

## Experiencing Victory in the Presence of the Lord

**John 13:34–35 (NKJV)**

<sup>34</sup>A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

<sup>35</sup>By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- *The defining characteristic of a disciple of Jesus Christ is not found in the gifts of the Spirit, but in the fruit of the Spirit, “by this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

**1 Corinthians 13:1–3 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup>Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

<sup>2</sup>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, but have not love, I am nothing.

<sup>3</sup>And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

- “though I speak with the tongues of men and angels ... I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and have all knowledge, and I have all faith ... and I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and I give my body to be burned, but I have not love I am nothing and it profits me nothing.”
- *Apostle Paul is not saying that the gifts of the Spirit and signs, wonders, miracles, or acts of sacrifice are unimportant. He is saying is that without character – having love, being motivated by love, and expressing love – the gifts are ineffective in witnessing to others or conforming us into the image of Jesus Christ.*
- *The greatest testimony of the grace of God and the truth and power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a changed life.*
- *The world may try to dismiss or ignore testimonies of healings or miracles, but they cannot dismiss a life that has been changed by Jesus Christ.*
- *When a person who once lived and acted in selfish and self-destructive ways begins to live and act like Jesus, being motivated by His love, that is something the world cannot deny nor reproduce.*
- *Miracles, signs, wonders and healings are important and are wonderful ways of getting people’s attention, but it is the fruit of the Spirit, a changed life, that most loudly and clearly proclaims the heart of the Gospel.*

- *The ultimate goal of the Gospel is to redeem the lives of men and women, so they can be saved not only from the penalty of sin, which is freedom from eternal damnation, but to save them from the power of sin, so that they are no longer under the power, the control, nor the destructive consequences of sin.*
- *God's will for each believer is for us to be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit and the life of Jesus Christ, so we will "be conformed to the image of His Son." (Romans 8:29)*
- *We know how to deal with sin. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). But how do we walk in victory free from the power and control of sin, so we can live just like Jesus?*

### **John 15:1–2 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup>**"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.**

<sup>2</sup>**Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.**

- *"that it may bear more fruit" - To properly understand John, Chapter 15, it is important to understand that the theme of this chapter is not salvation but fruitfulness.*
- *The Greek word for fruit, καρπός (karpos), is used eight times in the first 16 verses of John 15 and it speaks about the importance of bearing fruit (vs2), more fruit (vs2), much fruit (vs5; 8), and fruit that should remain (vs16).*
- *God's plan of salvation goes far beyond having our sins forgiven and going to Heaven. It includes bringing forth much fruit that impacts not only our lives, but the lives of those around us. That impact is eternal because our fruit remains forever.*
- *The biblical concept of fruit is the natural result or outcome of how our life has changed in terms of deeds, activities, character, and lifestyle.*
- *However, just because fruit is the natural result of what has been sown and is growing does not mean that no care or effort is required in the development of the fruit.*
- *The farmer does not actually produce a crop, because that is the result of the very life inherent in the plant. However, at the same time it does not mean the farmer is not involved in growing the crop and producing fruit abundantly.*
- *While the farmer cannot actually produce fruit through his own self-effort, his labour is important in the areas of cultivating the ground, sowing seed, irrigating the crop, pruning the plants, and weeding the garden.*

- *The life in the plant is the essential component to produce fruit and without this life no amount of effort by the farmer can produce growth and fruitfulness.*
- *The labour of the farmer may be a small part when compared to the life giving force in the plant, but it would be incorrect to say that no labour is required by the farmer or that his labour has no value.*

#### Titus 3:5 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup>not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

- *True righteousness in a person's soul is always a product of the righteousness inherent in the reborn spirit of a believer being manifest in their soul.*

#### 2 Timothy 3:5 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup>having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

- *In self-effort a person can appear to be nice or even righteous, but it may really be just a product of the flesh with no eternal value. It can even lead to self-deception thinking they are right with God when they may not even know Him.*

#### John 15:4 (NKJV)

<sup>4</sup>Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

- *There are two words that are predominant in John 15, the first word is the Greek word for "fruit," καρπός (karpos) which is used eight times. The second is the Greek word for "abide" μένω (menō) which is used ten times.*
- *The Greek word "abide" means "to remain in the same place over a period of time; to stay; to tarry; to dwell; to stand fast as opposed to wavering or fleeing; to stand against opposition; the fixity of the stars as opposed to the movement of the planets."*

