvelous reality.*

* 1. The Father had a deep desire to have a family that experiences and expresses His love with one another. He fashioned the human heart with a deep sense of wanting to belong (Gen. 2:18). Jesus is committed to blessing kingdom communities of believers called the local church.

18“…I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” (Mt 16:18-19)

27…that He might present her to Himself a glorious church… (Eph. 5:27)

*I mentioned in our last session that the Father had a deep desire to have a family from before the foundation of the world. The reason He created the heavens and the earth, the reason He redeemed, was that He wanted a family. He wanted to share the joy within the family dynamics of the Godhead, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, dwelling in these glorious, magnificent family dynamics. The Father said, “We are going to extend the family to human beings and make a way for them to actually come near us in family relationship.”*

*This must have been shocking to the angels when the plan was made known. “Surely you can save them and make them workers in Your kingdom like us angels. Forever they can be in your kingdom like us.”*

*The Father says, “No, I am Father. They are going to enjoy the family dynamics with Father, Son, and Spirit.” What a remarkable reality! In Matthew 16:18, Jesus declares His plan. This is a most dynamic prophecy, “I will build My Church.” That is the primary building plan and agenda on the heart of God—to build the local church to bring the people of God together in spiritual families in every single geographic area in the earth.*

*Before the Lord returns, it will be in every tribe and every tongue. There will be a local expression of people where stronger ones pursue weaker ones like God pursues them, and the glory of the Father will be displayed in that kind of reality. Again it is not just a few folks hanging out with their friends and enjoying the same movies and games and saying, “Hey, we are Christians; that is fellowship.”*

*Beloved, kingdom community is built on kingdom values. It is not enough just to have some entertainment, recreation, and say that, since we are born again, we have kingdom community. No, that is the secular view of community, although I am all for a little entertainment and recreation. There are kingdom values need to be in place for it to be kingdom community. A lot of folks seek community, but it is through a secular paradigm. It is not the kingdom-value-derived paradigm of community, and really it is a substitute counterfeit of what God is after.*

*In Matthew 16:18, He says I am going to build a Church. That translates to, I am going to have spiritual families in every single region of the earth, and they will stay together, and the stronger ones will pursue the weaker ones. The stronger ones will be the joints of supply, the conduits, the vessels to express My love to the weaker ones. Unbelievers will witness it and say there must be a Father engineering this whole operation; God must be a Father.*

*Jesus makes it very clear, “I am building a Church.” Now today the Church is not so popular, but I tell you it is popular in heaven. It is number one on God’s agenda to build this Body of Christ as local spiritual families all across the earth.*

*Now our city is blessed, as many cities are in the Western world, because we have 1000+ congregations in our city. We have 1000 spiritual families; I mean that is remarkable. Many cities of the earth do not have even one. They do not have the gospel preached there. In other cities, maybe they have one or two. I am talking about some of these Islamic nations where the family of God is very small and kind of remote. Beloved, we live in a city that is so blessed, in a nation where there is a multitude of spiritual families. Sometimes because of that we lose sight of how strategic and valuable this is to God.*

*He is coming back for a spiritual family that is built together, that has a sense of belonging, and that is deeply connected to each other. He is not coming back to a bunch of independent Western Christians that wave at each other a little every now and again. He is coming back for a Church that is functioning together as a real family, showing the value of God to the others where everyone feels pursued, everyone has a sense of belonging, and everybody feels they are a part of it. Because—and this is not the exact number but—the seventy percent that have a sense of it are committed to have a deeper sense not just to go deeper themselves, but to include the thirty that have no sense of it.*

*The thirty percent—they go to the meetings, they go to the prayer room, they go to the home groups, the friendship groups as we call them, but still nobody pursues them, and they just sit there. You know we’ve got a hundred new friendship groups that we have started, and without this paradigm, there will be people who will sit in those groups for six to twelve months, and people will be nice to them and greet and hug them, but nobody will talk to them much besides really light conversation. Nobody will talk to them outside the group, and a year later you know what they will conclude? That it is true: I am unnoticed, I am unimportant, God probably does not really love me, or at least I cannot feel the power of His love.*

