

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

John 15 --- That's not my name but.....so we're finishing off this thing on Abiding, and this is a great verse. 15:9

“Just as the Father has loved Me I have also loved you. Abide in My love.”

Just as the Father has **loved** Me I have also **loved** you. Just **AS** the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you. Just as the Father has loved **ME** I have also loved **YOU**. Isn't that astonishing? Ok, so who said, “Yeah?” Cause I'm just gonna talk to you all night. Just as the Father has loved Me, in exactly the same way that I am loved by the Father, I love you that way; **STAY** in My love! That's intense! There is an intensity in the love of God that is awesome; it's enormous! You were not made for ordinary loving and God does not love us with an ordinary love. He's not human; God is not human! Thank God for that hey? He's divine; He loves you with a love that's so excellent, so astonishing, so outstanding that just being within a mile of it should do something significant in your life. You are not meant to be loved in an ordinary way. And so for you to come under the love of God, you have to come under something so extra-ordinary, so powerful that it changes your very personality. It changes how you see things; it changes how you think; it changes how you feel; it changes who you are!

The word in the Greek for love is “Agape” and what's fascinating is that this word was not a part of the Greek language before Christ. There was no such word for the love that Jesus brought. They had to invent a word in Greek to explain the love of God; and so they invented a word and they called it “Agape”. There was no such word in existence before Christ started preaching. Isn't that astonishing? I think that is worth a clap. Jesus is the source of total, unconditional love to us, in and from the Father. The love of God to you is completely unconditionally unconditional, because Jesus Christ has met all the conditions in Himself.

So now the love of God doesn't depend on you. It doesn't depend upon how you think; how you see; how you live; what you are doing; it has nothing to do with you. It has nothing to do with your performance as a Christian. You are loved outrageously, because the Father loves the Son in that way. You are totally acceptable to God; you are completely adored by Him; because He loves Jesus. Unconditionally, absolutely no conditions what so ever, you are loved; live with it! Live with it! There's nothing you can do to make God love you more. And there is nothing you can do to make Him love you less. He loves you one hundred percent; He will always love you one hundred percent. The only thing that will change is your ability to experience that love; that will grow and

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

that will increase!

So it may feel, O God loves me more than He did last year; No, He doesn't. He loves you the same on your worse day as on your best. He's unchanging! The only thing that changes is your ability to receive that love that keeps getting upgraded. And maybe I think there is a few of us here tonight that could do with an upgrade....yeah? I got upgraded on my flight out here. It's always nice....I always ask for one. When I go into an airport and I approach the desk, I always say; "Look, I know you're busy and – but listen – if the flight is full and you absolutely have to bump somebody up to first class, I want you to know that I'm willing to be victimized. I'm so willing to be victimized. Look no further, I am your victim! Here I am in all my glory, I am here. Their kind of looking at you like, Ok he's weird but my face sticks in their memory. Sure enough I got a call, oh yea, it's always worth havin' a go. Upgrades! Don't you all love upgrades? It's great to get an upgrade especially on a Trans Atlantic flight. O My God, yes! So when I use to fly from London to Sydney Australia, that's like a 37 hour trip you need an upgrade on that flight cause it's a monster. There was this one time I walked into the airport and I'm approaching ticketing and it's like suddenly I get this horrible pain in my knee. And I'm going; "What is that? Dear God, what is that?" And I'm limping up to the desk and they say, "Are you alright?" and I say, "I just got this horrible pain in my leg, I have no idea where it came from." And so we're doing the flight and I said, "How's the flight looking?" and they said, "It's really full and its actually overfull. And we've got an overbooked situation. And she looked around and she said, "I'm gonna put you in first-class." And so I got my ticket and I'm walking away and suddenly my knee gets a heck of a lot better, and the Lord said to me, "How'd cha like that one?" I'm thinking, "Ok, Ok, but let me know next time hey, cause I'm about to take authority over something. Hadn't realized I'd been taking authority over You."

You know the important thing for us here is we must learn to rest in Jesus' confidence concerning being loved. He is totally loved by the Father and we must rest in the same confidence in the Father that He does. Yeah! Totally unconditionally loved. You need to revel in it. You need to kind of brag about it. Yea well ya know what I'm so loved by God. So how do you like those apples? Yeah, ya know I'm so loved by God it's incredible. You need to revel in it. You need to trade on it everyday. You are loved, wonderfully, incredibly, outrageously, beautifully, marvelously loved; and you need to enjoy it; you need to revel in it; you need to rejoice in it; you need to give thanks about it; you need to talk about it; you need to live in it; you need to trade on it shamelessly. Yeah! You have that right you are loved outrageously; you need to feel outrageously loved.

