

# Why Do I Do What I Hate

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please have a seat. For those who are visiting, welcome. My name is BK. I have the pleasure of being one of the pastors here. And let me add my blessing to fathers. Father's Day is, I'll be honest with you, it's the only day I feel comfortable wearing a Hawaiian shirt.

Call me a legalist. It doesn't matter. But I figure you guys are going to have enough grace on Father's Day for this. So, I hope you're doing well. Please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans chapter 7.

Now, today we're not going to be just in Romans 7. We're going to be in verse 15. Which theologians are aligned is one of the most difficult passages in all of Scripture.

Now, some passages are difficult because they're hard to understand. Romans 7.15 is difficult because we do understand it.

We know exactly what Paul is talking about in this passage. The truth is, we have all experienced the frustration of wanting to do what is right, yet finding another force at work within us.

[ 1 : 19 ] We know this experientially. Have you ever done something and immediately afterward wondered, what in the world was I thinking?

Maybe it was something you said. Maybe it was a harsh word, an anger, a selfish decision, a sinful choice. Perhaps a temptation you promised yourself you would never give into it again.

And almost immediately after it happens, you find yourself asking, why did I do that? I know better. I didn't want to do that. And I hate that I did that. Yet somehow you did it anyway. Here's the facts. It doesn't matter where you are in life. You understand this text. You can be a teenager who's fighting temptation. You could be a husband losing their temper.

[ 2 : 26 ] A wife who speaks words that she wished she could take back. A believer who falls into the same sin again and again and again. And every single one of us knows something about this struggle.

And that is exactly what Paul is talking about in verse 15. Let's look at the text with me. It simply says, Anyone relate?

Or just me and Saban on this one. You see, this is Paul's being honest with us. He's being honest about the conflict that rages inside every single human heart.

It is a conflict between desire and performance. A conflict between what is right and what I actually do. And it's a conflict that every believer understands at some level.

But before we rush to identify with Paul's struggle, we need to remember where we are in Romans. Because Paul is not just sharing some random frustration here.

[ 3 : 53 ] Paul, at the core of this text, is making an argument. And remember I told you, a lot of people struggle. Is Paul talking about himself as he's saved or before Christ?

And people really get involved in all of these kind of struggles. That's not the point of the passage. The point of the passage is what is God teaching us in here?

Because Paul, like I said, is making an argument. If we forget the argument, we will misunderstand the struggle that Paul is talking about here. Let me give us a quick review of Romans 7.

Verses 1 to 6, Paul taught us that we have died to the law and now belong to Christ. Verses 17 to 13 taught us that the law is not sinful.

The law is holy. The law is righteous. The law is good. And the fact of the matter is, the problem is not the law. The problem is sin. And remember what sin is.

[ 5 : 00 ] Sin isn't an action that we do that is wrong. Paul's talking about sin as a force that works against us. You with me on that one? Sin is this power that is working against us.

And in the last sermon in Romans, we arrived at verse 14. And Paul simply says, The law is spiritual, but I am fleshly. Because we know the law comes from God.

The law reflects God's holiness. The law tells us the truth about who we are. But the truth of the matter is, we lack the power to obey it.

And now, in verses 15 to 17, Paul is giving us the evidence that we lack the power to obey the law. All right? That's the context. We need to understand this. Notice what verse 15, it starts off with the word for. What he's saying is, in other words, let me show you why I just said what I said.

[ 6 : 08 ] Let me prove to you what life looks like when God's perfect standard confronts human weakness. And what follows was one of the most vivid descriptions of human inability found anywhere in Scripture.

Paul is a man who knows what is right. Paul is a man who desires what is right. And a man who even approves of what is right, and yet finds himself doing the very thing he hates.

Why? Why do I do the things I hate? And this is the question that Paul wants to answer. And I'm going to tell you something.

The answer is far deeper than we have bad habits. The answer is far deeper than I lack discipline. The answer is far deeper than I didn't try hard enough.

You with me on that? It's not that. Paul is going to expose a power that operates beneath the surface, a power that the law can reveal, but the law cannot conquer.

[ 7 : 26 ] A power that frustrates human effort. And it's the power called indwelling sin. Indwelling sin.

And until we understand the problem of indwelling sin, we will never appreciate the solution. So the fact is, we need to understand Romans 7.

Paul is doing two very specific things. One, Paul is dismantling the confidence that we have in ourselves. We always want to have confidence in ourselves.

