



SERIES GUIDE

JOURNAL & PRAYER GUIDE

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Introduction:

Introduction: Jesus has invited us to abide in him as he abides in us. This can feel like an abstract thought that we hear and move on from because we don't know what it means. If we do that, we miss out on so much rich truth and the very essence of the Christian life. To abide in Christ is simply this:

Definition of Abiding in Christ – *Remaining*
constant awareness of, connection to, and dependence
on the power and presence of our loving Savior.

“Abiding in Christ” is (primarily) John’s imagery (see John 15-16 and 1 John) that captures the principles delivered (primarily) by Paul of being “in Christ as he is in us” (union with Christ), “walking by the Spirit” (Gal 5:16-23), putting off/on (Eph 4:17-24ff), being filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and walking in Christ (Eph 4:1 and Col 2:6). Further, abiding (remaining) in Christ captures the idea of both the *perseverance* of the saints and God’s *preservation* of the saints as it describes the enduring, faith-filled walk of the believer in dependence on Christ *to the end* (1 John 2:17, 24; 1 Peter 1:1-25). Abiding is also related to the concept of hospitality as it is the invitation of our Savior who welcomes us to “stay” with him and find our vitality and freedom in him as our dwelling place (see John 8:35 and Psalm 90:1). Each of these images give us a different color on the Christian walk but are all fundamentally the same: abiding in Christ.

It is my prayer that you would fully embrace Christ’s invitation to abide as we begin this year. This guide contains 5 weeks of readings designed to prepare you for the sermon each Sunday. Each week contains 5 days of readings with a central scripture passage to study, opening your Bible to prayerfully observe, interpret and apply it’s meaning. For your encouragement, each passage reference is accompanied by an excerpt from the helpful book, *Abide in Christ*, written by Andrew Murray, a pastor in the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa. The language may appear old as the work was first published in 1895, but I believe it is worth the effort to hear his encouragement and instruction. I pray these scriptures and readings will be as helpful to you as they have been to me as you seek the joy of abiding in Christ.

-Pastor Ben

Quotations throughout are from Murray, Andrew. *Abide in Christ*. © 1895, Public Domain.

You can access the full document here: https://www.peacechurch-cr.org/editoruploads/files/GROW/Spiritual%20Development%20files/Andrew_Murray_-_Abide_in_Christ.pdf

PREPARATION - HEART HABITS

**"LORD, YOU HAVE BEEN OUR DWELLING PLACE IN ALL GENERATIONS...
SO TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS THAT WE MAY GET A HEART OF WISDOM."
(PSALM 90:1, 12, ESV)**

Our Lord invites us to abide in him: to remain in constant awareness of, connection to, and dependence on the power and presence of our loving savior. It is an invitation to find in him our constant "dwelling place" or "abode." It is a call to find our power for living in *his* power, our purpose for living in *his* purpose, and our joy for living in *his* presence.

Sometimes we think of abiding as the same thing as "spiritual disciplines;" thinking, "I abide when I read my Bible or say a focused prayer, but when that stops, abiding stops." This line of thinking is fundamentally flawed. The "spiritual disciplines" (as we typically use the term) are frequent, focused, yet *momentary habits* that help us refocus our hearts toward abiding. Abiding, on the other hand, is an *ongoing posture* of the heart that is yielded to the loving power and presence of Christ revealed through his word. The spiritual disciplines must be pursued *for the sake* of our ongoing abiding but must *not* be considered the *entirety* of abiding in Christ. The disciplines can be misused as a cheap substitute for abiding, pursuing the *momentary task* rather than the *ongoing posture*. When this happens, the believer will swing from pride (of succeeding in their Christian walk through the accomplishment of a man-made "law") to despair (of failing in their Christian walk by falling short of this man-made law), all without experiencing the aim and promise of the spiritual walk: a vital connection to the living God.

Once we recognize that abiding and the spiritual disciplines are different, we can then come to understand that they share a relationship that is absolutely dependent on one another. Without disciplined heart habits, our hearts are prone to drift from finding our source of life and refuge in the Lord and we lose sense of abiding. Without an awareness of our need to continue abiding in Christ, the disciplines become stale, lifeless rituals that we don't feel we need. The disciplines fuel endurance in abiding, and the abiding heart fuels a passion for the disciplines.

In order to prepare your heart to grow in a closer abiding relationship to Christ this year, work through the following preparation based on Psalm 90.

PREPARATION STEP 1 - ACKNOWLEDGING MY NEED

Read Psalm 90:1-4. Confess your need for the eternal God to be your dwelling place. Confess your weakness as a creature of "dust" compared to his strength as an eternal God. In specific what ways are you particularly needy?