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

You need to go to the max of God's intention. Your emotions need to go to a high level. Now don't get stuck in all this evangelical clap-trap about emotions! God gave you emotions so you could feel something. I don't know why evangelicals are scared of emotions. What the heck is wrong with that? It's like well we can think about God, but we can't feel about Him. Well a pox on that! For God sake, what is that about? I don't want to love God with my head. I do love God with my head; I love thinking about God but I want to feel God! Yeah! I want to know the outrageous love, I want to feel it. Stuff the other stuff, you can keep that. I'm going for intense emotion here; I want to feel the love of God. I want to know the love of God that passes knowledge, and that gets you out there in a deep place of feeling; rejoicing O yeah I'm loved! Yeah! I like that! I am so not an evangelical because God isn't. I have nothing against evangelicals I just don't want to be one. And I don't want to be a charismatic either cause I'm not even sure that on days they aren't just as dumb. I want to be a child of God; I don't want to have a label other than "Beloved" I wanna be the Beloved of God. Yeah, I wanna be the Beloved of God; I wanna be like Daniel. "O man, greatly beloved of God!" What's Danny boy got for goodness sake, yeah! You are greatly beloved; you need to enjoy it. Enjoy it. Go after it! Find out what it looks like; what does that mean Lord? What does that mean in this situation? What does your love mean in this situation? What does it mean here? What does it sound like Father? What does it look like? What does it feel like? I wanna know! I wanna know the love that passes knowledge. I wanna feel it, know it, revel in it. Oh yeah!

We rest in Jesus' confidence concerning being loved. He is so loved and he reveled in it. And I like that. I really like that. He is the Beloved Son the Only Begotten of the Father. He is the exact representation of God's likeness and character, and we are accepted in Him. We are accepted in the Beloved. And Jesus is the source to release to us everything we need to live in Him; a totally, completely, wonderfully dependable source for everything. Ya know, the Father has a longing and an intention towards us because He has a longing and intention towards Jesus, so the Father put you into Jesus so that He could love you in the same way He loves Christ. I like that. Putting us into Christ means that the Father can fulfill His heart towards the Son in us. So that's worth an upgrade in our thinking. You know we have to have an upgrade in our heart, in our mind.

The ultimate concern of the Kingdom is to release the Agape love of God from heaven to earth, so that God's glory may be fully seen in the nature and character of His people. You are meant to be carriers of the love of God. And when that love comes from Heaven to earth it changes everything; no one should be safe from a blessing. No one should be safe from the love of God when we're

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

around. We should be touching everyone we meet especially our enemies. How do you love your enemy? Well maybe it starts by not seeing them as one.

I had a guy come up to me and say "I just want you to know I hate your ministry." I said, "Ok, thanks. Appreciate that." He said, "No, I really hate your ministry; I'm against you. I am your enemy." I said, "Naw Dude ya can't be." He said, "Naw I am your enemy." I said, "No, you can't be." He said, "I am! I am your enemy." I said, "Naw, trust me you're not." He said, "I'm your enemy." I said, "No, honestly Dude you can't be." "Why?" "Cause today's Tuesday, I don't take enemies on Tuesday." He said, "I'll come back tomorrow." I said, "Yea but then it'll be Wednesday. Wednesday is my day for outrageously loving everyone, so come back tomorrow that'll be cool." "I am your enemy!" I said, "Dude you're not! Honestly you're not!" "Why?" "Because I don't want you to be." It was really frustrating him and it was great. I loved it; he was totally frustrated with me. "I'm against you." "Naw Dude can't be sorry. Come back Friday though we can have a conversation on Friday." "What's so special about Friday?" "Nothing really, but you know you might get lucky." He just totally didn't know what to do with Himself. Ya can't be mad at me because I don't choose it! I have a choice in this too. So put that in your pipe and smoke it.

We are to love in the same manner and degree that we are loved by the Father. You see, abiding in Christ means allowing the fullness of God's love to become real. So I want a continuous on-going experience of the love of God in my life; so I'm asking – I just wanna know your love today Father. So if He loves me like He loved Jesus He's gonna do something, hey? When was the last time you asked God to love you? When was the last time you asked the Holy Spirit to comfort you? When was the last time you asked for the joy of your salvation to be restored? You know, you have not because you ask not. Always ask! Heavens always open! The Father is always working to cultivate Agape love, unconditional love; to replicate His love in your life in every situation. You know some times we get in the flesh about situations because we forget to love; all of us do that. I do that. We forget to love, we forget that love is the currency of Heaven and we just forget. You know and the Holy Spirit has to remind us, "You know you could have loved there. You had a chance to love Graham, ya missed it! You blew it!" "Oh yeah You're right, I did" "So, do something about it."

