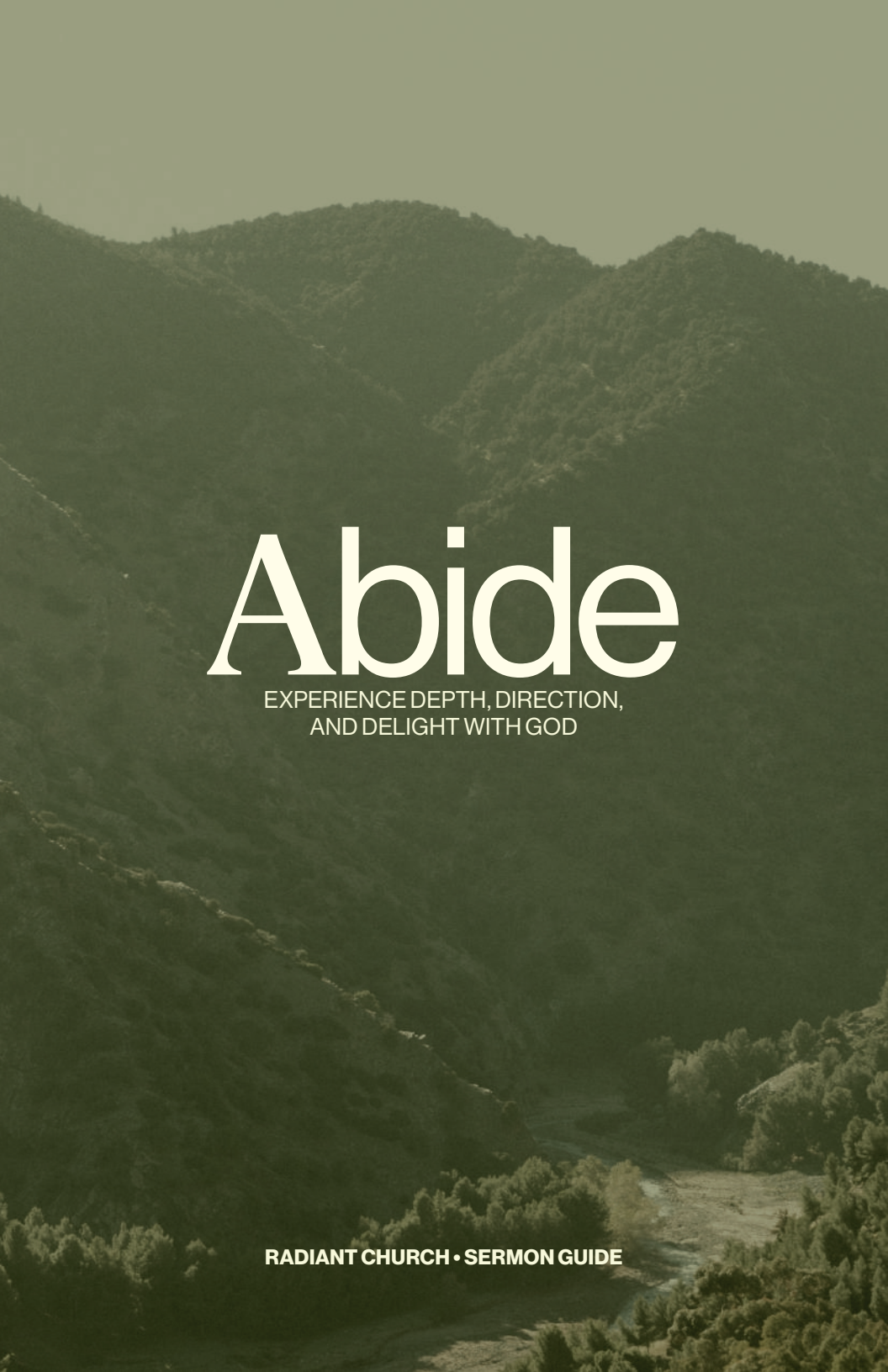




Abide

EXPERIENCE DEPTH, DIRECTION,
AND DELIGHT WITH GOD

RADIANT CHURCH • SERMON GUIDE

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

Welcome To Abide

We're so glad you're here. Over the next eight weeks, we invite you into more than just a sermon series - we are inviting you into a **way of life**. *Abide* is a journey toward experiencing depth, direction, and delight in God. Not occasionally, but daily and intentionally.

Jesus' invitation in John 15 is simple and life-changing: **"Abide in Me."** Not visit. Not check in from time to time. Not observe from a distance. Abide. Remain. Stay connected.

Everything about the Christian life flows from this one invitation. When we learn to abide, our lives begin to change from the inside out.

What You Can Expect

This series is designed to move us beyond information into **transformation**. Each week builds on the last, helping you form spiritual rhythms that draw you closer to Jesus in everyday life.

Along the way, you'll learn how to:

- **Connect with Jesus daily**
- **Hear God's voice more clearly**
- **Discover God's will through His Word**
- **Be led by the Spirit**
- **Experience freedom, healing, and renewed thinking**

This is not a theory. It is a time-tested practice. And it works!

Why Abiding Matters

Many of us have settled for surface-level faith - busy, distracted, spiritually tired. We believe in God, but are often unsure of what God wants for our lives. The result is stress, anxiety, confusion, and spiritual exhaustion.

Abide is a call back to what we were created for:
life with God, not just belief in God.

If you take this journey seriously, you should expect God to shape your desires, challenge unhealthy patterns, clarify your direction, and deepen your joy. When branches stay connected to the Vine, growth is inevitable.

Whether you feel spiritually strong or spiritually dry, whether you are new to faith or have followed Jesus for years, this journey is for **you**. Jesus is inviting you closer. Not to do more. But to be with Him more.

So lean in. Show up. Stay connected.

Let us abide together.

Your pastor, Aaron Burke



Your Role in the Journey

To get the most out of *Abide*, your participation matters.

Use the booklet.

Take notes. Write prayers. Capture what God is speaking to you. This is a tool designed to help you slow down and engage intentionally with God.

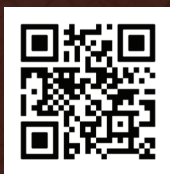
Commit to a Radiant group.

Life change happens in the context of relationship. God often uses others to sharpen us, encourage us, and help us apply what we're learning.

Put it into practice.

Abiding is not passive. It is a daily, intentional connection with Jesus through Scripture, prayer, stillness, obedience, and surrender.

Go deeper with additional resources.



You'll find extra tools throughout this booklet and online at [**weareradiant.com/abide**](https://weareradiant.com/abide) that are available to help take your faith further.

This journey will require time, focus, and consistency. But what God does in you will be **worth it**.

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Abide

Created to Connect

WEEK ONE

February 1st, 2026

Week 1 - Created to Connect

John 15:4-5 **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. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever **abides** in me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Abide (*menō*): to dwell, stay, remain, endure.

The goal of abiding: to connect with Jesus **daily**, find depth in His **Word**, direction from His **Spirit**, and delight in walking in obedience.

1. God created us for connection with Him.

Genesis 2:15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the **Garden of Eden** to work it and take care of it.

The heartbeat of the Bible is God's desire to dwell with us.

Ezekiel 37:27 My **dwelling** place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

2. Our connection with God thrives within His boundaries.

Genesis 2:16-17 And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly **die**."

