

ABIDING

Read **I John 4:13-15**:

13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

Verse 13: *By this we know* John opens verse 13 with certainty, but not only here, it's all throughout I John.

10 other times we see similar phrasing in I John.

2:3 - By this we know that we have come to know him...

2:5b - By this we may know that we are in him...

3:10 - By this it is evident who are the children of God...

3:14 - We know that we have passed out of death into life...

3:19 - By this we shall know that we are of the truth...

3:24b - By this we know that he abides in us...

4:2 - By this you know the Spirit of God...

4:6b - By this we know the spirit of truth...

5:2 - By this we know that we love the children of God...

5:13 – *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.*

John's chief concern is to transfer his unwavering certainty of our abiding in God and he wants to tell us how.

The question everyone needs to answer before you leave here is, "Do I know for sure that God abides in me?"

The result in our knowing God abides in us and us in God will produce in us a Godly assurance.

But let's look at the word here *abide*. Here the English word, *abide* is translated from the Greek word "Meno." In other places it has been translated *continue, endure, stand, dwell, remain, and stay*...All of which contain a passage of time to it. We will be looking at "abide" in different instances and hopefully will find a better fitting English word that is more understandable for us.

Let's look at **I John 4:13** again but rearrange its wording: *because he has given us of his Spirit, by this we know that we abide in him and he [abides] in us,*

Now if you just sat down at Kaladi's and decided to read over I John (which I recommend everyone do), your mind would have recalled a similar statement. Just one chapter earlier in **I John 3:24b** it says, *And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.* So here we see it the second time, John repeating his certainty...that if Holy Spirit is in your heart he will confirm his abiding within you.

It's important to know that as we study this passage today, John loves repetition. Many times he will use this phrase abiding, some will be worded slightly different to shed new light, some will just be rearranged but saying the same thing. John is just a patient simple teacher, reminding us, the forgetful reader that we can comprehend these difficult subjects. I see it as him giving us a bedtime story (not in the sense of fairytales), but along the lines of his language and simplicity. Numerous time he refers to the recipients as "little children." He doesn't want there to be any confusion in our understanding of God abiding in us and he'll say it as many times as necessary to transfer his same confidence to you.

Let's keep reading on. Verse 14, *And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world*

John has seen him, eaten with him, followed him, seen his miracles, laughed with him, saw him at his transfiguration, watched him die, and saw him rise again. He knows this Jesus intimately who years earlier said to him, *Abide in Me, and I in you...* **John 15:4** Who better to trust in our search for the connection to God. This is the Jesus he tells us about that was sent to be the Savior of the world. Continuing on,

Verse 15 *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.*

One question should be on our hearts after reading verse 15: What is the significance of confessing, since it seemed to open the door to God abiding with us and us in God?

Thankfully, John again uses repetition on this matter one chapter later to help explain. **I John 5:13:** *I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.* This time instead of using confess, he inserts believe. I believe these two accounts to be the same person. The person who confesses Jesus is the Son of God and the person who believes in the name of the Son of God are the same person. The result: God's abiding in him/having eternal life. Where else do we see this teaching?

Paul writes about confessing and believing in **Romans 10:9** *If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Confession is just the outward expression of the inward reality. It is a natural flow from the heart of one who has true belief in Jesus to speak openly about it.

Also in **Eph 1:13, 14** Paul writes: *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*

It's our confession from the internal belief that we have that seals us with the Holy Spirit – Thus God abiding in us. So when read this again, this time let's insert another English word that we are more familiar with...

Verse 15 *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God.*

But this only half of the equation. What about us abiding in God?

Let's look back in verse 13: *By this we know that we abide in him and he in us...*

Verse 15 *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God.*

This phrase (us abiding in God) is used more frequently in John's letter:

2:24 – *If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father.*

2:27 – Concerning what you learned he commands us to “abide in him”

2:28 – The command to abide in him is the very means of confidence when we face Christ in the next life.

But it's not until **I John 3:24** that we gain new insight as to what this could be. John writes: *Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him.*

Our abiding in him is to say we are keeping his commandments. Flipping that, when we continue to uphold the standard he desires for us to live, we remain, continue, and abide in Him!

3 Things to remember when considering your abiding in God.

1. The issue of abiding in him is an issue of connectedness.

-John 15:5 *I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.*

When we abide in Christ, we are remaining connected to Him. The result? Works? NO...FRUIT! It's like in Phil message last week. Many were the acts of those miracle workers, but Jesus said "Depart from me..." A scary thing to hear, but these works began from a void. They were not fruit. Here's the distinction...

Illustration: There is a profound difference when comparing a chair manufacturer and its chairs (much like the ones you are sitting on now) and the tree and its fruit. Whereas a product is manufactured and has little relation to its manufacturer, the fruit is the tree. It is intimately connected!

How powerful is this image for us! Do you struggle to be loving? Do you struggle to be kind? Do you struggle to be understanding? Is it because we have depended on our own charitable works rather than remaining connected to the True Vine all love, kindness, and understanding? Jesus said, I AM THE VINE AND YOU ARE THE BRANCHES!!! Leave the responsibility to ME to grow the fruit in your life, you worry about remaining connected to me!

The second thing to remember concerning our abiding in God is this...

2. God's commands are not burdensome to those whom God abides within.

Even though one still feels the pull of sin and may even be enticed to pursue it, one will begin to say with the Apostle John, *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.* **I John 5:3**

God's commands to those who have the Spirit within should have a drawing to obey. "Lord, above all else, I desire to honor you with my life and my time." We may be allured by something, but in the end, it will get easier to obey God because of our desire to please Him. Our love for him grows and our distaste for what displeases Him grows correspondingly!

3. Even if we disobey, repentance confirms our abiding in him and God's abiding in us.

I John 3:6 *No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.*

The biggest problem isn't that we have sin after we encounter Christ, it's that many don't return after they've wandered off in sin. Some leave the church never to return, but it shows the reality of their heart.

But just because we sit here today, doesn't put us in anymore of a favorable position before God. God won't say, you went to church, "Good job." It could just be another work we are trying to produce. There may be some of you here today that are drowning in your sin. People ask you every week, "How are you doing," and you're crying out for help, but you reply with, "Good." Abiding in God is a distant memory and you wonder if it ever happened. God is calling you to turn from your sin and return to Him. He's calling you to reconnect to Him in faith as the Son of God.

Conclusion: Brothers and sisters, God's message for you today is this: Do you know for certain that God abides within you? Do you remember when you confessed to God your belief in Him? Do you remember when He came into your life and changed you? Does your lifestyle and obedience reaffirm this? Are you more connected to Christ than ever before? Have his commands become less burdensome? Has your life been marked with repentance and brokenness after sinning? If God is leading you this morning to get something right in your life, don't ignore it, I invite you to pray with me.