I am so confident in God's love I don't fear failure. I'm not worried about failing; I'm actually really concerned about not trying. You know when you do something for the first time you learn how not

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

to do it. Isn't that true? So the first time you do something you can't make a mistake, cause if you haven't done it before, it's not a mistake, its learning. You should love the learning. If you really want to grow in the Holy Spirit, love the learning that comes through life. Love the learning that comes through everything. You're not perfect; you're not brilliant – yet. So love the learning that takes you to a higher place of being brilliant. Love the learning in every situation. Don't be embarrassed by failure; God isn't. He chose you because you're weak and foolish and have a history of screwing up; so He chose you for all the right reasons! Yeah! He's happy with His choice let me tell you that. To be honest you're just not good enough to surprise Him; you're not clever enough to disappoint Him. Now come on, the very idea that anyone in this room could disappoint God; Oh my goodness, get over yourself. The very idea that God could be disillusioned with you, fed up; as if!! He doesn't have any illusions about you; He knows exactly what you're like. He knows you on your best day; He knows you on your worst day; He's set His heart on loving you no matter what.

Perfect love casts out fear; there is no fear in love; fear has torment and God is not into torment. But He is into casting out fear. The fear of failure.....He's against that! For He's sooo gonna love you in your failings, He's so committed to loving you in your failings to stepping into your low place and being there for you; being with you. It's so important as part of our abiding that in agape love we must concentrate on being loved perfectly. I'm so confident in God's love towards me; I'm so confident in His grace. Abiding means to live in the deep place of God's love; the deep place of His affection. It's a love so deep it humbles you. There have been many times I've cried, I've wept because of how deep God's love is, and especially on the day when I'm being a prize idiot and God comes along and kisses you and it's so humbling; and He surrounds you with a love that's so deep when it comes it makes you want to be better; bigger; it's a love so intense it thrills you.

There are times in my walk with God when His love has come so deep, so powerfully, so strongly, I trembled from head to foot just with excitement. You don't know what to do with yourself; you don't know whether to laugh, cry, jump around, sing, screech running down the stairs; I don't know, run naked in the street! I don't know! You don't know what to do with yourself. You are beside yourself. It's like here's me and there's me. I am beside myself. I don't know what to do with myself. It's like....I don't know what to do. It's love that's so profound, it moves you. It moves you to do things; it moves me to write; it moves me to – I love writing poetry, it's just one of the pleasures in my life and it moves me to write. It moves me to wanna express something. You know

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

God's love is so deep, it moves you to creativity; and some of my friends it moves them to paint; others it moves them to dance. It's important to be moved by the love of God and to understand that there is a creative outlet. When the love of God really touches you deeply you have to do something. We are undone by agape love. It's an amazing love that feels beyond us until you are touched by it.

An agape love produces this deep rest and peace and it is absolutely impossible to be anxious when you experience agape love; it's like all that stuff is just driven out of you. And there's a deep rest; there's a deep peace' there's a joy; there is just an intensity in your heart of confidence that anything's possible. And it's like your heart goes to one place and your head goes to another; and it's like your brain fizzes just with the knowledge of Who God is; and it takes you to a place of creativity in your thinking.

Agape love is strong by definition. It's the strongest thing that exists, it's powerful, it's effective and it gives us confidence. Of all people on the face of the earth we are the most confident in God. We have every reason to be confident. We are confident in our expressions towards people. I'm confident of Who God is for me. Confident that I can tell anybody "Well, this is what God's like! This is Who He is." ... so I have the coolest job there is. I get paid for bragging on God. I love talking to people about Who He is; that's the only thing I love about plane journeys. Yea you're trapped in a steel tube at 39,000 feet with 400 people and they can all be victimized by you. Ain't no one gettin away from you. I'm always intrigued about who I'm gonna sit next to. I always say to my intercessors... "Pray about the person sitting next to me." And some times you get some wonderfully obnoxious person, who has a thing against religion--- (Don't we all?) ---and wants to tell me about how much he hates religion and I'm nodding saying, "Dude I'm so with you. Yea know it's amazing. Have you been talking to God?" "What do ya mean?" "Well He says exactly the same thing as you say. You guys been having a conversation? That's incredible. The last time I talked to Him about religion He said exactly what you said! So you know Him then?" "Well, no I don't know Him." "But, you're saying exactly the same thing as He's saying." "I am?" "Yea, you're sure you haven't had a conversation; not a conversation, you've never had a conversation with God? Would you like to?" I've so got him wrapped around that finger and he doesn't even realize it.

