



guide to
abide

“As the Father
has loved me,
so have I loved
you. Abide in
my love.”

John 15:9

guide to abide

FIVE DAYS OF ABIDING

before you begin

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love” (John 15:9 ESV). You may have read this before and wondered what *exactly* does it mean to abide? Or maybe you’ve heard it this way, “Remain in my love.” What does it mean to remain in the love of Jesus? What does it *practically* look like?

I used to ask myself these questions often. My days were filled with God-honoring good things, but something was missing. I had the desire to spend more time with Jesus and wanted to grow my faith. I wanted to *abide*. Even though I would pray regularly and volunteer at church, I still felt like something was missing in my relationship with Jesus. Even with a theology degree and working as a pastor, I knew there was something more but I wasn’t sure what that was.

If you have ever felt this way, this *guide to abide* is for you.

I have since learned that to “remain in my love” is not as complicated as I once thought. It takes some intention, but it is not a hard thing to abide. Instead, it is a simple yet deep act of faith.

Despite its simplicity, abiding is not easily understood because it goes against much of American culture - even sometimes against our church culture! It is not about filling our days with complicated rituals or obligations. It’s accepting Jesus’ invitation to freedom, a simple expression of the belief Paul writes about in Galatians 2:16, “know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ.”

Before you begin, try not to complicate a simple thing; there’s no need to overthink it.

What Abiding IS NOT

This is not another Bible Study to sit on your counter and feel guilty about not doing. This is not a time to succumb to perfectionism by doing it perfectly or not at all. Abiding is not rushed. It’s not a task to be checked off your to-do list each day, although there will be tasks listed on the following pages. It’s not a complicated equation to solve.

What Abiding IS

This is a time to sit with Jesus and allow Holy Spirit to transform you; to focus on *simplicity* which is the way of the Kingdom of God. Take this guide along with your daily bread - the promise of what you need today only, not yesterday and not tomorrow. It is *slow* and *simple*.

Practice the discipline of sitting with the daily prompts slowly, and embody one aspect of abiding at a time. It is a 5-day guide, but feel free to spend more than one day on each aspect of abiding as you feel led.



guide to abide

CHECKLIST

before you
begin

Schedule time each day for the next five days and commit to finishing the steps each day. It doesn't have to be the same amount of time each day or at the same time, but sitting with God needs to be in your calendar with the same importance as if it was a work meeting or doctor's appointment. No legalism here - just like a meeting can be rescheduled, so can this if need be. The point is to just do it, responding to Jesus' invitation to *abide*. I recommend starting with 10-15 minutes.

Find your abiding space. It could be a prayer closet or just a chair, inside or outside. Make this a space you enjoy being in that feels comfortable and peaceful. But again, don't complicate it. You don't need to paint your room or order new furniture; a simple tidying up will do! Don't dwell on what the space could be, just spend a few minutes arranging it.

my abiding space is



guide to abide

CHECKLIST

before you begin

Remove all distractions that threaten this time. Get rid of physical distractions like the TV or your phone and mental distractions like errands you need to run or the next event on your schedule. List them below, knowing these burdens are safe on your paper until you need to pick them up again. Allow yourself in this abiding time to not worry about work, housework, or what you “should” get done. Begin practicing now Jesus’ words in Matthew 6, “Do not worry about your life... but seek first his kingdom.”

||| *I might be distracted by*

Gather your supplies before you begin. I like to have a cup of coffee, blanket, journal and pen, and Bible. Again, don’t complicate it. You don’t need to shop for a new journal or fancy pens. It can also be helpful to have a routine when you gather your supplies, like a liturgy to set a sacred tone for the space. For example, light a candle or take a few deep breaths.

||| *my routine is*

Be realistic about your expectations for yourself and for this time. Don’t put pressure on yourself to act or feel a certain way. While this guide is full of practical tips, it’s not a formula because there is no formula. Abiding is about *being with Jesus* which can be done anywhere, everywhere, and all the time!

||| *just be with Jesus*



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PRESENT WITH HIS PRESENCE

DAY 1

Abiding begins with the presence of God. In the beautiful mystery of the Trinity - God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit - three persons exist in one deity, which adds a level of complexity to our relationship with the One we worship. When you pray, do you pray to God, Jesus, or Holy Spirit? When you talk about your faith, do you mostly speak of God, Jesus, or Holy Spirit? Although they are the same, they function differently. Take a moment and write out about your relationship with each. How would you describe them individually? What role do they play in your faith?

