Session 11 The Glory and Responsibility of Being Chosen By God (Jn. 15:16)

*“Let me drink from the river of Your pleasures as I delight in Your beauty” (Ps. 36:8; 37:4)*

1. God chose His people for friendship and fruitfulness (Jn. 15:16)
	1. Immediately after speaking on friendship with God, Jesus assured them that it was not their idea but a privilege that began in God’s heart that He will help them to grow in until they reach its fullness.

15“…I have called you friends…16You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you
that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain [be rewarded in eternity],
that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. 17These things I command you, that you love one another. 18If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me… (Jn. 15:15-18)

*Paragraph A: Let’s read from John 15. Note the amazing verse, verse 16, where the Lord says, “I chose you.” There are many implications to this. It is a staggering concept that the “Genesis 1 God” called you by name and led you into the Kingdom, and He knew of His calling of your life before you were born. He pursued you when you had no thought about Him. Because He has pursued us, we must refuse the enemy’s lies—he says, “God does not care,” but the Lord says, “I have been pursuing you long before they ever connected to Me.”—He chose us and took the initiative in this relationship, and He is committed to His relationship with us for all of eternity.*

*God sovereignly chose us. I want to make it about us. He is talking to the apostles, but the message is clearly for all believers. It is not limited to them. I mean, they were uniquely the apostles of the Lamb. Nobody else is but those original ones, yet they are some of billions of believers throughout history. He chose us for friendship, number one, but we have to say, “Yes,” to it, and He chose us for fruitfulness.*

*Immediately after speaking on friendship with God in verse 15, Jesus assured them in, verse 16, that friendship with Him was not their idea; it is His idea. Thus He is convincing us, not us convincing Him, to have a friendship together. It is privilege that began in God’s heart before you were ever born, this idea that He would have friends among weak and broken people who would say, “Yes,” to Him.*

*And so, He tells us here in verse 16, “You did not choose Me.” Now that is not a fully accurate statement even with Jesus’ words because they did have to choose Him. But what He is saying is that you did not initially start this relationship choosing Him. So, He meant that because in a minute we will see by the words of Jesus, they had to choose Him in a very radical, wholehearted way in order to walk in this.*

*Verse 16 “You did not choose Me.”—You did not start this relationship—“But I chose you, and I appointed”— or I ordained you many translations say—“that you would go”—you would rise up and take action in the kingdom. And, that action would actually be successful, though it might not look that way to man, but it would bear fruit in your life and it would bear fruit in other people’s lives, though many do not have the discernment to measure that or to see it. He said, in effect, “I assure you: I have ordained you, and I am committed to lead you in a way so your life will be transformed. You will have fruit on the inside, and you will have an impact of inspiring that transformation in the lives of others. Whether anybody ever recognizes it or counts it or measures it, it will happen, I assure you. This is My call. It is bigger than your call. This is My plan for you, bigger than your plan for you. This is My ‘dream’ for you, just using that word. It is bigger than your dream.”*

*He said that when you bear fruit, when this change happens in your heart, the fruit actually is growing in love and being used to inspire other people to grow in love. In one sentence, that is what it is. He goes on, and the remarkable thing is that this fruit would remain. And what He means by “remain”—you put many of His teachings together—He means you will have rewards forever, eternally rewarded based on conversations and small actions and decisions you made in this life. You will have rewards forever. The fact that weak and broken human beings can have conversations—I can have a message, and a few of you get inspired—and the Lord sees that, and He says, “There, you bore some fruit because some hearts were inspired.” It is a one-on-one conversation. You are talking to your grandchildren. You are talking to the neighbor. You are talking to people at work or the soccer league. You are bearing fruit. You have that opportunity in God.*

*Then He goes on to say, “Whatever things you ask the Father in My name, I will give you.” And, of course, the idea He is talking about is that you would talk to Him about bearing fruit, how to do it, open doors for you, anoint you, and the fruit that you will bear most, verse 17, is that you love one another. He was saying, in effect, “I am giving you a blank check to talk to Me about anything, but I am giving you a really clear hint: I would that you would talk to Me most about bearing fruit and walking in love,” which is really the same thing, verse 16 and 17.*

*In verse 18—we will actually cover this in the next couple weeks—He says, “I want you to know, this fruit will stand up even in the face of hostility. The world is going to hate you.” He gives about seven verses of teaching, verses 18-25, where He unpacks the hostility, but the point here is, “I will anoint you in your weakness and your brokenness to actually make an impact and not cave in, even in the face of hostility. And God will remember forever the fruit that you bear. I have chosen you. This is My plan for you. But you have to talk to Me about it. And if you talk to Me about it, it is going to happen.”*

*I cannot imagine anything more glorious than God—the Genesis 1 God in the human body—the Man—saying, “I want friendship with you, and I am going to enable you to bear fruit that will last forever, even in the face of hostility, even in your weakness, and in your proneness to timidity. I will help you, even you, if you will talk to Me about it.” That is the message here.*

* 1. ***I chose you and appointed you***: This divine choosing is for every believer. Jesus wanted them to be clear that He took the initiative in their relationship with Him (Jn. 1:39, 42-43; 6:70). This is important because of the fear that they were about to face that night (14:1), and because Peter and the others trusted their commitment to Jesus more than His commitment to them (Mt. 26:33-35).

33Peter [said], “Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble” …35if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And so said all the disciples. (Mt. 26:33-35)

*Paragraph B: “I chose you and appointed you.” He wanted them to be clear that He took the initiative in the relationship, not them. Because, if He took the initiative, then He was responsible for a number of things. I will get to that in a moment. It was really important that night they knew that because that He took the initiative, “If I am the One that is behind this, then I am the strength behind this relationship. You sort of think you are, but actually, you are not. I am.” As a matter of fact, the fear that was going to overcome them that very night. So that is what He is teaching them, “Let not your heart be troubled. Do not let fear dominate you.” He is teaching them about overcoming fear in this context.*

*He is saying, “One way that fear will not overcome you is if you really have a living understanding of the fact that I chose you. I am committed to the relationship more than you are. I am going to undergird this relationship in a way that you do not even understand. I see the end from the very beginning, and I know where I am going, and I have chosen you, and I have called you by name.”*

*Another thing that was really important that night was that Peter particularly, but probably the others too, had a very fatal spiritual flaw. And it is one that we easily succumb to without knowing it: Peter actually had more confidence in his commitment to Jesus than in Jesus’ commitment to Him. When Jesus said to him, right here in Matthew 26, “You are going to stumble,” he responded, “Maybe those guys, but I will never stumble. You do not know who I am. You do not know my heart.”*

