

# Abide in Christ

## Introduction:

Unless, as a follower of Jesus, you know where you stand with Holy God, you will be overwhelmed with guilt and avoid drawing near to Him. If you fail to understand your source of power for becoming like Christ, you will become frustrated and finally give up, or worse, you may just try to fake it. The core of the Christian life doesn't revolve around doing, but is grounded in being. Our focus is on Christ not on the performance of religious activities. The object of this lesson is to help you clearly understand what is meant by abiding in Christ and what you can and cannot do to make the character of Christ apparent in your daily life.

Scripture Focus: 1 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20; John 15:1-10

Scripture Memory: John 15:4-5

## A New Identity

When we trust Christ alone for our salvation we are **baptized** (immersed) by the Holy Spirit **into Christ**. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

### What does it mean to be in Christ?

From God's perspective, who is all knowing and unconstrained by time, it means we stand before Him in Jesus Christ's perfection. We are **justified**. In Christ our sin is washed away and will never be held against us. Likewise, in Christ, we obtain His righteousness. From God's perspective, our sin is removed, and replaced with the very essence of righteousness. When God looks at you, He sees the perfection of Jesus Christ and on that basis alone declares you to be His child forever.

However, when you examine your life, do you see perfection? Unlike our Heavenly Father, we have limited knowledge and are bound by time. We cannot see what we will become. All we see is what we have been and what we have become. We probably see some movement toward righteousness, and we hope that as time goes by we will continue to become more like Christ. Yet, we still fail to live truly holy lives. Our actions are not always righteous. Our motives are not always pure. We are in the process of being **sanctified**, but we are a long way from His perfection, power, and character.

We are told in 1 John 3:2 that when Jesus Christ appears we shall be like Him. That is, the process of sanctification will be complete. There will no longer be two perspectives. God's view of us in Christ, will correspond with our own view of ourselves. The question for us today is: How close can we get to Christ's likeness in our daily experience before He appears again?

- Is it possible that we can operate in the Power and Authority that belong to the Messiah, the King of Kings?
- Is it possible that we get nothing of what we have coming to us due to our self centeredness because we died in Christ and the life we now live is hidden in Him?
- What do you think? Can it be that our position in Him gives us the ability to, daily, live like Christ to a lost and dying world?

Read the following Scriptures and reflect on the answers to the above questions:

### **1 Corinthians 1:30**

*It is because of him that **you are in Christ Jesus**, who has become for us **wisdom** from God-- that is, our **righteousness, holiness and redemption**. (NIV)*

### **1 Corinthians 15:22**

*For as in Adam all die, so **in Christ all will be made alive**. (NIV)*

### **2 Corinthians 5:17**

*Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation**; the old has gone, the new has come! (NIV)*

### **Galatians 2:20**

*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. NIV*

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## **Galatians 3:28**

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for **you are all one in Christ Jesus.** (NIV) (No racial, social or gender differences – everyone in Christ is equal on every level with all the others who are in Christ.*

## **Ephesians 1:3**

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with **every spiritual blessing in Christ.** (NIV)*

## **Ephesians 2:10**

*For we are God's workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus to do good works,** which God prepared in advance for us to do. (NIV)*

## **Ephesians 4:32**

*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as **in Christ God forgave you.** (NIV)*

## **Philippians 3:9**

*and **be found in him,** not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ-- the righteousness that comes from God and is **by faith.** (NIV)*

## **Philippians 4:13**

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (NKJV)*

## **Colossians 1:27-29**

*To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.** We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I **labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.***

NIV

As Christians we have a new identity. We are no longer the same old self; so, why are we content to live less than we are? Why would we assume our old identity and experience frustration, discouragement, anxiety, unforgiveness, wrath, and defeat? Too many believers are simply taking Christ Jesus along for the ride. They are proceeding down the road of **their own hopes and dreams.**

How would you describe who you are? What is your identity?

We are identified by our character traits and beliefs, by our plans and activities, by our relationships and by our ability to influence others. The choices we make define us.