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

Hey listen; this is what I know about God right? And it's always interesting to me on planes because you always have this wonderfully captive audience. And so you've got to pray that you get to sit next to someone who's really loud and obnoxious cause it's like perfect opportunity to preach the gospel, cause he's sooooo gonna let the whole cabin know how he feels, and I am so gonna screw with his head. So it's interesting cause you find yourself just turning up the volume on your own voice box ya know and start talking about how God's not like that. That's very interesting and I appreciate everything you say, but I just want to say one thing. God isn't like that. I have never known God to be like that. This is what God is like....and turn up the volume....and you look around and you find that the guy behind you has got his nose stuck between the 2 seats and he's listening and the guy in front...suddenly his seat comes back....and he's listening. Cool, that's great! That passes for fun in my bazaar life.

Every challenge we meet will be overcome by agape. You'd have to live for a thousand years to get any where close to how much God really feels about you. It is so deep, it is so broad, it is so profound and you cannot be separated from it. Not even your own stupidity can separate you from the love of God I know cause I've tried and the Lord says, "Graham please...I'm God...it's like there is no way, you're just not dumb enough to be separated from Me. Trust Me, you'll never be that dumb that I'll get rid of you. But you just might live to be a profound man who runs with a deep experience of My nature and changes things all around

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

you. How do you feel about that?" "I'd just settle for being less stupid today!" "Deal!! You have a deal!"

Every challenge we meet will be overcome by Agape. Every relational difficulty is resolved by Agape. The wisdom and the revelation of God will always reveal Agape in all its beauty and in all its power. Love of God.

You're supposed to have a marvelous experience of being loved. Don't you dare settle for anything less than something majestic, or I'll find where you live and I'll come around and I'll beat the snot out of you. Trust me on that one. I'm telling you. I'm serious as a heart attack; I'll send the boys around. You're supposed to have a marvelous experience of being loved. Please don't settle for anything less. Let your heart go out towards God. And don't you dare have a thought in your head that you are not worthy!! Cause I'm so gonna kick your backside – In love obviously, but hard. Don't you dare think of yourself as unworthy or not good enough. You're good enough because you are in Christ. He's good enough – you're good enough. Yea. Say yes, Graham...(audience, Yes Graham) Thank you.

Verse 10 –

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.

Obedience results as a consequence of being outrageously loved. The problem with evangelicals is that they put obedience before love. It should come afterwards. Yea. We put obedience is like our performance thing, well if you obey the Lord, if you do this, if you do that, then the love of God can come into your life. Naw it's not true! The outrageous love of God comes and enables us to be obedient cause when you are touched by the love of God, you want to do everything for the One Who loves you so well. So obedience comes after love. Obedience results as a consequence of being outrageously loved. There's no performance here. You don't have to do anything to be loved by God; He's set His heart on you. Love is the thing that He wants to be. He is love, He chooses love He can't be any other way. He will always love you. It is Who He is.

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

There are two sets of commandments here; there's the Fathers commandments and Jesus' commandments. Jesus kept His Fathers commandments on our behalf. That's the beauty about being in Christ. Jesus is the guarantee of a better covenant and because you are in Christ you come into all of His obedience. Somebody breathe. Because you're in Christ you come into the fullness of the experience of His obedience. That's what it means to be in Christ. What he is you become; as He is so are we in this world. So His obedience becomes yours like His righteousness is yours. Yeah we live in the righteous-ness of Jesus, we're not trying to have our own righteousness, we just accepted His. I am righteous because of Who He is. I'm obedient because He's obedient. He obeys the Fathers commandments and because I'm in Him I can do exactly the same; I can do whatever Jesus does. I can be whatever Jesus is because that's my right; it's my privilege; it's my inheritance.

Somebody smile! You guys are starting to worry me this evening.

That's why Jesus' says,

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another even as I have loved you. That you also love one another; by this all men will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another."

I've never understood why the western church lets go of people when they're going through difficulties. When there's sin in your life you need to be loved even more. "Where sin abounds, grace does MUCH MORE abound. Yeah. The love of God overwhelms everything. And people need to be outrageously loved.