*The Lord says, “No, I have a solution for you. I am raising up a kingdom community of people all over the earth. They are going to have kingdom values, and My Church—My family—will function like a family.” That is what He is saying here in Matthew 16:18 when He says, “I will build My Church.” He is saying that His Church will function like a spiritual family with all the diversity and the uniqueness and all of the value being communicated. Because the stronger ones understand that is the way God values them, so out of gratitude, they value the weaker ones. They express that value.*

*Now Jesus makes this most glorious promise. He says the gates of Hades—which means hell, the gates of hell, the authority of hell—will not prevail over My people when they function as a spiritual family. This is remarkable. He is saying that He is going to raise up spiritual families that are completely free of demonic influence and demonic oppression. I believe this is going to happen worldwide before the Lord returns, where the Church is functioning without demonic oppression or demonic influence on the inside of the family of God.*

*In Matthew 16:19, He says that He is going to give them authority to bind the negative—the demonic things—and He is going to give them authority to loose the positive things—the blessing of God. A lot of people get excited about the authority to bind the negative and to loose the positive, but sometimes people will read verse 19**and will isolate the binding and loosing. But I want you to know that the power of verse 19 is in the context of verse 18, with the plan of God to have a spiritual family that is strong and vibrant, where the strong pursue the weak and communicate the value of God to them.*

*Now this might be a new idea to some of you, but intrinsic in the command to love one another from John 15:12 is the pastoral responsibility of every single member of the Body of Christ. Every believer in the Body of Christ actually has a pastoral calling, no matter if they have other callings that are primary or even more pronounced. So when I hear someone say he is a pastor or he is not a pastor, the truth be known, the command to love one another is the commission for everybody to operate in the pastoral anointing and the pastoral grace.*

*Now I am not saying that you should quit your job and make it your full-time occupation. There is only a small percent, you know a fraction of one percent, called do that. But the whole of the Body has an anointing, has a mandate, has a calling to function in the pastoral calling to express Jesus the Great Shepherd—Jesus the Great, the Chief Shepherd, the Pastor—to express His heart to other people.*

*Now a lot of believers do not know they have that calling; they have never connected with that truth. They think, “I’ve got a few friends, and I want to have a few friends that make my life happier.”*

*That is cool, but the Lord says, “No, it is more than that. I want you to be an extension of My pastoral ministry to those three or four or ten,* ***and*** *I want you to go* ***beyond*** *the scope of your familiar friends. You are one of My pastoral vessels in the Body of Christ.” I mean, there are a billion of us in the earth, but a lot of folks neglect it because they do not know that is part of their calling. It may not be your primary calling, but it is a* ***part*** *of your calling.*

* 1. The NT community resulted from people pursuing a common vision and values together. The majority of the believers together embraced a lifestyle which included being committed to receiving the Word, godly fellowship, breaking bread, prayer, and outreach (Acts 2:42-45). Some today lack revelation of God’s purpose and thus, they embrace a “churchless Christianity.”

25…not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (Heb. 10:25)

1. helping people see the glory of God in their life

*Now this is a remarkable verse,**John 17:22. Jesus is praying to the Father, and He makes these remarkable statements about the family dynamics within the Godhead concerning the way the Father, Son, and Spirit relate. He does not just make a statement to how they relate. He ties it in to how we relate to them with those family dynamics. It does not stop there. It is not just us relating to Father, Son, and Spirit in these particular ways, but then we relate to one another in the overflow of those same family dynamics.*

*That is what John 13-17—these five chapters I have been focusing on in this series—are unveiling: the mystery and the glory of the family dynamics within the Trinity that every individual believer participates in, some a lot more than others because they have a greater understanding, and they also express those family dynamics to one another. This is one of these classic verses. There are quite a few of them in**John 13-17. There is nothing like these five chapters in the whole of the Word of God for this subject!*

