

Abide



Bible Study Leader's Guide

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ABIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Goal of This Study	2
Your Role as a Leader	2
Introduction	3
How to Get the Most out of This Study	3
Week 1: Abide in the Word of God	4
Week 2: Abide in the Work of Jesus	9
Week 3: Abide in the Worth of Jesus' Life	14
Week 4: Abide in the Worship of Jesus	20
Week 5: Abide as a Witness of Jesus	25
Week 6: Abide as You Wait on Jesus	29

ABIDE

LEADER'S GUIDE

THE GOAL OF THIS STUDY

Our hope is that this study will lead you to better understand the importance of abiding in Jesus's words and work in order to discover your worth, based on Jesus' life alone, as God's workmanship created for the specific purpose of witnessing to the world around you while you wait for the glorious return of your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

YOUR ROLE AS A LEADER

Thank you for leading your group through *Abide*. Your role is integral as you prepare, pray, facilitate, and care for your flock. You are not expected to be an expert in order to lead this study. We have provided you with all the answers you are expected to know. With that said, please look over these best practices for leading your group through the *Abide* study.

1. Make it a priority to start and finish on time. Each lesson should take about 1 hour for study, discussion and wrap-up. Other things like prayer, a meal, etc. will need to be planned beyond the hour for the study.
2. Read the material and prepare to facilitate the discussion so nothing catches you off guard in your group time.
3. Keep the group on task as much as possible. A few small detours are okay, but don't let the study be derailed by a discussion that is not connected to the material or that creates an argument over secondary theological issues.
4. Don't skip anything. Each element in the six weeks of study has been included for a particular purpose.
5. The "Key Takeaways" at the end of each study will provide a helpful wrap-up. They also help you to see the primary lessons we hope participants will learn each week.

ABIDE

INTRODUCTION

Abiding in Christ demands meditation on God's Word, trusting the work of Christ alone for our salvation, understanding our new identity and worth that God has given us in Christ, and living lives of sacrificial worship while remaining in the faith as Jesus' witnesses to the world around us as we await His glorious return.

This small group Bible study will focus on six primary ways that the believer in Christ can abide in Jesus. You will learn the importance of abiding in Jesus by connecting to his Word, trusting in his work, meditating on his worth, worshipping him with your life, witnessing to others by sharing his story, and remaining in him by staying true to his Word while you wait for his promised return.

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS STUDY

1. Don't skip any of the studies. Each week will build on the last. To best understand the material, you need to move from one section to the next without bypassing any.
2. Read each passage slowly. Don't rush through the readings. It is easy for us to do this, especially with familiar passages. It's often the case that there's more there than what initially comes to mind as we read.
3. Answer each question thoughtfully. Consider how your answer to a question might fit within the broader context of the section you are studying and within the study as a whole.
4. Use the "DIG DEEPER" sections to focus on concepts that require further explanation to help us more fully grasp the significance of their part in the passage.
5. Take the takeaways. At the end of each section is a list of "Key Takeaways." This is meant to be a summary of the lessons learned from each section. Before concluding your study of each section ensure that you have grasped their part in the story.
6. Encourage others to join you. This study is best done in a small group.

ABIDE

WEEK 1: ABIDE IN THE WORD OF GOD

I Have Hidden Your Word in my Heart

As believers we are keenly aware of the importance of abiding in Jesus. After all, John 15:5 tells us that apart from Jesus, we can do nothing. However, having the knowledge that something is crucial is rarely sufficient to propel us into action. Contrary to what you may think, abiding does not result in a lack of movement. Conversely, it demands every fiber of our being to intentionally ignore our flesh while simultaneously fixing our eyes, minds, and hearts on the words and the person of Jesus.

John 1:1-3 says,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

Jesus is the Word of God. He is the founder, creator, and sustainer of all things. If we are to abide in Jesus, we must choose to remain in him by reading, believing, praying, practicing and proclaiming the truth of Scripture.

