

# **ABIDING IN HIM & HE IN US**

## **JOHN 15**

When you have an apple tree, you expect the tree to bear fruit. There is an expectation of what we, as followers of Christ, need to be. An expectation from our close ones, friends, work colleagues, and even from ourselves. And that expectation is to be fruitful and transformed into the likeness of Jesus.

The harsh reality is that many of us fail to produce fruit. Galatians 5:19 mentions that these are not the fruits of the spirit: quarrel, envy, selfishness, division, jealousy, outbursts of anger, etc. Why did we fail? Some of us even accept our condition, the inability to change and blame it on our human nature.

We are God's beloved children of God; our salvation is just the start of a new beginning, the beginning of our eternal life with God. A life of transformation then begins, and it is a transformation with God as the agent of change for our lives (John 15:1-8). To be transformed and fruitful, we need to abide in Him and remain in the vine.

This study guide explains John 15, emphasising that we can produce fruit by remaining on the vine. By abiding in Him, God will be the one who enables us to bear fruit, and without Him, we cannot bear fruit

# Abiding in His Words

Jesus was teaching disciples in the upper room before the day he was captured and crucified. He used the vineyard as a metaphor in His teaching since it was familiar to every Jew. Specifically, He described the relationship between the vinedresser, vine and branches. In order for branches to be fruitful, they have to abide in the vine and let the vinedresser do His works in protecting, caring and pruning.

The word “abide” is used ten times in John 15:1-11. Why is it so important for Jesus to use this word? What does it really mean for disciples? It means that disciples must remain in Him, having intimate relationships and obedience to His commands. Abiding is neither a feeling nor a special experience; it is a process or journey of obedience by reading and applying His words. Someone may have a special experience or feeling in God, yet they are not really abiding by God.

Since the standard of abiding is human method. When someone truly abides by His words, people will taste their true fruits since they apply the words and live with His truth as a foundation. Although they are in the process of pruning and cleansing, they remain faithful. They focus inwardly instead of outwardly. They grow in love and obedience to His words.

***4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15: 4-5)***

At least three essential elements that we can learn from these verses:

## **1. Union and communion**

It illustrates how close the relationship between Jesus and the people who believe in Him. This also describes the continuous sharing of the very essence of Jesus’ life with us.

As Jesus has union and communion with the Father, we are to have the same communion with Him, who guides us to the Father.

## **2. Dependence**

The very essence of communion is called dependence. This illustrates in the beginning of John 15 that Jesus depends on the Father as the vinedresser. Therefore we must learn to depend on Him in order to understand Him and be fruitful.

The aim is not to rely on ourselves but to be dependent on Him. However, the prince of this world has tried to infiltrate the idea of independence since the beginning of creation. Adam and Eve were lured to have this independent mindset by eating the forbidden fruit. Therefore, they rejected the authority of God as the supreme source of order. Alienation from God and distortion of the order that God set occurred as a result.

## **3. Fruits of the branches**

It is clear in verse 5 that we can do nothing outside of Him. Branches must abide by the vine in order to receive proper nourishment. Therefore we can be fruitful. Since branches are not for decorating the vine and nor to benefit themselves. Branches are created to bear fruits that reflect the

vine. Therefore, God saved us not to show a stunning appearance but to be fruitful by abiding in Him.

## **The Guide**

The “Abiding in His Words” campaign consists of four focuses that lead us to discover the greatness of His words. Every focus will help us to understand the essential part of Christian life and bring us closer to Him, strengthening the relationship with Him, which was lost when Adam & Eve committed sin in the garden of Eden. Jesus was sent to build the divine bridge so that we could know the Father.

## **Structure**

### **- Material**

Everyone in your group will need a copy of this study guide, which includes the video teaching on Sunday service, discussion questions, and personal studies/devotions. It would be helpful to use a Bible as well.

### **- Personal**

During the week, you can optimise the impact of this material with the personal devotion provided for each session. You can use them in whatever way works best for your schedule. However, we really encourage you to set time on a regular basis to mediate the words and ask specific questions. These materials are not intended to be burdensome or time-consuming but to provide assistance to have intimacy with God, grow knowledge of Him & encounter His truth, love & power personally.

### **- Group**

Abiding in His words is designed to help you experience scripture personally or with others in a group (OIKOS), whether face-to-face or using a digital platform. If you are not in the group (OIKOS), we really encourage you to join OIKOS, which assists us to grow in faith by sharing and strengthening each other. If your group (OIKOS) is larger in size, consider breaking it off into smaller groups for discussion. This allows everyone to participate in discussions.

## Step / Guide to Engage to His Words

### 1. Consider

Pray, have a humble heart and be open to the Holy Spirit when reading the words  
Paying attention to what God wants to say when reading the words

### 2. Command

Mediate the word by asking personal questions to yourself:

- What do I notice personally in the words of God for the first time in this reading?
- What things am I reminded need to change or repent from these words?
- What commands does God want me to do from this reading?

Write Down your reflection and be creative (use colours or pictures)

Note: During his study, Rick Warren created ten methods of how to understand the bible when reading and studying it (more than Wellcome if you want to use one of his methods). He also mentioned that asking the right question is the key to opening the passage and understanding the word of God. Please be more specific and personal when asking the questions. Let the Holy Spirit guide and reveal the amazing words.

### 3. Consistent

#### *Action*

Obedying what God instructs you personally by applying it daily

#### *Share*

Discuss with others (wife/husband) in your OIKOS what you experience with God.

Be specific.

Note: What we share in OIKOS stays in OIKOS.

Unless it is used as a testimony or encouragement to others.

We really encourage anyone from each OIKOS to share their personal experience with God in the Church.

## Disclaimer

This material is only used for the internal of Harvest Indonesian Church.  
Harvest Education Team

## **Motivation**

If we believe the bible is truly the words of God, then it should be treated more than a book that we are familiar with. It should be used as a guide in all aspects of life and every decision.

If God, as the creator of the universe, spoke His words in the book 'the bible', then abiding in His words by studying and meditating is the most important thing every believer must do. Hence, understanding the important reason why we have to abide in His word is essential. Therefore, we are not doing the good thing for the wrong reasons.

## **Status**

There is nothing wrong with status if it is placed accordingly. But when we are motivated by status (position in the church, community/group) to read and abide in His words, we may need to refocus our motivation.

## **Program**

Church programs are sometimes good for encouraging people to read the bible. However, the motivation should not be based on the schedule. A program is simply a tool with steps to assist us in reading and abiding by His words constructively. Because people often do not really know how to start. Doing it as a program and in a group may encourage us more to enjoy His words and find the essential reasons for abiding in His words.

## **Guilt**

Many believers are motivated to learn His words due to guilt. As we are told to do it by leaders. It becomes part of the religion list that we have to do alongside tithing, attending church or Oikos. However, this reason is easily swept under the carpet since no one admits that guilt is the reason to study His words. This motivation will lead us to legalism. We created our own standard that often gives us a sense of failure if we are not able to reach that standard 'amount of verses that we have to read in a day'. Reading His words is an act of a believer to know Him with the right motivation.

## **Delight**

Studying the Bible is simply not for adding more knowledge, making us look more intelligent and a standard for others to follow what we do. Abiding in His words helps us become more like Him. We should not succumb to our ungodly desire, but let His words transform us "by the renewal of our mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12: 2). As Psalm 37:4 says

"Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

Before starting the material, please take some time to think about your motivation in abiding by Words. If there are wrong motivations, let the Holy Spirit touch and heal you. Therefore, we can experience the most of Him through this material.