PREPARATION STEP 2 - UNDERSTANDING THE OBSTACLES

Read Psalm 90:5-8. Ultimately two things keep us from wanting to abide in Christ: weakness and sin. In our weakness, we feel the quickly fading resources of time and energy. In our sin, we choose other sources of life as more important than him. **Ask the Lord what obstacles seem to be getting in the way of abiding in him (fears? physical obstacles? excuses? schedules? misplaced focus/priorities? distractions?). Be specific and write down what comes to mind below (the more specific you are, the more you will be able to see what new habits need to form).**

Example: My use of media distracts me from spending focused time with the Lord.

PREPARATION STEP 3 - EMBRACING MY CALLING

Read Psalm 90:9-12. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. We learn that He is our only refuge and hope because of our weakness and sin. Because our time is short and he is returning soon, it is *now* the time to abide in him as our dwelling place, and *now* is the time to use our days wisely. **Using the "five spheres" model, take some time to consider what God has called you to so that you can walk in wisdom:**

Circle any role that applies to you and briefly describe the God-given responsibility of that role:

Individual: Disciple of Jesus

Family: Husband, Wife, Father, Mother, Son, Daughter

Church: Member, Deacon, Elder, Disciple-maker

Community: Neighbor, Employer, Employee

World: Governmental Citizen, Partner to Missionaries

PREPARATION STEP 4 - ESTABLISHING NEW HABITS

Read Psalm 90:12-17. Because our days are few, and the King is returning, we must pay wise attention to the work of our hands. Because we are dust and he is eternal, we need him to have pity on us, restore our joy, show us favor, and establish the work of our hands. **Considering your need, the obstacles you identified, and your specific calling, what heart habits from the next pages will fuel a closer relationship of abiding in Christ this year? Prayerfully select a few and ask God to establish the work of your hands.**

EXAMPLE HEART HABITS

FROM *THE COMMON RULE* BY JUSTIN WHITMEL EARLY

Daily Habits: <https://www.thecommonrule.org/daily-habits>

- 1) **Kneeling Prayer 3x per day** - "The world is made of words. Even small, repeated words have power. Regular, carefully placed prayer is one of the keystone habits of spiritual formation and is the beginning of building the trellis of habit. By framing our day in the words of prayer, we frame the day of love."
- 2) **Scripture before Phone** - "Refusing to check the phone until after reading a passage of Scripture is a way of replacing the question "What do I need to do today?" with a better one, "Who am I and who am I becoming?" We have no stable identity outside of Jesus. Daily immersion in the Scriptures resists the anxiety of emails, the anger of the news, and the envy of social media. Instead it forms us daily in our true identity as children of the King, dearly loved."
- 3) **One Meal with Others** - [We do not abide alone: it involves loving one another (see John 15:10-12). Eating one meal per day with others gives us the opportunity to abide in Christ's love and extend that love to others.]
- 4) **One Hour with Phone Off** - "We were made for presence, but so often our phones are the cause of our absence. To be two places at a time is to be no place at all. Turning off our phone for an hour a day is a way to turn our gaze up to each other, whether that be children, coworkers, friends, or neighbors. Our habits of attention are habits of love. To resist absence is to love neighbor."

Weekly Habits: <https://www.thecommonrule.org/weekly-habits>

- 1) **One hour of conversation with a friend** - "We were made for each other, and we can't become lovers of God and neighbor without intimate relationships where vulnerability is sustained across time. In habitual, face-to-face conversation with each other, we find a gospel practice; we are laid bare to each other and loved anyway."
- 2) **Curate Media to Four Hours** - Stories matter so much that we must handle them with utmost care. Resisting the constant stream of addictive media with an hour limit means we are forced to curate what we watch. Curating stories means that we seek stories that uphold beauty, that teach us to love justice, and that turn us to community."
- 3) **Fast from Something for 24 Hours** - "We constantly seek to fill our emptiness with food and other comforts. We ignore our soul and our neighbor's need by medicating with food and drink. Regular fasting exposes who we really are, reminds us how broken we the world is, and draws our eyes to how Jesus is redeeming all things."
- 4) **Sabbath** - "The weekly practice of sabbath teaches us that God sustains the world and that we don't. To make a countercultural embrace of our limitations, we stop our usual work for one day of rest. Sabbath is a gospel practice because it reminds us that the world doesn't hang on what we can accomplish, but rather on what God has accomplished for us."

EXAMPLE OF PERSONAL COMMITMENTS - PASTOR BEN

NOTE: These are meant to serve as an example. Pastor Ben falls short of these often and is a major work in progress. Also note that some of these habits are specific to his role as a pastor.

I will maintain healthy patterns of work, rest and personal discipline.