*Jesus is praying in**John 17:22. He says, “Father, the glory You gave Me”—that is a vast subject for another day—He says, “I have given that same glory to them.”*

*That is so big and so awesome, it just almost hurts my heart. I mean it is so big that it stretches me! “Jesus, You have given the glory the Father gave You to me? Are you sure, Jesus, that what you meant?”*

*“Yes, that is what I meant.” Then He goes on, and He ties it together to the Church functioning in love. He goes on to explain, as it were, that when we see that glory, that is what enables us, what empowers us to be one. This is what we are going to spend the next ten minutes on, and then we are going to pray for you. Then Jesus goes on to bring it up a notch, “to be one like the Father and I are one in our family relationship.”*

*We think, “Oh, there You are going so big, Jesus. I mean that is so massive!” Of course it takes the Holy Spirit's insight to see this even a little bit.*

*So now when He says that they may be one, in place of “they may be one,” you could put the words “they will love one another” because John 17:22**is tied to the verse we looked at a minute ago—John 15:12, love one another. When He says* ***they will be one****, that is the same thing as* ***they will love one another****. When He says* ***they will be one****, that is the same thing* ***as I will build My Church****, meaning they will function as a healthy family. I mean they will function as a family, not in the absence of their flaws, but in the presence of their flaws, because they are so moved by the way God loves them. Instead of dismissing each other in the presence of flaws, they stay resilient in love, in the overflow of how God loves them.*

*The whole thing is contingent on God’s people understanding Jesus has given them the glory that the Father gave Him, and when they see that glory, they will be one or they will love one another more or they will function as a healthy spiritual family in the presence of the flaws of the people that they love. Those are all saying the same thing in different language.*

* 1. Our unity is directly proportionate to how much we see of God’s glory in the person of Jesus, in our life, and in the lives of the redeemed. God’s people experience His glory in three stages—we experience a measure of His glory at our new birth (Rom. 6:4-5; Col. 3:3-4), a greatly increased measure in the end-time revival (Eph. 5:27), and full measure in the age to come (2 Cor. 4:17).

 22The glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one. (Jn. 17:22)

*Our unity or ability to love, our ability to function as a family, is directly proportional to how much we see God’s glory. First we see God’s glory in the person of Jesus, and then we see God’s glory in our own weak and broken lives as born-again believers. It does not end there; we see the glory of God in the life of another flawed, weak, broken born-again believer. When we see the glory in those three ways, to the degree we see it, our ability to function in love or our ability to walk in unity is enhanced to that degree*

*Now I like to think of three different stages in which we experience God's glory. I write this not as a doctrine; this is just a perspective. Number one, the day we are born-again we receive the glory of God. The Holy Spirit comes to live in our spirit, we are totally forgiven, we have a new legal position as being in Christ, and the Father relates to us through Jesus.*

 *So the day we are born again, we receive the glory of God. Now the challenge is that we do not feel it. The challenge is with our natural thinking. We cannot see it or measure it, but the Holy Spirit says, “I will help you see it. I will give you little hints, and I will give you insights into the glory, but you will need My help to see. The truth is you did receive it.”*

*Well, most believers do not experience very much of the glory they receive. They do not see it, they do not feel the power of it, and they do not see it in others. So the glory is theirs, but they experience so little of it that it is almost as though they are not operating in any of it. Others have greater understanding, and they experience more of it.*

*Second, there are these seasons of revival where there is a heightened release of the presence of God. In seasons of revival people tend to experience the glory in their own life more and see it in the lives of others.*

*And third, I have good news for you. At the end of the age, right before the Lord returns, in those final years or maybe decades even, there is going to be a release of glory. Jesus is coming back for a Church filled with glory—Ephesians 5:27. The Church will be filled with glory; I am talking about even before He returns.*

*So when we read that the Church will be filled with glory, it is synonymous with “the Church will function in love.” Then there is a glory in the resurrection where we will enter into a far greater unity, a far greater dimension of love, but beloved, I am not going to wait until the resurrection to enjoy the glory in my life and the glory in your life.*

* 1. The greatest problem in the Church today is a *low view of God*, which is inevitably followed by a *low view of salvation*, resulting in a *low view of God’s people.* The redeemed are crowned with glory and honor by being united to Jesus’ heart and glory by virtue of His cross and resurrection. A high view of God and His glory will lead to a high view of who the redeemed are in Christ.

