

Session 6: God's Superior Love: How God Feels About Us

The lack that people have—believers I am talking about and sincere believers—is understanding that God has affection and enjoyment of us even in our weakness. This is what the devil will take advantage of, and what he will exploit: this lack of revelation in the lives of countless of hundreds of millions. He fills them with condemnation. Often when people come for a training program or the Bible school here at IHOP, this is one of the first things that I hear that it is jolting, it is hard to get a hold of, as we are so used to condemnation.

We are so used to standing in God's presence unsure how He feels about us that it takes a while to switch over, it really does because we have so programmed our mind with our unrenewed thinking before we were saved, and then through ineffective or even wrong teaching from the scriptures after we have been saved.

REVIEW: THE SUPERIOR PLEASURES IN THE GRACE OF GOD

In 1 John 3:1, John urged them to take the love of God very seriously as an issue of their study. He says, "I want you to behold," or you could put the word study, "Behold, be amazed at the manor or the quality of love that the Father has for you."

Beloved—it is stunning and it is amazing—it is past our human comprehension, it takes revelation to grasp this—the manor of love, or you could put the word quality—the way God loves us, the manor. Behold, or be alerted at its vastness, at its difficulty of grasping it. Those things are implied by the word, "Behold." It is going to take some attentiveness. Of all the subjects of the Word of God, we would think that the love of God would be the simple one that everyone likes, but it is the subject that many refer to a little bit. It is the subject that most Christians have at the back of their minds a little bit, even here at IHOP.

"BEHOLD, WHAT MANNER OF LOVE THE FATHER HAS BESTOWED ON US"

A lot of people talk about it, but it is not the premier topic of their personal life meditation and study. It is still something on the peripheral. It is on the side. It is something that is true, and one of these days they are going to connect with it and really get on with it. One year turns to two, and two years turn to ten. My point is

this: we must behold the manor of this love now, not in a message, not even in a series, I am talking about it needs to be the premier subject in your personal devotion and meditation time with God in your personal prayer life.

GOD LOVES US IN THE SAME WAY GOD LOVES GOD

In session five, we looked at the fact that God loves us in the way God loves God. It is remarkable. Jesus said, “As the Father loved Me,” John 15:9, this needs to be a verse that we know so well that you wake up in your sleep saying it because it is so stamped on your heart.

This is no longer to be an obscure passage. This must absolutely be a staple in our diet. We need to feed on this reality day and night. Jesus said, “The way that the Father loves Me, beloved, that is the way that He feels about you.” He is talking to sincere believers, of course.

FOUNDATIONAL PREMISE: SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY IS NOT REBELLION

Roman numeral II. This is one of the foundational premises that many trip over—this one issue right here. That is why I made it its own separate point. Spiritual immaturity is not the same thing as rebellion against God. This is a massively important Biblical principle. Some think that if you are really sincere for God, then you can tell because if you are really sincere, you will beat yourself up the worst. You will have the highest standard. What that means by a high standard is actually a wrong application of a high standard. A high standard often means that if you are the meanest to yourself when you repent, then you have the highest standard.

I would rather have just truth, the Biblical standard. God has different emotions related to people's responses. I am going to say that: it is a very important point that some would not agree with. God has emotional responses to the human race that are partially based on how they respond to Him. He has more than that. That is not all how God responds, but there is a dimension of relationship that God has with the human race that God has with individuals where He responds to them in part by their response to Him. He responds first. He initiates, and then they respond in obedience, disobedience, or partial obedience, and then He responds back to them. That is what we are going to look at a little tonight.

Now some are confused about how God feels, and we do not need to be because the Bible is clear about it. I do not want to think presumptuously and act like I

know everything about how God feels, but the Word cannot lie. The Word is true. It is eternal. We can count on it, so on the basis of that, we can have confidence. Many are confused about how God feels about them. They do not know if God is mad, is He sad, or is He glad? They do not really know, and they really want to know. Beloved, I cannot think of anything more important than this piece of information, having clarity about this subject in my heart. It is not like every minute of every day I will have perfect understanding of it, but we need to have this settled in our heart based on the revelation of the Word of God.