DIG DEEPER

“Much as our words reveal to others our heart and minds, so Jesus Christ is God's ‘Word’ to reveal His heart and mind to us. Jesus said, ‘He that hath seen me hath seen the Father’ (John 14:9). A word is composed of letters, and Jesus Christ is the ‘Alpha and Omega’ (Rev. 1:11) the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. According to Hebrews 1:1-3, Jesus Christ is God's *last* Word to mankind, for He is the climax of divine revelation” (Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*, 228).

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible, which is quite fitting as its theme is centered on the importance and value of God's Word in the life of a believer. Today we will study 6 verses from this lengthy Psalm, which most scholars believe was written by David. In it you will see a clear connection between meditating on God's Word and abiding in his presence. Read and discuss the following passage.

Psalm 119:10-16

- ¹⁰ I seek you with all my heart;
do not let me stray from your commands.
- ¹¹ I have hidden your word in my heart
that I might not sin against you.
- ¹² Praise be to you, LORD;
teach me your decrees.
- ¹³ With my lips I recount
all the laws that come from your mouth.
- ¹⁴ I rejoice in following your statutes
as one rejoices in great riches.
- ¹⁵ I meditate on your precepts
and consider your ways.
- ¹⁶ I delight in your decrees;
I will not neglect your word.

DISCUSS

1. Abiding means to remain. What does it mean then to stray from God's commands?

Departing from the truth of Scripture to go my own way. Ultimately disobeying God.

2. According to verse 11, how does hiding God's Word in your heart enable you to stay faithful to Him?

Meditating on and memorizing Scripture enable us to fight off temptation and prevent us from sinning against God. Ephesians 6:17 calls the Word of God the sword of the Spirit. God's Word is a strong defense against temptation. When Jesus was tempted and tried by Satan he replied with the words, "It is written..." as he quoted Scripture to fight off the enemy.

3. Have you ever recited Scripture to say no to sin? If so, can you recall the passage you used and how it helped?

Answers will vary.

4. Discuss how learning, reciting, rejoicing, meditating, and delighting in God's Words bring praise to the Lord.

As we read, recite, and meditate on Scripture we are submitting to God's leadership, authority and wisdom over our lives.

As we rejoice and delight in Scripture, we are agreeing with what he says, seeing more of who he is, and worshipping him with gratitude.

5. Do you view God's Words and commands as great riches? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

6. What is the evidence, in your day-to-day life, of how much you value God's Word?

Answers will vary but may refer to time spent reading and studying the Bible, praying Scripture, applying it to one's daily life, and submitting to its authority even when it doesn't make sense, feels unfair, or costs something, etc.

7. Read through verses 12-16 and discuss how each line connects to the other.

Seeking God with all my heart means not straying from what God says.

Hiding Scripture in my heart is a weapon against temptation to sin.

I praise God by submitting to his Word and allowing it to instruct me.

We should recite and proclaim the words God gave to us through his Word.

If I value God's Word, I will rejoice in reading it.

As I read Scripture, I should meditate on what God is saying, who he is and what his will is.

As I delight in God's Word, I will come to it consistently and not stray from it.

8. According to this passage what are some of the reasons it's important to be in the Word?

To connect more deeply with God.

To know and obey his will for my life.

To honor him by living according to his Word.

To bring God praise.

To proclaim God's Word to ourselves and others.

To be enriched by time with him in his Word.

To find and experience joy.

To know God more intimately.

To delight in the gift he has given in his Word.

9. Is it possible to abide in Jesus while straying from his commands or neglecting to read his Word?

This is a bit of a trick question, I suppose. Obviously we will never be perfect, without sin, or able to perfectly obey or abide in Jesus at any given time during our time on earth, but it is essential, if we want to connect with Jesus, that we know and submit to the authority of his Word throughout the course of our lives.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ Abiding is not actionless. It requires you to continue in your faith. To take a stand. To fix your attention onto the words of Scripture and the person of Jesus.
- ❖ Jesus is the founder, creator, and sustainer of all things. Therefore he is the only one who can provide us with what we truly need for life and godliness.
- ❖ Abiding in Jesus happens when we read and submit to his Word as the ultimate authority over our lives.
- ❖ To remain in Jesus is to remain faithful to his Word.
- ❖ Reading, reciting, memorizing, meditating on, and rejoicing and delighting in Scripture enable us to seek the Lord with all our hearts as we honor him with our thoughts, actions, words, and attitudes.

