

THE WHERE - JOHN 15:1-12

THE WHAT - ABIDE

Abiding in Christ involves a deep, intimate, and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is a continual state of being rooted in Him - resembling a branch connected to a vine. This connection is foundational and essential to spiritual growth.

The verb *Abide* is such a powerful word that Jesus said is the key to living in the fullness of Christ. Many times in the Christian life, it is easy to fall into the perception that we must do more to have more. But abiding is *more about being than doing*. To abide is not to strive, but to be fully connected to Jesus as the source of all that is godly, righteous, and true. When we live fully connected to Christ we are not striving, but living in stride with the Spirit.

The connection that happens from abiding is supernatural. It is a mutual dwelling that takes place when a believer surrenders his/her life to Christ. It means that I am His and He is mine (I in you and you in me). Abiding is in essence a lifelong process of nurturing our faith through seeking the Lord's presence, growing in His word, and worshipping. This continual engagement leads to a deeper understanding of God's will, cultivating faith in our hearts, and a total reliance on His guidance. It may be hard at first, but discipline eventually leads to devotion.

This is why consistency mixed with a pure heart is so important. Many times, we stop abiding because we get off track. But God is not interested in our pursuit of perfection, He is interested in our pursuit of His heart.

When abiding happens, you are living in a rhythm of resting in God's presence and able to persevere in faith when life is hard. As you live in rhythm with His presence, God's love flows into us like sap from a vine that bring life giving power to sustain and overcome.

Jesus said apart from me you can do nothing. When we exclude parts of our life from Jesus we miss out on being fully fruitful. Abiding in Christ is about bearing fruit- exhibiting love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control as evidence of a life aligned with Christ's teachings. If we are fully abiding, then everything that He is in us. What a powerful truth to live in every day.

“When we live fully connected to Christ we are not striving, but living in stride with the Spirit.”

ABIDING DAILY

- **SET A TIME EACH DAY TO PRAY AND TALK TO GOD**

PREPARE YOUR HEART - INCORPORATE THESE 4 ELEMENTS INTO YOUR PRAYER TIME

- **PRAISE**
- **GRATITUDE/THANKS**
- **FORGIVENESS OF SINS**
- **READ THE BIBLE AND LET HIM SPEAK TO YOU. REMEMBER THAT IT IS THE LIVING WORD OF GOD.**
- **ACTIVELY INVITE THE HOLY SPIRIT TO FILL YOU AND GUIDE YOU TODAY.**
- **MAKE WORSHIP A PRIORITY IN YOUR LIFE - WORSHIP SETS THE ATMOSPHERE FOR OUR HEARTS TO RECEIVE WHAT GOD HAS FOR US.**



THE HOW - ABIDE

CULTIVATE

The definition of cultivate is “to prepare and use land for crops or gardening.” Abiding starts when we begin to cultivate and prepare the soil of our hearts to be fully connected to God. **You are in charge of the atmosphere of your heart.** Start preparing your heart for God to speak to you by using the prompts on the front of this page. Praise, gratitude, and asking for forgiveness of our sins before we lift up our requests to God and get in His Word will help us prepare the atmosphere of our hearts to hear from God even more. You will know God’s voice more clearly the more you know His Word.

FILTRATE

Proverbs 4:23 says “Guard your heart for out of it flows the issues of life.” In the world we live in it is impossible to not be exposed to secularism, negativism, and pessimism. But God’s Word tells us to be on guard and protect the most important part of you - your heart. Learn to start filtering the things you are exposed to through what His Word says. If you can avoid certain settings, then that is a great first step! Be determined to spiritually process what you hear. Ask yourself: **Does this line up with the truth of God’s word? Does this bring life to my soul? Does this bring harm to me or anyone around me?** These are just a few filter questions to process daily in the negative world we live in.

ELIMINATE

There are some things we just need to stop doing and let go of. We are really good at justifying what makes us “feel good”. But too often, we leave a crack open in our hearts in order to allow something we love to stay there, when really it needs to die. Jesus said, **“the branches that bear no fruit are cut off and thrown in the fire.”** We need to be really honest with ourselves and the Lord and be willing to cut off any dead branch in us. This could be just flat out sin, or it could be something that is not really bad, but it has not spiritually benefitted our lives. There are many things that are “idle activities” that distract us from living fully surrendered lives for the Lord. Be willing to eliminate anything that spiritually hinders you from fully abiding in Jesus.

EVALUATE

It is important to take inventory of your life. This does not mean giving yourself a grade or over-analyzing things. It means **keeping an awareness of where your focus is, what thought patterns are occurring, and how the atmosphere of your soul is.** By taking inventory, you will be able to identify something that will produce a negative “root system” or a “dead branch” before it becomes one. In contrast, taking inventory also means identifying thought and behavior patterns that are life-giving and healthy. Typically, we are hardest on ourselves. Being intentional to celebrate wins and things you are doing well in your life is a very important. **Knowing how you are using the spiritual gifts God has given you; remembering the goodness He is in your life; finding joy in the mundane of life; these things are key to staying encouraged in order to abiding in Christ.**

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. Is there anything you are connected to that keeps you from fully being connected to the vine of Jesus?
2. What areas of my life that are not fully connected to Jesus?
3. What are some practices you can incorporate in your daily life to help you stay connected to Jesus?
4. In the scriptures listed on the front of this page, describe how they are speaking to you. What are ways you can apply these to abiding in your life?