

# ABIDE IN CHRIST

→ the in-depth study



Prepared for The Navigators by Staff Development and Care

## ABIDE IN CHRIST → THE IN-DEPTH STUDY

The heart of our national strategy lies in a God-sized goal of **one million multiplying disciplemakers living and discipling together among the lost by 2030** and three Faith Initiatives: **Abide**, **Ignite**, and **Multiply**. The success of this strategy hinges on abiding deeper in Christ, for apart from Him we can do nothing (John 15:5).

**OBJECTIVE:** To grow deeper in our dependence on Jesus and His Word—as individuals, in community, and on an organizational level—resulting in biblical fruitfulness

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** Staff will be able to:

1. Define “abiding in Christ” and support it from Scripture.
2. Describe the role and relationship of the Father, Jesus, and the believer in abiding.
3. Explain the connection between abiding in Christ, our fruitfulness, prayer life, discipleship, joy, community and glorifying God.
4. Establish stronger practices of abiding in Christ which deepen our dependence on Jesus and His Word.

### **BIBLE STUDY:**

1. Read and meditate on John 15:1-17 in your favorite version.
2. Read it in two or three other versions.
3. Highlight key words and phrases, look up word definitions, link related thoughts (use the attached study guide as desired).
4. Look up related cross-references (including Psalm 1, 92:12-15; Jeremiah 17:7-8)
5. Answer the following questions (on other paper if needed):
  - Define “abiding in Christ.”
  - What is the believer’s role in abiding in Christ?
  - Why is abiding in Christ important?
  - What changes to your practices should you make to lead to a deepening dependence on Jesus and His Word as a result of this study?

VERSE 1

**ESV** I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

I am the Real Vine and my Father is the Farmer.

**MSG**

**OBSERVATIONS**

**WORD STUDY**

**CROSS-REFERENCES**

True:

Vine:

Vinedresser:

**INTERPRETATIONS**

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

**APPLICATION**

- What do you know about vinedressing?
- What is different between a vine that produces grapes and a tree that produces apples?

VERSE 2

**ESV** 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.

He cuts off every branch of me that doesn't bear grapes. And every branch that is grape-bearing he prunes back so it will bear even more.

**MSG**

**OBSERVATIONS**

**WORD STUDY**

**CROSS-REFERENCES**

Bear:

Fruit:

Takes away:

Prunes:

**INTERPRETATIONS**

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

**APPLICATION**

Compare and contrast the branches that do bear fruit with the branches that do not bear fruit.

VERSE 3

**ESV** > Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

You are already pruned back by the message I have spoken.

< **MSG**

**OBSERVATIONS**

**WORD STUDY**

Clean:

**CROSS-REFERENCES**

**INTERPRETATIONS**

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

- How has God's Word pruned you and made you ready to bear more fruit?
- Is there pruning left to do in your life? Where?

**APPLICATION**

VERSE 4

**ESV** > 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.

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**

**OBSERVATIONS**

**WORD STUDY**

Abide:

**CROSS-REFERENCES**

**INTERPRETATIONS**

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

- Consider the mutuality of abiding in Christ and He in you. How is that mutuality reflected in your experience with Christ?
- What would it mean for you to abide more deeply in Christ?
- What would it mean for you to have Christ abide more deeply in you?

**APPLICATION**

VERSE 5

ESV

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.

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.

MSG

OBSERVATIONS

WORD STUDY

CROSS-REFERENCES

Apart:

Nothing:

INTERPRETATIONS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

APPLICATION

- In this verse and verse 2, Jesus adds qualifiers to fruit: "more" and "much." How do these qualifiers shed light on God's desire for fruitfulness and the importance of abiding in Christ?
- How important is fruitfulness and abiding in Christ to you?

VERSE 6

ESV

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.

Anyone who separates from me is deadwood, gathered up and thrown on the bonfire.

MSG

OBSERVATIONS

WORD STUDY

CROSS-REFERENCES

Withers:

INTERPRETATIONS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

APPLICATION

- Consider the difference between a branch connected to the vine and a branch that has been disconnected for a while and lying on the ground. Which will be more fruitful?
- Which is better kindling for a fire?
- Which do you aspire to be more like?
- What decisions do you need to make today to abide in the vine?

VERSE 7

**ESV** > If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon.

< **MSG**

<p><b>OBSERVATIONS</b></p>	<p><b>WORD STUDY</b></p> <p>Ask:</p>  <p>Wish:</p>	<p><b>CROSS-REFERENCES</b></p>
<p><b>INTERPRETATIONS</b></p>	<p><b>REFLECTION QUESTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· This verse connects three distinct concepts: “abiding,” “the Word,” and “prayer.” How are these three similar/ different?</li> <li>· What in particular about abiding stands out to you?</li> <li>· How does this nuance affect your practice of abiding in Christ?</li> </ul>	<p><b>APPLICATION</b></p>

VERSE 8

**ESV** > By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

This is how my Father shows who he is—when you produce grapes, when you mature as my disciples.