ABIDE

WEEK 2: ABIDE IN THE WORK OF JESUS

Apart From Me You Can Do Nothing

Grapevines are exceptionally sturdy vines that can produce abundant amounts of nourishing fruit. The trunk of the grapevine was first a young shoot that eventually grew into a permanent support for all the above ground vegetation and fruit produced by the vine. Once a trunk has fully matured it produces arms, or branches, that are far-reaching but stay connected to the vine in order to receive the nutrients necessary for life and fruit production.

In **John chapter 15** Jesus used the fitting analogy of a vine and its branches to emphasize the fact that he is our only source of life and fruitfulness. In **Genesis 3** we are able to witness an instantaneous spiritual and eventual physical death that resulted from Adam and Eve's disobedience to God. As we know, their disobedience yielded a curse of generational sin that saw no end, but God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (**John 3:16**). In submission to his Father's will, Jesus left his heavenly throne, clothed in humanity, to be born in a manger. He grew in stature and favor as a young shoot and became the permanent support for his future branches by perfectly submitting to his Father's will while paying the penalty we deserved, which was death on a cross. As he drew his last breath, he uttered the words "It is finished" because he

had completed all the work necessary to provide the true and abundant life of Christ to anyone who abides in him by faith.

Today we will spend time reading John 15 as we consider Jesus' words, "If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." We will consider the importance of remaining connected to Jesus as we trust the work he did on the cross on our behalf and continue to trust the work he will do through his Spirit as we abide in him. Read and discuss the passage below.

John 15:1-8

¹ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

DIG DEEPER

"The greatest judgment God could bring to a believer would be to let him alone, let him have his own way. Because God loves us, He 'prunes' us and encourages us to bear more fruit for His glory. . . . Your heavenly father is never nearer to you than when He is pruning you. Sometimes He cuts away the dead wood that might cause trouble, but

often He cuts off the living tissue that is robbing you of spiritual vigor. Pruning does not simply mean spiritual surgery that removes what is bad. It can also mean cutting away the good and the better so that we might enjoy the best” (Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*, 285).

DISCUSS

1. In verse 1 Jesus declares his 7th and final “I Am” statement in the book of John. Put its meaning in your own words.

Jesus is the genuine or real vine that the Father, the gardener, has planted to provide life and produce fruit for those who abide in him.

2. Describe the relationship between the vine and its branches to the gardener.

Jesus is the vine that the Father, the gardener, has planted to provide life and produce fruit through the branches who abide in him. The branches that stay connected to the vine will produce fruit and the gardener will prune them in order to bring about a bigger harvest. The branches that don't stay connected to the vine will not be able to produce fruit and will therefore be cut off from the vine by the gardener.

3. Discuss the progression of fruit production mentioned in the course of this passage and what determines the amount of fruit produced.

No Fruit

Fruit

More Fruit

Much Fruit

4. What determines if a branch is cut off or pruned?

Branches with NO fruit are cut off

Branches with ANY fruit are pruned

5. What two things are essential to fruit production and why are they essential?

Abiding in the vine

Gardner's pruning

6. Who or what is the fruit ultimately being produced for?

The Father's glory

7. Counterfeit fruit is produced by the flesh, but real fruit will produce seeds for more fruit to be produced. Give an example of counterfeit fruit that could be produced from the flesh.

Answers are endless but here are a few examples:

Circumstantial happiness that appears to be joy

Love that is self-seeking

Peace that is a result of foolishness or denial

8. Give some practical examples of how a believer can remain in Jesus.

Reading the Bible, meditating on the truth, reciting Scripture when tempted, etc.

Talking to him in prayer. Giving him our burdens, asking for help, etc.

Worshipping him with a heart of gratitude and awe.

Connecting to the body of Christ

Serving the body of Christ

Etc.