- A morning routine of personal Bible reading and prayer for 30-45 minutes, time in the word with the boys for 30 min, a 30-45 minute time of church-focused kneeling prayer upon arrival at the office and a routine of putting my teaching/preaching study in the morning as much as possible.
- Scripture before phone each day. Social Media use limited by Antisocial App.
- Daily Pattern with opportunities for prayerful reflection at each interval:
 - ⇒ Morning (6am-12pm) – Focusing my heart on the Lord and inability to do anything of value without him first working and speaking in and through me.
 - ⇒ Afternoon (12pm-5pm) – Focused on the pressing tasks and meetings of the day.
 - ⇒ Evening (5pm-10pm) – Focused on relationships to which God has called me (family, church members, neighbors, etc.)
 - ⇒ Night (10pm-6am) – Sleep
- A weekly pattern of Sabbath (a day like no other to rest my heart in the Lord)
- A regular pattern of solitude and fasting of one day per month and one weekend per year.
- Regular patterns of exercise (minimum of 3 times a week) due to the body/soul connection

I will examine fruitfulness only to the extent that it leads me to the source of fruitfulness: an abiding relationship with Christ.

- When I see godly fruit in character or ministry, I will rush to praise the Lord as the source of any lasting change.
- When I see clearly ungodly fruit in character or ministry, I will rush to the Lord as the source of grace and empowerment.
- When I see a relative lack of perceived fruit in character or ministry, I will not focus on the fruit, but on further developing my relationship with the Lord as the source of anything good.

I will seek accountability that understands the nature of abiding and fruitfulness.

- They will know about the common fruits that indicate a lack of abiding in my life (anger, despair/depression, lustful thoughts).
- They will ask questions about my spiritual habits understanding they are the fuel to ongoing abiding.

YOUR PERSONAL COMMITMENTS

Drawing from the example lists and from your own convictions, prayerfully write out your core convictions below. These can and should develop over time.

WEEK 1: 12/30/19 - 1/5/20

ABIDING IN CHRIST: THE ONLY SOURCE OF LIFE

Read the scripture passage: Observe, Interpret, Apply. Then read the excerpt from Andrew Murray's *Abide in Christ*.

DAY 1 – JOHN 15:1-6 – THE PARABLE OF THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

“[Abiding in Christ] is not the doing of some great thing, and does not demand that we first lead a very holy and devoted life. No, it is simply weakness entrusting itself to a Mighty One to be kept - the unfaithful one casting self on One who is altogether trustworthy and true. Abiding in Him is not a work that we have to do as the condition for enjoying His salvation, but a consenting to let Him do all for us, and in us, and through us. It is a work He does for us the fruit and the power of His redeeming love. Our part is simply to yield, to trust, and to wait for what He has engaged to perform.” (chapter 3)

DAY 2 – ROMANS 6:5-14 – UNITED WITH CHRIST

“It is because so many a young believer fails to lay hold of this truth that the rest so speedily passes away. With some it is that they really did not know; they were never taught how Jesus claims the undivided allegiance of the whole heart and life; how there is not a spot in the whole of life over which He does not wish to reign; how in the very least things His disciples must only seek to please Him. They did not know how entire the consecration was that Jesus claimed.” (chapter 2)

DAY 3 – COLOSSIANS 1:3-14 – FRUIT THROUGH FAITH

“These two, consecration and faith, are the essential elements of the Christian life-the giving up all to Jesus, the receiving all from Jesus. They are implied in each other; they are united in the one word-surrender. A full surrender is to obey as well as to trust, to trust as well as to obey.” (chapter 2)

“Is it possible for the believer always to abide in Jesus? Is a life of unbroken fellowship with the Son of God indeed attainable here in this earthly life? Truly not, if the abiding is our work, to be done in our strength. But the things that are impossible with men are possible with God. If the Lord Himself will keep the soul night and day, yea, will watch and water it every moment, then surely the uninterrupted communion with Jesus becomes a blessed possibility to those who can trust God to mean and to do what He says. Then surely the abiding of the branch of the vine day and night, summer and winter, in a never ceasing life-fellowship, is nothing less than the simple but certain promise of your abiding in your Lord.” (chapter 13)

DAY 4 – COL. 1:24-2:15 – CHRIST IN YOU

“It is as our heart takes in this truth that, when He says, “Abide in me,” “Learn of me,” He really means it, and that it is His own work to keep us abiding when we yield ourselves to Him, that we shall venture to cast ourselves into the arms of His love, and abandon ourselves to His blessed keeping. It is not the yoke, but resistance to the yoke, that makes the difficulty; the wholehearted surrender to Jesus, as at once our Master and our Keeper, finds and secures the rest. . . . Abiding in Jesus is nothing but the giving up of oneself to be ruled and taught and led, and so resting in the arms of Everlasting Love.” (chapter 2)