< **MSG**

<p><b>OBSERVATIONS</b></p>	<p><b>WORD STUDY</b></p> <p>Glorified:</p>  <p>Prove:</p>  <p>Disciples:</p>	<p><b>CROSS-REFERENCES</b></p>
<p><b>INTERPRETATIONS</b></p>	<p><b>REFLECTION QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>Prayerfully consider connection between abiding in Christ, the Trinitarian relationship, fruitfulness, and discipleship. How does this affect your practice of Abiding in Christ?</p>	<p><b>APPLICATION</b></p>

VERSE 9

**ESV** > As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.

I've loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love.

< **MSG**

**OBSERVATIONS**

**WORD STUDY**

Love:

**CROSS-REFERENCES**

**INTERPRETATIONS**

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

As you study the remaining verses, prayerfully consider the community aspect of abiding in Christ...in His love. How does this impact your practice of abiding in Christ?

**APPLICATION**

VERSE 10

**ESV** > 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.

If you keep my commands, you'll remain intimately at home in my love. That's what I've done—kept my Father's commands and made myself at home in his love.

< **MSG**

**OBSERVATIONS**

**WORD STUDY**

Commandment:

**CROSS-REFERENCES**

**INTERPRETATIONS**

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

Prayerfully consider the scriptural differences between legalism and genuine, wholehearted, and life-giving obedience.

**APPLICATION**

VERSE 11

**ESV** > These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature.

< **MSG**

**OBSERVATIONS**

**WORD STUDY**

**CROSS-REFERENCES**

Joy:

Full:

**INTERPRETATIONS**

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

**APPLICATION**

- Consider how Jesus connects His experience with God the Father to His experience of joy as well as ours. If you were with Jesus when He said that, how would you have experienced His joy?
- If you were to mention your joy to someone in your community, how would they react?
- Would they want your joy in them?

VERSE 12

**ESV** > This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you.

< **MSG**

**OBSERVATIONS**

**WORD STUDY**

**CROSS-REFERENCES**

**INTERPRETATIONS**

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

**APPLICATION**

- Consider Jesus words, "as I have loved you." How would the disciples have experienced Jesus' love?
- How have you experienced Jesus' love?
- How do others in your community experience your love?
- How can you love others like Jesus did?

VERSE 13

ESV Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends.

MSG

OBSERVATIONS

WORD STUDY

Lays down:

Life:

Friends:

CROSS-REFERENCES

INTERPRETATIONS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Consider how Jesus laid down His life for you and how others have laid down their lives for you. What does that mean to you?
- How might the idea of “sacrificial loving friendship” affect your practice of abiding in Christ?

APPLICATION

VERSE 14

ESV You are my friends if you do what I command you.

You are my friends when you do the things I command you.

MSG

OBSERVATIONS

WORD STUDY

Do (and synonyms):

CROSS-REFERENCES

INTERPRETATIONS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What does friendship with Jesus look like?
- How do you describe your friendship with Him and with others?
- How does “doing what Jesus commands” relate to being Jesus’ friend?
- What else can a person do with a command besides “do” it?
- What is involved with doing what Jesus commands?

APPLICATION

VERSE 15

ESV

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.

I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father.

MSG

OBSERVATIONS

WORD STUDY

Servant:

Master:

CROSS-REFERENCES

INTERPRETATIONS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Prayerfully consider your identity in Christ. What does Jesus call you and why?
- What is your primary identity?
- What difference would the identity of "friend" versus that of "servant" have on your practice of abiding in Christ?

APPLICATION

VERSE 16

ESV

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.

You didn't choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won't spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you.

MSG

OBSERVATIONS

WORD STUDY

Choose:

Appointed:

Give:

CROSS-REFERENCES

INTERPRETATIONS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What part have your choices versus God's choices played in your Christian life? ...your fruitfulness? ...your prayer life?
- What's your responsibility?
- What's not your responsibility?

APPLICATION

ESV

These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

But remember the root command: Love one another.

MSG

OBSERVATIONS

WORD STUDY

CROSS-REFERENCES

INTERPRETATIONS

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

APPLICATION

- Prayerfully review your study notes for the last sixteen verses. How is “loving one another” related to abiding in Christ?
- Compare the context of the word *nothing* in 1 Corinthians 13:2-3 to the context of the same word in John 15:5. What do you notice?
- How would you explain what it means to “abide in Christ among the community of the beloved”?
- What role does community play in your practice of abiding in Christ?

**STUDY THE PASSAGES BELOW AND CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

1. What observations can you make about abiding in Christ or fruit bearing?
2. What are some practical steps we can take to grow in our practice of abiding in Christ?

*One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. PSALM 27:4*

*Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened towards Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. DANIEL 6:10*

*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him. And when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" MARK 1:35-37*

*"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." MATTHEW 4:19*

*I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. JOHN 12:24 (SEE ALSO MARK 1:17, LUKE 5:10)*

*Don't give up: Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. GALATIANS 6:9-10*

*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, Then you will be able to test and approve (discern) what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. ROMANS 12:2*

*You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. ISAIAH 26:3*

*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. GALATIANS 2:20*

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17*

*But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. ROMANS 11:17-18*