9. What repeated themes do you notice between verses 1-4 and 5-8?

Relationship to Jesus (Vine), Father (Gardener), and branches (people)

Remain in me and I will remain in you

Remain in the Word

Remain in Jesus and produce fruit

Fruit is produced by Jesus and for God's glory

Those who don't produce fruit are cut off and are unable to produce anything

10. How do Jesus' word cleanse us, enable us to pray in line with his will, and keep us connected to Him (verses 3 and 7)?

We are only made clean or declared righteous by believing in the truth of the gospel of Jesus as written in the Bible. Faith in Jesus and his Word are what connect us and keep us connected to him, as well as enable us to pray in line with Scripture.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ Our salvation and fruitfulness are produced by the Word and work of Jesus alone.
- ❖ Jesus is our only source of life.
- ❖ We cannot produce anything good apart from our relationship with Jesus.
- ❖ We abide in Jesus in prayer, by praying in accordance with his words in Scripture.
- ❖ Just as we entered a relationship with Jesus by placing our faith in him, we abide in him by continuing to do the same.
- ❖ Just as Jesus submitted to the Father's will and so remained in him, we are to submit to Jesus's will for our lives as we remain connected to him.
- ❖ God, the Father, is the one who prunes us, which is a sign that we belong to his Son, Jesus, the true vine.
- ❖ God prunes us in order to produce even more fruit for his glory.

ABIDE

WEEK 3: ABIDE IN THE WORTH OF JESUS' LIFE

Your Life Is Now Hidden with Christ

What we value dictates how we live. Paul said, “To live is Christ” because Jesus was the entirety of his life’s worth. If we believe our greatest treasure is found in the life of Christ, we will spend our days living lives aligned with his. Identity in Christ is a popular theme in the Christian life. As believers it is imperative that we know who we belong to, where our worth comes from, and what our life’s purpose is. However, the aim of knowing our worth in Jesus is not to build up our image; in contrast, it is to better reflect his image and bring glory to his name. If we know who we are in Christ, the one who gives our lives value, we will better walk in accordance with God’s Spirit and deny our old way of living.

DIG DEEPER

“We died with Christ. . . . The fullest explanation of this wonderful truth is found in Romans 6-8. Christ not only died *for* us (substitution), but we died *with* Him (identification). Christ not only died *for* sin, bearing its penalty, but He died *unto* sin, breaking its power. Because we are ‘in Christ’ through the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.

12:13), we died with Christ. This means that we can have victory over the old sin nature that wants to control us. 'How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' (Romans 6:2)" (Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*, 682-83).

Today we will be reading from the third chapter in the book of Colossians. This book is written by the apostle Paul to the church at Colossae. In this chapter Paul is talking about the believer's new life, which can only be found and lived in connection with Jesus' life. Read and discuss the passage.

Colossians 3:1-17

¹ Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

DISCUSS

1. Read verse 3 and discuss its meaning. How and when did you die and what does it mean that your life is hidden in Christ?

At the moment of our salvation, we were made new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Our old lives are gone and dead, and our new lives can only be found and lived out in connection with Jesus. Similar to last week's text where we learned we can't produce fruit without connecting to the vine, we can't live our new lives apart from abiding in Christ.

2. What does it mean to put off our old self and put on our new self, and how can we do this, practically speaking?

Stop walking in your old, flesh-centered ways as you did before you trusted Jesus and start walking by the Spirit in line with the new life you have been given.

Reading the Bible, praying, and connecting to a biblical community are essential disciplines to engage in if you want to live in line with Scripture, by God's Spirit, as a new creation within the body of Christ.

3. Put verse 11 in your own words. What is Paul saying and why does it matter?

As a believer in Jesus, our old self and identities are gone. We are new creations with a new identity. . . one unifying identity found in Jesus alone.

Nothing separates us from one another. Nothing gives us more or less standing in Christ than another believer. Our old lives and identities hold no meaning any longer.

4. What three words and phrases does Paul use to describe us as believers, according to verse 12?

God's chosen people, holy, and dearly loved.

5. How does being one of God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved by him, impact your personal worth? How should it impact the way you live?