DAY 5 – 2 PETER 1:1-15 – ALL THINGS FOR LIFE AND GODLINESS

“When you think how utterly, in times past, you have failed in keeping the most sacred vows, the consciousness of present weakness makes you tremble at the very idea of answering the Saviour’s command with the promise, “Lord, from henceforth I will abide in Thee. ” And when you set before yourself the life of love and joy, of holiness and fruitfulness, which in the future are to flow from abiding in Him, it is as if it only serves to make you still more hopeless: you, at least, can never attain to it. You know yourself too well. It is no use expecting it, only to be disappointed; a life fully and wholly abiding in Jesus is not for you. Oh that you would learn a lesson from the time of your first coming to the Saviour! Remember, dear soul, how you then were led, contrary to all that your experience, and your feelings, and even your sober judgment said, to take Jesus at His word, and how you were not disappointed. He did receive you, and pardon you; He did love you, and save you—you know it. And if He did this for you when you were an enemy and a stranger, what think you, now that you are His own, will He not much more fulfil His promise? Oh that you would come and begin simply to listen to His word, and to ask only the one question: Does He really mean that I should abide in him? The answer His word gives is so simple and so sure: By His almighty grace you now are in Him; that same almighty grace will indeed enable you to abide in Him. By faith you became partakers of the initial grace; by that same faith you can enjoy the continuous grace of abiding in Him.” (chapter 5)

SERMON (1/5/2020):

ABIDING IN CHRIST: THE ONLY SOURCE OF LIFE – JOHN 15:1-6

JOURNAL WEEK 1: 12/30/19 -1/5/20

ABIDING IN CHRIST: THE ONLY SOURCE OF LIFE

DAY 1 – JOHN 15:1-6 – THE PARABLE OF THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 2 – ROMANS 6:5-14 – UNITED WITH CHRIST

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 3 – COLOSSIANS 1:3-14 – FRUIT THROUGH FAITH

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 4 – COL. 1:24-2:15 – CHRIST IN YOU

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 5 – 2 PETER 1:1-15 – ALL THINGS FOR LIFE AND GODLINESS

Prayer and Reflection:

SERMON (1/5/2020):**ABIDING IN CHRIST: THE ONLY SOURCE OF LIFE – JOHN 15:1-6**

Specific Application(s) after Week 1:

WEEK 2: 1/6/20- 1/12/20

ABIDING IN HIS WORD

Read the scripture passage: Observe, Interpret, Apply. Then read the excerpt from Andrew Murray's *Abide in Christ*.

DAY 1 – JOHN 15:1-8 – ABIDING IN HIS WORD

“During the day there come hours of intense occupation in the rush of business or the throng of men, when only the Father's keeping can maintain the connection with Jesus unbroken. The morning manna fed all the day; it is only when the believer in the morning secures his quiet time in secret to renew distinctly and effectually loving fellowship with his Saviour, that the abiding can be kept up all the day. But what cause for thanksgiving that it may be done! In the morning, with its freshness and quiet, the believer can look out upon the day. He can consider its duties and its temptations, and pass them through beforehand, as it were, with his Saviour, throwing all upon Him who has undertaken to be everything to him. Christ is his manna, his nourishment, his strength, his life: he can take the day's portion for the day, Christ as his for all the needs the day may bring, and go on in the assurance that the day will be one of blessing and of growth.” (chapter 14)

DAY 2 – JOHN 8:31-47 – THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

“Think not so much of yourself as a branch, nor of the abiding as your duty, until you have first had your soul filled with the faith of what Christ as the Vine is. He really will be to you all that a vine can beholding you fast, nourishing you, and making Himself every moment responsible for your growth and your fruit.” (chapter 5)

“OF GOD I am in Christ: created anew, made a branch of the Vine, fitted for fruit-bearing. Would to God that believers would cease looking most at their old nature, and complaining of their weakness, as if God called them to what they were unfitted for!” (chapter 6)

DAY 3 – 1 JOHN 2:1-17 – ABIDING IN HIS COMMANDMENTS

“The connection between this keeping the commandments and the abiding in Christ's love is easily understood. Our union with Jesus Christ is not a thing of the intellect or sentiment, but a real vital union in heart and life. The holy life of Jesus, with His feelings and disposition, is breathed into us by the Holy Spirit. The believer's calling is to think and feel and will just what Jesus thought and felt and willed. He desires to be partaker not only of the grace but also of the holiness of His Lord; or rather, he sees that

holiness is the chief beauty of grace. To live the life of Christ means to him to be delivered from the life of self; the will of Christ is to him the only path of liberty from the slavery of his own evil self-will." (chapter 24)

