

Abiding in Christ

John 1:1-14

"When our Lord says: "Abide in me" he is talking about the will, about the choices, the decisions we make. We must decide to do things which expose ourselves to him and keep ourselves in contact with him."

This is what it means to abide in him. We have been placed into Christ by the Holy Spirit. Now we must choose to maintain that relationship by the decisions we make – decisions to expose ourselves to his Word in order to learn about him, and to relate to him in prayer wherein we converse with him.

Decisions to relate to other believers in Body Life experiences; that is, bearing one another's burdens and confessing our faults and sharing in fellowship with one another, wherein we learn about and see Christ in one another. All of this is designed to relate to him – "Abide in me". If we do that, we are fulfilling this active, necessary decision of the will to obey his Word, to do what he says, and to stay in touch with him." Ray Stedman

- I. Jesus compares our union with him to a grape vine. Jesus is the vine, and we are its branches. We became an organic part of the vine the second we came to know him as our Lord and Savior. The vine is planted in the spiritually nutrient rich soil of God's kingdom. Its nutritional power gives us everything we need for life and godliness. Without the vine we would surely shrivel and die, which is why we've been given an intimate, vital, spiritual union with Christ.

John 15:1

John 14:15-17

Isa. 15:1-2,7

Jer. 2:21

Ezek. 16:10

Hos. 10:1

Ps. 80:1-10

Isa. 5:4

Ps. 80:14-19

Isa. 4:2

Isa. 11:1-2

Isa. 53:2

Union with Christ is not union with a system of doctrine, nor with external religious influences, nor with an organized church, nor with an ideal man, -- but rather, with a personal, risen, living, omnipresent Lord (J. W. A. Stewart).

- II. Jesus grafted us into the vine to produce in us fruit fit for a King. God started a mighty work in our hearts the second we came under his care. Jesus compares his care to a gardener who lovingly lifts us up and draws us near to him to make us spiritually healthy. He searches us, knows us (Ps. 139:1) and prunes from our hearts whatever is necessary so that we can bear good fruit for him. If we allow him, he will remove everything that is detrimental to our producing a fruitful harvest of righteousness and peace (Heb. 12:11).

John 15:1-3

1 Cor. 13:11

1 John 1:7

καθαίρω kathairō, to cleanse, of filth impurity, etc. To prune trees and vines from useless shoots (Strong's)

Phil. 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

- III. **To remain** (abide) in Christ is of utmost importance if we are to keep a vital connection with the vine and the gardener. It is an absolute necessity if we are to bear any kind of spiritual fruit as a believer. **Remaining** in him refers to a **conscious decision** to live in humble submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in every area of our lives. To choose not to remain in Christ forfeits two great blessings promised to us, the privilege of bearing abundant fruit for him and the joy of answered prayer.

John 15:4-8

2 Peter 1:3-5

1 Tim. 4:1

Matt. 7:17-20 Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that