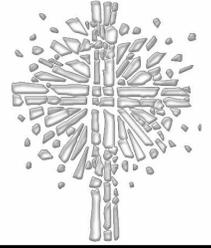




john 15:4 Abide in ME



Bible studies for disciples who make disciples

Loudonville Community Church

Volume 1 - Number 23
The week of April 17, 2016

Changing the World Through Discipleship Matthew 28:19; 2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:6-7

THIS WEEK'S CORE STATEMENT

Constant Abiding: Disciples of Jesus Christ must abide in Christ in order to be faithful to Him and to bear fruit for Him.

Dr. Sinclair B. Ferguson is a distinguished visiting professor of systematic theology at Westminster Theological Seminary and former senior minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC. The following passage is an excerpt from his book, *In Christ Alone* and speaks directly to our need to abide in Christ.

The exhortation to “abide” has been frequently misunderstood, as though it were a special, mystical, and indefinable experience. But Jesus makes clear that it actually involves a number of concrete realities.

First, union with our Lord depends on His grace. Of course we are actively and personally united to Christ by faith (John 14:12). But faith itself is rooted in the activity of God. It is the Father who, as the divine Gardener, has grafted us into Christ. It is Christ, by His Word, who has cleansed us to fit us for union with Himself (15:3). All is sovereign, all is of grace.

Second, union with Christ means being obedient to Him. Abiding involves our response to the teaching of Jesus: “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you ...” (John 15:7a). Paul echoes this idea in Colossians 3:16, where he writes, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,” a statement closely related to his parallel exhortation in Ephesians 5:18: “be filled with the Spirit.”

In a nutshell, abiding in Christ means allowing His Word to fill our minds, direct our wills, and transform our affections. In other words, our relationship to Christ is intimately connected to what we do with our Bibles! Then, of course, as Christ’s Word dwells in us and the Spirit fills us, we will begin to pray in a way consistent with the will of God and discover the truth of our Lord’s often misapplied promise: “You will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7b).

Third, Christ underlines a further principle, “Abide in My love” (15:9), and states very clearly what this implies: the believer rests his or her life on the love of Christ (the love of the One who lays down His life for His friends, v. 13). This love has been proved to us in the cross of Christ. We must never allow ourselves to drift from daily contemplation of the cross as the irrefutable demonstration of that love, or from dependence on the Spirit who sheds it abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5:5). Furthermore, remaining in Christ’s love comes to a very concrete expression: simple obedience rendered to Him is the fruit and evidence of love for Him (John 15:10–14).

Finally, we are called, as part of the abiding process, to submit to the pruning knife of God in the providences by which He cuts away all disloyalty and sometimes all that is unimportant, in order that we might remain in Christ all the more wholeheartedly.

... abiding in Christ means allowing His Word to fill our minds, direct our wills, and transform our affections.

It is our hope, that the LCC Growth Groups and our emphasis on Bible study within a small community will enable us to continue to experience new depths in abiding in Jesus as the people of God at LCC!

This Week's Complementary Passage

John 15:1-17 (ESV)

¹ "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 does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ 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. ⁵ 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. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

¹² "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

Marking Guide for Acts (not all words occur in the passage)

appointed

baptized

Caesar

enemy/demons/Satan

eternal life

fathers & children [in one color
different from Moses]

Gentiles

gospel

grace

Holy Spirit

in the name of Jesus Christ

Jesus

Jews

Law (of Moses)

men of the council

Moses [in different color from
fathers & children]

prayer

repent (repentance)

resurrection (raised up)

salvation

suffering

the Way

the promise of the Father

witnesses

word of God

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STEP ONE . . .

READING what the passage says
(*Read it at least three times*)

Matthew 28:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 2:2 (ESV)

² And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

1 Thessalonians 2:6-7 (ESV)

⁶ Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. ⁷ But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.

STEP TWO . . .