DAY 4 – 1 JOHN 2:28-3:10 – CHILDREN OF GOD

"Think then too of the mode of that abiding in the Father and His love which is to be the law of your life. "I kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love." His was a life of subjection and dependence and yet most blessed. To our proud self-seeking nature the thought of dependence and subjection suggests the idea of humiliation and servitude; in the life of love which the Son of God lived, and to which He invite us, they are the secret of blessedness. The Son is not afraid of losing aught by giving up all to the Father, for He knows that the Father loves Him, and can have no interest apart from that of the beloved Son. He knows that as complete as is the dependence on His part is the communication on the part of the Father of all He possesses. Hence when He had said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, except He see the Father do it," He adds at once, "Whatsoever things the Father doeth, them also doeth the Son likewise: for the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth." The believer who studies this life of Christ as the pattern and the promise of what his may be, learns to understand how the "Without me ye can do nothing," is but the forerunner of "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." We learn to glory in infirmities, to take pleasure in necessities and distresses for Christ's sake; for "when I am weak, then am I strong." He rises above the ordinary tone in which so many Christians speak of their weakness, while they are content to abide there, because he has learnt from Christ that in the life of divine love the emptying of self and the sacrifice of our will is the surest way to have all we can wish or will. Dependence, subjection, self-sacrifice, are for the Christian as for Christ the blessed path of life. Like as Christ lived through and in the Father, even so the believer lives through and in Christ." (chapter 23)

DAY 5 – 1 PETER 1:22-25 – THE LIVING AND ABIDING WORD

"And so, especially in any work you do for God, abide in Jesus as your wisdom. "We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"; let all fear or doubt lest we should not know exactly what these works are, be put far away. In Christ we are created for them: He will show us what they are, and how to do them. Cultivate the habit of rejoicing in the assurance that the divine wisdom is guiding you, even where you do not yet see the way." (chapter 7)

SERMON (1/12/2020):

ABIDING IN HIS WORD – JOHN 15:7-8

JOURNAL WEEK 2: 1/6/20 - 1/12/20

ABIDING IN HIS WORD

DAY 1 – JOHN 15:1-8 – ABIDING IN HIS WORD

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 2 – JOHN 8:31-47 – THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 3 – 1 JOHN 2:1-17 – ABIDING IN HIS COMMANDMENTS

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 4 – 1 JOHN 2:28-3:10 – CHILDREN OF GOD

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 5 – 1 PETER 1:22-25 – THE LIVING AND ABIDING WORD

Prayer and Reflection:

SERMON (1/12/2020):

ABIDING IN HIS WORD – JOHN 15:7-8

Specific Application(s) after Week 2:

WEEK 3: 1/13/20- 1/19/20

ABIDING IN HIS LOVE

Read the scripture passage: Observe, Interpret, Apply. Then read the excerpt from Andrew Murray's *Abide in Christ*.

DAY 1 – JOHN 15:1-17 – ABIDING IN HIS LOVE

"Believer! abide in the love of Christ. Take and study His relation to the Father as pledge of what thine own can become. As blessed, as mighty, as glorious as was His life in the Father, can yours be in Him. Let this truth, accepted under the teaching of the Spirit in faith, remove every vestige of fear, as if abiding in Christ were a burden and a work. In the light of His life in the Father, let it henceforth be to you a blessed rest in the union with Him, an overflowing fountain of joy and strength. To abide in His love, His mighty, saving, keeping, satisfying love, even as He abode in the Father's love--surely the very greatness of our calling teaches us that it never can be a work we have to perform; it must be with us as with Him, the result of the spontaneous outflowing of a life from within, and the mighty inworking of the love from above. What we only need is this: to take time and study the divine image of this life of love set before us in Christ. We need to have our souls still unto God, gazing upon that life of Christ in the Father until the light from heaven falls on it, and we hear the living voice of our Beloved whispering gently to us personally the teaching He gave to the disciples. Soul, be still and listen; let every thought be hushed until the word has entered your heart too: "Child! I love thee, even as the Father loved me. Abide in my love, even as I abide in the Father's love. Thy life on earth in me is to be the perfect counterpart of mine in the Father." (chapter 23)

DAY 2 – JOHN 13:31-35 – A NEW COMMANDMENT

"This is my commandment," the Saviour says, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you." He sometimes spoke of commandments, but the love, which is the fulfilling of the law, is the all-including one, and therefore is called His commandment--the new commandment. It is to be the great evidence of the reality of the New Covenant, of the power of the new life revealed in Jesus Christ. It is to be the one convincing and indisputable token of discipleship: "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples"; "That they may be one in us, that the world may believe"; "That they may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved me." To the believer seeking perfect fellowship with Christ, the keeping of this commandment is at once the blessed proof that he is abiding in Him, and the path to a fuller and more perfect union." (chapter 26)