Sin isn't just breaking a command; it's breaking connection with God.

1 John 2:3 We know that we have come to know him if we **keep his commands**.

When we live inside God's boundaries we experience:

- **Peace** instead of panic
- **Grace** instead of guilt
- **Clarity** instead of confusion
- **Fruit** instead of failure

Abiding in Christ teaches us to shift our focus from
“What do **I** want?” to “What does **God** want?”

3. When you dwell with God, you find **direction** from God.

Genesis 2:18-19 The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.

God **created** Adam → God **connected with** Adam → then God **called** Adam.

Psalms 32:7-8 You are my **hiding place**; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. I will **instruct you** and **teach you** in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

The more connected you are, the more **clarity** you have.

Genesis 3:8–9 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and **they hid from the Lord** God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

4. What Adam **lost** in the garden, Jesus **restored** on the cross.

Romans 5:10 For if, while we were God's enemies, **we were reconciled** to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Jesus didn't just fix our **sin** problem; He fixed our **separation** problem.

Week 1 - Created to Connect

Small Group Guide

We were created for connection with God. From Eden to the upper room, God's desire has always been to dwell with His people. In John 15, Jesus gives us the foundation of the Christian life: "Abide in Me." Abiding means dwelling, remaining, and living in continual communion with Christ. When we abide, our lives become marked by peace, clarity, and fruitfulness. When we disconnect, we drift into confusion, striving, and spiritual exhaustion. Adam's life shows us the pattern: **connection → boundaries → obedience → direction**. And Jesus restores what Adam lost - bringing us back into fellowship with God through His finished work on the cross.

Week 1 lays the theological foundation for the next seven weeks as we learn to live a lifestyle of deep, consistent connection with God.

John 15:4-5 **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. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever **abides** in me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Sermon Takeaways

- 1. We were created for continual communion with God.**
Eden reveals our original design: dwelling with God.
- 2. Fruit comes from connection, not striving.**
The branch's only job is to stay connected to the Vine.
- 3. God's boundaries protect our intimacy.**
Obedience doesn't restrict relationship, it safeguards it.
- 4. Direction flows from abiding.**
Adam received his assignment *after* he walked with God.
- 5. Jesus restores us to a life of abiding.** He reconciles us back into fellowship so we can walk closely with Him.

Core Practices

Weekly rhythms for developing a lifestyle of abiding

1. Create a Daily “Abide Time”

Slow down each day to meet with God. Set aside 10–15 minutes to sit with Him, read Scripture, pray, and be still.

2. Read and Reflect on John 15

Spend this week meditating on John 15. Let the words “remain” and “abide” shape your understanding of connection with God.

3. Practice Stillness

Take 2-3 minutes a day to sit in silence before God. No agenda. No hurry. Just being with Him.

4. Choose One Step of Obedience

Identify one area where God is asking you to stay within His boundaries — and practice obeying Him as an act of abiding.

Discussion Questions

1. What does “abiding” in Christ mean to you, and how does that differ from simply believing in Christ?
2. Where do you notice your connection with God gets disrupted most — busyness, distraction, sin, or self-reliance, and why?
3. Which core practice this week will help you create more intentional space for connection with God?

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Abide

The Making of a Fruitful Life

WEEK TWO

February 8th, 2026

The Goal of Abiding

to connect with Jesus daily, find depth in His Word,
direction from His Spirit, and delight in walking in obedience

“The true abiding Christian has a **joy** unspeakable, a faith unshakeable, and a **peace** that is indestructible.”

- **Leonard Ravenhill**

Week 2 - The Making of a Fruitful Life

John 15:1-8 I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 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**. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 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**. “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. 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. If you abide in Me, and **My words abide in you**, you will ask what you **desire**, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that **you bear much fruit**; so you will be My disciples.

Abide (*menō*): to dwell, stay, remain, endure.

Role		Function
The Vine - <u>Jesus</u>		Source of <u>life</u> and nourishment
The Vinedresser - The <u>Father</u>		Cultivates <u>growth</u>
The Branch - The <u>Believer</u>		Called to <u>remain</u>
The Work - The <u>Holy Spirit</u>		The <u>power</u> behind the process
14	The Goal - <u>Fruit</u>	The <u>outcome</u> of abiding

A Fruitful Life

1. We are **planted** (**Salvation**)

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to **become children of God**, to those who believe in His name.

You can't grow roots in **God's** soil while still playing in the world's **dirt**.

Joshua 24:15 But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then **choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve**, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, **we will serve the LORD**.

2. We are **pruned** (**Sanctification**)

Psalms 15:1-2 Lord, who may **dwell** in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain? The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their heart.

Hebrews 12:10-11 God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in **his holiness**. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but **painful**. Later on, however, it **produces a harvest of righteousness** and **peace** for those who have been trained by it.

God's Methods of Pruning:

Scripture • The Holy Spirit • Community
Spiritual Authority • Difficult Seasons • Personal Obedience

Psalms 139:23-24 **Search me**, God, and know my heart; **test me** and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and **lead me** in the way everlasting.

Abiding invites the Spirit to **change** us from the **inside** out.

3. We produce fruit (Significance)

Matthew 7:17-20 Likewise, **every good tree bears good fruit**, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their **fruit** you will **recognize** them.

Spiritual success isn't measured by activity but by fruit.

Internal fruit: Christ-like character and attitude

External fruit: Christ-like actions

Matthew 3:8 Produce **fruit** in keeping with **repentance**.

Week 2 - The Making of a Fruitful Life

Small Group Guide

This week, we learned how the Father, as the Gardener, cultivates our lives so we can bear fruit. In John 15, Jesus reveals a divine process: we are planted in Christ, pruned by the Father, and empowered by the Spirit to produce fruit. Abiding is not passive—it is a transformational relationship where God shapes us from the inside out. Being planted means surrendering our lives fully to Jesus. Being pruned means allowing God to remove what is unhealthy, unholy, or unfruitful. Being fruitful means becoming more like Christ internally, through our attitudes, and impacting others externally, through our actions. Every believer who abides goes through this process. And the goal is simple: to live a life that looks like Jesus and leads others to Him.

John 15:1-8 I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 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. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 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. 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. 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. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Sermon Takeaways

1. **God plants us** — Salvation roots us in Christ and anchors us in His presence.
2. **God prunes us** — The Father removes what hinders spiritual growth so we can become holy and whole
3. **Pruning can be painful, but it is always purposeful**
It produces a harvest of righteousness and peace.
4. **Fruit is the evidence of abiding**
Internal fruit - Christlike attitude and character.
External fruit - Christlike actions.

Core Practices

Weekly rhythms for developing a lifestyle of abiding

1. Choose where you will be planted

Make a clear decision to root your life fully in Christ—no switching between gardens, no halfway commitment.

2. Invite God to prune you

Pray Psalm 139:23–24 each day and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal attitudes, habits, or relationships that need cutting back.

3. Practice confession in community

Share one area with a trusted person where you need pruning so you can grow in holiness and accountability.

4. Evaluate internal and external fruit

Pay attention to how God is shaping your attitudes and actions—peace, joy, patience, contentment—as you abide this week.

5. 3x5 Card Challenge

Write out the desires of your heart. As you abide with Christ, watch how those desires change over time. Head to our resource page to get more information.