I'm gonna digress for a moment into one of my other passions. One of the things I love about my soccer team, even though they got a bad result today, I love being at the home ground where you've got nearly 80,000 people and they sing non-stop for like 2 hours. They sing songs about our own team; every player has a song that they sing for them; we sing songs about the opposition which are less than flattering; we even sing songs about teams we're not even playing on that day. And then we sing songs about teams that we haven't played for 5 years, but we hate them. It's fun. But the thing I love about the supporters of my team when a player is playing badly they sing his song. They encourage him. They start singing his song. They start treating him as though he's having the best game of his life. And you know players pick up their game. They pick up their

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

game...why?...because there's love coming off the terraces, all this love coming out of the crowd. Yeah. Well God is like that. He sings over us doesn't He? He has love songs in His heart about u. He loves loving. He is love. And if we're gonna represent Him we come into that same environment of heart. We are made to be lovers of God and lovers of people. And it's really important that you sort your heart out in terms of being outrageously loved, and to know that your obedience come as a consequence of being loved. It's the power of abiding love, operating in our life that enables us to keep God's commandments. Why? Because you want to!

One thing I know about human beings is every single one of us does exactly what we want to do. Yeah! You can't stop people from doing exactly what they want to do. Well, I WANT to be loved by God. I want to love the people around me; not saying I always do it, or do it well, but it is a passion and I'm learning and I'm growing. "If anyone loves Me," Jesus said, "he will keep My word. And My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our abode with him. We'll come and dwell with him."

It's called reciprocal abiding. That we abide in God and God abides in us, and love is the currency that your life works on. Love is the currency; love is like the air that you breathe. And reciprocal abiding, that mutual abiding of God in you and you in God, is the goal of the Holy Spirit in all things. He teaches us to abide and He enables us to perfect the discipline of dwelling and remaining in Jesus. You're in Christ! It's the difference between "state" and "standing"! "State" is how you see yourself; and very often in our state we see ourselves negatively. We see ourselves as weak, powerless, sinful, undeserving and our performance is not good, therefore God can't love us; therefore I'm not acceptable and all that kind of stuff...."state".

God has come to take you out of your "state" and put you in your "standing". You're standing is who you are in Christ; how the father sees you in Christ! So the Father puts you into Jesus that means when He looks at you He doesn't see anything wrong with you. Because you're in Christ He sees you through the lens of Jesus; so He doesn't see what's wrong with you, He only sees what's missing from your current experience of Who He is and who He wants to be, and He always has a plan to correct that. God knows the next piece God wants to bring into your life. He knows the area, He knows exactly what He wants to do in the area where you least like yourself. He has a plan; He has a purpose; He doesn't see what's wrong with you He sees what's missing out of your experience of Him. And God is committed to coming into you in your standing and increasing it, so

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

that you have an increase of wisdom and revelation about who God is for you in your current circumstances; so the only reason God puts His finger on something in your life is because He's got a Divine exchange planned. He wants to show you, you don't need that piece, you need this!

Yeah God is not obsessed by sin, He's consumed by life. He's dealt with sin once for all so He's not dealing with it any more; He's dealt with it once and for all in Christ. He's not dealing with sin; He's giving you life! When God comes to you, He's not coming to smack you about sin, He's coming to give you the life that you're missing and He knows that the reason you are doing this sin, is because you are missing some life. So God wants to give you life. Then He says consider yourself dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:11) God is committed to giving you life. He's so not an evangelical. He is not obsessed by sin...for God sake! He's dealt with it. He's consumed by bringing Life to you. He looks at an area of your life where you're not doing well and He sees the need and He's committed to meeting that need, and He only points it out to you because He wants to do something.

So He brings us under a conviction that something needs to change in this area; and what He's convicting you of is your need for an upgrade. "I sooo wanna touch this area of your life." And what do we do? We get guilty about it and turn away. What is that? That is criminal insanity! And we actually think God is human; that He's annoyed with us; that He's offended by us; Goodness sake Jesus took all of that offense. Has Jesus been punished enough! Yes! Has he been judged enough? Yes! So there is no judgment in this life, there is grace; mercy and grace to help us in our time of need. You can boldly come before the throne of grace, you have that right. "Father, I've got a problem, I need Your help!" "I know! I've been waiting for you. Have it right here. (Big smile; fully accepted; totally loved) Let's just get on with it."

Many of us have wasted so many years in feeling unacceptable, unworthy. That is not the Holy Spirit saying that. That is the evil one. It's not the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "When the Spirit of Truth comes He'll show you Who I am." The Holy Spirit will only ever show you Who Jesus is for you. He'll point out the area of your life and then He'll show you what Jesus is for you in that area. "He'll tell you the things of Mine and show them to you." Why? So that you can take it onboard! You need to run with the Spirit of Revelation about the true nature of God and what He is really, really, really, really like! We need to revel in it; we need to revel in the Love of God. And you know what? You can change really quickly if you get a hold of the true nature of the Love of God for you. Stop

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

feeling unworthy. I mean like, stop it! Stop it! You can stop it; it's called repentance, change your mind set. You can only replace a mind set with a mind set. Change your mindset about God. Change your mind about Who He is and what He's like.