Knowing he chose me, has made me holy, and loves me dearly should enable me to look no further for acceptance or value.

I should live with more assurance of whose I am and how much God loves me. If I did it would impact how I spend my time, what I concern myself with, and how I view myself and others. I would live free from needing the approval and acceptance of others. I would love others more deeply.

6. After Paul lists out the things we should put off, put on, and put to death, and our call to walk in newness of life, he concludes with how some abiding details on how we are to accomplish this. Read verses 15-17 and discuss the following:

- a. According to verses 15-17 what are the four ways we are to abide in Jesus as we live a life that is hidden in him?

Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts

Be thankful

Let the message of Christ dwell among us richly

Do everything in the name of our Lord, Jesus

- b. What is the peace of Christ and how do we know if we are allowing it to rule our hearts?

Romans 5:1 says we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the peace of Christ is the peace provided between God and man, purchased by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus for anyone who believes

in him. According to Romans 5:10, we were enemies of God, but once we trust in him as our Lord and Savior, we are reconciled to him and adopted as his children.

- c. What is the message of Christ and what does it mean to allow it to dwell among us?

The gospel. Using it to teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

- d. How can we determine if we are doing something in the name of Jesus? What other name might our flesh be prone to doing things in?

It should be in line with Scripture, God's character, the will of God, etc.

Our name or the name of those from whom we are seeking approval

- e. How does having a heart of gratitude enable us to abide in Jesus?

As we encounter God through his Word, his Spirit, in worship, and in prayer we should be so humbled by how gracious he has been to us and how lavishly he loves us that we enter a place of worship and gratitude. As we do this our focus shifts from ourselves on onto God. This enables us to connect with him more deeply as we fix our eyes on who he is and what he has done.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ Our worth can only be found in connection to Jesus' life.
- ❖ The moment we put our faith in Jesus, our old self died. Therefore, we should no longer go on living in accordance with our earthly nature, but rather we need to put those sinful patterns to death.

- ❖ The moment we put our faith in Jesus, we were raised to live a new life in Christ.

Therefore, we should live a life deeply connected to Christ which will produce spiritual fruit.

- ❖ We are God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved. and we are therefore called to a life lived in an abiding unity, the peace he provided us, anchored to the truth of his Word and deeply connected to the Father with worshipful gratitude.

ABIDE

WEEK 4: ABIDE IN THE WORSHIP OF JESUS

I Will Sing the Lord's Praise, for He Has Been Good to Me

The Bible has a lot to say about worship. As we read verses like **Romans 12:1**, which says, “Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship,” we realize worship is much more than the songs we sing as a congregation on Sunday morning. It is an all-encompassing posture of humble submission to God’s sovereign will and authority over every aspect of our lives, no matter the cost or our current circumstances.

Furthermore, it is the ability to rejoice in suffering (**Romans 5:3**), give thanks in all circumstances (**1 Thessalonians 5:18**), and say things like **Job** did in **chapter 1 verse 21**, when he said, “The Lord gives and takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” This type of worship is counterintuitive to the flesh and can therefore only be produced supernaturally by God’s Spirit, which is why **John 4:24** says, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” When we, abide in Christ through our worship of him, even in the middle of the darkest storms of life, we are able to experience his peace, which transcends all understanding (**Philippians 4:6-7**).

DIG DEEPER

“In this brief Psalm (found in chapter 13) the author deals with his feelings, his foes and his faith” (Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament*, 887). As he wrestles with his fears and frustrations, he chooses to abide in God by calling out to him in prayer, which is one of many forms of worship. After he pleads with the Lord to help him in his time of need, he quickly shifts his heart to the truth that he can rejoice in what God has already done, knowing that God alone is good and worthy of praise regardless of current circumstances.

Today we will read and discuss Psalm 13, which most scholars agree was written by David. Notice how David clings to the Lord, yearning for evidence of his presence and justice, through his vulnerable and worship-filled prayer. Even when his circumstances look bleak and he can't sense God's presence in his life, he chooses to abide in God by responding in worship as he continues to place his trust in God's unfailing love. Read and discuss the passage.