Discussion Questions

1. Would you say you are fully planted in Christ Jesus as your Lord? If yes, what changes took place in your life to get to that point? If no, what's holding you back?
2. What area of your life might God be pruning, and how can you respond with trust rather than resistance?
3. What internal or external fruit do you want to see God develop in you as you continue to abide in Him?

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Abide

Seeing Jesus Clearly

WEEK THREE

February 15th, 2026

The Goal of Abiding

to connect with Jesus daily, find depth in His Word,
direction from His Spirit, and delight in walking in obedience

John 15:4-5 **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. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever **abides** in me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Abide (*menō*): to **dwell**, stay, **remain**, endure.

Week 3 - Seeing **Jesus** Clearly

“What we **think** about God is the most important thing about us.”

- **A.W. Tozer**

The ultimate question: Do you trust that Jesus is **good**?

When you **know** who Jesus is, you can trust where He's **leading** you.

John 10:7-11 Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, **I am the gate** for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have **life**, and have it to the **full**. **I am the good shepherd**. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

Seeing Jesus Clearly:

1. Jesus is the **Gate**

Jesus, as the Gate, is our **access** point to everything we need for an abundant **life**.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, “I am **the way** and **the truth** and **the life**. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Hebrews 4:14 Therefore, since we have a **great high priest** who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us then approach God's throne of grace with **confidence**, so that we may receive mercy and **find grace to help us** in our time of need.

2. Jesus is **Life**.

Life (zoe): **fullness, abundance**

John 6:63 The Spirit gives **life**; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and **life**.

The abundant life is a **fruitful** life.

3. Jesus is the **Good Shepherd**.

As the Good Shepherd, Jesus embodies the **character** and **skill** necessary to take care of us.

As our Good Shepherd:

Jesus **knows** us.

Jesus **guides** us.

Jesus **protects** us.

Jesus **rescues** us.

John 10:3-4 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep **listen to his voice**. He calls his own sheep by name and **leads them out**. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and **his sheep follow him** because they know his voice.

The Good Shepherd doesn't promise an **easy** path, but He promises you'll never walk it **alone**.

Because Jesus is good, the only proper response is our **surrender**.

Week 3 - Seeing Jesus Clearly

Small Group Guide

This week centers on the truth that abiding begins with knowing who Jesus truly is. What you think about God determines everything about your ability to draw near to Him. In John 10, Jesus reveals Himself as the Gate, Life, and the Good Shepherd. When you understand His character — His goodness, His intentions, His protection, His leadership — you learn to trust His voice and follow His way. Abiding becomes natural when you see Jesus clearly. He is your access to God, the source of abundant life, and the Shepherd who knows you by name, guides you, protects you, and rescues you.

Abiding is not simply spending time with God; it is learning to trust the God you spend time with.

John 10:9–11 I am **the gate**; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have **life**, and have it to the full. I am the **good shepherd**. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

Sermon Takeaways

1. **Jesus is the Gate** - He is our access point to salvation, protection, and the presence of God. Nothing comes in or out of our lives without going through Him.
2. **Jesus is Life** - He brings abundance where the enemy brings destruction. Abiding in Him leads to fullness, peace, joy, and purpose.
3. **Jesus is the Good Shepherd** - He knows us, leads us, protects us, and rescues us. His leadership is always good, even when the path feels difficult.
4. **We surrender to His voice when we trust His character** - Hearing God becomes possible as we see Jesus clearly and abide in Him consistently.

Core Practices

Weekly rhythms for developing a lifestyle of abiding

1. Spend time studying and meditating on Jesus' character

Take 5–10 minutes each day search the scriptures and meditate on who Jesus is: the Gate, Life, and the Good Shepherd. Let His identity shape your trust.

2. Read John 10 throughout the week

Slowly read and reread John 10. Notice what Jesus says about His voice, His leadership, and His care for you.

3. Listen for the Shepherd's voice

Take a moment of stillness each day and ask, “Jesus, what are You saying to me today?” Write down impressions that align with Scripture.

4. Release control

Identify one area of your life where you tend to hold control. Spend time in prayer surrendering it to the Good Shepherd.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you trust that Jesus is good? Where do you find it hardest to trust Jesus' leadership?
2. What part of Jesus' identity—Gate, Life, or Good Shepherd—stood out to you the most, and why?
3. Which core practice this week can help you grow in surrender and learn to follow the Good Shepherd's voice?

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Abide

Finding God's Will in God's Word

WEEK FOUR

February 22nd, 2026

The Goal of Abiding

to connect with Jesus daily, find depth in His Word,
direction from His Spirit, and delight in walking in obedience

John 15:4-5 **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. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever **abides** in me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Week 4 - Finding God's Will in God's Word

You'll **never** know God's will if you **ignore** God's Word.

Psalms 119:103-105 How sweet are **your words** to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! I **gain understanding** from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path. Your word is a **lamp for my feet**, a **light** on my path.

God's word isn't meant to answer every question about the **future**, but to give guidance for **today**.

Matthew 4:4 Jesus answered, "It is written: Man shall not live on bread alone, but on **every word** that comes from the **mouth of God**."

Psalms 1:1-3 **Blessed** is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose **delight is in the law of the Lord**, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which **yields its fruit in season** and whose leaf does not wither — whatever they do prospers.

If you will open your Bible **daily**, it will **feed** your soul, **guide** your steps, and keep your life aligned with God's **will**.

1. God's Word should be read **systematically**.

2 Timothy 3:16 **All Scripture** is God-breathed and is **useful** for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

Systematic Ways to Read God's Word:

Cover to **Cover** (Reading through the **whole** Bible)
Book Study
Word Study



2. God's Word should be read **slowly**.

Abiding means **remaining**, not rushing.

Psalms 46:10 Be **still**, and know that I am God

Your goal of daily Bible reading is for God to reveal truth that **changes** your life.

John 8:31-32 If you **continue** in My word, you are truly My disciples. Then you will know the **truth**, and the truth will set you **free**.

God's **Word** → God's **Way** → God's **Will**

1 Samuel 3:10 "Speak, Lord, for your servant is **listening**."

As I am reading God's word, I am asking myself:

What is God **teaching** me about His character?

What is God **challenging** me about my character?

How is God **leading** me in this season?

3. God's Word should be read with a **surrendered** heart.

Don't read the Bible to complete a **task**; read it to be **transformed**.

James 1:22-25 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says**. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be **blessed in what they do**.

Example SOAP

Scripture

Psalms 54:4 Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me.

Observation

God is my help. It's not always up to me to figure things out or change the circumstances I'm facing. He will help me and He will carry me through. He will give me strength to keep moving forward. I can rely on Him.

Application

Trying harder or doing more is not the solution. If I'm facing a challenge, God will be the One to guide me through and make a way forward. I don't need to rely on my own strength or ability, I can trust Him with the outcome. I will surrender my situation to the God who helps me and sustains me.