Too often, we view Jesus as our Co-Pilot. He is always there, just in case we need Him, but we usually make all the choices, interact with people and engage in activities without much thought about what Jesus wants us to decide, to whom and how He wants us to relate and what He wants us to do. However, He holds a position far greater than co-pilot. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! He is the center; we are the periphery. Our lives are to be hidden in His, not the other way around.

In this lesson, we are talking about abiding in Christ. That is, we live in Him and take on His identity. His character is expressed through us. We have the same relationships as He has. His plans and actions are carried out through those in whom He dwells.

How does one get into Christ?

According to the Bible (1 Corinthians 12:13), we are immersed into Christ by the Holy Spirit. We submit to this "baptism" by faith in Christ Jesus alone and as a result are justified before God.

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Galatians 3:11-14:

*Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles **through Christ Jesus**, so that **by faith** we might receive the promise of the Spirit.*  
(NIV)

Justification is an event. Once we have placed our trust in Jesus Christ alone for our salvation, we are forever in Christ. Faith is the key. We must believe in Him. Jesus' death and resurrection cleared the way for our justification, but individually, we must **believe in Him** to receive it. Living in a country whose money says "In God We Trust" is not sufficient to obtain it. Neither are being the child of believing parents, becoming a member of a church, nor behaving outwardly like a believer. Each of us must **be** a believer!

This word - **BELIEVE** - can be somewhat misleading. For example, I believe that George Washington was the first President of the United States of America. Since I wasn't there in person, I have to take it on FAITH that the history books are correct. I am TRUSTING my History teachers to have provided me with the facts. However, whether it is true or not has very little affect on me personally. It would not significantly change my life if Thomas Jefferson were really the first President. Likewise, we can BELIEVE that Jesus Christ died for our sins. We may TRUST the accuracy of this historical event as recorded in our Bibles. We may, by faith, BELIEVE the preachers and teachers who have told us the story of His death and resurrection. Yet still not be born again. This act of BELIEVING must extend beyond mere intellectual agreement.

**Simply understanding His death to have atoned for your sins is not sufficient to give you eternal life.**

There once was a tight rope walker who advertised throughout the region that he was going to walk across Niagara Falls on a rope. People came from miles around to watch this amazing feat. Before the acrobat began, he asked the people to raise their hands if they **believed** he could successfully walk across the Falls on his rope. Several raised their hands, but there were a number who evidently came to watch the man *fall into the Falls* because they did not **believe** that he could successfully *make the trip without tripping*. Nevertheless, the man began to walk across the raging water. Each step was sure and true. He made it across without a hitch. He then took a wheelbarrow, filled it with rocks, and steadied it on the rope. He asked again for a show of hands of all those who **believed** he could walk across the Falls pushing this loaded wheelbarrow. There were a few skeptics left, but many more people raised their hands. The man was highly skilled and the loaded wheelbarrow presented no apparent difficulties to him. Once again, he walked across almost effortlessly. On the other side, he turned and asked for a show of hands from all those who **believed** in his ability to successfully transport a loaded wheelbarrow across Niagara Falls. Everyone raised their hands; after all, they had seen it with their own eyes and SEEING IS BELIEVING - right? Then he asked another question of them. **"Who will get in the wheelbarrow and be my next**

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## load across the Falls?!?"

Only those who would get into the wheelbarrow truly **BELIEVED!** Likewise, only those who choose to place themselves in God's wheelbarrow can be transported from sin and death to eternal life. We must place our lives in His Hands and become completely dependent upon Jesus Christ alone for our salvation.

How does one reflect the character/identity of Christ?

### **Galatians 3:2-3**

*I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? (NIV)*

### **Colossians 2:6-7**

*So then, **just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. (NIV)***

Justification before God is to have our sinfulness replaced by the perfect righteousness of Christ. Through our faith in Christ's atoning death for sin, we are justified and God sees us as perfectly righteous in Christ. The process of conforming our character and actions into those that resemble Christ's is called sanctification. Another way of saying it is that it is the process of maturing in Christ. As we submit to His direction over us, we begin to take on His character and act and react as He would.