Psalm 13

¹ How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

² How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?

³ Look on me and answer, LORD my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

⁴ and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,”
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

⁵ But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.

⁶ I will sing the LORD's praise,
for he has been good to me.

DISCUSS

1. What questions does David ask the Lord?

How long will God forget him?

How long will God hide his face from him?

How long will he wrestle with his thoughts?

How long will he have sorrow in his heart?

How long will his enemy triumph over him?

2. Put what they mean in your own words.

Answers will vary.

Example: When will I see the evidence that you are here and you care for me?

3. Have you ever asked the Lord these types of questions? Which ones in particular do you relate to?

Answers will vary.

4. What prayer requests does David lay before the Lord?

For God to look at and answer him.

For help seeing clearly that God is just and acting on his behalf.

5. What types of things does David seem to be fearful of?

God's absence—His being silent and distant.

Being left on his own to defend himself.

Being overcome by his own thoughts and emotions.

His enemies conquering him and laughing at him.

6. What word begins David's change in perspective?

But

7. What's the conclusion to David's prayer?

No matter what he will trust in God's unfailing love.

He will rejoice in his salvation.

He will sing praise to God.

He will remember and proclaim how good has already been to him.

8. Talk about the 3 movements in this short passage and summarize the main point.

1st Movement: Pursuit of God's presence

2nd Movement: Prayer for God's justice

3rd Movement: Praising God for his goodness

Main Point: God is good and worthy of praise, and regardless of our current circumstances or how we feel, we can trust in his unfailing love as we rejoice in our salvation and remember how faithful he has already been to us.

9. Considering this passage, would you say abiding in Jesus through worship requires us to ignore our feelings and just pretend everything is okay?

Answers will vary.

No. Abiding in Jesus through worship does not require us to be fake with God and ignore our feelings. David illustrates this well in his ability to worship God authentically by bringing his fears and feelings to the Lord, praying God will protect him from being overcome by his feelings, and then proclaiming his trust in and devotion to God, not his

feelings, because God had already proven himself faithful regardless of the sorrow and defeat David was experiencing in his life at that time.

10. What model for worship do you see in this passage that could be implemented in your own life when you are faced with difficult or scary circumstances?

Pursue God's presence—bring your fears to him.

Pray for God's justice—ask him to act on your behalf.

Praise God for his goodness—rejoice in your salvation and God's faithfulness.

11. How does worshipping Jesus enable you to abide in him when you are fearful or anxious?

When we bring our fears and anxieties to Jesus and lay them at his feet through prayer, we are able to turn our attention to him and how faithful and trustworthy he is. As we recount his goodness, our hearts well up with praise and we realize he is so much bigger than anything we are currently facing (Romans 8:31).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ True worship is only produced by God's Spirit.
- ❖ Worship requires a posture of humble submission to God's sovereign will.
- ❖ Worship can take on many forms. It includes but is not limited to being a witness of Jesus by proclaiming his words, his work, and his worth. In addition, it is expressed in our songs and prayers as well as in our ability, by God's Spirit alone, to rejoice in suffering and give thanks in all circumstances.
- ❖ When we worship the Lord, we are abiding in him by meditating on his goodness.
- ❖ Worshipping Jesus with a thankful heart leads us to experience the peace of God.

ABIDE

WEEK 5: ABIDE AS A WITNESS OF JESUS

You Will Be My Witnesses

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he explained to his apostles what would happen next. He instructed them that although he was leaving for a time, he would send his Holy Spirit to empower them to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth.

DIG DEEPER

“‘Witness’ is a key word in the book of Acts and is used twenty-nine times as either a verb or a noun. A witness is somebody who tells what he has seen and heard (Acts 4:19-20). When you are on the witness stand in court, the judge is not interested in your ideas or opinions; he only wants to hear what you know” (Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*, 323).

Today we will read Jesus’ words to the apostles in **Acts 1:8-11** as we consider how they apply to us today, as we abide in Jesus’ Holy Spirit as his witnesses to the world around us. Read and discuss the passage.