God

Jesus

Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit is God's presence with us today, *even now*. Jesus spoke about God's Spirit coming to be with us, help us, comfort us, teach us, remind us, guide us in truth, and glorify him (John 14:26, 16:13). As you begin to abide, it may be helpful to focus more on Holy Spirit. Being with the presence of God is the beginning of abiding.

"the advocate... will teach you all things"



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PRESENT WITH HIS PRESENCE

DAY 1

Additionally, being with Holy Spirit is how we begin to understand who we truly are. Who we are is exaggerated in his presence, magnified or illuminated when set next to this perfect standard. The righteousness and holiness in us is reflected in a mirror while our shortcomings are contrasted.

Since Holy Spirit is *perfect truth*, we more clearly see our sin.

Since Holy Spirit is our advocate, we learn our *value*.

Set a timer for 10 minutes with no agenda but to be with the presence of God. It can be helpful to pray to Holy Spirit, inviting him into this time and space to do the convicting identity work he is skilled at. Do this in silence, where his whispers can be best understood. It can also be helpful to have a word to come back to as your mind wanders. You could repeat a prayer or simply say *Holy Spirit* as an invocation back into focusing on his presence.

It may feel awkward to sit silently with Holy Spirit at first. You may wonder *am I doing this right?* In reflecting on your relationship with Holy Spirit above, if there hasn't been much interaction this will be normal. Like a first date, you may be unsure of yourself or of your date!

He is there. He can be trusted. Be present with his presence.

additional
resources

www.hannahrowenfry.com/blog

"Forgotten God" by Francis Chan

"Holier than Thou" by Jackie Hill Perry

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PRACTICING PRAYER

DAY 2

For many people, prayer can be intimidating. Whether in private or in public, having an intimate conversation with God can feel like a *really* big deal. There are so many ways to pray and things to pray for! In the practice of abiding, focus again on Holy Spirit by praying *to* and praying *with* him.

When we aren't sure what to pray for, Holy Spirit intercedes for us (Romans 8:26-27). Isn't it amazing that the presence of God not only lives in us, but prays in our place? Imagine the power as he intercedes, lifting these prayers up to God on your behalf! The same power that raised Christ from the dead living in you and praying with you!

Set a timer for 10 minutes and ask Holy Spirit to pray with you. As he brings people and situations to mind, lift them to his care and see what comes to mind next. Write these prayers down as a reminder to continue praying for them on your own, or trust Holy Spirit will bring them to mind again when he's praying them alongside you.

Holy Spirit, come. I invite you into this time and space. Make yourself known; make me aware of your presence. You are welcome to transform me, one prayer at a time. Increase my trust in you as we spend more time together. Lead me in your way, following your will for your glory. Give me exactly what I need for today. Forgive me as I forgive others. Keep me from being tempted to put my trust in anything but you. I know I am valuable to you, and you will provide me with all that I need. I am grateful you have told me to not worry about tomorrow. Thank you for the opportunity to focus on you today. Remove the burden of my future from my care. Help me to remember what a gift it is that you are already taking care of it. Thank you for the peace that comes in your presence. Amen.

additional resources

Praying Scripture is powerful. Holy Spirit has been interceding for the church through these words since before the church existed. Some common passages to pray are Matthew 6:9-13, Ephesians 3:14-21, Psalm 103, and Isaiah 40:21-31.

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PRACTICING PRAYER

DAY 2

Holy Spirit, I pray

"The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God."