DAY 3 – JOHN 17:20-26 – JESUS' PRAYER FOR OUR LOVE

“Think first of the origin of that life of Christ in the Father. They were ONE--one in life and one in love. In this His abiding in the Father had its root. Though dwelling here on earth, He knew that He was one with the Father; that the Father's life was in Him, and His love on Him. Without this knowledge, abiding in the Father and His love would have been utterly impossible. And it is thus only that you can abide in Christ and His love. Know that you are one with Him--one in the unity of nature. By His birth He became man, and took your nature that He might be one with you. By your new birth you become one with Him, and are made partaker of His divine nature. The link that binds you to Him is as real and close as bound Him to the Father--the link of a divine life. Your claim on Him is as sure and always availing as was His on the Father. Your union with Him is as close.” (chapter 23)

DAY 4 – 1 JOHN 3:11-24 – LOVE ONE ANOTHER

“And now, just as Christ was to show forth God's love, believers are to show forth to the world the love of Christ. They are to prove to men that Christ loves them, and in loving fills them with a love that is not of earth. They, by living and by loving just as He did, are to be perpetual witnesses to the love that gave itself to die. He loved so that even the Jews cried out, as at Bethany, "Behold how He loved!" Christians are to live so that men are compelled to say, "See how these Christians love one another." In their daily [relations] with each other, Christians are made a spectacle to God, and to angels, and to men; and in the Christlikeness of their love to each other, are to prove what manner of spirit they are of. Amid all diversity of character or of creed, of language or of station, they are to prove that love has made them members of one body, and of each other, and has taught them each to forget and sacrifice self for the sake of the other. Their life of love is the chief evidence of Christianity, the proof to the world that God sent Christ, and that He has shed abroad in them the same love with which He loved Him. Of all the evidences of Christianity, this is the mightiest and most convincing.” (chapter 26)

DAY 5 – 1 JOHN 4:7-21 – GOD IS LOVE

“Let us try to understand how this is so. We know that God is love, and that Christ came to reveal this, not as a doctrine but as a life. His life, in its wonderful self-abasement and self-sacrifice, was, above everything, the embodiment of divine love, the showing forth to men, in such human manifestations as they could understand, how God loves. In His love to the unworthy and the ungrateful, in His humbling Himself to walk among men as a servant, in His giving Himself up to death, He simply lived and acted out the life of the divine love which was in the heart of God. He lived and died to show us the love of the Father.” (chapter 26)

SERMON (1/19/2020):

ABIDING IN HIS LOVE – JOHN 15:9-17

JOURNAL WEEK 3: 1/13/20 - 1/19/20

ABIDING IN HIS LOVE

DAY 1 – JOHN 15:1-17 – ABIDING IN HIS LOVE

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 2 – JOHN 13:31-35 – A NEW COMMANDMENT

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 3 – JOHN 17:20-26 – JESUS' PRAYER FOR OUR LOVE

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 4 – 1 JOHN 3:11-24 – LOVE ONE ANOTHER

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 5 – 1 JOHN 4:7-21 – GOD IS LOVE

Prayer and Reflection:

SERMON (1/19/2020):

ABIDING IN HIS LOVE – JOHN 15:9-17

Specific Application(s) after Week 3:

WEEK 4: 1/20/20 - 1/26/20

ABIDING THROUGH OPPOSITION

Read the scripture passage: Observe, Interpret, Apply. Then read the excerpt from Andrew Murray's *Abide in Christ*.

DAY 1 – JOHN 15:18-16:4A – ABIDING THROUGH OPPOSITION

"One would think that no message could be more beautiful or welcome than this, that we may rest and be quiet, and that our God will work for us and in us. And yet how far this is from being the case! And how slow many are to learn that quietness is blessedness, that quietness is strength, that quietness is the source of the highest activity--the secret of all true abiding in Christ! Let us try to learn it, and to watch against whatever interferes with it. The dangers that threaten the soul's rest are not a few. There is the dissipation of soul which comes from entering needlessly and too deeply into the interests of this world. . . . Then there is the restlessness and worry that come of care and anxiety about earthly things; these eat away the life of trust, and keep the soul like a troubled sea. . . . No less hurtful is the spirit of fear and distrust in spiritual things; with its apprehensions and its efforts, it never comes really to hear what God has to say. Above all, there is the unrest that comes of seeking in our own way and in our own strength the spiritual blessing which comes alone from above. . . . And, last of all, even when the soul seeks truly to enter the way of faith, there is the impatience of the flesh, which forms its judgment of the life and progress of the soul not after the divine but the human standard. In dealing with all this, and so much more, blessed the man who learns the lesson of stillness, and fully accepts God's word: "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." (chapter 18)