I can handle that temptation. I can get over this. I just need to get up earlier, read my Bible. I just need to try harder. And Paul is stripping away our trust in our own efforts.

Paul is bringing us to the place where we stop saying, I can do this. And he's bringing to a place that starts saying, just as the song that we sang this morning, Lord, I need you.

[ 8 : 40 ] This morning, I have one single goal for you this morning. Is that you would understand verse 15. That's all we're going to teach about today. We're going to go phrase by phrase, three phrases and there's three points.

The first point is we're going to look at our contradiction. For I do not understand my own action. Number two, we're going to look at our divided will.

For I do not do what I want. And the third is we're going to look at our hatred of sin. But I do the very thing that I hate.

Before I go any further, let me pray. Dear most holy, loving Father, we need you. I need you. Father, this verse undresses us. We relate to it. This isn't us before we were saved.

[ 9 : 41 ] This is us now. This is the human condition that we all live in. Father, I just pray through the exposition of this text that we would truly understand it.

We would truly understand the purpose of his words. And I pray that we would find freedom that can only be found in you and that's trusting you in all things.

Father, I pray that our hearts would be exposed, our legalism would be exposed, our lack of discipline would be exposed, our lies that we believe about ourselves and others would be exposed to your absolute and wonderful truth.

So God, we thank you. I pray that you give us hearts and minds to understand and hearts to be gripped by your words here about this man 2,000 years ago who's really revealing the depth of his heart to us.

I pray that we would not take this text lightly and I pray that you'd give my voice clarity so that we may understand this truth. In your name we pray.

[ 11 : 03 ] Amen. So the first point that I want to look at is I want to look at the contradiction, our contradiction, for I do not understand my own actions.

Like I said, we know the truth of the statement. Paul has just said in verse 14, the law is spiritual, but I am fleshly sold under sin. In this section, he's now giving us the evidence.

Like I said, that word for means, let me show you what I mean. Let me prove what life under the power of sin looks like. And the proof is shocking.

It's I do not understand my own actions. Now, when we first read this statement, we might be thinking that Paul is saying, I don't know what I'm doing. But that's not what Paul means here.

Paul is not suffering from ignorance. He's not suffering from lack of information. He's not confused. Maybe this is right. Maybe this is wrong. That's not what he's talking about here.

[12:07] In fact, it's the exact opposite. Paul begins with he knows what is right. He loves what is right. He desires what is right.

Yet somehow his actions keep moving in the opposite direction. So when Paul says, I do not understand my own actions, it's key to understand that word understand.

It's not just a, this doesn't compute. What it means is that he's generally confused and bewildered. In other words, Paul is expressing that the sinful results of his action simply make no sense to him. He's saying, I can't make sense of this. I, I don't know what I should do. I, I know what God requires. I know what is right. And yet I keep finding myself doing something else.

Let me ask you, have you genuinely wanted to trust God? Lord, I'm going to trust you today. You wake up in the morning. I am going to trust you today, but you're full of fear that day.

[13:25] You generally want to forgive that person who hurt you, but you keep repeating that offense in your head over and over and over.

And then you find this bitterness keeping resurfacing. And you're saying, Lord, I want to forgive. Have you genuinely wanted to pray, but your heart just seems cold and distracted? Or you generally want to honor Christ, but you find yourself thinking, speaking, or acting in ways that dishonor him.

And afterward, you sit there thinking, what was I doing? Why did I do that? I know I'm supposed to forgive.

I know I'm supposed to trust. I didn't want that. In fact, I hate that version of me. Anybody been there? Right? You think that way.

[14:30] That's a version of me I don't like, but it's still tangled up in me. The funny thing is, the Puritans used to say that sin is irrational.

It never delivers what it promises, and it always over promises and under delivers. Yet somehow, we keep listening. See, what's fascinating here is that Paul is describing something that has been recognized for thousands and hundreds of years before Jesus Christ.

In the ancient pagan world, they understood this struggle. There's this poet, a Roman poet, but he famously said, I see and approve the better things, but I pursue the worst things.

The Greeks understood that human beings often act against their own better judgment. Who's been there? But Paul goes much deeper than Greek philosophy ever could.

You see, the Greeks believed the problem, the reason why you sin is because you have weak self-control. You have a failure of reasoning and a lack of discipline.

[15:56] Anybody here ever think that's the solution to your problems? But I can only be more disciplined, right? I could really get a hold of that.

If I just think through this better, maybe I'll talk to a friend and bounce those ideas off them. If I can only develop self-control, this won't be a problem.