Reciprocal abiding is the goal of the Holy Spirit, God lives in you and you live in God and we're learning the discipline of dwelling and remaining in Who Christ is for us. And you should be having a great time in your life. Even on the toughest days it's brilliant to be a Christian; it's brilliant to know God; even on the worst days it's amazing; anything can happen with God. Jesus lives in us to keep His word to us, and as we abide in His obedience and as we trust that, in His nature we are free to keep His word to other people. I love loving my friends! I have some brilliant friends and I love thinking about them, I love anticipating what comes next. I love asking the Lord questions: "So what's happening right now with Barbara?" Barbara is funny, she's kind of goofy, her husband is one of my best friends; he's the worship leader in our church; and Barbara's nick name is -4MT- because she acts like she's the 4th Member of the Trinity. She is the boss of all of us; she organizes us. We all go out....a huge crowd of us....every Sunday for lunch and she organizes everything she's like an old sheep dog, she herds us in the right direction of the restaurant; all that kind of stuff. She's incurably noisy and we all adore her. 4MT! Brilliant friend! And she just has this way about her. The thing about Barbara is that she knows she is wonderfully loved by Jesus. And so she expects to be wonderfully loved by everyone that she meets. And you know what? She's never met a stranger. She just like comes up, and you find yourself saying something about yourself to her and you've never even met her before. She has that way, but I love thinking about Barbara and thinking about her in terms of what's next for her Lord? What is she becoming? And what's emerging in her life with You? I like thinking about my friends. Where are they right now? What are they struggling in? How can I stand with them? What's coming next? Ya know; what have we got to look forward to? How are they going to be changing? I love all those conversations with God. And when we get together often we have meals together. We'll sit there and ya know, a, we'll just tell one another what we like about one another. I like that. Just a whole evening of saying, "Ya know Bob this is what I really value about you." I like that cause there's something really powerful in friendship about that.

It's called intentionality and God is very very intentional. You know God loves to tell you the things He likes about you. I really struggled with this years ago. And God said to me one day; "Ya know Graham, you are My beloved son in whom I am well pleased." And I'm going; "Shuss, shuss!

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

You're not supposed to say things like that. I'm not Jesus. You only say that to Jesus." He said, "I was." I said, "What do ya mean?" And He said, "I'm saying it to Jesus in you. You're in Him. So you're My beloved son in whom I am well pleased." "OK, well I can't get my head around that." "What? You don't believe Me?" "Well it's not that I don't believe You, I just think You're being nice." "Ya think I'm being nice?" "Un huh." "Well ya think I'm like lying to you?" "Well no." Thinkin, OK I'm getting on dangerous ground here. "Well no." "We'll what does "no" mean?" "It means no, not exactly. No possibly but, I don't want to say yes." He said, "Graham, you're such a dummy." We agree on that score! "Ok, I'm gonna prove it to you." Over the next 18 months I think there was 416 people came to me at conferences; meetings; and all of them put a piece of paper in my hand and when I opened it, it was the same flippin verse: "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased."

416 times! After 50 I was done. "I'm done. I believe You! Lord I believe You!" "What's that?" "I believe You." "No, no you don't." "Honestly I do." (50 more) "I get it, I totally believe You." "No, no I'm not sure. You're saying you believe Me now, but you might not believe Me." (Another 100 people coming) "God told me..." yeah, yeah, great thanks..... 416 rubbed my nose in it. And the 416th was an elderly lady whose one of my intercessors and she comes up to me and she looks at me and she says, "The Lord says this is the last time He's going to tell you." Great! And she has that look like are you stupid or what? Like, she knows stuff. Thank you Sandra, I am stupid.....but I'm wonderfully loved apparently.

He's your Father. Naw, like really. He's your Father. Honestly! Don't look at me like that! He's your Father. OK, who wants to be slapped first? He's your Father. And He loves you. My experience of my earthly father was so horrendous for years I couldn't relate to God as Father; but ya know what? I'm His beloved son in whom He is well pleased, and He's my Dad. He's my Father. I am wonderfully, outrageously, unconditionally, totally and completely hopelessly loved by God, Who thinks the world of me. And that is the truth that sets me free. That's my truth that sets me free. Totally loved, very, very, very, very, very confident in Who God is for me. Know that I am wonderfully loved on my worst day. Know that when I'm having a bad day with God, but He is not having a bad day with me. He loves me. And He's happy.