OBSERVING how the passage moves

Return to the passage and **Mark key words, phrases and movements:**

- Circle all of the words in this passage that speak of the Triune God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit, etc.).
- Underline the significant verbs/action words in this passage.
- In Matthew 28:19, underline the words/phrases "Go," "make disciples," and "baptizing."
- In 2 Timothy 2:2, underline the words/phrases "what you have heard," "presence of many witnesses," "entrust to faithful men," and "who will be able to teach."
- In 1 Thessalonians 2:6, underline the words/phrases "Nor did we seek glory from people," and "we could have made demands as apostles of Christ."
- Highlight 1 Thessalonians 2:7.

STEP THREE . . .

Ask the five “W” questions and the one “H” question:

1. **WHO** is speaking? Who is this about? Who are the main characters? And, to **whom** is it speaking?
2. **WHAT** is the subject of the passage? What does the passage say about the subject?
3. **WHEN** do or will the events occur? When did something happen to a particular person, people, or nation?
4. **WHERE** did or will this happen?
5. **WHY** is something said or mentioned? Why would or will this happen? Why at this time? Why this person?
6. **HOW** will it happen? How is it to be done? How is it illustrated?

STEP FOUR . . .

UNDERSTANDING what the passage means

This commentary is intended to enhance your own study of the text.

Commentary on Matthew 28:19 (ESV)

28:19 - “Go.” “Going” may be the most accurate translation of this Greek participle. All Christians are commanded to be lifestyle witnesses. It is a priority. This is the Great Commission—not the Great Option.

“Make disciples.” The term “disciples” means “learners.” The Bible does not emphasize decisions, but lifestyle faith. The key to evangelism is discipleship. However, discipleship must start with a repentant faith profession and continue in the same way unto obedience and perseverance.

“Of all nations.” This must have been a shocking statement to the Jews, but it follows Daniel 7:14 which speaks of a universal, eternal kingdom (see Revelation 5). Notice the number of times that the inclusive “all” appears in this paragraph.

“Baptizing them.” This command is balanced with “teach” (v. 20). The two purposes of the Church are evangelism and discipleship. They are two sides of one coin. They cannot and must not be separated!

“In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Notice “in the name” is singular. The name of God is Triune.

Commentary on 2 Timothy 2:2 (ESV)

2:2 - “And what you have heard from me.” Timothy is to pass on Paul’s apostolic teachings, not his own personal opinions or theories.

“In the presence of many witnesses.” This seems to refer to those who heard Paul preach and teach when Timothy was present. Timothy is to emulate Paul in every area!

“Entrust to faithful men.” This is the Greek noun *pistis* translated into English as “faith,” “belief” or “trust.” Here it is used as an adjective, *pistos*, in the Old Testament sense of trustworthy, faithful, hopefully discerning potential church leaders. This is the principle of delegation and multiplication. Jesus spent His time on a select few so as to reach many through them.

Commentary on 1 Thessalonians 2:6-7 (ESV)

2:6 - “Though we could have made demands.” Literally, this translated phrase means “with weight.” The intended meaning could be demands in terms of apostolic authority; apostolic honor; or financial compensation.

“As apostles of Christ.” This includes Silas and Timothy. This illustrates the wider use of the term apostles. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11, “apostles” are mentioned as an ongoing spiritual gift in the church. Some examples are: Barnabas; Andronicus and Junias; Apollos; and James the Just. It is uncertain to what aspect of ministry this ongoing gift relates: church planting; evangelism; area leadership; or it may be linked to prophets, evangelists, and pastors/teachers in Ephesians 4:11, all of whom proclaim the gospel with differing emphases.

2:7 - “But we were gentle among you.” Some commentators believe Paul spoke to the Thessalonians in baby language so they could understand. Paul uses parental language in verses. He saw himself as their spiritual parent.

“Like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.” This phrase literally means “to warm” and was commonly used of mother birds “warming” their young. It was a metaphor for breast feeding. Paul, like Jesus (Matthew 23:37), describes his love for them in nurturing terms.

Resource for Commentary: Robert James Utley’s *Study Guide Commentary Series* from Logos software

STEP FIVE . . .

SUMMARIZING the message
No summary this week.

STEP SIX . . .

