



## International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

### **John 15:10-17 Commentary** **New Revised Standard Version**

**Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse [International Bible Study Commentary](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Study Forum](#).

**(John 15:10) “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.**

Jesus expressed His love for His Father by obeying all His Father's commands and fulfilling all His Father's purposes in the world. True Christians will express their love for Jesus by obeying His commands and seeking His purposes for them. True Christians do not earn or merit God's love by keeping God's commands; for while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). Indications that a believer loves the Father and Jesus are keeping their commands. An indication that a believer is not remaining in love with God and Jesus is their refusal to obey their commands—to refuse to do what God wants them to do so God can keep working through them. Because God loves us, God has given us commandments. God's commandments correspond to the way God made us and the way God intended us to use our minds, bodies, and souls. The Bible can be compared to an automobile owner's manual that shows the owner how to care for their car to get the most trouble-free miles using it. Those who obey the loving commandments of God know how to avoid many destructive actions.

**(John 15:11) I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.**

Jesus' great joy came from always loving and obeying His Father. He came to live and die and rise again because He loved doing God's will and for the joy set before Him. In Hebrews 12:1-2, we read, "Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, *who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*" Jesus wants everyone who obeys Him to have joy and true happiness, which can never come from living in disobedience to God. His joy can be in every believer and every believer can bring God great joy from their loving obedience. Our joy will be complete when Jesus says to us: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:23). Our joy will be complete when we know that Jesus is our Friend, and when we serve Him as a friend. Obeying and serving the Father and the Son brings us joy, and someday our joy will be totally complete when we see and hear these words personally: "Then I heard a voice from heaven say, 'Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them'" (Revelation 14:13).

**(John 15:12) "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.**

Moses gave the law of God to Israel on stone tablets, with ceremonies and sacrifices that pointed toward the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. When Jesus came, Jesus gave His law to His disciples and God wrote and still writes Jesus' Law of Love in the hearts of all born-again Christians; furthermore, God makes it possible for Jesus' followers to fulfill the Law of Love. Jesus made a New Covenant (or New Testament) in His blood, and Jesus' love, life, and teachings became the standard of behavior for all His followers. Christians love one another as Jesus loved and continues to love them when they seek to wisely do to others what is best for them and all

concerned, and when they make loving and necessary sacrifices for others as the Holy Spirit within them leads them to love as the Bible teaches.

**(John 15:13) No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.**

Love motivates a person to do all they wisely can to help someone else. God uses love and wisdom whenever He does anything, even when helping His enemies and sinners come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus loved the rich young man who came to Him, and He told him what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. After Jesus had done all He wisely could, He allowed him to walk away rather than follow him and beg him to come follow Him and be saved (see Matthew 19). Jesus laid down His life for His friends, former sinners who became His disciples and eventually friends. Before He laid down His life for them (died), He especially wanted His disciples to know that He loved them and considered them His friends. He wanted them to know that He was laying down His life (dying) for them because He wanted to save them from their sins and grant them eternal life with Him and one another. Not the devil, not the religious leaders, not the Romans killed Jesus by crucifixion. Jesus knowingly and willingly laid down His life by the method of crucifixion according to His perfect timing. Jesus chose to sacrifice His life. Before He died, Jesus spent about three years with His disciples and by word and example Jesus taught them all they needed to learn up to that point. When we as disciples of Jesus bear fruit by leading others to faith in Jesus Christ or by teaching them how to live as disciples of Jesus according to the Bible's teachings, we should not be surprised if it takes Jesus, us, and them a few years for them to become stable disciples. Disciples of Jesus take the time and make the effort which involves laying down their lives for them. Disciples take the time that they might have spent enjoying other pursuits to help people follow Jesus according to the Scriptures. Taking this time and making this effort brings them complete joy, just as taking the time and making the effort to help others brought Jesus and still brings Jesus great joy. Jesus found complete joy as He made the ultimate sacrifice for His friends and the world by dying on the cross as a God-ordained sacrifice for our sins. Because Jesus loves us He hears and answers our prayers.

**(John 15:14) You are my friends if you do what I command you.**

If His disciples were truly His friends, then they would do what He asked; especially when they knew that He would never ask them to do what was wrong or not in their best interests or not in the best interests of others. As the Son of God, when Jesus helped someone believe in Him and trust in Him, Jesus knew exactly all the consequences. When Jesus saved and taught one person to love Him and obey His commands, Jesus knew the joy He would bring and the joy one born-again Christian would bring to all concerned for many generations in the future. Friends will do whatever they rightly and wisely can do for their friends. Jesus obeyed His Father and laid down His life because He loved His disciples and wanted to be their Friend. In return, He expected them to be a friend to Him and do what He asked; then, they would be loving friends with one another and bear much fruit, and many would repent and receive the gift of eternal life through faith in Him.

**(John 15:15) I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.**

A servant or employee obeys his master or boss without always knowing why they want them to do a task, unless they obviously know they are being asked to do what is wrong or in violation of the Bible's teachings. For three years, Jesus' disciples (students and servants) had done what Jesus asked. They had accompanied Him without knowing all the reasons He did something. Now, at the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus assured them (and those who would hear them or later read what they wrote) that they knew what the Father wanted them to know and what He wanted them to pass on to others. Then, after His death and resurrection, and before He ascended into heaven: "Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age'" (Matthew 28:18-20). Out of love and friendship for Jesus, they obeyed Him and

passed on to others what He taught them—when they made disciples, they bore fruit as Jesus intended.

**(John 15:16) You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.**

Jesus made a prophecy about what would come to pass. Jesus chose them (and later the Apostle Paul). They bore much fruit in leading many to salvation during their lifetime. God answered their prayers and performed miracles through them that substantiated the truthfulness of what they taught about Him. Their fruit has lasted for almost 2,000 years, and their writings still lead people to believe in and obey Jesus and study their writings to learn more about Jesus and living as a Christian. What Jesus taught and subsequently what they taught is believed and obeyed by true Christians who love God and Jesus, who likewise tell others about Jesus and what He taught. We become disciples of Jesus because He chose us. When we hear the good news about Jesus Christ, we choose to become disciples of His because He chose us. Today, Jesus chooses disciples and appoints disciples through the fruit bearing of other disciples, and Jesus has appointed all His disciples to bear fruit that will last by using the gifts He has given them. The Apostle Paul further explained this in Ephesians 4:11-13, “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” When Jesus’ goals and purposes become your goals and purposes as a disciple of Jesus Christ, then *the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my (Jesus’) name* so you can bear much fruit that will last.

**(John 15:17) I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.”**

Those who love Jesus will obey Jesus. They will obey Jesus and love others in the Church. They will love their enemies and do whatever they wisely can do to promote the well-being and happiness of others. Doing all they wisely

can may lead to sacrifice as the Holy Spirit leads them and God answers their prayers for guidance in accordance with the Bible. As Jesus taught by example, sometimes disciples must let their enemies (and God's enemies) walk away, or even former friends or family members walk away, as an expression of loving, prayerful wisdom as the Lord leads us to let them walk away. Since we do want them and others to come to faith in Jesus Christ and receive the love and joy He wants for them, we can pray for them in the name of Jesus.

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. What examples did Jesus say He had given us as His disciples?
2. What commandments did Jesus give us as His disciples?
3. Why did Jesus show and tell us, His disciples, what He did?
4. What did Jesus call those who knew what He was doing? What does Jesus expect from those who know what He is doing?
5. What two names did Jesus use when He spoke of His disciples? What did He mean when He changed what He called them? What are we to Jesus? Why?

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