

[9] **As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.** [10] **If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.** [11] **These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.** John 15:9 - 11.

We must keep in mind the circumstances of this passage; the disciples have been confronted with the fact the Jesus will no longer be with them. There is much fear - uncertainty among the disciples. Jesus has, through the illustration of the vine, told them that they will never lose their connection with Him - that the life that flows in Jesus will flow in their lives. Jesus now brings them a step higher toward this wonderful part of Jesus' life - fellowship on the basis of spiritual worship - the love of God. They have all witnessed the wonderful love that was between the Father and their Master. They are now introduced to this wonderful reality that they, too will share in this fellowship - the same fellowship that between the Beloved and the Father. It's this fellowship that is referred to by Paul in [Ephesians 5:1](#) where the Ephesian believers are told to be imitators of God as dearly loved children. So, as the Father loved His Only Begotten Son, so He loves the child of God - what a wonderful prospect.

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Having said that, I read with interest Holman's comment:

"15:9 - 10. Here we enter one of the great love passages of the New Testament. Six times in the next eleven verses the disciples will be told to love one another. Once again, Jesus placed himself between the Father and the disciples. The Father loves first; then the Son reflects that love; and we, his people, remain in his love. Remaining in the Lord's love also requires obedience and brings joy."¹ That's this lesson in a nutshell.

The Eternal Bond of God's Love.

John proceeds to set up two historical aorist: "Just as...the Father loved... so I have loved you." Actually, according to God's word, my use of the term "historical" might be inadequate. We learn from God's word that the Love between the Son and the Father transcends history as we know it. We learn from the first chapter of John that the Son was the only begotten, a term of endearment as a one and only Son. We learn also that the Son was in close, intimate relationship with the Father - in His bosom ([John 1:14, 18](#)). We learn from John that because the Father loves the Son, he has given all things into his hand ([John 3:35](#)), shown all things to the Son ([John 5:20](#)), the Father's Love is affirmed by Jesus' obedience ([John 10:17](#)). **This eternal bond is meant to be**

¹ HOLMAN New Testament COMMENTARY John, page 285,

demonstrated to the world, first by Jesus Christ ([Rom 5:8](#)) and then by the disciples ([John 13:35](#)). So, this is the **constant** in the world. Nothing else can be depended on: God's word and the Love between the Father and the Son.

Verse 9: The Constant of God's Love among the disciples. Nature has many constants. We have the speed of light.²

We have the constant of objects falling to earth.³ Here is another Constant: God never changes in His Love for His Son - this is a constant that transcends the universe. Now here is how it applies to us: just as Love remains between the Father and the Son, so the same Love

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remains (our word *meno*, imperative, aorist - a command, "...continue ye in my love...") between the disciples and God. The imperative aorist fits in with the previous 3rd class conditional clauses indicating that we have responsibility for our relationship with God. But the Love of God is always there,⁴ it's just that we bear responsibility in our relationship with God as we will see in the next verse.

The Responsibility of God's Love.

Verse 10: Obedience, our responsibility. Jesus bore the same responsibility in His Humanity. We have a curious passage in Hebrews where Jesus *learned* obedience through suffering ([Hebrews 5:7 - 9](#)). Here the Son suffered much - indeed, this provided the necessary experience so that He could be our High Priest. However, part of His suffering was necessary for His humanity so that He could learn obedience *even though He was the Son of God*. Should we expect less in our experience? Peter touches on this necessity in his epistle:

1 Peter 1:6 **Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: [7] That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: [8] Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:**

I bring in the idea of the responsibility and consequences of our obedience to the Lord because obedience should not be taken lightly. I point out again that this a 3rd class conditional clause - it's up to us to obey God's word and that obedience has it's

² 186,000 miles a second or 700 million miles an hour.

³ g = 32 ft/s², excluding terminal velocity due to resistance of air.

⁴ [Romans 8:35 - 39](#).

toll - it's not a light thing - obedience to God's word, it is absolutely necessary. I've said this before, perhaps many times, we cannot pick and choose what parts of God's word we might obey - and **furthermore willful ignorance of His word due to lack of study is not an excuse either**. Wilful ignorance will certainly result in divine discipline from the Lord.

The Reward of God's Love.

[Read verse 11.](#) Joy of Jesus is mentioned here. Let's do a word study on this word from the original. Χαρά, *chara*. The classical Greek uses this word to depict delight, a significant event of great celebration. The LXX seems to follow a similar application as found in [Esther 8:17](#) after Haman, the man who tried to exterminate the Jews, was hanged and there was great celebration. Feasts were held and there was a good day - an understatement indeed. In [Psalm 30:11](#) God turns mourning into great joy. In the New Testament ([Luke 15:10](#)) there is great joy when one sinner repents and comes to God. The disciples' great trials because of persecution will be turned into joy ([John 16:20](#)).

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And the references to this joy in connection with Jesus go on. Please note the condition that results in this Joy of Jesus. It is *never* our temporal circumstances. Rather, it is our relationship with Him. In our present passage it is based on our having received [and applied] the spoken word of Jesus - the word of God

So the basis of our joy is Jesus' spoken word! This is a point not to be missed. Too often we rely on our position in life - a good job, a tranquil family setting, a worship service that pleases us - our circumstances drive our feeling of well-being. That is *not* what Jesus is using as the basis of His joy. Think about the believers around the world who do not have the material and social blessings that we enjoy. Have they any less of this joy? No. Jesus' joy is based on our relationship with Him, on the word of God, on the believers' daily intake and obedience to His word. Our occupation with Jesus is to be the basis of this joy. I know I have been repetitive to a fault here but it is that important to note that we can never spend too much time in His word - we can never miss an opportunity to apply His word in our everyday experience. We can never take our relationship with Him and our Heavenly Father too seriously. Our whole discipleship experience depends on our obedience to the word of Jesus and our relationship with Him.

**Some Ramblings on this Love Passage
and Paul's Passage in Corinthians.**

1 Corinthians 13:1 **Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. [2] And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. [3] And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.**

These are just some thoughts that rattled around in my head as I was reviewing the lesson. It seems to me that the "other love passage" in John 15 places great emphasis on our **relationship** with the Lord and each other. It places great responsibility on us in that relationship as God's children - remember [Ephesians 5:1](#)? We are to be "chips off the old block", as the New England saying goes, - like God in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Paul's emphasis in Corinthians is more on the authenticity of God's Love. It also has the emphasis on how others perceive us in the context of love - *agape*. But it also shows us how God views us. It's a great passage and one that should be compared with John's passage.

I guess my point should be this: we can talk about the Love of God, but if our actions speak to the point that we really do not care about others or the Lord, our professed love is invalidated. Our actions form the basis of authenticating our professed love. That's the important point the I wish to make. All too often we may display attitudes, frame opinions, act toward others based on our feelings or tastes, or preferences toward others' personalities. This, in my view, violates the principle of God's Love. "God so Loved the world..."⁵ was not a statement of motivation based on the value as sinners - nor was it based on our attractiveness or personality compatibility with God. It was a unilateral, gracious, outreaching Love. One that was based on who and what God is not on who and what we were. This is the mandate of our wonderful, loving relationship with the Lord and each other - the mandate of loving each other not just with words but with caring actions and benevolent attitudes toward each other. I feel strongly that if we "practice" this love toward each other that it will become more and more a natural reflex to love the world in the way that our Heavenly Father did when He sent His Son into the world to die for our sins. Please read [James 2:5 - 8](#).

⁵ [John 3:16](#).