*And the truth was, “Peter, you do not know your heart, but if you have more confidence in your commitment to Me, and you are the strength undergirding your relationship, number one, you will not pray and talk to Me much about it. You will not think you need to. You will have confidence, but it is an unsanctified, inappropriate confidence. And, number two, you will stumble much, and you will live perpetually in condemnation. You have to know, My commitment is greater than yours, and I am the strength behind the relationship. You have to know that, Peter.”*

* 1. ***I chose you***: Our relationship with Jesus was initiated by Him. By saying, “I chose you,” He assures us that He is yoked or bonded to us. He seeks to convince us—it is not us convincing Him—of a friendship that bears much fruit that glorifies God and remains (Jn. 15:8, 16). He laid His claim on us before we ever thought of Him. Thus, He is committed to uphold, oversee, undergird and be the strength in our relationship with Him. I pray, “*Jesus, thank You that You chose me. Show me more!*”

16You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you… (Jn. 15:16)

*Paragraph C: He said, “I chose you.” And when He said He chose you, what He was saying is, “I am bonded to you. I am yoked to you in a way bigger than what you understand.” So when they would face trouble, that night and the next day and the next years—most of them were martyred—“you will know that I am with you when you understand that I chose you before you chose Me. I initiated the relationship.” I mean, the idea is that God pursues us. We talk a lot about pursuing God, which we should. But we only pursue God to the level we actually understand He pursued us.*

*John said, “We love Him because He first loved us.” When we understand He loves us more, we love Him more. When we understand that He pursues us more, we pursue Him more. It is the revelation of His pursuit that awakens us and energizes us to pursue Him. So, this is a really critical and essential declaration He is making to them, but it is just as essential for us.*

* + 1. By declaring that He chose us, Jesus takes full responsibility to help us to grow strong in our relationship to Him by giving us direction, provision, protection, and vindication so that we are able to bear fruit that glorifies the Father. We must talk much to Him about this as we ask for help (15:16d). We are assured that He will hear our prayers for help to bear much fruit.

*Number 1: He is saying, “I am bonded to you. I am yoked to you.” In that He is saying, “I am fully responsible to undergird the relationship.” Yes, we have to choose Him, but that comes second. That is necessary, but He laid His claim on us long before we had a vision for Him. That is a powerful reality when it really connects with our heart. Thus, we are assured.*

*The very next phrase after He said, “I chose you,” He said, “Whatever you ask, I will listen.” We are assured that He is attentive to us because He took the initiative and He undergirds the relationship. What He was saying here when He said, “I chose you,” He was declaring, “I am taking responsibility to give direction to your life, to give protection to your life, to give provision. I am taking the responsibility to vindicate you when the enemy has come against you. But you need to talk to Me about it.”*

*Now, when He said, “I chose you,” the next thing He said is, “Whatever you ask.” Some folks imagine that is a random change of subjects. No, He is talking about bearing fruit in loving and walking out the privilege of being chosen. And the privilege is, “I will pay close attention to you, but you need to talk to Me because I require that.” I have taught on prayer for lots of years, and I love to say this. Prayer is not about giving God information. It is about conversation. He does not need information. He knows our needs and our problems better than you do. He wants conversation.*

* + 1. He is more committed to seeing our relationship with Him grow than we are. His plan for our life is bigger and better than our plan for our life. We can be sure that He is with us when we face troubles. He will lead us in a way to bear good fruit even in the face of hostility (15:18).
		2. Peter elaborated on 15:16, declaring that Jesus chose us as His special people (1 Pet. 2:9).
		We are a special treasure to Him (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; Ps. 135:4; Mal. 3:17; 1 Pet. 2:9). We are to proclaim or give witness to “the praises of Him” by magnifying His excellencies (Phil. 3:8) or how attractive He is—that we enjoy our relationship with Him and trust His leadership (Rom. 8:28). This is synonymous to bearing fruit that glorifies the Father (Jn. 15:8).

9But you are a chosen generation [people]…His own special people, that you may proclaim [give witness to] the praises of Him who called you…into His marvelous light… (1 Pet. 2:9)

8…I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ… (Phil. 3:8)

*Number 3: In 1 Peter, Peter elaborates on this issue of being chosen. He remembered well Jesus teaching this. He says in 1 Peter 2, “You are a chosen generation.” I mean, individually you are chosen, but the generation meaning the family of God, the Body of Christ, everyone who says, “Yes.” They are in that sphere of being in the chosen family. Peter said and understands what it meant we are His own special people. Other translations say we are His inheritance. We are His own special treasure, some translations say. Peter said, as it were, “I get it now. The fact that He chose me means I am special to Him. I am dear to Him. I knew that when He said it that night at the Last Supper, but I did not really grasp it.” This calling, this choosing, and this special relationship being special to Him, the point is that we would “proclaim the praises of Him who called us into His marvelous light.”*

*Meaning, we are not just special, and that is it. We are special with a mission. He said, “You are going to proclaim.” Many other Bible verses say we are messengers. Every one of you in this room and those joining us by the web stream, we are all messengers at some level. We are all called to proclaim or to give witness. What is it we give witness to? The praises of Him. And that does not just talk about a worship service. We give witness to believers and unbelievers, to many unbelievers and to believers, too, about how attractive He is and His leadership is. We are proclaiming our delight in conversation and intimacy with Him, that there is something about talking to Him with the Word that does something to me. I have a pleasure in obeying Him. I have pleasure in this. He is attractive to me. This is the praises of Him.*

*I have joy in His leadership. I am not offended. I am not afraid when things go badly; I am positive it will turn out for my good. And unbelievers see this testimony because we are talking about an invisible God: “You love and delight in talking to Him? You have pleasure in obeying Him and denying your own fleshly pleasures? You are obeying an invisible God?” Yes, because I feel His pleasure when I obey Him. “What are you talking about?”*

*When your life is hard, you have joy because you are not caving into fear and offense because you are so convinced of His excellent leadership, you know it is going to turn out for good. It may take weeks, may take months, may take years, but you are sure it will turn out for good. Unbelievers hear this, and they ask, “What do you know about an invisible God I know nothing about?”*