Prayer

God, thank you that you are my help. I can trust in you and look to you for all things. Help me to surrender this situation fully to You. With what's in front of me, I may not know all the answers, but I know that You do. Thank you for being my sustainer and the one who strengthens me and carries me through. Give me rest and peace in Your presence as I rely on You. **In Jesus' Name, amen.**

Week 4 - Finding God's Will in God's Word

Small Group Guide

This week focuses on how God reveals His will through His Word. We don't discover God's will by guessing or drifting through life—we find it by abiding in Scripture. Just as an instruction manual brings clarity to a complex piece of furniture, God's Word brings clarity to the complexity of our lives. His Word is not meant to overwhelm us, but to illuminate our next steps. Scripture is a lamp for today, not a floodlight for tomorrow. When we read it systematically, slowly, and with a surrendered heart, God speaks, guides, convicts, encourages, and forms us. You cannot know God's will while ignoring God's Word. Abiding is not just being with Jesus—it is hearing His voice through the pages of Scripture and obeying what He reveals.

Psalms 119:103-105 How sweet are **your words** to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! I **gain understanding** from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path. Your word is a **lamp for my feet**, a **light** on my path.

Sermon Takeaways

1. **God's Word is our guide** — Scripture gives direction for the next step, not the entire journey.
2. **God's Word feeds us spiritually**
We “live” on every word from God, just as Jesus taught.
3. **God's Word must be read systematically**
Systematic reading forms us and helps us hear God clearly.
4. **God's Word must be read slowly** — Revelation comes when we pause long enough to receive truth.
5. **God's Word must be read with a surrendered heart**
Blessing comes not from hearing Scripture, but from applying it.

Core Practices

Weekly rhythms for developing a lifestyle of abiding

1. **Commit to reading God's Word every day**

Make a decision to open God's Word every day this week, even for a few minutes. Let it feed and guide you.

2. **Choose a systematic plan**

Select a reading pattern—Bible-in-a-year, a book study, or a themed word study—to help you read intentionally rather than randomly.



Join our Bible in a Year plan, if you haven't already!
weareradiant.com/bible

3. **Start to SOAP**

We have a 5 day plan to help you learn to SOAP this week. Every day take a few minutes and slow down to journal a Scripture, Observation, Application and Prayer.



Find details on how to do this exercise here.
weareradiant.com/abide

4. **Ask three key questions:**

"What is God teaching me about His character?"

"What is God challenging me about my character?"

"How is God encouraging or correcting me today?"

5. **Apply one truth in obedience**

Don't just read—respond. Identify one action or attitude God is calling you to and take a step of obedience this week.

Discussion Questions

1. What stood out to you about the idea that God's Word is a "lamp" and not a "floodlight"?
2. What challenges do you face when it comes to spending time in God's Word? Was there anything from the sermon that challenged or encouraged you in this area?
3. What is something you can start or change this week to help make the most of your time reading Scripture?

Day One

Learning to Hear God Through His Word

John 15:1-4

Over the next five days you will learn how to open the Bible, understand what you are reading, hear God through the passage, and apply it directly to your life. Each day you will look at a small portion of John 15 and discover how God speaks through His Word. As you do, you will begin to build confidence in reading Scripture for yourself, and how to find God's will through His Word.

John 15 takes place during Jesus' final moments with His disciples before the cross. He paints a picture they knew well: the vine, the branches, and the careful work of the gardener. The vine was the source of life, and the branches couldn't survive without it. Jesus tells them, "I am the true vine," the source of real life, peace, and direction. This passage reminds us that spiritual growth isn't something we strive for on our own. Instead, it flows from staying close to Jesus and allowing His words to shape our lives.

This is called "Abiding."

Many people read the Bible quickly or randomly, walking away confused. When you slow down, read the passage in context, and ask God to speak through it, Scripture becomes clear and personal. God uses His Word to guide your next steps and reveal His will for your life. As you read, take time to reflect on the questions below. When you've finished, lean into the practice of SOAP to help you apply what God is speaking to you.

Reflection Questions:

- What is God teaching me about His character?
- What is God revealing about my character?
- How is God encouraging or correcting me today?

Scripture • *Write the verse word for word.*

Observation • *Note what the verse teaches and what the context is.*

Application • *Write how you can live this out today. (Be practical)*

Prayer • *Write out a prayer to God that includes asking for His help in applying the truth for today.*

Day Two

God the Gardener

John 15:2

In the Bible every vineyard had a gardener who watched over each branch closely. He lifted weak branches, cleared away debris, and pruned strong branches, so they could grow even more fruit.

This is exactly what Jesus does in our lives. He sees where we are struggling, and He gently lifts us up. He sees what is hurting us, and He removes what does not belong. He also sees where we are healthy, producing good fruit. He prunes us so we can grow deeper, stronger, and more fruitful.

Pruning can feel uncomfortable, even painful, but it is never punishment. It is preparation. God is shaping you, forming you, and cutting away what is holding you back, so you can experience the life He created you to live.

When you understand God as your gardener, you begin to see that He is actively involved in every part of your growth.

Reflection Questions:

- What is God teaching me about His character?
- What is God revealing about my character?
- How is God encouraging or correcting me today?

Scripture • *Write the verse word for word.*

Observation • *Note what the verse teaches and what the context is.*

Application • *Write how you can live this out today. (Be practical)*

Prayer • *Write out a prayer to God that includes asking for His help in applying the truth for today.*

Day Three

Remaining in Christ

John 15:4-5

Jesus tells us to remain in Him. Remain means to stay, continue, and dwell. It describes a relationship, not a moment. This is the foundation of Abiding. A branch cannot survive or produce fruit on its own. It has to stay connected to the vine. In the same way, we can't produce spiritual strength, peace, or change by trying harder.

True transformation only comes from staying close to Jesus every day. When we abide in Him, His life flows into ours. His words guide us, His presence strengthens us, and His Spirit shapes our decisions.

Jesus also says apart from Him we can do nothing. He isn't trying to discourage us; He's trying to free us from the pressure to do it on our own. Abiding isn't about perfection. It's about connection.

As you learn to slow down, stay present with God, and invite Him into your everyday moments, you'll begin to see His work in your life in ways you never have before.

Reflection Questions:

- What is God teaching me about His character?
- What is God revealing about my character?
- How is God encouraging or correcting me today?

Scripture • *Write the verse word for word.*

Observation • *Note what the verse teaches and what the context is.*

Application • *Write how you can live this out today. (Be practical)*

Prayer • *Write out a prayer to God that includes asking for His help in applying the truth for today.*

Day Four

Love as Jesus Loved

John 15:12-13

As Jesus teaches about abiding, He connects our private connection with him to how we should treat those around us. He commands us to love one another the same way He has loved us. His love is patient, forgiving, sacrificial, and purposeful. It seeks the good of others, even when it costs something.

When we abide in Jesus, this type of love becomes the natural fruit of our lives. It changes the way we speak, respond, and relate to people. Abiding isn't just about your connection with God. It affects your relationships, your reactions, and your willingness to love even when it is difficult.

Jesus laid down His life for us. When His love fills our hearts, it begins to flow into our everyday actions.

As you spend time with Him, ask Him to help you love like He loves.

Reflection Questions:

- What is God teaching me about His character?
- What is God revealing about my character?
- How is God encouraging or correcting me today?

Scripture • *Write the verse word for word.*

Observation • *Note what the verse teaches and what the context is.*

Application • *Write how you can live this out today. (Be practical)*

Prayer • *Write out a prayer to God that includes asking for His help in applying the truth for today.*

Day Five

Chosen and Appointed

John 15:16-17

In Jesus' time, disciples chose the teachers they wanted to follow. Jesus turns this idea around by telling His disciples that He chose them. He reminds them that they were chosen on purpose and appointed to live a fruitful life.

