



Abiding Study


Read John 15:1-11

This passage teaches us the vital truth that abiding in Jesus—spiritual fellowship with Him—is the key to life, joy, and fruitfulness. Our Lord illustrates this essential truth through the picture of the vine and the branches. Life flows from the vine to the branches through a vital, continuous connection. In the same way, Jesus Christ is the source of all spiritual good for us. We have access to all that He has for us as we stay connected to Him.

The question is, then, how do we abide in Him? The only command found in the passage is to “abide” in Jesus. What does that mean? We find four elements in the passage that help us to understand what it means to abide in Him: abiding in His love, His Word abiding in us, asking in prayer, and obeying His commands. We will also look at 1 John 1 for an additional element in abiding in Jesus: walking in the light.


As we teach through the passage, we will draw a simple visual to help us think through our practice of abiding in Jesus. The finished visual is below.

1. Draw a large heart. The heart stands for our inner being or the seat of our will and emotions, what the Bible refers to as the “heart.”
2. We begin in John 15:9: “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.” As we think about abiding in Him, this verse delivers the central truth in abiding: Jesus loves us. He loves us as the Father loves Him. That is, for us, unfathomable. For all who are in Jesus Christ through faith, His love cannot be broken. His love for us is the source of our new identity, our new life in Jesus. So, abiding in Jesus is not, at its core, something that we do—it is the result of His love



for us. This is the Gospel truth at the center of the teaching on abiding. (Draw a heart within the heart).

3. Read John 15:7: “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” In this verse we find two elements in abiding, signaled by the “if” at the beginning of the sentence. These are two “ways” we can deepen our abiding in Christ. The first is to have His words abide in us. (Inside the heart, draw the symbol for the Word—a Bible). His Word abiding in us is something more than just reading the Bible or listening to preaching. For His Word to abide in us, it needs to make its home in us. We bring the Word in our hearts through studying, meditating, listening, reading, memorizing, praying, and speaking the Word to others. As it comes into us, it transforms our hearts, our thinking, and our speech.
4. The second element in verse 7 is to “ask whatever you wish” in prayer. This aspect of asking builds on the previous element of the Word. As our hearts are transformed by the Word, our desires are transformed to be like Christ’s. So when we ask for whatever we wish, our asking is being brought into conformity to Christ’s heart through the Word. Prayer, like the Word, is our way of life—as constant as our breathing. (Draw the symbol for prayer—two arrows pointing up and down).
5. Read John 15:10: “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.” Here we see another element of our stewardship in abiding, again signaled by the “if.” This is to “keep his commandments.” This element is vitally related to the verse before it. Our obedience is rooted in our love relationship with Christ. We obey because we are a part of His family. Our disobedience can strain our abiding and fellowship with



Christ, but nothing can separate us from His love. Nothing can change our identity as a part of the family of God. This is the root of our joyful obedience. (Draw the symbol for obedience—an arrow pointing out). Obedience is mentioned throughout these chapters of John, and Jesus promises that the Spirit will help us obey (14:15).

6. Read 1 John 1:6-9. The final element in abiding comes from 1 John, where John calls us to “walk in the light” (v. 7). Walking in the light is a key to our ongoing “fellowship with the Father and with this Son Jesus Christ” (v. 3). This fellowship is another way of speaking of abiding.

What does it mean to “walk in the light?” Most people think that it means to live a holy life, to live free from sin. While hatred and avoidance of sin is definitely in view (2:1), “walking in the light” means a constant willingness to confess our sins. It is a heart desire not to hide sin in the dark, but to expose it to the light of God’s presence. (Draw the sun symbol in the bottom of the heart).

Abiding in Jesus is the key to a joy-filled, fruitful life in Christ. As He lives his life through us, we are free to follow Him and to bear fruit for His glory. Jesus Himself is the source of our life, our vine. He loves us and we thrive as we abide in that love. Because of His undying love for us, we seek to deepen our fellowship with Him by His Word abiding in us, by asking in prayer, by obeying His commands, and by walking in the light through regular confession of sin.

Drawing:



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