

Day Eight

Jesus: Real, Relevant, Raw and Radical!

You can do nothing...

John 15:4-5(NKJV) *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. 5 “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**.*

We can do many things and accomplish many things. But according to Jesus, if I want to be successful God's way, Jesus must be the source and supply of everything I do. Not just the source and supply, but also the reason and motivation. Jesus says it plain and simple, “Without Me you can do nothing.” Only God can make that claim. Jesus makes sure that the disciples understand anything that they try to attempt without Him, is fruitless. Fruitful living is only possible when Jesus is at the center of it all. An abiding relationship is a totally dependent relationship. The greatest life is lived in total surrender and in total dependence on Jesus Christ. Jesus is not merely a crutch to lean on in times of hurt, or a shoulder to cry on in times of sorrow. He is not simply a spare tire to put on in times of emergency, or a magic genie to call on in times of desperation.

He is the God to worship. He is the Creator to acknowledge. He is the Savior to embrace. He is the Provider to thank. He is the Friend to rely on. He is the Comforter to seek after. He is the Truth to embrace. He is the Way to walk by. He is the Life to find. He is the Shepherd to follow. He is the King to bow before, and He is the Vine to abide in! Jesus is telling His disciples, “You should know what I have taught you. It is the knowledge, that without Me, nothing you say matters and nothing you do matters. But when you allow Me to work through you, walk through you, heal through you, and help through you, then My life flows through you to others. Then your abiding relationship with Me, has an eternal impact for you and for others.”

Jesus uses the picture of abiding in Him the same way as a branch abiding in a vine. To be cut off from the vine is to be cut off from the sustenance that is available, and the result is spiritual dryness. If you are dry spiritually, it is because you have allowed yourself, or are allowing yourself, to live outside of the lifegiving relationship that is available to you. You are trying to do life independently on your own, instead of dependently on the Life Giver!

Jesus also wants us to know that an abiding relationship is lived out through obedience to His Word. **John 15:7(NKJV)** *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”* Many people read this verse and totally misread what it says: “I can ask whatever I desire and I will get it!” Read it again.

“If you abide in Me and My words abide in you...” To have God’s Word abiding in you, means to have God’s will living through you.

When you abide in Him and His Words abide in you, what do you think happens to your will? His will is in His Word and His will is His desire. We receive His desires because we are living our lives in a constant state of submission and obedience to His Word. Living like that means His will becomes your will. When you allow His will to swallow your selfish will, it produces a disciple that asks according to His desire. Because His desire becomes your desire. The sap that flows through the vine, is it the same sap that flows through the branches? Most definitely! In your body, you cannot have two kinds of blood; the same way you do not have different sap in a tree. When we get our nourishment from the Vine, His Sap (Life) flows through us and His will becomes our will.

Do you want everything that God has for your life? Then obey His Word! This is not an abstract obedience to a bunch of rules and regulations. That simply makes people miserable. That’s called “religion.” Jesus did not come to start a religion; Jesus came so we could know the Father. Knowing the Father and abiding in Jesus is lived out by living a life of love. **John 15:9-10(NKJV)** *“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; **abide in My love.** 10 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.**”* The evidence of abiding is seen in the way you treat others!

The greatest proof of abiding is the ability to bear up under the burden of difficult relationships. You cannot hang around Jesus and not be in love with what He is in love with! He loves people. People are His priority and His agenda. Broken people. Messed up people. Miserable people. Fallen people. Sinful people. Spiteful people. Vicious people. Capricious people. Selfish people. Self-absorbed people. Self-righteous people. Unholy people. Uncouth people. Unrighteous people. Egotistical people. Hateful people. What’s-in-it-for-me kind of people. Even so-called good people. All these are the ones He came and died for! And guess what He tells us? He loves us the same way the Father loved Him, and He expects us to love others the way He loves us!

Jesus wants to make sure that we understand this truth: Obedience and love are inseparable! To walk in obedience is to walk in love, and to love is to obey! The only way to walk in His love is to do what He tells us to do! Jesus does not mess around when it comes to us loving others. **“V17 These things I command you, that you love one another.”**

When you abide in Him, He gives you the ability to do what you cannot do on your own. When you have not been around Him, everything and everybody begins to work on your nerves. When people begin to irritate you, it is a great indicator that you are

distancing yourself from the Vine and the Vinedresser. Proximity to Jesus produces an ability to tolerate the intolerable. As Jesus shares this intimate truth with His disciples, He knows what is ahead of Him. He also knows what is ahead of them. So, He reminds them to abide. Because without abiding in Him, victorious living is not even faintly possible.

He finishes His message right before He prays and gives them the results that would be evident in someone that abides in Him. **A life of joy. John 15:11-16(NKJV)** *"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."* **A life of sacrificial love. V12-13** *"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."* **A life of friendship and insight. V14-15** *"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you".* **A life of fruitfulness and fulfillment. V16** *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you."*

"Without Me you can do nothing." May we as Christ followers realize that our potential and purpose can only be fulfilled when we are constantly and consistently abiding in Jesus. That our worth is not in doing, but in being, and the only way for our work to have eternal value is to abide in the Vine.

Prayer:

- **Ask the Lord's forgiveness where you have attempted to do life without Him.**
- **Pray for a heart of obedience to His Word.**
- **Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to practically love the people in your world.**
- **Thank the Lord that He calls you friend.**
- **Pray that your life will create a hunger for others to know Him.**