The same is true for you. You are not an accident. You are chosen by God and invited into a life that produces fruit that lasts.

Fruit is anything in your life that reflects Jesus, such as love, generosity, forgiveness, faithfulness, and influence. Jesus says He appointed you to live a life that makes a difference and brings glory to God.

When you abide in Him, He shapes your desires, guides your steps, and leads you into the purpose He has for you.

You do not create fruit by trying harder. You experience fruit by saying yes to the One who chose you.

Reflection Questions:

- What is God teaching me about His character?
- What is God revealing about my character?
- How is God encouraging or correcting me today?

Scripture • *Write the verse word for word.*

Observation • *Note what the verse teaches and what the context is.*

Application • *Write how you can live this out today. (Be practical)*

Prayer • *Write out a prayer to God that includes asking for His help in applying the truth for today.*

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Abide

Being Led By the Holy Spirit

WEEK FIVE

March 1st, 2026

The Goal of Abiding

to connect with Jesus daily, find depth in His Word,
direction from His Spirit, and delight in walking in obedience

Week 5 - Being Led by the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is not just a power to experience but a Person to follow.

John 16:7 But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the **Advocate** will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

John 16:13-14 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will **guide** you into **all the truth**. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will **tell you what is yet to come**. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will **make known to you**.

Advocate (*Paraklētos*): someone called to come alongside you.

The Holy Spirit leads us:

1. To know the truth

John 16:13 When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will **guide** you into **all the truth**.

“The Holy Spirit is the author of the Scriptures and the interpreter of the Scriptures.” – **John Stott**

God's Word → God's Way → God's Will

2. To walk in God's will

John 16:13 He will **tell you** what is **yet to come**.

Isaiah 30:21 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, you will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’

The Spirit may not reveal the **details** but He'll always show you the next **step**.

Yield - **pause** and give way.

How to Confirm God's Voice	
Scripture	God's leading never contradicts God's written word.
Church	Ask for confirmation from Godly community and spiritual authority.
Circumstances	Sometimes God provides clear open doors and closed doors.
Peace	The Spirit's leading will require faith but be accompanied by peace .

3. To glorify **Jesus**

The Spirit's goal is not to make much of **us** but to make much of **Jesus**.

Matthew 5:14-16 You are the **light of the world**. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine** before others, that they may see your good deeds and **glorify your Father in heaven**.

4. To live a **fruitful** life

Galatians 5:22-25 But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

The primary **evidence** of the Spirit's involvement is not the **gifts** of the Spirit, but the **fruit** of the Spirit.

46 Romans 8:6 The mind governed by the Spirit is **life** and **peace**.

Week 5 - Being Led by the Holy Spirit

Small Group Guide

This week we learned that the Holy Spirit is not just a power to experience but a Person to follow. Life is filled with decisions that Scripture doesn't directly answer, but God has not left us without guidance. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come alongside us—guiding us, leading us into truth, revealing what we cannot see, glorifying Jesus through our lives, and producing spiritual fruit within us. The Spirit is our Advocate, Counselor, and Guide. As we abide, He speaks, convicts, leads, redirects, comforts, and empowers. The Spirit-led life is not mystical or confusing—it is built on daily surrender, listening, obeying, and trusting that God is directing our steps one moment at a time.

John 16:7 But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the **Advocate** will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

John 16:13-14 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will **guide** you into **all the truth**. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will **tell you what is yet to come**. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will **make known to you**.

Sermon Takeaways

- 1. The Holy Spirit leads us into **truth**** — He reveals what is real, exposes deception, and helps us understand Scripture.
- 2. The Holy Spirit leads us into God's **will**** — He guides our steps, gives direction for the next move, and whispers, "This is the way; walk in it."
- 3. The Holy Spirit leads us to **glorify Jesus**** — His work in our lives always points back to Christ, not ourselves.
- 4. The Holy Spirit leads us into **fruitfulness**** — He produces Christlike attitudes internally and Christlike actions externally.
- 5. The Spirit-led life requires **surrender****
We must yield our plans, pace, and preferences to the Spirit's prompting.

Core Practices

Weekly rhythms for developing a lifestyle of abiding

1. **Begin each day with a simple prayer of surrender**

“Holy Spirit, lead me today. Speak to me, guide me, convict me, and direct my steps.”

2. **“Yield” before you make any decisions**

Before making decisions—small or big—pause, breathe, and ask, “Holy Spirit, what would You have me do?”

3. **Test what you sense**

Use the four confirmations of Spirit-leading: God’s Word, godly counsel, circumstances, and peace.

4. **Read Galatians 5**

Reflect on the fruit of the Spirit. Ask God which fruit He wants to grow in you this week.

Discussion Questions

1. Where do you most need the Holy Spirit’s guidance right now?
2. Which of the Spirit’s roles—truth, direction, glorifying Jesus, or fruitfulness—stood out to you the most and why?
3. What is one step you can take this week to become more sensitive and responsive to the Spirit’s prompting?

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Abide

An Effective And Enjoyable Prayer Life

WEEK SIX

March 8th, 2026

The Goal of Abiding

to connect with Jesus daily, find depth in His Word,
direction from His Spirit, and delight in walking in obedience

John 15:4-5 **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. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever **abides** in me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Week 6 - An Effective and Enjoyable Prayer Life

James 5:16 The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and **effective**.

Prayer Statistics (based on Lifeway and Barna research):

68% of Christians say their prayer life is “inconsistent or ineffective.”

55% say they “don’t know what to say when they pray.”

71% say they pray less than 10 minutes a day.

80% admit to being distracted within the first 2 minutes of prayer.

The average Christian spends more time on their phone before breakfast than in prayer all week.

Luke 10:38-42 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named **Martha opened her home to him**. She had a sister called Mary, who **sat at the Lord’s feet listening** to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are **worried** and **upset** about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. **Mary has chosen what is better**, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Martha: _____

Mary: _____

Effective and Enjoyable Prayer:

1. Surrender

Matthew 6:6 But when you pray, go into your room, **close the door** and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

James 4:7-8 **Submit** yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come **near to God** and he will come near to you.

Surrender positions my life to truly **connect** with God.

2. Slow down

If the devil can't make you **bad**, he will just make you **busy**.

You can't **hear** from God in a **hurry**.

Psalms 37:7 Be **still** before the Lord and wait **patiently** for him.

Isaiah 30:15 In **quietness** and trust is your strength.

Psalms 46:10 Be **still** and know that I am God.

3. Share your heart

Prayer becomes **enjoyable** when it becomes **honest**.

Psalm 62:8 Trust in him at all times, you people, **pour out your hearts to him**, for God is our refuge.

If it's on your **mind**, it belongs in your **prayers**.

Effective and Enjoyable Prayer:

4. **Seek out** an assignment

Prayer isn't just **connection**; it's also **commissioning**.

Seeking out God's mission:

- What is God asking me to **change** in my life?
- Who is God leading me to **pray** for?
- What is a step of **faith** God is telling me to take?

