



PRIEST LAKE CHURCH
FORWARD & HIGHER TOGETHER

*Building on the Foundation of Christ
where no one walks alone.*

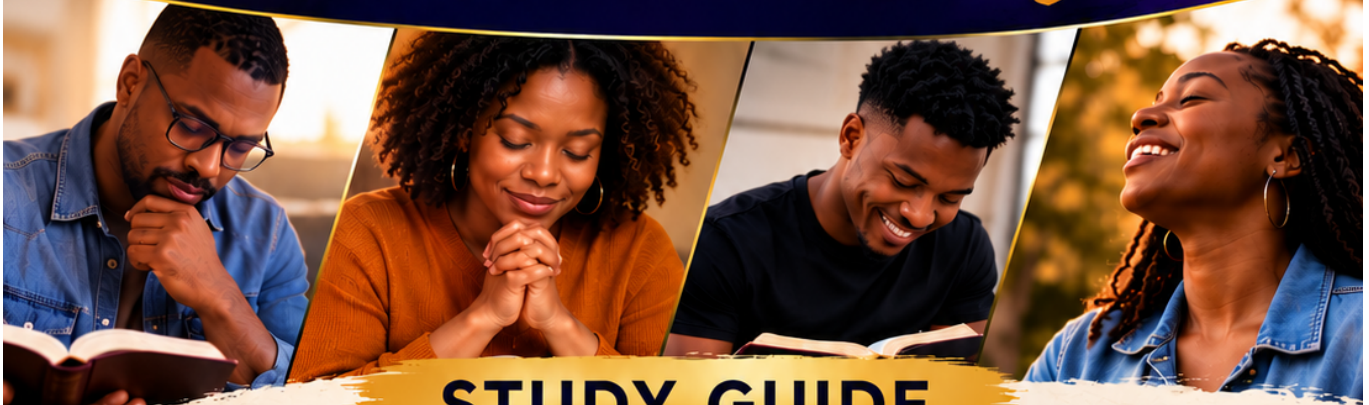
A DEEPER
RELATIONSHIP.

A SURRENDERED
LIFE.

A FULLER JOY.

When His Commands Become My Joy

LIVING IN HIS LOVE. OBEYING IN JOY.



STUDY GUIDE



DISCUSSION
Go Deeper



REFLECTION
Grow Together



APPLICATION
Live It Out



NEXT STEPS
Move Forward



KEY SCRIPTURES

JOHN 15:9-15 | 1 JOHN 5:3 | 1 CORINTHIANS 6:19-20 | ROMANS 12:1
LUKE 17:7-10 | MATTHEW 16:24-25 | GALATIANS 5:16-17 | ROMANS 8:13
JAMES 4:7 | EPHESIANS 5:18



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SERMON STUDY GUIDE

Vision: Forward & Higher Together - building on the Foundation of Christ where no one walks alone.

THE CENTRAL BURDEN

Many believers genuinely love Jesus, yet His commands can still feel heavy because there are areas of our lives we have not fully surrendered.

THE ISSUE UNDERNEATH THE ISSUE IS SURRENDER.

Big Idea: If I belong to Christ, I cannot keep living like I belong to myself.

Primary Text: John 15:9-15 **Pivotal Text:** 1 John 5:3

Supporting Texts: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 12:1; Luke 17:7-10; Matthew 16:24-25; Galatians 5:16-17; Romans 8:13; James 4:7; Ephesians 5:18

OPENING REFLECTION

Our culture says, "It's my life." Jesus calls us into a relationship where He is not only Savior, but Lord. Where do those two ideas collide in your everyday life?

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." - John 15:11 (KJV)

MOVEMENT 1 - I DON'T BELONG TO MYSELF

"Ye are not your own... For ye are bought with a price." - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Following Christ changes the ownership question. Jesus is Lord, so my will, plans, desires, body, schedule, relationships, and resources must come under His authority.

DISCUSS & WRITE

1. What does "you are not your own" mean practically?

2. Where is it hardest for you to surrender your preferences to Christ?

3. Where do you want Jesus' promises while still wanting the final vote?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

What am I still treating as private property rather than something entrusted to Christ?