GOD IS MOSTLY GLAD, NOT MOSTLY SAD OR MAD

If we think He is mad and He is not, what a waste of decades of our life. If we think He is mad and He is actually not mad, that is called condemnation. Let's go the opposite extreme. We think He is glad, and He is not glad. That is called presumption. I have no doubt that, well, there are more people who think He is mad and He is not. There are many sincere believers. He is not mad at them. There are some believers who are living in delusion.

They get a little bit of these kinds of messages around from different places, and they just live in some kind of disconnect from reality. They are living in sin, but they are confident that God is absolutely delighted in everything they are doing. That is called presumption and deception.

Let's lay a foundational point: you all know it, but it bears saying, and when you say this in small groups or in teachings, and as you know that our copyright is your right to copy.

You can copy any of this and make your own notes and put your name on it or put your mother's name on it or anybody's name on it that you want. You can use it word for word in any way that you want because I want to urge you to take some of these notes and make your own Bible studies for groups of two or three or two or three thousand. It does not matter to me. Run with it. Run with this stuff.

WE RECEIVE GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND FAVOR BECAUSE OF THE CROSS

It is important that we say that we, paragraph B, that we do receive God's favor and righteousness because of what Jesus did, not because of what we did; however, it is important and necessary to sincerely repent. I want to say that again. We receive His favor or His righteousness based on what Jesus did, not based on what we do, but the attitude of the heart must change. It is called repentance.

Some people are big on getting the favor of God as a gift, but they are really shy and weak on the necessity of genuine repentance, which is an attitude change. There is an action that comes later, I mean, in time. True repentance is an attitude that always ends up with action later, but the attitude is the critical part to change.

If we sincerely change the attitude, actions will change in time, but in my experience and certainly as you read the Word of God with His servants, the attitude changes, but the actions do not always change that minute. There is a time-delay working here. God does require that we line up at the attitude with sincere repentance. We turn from sin. We turn to God according to the light of our understanding that He has given us by the Holy Spirit and by the Word.

SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY IS NOT THE SAME AS REBELLION

Paragraph D. I am saying the principle again. Spiritual immaturity is not the same thing as spiritual rebellion. I have talked to people through the years, and they say, "I am so rebellious."

I respond, "Are you trying to flatter yourself, or did you read a book and believe it?" These were the most devoted people because they have an area where they stumble in their life.

They say, "I am so rebellious," and if they really mean it, it is a disastrous point of confusion.

If they are carrying on, which a lot of folks are doing, if they do not really mean it, then I am not really worried about it, but if they really mean it, and they are sincere believers, then that has disastrous implications and effect on their emotional life.

At times rebellion and immaturity (spiritually immaturity when referring to immaturity of a sincere believer in context to this session—session six here on the Song of Solomon), at times the outward conduct of the immature believer who is sincere in contrast to someone who is in rebellion, sometimes the things they do outwardly look the same, not their whole life, but some things they do. Some things they say sound just like an unbeliever. They have anger or they have bitterness just like an unbeliever, or they will have complaining just like an unbeliever, yet it is coming from a totally different heart response.

OUR ATTITUDE IS THE SEEDBED FROM WHICH ALL OF OUR ACTIONS FLOW

Now our actions do matter. I am not trying to give the idea that actions do not matter, but our attitude has more impact on God's heart than our actions. Our actions are critical, but our attitude is the seedbed from which all of our actions flow.

God sees the movements of our heart toward Him, and He begins to, He delights in the movement of our heart even before our feet move. He actually delights in the movement of our heart even before we completely walk it out because there is the cry, the longing to obey Him, and it moves His heart. It really does. A genuine lover of Jesus sincerely desires to obey Him. They pursue a life of obedience, obviously. Now a rebellious person just says, "No." They have no plans to obey in that area.

Take any area of their life. It is not just the scandalous areas. It is our speech, you know, that is my worst area. That is everybody's worst area—James 3. That is the wild fire that is still in the human race. It is a wild forest fire.

It is not ok to say, "Oh, just forget the speech thing. I will just forget it. I will not obey You." Beloved, we cannot take any area and just cast it aside. We may not do that great on it, but we have to declare war on darkness in every area that the Holy Spirit gives us light in.

