

Abide in Christ

GOSPEL OF JOHN SUMMER SERIES

Proverbs 1:1-7, 6:20-23, 7:1-4, John 8:31-36

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One of the things that you see in the Gospel of John is that Jesus *turns up the pressure* about being His disciple. To follow Jesus, to be a Christian, or a disciple, is *serious business*. Jesus makes it clear that being His disciple is **not** one in name only; **nor** is His Church some sort of a club that you belong to; **nor** can you neglect His Word. The Christian faith is **not** a hobby. In various ways Jesus teaches us the seriousness of following Him.

In the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) Jesus teaches that we must *count the cost*, and *we must pick up our cross and follow Him*. He even warns us that not everyone who says “*Lord, Lord*” will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. In various ways, Jesus teaches the First Commandment: ***we are to fear, love, and trust in God above all things.***

In the Gospel of John, Jesus teaches us this same thing with the word “*abide*.” We are to *abide* in Christ and His Word.

Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, “If you *abide in My Word*, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31-32

Jesus uses the word “*abide*” to describe our relationship to Him and His Word. The word *abide* means to *remain and stay*; the word picture is that you *live and dwell there, that you make your home in God's Word*. It includes the ideas of *enduring and continuing* throughout your life. When you *abide in Christ and His Word*, you *live and move and have your being* in Christ and His Word.

You cannot be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ and neglect His Word. **Disciples of the Lord Jesus are biblically literate and doctrinally sound!** They are Baptized; and they are learning and obeying His Word!

Don't be a stranger to God's Holy Word; don't let it intimidate you, and certainly do not neglect it. God the Father has given you His Word for you to study throughout your life, God the Son Jesus Christ continues to teach you through Holy Scriptures; and God the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens your faith through the words of your Bible. *To abide in Christ means that you live and move and have your being in Him and His Word throughout your life!*

Later in the Gospel of John, Jesus returns to this image of abiding in Him and His Word.

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I AM the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. John 15:4-5

Our very life depends on Christ and His Word. When you make your home in Christ and learn His Word, you become fruitful in the Kingdom of God. Jesus shows us how serious this is when he says *without Me you can do nothing.* *To abide in Christ means that you live and move and have your being in Him and His Word throughout your life!*

In another place in the Gospel of John, Jesus teaches us that when we *abide in Him and study His Word*, we should focus on Him and His work of salvation.

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about Me John 5:39

The Holy Scriptures are Christ-centered --> in both the Old and the New Testaments. Everything is meant to draw our attention and focus to Jesus' perfect life and His sacrificial death on the cross. His resurrection from the dead confirms that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior of the world. We learn from Jesus that we do **not** study Scriptures primarily to learn life

lessons; the Bible is **not** a self-help study guide; the Word of God does **not** guide us in *community action, political involvement, nor social justice*. Rather, we study the Scriptures to learn more about Christ, His love for us, and the forgiveness of our sins. St Paul echoed Jesus' words in 1 Corinthians 15:

For I delivered to you as of **first importance** what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the Third Day in accordance with the Scriptures, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the center of everything in the Christian faith --> including Scriptures themselves. Jesus teaches us to *search the Scriptures because they bear witness about Me!*

Jesus commands us to “*search the Scriptures.*” That word search is present *active imperative*; it's a command that means that we are to search and keep on searching the Scriptures¹! That's what God's people do! Disciples of the Lord Jesus abide in the Word of God; they study it, they learn it, they memorize, they grow in understanding, they mature in their faith! *Search the Scriptures* is another way of saying abide in My Word. God's Will for you is that *you live and move and have your being in Christ and His Word throughout your life!*

But we fail ... don't we? Maybe you haven't searched the Scriptures in a long time; maybe your Bible reading and study is non-existent. Maybe you have neglected God's Word for a long time. If so then let God renew you! *The very thing you have neglected is the only thing that can help you!* The Gospel Good News of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His forgiveness, His love, and His gift of eternal life creates a burning desire within you. It creates a hunger and thirst for God's Holy Word. You belong to God in Christ -- and He gives His people a passion and desire to learn more and more about Him. it is only through the

¹ This is called a **Gospel imperative** (a Gospel “command”). Our love for God and others is always in response to His love for us; He initiates, and we respond. When God commands us to do something, like “Abide in Christ” or “Search the Scriptures”, His gives us the power to do so through faith in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. Our response to these Gospel commands is not done in fear, but rather in response to the Love of God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that you can *abide in Him* and *Search the Scriptures*²!

Abide in Him and *Search the Scriptures* are Jesus' words to encourage you to be more and more *Biblically literate and doctrinally sound*!

- ⇒ when you are *Biblically literate and doctrinally sound*, you are growing in your knowledge of Scripture and maturing in your faith.
- ⇒ when you are *Biblically literate and doctrinally sound*, you can recognize false doctrines and corrupt teachings; and you can defend yourself from the temptations of the devil and his depraved demons.
- ⇒ when you are *Biblically literate and doctrinally sound*, you have Christ and His Word as the solid rock in which you stand as you face the difficulties of life. Christ's Word and Promises empower you to patiently endure all hardship, pain and suffering.
- ⇒ when you are *Biblically literate and doctrinally sound*, you will have a Christ centered worldview, you will understand the times, and you will not be deceived nor seduced by the world and its ways.

Abide in Him and *Search the Scriptures* are sanctification words; they are part of your holy life in Christ! These are things that Christians do after they are declared righteous, forgiven, and holy through faith in Christ.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus turns up the heat on our sanctification. We are to *abide in Him and His Word*.

As a believer in Christ, you are to *learn, study, read, and even memorize* God's Holy Word! Make your home in the Word of God; live and move and have your being in the Holy Scriptures.

Abide in Christ, abide in His Word, and show yourself to be His disciple!

Amen!

² If you need a Bible, let me know and I will give you a Bible for free.