**8 - The “Abide in Me” Key to Kingdom Life**

**Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. John 15:4 nasb**

**It’s Too Simple for Us**

Sometimes we miss a life-giving truth because we think it’s complicated. Take the “abiding” of [John 15:4-11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2015%3A4-11&version=NIV) for example.

 The Greek word there is *menó* ([Strong’s G3306](https://biblehub.com/greek/3306.htm)), which means, “to stay in a given place, state, relation or expectancy.

**So How on Earth Does It Work?**

So how *do* we “abide” in Christ? He’s not here physically. We can’t snuggle up to Him and “soak” in the security of His love and acceptance.

 Well, God is a spirit, and His Holy Spirit is the part of His triune (three-part) personhood who connects us with the Father and the Son.

 His Spirit is *in* us not just *with* us ([John 14:16-17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3A16-17&version=NASB)), and is the liaison between God and us. He is the Spirit of Jesus ([II Cor. 3:17](http://biblehub.com/2_corinthians/3-17.htm), [Rom. 8:9](http://biblehub.com/romans/8-9.htm), [Gal. 4:6](http://biblehub.com/galatians/4-6.htm), [Acts 16:7](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+16%3A7+&version=NIV), [Philip. 1:19](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philip.+1%3A19&version=NIV)) and *our* spirit recognizes His voice.

**A Spirit World**

However, Satan is also a spirit and while he is not *in* us, he is “the prince of the power of the air” ([Eph. 2:2](http://biblehub.com/ephesians/2-2.htm)) and “the ruler of this world.” ([John 14:30](http://biblehub.com/john/14-30.htm))

 The whole world is under his control ([I John 5:19](http://biblehub.com/1_john/5-19.htm)). He is all around us and he profoundly influences the culture and the activities of our world. He constantly challenges the voice of God’s Spirit in us and the contest between them is spiritual in nature. ([Eph. 6:12](http://biblehub.com/ephesians/6-12.htm), [II Cor. 4:4](http://biblehub.com/2_corinthians/4-4.htm))

 By *default,* we abide in the spirit of the world we are born into. Because our spirit was disempowered when man fell (Chap. 2), our connection there is “soulish.”

 Can you feel how that works in you - how the spirit of this world approaches you and appeals to you through your mind, will and emotions?

**However**

 However, because of free will, we can repent of our rebellion against God, receive his gift of eternal life, and be born again. When we are “born of the Spirit” ([John 3:3-8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+3%3A3-8&version=NASB)) and enter the spiritual life of the Kingdom of God, we escape our previous bondage to the spirit of this world. ([Col. 1:13](http://biblehub.com/colossians/1-13.htm), [Acts 26:18](http://biblehub.com/acts/26-18.htm))

 We are still “in” the world but are no longer “of” the world, as in [John 17:14-16](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17%3A14-16&version=NASB). We live here physically but are to be like the faithful ones of [Heb. 11:13b](http://biblehub.com/hebrews/11-13.htm) who, because of their citizenship in the Kingdom of God, were as “foreigners and exiles on earth.”

**Now Think About This**

Think about what happens at night when you “abide in” or “remain in” negative or fearful thoughts. Or rehash the pain of an injustice against you - maybe even in your long-ago childhood.

 Can you feel the power of that? Isn’t there a spirit quality about it that can suck the Life right out of you?

 What about when you are “working on your weight,” but you join friends at a sumptuous buffet? You determine to “be good” and to limit your portions and the number of “trips” but - “Oh wow!” - your eyes, imagination and passions soon join forces against you. As you abide in the delights of that spread you are captured by it and vow to be good “next time.”

 And what happens if you abide in sensual thoughts and imaginations, especially if you use visual resources as part of the moment? That takes you somewhere, doesn’t it?

 In each case, we have been drawn into the spirit of what we have set our minds on. We literally “abide” in the spiritual realm that is its source.

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 As a branch is connected to the vine, and resources flow from the vine to the branch which then produces leaves, flowers and/or fruit – we have connected to the spirit realm of our choice for that moment and it will bear fruit!

 Why does “bad company corrupt good character?” ([I Cor. 15:33](https://biblehub.com/1_corinthians/15-33.htm)) Why are we warned about being unequally yoked, and called to “come out from among them”? ([II Cor. 6:14-7:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2-corinthians-6-14--7-1)) It’s because of the spiritual nature of those settings, and when we hang around (abide in) them we are likely to take on their spiritual aroma. Simple enough?

**Set Your Mind On - -**

In [Col. 3:1-2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Col.+3%3A1-2+&version=NASB) we are instructed, “Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.” (nasb )

 What does “*keep* seeking” say to you? And consider the deliberate act of “set your mind.” Finally, did you notice the “not” between the two options? It is a “one or the other” choice.

 We have [Rom. 8:5](http://biblehub.com/romans/8-5.htm) too, “For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” (nasb) It’s not complicated.

 [Philip. 4:4-9](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philip.+4%3A4-9&version=NASB) also speaks of the kinds of things we are to think about. Verse 7 says that if we do so, “the peace of God, which exceeds all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.” Verse 9 concludes, “And the God of peace will be with you.”

 That sounds like a good place to be, doesn’t it!

 Wouldn’t such a discipline profoundly reshape the life of many Christians who struggle with low self-esteem, and with the fear, doubt, fleshly anger, jealousy, various addictions and other soul-based afflictions that rob them of the righteousness, peace and joy of the Kingdom of God?

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**Still not Sure?**

If you still wonder how you can abide in Christ and dwell in God’s Kingdom while here, read [John 14:18-26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+14%3A18-26&version=NASB) and be encouraged. Look at v23! Wow!!

 Consider how important our love *for* and obedience *to* Him are, as part of abiding in Him. Yes, that is part of the “cost” but it’s like buying pure gold for a penny an ounce!

 And then we have [John 15:26](http://biblehub.com/john/15-26.htm) and [16:5-15](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16%3A5-15+&version=NASB) which reinforce the need for the active work of His Spirit in us!

 In v7 He even says that it is better for Him to be in heaven, and His Spirit in us, than for Him to be here as He was with the disciples. If that is so, we’d better learn how to live and walk by the Spirit. ([Gal. 5:25](http://biblehub.com/galatians/5-25.htm))

 And then there’s [John 15:7](http://biblehub.com/john/15-7.htm), “If you remain in me, and if my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” *That* is big. If we truly abide in Him, we will know His heart. We will ask according to His purposes and for His glory, and not for our fleshly indulgences and will be amazed by what He will do for us and those we love.

**Final Words!**

“You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.” [Rom. 8:9](https://biblehub.com/romans/8-9.htm) niv

 “Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither - whatever they do prospers.” [Psalm 1:1-3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%201%3A1-3&version=NIV) niv

 As the sun “calls” us to bask in the warmth of its rays on a cold day, so Jesus invites us to bask in the Light and the warmth of His Presence in this dark and cold world, and to know the glorious life of the Kingdom of God!

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