EXPLORING the passage through discussion

1. If you could summarize the sermon in one sentence for group members who didn't hear it, what would you say?
2. Mark Twain defined education as "that which remains after you've forgotten all you've been taught." Write one thing that has remained with you from the sermon.
3. What insight, principle, or observation from Phil Downer's sermon did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Please explain your answer.
4. Can you share something from your personal experience that illustrates the positive results of heeding the message or the painful consequences of disregarding the truths of the message?
5. What personal need(s) did this message reveal to you?
6. How does this message apply to us corporately as an LCC Growth Group?

STEP SEVEN . . .

APPLYING the passage to my life
Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the Word but doers ~ James 1:22

You're encouraged to journal your answers to the following questions in order to apply what you've learned this week.

1. How is God making Himself known to you?
2. What is going on beneath the surface of your life that Jesus is trying to change?
3. How is God calling you to serve your family, community, and world?

This Week's Memory Verse

⁷But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.

I Thessalonians 2:7 (ESV)

THE MISSION OF LOUDONVILLE COMMUNITY CHURCH

We are committed to reaching and teaching people to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ, connecting them to one another and sending them to serve their families, communities and world.

10 CORE BELIEFS OF A DISCIPLE

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

The Godhead *2 Corinthians 13:14*

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Deity and Sinlessness of Christ *Colossians 2:9*

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life.

The Sufficient Atonement of Christ *2 Corinthians 5:19-21*

We believe in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood.

The Resurrection and Return of Christ *Acts 1:3, 9-11*

We believe in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential and that a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit *John 14:16*

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

Unity in Christ *Ephesians 2:14-17*

We believe in the spiritual unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eternity *Revelation 21:22-27*

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

We believe that everything we have or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES OF A DISCIPLE

Undiluted Worship *Matthew 22:37-40*

Loving the Lord God with all of our physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual vigor and, my neighbor as myself.

Constant Abiding *John 15:1-11*

Abiding in Christ in order to be faithful and bear fruit.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

Reading the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for daily life.

Desperate Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

Praying to God to know Him, laying requests before Him and, finding direction for daily life.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

Fellowshipping with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, other people's lives and, in the world.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

Using my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Total Forgiveness *Ephesians 4:30*

Practicing forgiving others as God has forgiven me in Christ.

Tangible Compassion *Matthew 25:31-46*

Showing compassion to those in need and so minister to Jesus Himself.

Generous Giving *2 Corinthians 8:7*

Giving away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

God Space *Ephesians 6:19-20*

Increasing the quantity and quality of our gospel conversations.

10 CORE VIRTUES OF A DISCIPLE

Love - a sincere affection for others *1 John 4:10-12*

Love is acting in someone else's interest no matter who they may be, no matter how you feel, and no matter what it costs.

Joy - a delight unaffected by circumstances *John 15:11*

An inner delight in God that is sustained in spite of the changing seasons of life.

Peace - an abiding sense of harmony *Philippians 4:6-7*

Relationships are free from friction. Positively, it describes harmonious relations with others in the church.

Patience - a willingness to stick with things *Proverbs 3:3-4*

Being willing to live with a difficult situation for a long time—even if things are slow to change or never change.

Kindness - a sense of compassion in the heart *Job 6:14*

An inner disposition that puts others at ease and out of which kind actions flow.

Goodness - a goodness that flows outwardly *1 Thess. 5:15*

Choosing to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Faithfulness - an unwavering loyalty *Psalm 26:3*

Being the kind of people who keep our word to one another.

Gentleness/Humility - an attitude of humility without any entitlement; a lack of self-awareness *Philippians 4:5; 2:3-4*

Gentleness is power and strength under God's control.

Humility is considering others above myself, if I consider myself at all.

Self-Control - an ability to direct your energy wisely

Titus 2:11-13

The strength to restrain our desires, emotions, and actions has to come from within rather than from some outside source.

Hope - a certainty of what is to come *Hebrews 6:19-20*

Coping with the hardships of life and with death because of hope in Christ.

Each week this Bible Study will feature either a core belief, practice or virtue vital for growing disciples.

#OTin52

(52 weeks through the Old Testament)

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE READING IN A YEAR

Monday, April 17 thru Saturday, April 24

Judges 14-17, 18-19, 20-21, Ruth 1-4, 1 Samuel 1-3, 4-7

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