But Paul's telling us here in this text is, no, that is not the solution. Why? Because the problem runs so much deeper than your behavior.

The problem is not merely that we make bad decisions. The problem is that there is a power at work against fallen humanity. A power so deceptive that people often act against their own stated desires.

A power, like I said, Scripture calls sin. And this is why self-help ultimately fails. This is why behavior modification never gets to the root of your issue.

[17:00] And this is why simply trying harder cannot solve the problem. One author simply wrote, indwelling sin is so blinding and so powerful that it continually sabotages our deepest, most determined spiritual resolutions.

You see, our problem is deeper than habits. It's deeper than education. It's deeper than discipline. It's a problem that reaches into the very core of who we are. How bad is it? Some of the most people that are fooled mostly by the power of indwelling sin is Christians.

Religious people. Right? We become especially frustrated because religion tells us try harder, do better, be nicer, work harder, be more disciplined, apply yourself.

The fact is, every serious Christian has tried these things. We've all made promises. We've all created plans. We've all started fresh Monday morning. We've all told ourselves, this time it will be different.

[18:18] I won't lose my temper at work. I won't yell at my kids. I won't be discouraged with my parents. Only to discover that the problem is still there.

And the reason is, information is not the problem. And here's the thing. Law gives us information. The law tells us what God requires.

But the problem is power. The law can tell you what to do. The law cannot give you the power to do it. And that is exactly what Paul is telling us. If you remember, the law is spiritual.

It's good. It's holy. The law is not defective in any way. But the law cannot transform a sinner. The law exposes the problem, but it cannot solve the problem.

It can diagnose the disease, but it has no power to cure the disease. So, if you're trying to understand Romans 7, and you're not there yet, let me explain this.

[19:32] Romans 7 is the wrecking ball to your own perfect spirituality. Romans 7 confronts the fact that most people spend their lives believing, I can fix this.

I can overcome this. I can improve myself. I can become the person I should be. Then Paul comes along in Romans 7 and destroys that whole way of thinking.

Paul here is tearing down every illusion of what is called self-sufficiency. He is showing us that the human problem is so profound that even knowing the truth is not enough.

It doesn't save you. But not only knowing the truth, even loving the truth is not enough. You know what else is not enough? Even wanting that truth in your life is not enough.

So it doesn't matter if you know, love, or want, something more is needed. Or, should I say, someone more is needed.

[20:43] And that's exactly where Paul is headed in Romans chapter 8. But before you can embrace Romans chapter 8, you need to understand the weakness of the flesh in Romans chapter 7.

And that leads directly to the second contradiction that Paul exposes. For he simply says, for I do not do what I want.

not only is there confusion that he's expressing, he's telling us there is a divided will and that's where Paul takes us in point number 2.

Point number 2 simply says, for I do not do what I want. First, he tells us that he's confused. Now he shares with us that I actually contradict myself.

I do not do what I want. That word do is to practice. It's to accomplish. Make no mistake, Paul knows what is right. The problem is that what he desires and what he does no longer line up.

[21:48] And this is the war that is taking place within him. One commentator simply states the conflict is between desire and performance. The will is there but the ability is not.

And this is what Paul describes. Now I want you to understand this word want. I do not do what I want. He's not describing a fleeting passing wish.

This is not I'd like to lose a few pounds. You know, I should exercise more often. That's what my wife tells me every day. I know it to be true and I ought to read more books.

No, no, no. It's far deeper than that. The word want means a determined resolution and volition toward what is good.

Paul is not saying I occasionally think about obedience. Paul is saying I want righteousness. I want holiness.

[23:00] I want to obey God. And I think we can relate to that very well, right? These are the things that we want and yet somehow there's this gap between what we desire and how we act.

And this explains to us why this struggle is so painful. because here's the truth. If Paul didn't care, there would be no conflict.

If he didn't want righteousness, there would be no frustration. If Paul loved sin, there would be no battle. But as we read here, the battle exists because the desire for good is so very real.

Now let me expand on this a little bit. This is where some Christians can grow to be discouraged. Some Christians assume that because there's a struggle going on with sin that proves that there is a spiritual failure.

[24:19] You with me on that one? We've been there. We struggle. Why do I have this struggle? And we get discouraged. But the fact is, the opposite is often true.

And I've made this point previously. The very existence of the struggle within you reveals that something in you wants God. Right?

It wants his ways. You know the law. I remember in university, I was just thinking about two friends this morning. They lived the way of the world.

