

ABIDE IN CHRIST

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A Blessed New Year to all!

It has been a tradition for me to open my journals for the year and check out the key words and lessons that stood out in the four quarters of the year. Abide, together with wisdom, perseverance, endurance and faith have been several of my personal key words for the year.

Abide is the English translation of the Greek word *meno*. *Meno* in the Greek text means to dwell, remain, persevere and obey. It is a verb in the imperative form meaning— it is a command, an action that has to be done! As such, when Scripture tells us to abide, dwell, remain, the Lord commands those who believe and trust in Him to do and be it! It is a command, not an option! Abiding, being a command shows us that as believers, we are to abide not once, but always. **This makes abiding a daily thing as well!**

John 15 opens with Jesus introducing Himself as the True vine. He uses the metaphor of the vine and the branches to describe the relationship He has with Israel as His people and is true for us today. Jesus being the true vine is the only way the branches, his disciples, will grow and later bear fruit. The relationship of the vine to the branches shows us the importance of connectivity. The connection of the vine to the branches is descriptive of the relationship the Lord Jesus has to his followers. And this relationship is put to the forefront with the call to abide.

A. Abiding in Christ is the proof that we are for Christ (v.4).

The close knit connectivity with the true vine has its corresponding responsibility – to abide. Jesus calls on those who follow and trust in Him to abide. Jesus says “*Abide in me, and I in you*” (v.4a). This clearly shows us the command and the one who cradles the command to abide! Yes, the One who is in our lives, the Lord Jesus is the One who enables us to persevere in our abiding, obeying and remaining in Him. Truly, apart from

Him we can do nothing (v.5). It is in Christ’s eternal abiding, indwelling in us that allows us to obey, abide and remain in Him on a moment by moment basis. Thus, it is true, even our abiding and obeying is all by His grace. And the more amazing truth is, the more we desire to abide, the more we see the proof of God’s love and grace for He enables us to rise above any situation that may hinder or slacken our abiding.

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, John 14:15-16a

B. Abiding in Christ is the key to bearing much fruit for Christ (v.5).

Fruitfulness is God’s great desire for His beloved followers. He states this so clearly – that those who follow Him bear not some fruit, but MUCH fruit. John expresses the Lord’s purpose for His coming— *I came that they may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10)*. Yes, JESUS, the Good Shepherd came to give us the opportunity to have life in Him, eternally and abundantly. The word abundantly can also be translated as a superfluous, overflowing life that is extraordinary! This is the kind of life the Lord has for those who abide in Him... to live in Him abundantly. This extraordinary life that is for those who believe is lived in the disciples abiding.

When disciples of Jesus abide in Him, we experience growth in our Christian walk. Our abiding is the proof of our Christian journey. As we obey, we get to see more of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives and less of our old life. When we persevere in our abiding, we are sometimes given the opportunity to see and experience the fruit of ministry. We see growth in the lives of people we minister. But even if we don’t, we just know that we are one step closer to becoming like Christ, even if it is a lifelong journey. And personally, the greatest fruit of the ministry is when I am able to continue to joyfully serve the Master with all I am. And for that, I am

truly thankful for the privilege.

This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. 1 John 15:8

C. Abiding in Christ is the proof of our love for Christ (vv 9-10).

I love the Lord! This is a sweet declaration to the Lord, but a declaration that has full weight. While the world has trivialized “love”, we can never do this when the object of our love is the LORD. The unconditional love of the Lord towards mankind has led him to give his life for us that we may have the opportunity to enjoy life under His reign (John 3:16). And because of the cost of what His love is about, the Lord desires that our love of Him is expressed in our unconditional obedience to Him and His word.

The Lord Jesus calls us to abide and remain in His love. And the way to show our love of God is when we are continually abiding in His Holy Word. Yes, our obedience is the yardstick of our love of God. While this is exacting, the Lord does not leave us alone for He knows we cannot. We do not have the capacity to obey God everyday at every time on our own. But thanks be to God, we have the Holy Spirit of God who dwells in us to teach us, convict us of our sinfulness, empowers, reminds us about the teachings of Jesus (John 16). The Spirit’s indwelling in our hearts forever is our greatest assurance that He is always for us. That He will continually lead us to Himself and obey His commands. This is how the Lord wants for us to love Him.

In our loving God, we need to depend on God so that we may obey God!

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. 1 John 5:3

The call of the hour is for us to abide. The call to live abundantly in Christ is to abide in Him. Yes, we are to continually remain in the Lord even in the middle of our challenges. Abiding in Jesus allows us to show the state of our relationship with Him. Our abiding in Jesus is the key to bear much fruit for His glory and show Him our love as we obey His commands. ✱