

Abiding Applied

John 15:4

Reading: 1 John 2:1-6

From Rosscup, *Abiding in Christ*, Chap. 14 – “*Putting it all Together.*”

Bethany Baptist Church
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Here is a very brief review: “*abide*” means “*remain in*” or “*live in.*”

Abide is a *verb*, which means it’s an *active idea*.

Jesus said, in John 15:4, “*Abide in Me, and I in you.*” So finally, to *abide* in Christ is a *command* for every follower of Christ.

In fact, let’s read John 15:1-11 together.

We began to *apply* Jesus command the last time we read these verses, let’s dig deeper into *how* we obey His *call to abide*.

“How do I begin to abide?”

1. Let’s start w/ a *theological certainty*. Every believer is *in Christ*. That’s almost *short-hand* for the Christian life.
 - a. The **NT** *teaches* that the work of the Spirit is to place into Christ (*baptism of the Spirit*) at the time of *rebirth*.
 - b. But the *quality (degree) of your experience (sense)* of your relationship varies.
 - c. I know that exploring Christian *experience* or *sense* makes some people *uneasy* (incl. *me* at times), but we all think about these ideas and we all long to *know w/ certainty* that we are *walking in close communion* w/ Him.
2. *Abiding* might be said to grow out of **three** *key activities of faith: relating, rejecting & receiving*.
 - a. You *abide* as you consciously **relate** your daily experiences (*good & otherwise!*) to *Christ* and your relationship to Him.
 - i. What *biblical principles* do you know that relate to *walking with Christ*? Apply them, obey them.
 - ii. See His *hand* at work. Speak with Him in *prayer*.

- b. You *abide* as you carefully **reject** *worldly, fleshly attitudes* that rise up to *tempt* you.
 - i. Sin *grieves* & disbelief *quenches* His Spirit.
 - c. You *abide* as you **receive** *His promises*.
 - i. How about *this* promise: “*And lo, I am with you always.*”
 - ii. Or this: “*I will never fail you or forsake you.*”
3. *Relating, rejecting & receiving.* ... It’s only **3 ideas**, but they might seem difficult to implement while you *juggle* the rest of your life...
- a. Do you remember how overwhelming it was to *learn to drive a car*?
 - b. *Sorting out* all the tasks and then developing the proper techniques for doing them?
 - i. How much brake & how soon. Same with the gas.
 - ii. What’s all this stuff on the dash? Knobs, dials, lights, gauges...
 - iii. Then there are all the *other cars*!
 - iv. “What – *you want me to drive backwards!?!?*”
 - c. But soon you were able to drive w/o *constant* thought.
 - d. So just *trust* Christ as you *obey* what you know to do, and then *trust* that He is present. You will *abide* ...
4. These principles of *abiding* absolutely work for a new Christian, but as you *mature* in Christ *abiding* grows (*deepens*) even more.
- a. Again, don’t forget the *essential* role of Scripture in growing and experiencing. Look carefully at **v.7** – “*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you...*”
 - b. And don’t forget that Jesus teaches (**v.2**) that *growing* includes *pruning*.

“Does abiding mean I’m always aware (sensing) of Christ’s presence?”

1. In one sense, you might say “yes,” as you look back over your life and you *trace* how Christ has always *guided & protected* you.
 - a. (Perhaps you might think of the famous *Footprints in the Sand* poem.)
 - b. And certainly if He’s been w/ you *every step in the past*, He’s with you *now!*

2. But it’s simply true, *moment by moment* you may not be aware of Him (“*sense*” that you *abiding*).
 - a. That’s usually because the *responsibilities & circumstances* of the day may require your *full attention*. This is *not* wrong.
 - b. Though it could also be true that sin has grieved the Spirit (this *is* wrong)!
 - c. **G. Campbell Morgan** illustrated this reality by describing his love for his wife, **Annie**. His love for her was *constant – unabating...*
 - d. ... but he simply couldn’t think of her with **every** *thought & breath*. Life & ministry had their *undeniable* demands on his limited attention.