And I remember them opening up to me. And one just feels really guilty every night, every weekend. He's over partying. He's getting into the ways of the world. And you know, when I asked him, he grew up in church.

He knew the law. Then there was another guy I knew. And he was just this out of control party guy. But he was never convicted about anything he ever did.

[ 25 : 20 ] Church, the law, Christianity was totally outside his spectrum. He was never exposed to it where he grew up. But he just regretted that on Monday morning he was hung over.

But there was no guilt associated with anything that he did, whereas the other one felt this guilt for what he did. You see, when a person is following the desires of the flesh, their motto simply is, if the flesh wants it, the flesh gets it.

There's no battle. There's no resistance. There's no grief. There's no sorrow. There's no argument going on between what is right and what is wrong. But when God begins awakening a heart to righteousness, righteousness, suddenly a war happens.

Because there's now competing desires. There is now conflicting loyalties. There's this tension. And what we read in this text is there's a divided will.

Obey Christ or satisfy yourself. Trust God or trust myself. Pursue holiness holiness or take the easier path.

[ 26 : 43 ] And every believer knows something of that struggle. And one of the great deceptions of the flesh is that it can become incredibly religious.

Right? We have these categories for sin. Right? There's drunkenness, immorality, greed, anger in this bucket. We stay away from that bucket.

But here's the thing. The flesh is far more sophisticated than that. The flesh can become religious. It can attend church.

It can memorize scripture. It can serve on missionary teams. And yes, the flesh can preach sermons. All the while seeking recognition, wanting to feel superior, seeking control over self, and reliance rather than dependence on God.

I don't need to pray for you, God. I don't even want to bother you. I can handle this. It's funny, one of my buddies tells a story. He's now pastoring a church.

[ 27 : 52 ] It's been over there for a hundred years, but in his first year, some days, they wouldn't have a Sunday school. Okay? Certain grade, they had it all divided by grades. They'd just make this decision.

He just would notice that they would be there, or there'd be no PowerPoint, or sometimes the music would be really low grade. And then he found out that everyone at this church had this little fiefdom, and no one trained anybody else on how to do that job, because to do that job was how they worship, and they wanted to be recognized for what's going on.

So would I train anybody else to do the junior church? Absolutely not, because I'm the greatest teacher in the world. Why would I submit them to anything less? It's my world. I had this funny story. I was telling Danielle about it last night. I was laughing. We were just getting this women's ministry going at one of my former churches, and the women were growing. They were having this conference, and this was their women's ministry, and this little old lady comes in, and she's got this document.

The document was from the 80s, and back in the 80s, they had a description in the bylaws about what women's ministry was, and that women's ministry, to be a part of women's ministries, you had to do quilting.

[ 29 : 07 ] You had to do quilting. Otherwise, if you didn't do quilting, you couldn't be accorded to be in the women's ministry. Bless her heart, I let her keep on quilting, but I said some of the women might want to do something else.

You see, Paul is showing us that the problem is not merely that we sometimes do bad things. The problem is that there is something fundamentally wrong even with our human effort, even the things that we think are good, even those things we think are directed towards the good.

Now, the question is, why does God allow us to feel this tension? Why doesn't he simply remove every struggle immediately when we get saved?

Wouldn't that be great? No more struggle. No more battle. And what Paul is talking about here is that God is teaching us something.

God is teaching us that holiness is never produced through self-confidence. Holiness is growth through dependency.

[ 30 : 27 ] It's not us, it's God. Romans 7 is about exposing the bankruptcy of self-effort. It is showing us that sincere desire by itself is not enough.

Strong resolutions are not enough. Determination is not enough. Willpower is not enough. You see, the Christian life is not lived by grit.

It's not lived by personality. It cannot be lived by discipline alone. Because the fact of the matter is flesh produces activity.

But the spirit produces transformation. And that's what God wants us to understand. So Paul, so far in this sermon, has shown us two things.

One, he's confused by his own actions. And two, he is frustrated because his actions contradict his desires. But here's something else that he says.

[ 31 : 32 ] It's remarkable. He actually says, I do the very things that I hate. This brings us to our third point. Our hatred of sin.

Now, Paul's statement, but I do the very thing I hate, is revealing. He's already told us, I do not do what I want, but he takes it a step further.

He says, it's not that I don't do the things that I want, I do the things that I hate. Notice he doesn't say, I do the things that I dislike.

I do the thing I wish I wouldn't do. I do the thing that occasionally bothers me. No. Paul uses the strongest language possible.

