

JOURNEY TO THE CROSS

# The Joy of Following Jesus.

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Sunday, March 30

## **John 15-10 - 11 (ESV)**

*“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. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”*

Like every little kid, I always looked forward to holidays, summer and special events. The anticipation was almost as much fun as the actual event! What kind of birthday cake will I have? Will there be time off from school? (The best!)

What will my present be? And most importantly—will there be candy?

My whole vision for my life at that time was living from one happy fix to the next. However, this philosophy doesn't translate well into adulthood, in fact it begins to lose its "shinyness" in late childhood, early teen years.

This is when we start saying things like, I will be happy when I graduate, when I get a job in my field, when I get married, when I own my home,

when I make more money,  
when I have a baby.

What about, I will be happy  
when I am out of pain,  
when I am healed,  
when I am not suffering,  
when my adult children are happy,  
when this intense pressure is off.

Maybe you have even tried to  
alleviate feelings of unhappiness  
with vacations, food, alcohol,  
approval, attention, shopping,  
sports, video games, sex, you name  
it, only to slide back into  
discontentment.

Discovering that problems, negative feelings and unanswered questions persist after *the big event* is disappointing, maybe even soul crushing.

**What do I do with this over-whelming sense of hollowness?**

What do I do when I had a picture of how life would go but now there is a widening discrepancy between what I thought it would be and what it really is? I don't know about

you but that one hit me hard...  
repeatedly...slow learner.

Where to go for lasting happiness when you are left disappointed, unfulfilled and empty? How do I have joy that isn't dependent on pleasant circumstances and temporary fixes?

**Jesus, in His love and kindness, anticipated these questions in His disciples and in us as well.**

He speaks to it in these verses,  
*“These things I have spoken to you,  
that my joy may be in you, and that  
your joy may be full.”*

*What things?*

***Abide in my love;  
remain with me.***

Resulting in—Relationship with  
God, relief from the burden of my  
sin, eternal perspective and  
security, hope in suffering, living  
with purpose, peace that passes  
understanding, a sound mind, and  
dispelled fear.

## ***Keep my commandments.***

Resulting in—Priorities aligned with God's, knowing what matters, restored relationships, healthy decisions, absence of chaos, and fewer behavioral consequences.

And then what?

## ***Joy.***

Not just any joy but joy that is full. Or more accurately, joy that is complete. Not waxing and waning with our moods or circumstances but a solid understanding that

Jesus is enough, no matter what.  
When we abide with Jesus and  
keep His commands, we find joy,  
even in the midst of trials.

## **A Prayer.**

Dear Jesus,  
Thank you for inviting me to abide  
in your love; to remain with you, to  
walk in your ways and experience  
fulness of joy.  
Amen.