

Intimacy with God

Lesson #2: Maintaining the Spirit of Intimacy

I. Introduction

II. We maintain intimacy with God by abiding

See John 15

A. The Vine

1. The vine is the initiator and sustainer of all life (physical or spiritual) (verse 1). The vine is the source of everything. It's the ultimate cause, the prevailing life giver, the provider of all needs. Everything the branch produces comes from the life of the vine. The branch initiates nothing. We didn't choose Him, He chose us (verse 16).
2. Christ as the Vine is sovereign – He is in control!
"God is the infinite and perfect Spirit in whom all things have their source, support and end." (A.H. Strong)
3. Christ as the vine is sufficient – He is enough!
El Shaddai might also be translated, the God who is enough! And, if Christ as the vine is enough, I shall not want. Consider Psalm 23.

A holy partnership exists between the vine and his branches. The Vine provides the resources for victorious Christian living. The Branch depicts the believer's responsibilities for victorious Christian living.

B. The Branches

1. The branch must remain connected – The Bible calls this abiding.
 - a. "Abiding" ("meno") means to remain, to stay connected moment by moment day by day. It's an issue of practice, not position. It's the idea of remaining in His "orbit" for you. It infers a mystical element of inner unity.
 - b. "Dependent" – The Branch is totally dependent upon the vine for resources to bear fruit. There is a connection. The maintenance of that connection is the responsibility of the believer. It's either an active, constant relationship or a dried-up fruitless one.
2. The branch must be pruned – The Bible calls this discipline.
Some principles involved in pruning:

- a. It's a mark of identification: God only prunes (chastens) His own kids! Proverbs 3:11-12, Rev. 3:19, Hebrews 12:5-8
- b. It is the motivation for growth: The purpose of pruning (Hebrews 12:10) is "That we might be partakers of His righteousness."
- c. It is a means to produce fruit. Lev. 25:3

C. The Fruit

1. Leaves, shade and beauty are not the purpose of the branch – it's the fruit!

The condition of abiding, of remaining vitally connected to the vine has one single purpose – produce fruit!

2. The nature of this fruit

- a. Quintessentially, fruit is spiritual in nature.
- b. Quantitatively, fruit has a great deal of variety.

Producing fruit in the life of the believer is meant to be: Progressive and continuous.

- John 15:16 – "go and bring forth fruit" – Keep on bearing fruit.
- Galatians 4:19 – "...until Christ be formed in you." We're to produce fruit in all periods of our lives.
- 2 Peter 3:18 – But grow in grace...
- Psalm 92:13-14 – "Those that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit and old age..." Branches are meant to produce and even greater quantity of fruit.
* The principle is not mere fruit, but more fruit...much fruit (John 15:2-8).
- Matthew 13:8 – "But other fell into good ground and brought forth fruit – some a hundred fold, some sixty fold, and some 3 fold."

- c. Qualitatively, there are conditions to fruit-bearing:

- 1) Sometimes there is a "death" that must take place. John 12:24 – "...but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."
- 2) There must be a constant application of water. See Psalm 1:3, John 4:10, Rev. 22:1-2, Eph. 5:26

3. Fruit is not optional in the life of the believer!

- a. Bearing fruit is the natural, normal result of abiding. Connected, watered, pruned branches bear fruit!
- b. If there isn't fruit, there is judgment. Matt. 3:10, Heb. 6:8

III. We maintain intimacy with God by walking in the Spirit

A. The Holy Spirit fosters our abiding See John 15:26, 16:13-14

John 14:16 – Christ promised another helper – another of the same kind.

“To make possible a continuance of the intimacy with Him that they had enjoyed”
(Enjoying Intimacy with God, p. 73)

B. Walking in the Spirit

Gal. 5:16-17, 25

1. This is “ordinary walking around.” It’s the normal everyday activities in the constant awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Habitually order your lifestyle thru the Spirits guidance, and then you will not be deflected by the desires of the flesh, from a walk in fellowship with God.” (Sanders, p. 80)

2. This is also a “measured walk” – Marching in line, step by step. It’s an issue of “walking after the flesh” or “walking after the spirit”

After the flesh		After the spirit	
Gross physical sins:	Sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery	With reference to experience:	Love, joy and peace
Occult practices:	Idolatry, witchcraft	With reference to conduct:	Patience, kindness, and goodness
Evil dispositions:	Hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage	With reference to character:	Faithfulness, gentleness and self-control
Religious disunity:	Selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy		
Sensual indulgence:	Drunkenness, orgies, and the like		

IV. So how are you doing with your “abiding” and “walking”? We can’t be intimate with God without it!

Discussion Questions:

1. How easy is it for you to remain totally dependent on the Lord?
2. Specifically, what does “abiding” look like in your life?