3. But...when nothing else *demands* your attention, where do your thoughts go tend to go...? And when your *soul* has questions, who do you *ask* – simply *yourself*, or your *Savior*? Do you *talk to yourself*, or do you *commune w/ Him*?
 - a. Dr. Rosscup writes: *Even in the thick of all those activities, his life is permeated by Christ so that he often **thinks** of Him, **communes** with Him in the heart’s affections, **prays** for guidance, **lives** for His glory. He learns that the busy work of the day need not intrude a hair’s breadth between him and Christ but may itself be filled with Christ with whom he may **share everything** in life. – Rosscup (175)*

“Where else is abiding taught in Scripture – is this really that essential?”

1. *Abiding* is synonymous with *walking, being filled, growing (maturing)*. To *abide (live life) in Him* is clearly not an isolated or peripheral NT concept.
2. Consider the writings of the Apostle John. He never forgot Jesus’ story, as this principle of *abiding* was prominent when he wrote 1 John almost **60** years later.
 - a. So in 1 John 2:28 we read – *Now little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.*
3. *Abiding* is *being filled with the Spirit* (Ephesians 5:18b).
 - a. To be *Spirit filled* means to be *controlled & powered by the Holy Spirit*. Consider these similarities of the *Spirit-filled life* to the *abiding life*:
 - b. The Spirit *bears His fruit* in us (compare to John 15:2, 4, 5, 8, 11).
 - c. The Spirit *leads us* (compare to the idea of *living with or remaining with*).
4. Similar truths accompany NT teachings on *walking in the light* (..worthy of the gospel, ...and in love, ... *circumspectly, ... in wisdom*).
 - a. *Walking* is a common metaphor that suggests *lifestyle*. *Abiding* means to *live in, to remain in*. NT is just using **two** difference illustrations (*abiding & walking...vine, light*)
 - b. And *walking in the Light* (Jesus is the *Light of the World*) is essentially the same as *abiding in Christ&being Spirit-filled&growing*.

5. While we've touched on this already, let me point out that with all of these pictures, one of the constant & essential themes here is *fruit*. *Life with Jesus bears fruit*.
- a. Jesus said, "*He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.*" (Note: vv.2, 4, 5, 8)
 - i. In the Vine & Branch picture, the Lord promises you the fruit of *love* (9-10) & *joy* (11).
 - b. Paul writes about the *fruit of light* (Eph 5:9) & the *fruit of Spirit* (Gal 5:22, 23). Which, by the way, include *love & joy!* 😊
6. *Abiding = being Spirit filled = walking ...* all of which include the idea of *maturing* or *progressing*.
- a. The *good news* is that the *new Christian (babe in Christ)* can still *abide, walk, be filled*.
 - i. *Relating & rejecting & receiving* all work for the *recent convert*.
 - b. The *even better news* is that the *maturing Christian* will experience communion with Christ in ways that ever *richer & deeper & warmer!*
 - c. Both *new & mature Christians* will *abide*, but the outcome is more *fruitful* in the mature (→ more spiritual *self-control, capacity, sensitivity*).
 - i. It's kind of like *weightlifting....*
 - ii. When you start perhaps you can *sweat & strain* and benchpress **100** pounds. Six months later you *strain & sweat* and put up **150** pounds.
 - iii. Whether on the *first day* or then **six** months *later*, you are using the same techniques & giving it your *all*. But it just gets *better*.
 - d. So we can all grow *deeper, richer, fuller* w/ Him, and we should expect to experience this *closer abiding* as we grow.

Gal 5:25 – if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 2X

1. Paul is putting *theology* in context w/ *application*...
2. I.e., this *abiding theology* (*live in the Spirit*) doesn't just *happen w/o* your *participation* (*walk*) ... so *strive* that your *practice & experience* measure up to your *theological* position.
3. So, as we go, take these **three** key words: *relate* (everything in life to Christ), *reject* (temptation that threaten to interrupt abiding), *receive* (*trust* Jesus' promises that you can *abide in Him*, that He is w/ you always).
 - a. Each one requires *faith*. You must *trust* Jesus to *abide you* as you seek to *abide in Him*.
4. No Christian wants to have *a superficial relationship* w/ Jesus! No Christian *needs* to!

...pray...