*Peter said that we are proclaimers, we are messengers of the praises of Him. I want to use the words, “the attractiveness of Jesus.” By our commitment to obey, to love the Word, to rejoice in His leadership in trouble, it makes Jesus look attractive to other people, both believers and unbelievers alike. And the glorious thing is what we are telling other people is that we are interacting with Him who is marvelous light. Not that we only got saved from the debt of our sin, which is unbelievably glorious, but we are interacting with He who is marvelous light. That light touches us when we talk to Him. We feel His presence when we talk to Him in the Word, not every time totally but as a regular part of our life, and we would have no other lifestyle but to be called to tell the story and proclaim Him. To tell the story of His praise, of His attractiveness.*

*Later on, we will see, though we will not probably spend time on it, but that is what it means at the end; I will just point it out to you. When Jesus said that by bearing fruit you give glory to the Father, you make the Father look attractive to people when you bear the fruit of loving His leadership, loving His Word, interacting with Him, obeying Him, seeing the delight in His heart when you obey Him and then it brings the light to your heart because you glorify God that way. People see the invisible God in your expression. They ask, is that possible that a human being can interact with an invisible Being with this kind of reality and this kind of satisfaction? And that is what He means in verse 8—we probably will not have time to get to it—you will glorify God by doing this. You will make My Father look good in a dark world. What an incredible privilege!*

*This thing is so much more than us just kind of slugging it through and hanging in there. I am a weak man in a broken, fallen world, yet I get to make God look attractive in my weak labors and touch marvelous light and bear fruit that lasts forever. How did I get to do that? It is glorious is what Jesus is saying. But a lot of believers do not have quite that perspective just yet. But I believe that will be the perspective of the End-time Church walking in victory. They will see the absolute glory of Jesus having chosen them to bear fruit that lasts forever that makes their Father, the Father, look good.*

* + 1. ***He chose us***: This is also applies to how He chose to form our inward parts in our mother’s womb in a unique way with various strengths and weaknesses (Ps. 139:13-16).

13You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. 14I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made…15My frame was not hidden from You, when
I was made in secret…16Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them. (Ps. 139:13-16)

* + 1. As creator, He chose the design of the human make up knowing it would be weak as we chose sin. He chose this as the context in which His kindness is displayed forever (Eph. 2:5-7).

5…we were dead in trespasses, [He] made us alive with Christ…7that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us… (Eph. 2:5-7)

* 1. Did Jesus choose us or did we chose Him? Both, but this must be understood in the right sequence.

*Paragraph D: The question has been asked, “Did He choose us or did we choose Him?” Of course, you already know—it is obvious—the answer is both. It is the matter of the sequence. Because He initiated it, He is the One who undergirds the relationship, and He is the One who oversees it with far greater detail and focus than we do. That really makes me happy. He is more committed to my bearing fruit, which means to be spiritually successful, He is more committed to me bearing fruit than I am. You know, I want to, but I kind of lose my focus. Then He reminds me, “Hey, I am the One more committed to this than you are. And this is the way of your greatness and your success, to enter into conversation with Me where you bear fruit.” Well, He chose us, as I said, long before we chose Him.*

* + 1. First, Jesus chose to reveal the Father to us long before we wanted to know Him (Mt.11:27). The reason we know the invisible God of Genesis 1 is because Jesus inspired us to seek Him.

27Nor does anyone know the Father except…the one whom to the Son wills to reveal Him. (Mt. 11:27)

*Number 1: Nobody knows the Father except for the Son and except for those to whom the Son reveals Him. The reason you know the invisible God of Israel, God the Father, is because His Son tapped your heart to give understanding in the way that made it sense to you to say, “Yes.” That was not the devil, and that was not your flesh. That was Him picking you. Some of you were 4. Some of you were 60. He tapped your heart, and He has been touching it for a while, saying, “I want to reveal the Father to you because you are chosen.”*

* + 1. His choices come from His infinite wisdom and perfect foreknowledge (Ps. 139:4; Jer. 1:5; Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:1-2). To be conformed to the image of Jesus is synonymous with bearing much fruit that remains. “*He knew what He was getting into when He called your name.*”

28…all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called… 29For whom He foreknew, He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son… (Rom. 8:28-29)

1Peter…to the pilgrims….2elect according to the foreknowledge of God… (1 Pet. 1:1-2)

*Number 2: Jesus’ choices all come from infinite wisdom and perfect foreknowledge. I mean, before you were born, He knew about your life, and He had plans for you. His commitment to us is far longer than our commitment to Him. I love the Misty song that I have written here. Some of you are new, and you will not know this, but she sang this for years, “He knew what He was getting into when He called your name.” I have heard that for years. He knew what He was getting into when He called broken you. He is not shocked. He understood who you were when He said, “I will reveal the Father to you.”*

*It says here in verse 28, Romans 8, “All things work together for good to those that love God, to those that are called, for whom He foreknew, He chose, He predestined from the beginning, He predestined people to be that He chose to be conformed to the image of Jesus,” in other words, to bear fruit. “Conformed to the image of the Son” is Paul’s way of saying bearing fruit that remains. God foreknew you and said from the beginning, “You will bear fruit that remains. You wait and see My leadership over your life. If you will listen to it, I will lead you in a way that will not always be easy, but it will be effective.*

* + 1. Second, we must respond to His choosing of us by choosing to love Him on His terms.
		They had to choose to follow Him in a wholehearted way in order to bear fruit in fullness. Jesus told them how a disciple must live if they are to bear fruit to the full measure that God ordained for their lives. A disciple is an “apprentice” who is committed to obey and learn from their leader. The call to discipleship is missing in the modern presentation of the gospel.

26“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother…and his own life also,
he cannot be My disciple. 27Whoever does not bear his cross…cannot be My disciple… 33whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (Lk. 14:26-33)

*He did choose us, but we still have to choose Him. Some theological circles debate about this, but it is not that complicated. He chose us, and then He required us to choose Him. So, in one sense, we voluntarily choose Him. But here is the key, and this is often overlooked. As people serious about being His disciple, I do not just want to be a church member, or I do not just want to be whatever. I confess Jesus. I want to be a disciple, a learner from His leadership. A disciple committed to learn and obey the Master, that is what a disciple was. He said, in effect, “You will be learners, and you will be those who obey. But if you are going to choose Me, you have to choose Me on My terms.”*

*Now, this is not often emphasized in the Body of Christ today, but the good news is that it is going to be majorly emphasized before the Lord returns in the global Body of Christ. Notice that He mentions three times—these are the very words of Jesus in Luke 14—three times He says if you are going to come to Me, you have to come this way or you cannot be My disciple. You have to come this way or you cannot be My disciple. You have to come this way or you cannot be My disciple. And somehow that gets lost in the modern presentation of the gospel. He said, “You have to hate your mother and father,” meaning in comparison. “Your loyalty to Me is higher than your loyalty to your family.” Not your loyalty to a church or a ministry, your loyalty to obeying Him in a direct way.*

