

a spiritual life development resource

# JUST HIM



# A B I D E

• get away with Jesus •



# JUST HIM

## learning to abide

Just Him. What comes to mind when you hear those two words? Quiet time with the Lord? An intimate relationship with Jesus? A life of simplicity? It's all these definitions and so much more. It is about abiding: being intentional, and the ongoing practice of the presence of Christ. This does not just happen; there is a cost to be counted. It doesn't happen through wishful thinking and momentary quietness; it is a lifestyle.

We live in a world full of voices constantly competing for our attention, and the loudest, most persistent voice wins. So, what has your focus? What is that lingering thought that keeps coming up during unguarded moments? When you don't have your devices nearby, you find yourself alone with a moment of no stimulation. What is your go-to attention grabber? Where do your thoughts tend to land? Is it physical, relational, financial, situational, or something else entirely?

Don't rush this question. Take a few moments to settle yourself. Take a deep breath. Be aware of your body and quiet your mind for a few moments. Allow yourself to linger in the silence and reflect on the following:

What seems to capture your attention?

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Whatever comes to mind, that is where you are abiding right now. Whatever has been revealed to you, God is pleased with your willingness to be open to the Holy Spirit.

If your ongoing mindset is on God, that is where you abide. If not, how do we open ourselves up to the Lord so that He is our first and ongoing thought? How do we abide in Christ?

# Abide

Generally, the word 'abide' means to remain or stay connected. However, the biblical idea of abiding has a much deeper meaning — it involves a close, lasting relationship with God through Christ. This concept is central to the Christian life, highlighting the importance of intentionally maintaining a connection to Jesus for growth and fruitfulness. To "live in" Christ is a constant awareness of Him, staying securely connected to His presence, and moving in harmony with His Spirit.

## Spirit – Soul - Body

We are tri-part beings – spirit, soul, and body. When we abide in Christ, it affects our entire being.

- We are spirit – the part of us that connects and communes with the Holy Spirit.

*"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith."* Ephesians 3:16-17

- We have a soul, which consists of our mind, will, and emotions.

*"Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."* Romans 12:2 When you say, "I want, I think, or I feel", that's your soul talking.

- We live in a body – *"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies."* 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

When we abide in Christ, we find greater intimacy with Him as our spirit yearns for deeper, ongoing communion with the Holy Spirit. We discover that our soul (mind, will, and emotions) bends toward the way of Christ – we think the thoughts of Christ, we want what He wants, and we feel what He feels. It begins through intentionality and becomes second nature to us.

## What Abiding is not...

To practice God's presence, one must unlearn the things the world teaches, what or the flesh promotes concerning satisfying the lust, to prove one's own worth. Therefore...

- Be aware when going on “auto-pilot”
- Do not take the smallest action without first feasting on Him.
- Live open-handedly, not demanding results or acknowledgment in the world’s variety of ways.
- Be satisfied with His presence and in all you do, may it be done simply for Him and not the outcome or to see His demonstration of power. Desire Him...just Him.

Which one of the above bullet points speaks most to you? Is there something else that compels and distracts you from the presence of God?

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## Where to Begin?

One of the best definitions of abide is found in the title of the spiritual classic *The Practice of the Presence of God*, by Brother Lawrence. Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection (1614-1691) was a lay Catholic brother who served at a Carmelite monastery in France. He was assigned a humble position in the kitchen, but his depth of faith and purity attracted many to him. He had a reputation for experiencing profound peace. Visitors came to seek spiritual guidance from him. He pursued God’s presence in everything, the everyday, even the mundane. He became respectfully known as the “Lord of the Pots and Pans” because of his godly life. The wisdom he passed on to others, through conversations and in letters, would later become the basis for the groundbreaking spiritual classic, *The Practice of the Presence of God*.

Brother Lawrence found the secret of abiding through the awareness of God’s presence in the everyday moments as stated in his book: “He does not ask much of us, merely a thought of Him from time to time, a little act of adoration, sometimes to ask for His grace, sometimes to offer Him your sufferings, at other times to thank Him for the graces, past and present, He has bestowed on you, in the midst of your troubles to take solace in Him as often as you can. Lift your heart to Him during your meals and in company; the least little remembrance will always be the most pleasing to Him. One need not cry out very loudly; He is nearer to us than we think.”

# In Him

*“For in him we live and move and have our being...” Acts 17:28*

What does it mean to “live in”? To move in, get comfortable, get settled; it is a feeling of being at home.

When we feel at home, there is a deep-seated sense that allows our true self to shine and a real sense of being known and loved. There are postures we take when we are home that we may not take anywhere else. The same is true of the posture we take when we abide or live in Him. Certainly, these postures can be taken literally, but also spiritually. Which one(s) call out to your soul today?

## The Six Postures of Abiding

### 1. Seeking

The Lord replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. (Exodus 33:14-15) Step back and ask yourself, “What brings me unrest and what brings me peace?” Journal your response.

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### 2. Walking

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25) When two people walk together, if they want to have a conversation, they must keep in rhythm with one another to carry on the conversation. There is discomfort if one moves ahead or lags. When have (or do) you feel out of step with the Lord?

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### 3. Sitting

She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, *"you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."* Luke 10:30-42

The posture of sitting is an act of remaining in one place, settling down, resting. Consider what would happen if you stopped trying and just sat still for a while. Does that feel comfortable, or is being non-productive difficult for you? Can you "be"?

"Be still and know that I am God..."

"Be still and know that I am..."

"Be still and know..."

"Be still..."

"Be..."

Take a moment and "be".

### 4. Setting

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:1-3)*

Sitting still in body, mind, and soul can be quite challenging. It is essential to give yourself grace as you attempt to practice stillness. Remember, this is not an instantaneous rhythm. It may take many tries and longer than you anticipate.

There comes a point when your mind is no longer occupied with the many voices of distraction. Many voices become quiet and, in the sitting, the voice that remains is that of the Holy Spirit. "Sitting" shifts to centering on "setting" as mentioned in the Scripture above. There is a desire that swells within to "set your mind on things above." This is the ushering in of a life of abiding in Christ.

Setting your minds on things above takes intentionality. During your time of “setting”, every time your mind starts to wander, take note of what is happening and gently bring your thoughts back to Him. Do this as often as necessary without self-judgment. Keep in mind that the Lord delights in the intention of your heart.

Now, take some time to set your mind on Jesus.

## 5. Dwelling

*Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. (Psalm 91:1)*

One definition of “dwell” is to live in a particular way. If you:

- Seek God’s presence,
- walk in His ways,
- allow yourself to spend time in His presence or sit in His presence,
- settle into or desire more of His presence...

Your mind, will, and emotions will begin to bend toward the way of Christ.

Give yourself grace and patience as this process of abiding takes place. This continued awakening of the Holy Spirit in your inmost being is a journey, not a quick trip.

## 6. Remaining

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. *“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.”* John 15:4-5

The Message paraphrase puts it like this:

*“Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can’t bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can’t bear fruit unless you are joined with me. “I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you’re joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can’t produce a thing.”*

“Remaining” manifests in growth, spiritual growth, which is apparent by the appearance of the Fruit of the Spirit. “But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of



fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

Do you see the fruit of your "remaining" in Him?

Journal your reflections.

## Prayer

Now, O Lord,

*calm me into a quietness that heals and listens,  
and molds my longings and passions,  
my wounds and wonderings into a more holy  
and human shape.*

*Amen.*

Ted Loder





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