

Abiding in Christ



"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." (John 15:1-8)

WE see from this passage that Christ is the "true" vine. He is the only One we should ever cling to and abide in. Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6) and "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:7-9). Christ is the true vine, His Father is the vinedresser and we are the branches. Those who abide in Christ will bear fruit. Every branch that does not bear fruit, God will take away. But those who bear fruit, God will prune so that they will bear even more fruit. How does God accomplish this? Most often He will send trials our way to accomplish the task of pruning. God looks down and sees how His people are becoming unfruitful and going astray and He sends trials our way to bring us back to Him and to conform us to the image of His Son. God also uses the word of God to prune and to cleanse us. The Greek word for "prune" is "Kathairo" which means to "cleanse." In Ephesians 5:25-27 we read how Christ sanctified and cleansed the church by the word of God: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."

Christ the vine exhorts us to abide in Him. To abide means "to remain, to stay, and to hold fast to." How can we branches live without Christ our vine "for in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28) and "He is our life and the length of our days" (Deut. 30:20). In order to bear fruit we must abide in Christ. Apart from the vine, the branch is dead and fruitless. Jesus said "for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5) but Paul said "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). God's

ultimate desire for us is to be fruitful. There are two types of fruit - inward and outward. The inward fruit is the fruit of the Spirit which are: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23). The outward fruit is seeing God blessing our efforts as we seek to bring people to Christ and winning souls for Him (Prov. 11:30). There are blessings and promises in connection with abiding in Christ such as the promise of answered prayer (John 15:7) and seeing our fruit remain (John 15:16).

HOW TO ABIDE?

1. BY PARTAKING OF CHRIST

"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him." (John 6:56)

It does not mean to literally partake of His flesh and His blood but spiritually we take Him in like food and He becomes part of us.

2. BY ABIDING IN HIS WORD

"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."" (John 8:31-32)

3. BY KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS

"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." (John 15:10)

"Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. (1 John 3:24)

4. BY THE HELP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

"But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him." (1 John 2:27)

REASONS TO ABIDE

1. TO BEAR MUCH FRUIT

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." (John 15:4-5)

2. WITHOUT HIM WE CAN DO NOTHING

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

3. TO SEE ANSWERS TO PRAYER

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you." (John 15:7)

If we want to see answers to prayer, we need to abide in Him!

4. SO WE WILL NOT WITHER AND DRY UP SPIRITUALLY

"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned." (John 15:6)

5. SO WE WILL NOT BE ASHAMED BEFORE HIM WHEN HE RETURNS

"And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming." (1 John 2:28)

We do not know when Christ will return. May it never be that when He returns, He finds us sinning and not abiding!

TESTS OF ABIDING

1. TO WALK AS HE WALKED

"He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked." (1 John 2:6)

2. THAT WE LOVE THE BRETHREN

"He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him." (1 John 2:10)

3. THAT WE ARE KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS

"Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us." (1 John 3:24)

4. THAT WE ARE NOT HABITUALLY PRACTICING SIN

"Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him." (1 John 3:6)

It does not mean that we will never sin or we will be perfect, but we do not sin as a way of habit.

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