*He said that if you will not bear your cross, if you will not deny yourself as part of the process, you cannot be His disciple. You cannot be one that bears fruit that remains. You cannot enjoy friendship with Him. There are people who will still be saved. In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul talked about it in verse 15. They will be saved, but they will suffer the loss of all the fruit and the reward they could have had. But still they are saved as though by fire. And some people want to figure out how far they can go on the edge of darkness and still be saved.*

*I maintain that is entirely the wrong question. Completely the wrong question. We want to know how far He will let us go towards Him, not how far we can get to the edge of darkness and still be in the kingdom. That is a devastatingly scary question that folks are asking: can I do a little immorality, a little bit of drunkenness, a little bit of lying about money, not that much lying, a little bit of slander, not that much slander. That is the wrong question. How about complaining? Can I complain a bit? I will not complain to that many people. No! That is the life we are called to. We cannot bear fruit in that mindset.*

* 1. One important issue that many overlook is the biblical call to press in for “the fullness” of all that the Lord calls us to and not be content with less. Paul exhorted us to press into God for the “prize” of fullness. Jesus spoke of hungering for a greater breakthrough of righteousness in our heart.

12…I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ…laid hold of me [the fullness of my destiny]…14I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God… (Phil. 3:12-14)

6“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness…” (Mt. 5:6)

* 1. Earlier that week, on Tuesday, Jesus taught a parable (Mt. 22:1-14) to warn those who seek to enter the kingdom on their own terms. Some of the Jewish people at that time hoped to participate in the kingdom simply because they were Jewish (Mt. 3:9). His message here is that no one should trust in their nationality or religious heritage as the basis of salvation without responding to Him as King.

11“…[the King] saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment… 13The King said…, ‘Bind him…and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’
14For many are called [invited by God], but few are chosen [by responding to God].”
(Mt. 22:11-14)

*Paragraph F: Just two days earlier, Tuesday night—here at the Last Supper, this is Thursday when He is talking to them in John 13—on Tuesday He was talking to them, we see in Matthew 22. He was warning Israel. I am not going to go through the parable. You can read it on your own, but it is the parable of the wedding feast, and the guy who went into the King, and the Father said, “You cannot be here,” and He threw him into outer darkness. And then look at verse 14. Jesus gave this very important principle, “For many are called, but few are chosen.” Now He said this on Tuesday, “For many are called, but few are chosen,” and that is foundational to understanding what He said on Thursday when He said, “I chose you.”*

*He is not contradicting what He said on Tuesday. He said, in essence, “I chose you first, but remember what I said Tuesday: you do have to choose Me. So, do not confuse it. I laid the foundation clearly on Tuesday. I am going to invite many people into My Kingdom. They have to choose Me. They have to respond.”*

*And what happens here in this parable—He was talking to some of the Jews at that time—they thought they would participate in the Kingdom by simply by the fact they are Jewish. “Hey, we are in Israel. We are in the Kingdom.” No, no, you cannot trust in your nationality. You cannot trust in your religious heritage. You cannot trust in the fact that four generations of your family had pastors in them. That does not matter. The only thing you can have confidence in for the basis of salvation is your response to the King.*

*Jesus is saying, “Do not presume on this. You have to come to Me on My terms.” He made that clear on Tuesday, so now on Thursday when He said, “I chose you,” He is saying, as it were, “and I know that you are not thinking that you do not need to choose Me.” He says, “I have been very, very clear”—in Luke 14 Paragraph E and Matthew 22 Paragraph F—“I have been very clear repeatedly that you must choose Me, but that is just the response to understanding that I am bonded to you and yoked to you first, and I am undergirding the relationship much more than you are, and I am overseeing it more than you are.*

* 1. Jesus taught that “*many* are ***called*** (invited) but *few* are ***chosen*** (by responding on God’s terms). This helps us to understand why on Thursday He emphasized “choosing them” (15:16) without mentioning that they had to choose Him. He had established that earlier in Matthew 20:16; 25:14.

*Paragraph G: This principle of being, it says, “Many are called,” many are invited, but they are not chosen. The people who are chosen are the people that respond. And so He says that you have to respond. And the thing I want to highlight in Paragraph G—you can read the paragraph later—are the words, “many” and “few.” I want them to mark my heart in a deeper way. Many are invited. Many hear the message. But a small percent respond in order to be chosen. Even though the Lord has chosen them from the beginning, but the human response—they do have to respond.*

* 1. It is tragic that many are invited but only a few respond to be among the chosen. That *many* are called, but *few* are chosen highlights the balance between God’s sovereignty and man’s free will. Divine sovereignty requires human responsibility so that voluntary love is manifest.

*Now what is happening here is the fact that many are called, and few are chosen. He is highlighting the balance of God’s sovereignty and man’s free will. There is this tension that God calls, but He still requires the human responsibility to say “yes” to love because it is not a shot-gun wedding. He wants voluntary lovers in His Kingdom. He says, in effect, “I sovereignly called you. I sovereignly got your attention. I sovereignly stirred your heart, but that is not the guarantee that you will say, “Yes.” There is a certain mystery between God’s sovereignty and human responsibility. The call is effectual, but the human response needs to be in place.*

* 1. Many seek to come to Jesus on their own terms. Some are active in ministry or give money to kingdom ministries. But on the last day their lack of genuine faith will be exposed (Mt. 7:23).

