



**The Oaks Baptist Church**  
Grand Prairie, Texas

**Lesson Leaders:**

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**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:**

To face life's changes, look to the unchanging God

**POEM FOR THE WEEK:**

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day,  
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;  
Change and decay in all around I see  
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!  
—Lyte

**SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:**

*For I am the Lord, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob*  
(Malachi 3:6 NKJV)  
*(from "Our Daily Bread", May 14, 2005)*

**Series: Love For One Another**

**UNIT: Godly Love Among Believers**

**NEXT WEEK**

**Confident Love**  
(1 John 3:11-24)

## Abiding Love John 15:4-17

**Lesson Background and Introduction**

John 15 is at the center of the Farewell Discourse (John 13-17), a series of speeches and a prayer given by Jesus during the last supper. Jesus builds his case for mutual love by using common observations from the vineyard. The vineyard was a staple of agriculture in the ancient world. Grapevines would be pruned severely at a certain time of the year, leaving little more than a leafless, branchless stump that would be propped up with a rock or two. Remaining, obeying, and loving, these are the central elements of discipleship. The love of Jesus exemplifies all of these. He remains with the Father in a relationship so intimate, it is beyond our understanding. He always obeys the Father. And His great love for the Father overflows to His chosen disciples. In this we understand what biblical love is all about. It is conditioned by a lasting, faithful relationship and expressed by obedience. It is unselfish love, given without condition or expectation of return. In the Gospel of John, the last supper finds Jesus teaching about these things. The arrest, trials, and crucifixion find him acting out these things. The resurrection shows the Father approving of these things for Jesus: his teachings and his actions. Thereby the disciples of Jesus have been motivated ever since to follow him unselfishly with the purposes of being obedient disciples themselves and of producing new disciples in every generation.

*(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)*

**A Vine and Branch Connection** - Jesus taught His disciples about abiding in Him, and He used the illustration of a vine and its branches to help them understand their ongoing relationship with Him. The word "abide" (John 15:4, KJV) meant for them to stay connected with Him relationally in a real, vital, joyful, loving, and life-giving fellowship. Jesus also used this example to explain the development of Christlike character. Jesus made it clear that without this type of connection to God, it's impossible for us, the branches, to produce fruit. Fruit can be when someone believes in Christ after our faithful witnessing, or it can be a person's righteous actions, or it can refer to the fruit of the Spirit. Imagine a branch that's fallen and is no longer a part of the tree. It's no good. In the same way, Jesus exhorts His followers to abide in Him, and He will abide in us, and together the work of the Kingdom will be accomplished.

**A Loving Relationship** - This relationship between Jesus and Christians should be seen as something precious and valuable, not a duty or an obligation. This bond encourages honest, open communication. One who loves the Lord yearns to know His Word and follow His instructions. As this connection becomes stronger, the heart desires of God's children will increasingly match the heart desires of Jesus; they will long for and pray for God's will to be done.

**Sacrificial Love** - Jesus referred to His disciples as His "friends" (15:14). Jesus told them they had been chosen by God to bear fruit in His name. The Father has commissioned Christians to manifest the love of God in the world. God's compassion was shown through Christ's death on the Cross. Therefore, Christ's followers receive this love, and as it overflows, it spills out toward others.

*(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)*

## NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

### **Love by Abiding in the Vine (John 15:4-11)**

#### *Abiding in the Vine to bear fruit (4-8)*

The fruit God expects includes the manifestations of the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)

The fruit God expects includes righteousness (Phil 1:9-11)

The fruit God expects includes good works (Col 1:10)

The fruit God expects grows and matures (Matt 13:31-33)

The fruit God expects must be productive (Luke 13:6-9)

The fruit God expects comes from His Divine power (2 Peter 1:3-8)

#### *Abiding in the Vine through abiding in love (9-11)*

Abiding in love by being rooted and established in God's love (Eph 3:16-19)

Abiding in love through righteousness (Ps 36:10)

Abiding in love through the full extent of Jesus' love (John 13:1)

Abiding in love through obedience (John 14:21)

Abiding in love through the mercy of God (Jude 1:21)

### **Abiding by Loving One Another (John 15:12-17)**

#### *Loving one another is commanded (12-13)*

Commanded by Jesus (John 13:34-35)

Commanded through being imitators of God (Eph 5:1-2)

Commanded through Jesus making love increase (1 Thess 3:12)

Commanded because it is taught by God to do so (1 Thess 4:9)

Commanded through obedience to the truth of God's word (1 Peter 1:22)

Commanded to cover sins (1 Peter 4:8)

#### *Loving one another through friendship (14-15)*

Friendship with God first (James 2:23)

Friendship that comforts during grief (Gen 38:12)

Friendship that loves at all times (Prov 17:17)

Friendship that never forsakes (Prov 27:10)

Friendship that provides earnest counsel (Prov 27:9)

Friendship that provides strength (Eccl 4:9-12)

#### *Loving one another through choice (16-17)*

Chosen through loving Jesus (John 21:15)

Chosen through being created to do good works (Eph 2:10)

Chosen through responding to the gospel (Col 1:4-6)

Chosen through being passed from death to life to love (1 John 3:14-16)

Chosen through being commanded to love (John 13:34)