DAY 2 – JOHN 17:1-19 – JESUS' PRAYER FOR YOUR SANCTIFICATION

"But how is it possible that a believer, having sin in him--sin of such intense vitality, and such terrible power as we know the flesh to have--that a believer having sin should yet not be doing sin? The answer is: "In Him is no sin. He that abideth in Him sinneth not." When the abiding in Christ becomes close and unbroken, so that the soul lives from moment to moment in the perfect union with the Lord its keeper, He does, indeed, keep down the power of the old nature, so that it does not regain dominion over the soul. We have seen that there are degrees in the abiding. With most Christians the abiding is so feeble and intermittent, that sin continually obtains the ascendancy, and brings the soul into subjection. The divine promise given to faith is: "Sin shall not have dominion over you." But with the promise is the command: "Let not sin reign in your mortal body." The believer who claims the promise in full faith has the power to obey the command, and sin is kept from asserting its supremacy. Ignorance of the promise, or unbelief, or unwatchfulness, opens the door for sin to reign. And so the life of many believers is a course of continual stumbling and sinning. But when the believer seeks full admission into, and a permanent abode in Jesus, the Sinless One, then the life of Christ keeps from actual transgression. "In Him is no sin. He that abideth in Him sinneth not." Jesus does indeed save him from his sin--not by the removal of his sinful nature, but by keeping him from yielding to it." (chapter 27)

DAY 3 – 1 JOHN 2:15-27 – DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD

“But, alas! I hear someone say, it is just this abiding in Jesus, always bearing His yoke, to learn of Him, that is so difficult, and the very effort to attain to this often disturbs the rest even more than sin or the world. What a mistake to speak thus, and yet how often the words are heard! Does it weary the traveler to rest in the house or on the bed where he seeks repose from his fatigue? Or is it a labour to a little child to rest in its mother's arms? Is it not the house that keeps the traveler within its shelter? do not the arms of the mother sustain and keep the little one? And so it is with Jesus. The soul has but to yield itself to Him, to be still and rest in the confidence that His love has undertaken, and that His faithfulness will perform, the work of keeping it safe in the shelter of His bosom. Oh, it is because the blessing is so great that our little hearts cannot rise to apprehend it; it is as if we cannot believe that Christ, the Almighty One, will in very deed teach and keep us all the day. And yet this is just what He has promised, for without this He cannot really give us rest.” (chapter 2)

DAY 4 – MATTHEW 10:16-39 – INEVITABLE OPPOSITION

“MORE than one admits that it is a sacred duty and a blessed privilege to abide in Christ, but shrinks back continually before the question: Is it possible, a life of unbroken fellowship with the Saviour? [Special] Christians, to whom special opportunities of cultivating this grace have been granted, may attain to it; for the large majority of disciples, whose life, by a divine appointment, is so fully occupied with the affairs of this life, it can scarce be expected. The more they hear of this life, the deeper their sense of its glory and blessedness, and there is nothing they would not sacrifice to be made partakers of it. But they are too weak, too unfaithful--they never can attain to it.” (chapter 3)

DAY 5 – 1 COR 4:7-18 – GIVEN OVER TO DEATH FOR JESUS

“THERE is no truth more generally admitted among earnest Christians than that of their utter weakness. There is no truth more generally misunderstood and abused. Here, as elsewhere, God's thoughts are heaven-high above man's thoughts. The Christian often tries to forget his weakness: God wants us to remember it, to feel it deeply. The Christian wants to conquer his weakness and to be freed from it: God wants us to rest and even rejoice in it. The Christian mourns over his weakness: Christ teaches His servant to say, "I take pleasure in infirmities; most gladly will I glory in my infirmities." The Christian thinks his weakness his greatest hindrance in the life and service of God: God tells us that it is the secret of strength and success. It is our weakness, heartily accepted and continually realized, that gives us our claim and access to the strength of Him who has said, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." (chapter 28)

SERMON (1/26/2020):

ABIDING THROUGH OPPOSITION – JOHN 15:18-16:4A

WEEK 5: 1/27/20- 2/2/20 - CATCH UP WEEK

Guest Preacher, Pastor Matt Townsend (Harvest Philadelphia)

JOURNAL WEEK 4: 1/20/20 - 1/26/20

ABIDING THROUGH OPPOSITION

DAY 1 – JOHN 15:18-16:4A – ABIDING THROUGH OPPOSITION

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 2 – JOHN 17:1-19 – JESUS' PRAYER FOR YOUR SANCTIFICATION

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 3 – 1 JOHN 2:15-27 – DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 4 – MATTHEW 10:16-39 – INEVITABLE OPPOSITION

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 5 – 1 COR 4:7-18 – GIVEN OVER TO DEATH FOR JESUS

Prayer and Reflection:

SERMON (1/26/2020):

ABIDING THROUGH OPPOSITION – JOHN 15:18-16:4A

Specific Application(s) after Week 4:

WEEK 5: 1/27/20- 2/2/20 - CATCH UP WEEK

Guest Preacher, Pastor Matt Townsend (Harvest Philadelphia)

WEEK 6: 2/3/20 - 2/9/20

ABIDING THROUGH THE SPIRIT

Read the scripture passage: Observe, Interpret, Apply. Then read the excerpt from Andrew Murray's *Abide in Christ*.