21“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom…but he who does the will of My Father…22Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons…and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” (Mt. 7:21-23)

*Paragraph I: Many people claim to follow Jesus, but they need to take it seriously. Many people say, “I am a Jesus follower. I testify that I believe in Him. I prayed that prayer once. That one preacher said to pray the prayer, and it is fine. I did it.” They have to hear Jesus’ warning that He gave at the end of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7. He said, and you know the verse, verse 21, “Not everyone who says to Me on the final day ‘Lord, Lord’ not all of them will enter the Kingdom.” The person who does the will of God, and no one does the will of God perfectly, but the person that has set their heart to do God’s will. In the area of their morality, what they do with their body, what they put in their body, what they do with their money, how they use their money, what they watch, how they talk, they have to be committed to the will of God.*

*Again, we all stumble. The issue is not: do you stumble? The issue is: when we stumble, do we call sin sin and go to war against it or not. I mean, nobody else around me seems troubled about it. There are large camps in the Body of Christ with immorality, drunkenness, and unrighteousness with finances, speech, and relationships, well, it is the grace of God. No, that is a seriously false message. It is a very troubling one because some folks are unknowing and think it is okay, because thousands of “cool Christians” and powerful leaders with big ministries are giving that message. But Jesus said, “It is he who does the will of My Father,” or I would say “he that is committed to do the will of My Father” because there is the human element and we all stumble, but the commitment is there with the sincerity.*

*Verse 22. This is troubling. Many, not a few. Like what? That word, “many,” I do not like that word, many. “Many will say to Me on the final day, ‘I prophesied in Your name. I cast out devils. I worked miracles.’ Verse 23, I will say to them, ‘I never knew you.’”*

*“What do You mean, ‘never knew you?’ I cast out demons in Your name.”*

*“We never had a relationship.” And there is a lot more to say about that, but I do not want to go into that right now because I am really locked in on just talking about being chosen and us responding to Him choosing us by responding on His terms so that we bear fruit that makes the Father look attractive in a fallen world. I cannot fathom anything more exciting than that. And that I can talk to God about. And the Spirit in me, and I have got the Bible, and I talk to Him, and I feel delighted. This is amazing.*

*My first early years walking with the Lord, I did not like prayer at all, and I did not like Bible study. I liked meetings, but I did not like prayer and Bible study. So it took me a while, but I assure you, I mean, I thought I would never like prayer or Bible study. The Bible was so boring to me, and prayer was even more boring. But I loved meetings. I loved outreaches. I would go to meetings and have a ball and take notes and talk to people afterwards and go on the outreach and witness to people. But when I opened the Bible to the book of Romans, I said, “What on earth is this about?” I never dreamed I would love talking to God with the Bible. I had no idea that pleasure was available to weak people. But I promise you, it is.*

* 1. Jesus chose the apostles, but eventually they had to choose to “come to Him” on His terms. Jesus again emphasized His requirement of obedience to be a disciple (which is synonymous with bearing fruit that remains). We will be shocked by the glory of the rewards that He gives for every act of obedience. We will never regret denying ourselves on the day that we see His generous rewards.

24Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and
take up his cross, and follow Me…27The Son of Man…will reward each according to his works.” (Mt. 16:24-27)

*Paragraph J: Jesus chose the apostles, clearly, but they eventually had to choose Him, to come to Him on His terms. This is my third passage where I am talking about His requirement of serious obedience. He said, “If you want to come to Me, you have to deny yourself and take up your cross. I guarantee you, if you want to come to Me, you have to deny yourself and take up your cross.” Look at verse 27. In essence, “You will not regret it. I will reward you for every movement of obedience you have given to Me in this fallen world. I will remember every cup of cold water you gave in My name. I will give you the shock of your life when I reward you far more than you can imagine when you denied yourself and maybe felt sorry for yourself because you had to bypass a few opportunities that would touch your flesh or a few pleasures or something.” The Lord says, as it were, “I am going to give you the shock of your life. I will reward you in a way beyond anything you can imagine.”*

* 1. The principle of being chosen is applied first to our salvation and then to our ministry assignment.

*Paragraph K: The Lord wanted the apostles to know this. This is Jesus again. All this is Jesus’ teaching. He talked about how He requires faithfulness for true disciples, for those that will be fruit-bearers of fruit that will remain. That is the key. I want to bear fruit, and I want it to last, and I want the Father to look good when people look at my life. And so, Jesus gives this parable in Luke 12:44. He is talking about the faithful guy who will be a ruler in the age to come. This is what He is talking about. He will make him a ruler in the age to come at the Judgment Seat. But then He warns them, and He is saying this to the apostles, “Every one of you who have been given more, so you want a great calling, so you want a big vocation, so you want an abundance of grace? I will require more from you if I give you more. You must know that. If I give you more, it will help you, but I will have you answer because I do not distribute My gifts and My grace to My people just in vain.”*

*If it is from the Genesis 1 God who gave it to you in kindness, like, oh, I do not want to mess with it!*

*“It is just God.”*

*Just Who? It is the living God! He gave it to you.*

*“Well, I do not like that calling. I do not want to do it. I want to do what I want to do. I am tired. I am discouraged.”*

*Think again. Think again. There is only one God of Israel who sent His Son. He is going to require a response. He is telling His apostles this thing. You know, you are chosen, you are favored, but there is a need to respond.*

* 1. Paul prayed that, when Jesus returns, God would count believers in Thessalonica worthy of receiving the “fullness of all” that God ordained for them in the age to come. We do not pray to “worthy to be forgiven” for we are forgiven and receive the gift of righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21) as a free gift based on Jesus’ death. Our entrance into heaven is absolutely free. Paul was not referring to our entrance into the city, but our placement in His kingdom government in the age to come.

10When He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints…11Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power… (2 This. 1:10-11)

*This is a very much neglected passage. You almost never hear this talked about. Paul says in verse 11, he “prays always, that God would count believers”—born-again believers—“worthy of their calling.” What? This confuses people that Paul is praying for born-again believers to be made worthy. That sounds like we are earning our salvation.*

*I am not talking about salvation. I am talking about—look at the middle of verse 11—the key is that they would fulfill all of the will of God in their life. And you want to be worthy to fill all the will of God, entering into the fullness of what God ordained for you, when you stand before Him. I am praying you would have a worthy response. Beloved, I want to stir you up to have a vision for fullness. I do not want to get by. I do not want a little bit of reward. I want to enter into everything that God will give my human spirit in this age. I want to enter into the fullness.*

*Look at that. “Fulfill all the good pleasure of God.” And Paul says, “I pray always.” That is not a given. I mean, you are already saved. You are good. And you are moving along. But you have some decades ahead of you. And if you are serious, you will pray that the Lord will strengthen you and not just take that for granted.*

1. Weak people are chosen to bear fruit that remains
	1. ***That you should go and bear fruit***: He assured them that He had chosen them to be His friends which included being appointed them to a specific mission that would bear fruit that would remain.

10“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love…12This is My commandment,
that you love one another…16that you should go and bear fruit…” (Jn. 15:10-12, 16)

*I have really good news. God chooses weak people. He chooses people like us to bear fruit that remains. Before we look at a few examples of that good news, I am just going to say it really clearly. You already know it, so I do not want to take time on it. He says that you would bear fruit. And the fruit-bearing has two facets to the fruit bearing.*

* + 1. Fruit bearing includes keeping His commands (15:10) to love God and people (15:12, 17).