Acts 1:8-11

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

DISCUSS

1. Who is Jesus talking to?

His apostles

2. Why does verse 8 start out with a “But”? What is the contrast Jesus is referring to from verses 6 and 7?

In verse 6 the apostles ask the question, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them in verse 7, “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.”

Verse 8 begins with “But” as Jesus is pointing out a contrast in that they can’t know the time God will restore the kingdom to Israel, BUT they can know something that is about to happen in advancing God’s Kingdom on earth.

3. What does it mean to be a witness?

Having knowledge from personal observation or experience of something.

4. What specifically had the apostles witnessed? (Read verses 1-5 and 9-11.)

His life, ministry, death and resurrection. They are about to be witnesses of his ascension and Holy Spirit.

5. We didn't personally witness Jesus' life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension, so does that mean we are not his witnesses? What qualifies someone as a witness of Jesus?

We are qualified by faith in Jesus, we are equipped by his Holy Spirit, and we are witnesses of his life, death, resurrection, and ascension through his written Word, which commands us to teach and proclaim his good news to the world around us.

6. What does it mean to be a witness to the ends of the earth? Is this a call for every Christian to be a missionary?

Yes, we are all called to be missionaries, but not like you may think. The call is to make disciples of all the nations because heaven will include every tribe, nation and tongue. It is not any one person's job to go to the ends of the earth, but rather, by God's Spirit through all believers the gospel will be preached to everyone everywhere. Our call is to follow the Spirit wherever he leads us as we make the most of every opportunity by loving others and sharing the good news.

7. When Jesus ascended to heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to abide in his followers in order to empower them as witnesses of the gospel. What does abiding have to do with witnessing?

Apart from Jesus we can do NOTHING. His Spirit abiding in us empowers us to be witnesses of the gospel to the world around us.

8. Have you ever experienced a deeper sense of Jesus' presence in your life while you abided in his Spirit to witness and serve others?

Answers will vary. As we walk in obedience to God by abiding in his Spirit, we will experience his fruit in our lives. For example, after witnessing to others you might

experience overwhelming joy, an unexplainable peace, or greater love for God and others.

9. How does what the angels said to the apostles in verse 11 add to the urgency we should have in witnessing to the ends of the earth?

Jesus IS coming back, and we don't know the day or hour so we should have an urgency in sharing the gospel with those who are still lost.

10. How does knowing that Jesus is coming back motivate you, personally, to witness to your friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers today?

Answers will vary.

It is an important reminder that we are not promised tomorrow and should therefore make the most of every minute today to share the love of Jesus with those who don't know him yet.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ Abiding in Jesus means being his witness.
- ❖ As a believer, you are equipped with the Holy Spirit, who gives you the power to share the gospel of Jesus to the world around you.
- ❖ While we wait on Jesus to return, we are called to share his story with others.
- ❖ Knowing Jesus is returning should give us a sense of urgency to share the gospel with everyone around us.

ABIDE

WEEK 6: ABIDE AS YOU WAIT ON JESUS

So That When He Appears You May Be Unashamed

You've likely experienced it before. The longer you are forced to wait the more likely you are to step out of line to settle for something far less valuable. That's because two things occur while we wait for what seems like an infinite amount of time on a promised product we have yet to see. The longer we wait the more we begin to question if what we are waiting on will ever pan out, and if it does, we wonder if it will be worth the wait in the end.

As believers we worship an invisible God who made a promise thousands of years ago to return for us, and while we wait for Jesus to return, the enemy is at work trying to lure us to step out of the lines of God's written Word and into a false doctrine that claims it will satisfy us in the here and now.

DIG DEEPER

“It is interesting to observe that antichristian groups rarely try to lead lost sinners to their false faith. Instead, they spend much of their time trying to convince professing Christians (and church members, at that) to their own doctrines. They are out to ‘seduce’ the faithful. The word seduce carries the idea of ‘being led astray.’ We have been warned that this would happen: ‘Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of the devil [teaching of demons] (1 Tim. 4:1)” (Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*, 981).

