

PURPOSE-LED DISCIPLESHIP

ABIDE

A One Day Retreat Experience

Participant Workbook

Remain in Christ. Receive His life. Bear fruit that lasts.

A companion to

Abide: Remaining in Christ, Bearing Fruit for His Glory

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Purpose-Led Discipleship

Welcome

Abide is a one day invitation to slow down and notice what has been supplying your inner life. You may have arrived hopeful, tired, guarded, distracted, hungry for God, or unsure what you need. You do not have to make the day look a certain way. You are invited to come honestly.

This workbook is a companion to Abide: Remaining in Christ, Bearing Fruit for His Glory, but it also stands on its own. You do not need to read the book before attending. Keep what you write private unless you choose to share it. You may pass during conversation, step out when needed, and return when you are ready.

THE HEART OF THE DAY Surrender opens our hands. Abiding teaches us where to remain. Jesus does not ask you to become your own source. He invites you to receive His life, respond to His truth, and keep returning.

Saturday Schedule

Time	Gathering	Purpose
9:00–9:30	Welcome, gospel foundation, worship, and settling	Begin with Christ, arrive honestly, and become present to God.
9:30–10:35	Movement One: Remain Before You Produce	Receive the invitation to relationship before activity.
10:35–10:50	Break	Rest, refreshments, and quiet.
10:50–12:00	Movement Two: What Are You Asking to Hold You?	Name false sources of safety, worth, and control.
12:00–12:45	Lunch	Eat, connect, and let the morning settle.
12:45–12:55	Quiet return	Reenter the day without rushing.
12:55–2:10	Movement Three: When Remaining Feels Hard	Abide through silence, waiting, pain, and uncertainty.
2:10–2:25	Break	Move, breathe, and receive care.
2:25–3:30	Movement Four: Living From the Vine	Build a life of receiving, responding, and bearing fruit.
3:30–4:00	Closing response and commissioning	Receive, release, remain, and return to ordinary life.

A Simple Rhythm

- Receive the teaching without trying to solve everything at once.
- Reflect honestly. Your private writing belongs to you.
- Share only what you choose.
- Listen without fixing or comparing.
- Respond with one faithful step rather than an ambitious promise.
- Return when your attention wanders. Returning is part of remaining.

Before We Abide

Relationship Begins with Christ

You do not need to have attended another retreat, read another resource, or understand every Christian word to begin. Abiding means continuing in a relationship with Jesus, so we begin by making that relationship clear.

Christian faith begins with Jesus Christ, not with self improvement or a spiritual experience. Every person has sinned and needs God's mercy (Romans 3:23). Because God loves us, He sent Jesus Christ, His only Son (John 3:16–17). Jesus lived a blameless life without sin (Hebrews 4:15), died on the cross for all our sins, and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). On the cross, He stood in our place and bridged the separation our sin created. Jesus alone provides the way to the Father (John 14:6). Salvation is received by grace through faith, not earned by religious work.

Ephesians 2:8–9 (KJV)

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

FOR THOSE RETURNING If you already belong to Christ, let this be a quiet return: I trust You again. Keep me close. Teach me to receive before I produce.

Room to Listen and Consider

Nothing is assumed about your background. You are welcome to listen, ask questions, and consider what you hear. Near the end of the day, you will be given time to respond honestly to Christ if you choose.

No one needs to imitate another person's response or make a decision before understanding what is being offered.

My Starting Point

What am I carrying into this day?

What has been taking most of my inner attention?

Where do I feel close to God right now? Where do I feel distant, guarded, or uncertain?

What would help me become present rather than perform?

A simple prayer for the beginning of this day:

Movement One

Remain Before You Produce

John 15:4 (KJV)

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

Relationship with Christ is not the reward for fruitful living. It is the source from which fruitful living grows.

Why This Matters

It is possible to know true things about God, work for God, and still keep the actual heart at a distance. Jesus begins with relationship. He invites us to receive before we produce, listen before we speak, and bring Him the life we are actually living.

