
Learning to Abide in Christ

1. God looks for fruit in the lives of His children

John 15:1-8 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. (NKJV)

- **God expects *fruit*. He is actively involved in your life to create the circumstances and conditions which contribute to fruit bearing.**
- **God expects *more* fruit**
- **God expects *much* fruit**
- **God expects your fruit to *remain***

2. Fruit-bearing is all about our relationship with Jesus Christ.

The key to bearing spiritual fruit is found in your relationship with Christ.

The key to your relationship with Christ is found in abiding in Christ

There is one word in John 15 that describes the relationship necessary to produce the fruitfulness that God expects in our lives: *ABIDE* in Him. It is our responsibility. God is active in pruning. We are active in abiding.

- **John 15:4 is Translated:**

John 15:4 "*Abide in Me, and I in you**. Just as the branch is not able to be bearing fruit by itself unless it shall be abiding in the vine, so neither you*, unless you* shall be abiding in Me. (ALT)

John 15:4 *Be in me at all times* as I am in you. As the branch is not able to give fruit of itself, if it is not still on the vine, so you are not able to do so if you are not in me. (BBE)

John 15:4 *Stay joined to me, and I will stay joined to you.* Just as a branch cannot produce fruit unless it stays joined to the vine, you cannot produce fruit unless you stay joined to me. (CEV)

John 15:4 *Remain united to me, and I will remain united to you.* A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; it can do so only if it remains in the vine. In the same way you cannot bear fruit unless you remain in me. (GNB)

John 15:4 *"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. (MSG)

John 15:4 *Continue in me,* and let me continue in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself--that is, if it does not continue in the vine--so neither can you if you do not continue in me. (WNT)

To abide means to stay in a given place, state, relation or expectancy.

The Greek word for abide is “meno”. The definition for “meno” is: to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy). Through studying each facet of this word we shall come to a clear understanding of the meaning of abiding in Christ.

Abide Means to stay in a Given Place – In Christ

Fourteen times in the book of Ephesians (NIV) we are said to be “in Christ,” one of the most significant doctrines in the New Testament. Because I have been grafted into Christ the following is now true of me:

- **I have been crucified with Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 2:20)**
 - **I have died with Christ**
 - **I was buried with Christ**
 - **I have been resurrected with Christ (Colossians 2:12)**
 - **I am ascended with Christ and am now seated with him in heavenly places. (Ephesians 1:18-23; 2:4-7)**
 - **Now we are challenged to draw on Christ as our life in our day-to-day living. (Colossians 3:1-4)**
1. **First, you need to determine if you are “in Christ”. Then you need to “meno” – stay in that place in Christ. As you are pruned, you have opportunity to develop MORE FRUIT. As you abide you will honor the Father with FRUIT THAT REMAINS. The challenges of life (pruning to produce more fruit) require you to “meno” more and more, thereby developing the fruit of the Spirit in your life.**

The danger lies in our unwillingness to “meno” – to stay in that given place – in Christ. Both John 15 and Romans 11 refer to those who are in Christ, who have made the decision to believe, who are later cut away. They are removed because of **unbelief** and **fruitlessness**.

2. **Unbelief. Unbelief differs from doubt. Doubt *can not* believe. It needs more information. Unbelief *will not* believe regardless how much valid information it has acquired.**

Example: "Doubting" Thomas was not "unbelief" Thomas. His teacher and best friend was just arrested, sentenced to death, scourged to within an inch of his life, publicly executed on a Roman cross, confirmed dead, buried and sealed in a tomb which was under Roman guard. Now, while Thomas is out of the room his other friends say, "He is not dead. He was just here with us." "Did you let him in through the door?" "No, he waked through the wall." "Sure! Listen, when I see him and put my finders into the nail holes in his hands and my hand into the slice on his side – Ill believe it."

As you grow in your knowledge of God and his word you will be blessed as you apply faith without demanding evidence.

John 20:28-29 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (from New International Version)

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (from New International Version)

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (from New International Version)

James 4:17 Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins. (from New International Version)

Unbelief doesn't believe. It demands proof from God all the time. It places God on trial, and, doesn't believe God and his word, no matter how much evidence is given.

Unbelief and fruitlessness are related. When you entertain unbelief you will see a reduction in your fruitfulness. Likewise, when you see less and less fruit in your life, you will find it easier to entertain unbelief.

Unbelief. Greek "apeitheia" (ap-i'-thi-ah); (obstinate and rebellious): disbelief --, "the condition of being unpersuadable" (a, negative, peitho, "to persuade"), denotes "obstinacy, obstinate rejection of the will of God"; hence "disobedience"

Ephesians 2:2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are *disobedient*. (from New International Version)

Ephesians 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are *disobedient*. (from New International Version)

You can see apatheia in operation in the following scriptures:

Hebrews 4:4-11 For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work." 5 And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest." 6 It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, *because of their disobedience*. 7 Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before: "Today, if you hear his voice, *do not harden your hearts*." 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. 9 There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10 for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. 11 Let us, therefore, **make every effort to enter that rest**, so that no one will *fall by following their example of disobedience*. (from New International Version)

Mark 16:11-14 When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, *they did not believe it*. 12 Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. 13 These returned and reported it to the rest; but *they did not believe them* either. 14 Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; *he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe* those who had seen him after he had risen. (from New International Version)

It becomes rather obvious how those who have believed in Christ, and who have been grafted into the vine have become apathetic toward their faith in God and his Word. They disobey him, produce no fruit, and are cut away by the Father and tossed into the fire.

3. The other reason believers are cut away is because of fruitlessness (Romans 11).

Fruit-*less*-ness, like fruit-*full*-ness is a progression.

Jude 12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; KJV

- **Fruit withers**
- **Fruit gone**
- **Twice dead (another season or possibly two, passes by fruitless).**
- **Plucked up**

Luke 13:6-9 Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. 7 So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' 8 "'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. 9 If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'" (from New International Version)