#### John 15:5 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup>"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

- *Jesus clearly defines our relationship with Him and our complementary role in bearing fruit.*
- *Jesus is the vine. He is the source of all life and fruitfulness.*
- *We are the branches. We are not the source of life, but if we abide in Him and allow His life to flow through us, abundant fruit is produced in and through us.*

- *The crowning principle in understanding fruit bearing and the importance of abiding in Christ is our total dependence upon Him, “for without Me you can do nothing.”*
- *If a Christian wants to live a fruitful victorious life, abiding in the Vine, Jesus Christ, is a necessity.*
- *The concept of abiding does not refer to a place we visit from time to time, or even a place we may frequent often, but a place where we constantly dwell and never leave.*
- *The concept of abiding in Christ is not simply having a devotional time every morning, but learning to “pray without ceasing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We allow our thoughts to dwell on the wonder of His love, salvation, and glory. As we abide, we “delight in the Law of the Lord, and in His Law we meditate day and night.” (Psalm 1:2)*
- *To meditate on His Word day and night does not mean to constantly read the Bible. It is much more wonderful, because each thought, word, and action in our lives is measured against the truth of God’s Word. As David said in Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.”*
- *His Word becomes a lamp at our feet guiding our next step, and a light on our path to mark our direction and destination.*
- *To meditate on God’s Word also means to ponder the mysteries, the beauty, and the glory of God contained in His Word.*
- *There is special delight when a verse of Scripture comes alive and takes on a new meaning we never saw or understood before. This experience can be compared to a person mining deep within the earth and suddenly discovering a vein of pure gold or a precious diamond embedded in the rock.*

#### **John 15:6 (NKJV)**

**“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.**

- *Verse 6 contains a serious warning if we fail to abide in Christ, but for us to understand the implications and the true nature of the warning, we must remember the theme of John 15 is not salvation, but fruitfulness.*

#### **1 Corinthians 3:11–15 (NKJV)**

**<sup>11</sup>For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

<sup>12</sup>Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

<sup>13</sup>each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

<sup>14</sup>If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

<sup>15</sup>If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- *1 Corinthians 3:11-15 also deals with the topic of fruitfulness, but it uses the analogy of building a structure. Paul warns us to ensure that we build on the foundation of our salvation, Jesus Christ, with materials that will last for eternity. "Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw."*
- *If we build according to God's plan and use the materials He has provided—gold, silver and precious stones, we will be guaranteed to receive an eternal reward, for "if anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward."*
- *However, if one builds with the temporal and carnal things of this life, at the Judgment Seat of Christ they will experience great disappointment and loss as all their life's efforts are burned up and they will enter into Heaven with nothing but their souls. "If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."*
- *For those Believers who build with wood, hay, and straw there will be much weeping at the Judgment Seat of Christ and eternal loss. However, Jesus will wipe away their tears for there are no tears in Heaven, but their loss will be eternal. (Revelation 7:17; 21:4)*
- *1 Corinthians 3 does not specify what the wood, hay, and straw represent, but it would be incorrect to assume that they only represent evil or sinful behaviours.*
- *One of the primary differences between gold, silver, and precious stones and wood, hay, and straw is that the first require great effort and are only found deep in the earth, while the second are found in abundance on the surface of the earth and require little or no effort to gather.*
- *Those believers who build on the foundation of their salvation with the temporal things of this life find they have little time or energy to build with eternal things. That is why the Bible exhorts us, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6:33)*

- *One of the great deceptions of the enemy is not to cause believers to fall into overt sin, but to keep them busy pursuing worldly success or pleasures to the exclusion of the kingdom of God.*
- *To pursue a career or enjoy the blessings God has given us in this life is not wrong and can actually enhance our relationship with God if we receive them with a thankful heart. However, they become a stumbling block when our priorities are misplaced and we neglect putting God first in our lives.*
- *What is the decisive factor that determines if we are gathering wood, hay, and straw or digging deep to find those precious and eternal treasures of gold, silver, and precious stones?*
- *If we are abiding in Christ we will be digging deep to find those treasure that God has placed there for us to find.*