*Number 1: We grow in love. We obey His commandments. A lot of folks are not serious about the word, “obedience.” That word is really important. Jesus said, “You have to keep My commandments.” And, of course, the ultimate is loving. Do not overlook this. That is part one of fruit-bearing, and part two is that He makes us a witness of His grace and kindness to other people. We bear the fruit of bringing people to the Lord or bringing people in the Lord to a greater place, bringing them forward in the Lord.*

* + 1. Fruit bearing includes being His witnesses to unbelievers as we gather fruit for eternal life.

35“…look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! 36He who reaps…gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps rejoice together. (Jn. 4:35-36)

*Fruit-bearing includes being a witness to unbelievers. Look at what Jesus said about this earlier. He talked about the harvest in John 4. He said, “The harvest fields are ready.” But look at verse 36. He says, “He that reaps”—I love this phrase—“He gathers fruit for eternal life.” What? He gathers fruit when you lead someone to the Lord, and it may not even be dramatic. It may be non-dramatic. When they say, “yes,” you are gathering fruit for eternal life. This is huge.*

*We need to ask the Holy Spirit to give us opportunities or even just give little, short witnesses. You do not have to give a sermon to somebody. “Lord, give me insight on how to do this.” I urge you to pray for this. “Give me opportunities and give me boldness.” You do not have to rise up and preach to somebody, “Hey, in the name of Jesus, you are going to hell.” No, just have a conversation. I have found over the years that I have led a lot of people to the Lord just by the grace of God, but it is in conversation. At first, I preached, and I went blah, blah, blah. I wanted to be Billy Graham part 2 or something, but it did not work.*

*Just talk to them. One of the things when I would start talking to somebody—I used this for 50 years, this same sentence—I would talk to an unbeliever, and I would say this. I was taught this by my youth leaders, and I have used it for 50 years. I would ask people, “Do you ever think of spiritual things?”*

*Most people say, “Yeah, I do.”*

*And then I have the second question ready to go. I would ask, “What are some of the conclusions that you are grappling with?”*

*And if they answer you, they want to keep talking. If they say, “It is none of your business,” okay.*

*If they said something, I would say, “Well, what do you base that conclusion on? How did you come to that conclusion?*

*And they may say, “Well, I do not know for sure.”*

*Then I tell them, “Christianity is not a religion. It is a relationship.” I used the same phrases 10,000 times, and I always add ed, “You know, you can live in a garage your whole life, but that does not make you a car. You can live in a church your whole life, but that does not make you a Christian. You have got to have a relationship.” And then, “Are you interested in that?”*

*“No.”*

*“Okay.” But it takes like two or three minutes to get that point. Then it is not confrontive. It is not rude. They are answering questions and giving you permission to ask the next one. So, be conversational. The reason I say that some people this witnessing thing is so terrifying because they think they have to go to a total stranger and just raise their voice, point their finger, and proclaim something. No. Not at all. Just have a friendly conversation. If they do not want to take it to the next question, then do not take them to the next question. Just pray for them.*

*In John 4:36, Jesus said that they “bear or gather fruit for eternal life”—that is such a dynamic thought. That I could say some things to some guy, and I am bearing fruit for eternal life. Are you kidding? It was just a 7-minute conversation:*

*“Yeah, I think I am interested in that.”*

*Well, would you like to pray to receive Christ?*

 *“Yeah, yeah, can I?”*

*Seven minutes later, I bear fruit for eternal life. Wow!*

*The Lord might say, “I am the One who chose you. I orchestrated that. If you will ask Me for opportunities, ask Me for insight.”*

*I gave you a little 3-minute little lesson on how to witness. You got a little bit of insight right there. Ask Him for a little boldness. I do not mean to rev up and confront, but just to talk, not to be afraid of your voice because it is a new person. Or they are a family member, not a new person.*

*And Jesus would say, “I want you to know this, both he who sows, and he who reaps rejoice together.” Sometimes you are sowing a seed, and the next guy or ten guys later, the person prays a prayer and receives Christ. You do not know if you are sowing the seed or if you are the one who is reaping in that final moment when they say “yes” to the Lord. So, do not be afraid of two-minute little witnessing and ask that question, “Do you ever think of spiritual things?” Again, I have used that for 50 years, and it is so easy and so non-confrontive to do that. They let you go forward by answering your questions. They give you permission.*

* 1. ***Go and bear fruit***: We are to “go” or take the action of being His witness (Jn. 20:21). Jesus marked our life with being chosen and then sent forth with a kingdom mission. The more that we feel the reality of being chosen by God for this, the more steadfast we will be in difficult times. Apply the promise in 15:16 that the Father will give us “whatever” we ask in prayer to ask for help to witness to unbelievers by giving us insight, boldness, and opportunities (by sending people across our path).

*Paragraph B: Jesus said, “Go, and bear fruit.” Beloved, take action. Now, that does not mean you have to go out to a new part of the city where nobody knows you and you are a stranger. Go bear fruit in your neighborhood, to your friends, to your family, to the place you work, at university. Just the natural places you are, start having your eyes open, saying, “I am told to take some action. Okay. I do not have to go out of my way even.” It will come across your path. It really will.*

*When this touched my life years ago, it marked me. When I saw the reality that I was chosen for God by God, that He would open doors, He would bring people across my path, He would give me a couple ideas that I did not have in my mind, and people would say, “Yes.”*

*The Lord says, “I chose you for that. Would you be open to it? Just be open to it. I will bring them across your path.”*

*When I began to see I was chosen for that, and His leadership was committed, it shifted me and made me far more attentive because: “This is what You are about, with a little weak person like me.”*

* 1. Jesus calls, ordains, and qualifies weak people in His own way and timing (1 Cor. 1:26-29). Throughout history, God has called many to serve in areas where they had no previous experience.

26For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27…God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty…29that no flesh should glory in His presence. (1 Cor. 1:26-29)

*I have an alert. Be warned by this! I say that tongue-in-cheek, but God calls people to do what they have no previous experience doing.*

* + 1. The apostles were uneducated men (Acts 4:13). The apostles were fishermen, tax collectors, zealots or political activists, or from other non-religious occupations, yet they were the most effective spiritual leaders in the first century. This is the result of Jesus having chosen them.