WHEN WE ARE WEAK, OUR REPENTANCE, OBEDIENCE AND LOVE COUNTS

Our repentance—paragraph F—is sincere, this is important, even when it is flawed and even when it is weak. Our repentance can be sincere even when it is weak, our love, our obedience. Your love for Jesus is sincere long before your love is strong.

Your love is not false when it is weak. It is still real. Some people think their love is only real when it is really mature, so that means all of their life, their love is false, and they come before God as somebody who is a hypocrite—someone who is living with false love. Jesus values our love for Him even before the love is mature. He values the budding seeds of love in our heart for Him and for one another, of course, love for others always comes out of our love for Him.

Paragraph G. The sincere intention, I am talking about the intention now, the setting of the heart to obey, is very different from the attainment of mature

obedience. I am saying the same thing I have said already the last five minutes. I am just repeating myself in different ways so that you do not think I am giving you a new principle. I am taking this diamond and looking at it from different angles, the same idea.

The sincere intention, “Lord, I am going to obey You with my words, with my money, with my sexuality, with my service or lack of service. I am going to obey You in the way that I serve. I am going to do this. I am going to shake off the slumber, and I am going to do this.” Of course, at the first time there is an inconvenient request, “Ah, I do not want to do that. I do not feel the grace for it.” Then we say, “Ah, I am just lazy and selfish, but I love You. I am going to get a hold of this.”

THE PURSUIT OF OBEDIENCE IS DIFFERENT THAN ATTAINMENT

The pursuit of obedience is different than the attaining of it. The going after it is different than the getting there. The journey is very important to the Lord, of course, the destination is important. I am in no way minimizing the need to actually follow through. I am a big follow through guy, but I am telling you that you can feel God's pleasure in the journey before the follow through complete.

It is only when you are sincere. The guy who says, “You know what? I am going to follow through, but I am going to claim that God loves me stuff, but I am not really trying to follow through.” That is falsehood. Trying to follow through and just, “Ah, I am just lazy and complaining and selfish and bitter. I just am. Ugh, but I am not going to stay this way. Jesus, I am coming after You. I am going to get my speech under control. I am going to quit complaining. I am going to get my time under control. I am going to get my thoughts under control,” and you may do horribly after you make that commitment, but the journey, the pursuit is really dear to Him. He does not only smile at you when you conquer.

Here is the reason why this is critical because if you do not feel His smile in the journey, you will never conquer. You will quit. The only way you will stay on the journey is by feeling His smile, and you say, “How do you feel His smile?” I am talking about the sense of having the confidence that He is pleased with you. If you do not feel His smile on the journey, then you will quit. If you think He is mad every step of the way, then you will make it for a few years like that, but sooner or later, you are going to say, “I cannot bear Him being mad at me every day. I would

rather just not try and just conclude that He is going to be mad, and at least I will settle the issue instead of reaching for obedience all the time.”

YOU HAVE TO KNOW THAT HE IS SMILING AT YOU IN THE JOURNEY

You have to believe that He is smiling at you in the journey. You must believe this. It is biblical, but it really changes the way you do your prayer time. I am not even talking about the prayer room. I am just talking about your own room at home or driving and praying. Who wants to worship before a God who is angry with you?

“Here it is. It is me again. Ouch, do not hit me. I love You. I love You. Do not hit me.” Who can worship that way and read the Bible, “Lord, I love Your Word, but do not talk to clearly. I am a mess. I am a wreck”? You cannot read the Word or come into His presence thinking He is about to wipe you out.

You have to understand this. This is not just kind of a cool, Kansas City thing, “Well, they are just into that in Kansas City.” I have heard some of my friends say, “They are kind of really into the God loves you, you are lovely in your weakness. It is a kind of a neat little thing they are into.”

Beloved, this is a matter of life and death in terms of longevity going hard after God for weeks and weeks and months and months and years and years and staying steady in the journey. You have to know His smile is on you in the process. It is not kind of one of their weird little things that they do in Kansas City. This is really important truth.

