

Abiding In Christ

The Christian's Secret to Success

by Jason Peebles

Have you ever wondered if there is one central key to success in life? Like the miners in the gold rush days, is there a “mother lode” that we should all be looking for? Well, I believe there is. In fact, I know there is. **The key that I am referring to is THE MASTER KEY that will launch you to a whole new level of living.** It will bless you in every way. With this key, you will be able to unlock the impossible.

Success Keys

Most of us search for **keys to success**. We may want to become better parents, better spouses, or improve our finances. And, we are willing to spend money for good information. We buy books and attend seminars. There’s nothing wrong with this, necessarily. Yet, like the miners looking for gold, we are in danger of spending all our time looking for little nuggets and miss the main vein of gold!

The Master Key to life is ABIDING IN CHRIST. This is the “mother lode.” Does that sound too simple for you? Well, hold on, because there’s a lot to it. When you learn to **ABIDE IN CHRIST** you will be connected to Him in a way that can turn any situation around. He knows what you should do. His wisdom, His strength, and His miracle working power will be available to you. Regardless of where you are now, abiding in Christ will take you to a whole new level.

It is important for you to understand that Christians do not worship the “Jesus principle” or a set of metaphysical keys. No, it is our privilege to walk with the living resurrected Jesus Christ! For believers, the center of the universe is our union with Jesus Christ. **As you learn to walk with Him, fellowship with Him, and allow Him to direct your decisions, you will experience amazing results. Like Jesus, you will learn to participate in the “works” of the Father (Jn 5:17-20).** He can work IN you and THROUGH you. Look at the results that are promised in Ephesians 3:20 – “*Now unto Him that is able to do EXCEEDINGLY ABUNDANTLY ABOVE all that we ask or think, according to the power that works IN US.*” This can be true in your life as you learn to abide.

Christ in You

In Galatians 2:20 Paul said, “*It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives IN me.*” In another place, Paul states that the grand mystery of life is, “*Christ IN you, the hope of glory*” (Col 1:27). Now pause a moment and let that sink in. Do you have a consciousness that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, actually lives IN YOU? Or, like most believers, is your version of Christianity a list of “dos and don’ts” or a busy church schedule? You see, if that’s your view of Christianity, it will keep you from tapping into the secret of abiding.

All the apostles understood this simple secret. The apostle John said that he was writing his letters so that we could have “fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn 1:3). He wasn’t just writing about self-help principles. No, he clearly states that he wants us to enter into FELLOWSHIP with the risen Savior. Think about it. Jesus Christ desires to be active in the hearts and minds of His people. He wants to commune with you, guide you, and help you fulfill your destiny. It will be a major step forward in your life when you grasp the truth that Christ is IN you – and that your first priority must be to ABIDE in Him.

John 15 – Abide in Me

In John 15 Jesus gives us the Christian’s secret for success. John 15:7 says: “*If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and*

it shall be done unto you.” What a promise! Abiding will bring results!

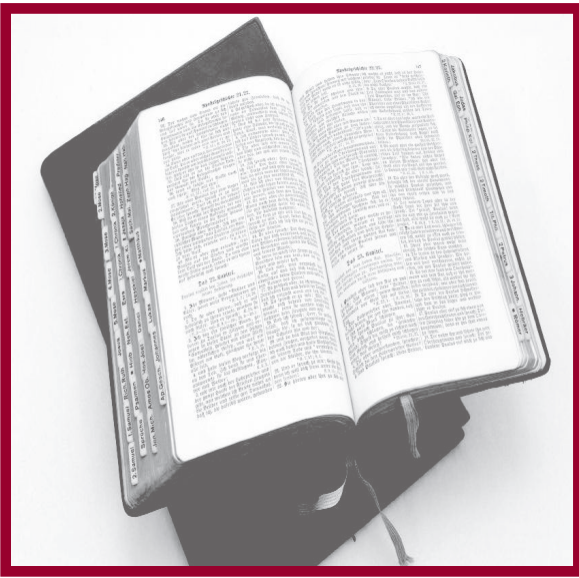
John 15:5 says, “I am the vine and you are the branches.” Stop for a moment and think about this illustration. The branch is totally and absolutely dependent on the vine for all its needs. If the branch stays connected, then the sap can flow. If the branch becomes detached, then the water and nutrients stop flowing. It’s that simple. Only as the branch stays “connected” will it receive the nutrients it needs to bear fruit. Without the vine the branch will wither and dry up. Do you see the point? The word “abide” means “*to remain, stay, dwell, and reside.*” Jesus was not talking about being ‘saved’ or ‘unsaved.’ He gave this illustration to His disciples who already believed. Friend, this isn’t rocket science! Jesus is simply telling us that we must be careful to stay “connected” to Him in our hearts and minds. Colossians 3:1,2 says, “*If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your hearts on things above, not on things of the earth.*”