**John 15:7 (NKJV)**

**<sup>7</sup>If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.**

- *Verse 7 provides us with the key that unlocks the grace for us to see our prayers answered, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you.”*
- *If we meet that criteria, then God will give us our heart’s desires and whatever we ask will be done for us.*
- *A most profound and wonderful promise is contained in this verse. The pronoun “you” in the phrase “it shall be done for you” is in the dative case meaning that the action or change can actually take place in us.*
- *An equally valid translation of this promise is “whatever you may wish you shall ask and it shall be done to you.”*
- *The promise gives us confidence that God can and will change us no matter what sins, addictions, or character flaws we battle. The three keys are: first, to abide in Him and have His words abide in us, second, to desire to change, and third, to ask Him to change us!*

**John 15:8 (NKJV)**

**<sup>8</sup>By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.**

- *The wonderful conclusion to this promise is that we can truly become disciples of Jesus Christ, living fruitful lives that bring glory to our Heavenly Father.*

**John 15:9 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup>“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.

- *Abiding in Christ is meant to be the most delightful and fulfilling experience one could imagine. “abide in My love.”*
- *There is nothing more wonderful than spending time bathing in His love for us. That is what makes prayer and meditating on His Word an act of pure delight.*
- *Another wonderful revelation contained in John 15:9 is that to the same extent the Father loves His Son, Jesus Christ, He loves us, “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you.”*
- *We are not second rate in God’s heart! He has placed us right there with His Son. In fact, He loved us so much that He sacrificed His Son to save us. (John 3:16)*

**John 15:10 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup>If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

- *One of the ways we abide in His love for us, is by simply obeying His Word.*
- *Obedience does not cause God to love us more, but obedience enables us to enjoy and experience God’s love.*
- *Obedience changes our hearts.*
- *A godly father still loves his child even when he or she is rebellious or disobedient. However, the child’s rebellion hinders him or her from the intimacy where they would experience their father’s love.*
- *Disobedience hinders us from experiencing God’s love for two reasons: first, the rebellious child does not want to be close to the father; and second, the shame and condemnation they heap on themselves prevents them from believing their father truly loves them.*

**John 15:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup>“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

- *Often Christians mistakenly think of abiding in Christ and obeying His Word as a difficult task that robs them of joy and freedom, but the exact opposite is true. It actually releases an overflowing joy.*

- *Christians who abide in Christ and are obedient to His Word are the most joyful people, but those believers who choose not to obey God's Word because they want to "have fun" are miserable and tormented people.*

**John 15:12 (NKJV)**

<sup>12</sup>This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

- *What is this restrictive commandment that unbelievers complain about when referring to God's Word? It is simply that we love one another!*
- *When we truly love others then we will find that fornication, stealing, lying, and all those other sins will simply become non-issues, because love will not allow us to do anything that would harm or abuse others or grieve the heart of God.*

**John 15:13 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

- *This is not speaking about Christ's love and sacrifice for us, because Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" and Romans 5:10 emphasizes, "when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son."*
- *In the midst of our rebellion and hatred toward God and His Laws, He sent Jesus to die for us. Jesus died for us while we were still His enemies, so we could be reconciled to Him and become His beloved children.*
- *He gave His life for us, as we were the ones who scourged Him, nailed Him to the cross, and mocked and scorned the Son of God.*
- *When Jesus says, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends," He is not describing what He has done for us. He is asking if we consider Him our friend and if we are willing to lay down our lives for Him.*
- *God has many more children than He has friends.*

**John 15:14 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup>You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

- *What does this act of laying our lives down for our Friend, the Lord Jesus Christ require of us?*
- *Simply obeying Him and putting His will and purposes before our own.*
- *Simply seeking to please Him.*

- *Many have put their faith in Christ and are born again, but fewer are truly His friends and His disciples and are willing to fully obey Him.*

**Exodus 33:11 (NKJV)**

**<sup>11</sup>So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.**

- *Moses had a very unique and special relationship with God as the Scripture says; “the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.”*

**Exodus 33:18–23 (NKJV)**

**<sup>18</sup>And he (Moses) said, “Please, show me Your glory.”**

- *During the course of Moses’ conversation with God, he made a bold request, “Please, show me Your glory.”*