The Lord is pleased with us from the time we repent. Long before the obedience matures, He is smiling at us when we repent long before the maturity process takes place. He really cares about the process, not just the destination. Now believers, you say, “How do you know if you sincerely repent?”

THE BELIEVER WHO SINS SHOWS SINCERITY BY QUICKLY REPENTING

Paragraph H. Here is how you know if you are sincere. When you fail, when you fall short, you quickly renew the war against that area in your life. That is how you know you are sincere.

So in my speech, in the way I spend my time and my money, sometimes I am out of the will of God. I do not always know it because you only have so much light,

but the more you obey light, the more light you get. When you understand you are off the path, you are not out of the kingdom, but you say, “Ah, my speech again. It is happening again. It was the same like an hour ago when I repented.” I mean, that is how I do it. It is like, “Ugh, it was only an hour ago. Hey, I made it an hour. It is a record. Lord, it is working. It is working. I made it an hour.”

The way our sincerity is clear is that we renew our repentance. We renew the war against it quickly. Someone goes, “How quick is quick? Do I have an hour or a day?” I am not going there. Those are the kind of questions I get, “Is quick, like, can I get a minute? Can I hang out there for a minute?” I say, “I do not know. Just do it quickly.”

A hypocrite is not a person who says one thing and does another. That is not a hypocrite. The whole world is a hypocrite then. A hypocrite is somebody who claims something and will not pursue it. There is a difference.

As believers we all tell people to walk in love. Nobody walks in perfect love. That means that we are all hypocrites. No, if we are pursuing walking in love, we are not hypocrites even though we have not attained it. A hypocrite is not someone who says one thing and does another. It is somebody who says one thing and does not pursue or go after the other thing. That is a hypocrite.

What happens often is that the devil tells us in our struggle, we are struggling, we are trying to get victory in these many areas, many categories of human life where you could, most people struggle in one or two or three or four areas. There are two or three or four that bug you or challenge you more than the other ones, but everyone's areas are slightly different from others and the combinations are different.

The enemy comes in and tells us in our struggle that if we are not breaking through then we are hopeless hypocrites and might as well quit, and if you feel like a hopeless hypocrite, then you will quit in time.

GOD DELIGHTS IN THIS SINCERE DESIRE

Paragraph J. God delights in this sincere desire. Again, I am just saying it again. He delights in the cry in our spirit to obey. It is the same thing that I have been saying for five minutes, the same thing. The cry to obey is a substantial beginning of victory. Beloved, the cry, “I want to obey You,” is not an irrelevant thing. It is a

beginning of victory. That is part of victory. The decision to obey even though you have not fully walked it out is already the beginning of God's work in your spirit.

Who talked you into obeying? It was not the devil. It was not your flesh. Where did you get this desire to say, "Yes," in these different areas? It came from God. It is the work of God. Victory is already working in you before it is fully manifested outwardly, and God sees it. God rewards it in eternity as victory.

Now, we want full victory in every area, but if you make a decision to obey in every area, I mean—in detailed ways—then you already have substantial victory working in you. It is real, and it will manifest in your actions and in time if you are sincere. Now God does not confuse immaturity and rebellion. We do, but God does not. In the Old Testament law, they had clean animals and unclean animals. They had the sheep and they had the swine or the pigs. Now both the clean animal, the sheep, and the unclean animal, the pigs, both of them got in the mud a lot. So the shepherd would get them out of the mud, so to speak. They could be taken out of the mud. The sheep are in the mud, and they are kicking. They are trying to get out. They are kicking and exerting energy trying to get out of the mud. They hate it.

So the shepherd might get them both out, and the minute he gets them both out, the pig is looking for another mud hole, I mean, within a minute. He is searching, and there he is off to another mud hole. Now the sheep gets into another mud hole probably before the day is over, but they do not like it. They kick to get out, and they are looking for freedom from it. They are not looking for a way to get away with sin. They are looking for a way to get free from the sin that they keep getting into. They are trying to find a way to get out of it, not trying to find a way to get away with it. That is the difference.