Romans

8:26-27

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WONDROUS WORSHIP

DAY 3

How do you connect with God most deeply? For many people, musical worship draws them to feel the presence of Holy Spirit more than anything else. For others, being in nature or serving others is where they feel most connected to the presence of God and worship him freely.

Gary Thomas speaks of 9 ways to connect with God in his book *Sacred Pathways*.

- Naturalist* loving God outdoors
- Sensate* loving God with the senses
- Traditionalist* loving God through ritual and symbol
- Ascetic* loving God in solitude and simplicity
- Activist* loving God through confrontation
- Caregiver* loving God by loving others
- Enthusiast* loving God with mystery and celebration
- Contemplative* loving God through adoration
- Intellectual* loving God with the mind

At first glance, which of the above pathways describe how you connect with God best? Which avenues lead you to worship? Are there any that you immediately don't align with?

I'm drawn to God through

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WONDROUS WORSHIP

DAY 3

The *Sacred Pathways* model provides some freedom in worship, especially for those who equate worship with music. Not everyone raises their hands or claps along to the beat while singing in a Sunday morning church service simply because that's not how they connect with God best. These people or others may have wondered if they are doing something wrong because they don't experience the same emotions they see others express. While music is often a part of worship, it is not the *only* way to worship.

John 4:23-24 doesn't even mention music as part of worship! "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

Go back to your list from Day 1 of defining your relationships with God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit. Looking at what you wrote, how does that inform your worship? Which of Thomas' *Sacred Pathways* do you connect with most? When it comes to abiding, find freedom in different styles of worship. Or if you do connect with God most in musical worship experiences, think about how you can abide outside of a corporate worship service. You can feel Holy Spirit move while listening to music on your couch just as strongly as you do in church.

Set a timer for 10 minutes and sit with Holy Spirit in whatever style of worship you are most drawn to. Abide in Jesus through the *wonder* of worship the way you were created.

additional resources

"Sacred Pathways" by Gary Thomas

"Celebration of Discipline" by Richard Foster

Download the Spotify music app for a
worship playlist

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SEARCHING SCRIPTURE

DAY 4

I'm going to share a less than profound thought here: **spending time with God through reading his Word is abiding.**

In John 1 we learn that Jesus was the Word before all things were created, and he became the Word *in flesh* when he entered earth as a human. This is another mystery like the trinity - God, Jesus, Holy Spirit - that is too beautiful for comprehension. *Word* in these passages can also be translated as *purpose* or *reason*. It is where we get the word *logic* from. From this we can understand that Jesus is the purpose, the reason, the logic of life, and Scripture is how we know him.

To read the Word of God is to dwell with Jesus. We remain in his love through reading. There is nothing else that we can read that has this same outcome. This is as close to Jesus we can physically get this side of eternity, holding the Word in our hands, flipping pages and soaking it all in. This is abiding.

In this *guide to abide* you've already done it for three days without even knowing it! Today as you read Scripture, think about the words as the reason, the purpose, the Word made flesh, not just reading the words as you would read this guide, but embodying them. It is a miracle and mystery how the same words we speak, read, and write every day can be *the Word - Jesus* - with the transforming power of Holy Spirit. Divine power at work!

Set a timer for 10 minutes and begin reading a passage of Scripture. Allow the words to permeate your soul as you ask curious questions about the text and what it teaches you about the character of God. If you're not sure where to start, I suggest beginning with the book of Luke.

additional
resources

Download the YouVersion Bible app for a daily Bible verse or reading plan

Choose a verse to memorize

"How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth" by Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart

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SCHEDULING SABBATH

DAY 5

Rest is perhaps the most difficult spiritual rhythm to incorporate regularly, but also perhaps the most important when it comes to abiding.

So what does a Sabbath practically look like? It can be hard to picture a day with no work; even taking a sick day or vacation with no work is hard for many people! There's no perfect schedule, but here's an idea to begin with:

☐☐☐ *Sleep in* or lay in bed awhile before you get up and start your day!

☐☐☐ Enjoy your *favorite* breakfast with your family.