Isaiah 6:8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "**Here am I. Send me!**"

"Do not start your day with the tasks of the world. **Begin** with God, and you will receive your **task** from God." - **Hudson Taylor**

Week 6 - An Effective and Enjoyable Prayer Life

Small Group Guide

This week we learned that prayer is not meant to be complicated, exhausting, or intimidating—it is designed to be relational, life-giving, and deeply enjoyable. In the story of Mary and Martha, we see the contrast between a distracted life with a devoted one. Mary positioned herself at the Lord's feet—surrendered, slowed down, and fully present—while Martha was busy, overwhelmed, and missing the moment. Jesus taught that the “better way” is not found in striving but in abiding. An effective prayer life flows from posture, not pressure. When we surrender, slow down, speak honestly, and seek God's assignment, prayer shifts from a duty to a delight. Prayer becomes powerful not because we are eloquent, but because we are connected.

Luke 10:38-42 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named **Martha opened her home to him**. She had a sister called Mary, who **sat at the Lord's feet listening** to what he said. But **Martha was distracted** by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are **worried** and **upset** about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. **Mary has chosen what is better**, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Sermon Takeaways

1. **Prayer is relational, not transactional**
God wants connection with His children, not performance.
2. **Start with surrender**
Prayer begins at Jesus' feet, not with our agenda.
3. **Hurry is the enemy of hearing God's voice**
Busyness blinds us to God's voice and burdens our soul.
4. **Honest prayer is enjoyable prayer**
God invites us to pour out everything on our hearts to Him.
5. **Prayer leads to assignment**
God meets us in prayer not only to fill us, but to send us.

Core Practices

Weekly rhythms for developing a lifestyle of abiding

1. Remove distractions

Start each prayer time by giving God your attention, your agenda, and your distractions. Sit at His feet before saying anything.

2. Create space to slow down

Set a timer for 2–3 minutes of stillness. Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and quiet your soul before speaking.

3. Be honest with God

Practice “say it all” prayers—bring your fears, joys, frustrations, questions, and desires to God without filtering.

4. Ask God for an assignment

At the end of your prayer time, ask: “Lord, what are You sending me to do today?” Write down what He puts on your heart.

5. ACTS Prayer Strategy

Follow the plan that includes: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication.



To learn more about ACTS,
visit weareradiant.com/abide

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways do you relate more to Martha than Mary when it comes to prayer?
2. Which part of prayer—surrendering, slowing down, saying it all, or seeking an assignment—do you feel most challenged by?
3. What is something you are excited to try this week to strengthen your prayer life?

Day One

Start with Surrender

Luke 10:38-39

When you look at Mary in this story, you realize she didn't start prayer the way most of us do. She didn't rush in with a list. She didn't multitask her time with Jesus. She simply sat at His feet. That was her whole posture. Before she prayed anything, she surrendered everything.

Andrew Murray once said, "God is ready to assume full responsibility for the life wholly yielded to Him." That line gets me every time, because it reminds me that surrender is not defeat. It is the doorway to connection.

James tells us to submit to God and draw near to Him, and He promises He will draw near to us. Surrender is where that happens. Prayer becomes enjoyable when you stop trying to control the moment and simply show up to be with Him. God meets you in the still place where your heart finally slows down enough to listen.

Challenge: Before you say a single request today, sit quietly and verbally surrender your plans, worries, and expectations to God for one full minute.

[illegible]

Day Two

Slow Down to Hear God

Psalm 46:10

Most of us live at a pace that makes hearing God almost impossible. Not because we don't love Him, but because our lives are loud and hurried. Martha was doing good things, but she missed the moment because she was moving too fast. Mary slowed down long enough to hear Jesus clearly.

E. M. Bounds said, "Hurry is the death of prayer," and it is so true. God speaks in the still moments. Scripture tells us to be still before the Lord and that quietness and trust is our strength. When the pace of your soul begins to quiet down, your awareness of God starts to rise.

Prayer gets enjoyable when it stops feeling like a task and starts feeling like rest. God is never in a rush. If you slow down, you will notice Him more than you ever have. I started the practice a few years ago of setting a timer and just sitting still before God. Practice it today, it will take your prayer life to the next level.

Challenge: Set a five-minute timer and do nothing but sit still before God, resisting the urge to speak, scroll, or rush—just be present.

[illegible]

Day Three

Say It All to God

Psalm 62:8

If you want prayer to feel real and relational, you have to stop filtering yourself. God is not moved by polished language. He is moved by honest hearts. We receive healing to the level we extend honesty. That is why the psalmist says, “Pour out your hearts to Him.” Not part of it. Not the church version of it. All of it.

E. Stanley Jones said, “Prayer is the means whereby our desires are bent to God’s will.” When you talk honestly about what is really going on inside you, God begins to shape and steady your heart. Think about how your kids talk to you. They don’t script their feelings. They just say what is real. And because of that, you know them more deeply.

Your Father wants the same from you. Honest prayer becomes enjoyable prayer. And if it is on your mind, it belongs in your prayers.

Challenge: Tell God the one thought, emotion, or struggle you usually edit out of your prayers and say it to Him honestly and completely.

[illegible]

Day Four

Seek God's Assignment

Isaiah 6:8

Prayer isn't just about being filled. It is also about being sent. Every time Jesus prayed, He came back with clarity. Isaiah experienced the same thing. In God's presence he heard, "Whom shall I send," and his response was simple, "Here am I. Send me."

God has a purpose for your life and for your current season. That is the heartbeat of prayer that leads to purpose. God wants to use you today. There is someone you can encourage, someone you can pray for, a step you can take, a change you can make.

An enjoyable prayer life is one that leads to mission. When you start your day asking, "Lord, what do You want me to do," prayer becomes exciting. It turns into partnership. It gives your day direction.

Challenge: Ask God, "Who or what do You want me to notice or respond to today?" —and then obey the first clear prompting He gives you.

[illegible]

Day Five • Build Prayer Into Your Rhythm

James 5:16

A powerful prayer life is not built on intensity. It is built on consistency. You don't need an hour. You just need a rhythm. Abiding in Christ, like Jesus teaches in John 15, is about daily connection. When you show up consistently, something starts to shift. Your heart softens. Your mind renews. Your spirit strengthens.

Martin Luther said, "To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing." Prayer isn't a religious requirement. It is a spiritual lifeline. Even ten focused minutes with God each day can reshape your entire life.

When you build a rhythm of prayer, it stops feeling like a box to check and starts becoming a relationship you enjoy. You feel grounded. You feel connected. You feel guided. That is what an abiding life looks like.

Challenge: Choose a specific daily time and place for prayer this next week and treat it as a non-negotiable appointment with God.

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Abide

Freedom in Forgiveness

WEEK SEVEN

March 15th, 2026

The Goal of Abiding

to connect with Jesus daily, find depth in His Word,
direction from His Spirit, and delight in walking in obedience

Week 7 - Freedom in Forgiveness

Matthew 5:23-24 Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

A life that abides in Christ is a life that continually walks in forgiveness.

Forgiveness flows in two directions:

Receiving forgiveness from God

Releasing forgiveness to others

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ **God forgave you**.

Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. **Forgive as the Lord forgave you**.

Forgiveness is the oxygen of the soul. Without it, our soul suffocates.

Three Biblical Truths about forgiveness:

1. We are fully forgiven in Christ.

Ephesians 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

"Forgiveness is not achieved by us, it is received by us."