MOVEMENT 2 - I'M NOT JUST A VOLUNTEER

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice... which is your reasonable service." - Romans 12:1

A volunteer offers something that still belongs to them. A servant begins with belonging. Volunteer language may help us organize ministry, but it cannot become our theology of discipleship.

Volunteer thinking asks: Do I feel like doing this?
Servant thinking asks: What does my Lord require?

DISCUSS & WRITE

1. Where has convenience become a condition for your obedience?

2. What is the difference between offering Jesus some of your time and presenting yourself to Him?

3. Is there an area where you are saying, "I'll obey - but not there"?

MY RESPONSE

MOVEMENT 3 - JESUS DOESN'T LEAVE ME AT DUTY

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you... I have called you friends." - John 15:14-15

Jesus does not remove obedience when He calls His disciples friends. He deepens the relationship. The servant knows the command; the friend is brought into an understanding of the Master's heart.

"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." - 1 John 5:3

Why does something Scripture says is not grievous sometimes feel grievous to me?

1. How does trusting God's heart change the way you hear His commands?

2. Which command of Christ has felt heavy to you recently?

3. Could the heaviness reveal an area where your will is resisting His?

PERSONAL PRAYER

MOVEMENT 4 - THE COMMAND ISN'T THE PROBLEM

"The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." - Mark 14:38

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." - Galatians 5:17

The flesh does not always look the same. Sometimes it says, "Leave me alone." Other times it says, "Let me run it." One person refuses to serve; another refuses to release control. Different behavior can reveal the same struggle: **self still demanding its own way.**

Surrender says: Lord, I give up my way for Your way.

"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." - Matthew 16:25

1. Does your flesh more often say "leave me alone" or "let me run it"?

2. What are you trying hardest to save - your way, control, comfort, image, or right to choose?

3. How might trying to save your way actually be costing you joy?

MOVEMENT 5 - EVEN GOOD THINGS MUST BE SURRENDERED

Family, marriage, children, work, rest, and ministry are good. But a good thing becomes disordered when it occupies a place that belongs only to God.

JESUS COMES FIRST.

This is not "church always wins" or "family always wins." Christ orders our loves and teaches us how to be faithful in each season.

"Lord, what does faithfulness require of me in this season?"

1. Have you ever used ministry to neglect home? What did that produce?

2. Have you ever used family, work, rest, or another good thing to avoid an act of obedience?

3. What would ordered love look like in your current season?

WHAT FAITHFULNESS REQUIRES OF ME NOW

MOVEMENT 6 - DON'T JUST ACCEPT THE TENSION; DEAL WITH IT

Scripture does not merely identify the conflict between flesh and Spirit. It tells us how to respond.

1. MORTIFY IT

"If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." - Romans 8:13

What am I feeding that I should be starving?

2. RESIST IT

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." - James 4:7

Where do I need to stop negotiating with what God has already settled?

3. BE FILLED

"Walk in the Spirit..." - Galatians 5:16 "Be filled with the Spirit." - Ephesians 5:18

The answer isn't simply: Try harder. It is: Surrender deeper. Walk closer. Stay filled.

What will walking in the Spirit look like for me this week?

PERSONAL APPLICATION - FROM "I HAVE TO" TO "I WANT TO"

Complete these prayerfully and specifically.

1. The area I am most tempted to keep for myself is:

2. One thing I need to stop feeding is:

3. One act of resistance I will practice this week is:

4. One way I will intentionally walk in the Spirit this week is:

5. A good thing in my life that needs to be reordered under Christ is:

6. The person I will ask to pray with me and hold me accountable is:

FINAL REFLECTION & PRAYER

Maybe the better question is not, "Why is following Jesus so hard?" but, "What am I still trying to save?"

"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." - Matthew 16:25

FINAL DECLARATION

*Lord, I belong to You.
My life belongs to You.
My family belongs to You.
My time belongs to You.
My gifts belong to You.
My future belongs to You.
My way belongs to You.*

And because I trust Your heart, Your commands are becoming my joy.

The issue underneath the issue is surrender.

Sometimes the distance between grievous obedience and joyful obedience is simply the distance between the part of my life I've given Him - and the part I'm still trying to save.

MY NEXT STEP