Now, I want you to apply this to your life. **Your first calling in life is not to be a good wife, husband, parent, business person, or even a good minister.** If you put any of those things first, then you will be disappointed. Nor should Church attendance, Bible studies, or other good works be confused with abiding. No, Jesus is calling you to fellowship with Him throughout the day. That’s how the “branch” stays connected to the “vine.” He wants you to daily seek His counsel in your decisions. **Furthermore, your first priority is not to bear fruit. YOUR FIRST PRIORITY IS TO MAINTAIN CONNECTION.** That is what allows the fruit you desire to come.

Results of Abiding

When you abide in Christ (*there are different ways to describe it - walking in the Spirit, entering His rest, fellowshiping with Him, trusting Him*) – there are wonderful results that you can expect in your life. Here are some of the main ones –

1. Increased communion with Jesus Christ - Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will bring all things to your remembrance (Jn 14:26). Throughout the day you can talk to Him, put your affairs in His hands, and learn to trust Him for answers and solutions.



2. Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's voice – you will learn to hear the still small voice in your heart and mind. The Holy Spirit wants to guide you with His inner witness and peace. Rom 8:14-17

3. Submitting to and resting in the will of God – you are on an exciting adventure! Discovering God's will and fulfilling your destiny is what TRUE SUCCESS is all about. Once you commit to abiding, God will pick you up right where you are (mistakes and all) and lead you. Paul said, *"I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision"* Acts 26:19. Abiding is your ticket to God's assignments for your life.

4. Establishing God's priorities for your life – as you learn to abide, it will no doubt cause some changes. Your plans and priorities will start lining up with God's unfolding plan. Some things that you thought were extremely important will drop by the wayside as God gives you His priorities and His plans. Eph 4:22-32

5. Responding to others with God's love – when you abide in Christ, His presence will require you to walk in love, for God is love (1 Jn 4:8-11). It may take time, but you will have an increasing desire to treat others fairly, show kindness and patience, and forgive them as God has forgiven you. Your life will start reflecting the fruit of the Spirit more and more. Eph 5:1-2 / Gal 5:22

6. Miracles and answered prayer - John 15:7 clearly links abiding to answered prayer (fruit). Abiding enables you to "get in step" with God's plans. He wants to bless your life and help you reach others. Life will become the exciting adventure that God intended as you learn to participate in miracles. My definition of "supernatural" is -- *God's super + Your natural!*

7. Experiences of persecution and rejection - wow, this is not one that you want to claim by faith! But it's true – when you walk with Christ, some will not understand and some will reject you. You might as well prepare your mind for some of this. It goes with the territory. Jn 15:19,20

Developing the Abiding Life

OK, now to some practical things that can help you develop the abiding life. But first, I must give you a warning. It would be a wrong assumption to think that by "working hard" you can guarantee the presence of God. Such is not the case! Once you make that false assumption, then you are by definition "religious." Going to church is important, but millions do it every week and never walk with Christ. Reading your Bible is great, but it may never change your heart. I can tell you that some of the most meaningful, intimate, and powerful times of God's presence in my life were when I did not know these truths – but I had a heart for God. Thank God for His mercy and grace. **Yet, on the other hand, I can say with confidence that certain keys will definitely help you grow in this area of abiding. Thus, I present this list, not as a recipe for God's presence, but more as "tools" to help you grow in this privilege of walking with Christ.** Here are some major keys that have helped me --