13When they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.
(Acts 4:13)

*The apostles—fishermen, tax collectors, zealots (political activists)—they were not religiously-trained people or religious leaders. When they talked, Acts 4, those who heard them said, “They are uneducated. They are untrained. There is no way they should be making an impact.” Beloved, God called so many people in the Bible to do something that was not at all related to the skill mix they developed before that. I could give you all kinds of stories, and you know a bunch yourself anyway. Now, sometimes they do. Sometimes it really is. Often, it is not. He calls you, and you have all these gifts and abilities, but He says, “That is not the area I am calling you to.” Like what? “No, I called you. I know what I am doing. I know what I am doing.” So, uneducated and untrained men were the most effective evangelists in the first century.*

* + 1. Paul’s appearance and speaking was unimpressive (2 Cor 10:10; 11:16).

10“For his letters,” they say, “are weighty…but his bodily presence is weak, and
his speech contemptible.” (2 Cor. 10:10)

* + 1. Consider Moses (Ex. 4), Jeremiah (Jer. 1), Gideon (Judg. 6), and Joshua (Zech. 3:3).

10Moses said…, “O my Lord, I am not eloquent…I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”
11The Lord said…, “Who has made man’s mouth?...12Now go, and I will…teach you what you shall say.” 13But he said, “…please send by the hand of whomever else You send.”
(Ex. 4:10-13)

*Moses, God called him, and he said, “I am not eloquent. I do not know how to talk. And I am going to talk to Pharoah and the entire nation?”*

*The Lord said, “Yeah.” The Lord said in Exodus 4:11, “Who made man’s mouth?” Well, You did, God. “Well, go then.” But I can’t talk “Who made man’s mouth?” Well, You did. “Go then, and I will tell you what to say when you get there.” What?? I am not good at that, Lord.*

*Then in verse 13, Moses said, “Would You send somebody else?”*

*The Lord says, “No. It is you.”*

*“Why? I am a shepherd. I am not called to be a national leader. I am a shepherd. I take care of sheep.”*

 *“No. You are a national leader, and you are a prophet.” What?*

5“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born…I ordained you a prophet…” 6Then said I: “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.” 7The Lord said to me: “Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ for you shall go to all to whom I send you. (Jer. 1:5-7)

*He told Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I ordained you.” And not just the prophets. God ordains callings while you are in your mother’s womb. It does not have to be prophet or apostle. I am just saying He gives assignments. He is very specific. He has given you an assignment. You do not have to know what it is with clarity. Like, “Well, when I find out, I will start doing it.” Just start going and bearing fruit, meaning in your neighborhood, in the workplace. Just go around with an open heart and just talk a little bit. Opportunities will come your way because the Lord called you. Therefore, He will send you opportunities.*

*In verse 6 Jeremiah said, “No. Ah, Lord God!” When he said “ah” it was a big word, I guarantee you. It was like “Ahhhhhhhhhhh! I cannot speak. Don’t You get it? I am a kid.”*

*The Lord said, “Don’t say you are a kid. You go where I send you. I am not going to prove how your great skill made this happen.” He does this over and over and over.*

1. How the chosen are to live to bear fruit that glorifies god (Jn. 15:5-9)
	1. Jesus is the life-giving vine, and His disciples are branches that express His life (15:5). We can only bear fruit as we cultivate a lifestyle of abiding or connecting with Him. We do this as we abide in His word (15:7) and in His love (15:9) so that the sap of His divine love flows in and through us.

5“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…7If…My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done…9As the Father loved Me, I have loved you; abide in My love.” (Jn. 15:5-9)

*Well, how do we live? You know this stuff if you have been here. We are on Session 60 of John 13-17. We all know this intellectually. He is the Vine. We are the branches. We can only bear fruit if we abide, if we cultivate the ongoing conversation. But remember what He says in verse 5, “Without Me you can do nothing.” In effect, “You have to know that you twelve apostles”—oh, I guess there were eleven then—“you cannot bear fruit apart from connecting with Me. Our three-year training is not going to make you bear fruit. You have to have connection. The sap of My divine love has to be connecting through you as you talk to Me and stay in connection with Me. I am going to be gone after tomorrow. You have to stay connected, or you will not bear fruit. We healed a bunch of people when we went to one of those healing things; we went city by city. That will not work without you being connected with Me.”*

* 1. ***Without Me you can do nothing***: Our labors in ministry will come to nothing (15:5) unless we are intentional about abiding in Him. We are wise to determine for the rest of our life to learn and experience what it means to abide in Christ. It is the secret of all fruitfulness.

*Paragraph B: Our labors and ministry will come to nothing, I want to assure you of that, unless we are intentional in abiding in that ongoing conversation. We are wise if we are determined to spend the rest of our life learning what this means. Set your heart. I set my heart years ago, though I have not done it perfectly, but I am so glad some leaders told me. I set my heart and sort of stumbled into it. Oh my goodness, what if it never would have dawned on me to do this? We have to learn what this means, “to abide in Him,” which is done by simple, ongoing conversation.*

* 1. ***My words abide in You***: One practical yet essential activity is to pray-read the Word so that His words abide in us. This is one of the absolute non-negotiable areas in our spiritual life that the enemy will continually attack. We must resist all that keeps us from prayerfully searching God’s Word on a regular basis. Nothing is more important than long and loving mediation on God’s Word.

*Paragraph C: One practical thing—this is my language—pray-read the Word. Jesus said, “My words have to abide in you.” Take the Bible. My number one thing in my spiritual life is I take the Bible—I did that for years. Now I do it on my laptop—I have the Bible open, and I am writing things I am saying to God because often the little phrases touch me, and it is my own words, and I realize, “That is You, God.” And I write, “That is You, God. Oh, that felt good. That really is You, God.” I smile, and I think, “You are smiling, aren’t You?” So I wrote, “He is smiling.” I pray-read the Word and journal. Done it for years and years and years. My absolute non-negotiable most important thing in my life so that the Word would abide in me.*

*I want to urge all of you, and you have heard this over and over here: resist everything that keeps you from cultivating this in your life. There are so many social opportunities, even ministry opportunities, even traveling opportunities, even entertainment, or whatever those ten categories are. We cannot give up this area of our life because one year turns to ten, and ten turns to twenty in one minute. And there you are living on fumes 20 years later, having been on fire for the Lord when you were 20. Now you are 40, living on spiritual fumes and spiritually bored, thinking, “Gee whiz, I wish I would get with it.” Do not have this testimony! And if you already do, start now because in a minute you will be 60, if you are 40 right now. And if you are 60—that is my people—in a minute, you are going to be 80, so start right now. And if you are 80, well, praise God!*

*There is nothing more important. I call it “long and loving meditation on the Word.” And what “long” means to this one will be different for that one. Do not see how little you can do.*

*At first, I did not like the Bible. I read it because my youth leaders told me I had to. I thought, “Uh, do I have to do this for the rest of my life?”*

*“Yeah,” they said.*

* + 1. The Word will not abide within us unless we prioritize spending time in it. My youth leaders warned me that it was presumptuous for me to think I could be a powerful or fruitful man of God without a cultivating a strong prayer life.