You lie on your bed at night, or if you are the Night Watch then you lie on your bed in the morning, so when you lie in your bed in the morning, and you are dreaming, your dream is, "How can I get free from this? I am not trying to get away with it. I am trying to get away from it." Beloved, that is a sincere spirit. That is a willing spirit. It is real. Now God viewed the immaturity of the apostles, and they were very immature. They were trying to be over each other. They were mean to people. John said in Luke 9, "They will not come to our meeting. Let's just call fire down and burn the city up."

Jesus said, “John, settle down.” “Well, they will not come to our meeting. Let’s just call fire down. Let’s nuke the city. Take the city out right now.” I mean, that was minutes after John said, “I want to be at Your right hand,” which translates to, “I want be the greatest man over everybody forever.”

He said that, “I want to be at Your right hand. I want to be over everyone forever.” Then the next scene he wants to nuke a city, “John, you are out of control. Stop it,” and Jesus said, “You do not know what kind of spirit you have,” which means, “Your spirit is not right right now, John,” but he became the apostle whom the Lord loved. He was the one who had more confidence in the love of God than any. He was really transformed in time.

AFTER WE REPENT, WE BOLDLY PUSH DELETE AS FIRST CLASS CITIZENS

After we repent, paragraph G, we push delete, I mean, we can push delete after we have repented. We really can. It does not mean that we do not have to sort out why we got into that area. There are things to think about—how we got ensnared, but I am talking about in terms of your guilt, we can stand before the Lord, and there is no point in going for three days in a self-imposed probation. Some people think, “If I repent, if I sin at three o’clock, and I repent at one minute after three o’clock, God deserves at least three days of purgatory, three days of probation before I am happy before Him.”

No, push delete, and at 3:01, begin to worship with confidence and take it seriously what Jesus did on the cross and your repentance is sincere. Do not go into a six-hour funk to kind of get even with God.

Just say, “No, this is terrible. It is creepy, but I am not going there. I know what Jesus did for me, I know how God loves me, and I love God. This is not who I am. This is not what I am about. I want to be Yours.” I tell you, you get right back into the place of first-class citizenship with boldness, I mean, in a minute, maybe take two if you are new at it. I am talking about getting back in the game. I really mean that. Stand before Him boldly.

PRINCIPLE #1: GOD LOVES AND BLESSES UNBELIEVERS

Roman numeral III. Principle number one, these are simple principles. Again, you can read them a bit more on your own. We are going to go through them quite quickly. I am just going to mention them. God loves and blesses believers, of

course He does, but I have to make a distinction in a minute, which is why I am putting it as principle number one. God loves unbelievers even when they rebel against Him.

“God so loved the world,” it says in paragraph B that He blesses evil people. He causes the sun to rise on the wicked, on the evil; however, we are not to mistake His blessing for His approval.

He loves evil people, and He blesses evil people. He does not approve of evil people. There is a huge difference because people with the humanistic spirit have God loving, they mistake God's love of everybody with His approval.

He does not approve of people who have chosen to live a life of evil. He is really against it. They will go to Hell if they do not repent, though He loves them and blesses them throughout their life.

GOD IS ANGRY AT REBELLION AND THOSE WHO REFUSE TO REPENT

Paragraph C. He is angry at their rebellion. He is angry with them though He loves them, though He blesses them. He is angry at their rebellion. He will actually refuse to forgive them even if they ask Him to if they do not repent. That kind of startles some people. They say, “If we pray the prayer He will forgive.”

No, He forgives us when we repent. That is what He said in Matthew 7:22-23, “Many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied on that day, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” The interesting thing is that He does love them and He blesses them.

IV. PRINCIPLE #2: GOD ENJOYS AND DELIGHTS IN IMMATURE BELIEVERS

Principle number two. He more than loves believers. He actually enjoys and delights in them, even in their immaturity, even in their immaturity. God loves unbelievers, but He enjoys, He only enjoys believers. He loves unbelievers, but He does not enjoy them. Big difference.

Luke 15:18-22: Jesus in the story, most of you know the story of the man who lost the 99 sheep and the one who went away. He went after the one, it says in Luke 15:4-7. He put the one sheep on His shoulders; it says in verse 5, “He put him on

His shoulders rejoicing. He calls His friends and says, ‘Rejoice with me.’” Then in verse 7, He says, “There is more joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents.” The guy has only repented for one hour, and Jesus is already delighted in him.