— **Martin Luther**

Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus.

In Christ, we are not our failures, we are forgiven and free.

2. We are **required** to forgive **others**.

Matthew 18:32-35 “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘**I canceled all that debt** of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you **forgive your brother or sister from your heart.**”

Unforgiveness **distances** us from Christ because it goes against the very **nature** of who He is.

Forgiven people **forgive** people.

Forgiveness is more about what Christ **did** for you than what they’ve **done** to you.

3. We find **freedom** in community.

Confession breaks the **cycle** of sin and shame.

We are as **sick** as our **secrets**.

Proverbs 28:13 Whoever **conceals their sins** does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

James 5:16 Therefore **confess your sins** to each other and pray for each other so that you may be **healed**. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Confession looks like:

I’m carrying bitterness that I can’t shake.
I’ve been pretending I’m okay, but I’m not.
I’m angry at God, and I don’t know how to say it.
I’m jealous of what God is doing for others.
I feel far from God, and I don’t know why.
I’ve been hiding a sin that’s eating me alive.
I don’t trust people because of how I’ve been hurt.
I’m terrified of being honest about what I’m struggling with.
My mind keeps replaying what they did to me.
I know I need help, but I’m scared to ask for it.

Forgiveness comes from **God**, but freedom comes when we confess to God’s **people**.

Week 7 - Freedom in Forgiveness

Small Group Guide

This week we learned that forgiveness is not optional for a follower of Jesus—it is essential for a life of abiding. Nothing chokes out intimacy with God faster than unresolved guilt or unreleased offense. Forgiveness flows in two directions: receiving forgiveness from God and releasing forgiveness to others. Both are necessary for the life of Christ to flow through us. When we grasp how fully Christ has forgiven us, the soil of our heart becomes soft enough to forgive others. And when we walk in community, confession keeps our soul free from shame, bitterness, and hidden struggles. Forgiveness is one of the greatest evidences of an abiding life—it frees our heart, restores our connection with God, and makes space for the Spirit's fruit to grow.

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, **forgiving each other**, just as in Christ **God forgave you**.

Sermon Takeaways

1. We are fully forgiven in Christ

Forgiveness is not earned through striving but received through grace.

2. Forgiven people forgive people

Releasing others is a biblical requirement, not an emotional option.

3. Unforgiveness disrupts connection with God

Bitterness, resentment, and offense create spiritual distance from Christ.

4. Confession breaks the cycle

Honesty within a trusted community brings healing and sustained freedom.

Core Practices

Weekly rhythms for developing a lifestyle of abiding

1. Research scriptures about being fully forgiven

Spend time reading passages about Christ's sacrifice (Ephesians 1, Romans 8, Luke 23). Let His forgiveness shape your heart toward others.

2. Release offense quickly

When someone hurts you, don't let bitterness settle. Pray, "Lord, I forgive them as You have forgiven me."

3. Practice honest confession

Share a struggle, temptation, or area of hurt with a trusted believer this week. Bring it to the light.

4. Pray blessing over difficult people

Choose one person who has wounded you and pray for their good. Let God soften what bitterness has hardened.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is receiving forgiveness from God essential before we can release forgiveness to others?
2. Which aspect of forgiveness—receiving it, releasing it, or confessing openly—feels most challenging right now?
3. How has unforgiveness affected your ability to hear God or enjoy His presence?

[illegible]

Abide

Mind Games

WEEK EIGHT

March 22nd, 2026

The Goal of Abiding

to connect with Jesus daily, find depth in His Word,
direction from His Spirit, and delight in walking in obedience

Week 8 - Mind Games

Genesis 3:1-4 Now the serpent was more **crafty** than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “**Did God really say**, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman.

Crafty (ārûm): it means subtle, shrewd, cunning, strategic.

The serpent doesn’t come with a pitchfork. He comes with a question mark.

Satan’s strategy:

Exaggeration (“Did God really say you can’t eat any tree?”)

Minimization (“You will not surely die...”)

Accusation (“God knows...”)

False promises (“You’ll be like God...”)

Satan aims his temptation at your personal desires, hoping you’ll try to satisfy them without God.

Genesis 3:23 So the Lord **God banished him from the Garden** of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

The solution to the mind games is a renewed mind.

Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

How to have a renewed mind:

1. Identify the lie
2. Replace the lie with the truth from God’s Word

Matthew 4:3-4 The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Lies we believe: "God isn't **good**."

Nahum 1:7 The Lord is **good**, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.

Psalms 119:68 You are **good**, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees.

Lies we believe: "My **past** defines me."

Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Lies we believe: "God does not **speak** to me."

Psalms 32:8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.

Lies we believe: "I will **fail** if I try."

Isaiah 43:2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

3. Practice **Confession**

We are only as **healthy** as we are **honest**.

James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

4. **Repent**

True repentance is less about the words we say and more about the steps of obedience we take.

5. Refocus on **Jesus**

"If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. If you look at God, you'll be at **rest**." - **Corrie Ten Boom**

Renewal Prayer: "Holy Spirit, renew my mind. Reveal the lies and replace them with Your truth. I commit to a life of both confession and repentance so that I can win this war within my mind and refocus my life and thoughts on you. Amen."

Identity Statements from Scripture

Genesis 1:27	I am made in the image of God
Deuteronomy 31:8	I am not forgotten
Psalms 34:18	I am not alone
Psalms 139:1	I am known (see also Jeremiah 1:4-5)
Psalms 139:2	I am seen (see also Genesis 16:13)
Psalms 139:14	I am fearfully and wonderfully made
Psalms 139:15-16	I am not hidden
Isaiah 41:9	I am accepted
Isaiah 41:10	I am strengthened and upheld by God
Isaiah 43:4	I am precious, honored, and loved
Isaiah 53:5	I am healed
Jeremiah 31:3	I am loved
Zephaniah 3:17	I am delighted in
Matthew 5:13-14	I am the salt and light of the earth
Matthew 6:26	I am valuable
Matthew 6:31-33	I am cared for
John 1:12	I am a child of God (see also 1 John 3:1)
John 15:15	I am Christ's friend
John 15:16	I am chosen and appointed to bear fruit



Acts 1:8	I am a personal witness of Christ
Romans 5:1	I have been justified
Romans 8:1-2	I am forever free from condemnation
Romans 8:28	I am assured that all things work together for good
Romans 8:35-39	I cannot be separated from the love of God
Romans 8:38-39	I am secure
1 Corinthians 6:19-20	I have been bought with a price, I belong to God
2 Corinthians 5:18-19	I am forgiven (see also Colossians 1:14)
Ephesians 1:5	I have been adopted as God's child
Ephesians 1:11-12	I am chosen
Ephesians 2:10	I have purpose and am God's workmanship
Ephesians 2:18	I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit
Ephesians 3:12	I may approach God with freedom and confidence
Philippians 1:6	I am confident that God is sanctifying me
Philippians 4:13	I am strengthened by Christ
Colossians 2:10	I am complete in Christ
2 Timothy 1:7	I have been given a spirit of power, love and self control
Hebrews 4:16	I can find grace and mercy to help in time of need
1 John 5:18	I am protected

Week 8 - Mind Games

Small Group Guide

As we learn to live a lifestyle of abiding with God, one of the greatest battles we face is in our minds. Doubt, fear, and shame often surface the moment we slow down to meet with God. From the very beginning in the Garden of Eden, the enemy has attacked God's people not with loud rebellion, but with subtle questions designed to distort truth and undermine trust. In this message, we saw how the serpent used doubt to disrupt intimacy with God, and how the same tactics are still used today. The solution to these mind games is not ignoring them, but renewing our minds through truth, confession, repentance, and refocusing on Jesus. A renewed mind restores confidence, clarity, and connection with God.