7You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands… 10It was fitting for Him [the Father]…in bringing many sons to glory…” (Heb. 2:7-10)

*Look at Hebrews 2:10. Now the writer of Hebrews is describing the redeemed. Here is how God sees you in Christ. In Christ, God crowned you with glory; He crowned you with honor. Verse 10. The master plan of God from before the foundation of the world was always to have many sons of glory. Now “sons” transcends gender. Just like men are the Bride of Christ, women are the sons of God. Here is the point. From the very beginning the Father said, “I have an agenda. I am going to have many sons who receive the glory of God, who operate in it.”*

* 1. Paul’s prayer included the Lord allowing us to see how He sees and values others (Eph. 1:18). I encourage us to pray, *“Lord, let me see and feel what You see and feel about my brother.”* As we see even a small measure of God’s glory in a person’s life, we are to speak it to them. God speaks many things to us through the words of other believers who are sensitive to the Spirit.

17…the Father of glory may give to you…revelation in the knowledge of Him…18that you may know…what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints… (Eph. 1:17-18)

23…that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24even us whom He called… (Rom. 9:23-24)

*This is the prayer that is most prayed at IHOPKC.**Ephesians 1:17-18. In our fourteen years this one has been prayed the most of any. Now notice it says that Paul prayed to the* ***Father*** *of glory. He does not pray to the God of power. By this Paul is saying, “You are not just God, You are a Father God. You have a Father's heart. You possess all the glory, and You express and communicate that glory through Your family.” This is a remarkable title, the Father of glory. He has it all, but He also has a Father's heart to impart it and to communicate it through His children.*

*Now look at**verse 18. Here is the prayer—that every single born-again believer would know the riches of the glory of being God’s inheritance. What a remarkable reality! He says, “I pray that everybody would know.” This is not intellectual data. In the New Testament when the word, know, is used relating to our experience with God, it is knowledge with experience. So Paul is praying that every single believer would know with experience—not just data—the glory of being God’s inheritance.*

*Beloved, do you understand you are Jesus’ inheritance? You are what He wants. The problem is we do not feel the power of this. Moreover, it is not just that you are who He wants. The other person on the other side of the room here—He desires them, too. So it is not just an issue that we do not see it clearly for our own lives. We need to see it in the life of the other person we are ministering to, and that is the focus that I am locked into today. Seeing the glory of who that other person is. They have no idea how dear they are to Him. Again many people live a life unnoticed. Nobody celebrates them, nobody pursues them, nobody includes them, and they do not know that God loves them and chose them as His own inheritance.*

* 1. The vast majority of our obedience, love, and service to Jesus consists of very small acts that are usually unnoticed by others, and thus their importance to Jesus is greatly underestimated by us.

17“Well done…because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.”

(Lk. 19:17)

10“For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven [eyes of the Lord] rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the Lord…” (Zech. 4:10)

* 1. The glory of our life in Christ is veiled from our eyes (Col. 3:1-5). You died—your old life, failure, and identity outside of Christ is dead. The full truth of our life now is hidden from us. The beauty that Jesus possesses is the very beauty that He gives His people (Ps. 90:17). As we speak of that beauty to others, we empower them to overcome the spirit of heaviness (Isa. 61:3).

