



## The Abiding Life

The abiding life is the true Christian life. Jesus said, "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." (John 15:6)

John 15 gives us the pattern for spiritual growth and effectiveness as believers. In the passage, we are called branches, Christ is the vine, and the Father is the vinedresser. What are the characteristics of authentic branches?

**1. They bear the fruit of Christ's character and power.** Fruit is the life of Christ through the believer. It is excess life. The life of the Christian is to be one of daily dependence on Christ, rather than on himself. *Do people see Christ in you?*

*Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away... 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. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. (Vv.2a, 4-5)*

**2. They are pruned by God.** God cuts off the diseased and the nonessential aspects of the believer's life. It is up to the vinedresser to determine what is and is not useful. Pruning is painful but necessary. *Is this your experience?*

*Every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. (v. 2b)*

**3. They know the joy of living by God's Word and prayer.** God will entrust much in prayer to those whose minds are being renewed through His Word, for they pray according to His will. *Have you learned to live by God's Word and prayer?*

*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. (v. 7)*

**4. They keep Christ's commandments.** *Do you obey Him?*

*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. (v. 10)*

**5. They love those who are in Christ.** Christ taught us love by sacrifice. While loving all men, abiding Christians have a special affection for believers and eagerly express this love in the local church. *Is love the prominent feature of your life?*

*This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. (vv. 12-13)*

**6. They are often misunderstood.** *Does the world love you or hate you?*

*If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. (vv. 18-20)*

**7. They speak openly of Christ and what He has done.** That which is in the heart comes out of the mouth. *Do you speak of Christ?*

*When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, and you will bear witness also, because you have been with me from the beginning. (vv. 26-27)*

The abiding life is the ONLY true Christian life. *Is it the life you lead?*

*By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. (v. 8)*



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