1. Guarding your heart. Friend, I cannot emphasize this enough! This is certainly number one! Think about it -- David's heart turned away with disastrous results. He allowed a woman to temporarily take God's place in his heart. Solomon, Samson, and almost all the kings of the Old Testament drifted at times. Let his verse become a principle that you live by --

2 Chronicles 26:5 says, "AS LONG AS he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper." As long – as long – as long – AS LONG AS he sought the Lord he

prospered. We must stay connected! We must all guard our hearts from things that would pull us away from abiding in our Savior. I know, for I have missed it in this area myself. Wrong relationships, the desire for things, and even too much church work can cause your heart to grow cold. None of these things can satisfy like staying connected with Christ. He is your home. He is your strength. Mk 4:1-20 / Prov 4:20-27 / 1 Jn 2:15-17

2. Reading, studying, and meditating in God's Word. What a privilege that we have a Bible to read and study. I've traveled all over the world and I have seen many people who could not get a Bible. But you have one! **In Joshua 1:8 God gave Joshua the key to success. He told him to read the Word, meditate in it, and speak it. If he did, God promised – "THEN you will make your way prosperous and then you will have good success."** The same is true today. God will speak to you from the Word; guide you from the Word; and strengthen you from the Word. As you make reading God's Word a priority, your spiritual life will begin to soar like an eagle.

3. The listening side of prayer. Prayer involves listening and not just talking. Train yourself to pause throughout the day and "listen." **Be sensitive to a Bible verse that God may remind you of; a strong impression that may come; the still small voice in your heart; and His peace or lack of it.** Ephesians 6:18 talks about "watching" in prayer – that is, being sensitive to what God may want to communicate to you in some fashion.

4. Worshiping with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs throughout the day. My spiritual life grew leaps and bounds once I discovered the key of worshiping throughout the day. We all have those "in-between-times" each day where we can sing to Him. No one else need know. At first, you may feel shy about this. But try it! If you don't know a song, then just take a favorite Psalm and sing your way through it, creating a melody as you go. **Singing in the Spirit "tunes" your mind to the voice of God. God inhabits the praises of His people.** Ps 22:3 / Eph 5:18-19 / Col 3:16

5. Yielding to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of the Holy Spirit as listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 are powerful tools that are given to all believers. If you are

a Christian, then the Holy Spirit lives in you (Eph 1:13). And, if He lives in you, then the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit are available to you. Learn to yield to them. Ask God to help you cultivate the speaking gifts, the revelation gifts, and the power gifts. Abiding means asking God for a word of wisdom when you need it. When faced with a challenge, ask for the gift of faith. **The gifts of the Spirit are "tools" for victory and will help you walk in His authority.**



6. Fellowshiping with positive, faith-filled believers. It's sad that many Christians are negative instead of positive. **It is important for you to find a church that teaches a positive message instead of majoring on all the world's ills.** There's a transference of anointing when you spend time with others. If you spend time with people who love God, teach faith, and encourage you, then it will strengthen your life. If they are negative, it will pull you down. Proverbs 13:20 says, *"He that walks with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."*

7. Sharing your faith with others. When you share Christ, it puts you in a position of having to trust Him. There's a special joy that comes when you encourage others. **The easiest way to do this is to look for problems.** What do I mean by that? When someone has a problem or a need, speak up and offer to pray with them (2 Cor 1:4). That always opens the door for a casual and friendly opportunity to share about your Savior. Simply share your heart.

Dear friend, may the Holy Spirit draw you into a deeper level of the abiding in Christ. This is my greatest desire for your life.

■ Jason Peebles

Key Memory Verse:

“If you abide in Me, and My Word abides in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.”

John 15:7

Prayer To Abide

“Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for my sins. I accept His sacrifice for my life and commit my life to Him. I want to grow in the Abiding Life. I choose to stay connected to Him like a branch in the vine. Strengthen me by the Holy Spirit and teach me to abide more and more. Thank you for your great love for me. In Jesus Name – Amen”

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P.O. Box B

Marietta, GA 30061

(designate for Home office)