3For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God 4When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (Col 3:3-4)

*Colossians 3: we will end with this. Paul makes this most dramatic statement. He says that you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Then in verse 4 he says that when Jesus appears at the second coming, then the glory of your life will also appear.*

*Now there are quite a few truths here. I will just mention one or two. Your life as a born-again believer is hidden with Christ in God. Here is what that means. It means you cannot see the glory of your life with your own eyes, and others cannot see the glory of your life with their natural eyes. It takes the aid and the ministry of the Spirit to see this glory. It is hidden from us, and it takes Holy Spirit revelation to see it. Now in this age we will only see in part; we will only see a little bit. But here is what Paul says, in essence, “I have good news for you; it is only hidden from you, from your natural observation. You can not measure it in natural ways right now, but the glory is in your life now anyway.”*

*He says in Colossians 3:4,**“Be encouraged because when the Lord appears, the true glory of your life as a born-again believer will at last be very clear to you and everybody else. You will see the glory of your life.”*

*What do I mean by that? Every small act of obedience, every choice to obey God, to love God, to love people, is remembered by God and moves His heart. He will openly declare it when you are before Him on the last day. Beloved, this is remarkable. Jesus said, “I want to assure you, every cup of cold water you give somebody in My name, it moves Me, and I will openly tell you how I feel about the way you love Me in giving that cup of cold water.” (Matthew 10:42; Mark 9:41, paraphrased)*

*Some of you will be before the Lord, and you will say, “Lord, that was forty years ago. I do not remember giving that cup of cold water.”*

*The Lord says, “I will never forget it, and you will never forget it. The glory of your life will be clear to you then.”*

*Here is the situation. Your life is glorious now, even though you cannot see it. We have the Word that describes all this to us. I do not want to wait until the resurrection to see this, at least in part, and I do not want to wait for the resurrection to see it in your life either. I want to see it in your life by what the Word says about the glory that is in you. The Spirit will stir us up and inspire us in this. I mean it is a glorious reality.*

*Now the glory of God is usually invisible. There are some dramatic demonstrations of it every now and then, but mostly it is invisible. You cannot measure it with your natural mind, but it is true nonetheless.*

*For instance, the glory of God is operating right now. Here I am, a weak, broken, flawed man speaking some phrases, and some of you in the room are listening to these phrases, and in your heart you are saying, “I want to obey God. I want to love people more.” That is the glory of God that a weak, broken, flawed man can say weak things and a weak person like you can conclude “I want to love God more.” Beloved, the glory of God is operating today right now.*

*Every prayer you pray has some impact in the spirit. We cannot see it now, but on the last day you will—the glory of God is operating. Every time you encourage your wife, your children, another person, you go out of your way to pursue someone, it is the glory of God. You give a cup of cold water and think, “Well, I did not feel anything.”*

*The Lord says, “I did.”*

*“I do not even remember it.”*

*The Lord says, “I will never forget it.”*

* 1. We are to see one another according to who they are in the Spirit (or in God's eyes), not the flesh. This is an essential part of loving and pursuing others in the way Jesus loves us (Jn. 15:12).

14For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died…16Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. (2 Cor. 5:14-16)

*Now here is our mandate and our pastoral calling. Every one of us has it. We are to tell people about the glory of God in their life. When they see the glory in their own life, beloved, they will receive love, and they will give love. That is what John 17:21**says. They will walk in unity, they will see love, and they will express love more when they see the glory that is in them.*

*So you go to this guy and you say simple little phrases, “You know what? I see the sincerity in your heart for the Lord.”*

*The guy says, “Really? Well, I am just a hypocrite, a failure. I am not really sincere. I mean I love Him, but I am such a wreck.”*

*You say, “You know what? You have a call of God on your life, and what you are doing matters to God forever, and it matters to the Body. Jesus wants you as His inheritance. He wants you on the team, and I want you on the team.”*

*The guy has a tear coming down his face. He says, “You know I have been in the kingdom twenty years, and no one has ever said those words to me once, ever.” Now some of you hear words like that so often that those words do not move you in the same way. But beloved, there is about thirty percent of the Body that never, ever hears simple things like this.*

*You are communicating the glory of God, the glory that they have, their sincerity, the value of just their weak service, how important it is, and the fact you want them a part of your relational circle—that is the glory of God. I tell you we change and transform lives in these simple ways. Amen and amen.*