Now somebody says that as long as it is the first time that they repent, and they just came the first time to the altar call, then this works. Then a year later, if the guy repents, he needs to go into probation for six months before God is happy. No. The repentance is sincere if he is a brand new Christian, an unbeliever who just got saved, or a believer who repents. For anyone who lost their way, He is rejoicing, carrying you back to the main highway. He is rejoicing and He is telling all His friends, “He repented. She repented.” The rejoicing begins immediately is the idea.

JESUS FEELS COMPASSION OVER THE PRODIGALS WHEN THEY REPENT

Paragraph B. This is the story of the prodigal son. It is the same chapter, Luke 15. Luke 15 is the main chapter in terms of a whole chapter on this subject. It is fantastic. In Luke 15, the prodigal son repents. On the day he repents, the favor is restored that day. Now the older brother says, “Father, at least,” he did not say this, but, “at least give him some time to see if it is real.”

Jesus was talking about the way the Father feels about people. He goes, “The day you repent, He is willing to put the best robe on you, not a month later, not after you go through the recovery program.” He is willing that day to put honor on you in His presence. It is amazing. It is fantastic. It is the day, when the prodigal came to his senses.

“GOD DELIVERED ME BECAUSE HE DELIGHTED IN ME” (PSALM 18:19)

Paragraph C—God enjoys us in our immaturity. He does not enjoy our immaturity, but He enjoys us in it. King David said on the day of his repentance, in Psalm 18:19. It is one of the most dynamic statements of David. I have preached so much on this over the last 25 years. I love this verse, which maybe gives insight into my life.

David said this, “God delivered me because He delighted in me,” and this is the day that David repented after 16 months in Ziklag, which is another story. My point is that David repented this day, and he understood God’s delight in him on the day he repented, on the day he repented. It is an amazing reality.

PRINCIPLE THREE: GOD'S ENJOYMENT IS NOT THE SAME AS HIS APPROVAL

Let's go to principle number three. God's enjoyment of us is not the same as His approval of us. God actually enjoys us, but that does not mean He approves of every area of our lives. That prodigal that Jesus was rejoicing about and throwing a party for, there were issues that Jesus was going to go after in his life (if it was a real life story). God is delighting over you and me right now, but He is saying, "Oh, I love you, I enjoy you, but do not think that means that I approve of every area of your life."

Some people think the doctrine of God's enjoyment means the doctrine of approval of every area. No. I remember when our two sons were young, and many small things, or even when they were older. The principle did not change.

I enjoyed them when they did things that I did not like. I still enjoyed them as a person. That did not change when they had an area that needed correcting. God's enjoyment is not the same thing as His approval of every area of our life.

GOD HAS TENDER PATIENCE FOR A SEASON WITH BELIEVERS

Paragraph B. God has seasons of tender patience with believers who do not repent. He is actually tender in His patience. He says to Jezebel and her disciples at Thyatira in Revelation 2:21-22, "I gave her time to repent and the people who follow her teaching."

Jesus in tender repentance, they are not in, nothing bad is happening, but they are not repenting, and they take their repentance, they misunderstand it. I mean, they take the fact that everything is going ok, they misunderstand it and they mistake it as Jesus is approving of everything he is doing.

He responds, "No, tell them that I have given them time to repent." The Lord gives His people time to repent. There is even a season where He is disapproving of an area, and He is watching.

You think, "Well, I am getting away with this. My ministry is still blessed. It may not be a big deal." No, you have misunderstood one of the critical principles of God's love. The fact that He is being patient with us does not mean He is happy with that area.

In Ecclesiastes 8:11, “Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; therefore, the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do more evil.” When the sentence of God’s judgment is withheld, it is not released immediately, people respond, “I think it was ok then.” No, do not go there. He is giving us time to repent because He cares about us.

PRINCIPLE FOUR: GOD’S DISCIPLINE IS NOT THE SAME AS REJECTION

Principle number four. When God disciplines us—now He is disciplining us—the saints at Thyatira that He is dealing with, He is disciplining them, severely disciplining them sometimes.