He says, I do the things that I hate. Make no mistake, this word matters. Because what hatred does, it reveals allegiance.

[ 32 : 36 ] Hatred reveals what side you're on. Hatred reveals what you truly love. And Paul says, the very thing I end up doing is the thing I hate.

Now, think about that for a moment. Someone who hates sin is not someone who regrets sin.

Someone who hates sin is not someone who fears consequences.

Someone who hates sin is not someone who just got caught in sin. And the fact of the matter is, who actually hates sin?

Because there's a huge difference. Regret is not the same as repentance. Judas regretted betraying Jesus.

Pharaoh, or I'm sorry, Judas regretted the consequences of betraying Jesus. Pharaoh regretted the consequences of rejecting Moses.

[ 33 : 42 ] Just like a thief regrets being caught, an adulterer regrets losing a marriage, a liar regrets exposure, or a drunk regrets the damage they've done.

The fact is, regret is common. But hatred of sin, that's something else. See, hatred says, even if nobody found out, hatred says, even if there were no consequences, even if I get away with this, I still hate what I became in that moment.

Do you understand the difference? And we know it. We may fear the consequences, but when we fear that, when we hate sin, we're lining up on the good side.

The Puritan Thomas Watson says, a hypocrite may leave sin, yet love it. As a serpent casts its coat, but keeps its sting, but a sanctified person who can say he not only leaves sin, but loathes it. What a picture. A snake sheds its skin, but it's still a snake. And the sad reality is many people abandon sins, but they still love them.

[ 35 : 13 ] They still miss them. They still long for them. They long for the times. You know, it's interesting, my friend showed me in an article that the greatest reason that is now given in divorce courts are tied to it as Facebook, because people connect with things from their past that they believe that was the good old days, that was better.

That girl when she was 17, she understood you so much more than when you're 55. But Paul says something entirely different.

He says, I hate it. Now, here's something that often surprises most Christians. See, one of the signs of spiritual growth is not that you become less aware of sin, that you actually become more aware of sin.

It's like the closer you get to Christ, the more sensitive your conscience becomes. We have the example of Isaiah in Isaiah 6. He's before the great throne room of God.

He doesn't say, what a great prophet I am. No, he says, woe is me. Peter, when he witnesses the transfiguration of Jesus Christ, he does not dance around and say, hey, I'm only one of the three spiritual guys who get to see Jesus transformed.

[ 36 : 44 ] With these great Old Testament saints, he simply falls down and says, depart from me for I am a sinful man. And then we've got the example of Paul himself.

We have his writings that pretty much encompass his whole Christian life and at the end of his ministry, he does not refer to himself as a spiritual giant.

He simply says, I am the chief of sinners. The fact is, every day I get into my office and I think it's nice and clean until the afternoon when the light shines in and I see, man, this is really dusty.

I've got to clean that computer monitor for the third time today. You see, this is one of the words of one of my mentors just simply saying this.

He says, it's not that when I grow older I sin less. You know, he might be avoiding the bigger sins but he starts to be moved by even some of the smaller sins. He says, as a believer grows in his spiritual life, he inevitably will have both an increased hatred of sin and an increased love for righteousness.

[ 38 : 03 ] In church, this is exactly what many believers misunderstand. They assume that because they feel the ugliness of sin more deeply than they used to, something must be wrong.

in reality, it might be the evidence that God is opening their eyes more clearly than ever before. And why does this matter?

Commentator John Murray simply writes, the unregenerate man hates the good. The man of Romans 7 hates the evil. The unbeliever hates God's authority, hates God's standard, hates God's claim on his life.

Romans 8 will tell us that the mind is set on the flesh, is hostile toward God, but this person in chapter 7 who we meet, he hates sin.

He hates evil. And this person agrees with God against himself. And that's remarkable because sin always tries to justify itself.

[ 39 : 12 ] Sin always seeks excuses. Sin always looks for someone else to blame. Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent, King Saul blamed the people, and we're not much different, right?

We blame our upbringing, our stress, our circumstances, our lack of sleep, our personality, our exhaustion, our spouse, our boss, our culture, but Paul doesn't do that.

Paul simply says, I hate what I just did. No excuses, no rationalizations, no minimizing, no blame shifting.

Only grief and only sorrow. And only hatred for the sin itself. Now I want to speak to you pastorally here now.

Because this switch is going to happen. Paul in Romans 7 isn't trying to kill you. He's trying to kill your idea that you can improve yourself without Jesus Christ.