*Paragraph l: My youth leaders warned me that it was presumptuous for me to think I could be a powerful man of God without cultivating this. I said, “I want to be a powerful man of God. I love Jesus.”—17, 18, 19 years old. I love Him.*

*“Well, you have got to cultivate this.”*

*I said, “The Bible is boring, and prayer is worse.”*

*They said, “Stay with it.”*

*I said, “Really? Why?”*

*“Just do it. He loves you.”*

*“Yeah, but why do I have to talk to Him about it? He knows what I am thinking.”*

*Little by little, it started changing. Beloved, this can work for everyone. Why? He chose you to bear fruit. That is why it works. He is the One undergirding and overseeing you. Your heart being touched. He is overseeing that.*

*Beloved, we are called to be a voice, not an echo. That is a phrase I have used a lot over the years. I do not want to be just an echo, echoing other people’s ideas. It is okay to do that. I have done it a lot. I have said a lot of things I have heard other people say. I love it. But I want to be a voice, meaning I want to say something that is resonating in my heart in my present life. That is what a voice is. I say stuff, and when I am alone, I still believe it and talk to God that way. Then you are a voice.*

* + 1. Leaders in the kingdom who truly bear fruit and who make a difference in people’s lives are not formed in a lifestyle of “prayer on the run.” Most do not really believe that.

*Paragraph 2: Jesus has appointed you. It is serious. It is glorious. Leaders in the kingdom who really want to bear fruit and make a difference, they are not spiritually formed on the run. They have to take time and put forth the effort. A lot of believers do not believe that. They will go on years and years “doing Jesus on the run.” They never unplug and settle down. Again, the amount of time is different for every person, and it will be different in every season of your life too, so I am not going to give a time frame. But I will tell you this, you will never form a spiritually vibrant life on the run, “prayer on the run,” if that is all you do. And you will wake up, years later, and so much time is wasted.*

* 1. ***Abide in My love***: Another practical focus is to abide in His love (15:9) or to live focused on understanding and expressing God’s love (15:9c) that is to abide or live in an on-going conversation with God around the two truths in 15:9a, b—God’s love for God and God’s love for me. We are at rest when we are confident that He is for us, His eyes are upon us, and He delights in relating to us.
	2. ***By this My Father is glorified***: The glorious result of being chosen by Jesus and responding to Him by a lifestyle of abiding in Him is to bear fruit that glorifies the Father (15:8), to experience joy in our heart (15:11), and to be used to love people by helping them and by inspiring them to love Jesus more (15:12). These are the things which Jesus had in mind when He said, “I have chosen you.”

8By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. (Jn. 15:8)

*Paragraph E: “By this, My Father is glorified.” I just love this. I have already said it, but I am going to say it again because it is fun to say it. We can make God look attractive. Can you imagine that? A guy like me and a person like you can make the God of Israel look attractive in this world? And, it moves Him. Are you kidding? What could possibly be more important than that?*

*You do not have to be “fulltime pastor.” Just full time in your heart, you are going for God. You may have a time in the marketplace, may have an assignment in your home, in your family, your neighborhood, in the sports world, in the music world, whatever. Can you imagine making God look attractive not only to unbelievers but to believers too?*

*People ask us why do we want to walk with God and obey Him even when there are challenges?*

*“When I open the Bible, the invisible Holy Spirit does something that is pleasurable when I talk to Him.”*

*What?*

*Really, it is pleasurable. I could do it for hours. I love it. I did not used to. I used to not like it at all, but I was changed. I love it. It is so delightful talking and feeling His presence. Okay. Not only that, when I deny my own flesh to obey Him and please Him, I feel His pleasure. That does something to me. To feel His pleasure when I am choosing things to deny my flesh because He likes it and He knows that I know He likes it, and He says, “I like it, and I know you know I like it.” Oh, I love that feeling! I love that feeling!*

*The joy you have when you look at His leadership even in the most difficult time in your life. Instead of offended and fearful, you will be positive that it will turn out for your good. Maybe a week, maybe a month, maybe years, but I am positive it will turn out for my good! His resumé is perfect. His leadership is excellent.*

*“Who are you talking to that we cannot see?”*

*His name is Jesus. He was sent by His Father, the God of Israel, to the earth. He is our exceeding great reward. Well, these are the things Jesus has in mind when He said, “I have chosen you.”*

* 1. We are called to make the Father look attractive to unbelievers in a fallen world. Some unbelievers will ask us the reason for the hope that is in us (1 Pet. 3:15)—they will ask how we live with peace and contentment even in difficult circumstances and why we are kind to people who mistreat us. We can tell them it is because we enjoy our relationship with God and that our conversation with Him around His Word is delightful. We feel pleasure in obeying Him even when it requires that we deny fleshly comforts. We have joy in His excellent leadership in difficult circumstances instead of being offended or afraid, being sure that it will eventually work for our good (Rom. 8:28) even if it takes years to see. *“God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.”* –John Piper

15But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense [answer]
to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you… (1 Pet. 3:15)

*Amen and amen. Let us stand before the Lord.*

*Oh, we love You, Jesus.*

*Just say it in your heart.*

*Holy Spirit, come and give us hope that this is for us. Give us confidence that we can go somewhere with this. Give us ways to be helpful. Oh, we love You, Jesus! You said, “If you ask anything, I will give it to you.” Help us love You. Holy Spirit, come and rest on our hearts right now. Spark our hearts with new understanding.*

*That is a great prayer for weak and broken people. The Lord says, “Ask Me anything. I will help you. I will help you love Me. I will help you be steady. Ask Me, and I will help you.”*

You have chosen me! Come and wash us with the water of Your Word. Wash us with the water of Your Word. Oh, that we would love You more. Teach us to love You more. Give me new hunger. Give me desire for Your Word. Give me desire for Your Word again.

The Lord says, “I am just waiting for you to ask Me.”