He is not rejecting us because He is disciplining us. He enjoys us, but He is displeased in an area, and His tender patience we did not take into account, so now He is disciplining us, but He still is enjoying us and He is not rejecting us, but He is disciplining us even severely.

It is because He loves us too much to let us get away with that which will destroy our hearts because it will become, it will get worse and worse as the months and years go by.

Paragraph A. God’s correction is not His rejection, rather it is proof of His love. Prov. 3:12 says, “For whom the Lord loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights in.”

God corrects us in the same way as a father corrects the son he delights in. He corrects us because He likes us, actually, not because He is done with us. God hates the sin, but He delights in the person He is disciplining. Look what it says in Revelation 3:19, paragraph B. Jesus rebukes, He loves these believers in Laodicea. He loves the Laodiceans, but He is rebuking them, but He loves them.

So we think, “Rebuke means rejection.” No. “Well, in my house rebuke meant rejection.” That is true. In many homes, rebuke means rejection, but not in the kingdom of God, He rebukes, and He went on to say, “I rebuke you,” Revelation 3:19 (paraphrased), “because I love you.” Some people have no grid for rebuke and love in the same sentence because in their family experience...

TO BE DISCIPLINED MEANS GOD HAS NOT GIVEN UP ON US

Paragraph C. To be disciplined means that God cares about us, and He has not given up on us. It is a terrible thing to get away with sin, I mean, long term. Do you know what it means if you get away with sin long term? It means that God has given you over to that sin. That is a horrible thing.

If you can go on with years and years and God's discipline has not come through, you need to say, "Wait, wait, wait, Lord, I am signing up for discipline." Romans 1:24 and many other places, several places, when God sees a person will not repent, He gives them over to the area.

He says, "I am not even going to discipline you now. I will let the evil in your heart grow unchecked, and it will destroy your life." When God does not discipline, you are given over. That is not good. It is a terrible thing.

PRINCIPLE FIVE: GOD IS GRIEVED OVER PERSISTENT SIN IN HIS PEOPLE

Principle five. God is grieved if the people stay persistent—I am talking about believers—in sin. He told the Laodiceans, "I would vomit you out of My mouth" (Rev.3:16-17). That does not mean that you are repulsive. To vomit out of your mouth means, "It makes My stomach sick. It makes My heart sick."

It does not mean that God is repulsed by us. It means that He is pained at the heart level. He is sick at heart. It does not mean that He has given us up. Some people would preach this and say that when He says, "I would vomit you out of My mouth," that He is casting them aside.

Rather, He says, "My heart is paining. I am sick at heart. That is what is going on. I am hurting in My stomach about you." It is not a statement of God casting them aside. It is a statement of His identification of His pain over them because He cares so much about them.

GOD FEELS THE PAIN OF THOSE HE DISCIPLINES AS HIS DEARLY BELOVED

Paragraph B. God feels the pain of those He disciplines. Look what it says in Isaiah 63:9, "In all of their affliction He was afflicted," and He is the one disciplining them." Isaiah 63:9, "In all of their affliction, God Himself was afflicted in His heart over them," and He was the one afflicting them.

He says, “This hurts Me because I feel this in My gut,” is what He told the Laodiceans. “I hurt in My stomach over you, but I love you,” and He still offered them His throne. He says, “If you will repent, I will let you sit on My throne when you come into the age to come.” He loves the Laodiceans.

Look what He says in Jeremiah 12:7, “I have given the dearly beloved of My soul into the hands of her enemies” to discipline them. He is talking about Israel in the Old Testament. He said, “You are dearly beloved to Me. I am not giving you up. I am allowing you to be disciplined because you are so dear to Me. It hurts My stomach to do this, but I love you so dearly. You are so dear to Me.” See, again, we have a grid that says, “If God is allowing us to be disciplined, He must be repulsed.” No, it is the opposite. You are in big trouble when He will not discipline.

PRINCIPLE SIX: SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE DOES NOT EARN GOD'S FAVOR

Principle six. Spiritual disciplines do not earn us God's favor. See, people get really confident in God, and in their confidence in God, they want to get diligent, and the first lie that comes is, “If you are diligent, you are trying to earn God's favor.”