There is a spiritual war waging against us and the only way we will be able to stand our ground and stay in line with Scripture as we wait for Jesus’ return is to remain in him and his Word while we wait.

Today we will spend time together in **1 John Chapter 2** as we read John’s warning to believers to guard against false teaching by remaining in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and by continuing to know and walk in the truth of the gospel they already possess. Read and discuss the passage.

1 John 2:18-29

¹⁸ Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they did not really **belong to us**. For if they had **belonged to us**, they would have **remained with us**; but their going showed that none of them **belonged to us**.

²⁰ But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. ²¹ I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. ²² Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a

person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. ²³ No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son **has the Father** also.

²⁴ As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will **remain in the Son and in the Father**. ²⁵ And this is what he promised us—eternal life.

²⁶ I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. ²⁷ As for you, the anointing you received from him **remains in you**, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, **remain in him**.

²⁸ And now, dear children, **continue in him**, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

²⁹ If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

DISCUSS

1. How many references do you see to abiding in this passage? Take time to list them out.

At least 7:

Belong to us

Remain with us

Has the Father

Remain in the Son and in the Father

Remains in you

Remain in him

Continue in him

2. Who is John writing to? What is the main point he seems to be making?

Believers

As you wait for Jesus to return, be on guard for false teachers who want to seduce you with lies and lure you from the truth. The way to do this is to remain in Jesus and remember what he taught.

3. According to verse 19, what is one piece of evidence of belonging to the family of God?

Remaining connected to the body of Christ

4. What is John referring to in verse 24? What had they heard from the beginning?

The truth of the gospel of Jesus

5. Describe in your own words what it means to remain in what you've heard.

Answers will vary.

Continuing to read, meditate on, recite, and apply Scripture to your life by submitting to it as the ultimate authority over all things.

Not stepping out of the lines of Scripture. Not adding or taking away from it. Not handling it accurately and carefully. Not bending it to say what you want it to say, etc.

6. Is there a correlation to staying connected to the body and in the truth of the Bible to abiding in Jesus?

Yes, both the body and the Bible are meant for our teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training as we aim to connect more deeply with Jesus and reflect his image to the world around us. If we neglect Jesus' Word or his body, we will not experience him as fully.

7. What is the anointing John referring to in verse 26? Do we have that same anointing as believers in Jesus today?

The Holy Spirit, given to all believers. Yes!

8. As we wait on Jesus' return, what are we to remain and continue in according to verses 27 and 28?

Remain in the Holy Spirit and what he has taught you

Continue in Jesus by faith

9. Based on this passage, what are the benefits to remaining in Jesus while we wait for his return?

We will remain with the body of Christ—in the family of God

We will believe the truth over a lie

We have eternal life to look forward to

The Son, the Father, and the Holy Spirit will remain with us

We will be confident and unashamed at his return

10. What passage of Scripture do you most often run to when you are seeking strength, comfort, or hope from the Lord?

Answers will vary.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ❖ Those who belong to Jesus will remain in him.
- ❖ Whoever denies Jesus does not belong to Jesus.
- ❖ If we belong to Jesus, we are anointed by his Spirit, and know the truth of his Word.
- ❖ The enemy is at work trying to seduce us with a counterfeit gospel.
- ❖ The evidence of abiding in Jesus is found in those who remain in with him and in line with the truth found in Scripture.

- ❖ Abiding in the Word of God enables us to have confidence and be unashamed as we cling to the truth of the gospel and our covenant relationship with God through the blood of Jesus.

Now that you've completed the 6-week *Abide* Bible study, spend time in prayer as a group. Ask God to enable you to apply what you have learned as you seek to abide in him with all your heart. It is our hope that as you grow in your understanding of what it means to abide in Christ, you will anchor yourself in his Word and trust his work both on the cross and in your fruitfulness today. As a believer, you are a new creation, and your life and value are only found as you abide in the worthy life of Christ. Apart from him you have nothing of value and are unable to produce anything of worth, but if you abide in his Holy Spirit, he will empower you to worship him through all the seasons of your life, while witnessing to the world around you and holding fast to the truth of the gospel as you eagerly wait for his glorious return.