God is the happiest person I know. He has the sunniest disposition of anybody you're ever gonna meet. I have some great friends who are brilliantly funny, totally hilarious and compellingly

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

fun to be with, like my friend Jessie. An American guy who lives in Vancouver BC, who is a pastor there; and he builds hot rods in his spare time and he's a ventriloquist who also plays the banjo and he's killing me funny. He has this dummy called grandpa, and grandpa is a little old guy who is like a Baptist, Presbyterian Methodist minister for 40 years and then he retired and got saved. So he's like really annoyed that he served God for 40 years and didn't know Him. And now he got saved, and grandpa loves the prophetic; loves to preach. So Jessie's very strongly prophetic himself ya know so a he gets grandpa up and some times grandpa does all the notices or he takes the offering, and always notice when grandpa takes the offering he's always big – he has the anointment....that's what he calls it. He says I'm under the anointment now. And he's such a great act but when Jessie starts prophesying using grandpa...Oh my goodness.

He picked out one guy in a conference we were doing together and Jesse nails this guy prophetically using grandpa, right, and you can see the guy sat there and hi's thinking, that's the word of the Lord but it's....that's the word of the Lord but....that's the word of the Lord....so it's like grandpa just leans out and says now son, don't get too proud, you've just been

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

prophesied to by a dummy. I mean it's hilarious, but Jesse is like one of the funniest people you'll ever meet in your life.

I was doing a conference in Vancouver and he comes to pick me up at the airport dressed as Elvis. Kid you not! And his associate is dressed as Tony the Tiger. So I come out of customs hold and I come out into the main part of the airport and fortunately for me, there was a plane load of Koreans who had exited the customs hold before me. So they all come out and see Elvis standing there and Tony the Tiger and Jesse has this guy with a camera so they're takin a picture....they're gonna take a film of Elvis greeting me and they have this big sign....Welcome Prophet! Freaked me out! And I'm looking up at....and I have this sense of impending doom; and I'm looking at Elvis and this Tony the Tiger and I'm thinking O shoot!....or words to that effect. But there's a plane load of Korean's between me and Elvis. So all the Koreans see Elvis and start getting their cameras out and so they are all there taking pictures and Jesse gets totally caught up in his 15 minutes of fame...."Hello Welcome to Vancouver"....he's doing all of this kind of stuff and Tony the Tiger is like posing and I totally walk right past them and his camera ...and I'm walking past them smirking. That's Jesse...I know that's Jesse and it was so funny cause we have this crowd following all the way through the terminal. The Korean's are going like...."Ah, one more picture!" Ya know... it was great.

So we're on the way home and he decides that he wants a hamburger cause he's Elvis, so we stop at this hamburger joint. It's full and he walks in and the whole place just stands up and starts cheering and he's going around signing autographs. That's Jesse. He's one of my best friends and he's killingly funny to be with. You laugh all day long with Jess. He's one of the most joyful people I know. And when you go out walking with him around his neighborhood, everyone knows him; little kids up to older people; bikers, everyone. How's it going? He's got a joke to tell; something funny; ya know; everyone smiles around Jesse. Everybody. He has that kind of personality.

Well God is like Jesse to the power of a million. God is like that. I'm not saying God would dress as Elvis, though I wouldn't put it past Him! I wouldn't put it passed Him. He can show up in very surprising ways, but He has a brilliant sense of humor. I mean look at this, look around; you're telling me God doesn't have a sense of humor? My goodness. God is extremely, incredibly, wonderfully joyful. When He says enter into the joy of the Lord...ya know it's like entering into everything I Am!! He knows how to laugh. He loves to laugh with us, mostly He laughs at us,

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

cause He finds us funny I think, on days. But He has this incredible lightness of spirit...God. Ya know that about Him. He's so light hearted..Yeah. Jesus was only acquainted with grief...it wasn't His best friend. Yeah, He was happy, joyful, He's a happy God. He over flows with smiles and laughter. He loves to lift up the light of His countenance, which is a wonderfully poetic way of saying, God has a brilliant smile!! He has a sensational smile. "I will lift up the light of My countenance upon you."

And He doesn't mind us if we are struggling He just has an intentionality towards us that's huge. So how many of you that are parents...right...when your kids are learning to walk.... Remember them, how they stood there holding onto the edge of the couch with those fat little legs yeah, and what do you do? You get down in front of him, you fling your arms wide and you put this brilliant smile on your face... "Come on then...come on then".... And the kid looks at you.... "Come on - you can do it"....and they start wobbling towards you and then they drop down and cheat; and crawl towards you. You don't mind a bit. You kind of like pick em up and you find their tummy and you do a raspberry on their belly button and you swirl em around, and you kiss em and you hug em and you put them right back an assume the position in front of them.... "Come on then"... and you don't care how many times your kid falls down or stumbles, as long as they're stumbling towards you.