It is true. Some people try to earn God's favor through diligence, but the people who understand these principles, they want to be near Him. Their diligence is earning them nothing. We do not have time to go into that. I have a little bit on that. I talk about it all the time anyway, so I just want the principle laid out there.

PRINCIPLE SEVEN: MATURITY ALLOWS US TO RECEIVE MORE (NOT TO BE LOVED MORE)

Principle seven. Just to finish with, and I want you to read these notes. This is an important one, but we are out of time for this particular class. Our spiritual maturity allows us to receive more from God, but not to be loved more from God, by God. When we are spiritually mature, we actually receive more, but that is not the same thing as being loved more. That is not the same thing. Let's look at a point or two here.

God loves all of us. He loves His whole Church, yet He entrusts a greater measure of power to the mature. Now listen carefully because some of you are going to go to a wrong idea right now. There is a really wrong idea just hanging in the shadows

here that is very common in the Body of Christ. He loves us, but He entrusts greater power to the mature, but here is the key—the next sentence. God has determined the measure of power that He has planned to give each person to walk in. The measure is different. God is determined some people will only have one talent in this age.

So He did not say, “If you are more mature, then you will have 10 talents.” He is saying, “If you are more mature, then you will enter into the fullness of that which has been ordained.” See, there are ten talent men out there who are only walking in half obedience, and they are only operating in half of what God has for them, but they have more power than everybody. I am not saying they are obedient and mature before God.

I am saying that if you are mature, then you will enter into all that was ordained for you. A half-obedient man with ten talents will make an impact around the world, but he is still operating at half that he was ordained to operate in, and God will settle accounts on the last day.

OBEDIENCE AND TALENTS

Another person is one hundred percent obedient, but God only gave them one talent, so you do not look at the two lives and say, “More power means more obedience.” That is not what I said, but that is what a lot of people think.

I have heard people say, “Boy, that guy is really blessed. He must be obedient.” I go, “Maybe, you do not know.” It is none of our business anyway, but obedience causes you to enter into that which was ordained by God, but you do not know how much that man was ordained to walk in.

You do not have any idea, so do not look at somebody who has no public ministry, they have no big following and say, “Well, they must not be obedient.” No, no, they could be radically obedient, but they will walk in the fullness of what was ordained for them. At the judgment seat everything gets switched around, I call the judgment seat of Christ the great equalizer. That is when everything comes into focus.

Amen. Let's stand.

MINISTRY TIME:

If anyone would like prayer tonight for anything that is stirring in your heart, I would like for you to go ahead and come forward, whether you want to be more dedicated, you need more revelation, or you feel stirred by something that is just between you and the Lord. We are just going to wait on the Lord.

Let's just open our heart to Him. We want the kisses of His Word because His love is better than wine. We are going to now get into the book breaking it down. I wanted to lay down these principles because I did not want to stop in the middle of it to break down the fundamental principles.

Lord, here we are. Let's just wait. Holy Spirit, we just invite Your presence right now. We invite Your presence, Holy Spirit. Lord, come and release Your manifest presence right now upon us. Feel free to slip out if you need to. We are just going to wait on the Lord for a few minutes up here. Come, Lord. Come and rest on us. Here we are. More, Lord. I ask You for more of Your manifest presence right now.

Release Your fire. Release Your fire right now. Around the room, just stay plugged in unless you need to slip out. Some of you are feeling the Holy Spirit feeling around your head. You are feeling the energy of the Spirit, physically you are feeling it. If that is true, I just want you to raise your hand.

He is wanting to release revelation. In a minute we are going to pray for you. We ask for more right now. We ask for Your wind to come across this room. I ask for the wind of the Spirit to come on the minds. Increase it all over the auditorium.

Increase the manifest presence of the Spirit on them physically over their heads. That is the Lord's way of saying, "I want to give you more understanding, a mantle of understanding, a new helmet of salvation." He is going to help you. You really want to feed your mind and your spirit. Any of you who will come, just begin to move around the room and pray for people, but I want to keep the whole room a sanctuary. If you need to slip out, go ahead.