



Abiding in God...a Necessity for Christ-like Development

The goal for a wholehearted disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ is to know Him and be like Him. Realizing this goal involves abiding in God. *As a point of clarification, abiding in God and abiding in Christ are interchangeable concepts.*

1 John 2:22-25, Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son.²³ No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.²⁴ Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father.²⁵ And this is the promise that he made to us — eternal life.

When a person initially believes in Christ, God takes up His abode in the new believer, and the new Christian simultaneously begins to abide in God.

1 John 4:14-15, And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.¹⁵ Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

From that miraculous beginning, a believer's spiritual growth is linked to obeying the two greatest commandments (loving God and loving others) and responding faithfully to the divine promises of God's Word.

Matthew 22:35-39, And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.³⁶ "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"³⁷ And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."³⁸ This is the great and first commandment.³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

2 Peter 1:3-8, His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge,⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness,⁷ and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.⁸ For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

TWO MAJOR BENEFITS OF ABIDING IN CHRIST

God's love through Jesus Christ is perfected (matured, completed) in the lives of believers who abide in God.

1 John 4:16-17, So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.¹⁷ By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.

Believers grow in love by abiding in God and also have an effectual prayer life by abiding in Christ and allowing Christ's teaching to abide in them.

John 15:7-8, If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE ABIDING IN GOD AND GOD ABIDES IN YOU?

As stated previously, abiding in God begins the moment that you believe, by faith, in Jesus Christ for salvation. (See [Life's Most Important Decision](#))

The first noticeable characteristic of a believer who is abiding in God is a changed life. Changes may be minuscule and difficult to ascertain initially, or they may be significant and easily noticeable right away. Anyone, however, who has been forgiven of sin and has received eternal life is a new creation in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Another characteristic of someone faithfully abiding in God is obeying God's Word.

1 John 2:5, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him.

1 John 3:24, Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

Another characteristic of abiding is loving fellow believers. Scriptural obedience and love for one another are integral to perfecting God's love in each believer.

1 John 4:12, No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

LIVING IN ACCORDANCE WITH ABIDING

If you have never received Christ into your life, you still abide in yourself . . . which is spiritual darkness. On the other hand, if you have received Christ into your life, you are able to grow in Christ-likeness because of abiding in Him. When you confess the Lord and obey His Word, you demonstrate that you abide in Him.