

Marked: Called to Abide - John 15:1-17

A Christian is a person who has been saved by Jesus and is connected to Jesus. Salvation is not only for the future; it is the lived experience of those who abide in Jesus.

What comes to mind when you think of spiritual growth? Who is someone you know that shows a lot of spiritual maturity? What about this person makes you say that?

What would you say is the most important factor in spiritual growth? Why?

As we abide in Christ, and He in us, the Holy Spirit changes us to be more like Jesus. Through spiritual disciplines such as daily Bible reading, prayer, corporate worship, and personal evangelism we abide in Christ and we are conformed into His image.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 15:1-4.

In some ways, everyone who is in Christ abides in Christ. In this series we have already seen that those who are in Christ are new creations. Therefore, anyone who has been saved is “in Christ.” However, Jesus offered some “if” statements in John 15 that suggest Christians may sometimes wander away from fellowship with Him. Apart from continuing fellowship with Jesus, Christians are separated from the “vine” that gives life; but in Jesus, Christians are connected with the power of Christ that changes the world.

What does it mean to be “in Christ”? How do we abide in Him?

Abiding in Christ can sound like a mystical, spiritual experience, and to some degree it is. However, abiding in Christ happens through very concrete steps. We abide in Christ through spiritual disciplines such as regular Bible reading, prayer, corporate worship, silence and solitude, and personal evangelism.

What spiritual disciplines do you practice regularly in your life?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 15:5-8.

Sometimes Bible phrases can be over spiritualized to a point that normal people have difficulty relating them to real life. When you read “bear fruit” in John 15, you could substitute it for “looks or acts like a Jesus Follower.” Jesus said that whoever abides in Him bears fruit, or looks and acts like a

Jesus Follower. Those who do not abide in Him are “thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.” Jesus Followers bear fruit. Those who do not bear fruit are imposters who are eventually cut off.

In what areas of your life do you see Christ’s impact most readily? In what areas of your life do you need to pray for more “fruit”?

Why is it important that followers of Jesus continue to bear fruit? How do spiritual disciplines help us to grow spiritual fruit in our lives?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 CORINTHIANS 13:14.

Sanctification should result in bearing fruit and an increase in holiness. But growing in Jesus should also result in grace and love. Just as Christ shows you grace in your salvation, so too should your relationship with Christ result in you being more grace-filled, loving, patient, and kind.

Why is it important that our relationships with and love for others always flow out of the love we have been shown in Jesus?

How might the climate of the world around us lead Christians to behave in ways that are un-loving and lacking in grace?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What do you need to limit or cut out of your life so that you might further abide in Jesus? Take concrete steps toward this change this week.

Take up or renew a spiritual discipline this week. Plan time each day to devote to this discipline.

Ask at least one person to check in with you this week to keep you accountable for practicing spiritual disciplines. As a group, offer to do this mutually for one another.

PRAYER

Close in prayer thanking God that He has brought you into relationship with Him through His Son Jesus. Ask Him to lead you to abide in Jesus each day, that you might grow more and more like Him.