

Day 2

Joy

Silence (2 minutes) Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

Scripture *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in Me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in Me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in Me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples. "As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love. If you keep My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."* John 15:1-11

Discussion At the end of the Last Supper Jesus told His disciples He is leaving, that if they love Him they will obey His commands, and that the Father will send the Holy Spirit to them. Then Jesus spoke the above teaching. His main points were: Only by remaining in Jesus will the disciples bear fruit. Bearing much fruit glorifies the Father, because it reveals that they are Jesus' disciples. If they remain in Jesus and His word remains in them, then whatever they ask of the Father, He will give them. Jesus has loved the disciples as the Father has loved Jesus. Remaining in Jesus' love is accomplished by obeying Him, just as Jesus obeyed the Father. Then Jesus says, *"I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."* Jesus wants to give us joy in the complete way only He can. Jesus listens to the Father and the Father's word is in Jesus. In a similar way we are to remain in Jesus as he remains in us. This is not setting up an absolute alternative: remaining in Jesus through perfect behavior or total separation from Christ. Rather, it is showing us the standard to which we are called: Christ. This does not mean we are free to disobey, rather, that we are free to obey Jesus just as Jesus freely obeyed the Father whom He loves. We are certainly blessed by having our sins forgiven by Christ's sacrifice, receiving the Holy Spirit, and having a relationship with God. This relationship is, in some ways, similar to Jesus' relationship with the Father.

Application John 15:1-11 shows that our obedience to Jesus' commands is related to the joy that we have for God. Is there an area of your life where you find obedience rather difficult, perhaps a sins you struggle to avoid? Ask God to grow your love for Him in this area and to show you how to find greater joy in Him through your obedience.

Prayer Jesus, thank You that You want to give me Your joy and that it is complete. I commit myself to remain in Your word and to remain in Your love by obeying You. I pray that I may bear much fruit, demonstrating that I belong to You, and glorifying the Father. Please help me grow in asking what is according to Your word and I thank You that You will grant it. Thank You, Jesus, for Your indescribable love and Your gift of joy. Amen.

Silence (2 minutes) Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

Scripture memory for the week: *"For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."* Hebrews 12:2b-3