Read Along

Jesus spoke about abiding as the cross approached. His disciples were about to face confusion, fear, failure, and a future they could not control. He did not give them a method for preventing every hard thing. He gave them a place to remain: Himself.

A branch does not create its own life. It receives. Its fruit is evidence of connection, not proof of independence. This does not make the branch passive. It grows and responds, but it never becomes its own source. Dependence on Christ is not something mature believers outgrow.

We can turn spiritual activity into a way of proving worth. Service, Bible study, ministry, prayer, and responsibility are good, but even good activity can become a hiding place. Like Martha, we can become troubled and distracted while trying to serve Jesus. The invitation is not always to do less. It is to stop asking activity to become the source of closeness, safety, or identity.

Abiding also means coming without pretending. God already knows the fear, anger, disappointment, numbness, or longing beneath our words. Honest prayer is not a failure of faith. It is a way of remaining in relationship with the One who knows the truth and does not turn away.

1 John 4:19 (KJV)

"We love him, because he first loved us."

Listen For

- Where has activity replaced attention to Christ?
- What are you trying to prove, secure, or prevent?

- What would it mean to receive rather than manufacture?
- What part of your actual heart needs to enter the conversation with God?

From Proving to Remaining

Where have I been working for God without making room to be with God?

What do I fear would happen if I stopped proving, producing, or holding everything together?

What do I believe God expects from me before I am allowed to draw near?

What is true about Jesus that answers that belief?

What might receiving look like in this moment?

A Prayer I Can Tell the Truth In

Dear Jesus, I have been trying to _____.

Underneath that effort, I am afraid _____.

Your Word shows me _____.

Help me receive _____.

Group Conversation

- What is the difference between receiving from Christ and becoming passive?
- Why can activity feel safer than quiet relationship?
- What helps truth about God become honest conversation with God?
- What does returning without pretending look like?

What I Want to Remember

One truth that became personal:

One place I want to stop pretending:

My next faithful response:

Movement Two

What Are You Asking to Hold You?

Psalm 62:5–6 (KJV)

"My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved."

A false vine is anything we ask to supply what only Christ can securely hold.

Why This Matters

Control, approval, performance, rescue, constant activity, and self protection often carry deeper promises. They tell us they can keep us safe, make us worthy, prevent loss, or guarantee belonging. Naming the promise helps us understand why a pattern is difficult to release.

Read Along

We rarely choose striving because exhaustion is appealing. We choose it because it promises something we deeply want. Control promises protection. Approval promises belonging. Performance promises worth. Rescue promises that we will remain needed. Constant noise promises that pain will not catch us.

A good gift can become a false source. Work, parenting, marriage, friendship, ministry, routine, and community all matter. But no gift can carry the weight of becoming our vine. When we require another person, role, result, or routine to make us secure, the gift begins demanding our peace.

Some protective patterns were learned in real pain. Hyperawareness, overfunctioning, silence, usefulness, or emotional distance may once have helped us survive. We do not shame the need beneath the pattern. We bring it into the light and ask whether the pattern is now keeping us from truth, rest, wise help, healthy boundaries, or relationship.

Faithful effort and anxious striving are not the same. Faithful effort carries what God has actually entrusted to us. Striving attempts to control the outcome, timing, meaning, or another person's response. Faithful effort can rest because God remains God while we stop.

REMEMBER Abiding never asks you to ignore danger, remain in abuse, abandon wise boundaries, or surrender responsibility for choices that belong to you.

Listen For

- What promise keeps a current pattern in place?

- What is the pattern demanding from you?
- What is it costing your peace, relationships, body, or obedience?
- What deeper need can be brought honestly to Christ?

False Vines Inventory

Choose one present pattern. Begin where you have enough safety and clarity. You do not have to choose the most painful part of your story today.