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

Sermon Takeaways

- 1. The enemy attacks through subtle **doubt****
He doesn't start with rebellion, but with questions that distort God's truth and goodness.
- 2. Mind renewal is **essential** for discernment**
A renewed mind leads to transformation and clarity in God's will.
- 3. Lies must be **confronted**, not ignored**
Identifying and naming lies is the first step toward freedom.
- 4. God's **truth** replaces lies**
Lasting victory comes when God's Word confronts and corrects false beliefs.
- 5. Refocusing on Jesus restores **peace****
Where our focus goes, our confidence and clarity follow.

Core Practices

Weekly rhythms for developing a lifestyle of abiding

1. Identify and write down lies

When doubt or fear surfaces, write the lie out clearly instead of ignoring it.

2. Replace lies with Scripture

Find a verse that directly confronts the lie you're believing and meditate on it daily.

3. Confess

Bring recurring struggles or thoughts into the light with a trusted believer.

4. Worship

Take time this week to intentionally focus on Jesus. During this time of worship, let God renew your mind.

Discussion Questions

1. How does understanding Satan's strategy help you overcome doubt, fear, and shame?
2. Which lie from this message resonated most with you, and what truth from Scripture replaces it?
3. How does slowing down and renewing your mind help you better discern God's voice?

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The Abide Toolkit

A practical guide to living a life of depth, direction, and delight in God.

Introduction: The Heart of Abiding

Abiding is the daily lifestyle of remaining with Jesus—staying connected to His presence, His Word, and His voice.

“Abide in me... apart from me you can do nothing.”
John 15:4–5

Abiding is not an event or a Sunday moment. It is a daily rhythm of being with Jesus so that we can become like Jesus and do what Jesus calls us to do.

This toolkit provides the practical tools to build that daily lifestyle.

How to Study the Bible

YouVersion Bible App

Free on iOS and Android
Offers many translations, audio Bible, topical plans, and daily reminders

How to use it:

1. Pick a Bible reading plan
2. Turn on reminders
3. Highlight verses and add notes
4. Share verses with friends for accountability

Blue Letter Bible

www.blueletterbible.org
Powerful for studying original language, context, and cross-references

How to do a word study:

1. Choose a word (faith, abide, grace, truth, shepherd).
2. Search it in Blue Letter Bible.
3. Select a verse that uses it.
4. Open the Interlinear tool to view the original Greek or Hebrew.
5. Read definitions, usage, and additional passages.
6. Journal the insights.

Studying the Bible
this way brings
scripture **alive**.

Four Ways to Read the Bible

Systematic Reading

Reading from Genesis to Revelation.

Goal: see the whole story of Scripture.

Book-by-Book Study

Choose one book (John, Romans, Psalms) and dive deep.

Word Studies

Trace a theme through the whole Bible (grace, faith, Spirit, fruit).

Meditative Reading

Sit with one passage.

Ask God to speak.

Great places to start: John 15, Psalm 23, Romans 8.

S.O.A.P. Journal Guide

S — Scripture

Write the verse or passage that stands out.

O — Observation

What is happening? What does this reveal about God?

A — Application

What should I do with this truth?

P — Prayer

Ask God to help you respond.

Example:

S — **“Apart from me you can do nothing.” - John 15:5**

O — Jesus is the source of all fruit.

A — Begin the day with connection, not productivity.

P — “Lord, help me remain in you today.”

The 3x5 Desire Exercise

A discipline that reveals how God shapes your heart over time.

How it Works:

1. Take a 3×5 card.
2. Write today's date.
3. Write any real desire—big or small.
4. Do not filter the desire.
5. File it away.

Monthly Review

Label each card as:

**Kept,
Released,
Changed,
or Fulfilled.**

Questions to Ask

Did God redirect this
from ego to service?

Did comfort shift into calling?

Did image shift into fruitfulness?

The Desire Test

Before asking God for a desire, ask:

1. Does this glorify God? (see John 15:8)
2. Would this bear lasting fruit?
3. Can I pray the Daniel 3 prayer: *“Even if not, I will trust you”*?

From Striving to Thriving

Striving Looks Like:

Trying to earn
God's approval

Living under pressure,
not grace

Burnout

Comparison

Anxiety

Self-reliance

Fear and control

Thriving Looks Like:

Rooted identity

Joy in obedience

Sustainable
rhythms of rest

Peace and clarity

Spirit-led decisions

Serving from overflow

Deep connection
with God

How to Move From Striving to Thriving - A Biblical Pathway

Receive your identity in Christ • Ephesians 1-2
You are chosen, adopted, forgiven, & loved.

Rest in Christ's finished work • Hebrews 4
Striving ends when you trust what Christ has already done.

Remain connected daily • John 15
Fruit flows naturally from abiding.

Renew your mind • Romans 12:2
Replace lies with truth.

Release control • Proverbs 3:5-6
Trust God with outcomes.

Respond in obedience • James 1:22
Obedience unlocks transformation.

How to Confirm God's Voice

Use this four-part filter:

1. Scripture

God never contradicts His Word.

Ask:

Does this align with scripture?

2. Church

Wise believers help confirm God's leading.

Ask:

Is this confirmed by godly community and spiritual authority?

3. Circumstances

God opens and closes doors.

Ask:

Are circumstances aligning with this direction?

4. Peace

The Spirit's leading will require faith but be accompanied by peace.

Ask:

Am I experiencing God's peace as I step forward?

**When all four align,
move forward with confidence.**

**If one is off,
pause, pray, and seek clarity.**

Abide Daily Rhythm

Slow Down

Be still for 1-2 minutes.
Say, "Here I am, Lord."

Read

Use a reading plan
or SOAP.

Reflect

*What is God teaching me
about Himself?*

What is God shaping in me?

*What is He correcting or
encouraging?*

Respond

Pray honestly.

Ask for your
assignment
for the day.

Remain

Throughout the day, whisper breath prayers:

"Jesus, lead me."

"Holy Spirit, speak."

"I choose to stay connected."

Abide Community Practices

Confession

Bring sin & struggle
into the light. **James 5:16**

Accountability

Walk with one or two
trusted believers.

Encouragement

Share verses, testimonies,
and prayers.

Coporate Worship

We abide personally, but
not privately. Community
strengthens connection.

Spiritual Growth Checklist

Weekly Questions

- Did I slow down and meet with God?
- Did I read and reflect on Scripture?
- Did I bring my desires to God honestly?
- Am I forgiving quickly?
- Have I confessed anything weighing on me?
- Did I obey the assignment God gave me?

Growth Indicators

You're growing if you see:

- More peace
- More forgiveness
- More clarity
- Quicker obedience
- More joy
- Hunger for Scripture
- Less striving
- Compassion for others
- Less fear
- Fruit of the Spirit increasing

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weareradiant.com/abide