



## ABIDE

*by Whitney Davis*

Blessing is not the goal of faith. Our faith's end goal is "Abiding": a deep-rooted oneness, or connection, with Jesus where His life becomes our life.

As we learn to abide in Jesus and draw life from Him, we will find ourselves producing fruit, serving others, and fulfilling the call to spread the Gospel. Any attempt to do these things on our own will lead to burnout, frustration, and emptiness.

To Abide in Jesus is counter to every fallen human impulse we possess, but abiding is the way. It is becoming less like myself and more like Jesus. Is that what you want in your life?

Are you tired of doing things in your own strength?  
Are you weary of feeling like you are constantly

striving? Let's explore how abiding in Christ (the Vine) helps us in this struggle.

### 1.) WHO IS THE VINE?

John 15:1-6- "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."

Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus uses the phrase "I am" to capture the attention of His audience, as well as the readers. In this last "I Am" statement, Jesus uses a "Vine" metaphor from the Old Testament. Jesus is the Vine, God the Father is the vinedresser (or caretaker), and we are the branches.

## 2.) WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ABIDE

John 15:7-11- "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. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 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. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."

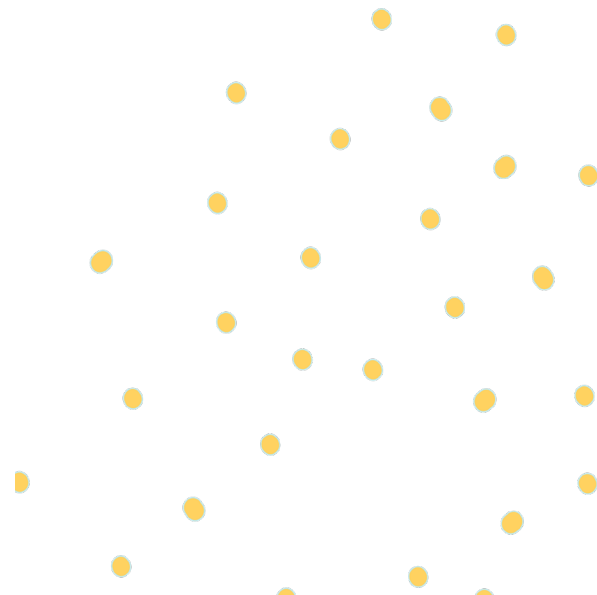
Central to our act of abiding is resting in Christ's love (v. 9). As the Beloved, we do not carry the burden of earning Christ's love for us. It is a gift freely given. Our understanding of this truth is the first step towards abiding in the Vine. As the branch, our priority is to stay connected to the Vine for our existence. We must trust outside of ourselves. This is contrary to the call of the world that says to look inward for life. Sabbath living is learning to savor our life with Jesus, and this extends beyond Sunday. Sabbath living is saying, "I have limits. I am insufficient for the task. I need rest."

## 3.) HOW DO WE ABIDE

John 15:5: "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."

Jesus could not have been any clearer about our need for abiding in Him. We cannot abide by trying harder or by force of will. We must learn to depend on the Holy Spirit to help us. Abiding in Jesus is not reserved

for the most faithful, nor is it optional. Without abiding, we will not produce the fruit of Christ, nor will we create anything of lasting importance. Every branch that does not bear fruit will be cut off. Remember, to not bear fruit, the branch has cut itself off from the Vine first. Remember, our purpose is not to produce fruit. It is to be connected to the Vine and bring glory to God. The Vine will produce the fruit in us. Let us draw nearer to Jesus, and He will see to the fruit. Abiding in Jesus is placing Him in the center. When we construct our lives around Him, we are bringing God glory. This is why Bible reading, prayer, worship, and so many other daily disciplines and habits are essential to our health. They are not in themselves lifegiving, but they do create the space for us to connect to the Life-giver. Yes, and amen.



## CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- 1.) Discuss a time when you felt “barren” (not producing fruit). What was that experience like? What did you learn about Jesus during that time?
- 2.) Talk about a time when you found yourself relying on Christ’s strength in a greater way. What did you learn in that season?
- 3.) What stands between you and the abiding life?
- 4.) “I have limits. I am insufficient for the task. I need rest.” Reflect on these statements together.

## CALL TO ACTION:

- 1.) Evaluate where you may be unbalanced- are you depending more on your own strength and struggling to abide in Christ?
- 2.) Spend some time in prayer this week seeking the Lord and intentionally choose to abide in Him. Journal your thoughts throughout the week.

Commit this week to cease striving in your own strength. Instead, choose to abide in Christ.

Memorize: John 15:5: “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.

\*lesson adapted from The Journey, unit 6, lesson 1. Visit [iphc.org/thejourney](http://iphc.org/thejourney) for further study.