The source I keep reaching for

The promise it makes

What it demands from me

What it is costing me

The need beneath the pattern

What Christ offers that this source cannot securely give

Responsibility and Control

Abiding does not remove responsibility. It helps us carry what is ours without trying to carry what belongs to God or another person.

What God Has Entrusted to Me

Examples: telling the truth, setting a boundary, completing today's work, asking for help, apologizing, following wise counsel, or taking the next clear step.

What I Have Tried to Control

Examples: another person's response, the timing of an outcome, being understood by everyone, preventing every loss, or knowing the entire future.

What can I release without abandoning what is mine to do?

Group Conversation

- Why do false sources feel dependable even when they exhaust us?
- How can a good gift become something we ask to be our vine?
- What is the difference between responsibility and control?
- How can we release a protective pattern without shaming the need beneath it?

Prayer of Release

Dear Jesus, I have been asking _____ to hold what belongs in Your hands.

The need beneath it is _____.

What You have actually entrusted to me is _____.

What I am releasing is _____.

Help me receive _____.

Movement Three

When Remaining Feels Hard

Isaiah 50:10 (KJV)

"Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God."

Faith is not proven by always feeling God near. Sometimes abiding means staying with Him when the path is dark and the heart has no easy answer.

Why This Matters

Silence, waiting, grief, uncertainty, and painful change can make remaining feel difficult. Scripture gives us room to tell the truth without leaving the relationship. It also gives us a path for wise discernment when the whole future is not visible.

Read Along

Isaiah describes a person who fears the Lord and obeys, yet walks in darkness and has no light. The darkness is not presented as proof of rebellion. The instruction is to trust in the Lord and stay upon God. A quiet or unclear season does not automatically mean God has abandoned the relationship.

Feelings matter, but they are not the whole truth. We can acknowledge that God feels distant without making the feeling the final statement about His character. Abiding may mean continuing to turn toward the God we know while admitting that we do not understand what He is doing.

Pruning is purposeful care, but not every pain should be labeled pruning. God can meet us, correct us, strengthen us, and redeem what has happened. That does not mean every illness, betrayal, abuse, or loss was a personal lesson He sent. We do not have to force an explanation in order to remain with Him.

Lament is one way we stay. It turns toward God, tells the truth, asks clearly, and chooses the next trust. It does not deny pain, and it does not abandon relationship because pain exists.

When direction is unclear, Scripture remains the standard. We examine character, fruit, motives, counsel, and timing. We stay willing to be corrected. Then we take the next clear step without pretending to see the entire path.

Listen For

- What have you interpreted God's silence to mean?
- Where do you need permission to grieve without forcing an explanation?
- What truth about God can you stay upon?
- What next step is clear even though the whole path is not?

Name the Season

You may be in more than one kind of season. Naming it is not the same as explaining it.

- Waiting
- Grief
- Rebuilding
- Correction
- Uncertainty
- Weariness
- Transition
- Fruitfulness
- Beginning again

The words that best describe my present season:

What feels hardest to hold before God?

What explanation have I been trying to force?

Where might God be meeting me without answering every question?

An Honest Prayer

Turn Toward God

Dear Heavenly Father, here is where I am...

Tell the Truth

What hurts, confuses, frightens, or feels missing...

Ask Clearly

What I need from You, and what help I may need to seek...

Choose the Next Trust

One true thing about Your character that I can stay upon...

A Discernment Path

Scripture: What has God already made clear?

Character: Does this direction reflect the character of Christ?

Fruit: What is this producing in me and around me?

Motive: What fear, desire, wound, or outcome may be influencing me?

Counsel: What do wise, trustworthy believers recognize?

Time: Is urgency forcing a conclusion that wisdom would let mature?

Obedience: What is the next clear step that belongs to me?

Correction: Am I willing for God to redirect me?

Group Conversation

- What makes it difficult to remain when God feels quiet?
- How does lament differ from giving up on God?
- Why is it harmful to label every painful experience pruning?
- What does faithfulness look like when only the next step is visible?