**<sup>19</sup>Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”**

- *God responded positively to Moses’ request by promising that He would reveal all His goodness, proclaim the name of the Lord, and reveal His grace and compassion to him.*

**<sup>20</sup>But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.”**

- *However, the next statement the Lord made is both remarkable and puzzling, “no man can see My face and live.”*
- *What makes this statement both remarkable and puzzling is that just a few verses prior to this, the Scripture states, “the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.”*
- *There are many facets to this statement “no man can see My face and live.” God’s glory is so infinitely great that we would be so completely and totally overwhelmed that our mortal corruptible bodies would simply expire.*
- *However, there is another aspect to this statement “no man can see My face and live” that is worthwhile exploring in light of the previous statement where it says Moses spoke to the Lord face to face. The next three verses offer a clue.*

**<sup>21</sup>And the LORD said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock.**

**<sup>22</sup>So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.**

**<sup>23</sup>Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.”**

- *There is a safe place where God’s glory will not cause death. It is when we are standing firmly on the rock, hidden in the cleft of the rock.*

**Colossians 3:3 (NKJV)**

**<sup>3</sup>For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**

- *Jesus is that Rock and when we abide in Him we are in the safest and most secure place, because our life is hidden with Christ.*
- *What kind of death can the glory of God produce in a carnal man?*
- *The same kind of death that caused Lucifer to corrupt himself - Pride.*
- *Lucifer was the anointed cherub, who acted as a guardian, but “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.” (Ezekiel 28:17)*
- *When a believer begins to take notice of how God is using him or her, then sin of pride will bubble up, and no matter how they try they will not be able to contain it. The result is that they will explode like an over inflated balloon filled with their own deluded sense of self-importance.*
- *How many times have we seen people used by God in mighty revivals who end up crashing and burning in self-destructive behaviours generated by pride?*
- *Immorality, greed, or conflict with others was only the product of their fall. The root was pride as they began to think that somehow they were more special to God than others in the Body of Christ.*
- *How could Moses stay in the place of safety where the sin of pride was not able to defile and destroy him?*
- *Moses learned how to stay in the presence of God through prayer and worship where he could meet with God face to face as a man speaks to his friend and where the flesh is unable to operate.*
- *Moses also learned the importance of being hidden in the cleft of the rock. Hidden there, he could not see himself, and others could not see him. All they could see was the Rock which is Jesus.*
- *Pride is one of the most powerful weapons the enemy uses against our soul, but in the secret place of prayer, the place of abiding in Christ, the flesh is unable to function and is powerless to control us.*

- *When we stay in that place of abiding and experiencing God's presence we are able to walk in victory and freedom and overcome every sin. However, as soon as we leave that place, the flesh is waiting to pounce on us and cause us to stumble.*

#### **Numbers 4:18–20 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup>“Do not cut off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites; <sup>19</sup>but do this in regard to them, that they may live and not die when they approach the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and appoint each of them to his service and his task.

<sup>20</sup>But they shall not go in to watch while the holy things are being covered, lest they die.”

- *The Kohathites, who were the priests who served daily in the Holy Place and saw the furniture in the Holy Place every day, were warned not to watch as the furniture was covered with the different coverings in preparation for them to be carried lest they die.*
- *How is it that the Kohathites could serve each day in the Holy Place before the furniture and not die, but if they saw the furniture being covered in preparation for it to be carried they would die?*
- *The reason is that the Kohathites were the ones who carried all the furniture including the Ark of the Covenant, all of which were covered by brilliant gold representing the glory of God. If they were conscious they were actually carrying the glory of God, pride would rise up and destroy them.*
- *When we see God's glory in the place of prayer and worship it is all about Him.*
- *When we see God's glory in the place of ministry it become all about us.*

#### **Exodus 20:26 (NKJV)**

<sup>26</sup>Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed on it.’

- *There were not to be steps going up to the altar, because service before God was to be free from self-effort, and therefore no flesh was to be exposed.*
- *In the place of abiding, the Holy Spirit can move freely in our soul. As the Holy Spirit moves, the works of the flesh are powerless to defile or control us.*
- *Experiencing Victory in the Presence of the Lord.*