Justification is an event. Sanctification is a process. Sanctification is growing into Christ likeness. It literally means to become holy, set apart for the precise purposes for which God designed us. We are justified by faith. When we place our trust in Jesus Christ alone we are in Christ forever. Likewise, the process of becoming like Jesus, sanctification, occurs by faith. Our growth in Christ likeness depends on our willingness to trust Him. Just like we trusted Him to cleanse us from sin; we must continually trust Him with every step of our lives. By faith we walk in Him. This means we rely upon Him to make the decisions in our lives. We entrust our well being and that of those we love to His care. We place Him on the throne of our lives. When we live in trust, He expresses His character through us. Likewise through the believer, He uses His power and authority to carry out His mission and build relationships with those He is seeking. We are a part of His mission because we are in Him - we are ambassadors of reconciliation urging the world back to the Father.

The promises of God are assured in Christ. In Christ, means abiding in Him. Doing what He is doing in the same way He does it! **LIVING IN HIM!**

### **Abiding in Him and letting His Word abide in you**

John 15:1-10

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, and I will 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 a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.
6. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers;

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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 given you.

8. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9. "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.

10. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love.

(NIV)

The phrase abiding in Him suggests dwelling or living with Jesus. We have all experienced living with someone, and that there is a significant difference between that and merely visiting on occasion whenever you feel like it. When you abide or live with someone, your schedules, habits, idiosyncrasies, personalities, hopes, and dreams become intertwined. The intertwining is only accomplished by a willingness to change. Abiding in Christ, that is, living in Him is the same. You have no other place to go; you must include Him in every part of your life. You are one with Him; you in Him and He in you!

The following Scripture passages talk about abiding in Christ. They give us guidance showing us our responsibilities in the matter. They also tell us what Jesus has done and will continue to do and the promises that await us as we abide in Him. Read the following references and their contexts. In them you will find a list of:

- Your responsibilities
- Christ's responsibilities
- God's Promises

## John 6:56

56 Whoever **eats my flesh and drinks my blood** remains in me, and I in him.

(NIV)

## John 8:31-32

31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "**If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.**

32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (NIV)

## Romans 8:1

1 Therefore, there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus, (NIV)

## 1 Corinthians 1:30-31

30 It is because of him that **you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God-- that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.**

31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." (NIV)

## 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

17 Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is **a new creation**; the old has gone, the new has come!

18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (NIV)

## Galatians 5:22-23

But **the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes]** is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness, gentleness (meekness, humility), self-control (self-restraint). AMP

## Ephesians 2:10

10 For **we are God's workmanship**, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (NIV)

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## Colossians 1:27-29

27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

28 **We proclaim him**, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

29 To this end **I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.** (NIV)

## 1 John 2:24-29

24 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-- even 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. (NIV)

My Responsibilities	His Responsibilities	Promises
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spiritually feeding on the very substance of Christ. Drinking in the Essence of His Life and the atonement He made for me. That is, I hunger and thirst for righteousness and am filled.</li> <li>• Love God with every fiber of my being and let His love be expressed through me to everyone around me.</li> <li>• Live in His word. Build a close relationship with Him by communing with Him.</li> <li>• Worship Him. Live in awe of Him.</li> <li>• Rely on Him in every aspect of my life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• His Body was broken for me and His Blood was poured out to pay the penalty for sin and to bring new life.</li> <li>• He first loved me and continues to love others through me</li> <li>• He is the Word and He speaks His heart to me.</li> <li>• He is the Way and He leads me in it.</li> <li>• He is the Truth and He reveals Himself to me.</li> <li>• He is the Life which He freely gives to me eternally.</li> <li>• He lives in me and expresses Himself to others through me.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sins forgiven</li> <li>• New life; Eternal Life</li> <li>• Abiding with Jesus</li> <li>• Knowledge of the Truth</li> <li>• Freedom</li> <li>• Spiritual fruit - the character of Christ in me</li> <li>• Answered Prayer</li> <li>• Redemption, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and supernatural capability</li> <li>• Adoption as a child of God</li> </ul>

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1. Do you see fruit appearing in your character as a result of your abiding in Christ?  
(love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control)
  
2. What area of your life is difficult for you to release to Christ's control?  
(work, finances, family, free time, etc.)
  
3. How can you more fully abide in Christ?
  
4. Are you open to spending the time with Jesus necessary for building a close relationship with Him?