☐☐☐ Spend some *extra* time being present with his presence, practicing prayer, in wondrous worship, and searching scripture. Maybe instead of a ten minute timer, set it for 15 or 20, or don't set one at all! Maybe read an entire book of the Bible, speaking it out loud or praying the words of the text.

☐☐☐ Read books, do puzzles, play games, watch movies, go for a walk, and *enjoy* the simple pleasures of life.

Here are a few tips to think about as you plan to abide through a weekly Sabbath:

- Resist the temptation to complete house projects like laundry, dishes, mowing the lawn, or paying bills. This is a day without responsibility to the things of this world, but just to be part of the Kingdom of God.
- Schedule time to finish those tasks to prepare for your Sabbath. For example, I tend to rest better when my home is clean so we tidy up the day before.
- Try to limit time on social media. Turn off all notifications to your devices.
- Incorporate some moments of solitude into your Sabbath, but feel free to spend time with family or friends if you are more energized by being with others.

Aside from being with Jesus, abiding rest includes doing the things that bring you joy while also being restful. For example, going to DisneyWorld brings me a lot of joy but is not often restful, so it is not the ideal Sabbath activity.

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SCHEDULING SABBATH

DAY 5

Traditionally Sabbath is on a weekend and is a full 24 hours beginning at dinner one day and ending at dinner the next. However it is important to find a balance between your current routine and adjusting your time. For me, there have been seasons where Wednesday was my Sabbath. There have been times that it was only an afternoon instead of a day. I would encourage you to really fight for a full day, rearranging your schedule as needed to fit this in each week.

Before we get to the weekly discipline, just focus on scheduling the first one.

Set a timer for 10 minutes and write what your ideal rest day may include. Keep in mind you'll want to be able to do many of these things each week and without a lot of preparation (another reason why going to DisneyWorld is not the ideal Sabbath activity - it takes too much preparation and isn't sustainable every week).

Now grab your calendar and find a day within the next week to pause, rest, and abide, and schedule your Sabbath there. Since it is short notice, a half day will do if there are too many things you can't rearrange. Schedule in Sabbath as if it were an "Out of Office" event and stick to it!

Then schedule your Sabbath day once per week for the next month.

For more Sabbath resources, visit my friends at Legacy Roots Co. for their Ultimate Sabbath Guide.

additional
resources

www.legacyrootsco.com

"The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry" by
John Mark Comer

[www.womenspeakerscollective.com/blog/
rest-as-a-spiritual-rhythm](http://www.womenspeakerscollective.com/blog/rest-as-a-spiritual-rhythm)

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FIVE DAYS OF ABIDING

next steps

You did it! You completed five days of abiding through being present with Holy Spirit, practicing prayer, worshiping in wonder, searching scripture, and scheduling Sabbath. What's next? Here are a few ideas to continue abiding:

repeat the five days

Go back to the beginning and reread the *guide to abide*. Maybe Monday is focused on prayer, Tuesday is focused on worship, etc. Or maybe each day incorporates a few minutes of each practice. As previously said, don't complicate it, just *abide*.

follow a Bible reading plan

Using a book, app, or online resource, you can find a Bible reading plan about any topic or theme. Many even have commentaries that can be helpful in diving deeper into the *logos*!

set reminders

Fill your life with abiding reminders. Change your phone background to an image that connects you to God or put a sticky note with a prayer or verse on your bathroom mirror. Abide, *slowly* and *simply*, throughout your day.

read "The Way of Gratitude"

For 21 days of devotionals repeating these practices, check out my book *The Way of Gratitude* plus accompanying music playlist at www.hannahrowenfry.com/resources.

recognize seasons

Remember that your current abiding routine may not be ideal forever. *How* and *how often* you practice abiding will look differently when raising small children or going back to school than it will as an empty-nester or even on vacation. Recognize these changing seasons and adjust your routine as necessary.



So then, just as you
received Christ Jesus as
Lord, continue to live
your lives in him, rooted
and built up in him,
strengthened in the faith
as you were taught, and
overflowing with
thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6-7