What I Want to Carry Forward

One truth I can stay upon:

One question I can leave unanswered for now:

One wise next step:

One person or resource from whom I can receive support:

Movement Four

Living From the Vine

Colossians 2:6–7 (KJV)

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."

Abiding becomes visible not through a perfect routine, but through a life that keeps receiving, responding, obeying, resting, and returning.

Why This Matters

The retreat ends, but ordinary life continues. Kitchens, vehicles, workplaces, classrooms, relationships, interruptions, responsibilities, and quiet decisions become the places where connection with Christ grows into fruit.

Read Along

Fruit is evidence of shared life. We cannot manufacture the character of Christ by appearing spiritual. We cooperate with God through obedience, repentance, Scripture, prayer, rest, and community, but the Spirit forms the fruit.

Fruit is not limited to visible success. It may look like a gentler response, a truthful apology, patience under pressure, integrity when no one is watching, courage to set a wise boundary, willingness to receive help, or peace that is no longer controlled by another person's reaction.

Spiritual practices are pathways, not proof. They help us turn toward Christ. They are not a scorecard that earns His nearness. Missing a morning routine does not remove access to God for the rest of the day. We can return in the next honest moment.

Healthy Christian community helps us remember truth, receive encouragement, recognize blind spots, and carry burdens. It points us toward Christ without making a leader or group our source. Rest also belongs in a faithful life. It declares that God remains God while we stop.

The most useful rhythm is not the most impressive one. It is the rhythm that can live inside the responsibilities we actually have and keep turning our attention toward Jesus.

Galatians 5:22–23 (KJV)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

Listen For

- What quiet fruit may already be growing?
- Which practices help relationship, and which have become measurements?
- Where in ordinary life do you most need to return?
- What kind of community helps you stay connected to Christ?

A Simple Abiding Rhythm

This is not a contract proving devotion. Choose what is realistic for your present season. A small rhythm you can return to is more useful than an ambitious plan that becomes another source of striving.

Receive: What small space will help me receive Scripture?

Respond: What ordinary moment will remind me to turn toward God in prayer?

Obey: What next faithful step has already become clear?

Walk Together: Who can meet me with truth, grace, prayer, and wise boundaries?

Rest: What will help me release what does not belong in my hands?

Return: What truth will remind me to come back without hiding?

Fruit in Ordinary Life

Do not look only for dramatic evidence. Notice where the life of Christ is becoming real in small responses.

In my closest relationships, fruit may look like...

Under pressure, fruit may look like...

In work or responsibility, fruit may look like...

In boundaries and truth telling, fruit may look like...

In rest and receiving help, fruit may look like...

In the way I return after failure, fruit may look like...

One quiet fruit I believe God may already be forming:

Group Conversation

- What kind of fruit might God be forming that is easy to overlook?
- Which spiritual practice helps you receive rather than perform?
- Where in ordinary life do you most need a reminder to return?
- How can community walk beside us without becoming our source?

My Next Faithful Step

The one response I want to carry into this week:

What could make this unrealistic?

How can I make it smaller, clearer, or more honest?

Who may walk beside me?

Closing Response

Receive, Release, Remain

There are two honest ways to respond. You may begin a relationship with Christ by placing your trust in Him, or you may return to the relationship you already have. Both responses should be honest, and neither will be measured by a staged public moment.

Receive: What truth or grace am I receiving from Christ?

Release: What have I tried to make my source, control, or carry alone?

Remain: What simple response will help me stay turned toward Jesus?

The Gospel and Your Response

Everything we have explored rests on one Person: Jesus Christ. God created us to know Him, but every person has sinned, and sin separates us from God (Romans 3:23). We cannot repair that separation by becoming better, trying harder, or becoming more religious.

Because God loves us, He sent Jesus Christ, His only Son (John 3:16–17). Jesus lived a blameless life without sin (Hebrews 4:15), died on the cross for all our sins, and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). On the cross, He stood in our place and bore what our sin deserved. He bridged the gap we could never cross and provided the only way for us to come to the Father.

