



Abiding in Christ

The hardest thing for Bible translators is not the learning of ancient languages such as Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic in which the Bible was originally written, but the more problematic issue of modern language as it keeps changing. It's not just that English has changed in its everyday usage from King James' time to the present, but that it continues to change and will do so even during the course of one's own lifetime. So sometimes there are words in the Bible that were very common to the English language at one time that are more difficult or obscure today. For instance, what does it mean to "abide" in Christ?

I have to admit that outside of church when there has been teaching concerning a verse using the word "abide", the only everyday usage of the word I can recall is somewhat negative: "I won't abide that kind of behavior". This usage came naturally to my grandmother and her generation, but we're more apt to state it as "I won't put up with it" or "I can't stand it". (Who knows what it will morph into for following generations?) "Abide" is a member of a group of words that continue to exist today, I believe, due to their prominence in Scripture, but might not be crystal clear as to their original meaning. So what does it mean to "abide" in Christ? There seem to be 4 main usages of "abide" in relationship to Christ: His person, His word, His teaching, and His love.

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

John 15:4

There's a sort of reciprocal action that takes place when we abide in Christ in that He, in return, abides in us. It's a life-decision as to what will be the center of life, the place from where one lives and proceeds. It's far beyond merely "believing" or "acknowledging" or "knowing" Christ; it's consuming and being consumed. Fruit is not produced by something sitting on the vine, visiting the vine, or admiring the vine. One has to become part of the vine. To abide in the person of Christ is to completely forsake our old nature and take on His and His alone.

Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

John 14:10

In providing for us the example that we need to abide in Christ just as He abides in the Father, Christ also conveys that God's Word is a result of that mutual, abiding relationship. In fact, it is the practical application of His Word in our life by which we prove whether or not we truly abide in Him:

As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

1 John 2:24

The act of abiding in Christ is not just something theoretical or ideological, but tangible to the degree that we embrace and follow His Word. The evidence of whether or not we truly abide in Christ is present to the degree of our faithfulness and obedience to His Word.

Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

2 John 9

This is further amplified by whether we live according to Christ's teaching. The biblical definition of someone that "hears" or "listens" is

someone that puts those things into practice. John plainly states that one cannot abide in Christ while straying from His teaching— they're mutually exclusive.

Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 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.
John 15:9-10

Notice the sequence: *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love"*. Love is not the beginning but the natural result of keeping His Word and teaching. Abiding in Christ is the process by which God's love is obtained, experienced, and shared. It is the result of a life consumed and being consumed by Him, keeping His Word, and putting into practice His teaching. It's the very example of Christ's own relationship with the Father that sets the example for our own relationship with Him.

The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.
1 John 3:24

The very presence of the Holy Spirit in each Believer's life is evidence of abiding in Christ. The Spirit testifies to His Word, we keep His commandments, the fruit of our life in Christ becomes visible in the quality of our deeds and love. It's the cycle of spiritual life in Him.

Finally, it is our hope not just for this life but for the next:

Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.
1 John 2:28

If Christ appeared at this very moment, would the level of your confidence in the degree to which you currently abide in Christ cause you to rejoice and rush to Him or shrink away in shame at the choices you've made? If the former, what is holding you back? To what are

you clinging? Just as you can't live in two houses at once, you need to make the definitive choice: Here or Him?

In His Love,

Servant@LogosWalk.com