

Recap

- A failure to be teachable can be one of the biggest hindrances to our growth.
- Not being teachable comes from pride.
- God teaches us through His Word, through the input of other people, and through the circumstances and difficulties of life.
- We become teachable by being humble, by seeking wisdom, and by embracing correction. We need to examine what God and people are saying to us, and develop a love for the truth.

Abiding in Jesus

The word *abide* means to remain, to dwell, to stay, or to continue on. John chapter 15 shows us Jesus' thinking on abiding in Him:

1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 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. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 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.

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. 6 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. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

9 "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 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.

11 “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. 12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. 17 These things I command you, that you love one another.”

This is a key part of the “Upper Room Discourse,” the Lord’s last words to His friends before His suffering and death. He has much to say here about how we need to remain in Him, and what will be the **results** of remaining in Him.

The disciples would have understood the picture He was painting: the Father is the Gardener and Christ is the Vine. We in turn are the branches of that vine.

We abide in Him by staying connected to him. As long as the branches remain connected to the vine, they **will** bear fruit. We worry about a great many things, when our focus should be more on our connectedness to Him, and making sure that nothing is damaging or hindering that relationship, our connectedness with him.

“There will be three effects of nearness to Jesus: humility, happiness, and holiness.”
-- Charles Spurgeon

Jesus reveals four aspects to this remaining in Him:

1. *Abide in Me*
2. *Abide in My Word*
3. *Abide in My love*
4. *Abide in Me and I in you*

1. Abide in Me.

We must make sure that we are engaging Him and strengthening our relationship with Him by prayer, and by simply talking to Him throughout the day.

- Paul says to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- Be sure to make special times for prayer and fellowship with Him. These are things we need to pursue on purpose.
- You can only develop your *own* walk with the Lord.
- “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:27).
- Have you ever considered the privilege that we have to be called Jesus’ friend?

2. Abide in His Word, or His words.

- “Christ... loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word...” (see Ephesians 5:25-26).

- However, Jesus seems to be focusing here more on the words that He speaks specifically to His disciples. Are we, as disciples, obeying His commands to us?

3. *Abide in His love.*

- Our love for Him will be demonstrated in doing what He says, and doing so with delight. Our *new man* desires to please Him by nature.
- The fruit of the Spirit is “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” If we are born again, we will naturally desire to please Him, and we will love others with His love.
- We will also continue on in His love towards others. “He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him” (1 John 2:10).
- Be alert for signs that your love is growing cold!

4. *Abide in Me and I in you*

- “Abide in Me and I in you.” He Himself remains in us and empowers us.
- “See, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (see Matthew 28:20).
- Christ living in us has become what the Bible calls “the hope of glory.”
- The Holy Spirit is the down payment on the eternal glory that Jesus has promised us!

The Father is the Gardener

Jesus presents the Father as the vinedresser or gardener of the vine. He tends to the Vine, overseeing and **purifying** the Church.

- A sobering truth: branches that do not bear fruit are rejected and cast away.
- A person may profess to be a Christian, but does his life possess any evidence of real faith in Jesus?
- Grace doesn't mean you can live however you wish: "...the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age..." (Titus 2:11-12).
- Jude complained of "ungodly men who have turned the grace of our God into a license for evil" (Jude 4).

The Divine Gardener also **prunes**.

- A gardener prunes away what's damaged, diseased, or even healthy, all for the sake of the plant's future health.
- When God prunes us, He is intervening in the circumstances of our lives to ensure healthier growth for us in the future.
- Pruning can happen in many different ways. Hold fast to Him in your difficult seasons; it will be for your good, and you'll be able to bear more fruit for God in the future.

God's plan for us and its results in our lives

If we abide in Jesus, we will see *good* things coming to pass.

- Staying close to Him will cause us to bear much fruit and experience answers to prayer. As I stay close to Him, my will and His Will grow to become one.
- Jesus also says (15:11) that He wants our joy to remain in us and be full. As I stay connected to Him, His joy will be seen in my life despite my circumstances. I will have a reason to praise Him regardless of circumstances: “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Philippians 4:4).
- He chose us to bear fruit, fruit that will remain. Only Jesus can deliver on the wonderful promise He made: “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10b).

All these things come from making sure that we’re remaining close to Jesus: spiritual fulfillment, lasting joy, answered prayer, experiencing His constant love, and enjoying His Presence. Abide in Jesus, and let Him abide in you!

Homework

Read John 15:1-17 daily. If possible, read it once in the a.m. and once in the p.m.

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