John 14:6 (KJV)

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Salvation is God's gift, received through faith rather than earned by works (Ephesians 2:8–9). To receive Christ is to acknowledge that you have sinned, turn from sin and self rule, believe that Jesus died and rose again, and trust Him alone as your Savior and Lord. This is more than having a meaningful experience. It is the beginning of a real relationship with the living Christ.

Romans 10:9–10 (KJV)

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

If You Are Ready to Receive Christ

Prayer is a conversation with God. It is the response of faith in which you acknowledge your sin and need for God, confess Jesus as Lord, believe God raised Him from the dead, accept His gift of salvation, and receive Christ as your Savior and Lord. Prayer does not earn salvation; Jesus saves. Speak to Him honestly in your own words or use this prayer:

Lord Jesus, I believe You are God's only Son. You lived without sin, died on the cross for all my sins, and rose again. I know I have sinned and cannot make my own way to God. I turn from my sin and trust You alone. Forgive me. I accept Your gift of salvation and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Come into my life and help me follow, serve, and love You. Thank You for giving Yourself for me, standing in my place, and making the way for me to know the Father. In Jesus' name, amen.

Be Secure in What Christ Has Done

If this prayer expresses the decision of your heart to turn from sin and trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, your confidence does not rest in how strongly you felt the moment or how perfectly you prayed. It rests in Jesus: who He is, what He accomplished, and what He

promised. Jesus said, “him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37, KJV). You have not merely had an experience. You have begun a relationship with Christ.

Tell Someone and Begin Well

Your response to Christ is personal, but following Him is not meant to be hidden or walked alone. If you trusted Christ today, please tell a leader or another trusted Christian before you leave. We want to celebrate with you, help you understand what has happened, pray with you, and walk with you into what comes next. If you would like to share with the group, tell a leader; we would be honored to celebrate with you. You will not be put on display or asked to give an immediate testimony.

- Tell a trusted Christian that you have placed your faith in Christ.
- Begin reading the Gospel of John and ask God to help you know Jesus.
- Speak honestly with Jesus in prayer each day.
- Connect with a healthy, Bible believing church and ask about baptism.

If You Already Belong to Christ

If you already belong to Christ, you do not need to be saved again. You may use this moment to thank Him, return to Him, and renew your trust: Jesus, thank You for saving me. I return to You without pretending. Help me receive Your grace, remain close to You, and follow You faithfully.

What would I like to ask or tell a trusted Christian leader?

A Prayer for the Way Home

Dear Jesus, thank You for meeting me here. I receive what is true and release the pressure to preserve a feeling. Carry this truth into my ordinary life. When I become distracted, help me return. When I am weary, help me receive. When the path is unclear, keep me close to the Shepherd. Form Your fruit in me in Your time. In Jesus' holy name I pray, amen.

One Month From Now

Return to this page without grading yourself. The purpose is to notice, adjust, receive, and keep walking.

Where have I noticed greater closeness, honesty, or dependence on Christ?

What fruit may be growing quietly?

What rhythm has been life giving?

What became unrealistic or turned into a scorecard?

Where do I need to return without shame?

What is my next faithful step now?

Continue the Journey

Abide: Remaining in Christ, Bearing Fruit for His Glory offers a fuller biblical journey into the truths explored during this retreat. Walking with God brings those truths into short reflections for ordinary days. Both can support what began here, but neither replaces relationship with Christ, Scripture, prayer, obedience, rest, or healthy Christian community.

- Read Abide slowly, giving truth time to become conversation with God.
- Use Walking with God one part at a time.
- Return to the exercises in this workbook when striving or distance reappears.
- Let a healthy church, small group, mentor, or trusted believer walk beside you.
- Remember that the next movement in the Purpose-Led Discipleship retreat journey is Identity.

Read Abide and Walking with God at purpose-leddiscipleship.com

John 15:5 (KJV)

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

Keep abiding.

Notes

Notes