DAY 1 – JOHN 16:4B-15 – ABIDING THROUGH THE SPIRIT

"God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." The same Spirit which dwelt and still dwells in the Son, becomes the life of the believer; in the unity of that one Spirit, and the fellowship of the same life which is in Christ, he is one with Him. As between the vine and branch, it is a life-union that makes them one." (chapter 4)

DAY 2 – JOHN 14:15-31 – ANOTHER HELPER

"Incalculable harm has been done to the deeper spirituality of the Church, by the idea that when once we are God's children the using of our gifts in His service follows as a matter of course. No; for this there is indeed needed very special grace. And the way in which the grace comes is again that of sacrifice and surrender. I must see how all my gifts and powers are, even though I be a child of God, still defiled by sin, and under the power of the flesh. I must feel that I cannot at once proceed to use them for God's glory. I must first lay them at Christ's feet, to be accepted and cleansed by Him. I must feel myself utterly powerless to use them aright. I must see that they are most dangerous to me, because through them the flesh, the old nature, self, will so easily exert its power. In this conviction I must part with them, giving them entirely up to the Lord. When He has accepted them, and set His stamp upon them, I receive them back, to hold them as His property, to wait on Him for the grace to use them aright day by day, and to have them act only under His influence." (chapter 16)

DAY 3 – 1 JOHN 4:1-6 – THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

"It is the faith that continually closes its eyes to the weakness of the creature, and finds its joy in the sufficiency of an Almighty Saviour, that makes the soul strong and glad. It gives itself up to be led by the Holy Spirit into an ever deeper appreciation of that wonderful Saviour whom God hath given us--the Infinite Immanuel. It follows the leading of the Spirit from page to page of the blessed Word, with the one desire to take each revelation of what Jesus is and what He promises as its nourishment and its life. In accordance with the promise, "If that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you, ye shall also abide in the Father and the Son," it lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

And so it makes the soul strong with the strength of God, to be and to do all that is needed for abiding in Christ. Believer, you would abide in Christ: only believe. Believe always; believe now. Bow even now before your Lord, and say to Him in childlike faith, that because He is your Vine, and you are His branch, you will this day abide in Him." (chapter 5)

DAY 4 – 2 COR. 3:1- 4:6 – THE SPIRIT TRANSFORMS

"Let each consciousness of failure only give new urgency to the command, and teach us to listen more earnestly than ever till the Spirit again give us to hear the voice of Jesus saying, with a love and authority that inspire both hope and obedience, "Child, abide in me." That word, listened to as coming from Himself, will be an end of all doubting--a divine promise of what shall surely be granted. And with ever-increasing simplicity its meaning will be interpreted. Abiding in Jesus is nothing but the giving up of oneself to be ruled and taught and led, and so resting in the arms of Everlasting Love." (chapter 2)

DAY 5 – GALATIANS 5:16-26 – FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

"Without the vine the branch can do nothing. To the vine it owes its right of place in the vineyard, its life and its fruitfulness. And so the Lord says, "Without me ye can do nothing." The believer can each day be pleasing to God only in that which he does through the power of Christ dwelling in him. The daily inflowing of the life-sap of the Holy Spirit is his only power to bring forth fruit. He lives alone in Him and is for each moment dependent on Him alone. Without the branch the vine can also do nothing. A vine without branches can bear no fruit. No less indispensable than the vine to the branch, is the branch to the vine. Such is the wonderful condescension of the grace of Jesus, that just as His people are dependent on Him, He has made Himself dependent on them. Without His disciples He cannot dispense His blessing to the world; He cannot offer sinners the grapes of the heavenly Canaan. Marvel not! It is His own appointment; and this is the high honour to which He has called His redeemed ones, that as indispensable as He is to them in heaven, that from Him their fruit may be found, so indispensable are they to Him on earth, that through them His fruit may be found. Believers, meditate on this, until your soul bows to worship in presence of the mystery of the perfect union between Christ and the believer." (chapter 4)

SERMON (2/9/2020):

ABIDING THROUGH THE SPIRIT – JOHN 16:4B-15

JOURNAL WEEK 6: 2/3/20 - 2/9/20

ABIDING THROUGH THE SPIRIT

DAY 1 – JOHN 16:4B-15 – ABIDING THROUGH THE SPIRIT

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 2 – JOHN 14:15-31 – ANOTHER HELPER

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 3 – 1 JOHN 4:1-6 – THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 4 – 2 COR. 3:1- 4:6 – THE SPIRIT TRANSFORMS

Prayer and Reflection:

DAY 5 – GALATIANS 5:16-26 – FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Prayer and Reflection:

SERMON (2/9/2020):**ABIDING THROUGH THE SPIRIT – JOHN 16:4B-15**

Specific Application(s) after Week 6:



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