[ 40 : 23 ] That's what he's saying. You see, when we become Christians, the Christian life is not merely about receiving new rules.

There's new ways to live. No, no, no. That's not the way Christianity works. Christianity is about receiving new affections.

It's about receiving new loves. You see, the Spirit doesn't merely teach us what God loves. The Holy Spirit gradually teaches us to love what God loves and to hate what God hates.

The Holy Spirit gradually teaches us to love what God loves and to hate what God hates. And you guys know this goes on in our lives as we grow.

There's certain things that we can accept in the world and we don't mind. But later on, a few years later, I'm just a little bit squirmy about that. I'm not comfortable with watching that TV show.

[ 41 : 28 ] Well, you watched that 10 years ago. I know that was then. This is now. I'm not that comfortable with this. You see, this is why a true believer cannot make peace with sin.

Let me answer a question. Ask a question. Can a believer fall? Yes, he can. Can a believer stumble? Absolutely.

Can a believer drift? Sadly, yes. But a true believer can never be comfortable with their sin. You know what I'm talking about? And some of you, if you've made disaster choices, you know what I'm talking about.

You're in that moment, whether it's a relationship or a use of money or some other thing. You're doing it. You feel that call, but you're in there. It just doesn't feel good.

And that's a good thing. Because that indicates that God has changed your heart. You see, now there is something inside of you that will keep crying out, this isn't who I want to be.

[ 42 : 49 ] This isn't what I love. This isn't what I really desire. And my friends, that is evidence of God at work. Because the battle itself reveals new life.

Because those that are dead in Christ, they don't fight, they don't grieve, they don't hate sin. But if you're alive to Christ, you hate sin.

So, if this is true, an obvious question emerges. If Paul agrees with God, if Paul hates the sin, if Paul loves righteousness, then what does that say about the law?

Does Paul's failure prove that God's standard is somehow defective? does Paul's struggle prove that God's commands are somewhat unreasonable?

Verse 6, 16 simply says, now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law and that is good. And what does Paul mean by that?

[ 43 : 59 ] That's what we're going to cover next sermon. Let me pray. Father, I pray that this sermon not only giving us understanding would give us a measure of freedom.

To know that in our own struggles is not the battle that we're saved, it's a battle that we just hate the things of this world.

We hate what our flesh is drawn to. As I've said many times, Lord, you know each and every story here.

And I pray that you would through the power of your spirit relate these scriptural truths to every story here, every background from every nation, every language.

Fact is, sometimes Satan attacks us when we're feeling empty and destitute and instead of running to you, oh Jesus, we ran from you.

[ 45 : 08 ] We try to satisfy ourselves in other ways, whether it could be work or pursuing my own hobbies, other relationships, buying things I did not need nor could afford.

There's just many things that sometimes come with very high consequences. But for those who were there and then felt the angst of hating it, not loving who they were, but hating who we were, Father, I say praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord that we knew just through that own hatred of ourselves and those actions, you were the one redeeming us, calling us back to you.

for those who do not know you, oh Father, and are kind of curious about Christianity, this is the core of it.

It's being in harmony with the righteous God to know that there is an power of the indwelling spirit that is stronger than the indwelling sin.

[ 46 : 16 ] And Father, we need to be taught this lesson and I look forward to Romans 8. That power of the spirit that we rejoice in the law of God, we rejoice in the affections of God, that we begin to grow and to love what God loves and hates what God hates.

So Father, as you prepare ourselves for this communion table, this is a relational exercise, a relational command that you give us, a command that invites us to this wonderful harmony of a relationship with you that can only be experienced with other believers.

Not something done at home alone or just with a few friends, but this is meant to be done with the gathered church. It's a testimony that simply says we are gathered in one.

Because of that vertical love to you, we have a love for one another. father. So father, I just pray for a time of silence where we can use this time to meditate, to ponder upon these words that have been spoken.

Maybe for some it's an opportunity to rejoice because they know the struggle means that you are indeed real. I remember the greatest fear that I grew up with was that you would flee from me.

[ 48 : 12 ] And I didn't mean salvation, but the joy of our fellowship, of being together. I never wanted to damage that.

And I still don't. I want to walk in the renewing power of your Holy Spirit. So father, I thank you for this cup that we are about to partake in this bread.

May our minds be on you and as we wait until that time when you will come again and we will no longer do this apart from you, but we will do this with you.

I ask these things in your most holy, precious, and everlasting name. Amen.