



6/11/26

*I walked into church yesterday and there was a huge blow-up slide in the atrium. Is it wrong that I asked the woman who came in for counseling if she thought part of our time together should be going down that slide???* She must not have thought it was wrong, because we slid down that slide!!! It was fun! Don't forget, our God is a God of joy and celebration. YAYAYAYAY!!!

*Blessings,  
Jonna*

*1 John 4:15-21*

*"Jesus refuses to accept our love unless it extends to His disciples" (Andrew Murray). Yikes. That seems very extreme!!! It is. And it's also biblical. 1 John 4 makes it very clear. The evidence of how much I really love God is found in how I love image bearers of God... humans, and especially His disciples. Yikes. How well do I actually love them?*

*Vs. 15-16 ~ "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God." Well... that's not saying anything about love. It's saying I have to confess that Jesus is the Father's Son... Lord... Master. If I do that, I have the Father abiding in me... and I abide in Him. We're in relationship with each other... so intertwined with each other that we can't see where one begins and the other ends. But that doesn't say anything about love.*

*That's why I have to read in context. Vs. 8 said, "Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love." To be in fellowship with God IS to love, because GOD IS LOVE. The closer I am to the Lord the more I love, not just Him, but also His people... as I am about to see.*

*"So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." Have I come to experientially know God's love through personal relationship with Him? Not just know ABOUT His love, but KNOW His love? Do I BELIEVE His love? Do I understand the implications of the fact that God IS love? It's not just an action He does, it's who He is.*

*Vs. 15 spoke of God abiding in me, and I in Him. To abide is to "remain." My house is called my "abode." It's where I live. It's where I "let my hair down" so to speak. It's where I'm the most comfortable. (For some in really hard circumstances, this is not true... but it's God's intention that we would learn what it is to remain, abide in Him by the safety and comfort of our home. I think we intrinsically know that our home should be the place where we are most ourselves. It's another one of those things the devil tries to destroy.)*

*So... God wants me to abide in Him, remain in Him, be most comfortable and safe in Him. And now in vs. 16, He says He wants me to abide, remain in LOVE. The words "God" and "love" are interchangeable. They are the same thing. To abide in God is to abide in love. To abide in love is to abide in God. To abide in love and God is to have God abiding in and loving me. God wants to PERFECT, mature, grow this love in me... as I'm about to see.*

*Vs. 17 ~ "By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as He is so also are we in this world." Wow. I need to break this down a little.*

*"By this" abiding, remaining in the Lord, love is perfected in me. It's accomplished. It's fulfilled. The call to love others cannot be genuine in me if I am not genuinely abiding in the Lord... being in constant conversation and relationship with Him.*

*This is imperative for me to get. It is by abiding in the Lord that the Holy Spirit who dwells in me works to transform me and perfect my love. The transformation by sanctification is real when it results in me loving others more... not just being a more moral person. Righteousness is not genuine if it's not motivated by love. This is a supernatural power at work within me. Paul explains this supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 2:12-13, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual." What makes me spiritual and able to understand the things freely given me by God (like love)? Abiding, remaining in Him. I don't just visit God randomly... I live with Him continually.*

*There's a purpose to having this love from God perfected in me... to have "confidence for the day of judgment." Judgment IS coming and God is the Judge. In 1 John 2:28, John calls us to abide in Jesus "so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink from Him at His coming." I don't want the first time I really acknowledge Him to be when He comes for me to take me home... and yes, to appear before the judgment seat of Christ where I will receive reward for how I honored Him in faith on earth. Let me not be deceived!!! There is only one Judge, the Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 4:5 says that when He comes, "He will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God." This is the grace and mercy of God. No matter how I as a believer behaved on earth, I will not receive condemnation, but commendation. But that's MORE reason for me to abide in Him, not less!!! Who else loves like that???*

*"Because as He is, so also are we in this world." In Jesus' prayer to the Father the night of His betrayal and arrest, He said to the Father in vs. John 17:16, "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." And He said that He was sending us into the world to draw others to salvation. That is the most important and impactful purpose I have here on this earth! How IS He "in this world"? He was despised and He was rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). He did not seek the approval of men. He sought the glory of His Father in heaven. He brought good news of salvation and He loved us to the very end. That's what He wants me to be like... That only comes supernaturally, as the Holy Spirit has free reign to work in my heart... as I abide in Him and in His love.*

*Vs. 18-19 ~ "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. We love because He first loved us." O Lord, how many years did I suffer under the deception that Your love for me was conditional??? I could say the right words, but I didn't embrace them. I desperately wanted to, but I let my feelings dictate what I dwelled on. Here is the most beautiful thing... YOU DON'T WANT ME TO FEAR PUNISHMENT!!! I have so many promises from Your word that prove this...*

- *1 Corinthians 8:1, "There is therefore now NO CONDEMNATION for those who are in Christ Jesus."*
- *Galatians 5:1, "For freedom Christ has set you free. Stand firm then, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."*
- *Romans 8:15, "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'"*

*O Lord, there are so many others!!! If I'm fearing punishment from You, I know that I need a deeper understanding of Your love... I need more perfecting. I get that by abiding in You and Your love! Please help me not to wait to abide in You until I understand Your love. Help me to step closer to You in faith and refuse to let my feelings be on the throne. YOUR TRUTH is the ONLY TRUTH. Let me remember that I love only because You first loved me, and You proved it on the cross.*

*Vs. 20-21 ~ O Lord, no man is an island. To justify "forsaking the gathering of believers in Your church" by saying my relationship with You is personal and private is to not know You. I DO have a personal, private relationship with You that is even more intimate than the personal, private relationship I have with my husband. But that is meant to fuel me to love others more, not less.*

*Let me not be a liar! Let me not rationalize or justify hatred or bitterness toward anyone in any way. This is a supernatural call. I cannot live like this unless I'm abiding in You. The evidence of my love for You IS my love for others... starting with those who are closest to me, but not ending there... I love others because they are YOURS, Your image bearers. You call me*

*to love my husband, love my children and their husbands and their children, love my friends, love all believers, and even love my enemies. How do I do this sincerely and faithfully and humbly, regardless of how others treat me?*

- *Abide in You and Your love.*
- *Let the Spirit have full reign to perfect Your love in me.*
- *Let YOUR love be my sole motivation.*

*That's it. You will do the rest... one degree of glorious love to the next. This is what You "freely GIVE me" as I remain, live with, abide in You. Yes, Lord. Please do this in me! It will take a miracle, but You are the God of miracles.*