

The Church of the Servant King

Survey of the Bible Series – The Gospel of John (SB_JN15B_Privileges of Abiding)

Introduction

In verses 1-8, we studied Jesus' intimate teaching with His disciples regarding principles of spiritual life. Jesus used an analogy to a vine and vineyard in His teaching. In this analogy, we observed the following:

Verse	Figure or Phrase	Represents
1, 5	True vine	Jesus
1	Vinedresser	God the Father
2,5	Branches	Disciples
2	Takes away	Lifts up, encourages
2	He prunes	Cleansing
3	You are already clean	The cleansing of the words Jesus had spoken to them
4, 5, 6, 7	Abide	Remain
4, 5, 6, 7	In Me	Communion or fellowship vs. union or positional truth as in Paul's use of "in Christ"
6	They	The unbelieving world
6	Cast out	Disregard, consider worthless

The essence of Jesus' teaching in verses 1-8 was that the disciples could only be productive witnesses to the world if they remained in fellowship with Him and produced the fruit of love for one another. Abiding in Jesus was the pre-requisite for fruit bearing. If they failed to abide in Jesus, thus if they failed to bear the fruit of love for one another, then they would be considered worthless by the unbelieving world and disregarded or cast out.

The Privilege of Answered Prayer and Conscious Glorification of God (15:7-8)

In verses 7-8, Jesus began to describe some of the privileges of "abiding" or "remaining" in Him. In verse 7, we looked at Jesus' teaching regarding effective prayer or prayers that are answered. In that verse, there are two conditions that are given for prayer to be answered: 1) "abiding" or "remaining" in Him which, as we have seen, is tantamount to obedient fellowship; and 2) His "words abide" in the disciples.

Principle: The believer cannot remain (commune or fellowship) in Jesus if His words do not remain in the believer. See Colossians 3:16 – "Let the *word of Christ dwell in you richly* in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord."

Principle: Only the believer whose mind is saturated with the Word will possess an understanding of the real, Biblical Jesus instead of the idealized personality that is constructed from a vague and worldly paradigm that is ignorant of Truth.

Principle: It takes an understanding of who the real Jesus is for the believer to know how to pray effectively.

Principle: The believer who does not have a mind saturated with the Word will possess a view of Jesus that is, by default, self-centered.

Principle: The believer who does not have a mind saturated with the Word will desire things that conflict with His plan, purpose and principles for the spiritual life and for human history.

Principle: The believer whose mind is saturated with the Word can think using a rationale based upon the principles and doctrines possessed by Jesus and thereby avail himself or herself to the ministry of the Holy Spirit Who provides guidance or leads the believer in actions or in paths that the Father would have the believer to take. (For example, Jesus, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in His human life, knew what the heavenly Father would have Him do. Therefore, He asked the heavenly Father with confidence when He prayed. See John 11:41-42 for instance).

Principle: When the believer remains in Christ and His words remain in the believer, the believer will enjoy the experience of having His thoughts and words fill even the subconscious mind and emotions.

In verse 8, Jesus explains another privilege of “abiding” or “remaining” in Christ – the privilege of consciously glorifying God the Father. When the believer becomes like Christ in the sense that he/she has appropriated the character of God into his/her life, the believer bears fruit (love for the brethren in context), thus glorifies God. This is vitally related to the reason God predestined the Church Age believer – to be conformed to the image of His Son (Ro 8:29). When we thus glorify God in our lives, Jesus is satisfied with the results of His sacrificial work on earth (see Isa 53:11 – “He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.”) This glorification of Christ and the Father is a conscious experience of the believer resulting from the Holy Spirit ministering to the believer’s human spirit. The peace and joy that passes human understanding is result in the believer’s life.

The Privilege of Personal Awareness of God’s Love (15:9-10)

In verse 9, Jesus teaches His disciples the principle that they have the privilege of being loved with exactly the same kind of love that God has for His Own Son Who resides continually in the bosom of the Father.

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. (Jn 1:18)

As My Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. (Jn 15:9)

And I have declared to them your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them. (Jn 17:26)

It is expected that the believer will be aware of God’s love and take comfort in it. See Romans 5:5. The condition for this constant awareness of God’s love is that the believer obeys Jesus’ commands (v. 10). As the believer demonstrates love for Christ by obeying His commands; God provides further demonstration of His love for the believer, thus continuing the cycle of fellowship. Another way of stating this principle – as the believer gains **objectivity** (vs. subjectivity) in his/her life by saturating the mind with the Word and as the believer gains **momentum** in his/her spiritual walk in **humble** and **yielded** obedience, the believer grows in **personal love for God** which motivates greater **impersonal or unconditional love for mankind**. (Do you recognize the components of the spiritual power sphere here?) This unconditional or impersonal love for mankind finds expression in the believer’s life (Jn 15:12-13) so that God is glorified.

The Privilege of Possessing the Joy of Jesus (15:11)

We can interpret the word *joy* as sharing the happiness of God, another component in the spiritual power sphere that we have studied in our spiritual life of the believer series. Although

Jesus endured undeserved suffering to a greater extent than any other human and that suffering was a part of God the Father's plan, Jesus had surpassing joy.

You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore, God, Your god, has anointed You with the oil of gladness [joy] more than Your companions. (Heb 1:9)

Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb 12:2)

Jesus desires to share this joy with believers in all their circumstances. The condition is IF they will abide (remain occupied) with Him.

But now I come to You [God the Father], and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. (Jn 17:13)

The Privilege of Experiencing the Love of Others (15:12-14)

The problem with loving others is that the "others" are sinful human beings. A good litmus test to determine whether you are abiding in Jesus is whether you can show love to other people as Jesus did. Jesus died for some of the most unattractive souls who are now believers. Do you have an objective, unconditional love for sinful people of any race, social class, physical condition, ailment or status in life? While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom 5:8).

Note an important distinction in these verses. Jesus defines His "friends" as those who do whatever He commands them. Jesus identifies the disciples as His friends in verse 15. Evidently, the disciples were willing to do what Jesus commanded. One of the repeated commands of Jesus in this section is that they love one another (Jn 13:35; 15:12, 17) and follow His example of self-sacrificial behavior in exhibiting that love (15:12-13). Yieldedness or trust in Jesus to the extent of obeying His command results in an increased awareness on the part of the yielded believer of God's love for him/her. No other group of humans has the privilege of experiencing the depth of love for God and other members of the human race than do yielded believers.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. (1 Jn 4:7)

We love Him because He first loved us. (1 Jn 4:19)

And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also. (1 Jn 4:21)

The Privilege of Being a Friend of Jesus (15:15)

Only a select few individuals in the Bible are called "friends." However, we have the same privilege extended to us IF we yield to His will in our lives and remain occupied with Him. The believer who so yields to God will find himself or herself in great company. Some examples of individuals in the Bible who were considered friends of God include:

- ❖ Abraham – 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8
- ❖ Moses – Exodus 33:11
- ❖ Daniel – "highly esteemed" by God – Daniel 10:19
- ❖ David – "a man after God's own heart" – Acts 13:22

The Privilege of Producing Eternal Fruit (15:16-17)

In this passage, Jesus distinguishes between human good and divine good. All "good" or philanthropic efforts performed by a believer during his/her lifetime will be burned at the bema seat judgment unless they were performed out of love for Jesus and consistent with divine viewpoint principles of life.

I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. (1 Co 2:3-5)