Well God is exactly the same as that. Where'd you get that from? It's in your DNA from heaven. God doesn't care how many times you fall over and stumble, as long as you are stumbling towards Him....Yeah. Yeah. He's happy! He's happy with you right now. He's happy with you because He always has a plan. He knows the next thing you need and He's so deeply committed to giving it to you. And just the thought of giving it to you makes Him happy. Hum. That's what He's like. You can't be miserable around God. He's just too happy and His happiness overwhelms you. And when His joy touches you, you break out into smiles. I think about God...I start smiling. I pray...I start smiling. I talk in meetings about God I'm smiling, cause He's a smiler. He grins; He has a great sense of humor; He's light; He's brilliant to be with. He's like the best person to hang out with....cause He's gonna find something to say that's funny. He's gonna find some way of putting a smile on your face cause He's committed to life, love and laughter. From age to age He loves to lift up the light of His countenance upon us. He has a brilliant dazzling smile. And abiding in Him provides you with the anointing to smile, grin and to laugh out loud no matter what is occurring.

Now we need to practice the art of belly laughing. Because you're gonna be doing it forever.

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

When you're not worshipping, you're gonna be laughing at something. Joy is a permanent emotion and rejoicing is its physical expression. Abiding is about joy being manifested as part of life. Grief, sorrow and sighing any kind of despondency can only ever be temporary, and don't keep them around longer than necessary. Get rid of them as soon as you can. "Weeping may last for a night, but joy comes in the morning". "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy". "They will find gladness and joy and sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads." Isaiah 51 "In His presence there is fullness of joy". Jesus said, "No one will take away your joy!" But you can give it up. Some of us have given up our joy. We've settled for not being happy, we've settled for being miserable. There is a deep outrageous joy that belongs to you; you all need to pick it up on your way out. Yeah. Ya need to go to the lost and found department pick up your joy; cause some of you give it up so easily. You give it up so easily. It's like you settled for misery. And God can come to you when you're going through a nightmare of an experience and He can make you laugh. I've known this myself in the last number of years, in what I've been going through personally. I felt that incredible comfort of the Holy Spirit blessing. Me.

There are some days when the Holy Spirit has just breezed into my room and started telling me jokes. He loves Pharisee jokes. He loves Pharisee jokes. You know, you might be a Pharisee if! "If your favorite words in the Bible are the ones you wrote in the margin...you might be a Pharisee!" "If a \$20 bill looks small when you take it to the grocery store and big when you bring it to church...you might be a Pharisee." He's a joker. And there were just days when I would just be in fits of laughter. I remember one day, He came into my room, I was doing a conference and I was really struggling and He came into my hotel room at 6 in the morning and I sat there and I'm praying and He just breezes in and you know the Holy Spirit is like...He's like Tigger. He bounces, yeah, He bounces He's like rude with health. He's incredibly cheerful and His cheeriness is like contagious.

And He just comes in and says... "You know what My favorite excuse in the Bible is?" I'm thinking, no, but you're gonna tell me. "It's like, do you remember that time when Moses is up on the mountain for the second time and he's bringing down the tablets, we all know there's a big commotion going on in camp because they all think he's dead, he's been away for 5 weeks; they're all thinking, he's toast. God's killed him so lets all party. So they're all partying down there doing unspeakable things and Moses comes down the mountain, he's got these tablets, he's feeling like really important. He say, Bless him he feels so important bringing the tablets down, and he gets to

ABIDING - John 15 - Graham Cooke CD 6 of 7 (duration 1:08:26)

the camp and he hears the sound of singing. Aaron meanwhile has been making this golden calf out of all the gold the people gave him and, He said....Moses gets to the edge of camp and the word about his presence spreads and He said you never have seen anyone so panic stricken in your life as Aaron. So Moses comes into the middle of camp and here's Aaron like this...in front of the golden calf....ya know...it's like "Hi! How ya doin? You want to come and get something to eat?" and it's like Moses is saying, "What's all this going on and what's that behind your back?" Ah 'er what? Moses bushes him out of the way and Aaron goes, "Well umm they gave me all this gold and I threw it in the fire and this came out!" And the Holy Spirit said, and We laughed like anything. I turned to the Father and I said, "Did You hear what he just said?" He said, we laughed like anything! He said it's like the best excuse I've ever heard.

And of course I've totally forgotten what I was miserable about!