



The Abiding Prayer

 **PASSION:** Jesus expresses the mystery and complexity of abiding in John 15 in different ways: “*abide in Me and I in you... abide in Me, and My words abide in you... abide in My love.*” The heartbeat of Jesus’ invitation to abide is anything but casual or optional. The offer pulses with strong relational passion. Yet, it’s easy for us to take it for granted. Our abiding is so critical to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that they placed a prayer from their hearts to ours in Ephesians 3 to help us abide. Overlay the prayer in Ephesians 3 onto the calling to abide in John 15, and you see the heart of God further revealed. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit know how challenging this lifestyle of constant abiding is for us. So they extend their hands to pull us further into the experience and power of their abiding prayer. We link hands and hearts with them to drink in the fresh, clear spring they uncork for us in the fulfillment of this abiding prayer. Immerse yourself in John 15 and Ephesians 3 to prepare your heart for exploration.

 **PROBE:** Meditate on John 15:1-11 several times in a variety of translations, especially verses 4-5 and 9-10.

⁴ “*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.*” ⁵ “*I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.*”

⁹ “*Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.*” ¹⁰ “*If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.*”

Meditate on Ephesians 3:14-21 several times in a variety of translations, especially verses 16-19.

¹⁶ *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,* ¹⁷ *so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,* ¹⁸ *may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,* ¹⁹ *and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.*

The core of this brilliant prayer in Ephesians 3 is found in verses 16-19. God’s strategy and invitation to join Him in the full experience of Christ abiding in us and us abiding in His love is revealed here. Paul’s prayer impacts the desired outcome of John 15.

- **So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**, addresses Christ abiding in us.
- **And that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge**, addresses us abiding in Christ’s love, the same love the Father has for Him!

Focus on Ephesians 3:16, and the first wave of God’s strategy for abiding is revealed. A reasonable conclusion is that a great deal of power is about to be aimed at something... but what? If you were aiming this much power at a particular target, what would it be?

Verses 17-19 indicate the two critical issues that need such power, from God’s perspective...

1. So that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith...
2. And so that the Ephesians might experience the full foundation and vast dimensions of all the love God has for them.

Q1. Realizing that these Ephesians are already believers, not “becoming” believers, why is so much power needed **“so that” Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith?**

- Could this same power be needed in order that we might abide in Christ?
- Would you say it is hard to abide in Christ?
- What reason would you give that so much power is needed?
- Perhaps the “ugly” answer is that we don’t really want Him to dwell in our hearts!
... Well, just not every day!

Q2: Why is so much power needed **“so that” we might experience the full scope of all the love God has for us?**

- Wise people have said that if we could truly experience the fullness of all the love God has for us, our lives would be revolutionized.
- Why is it so hard for us to receive all the love God has for us?

○ Perhaps we think we are the strongest thing in the universe---so strong that we can separate ourselves from the love of God! Or, on the other hand, perhaps we believe that He loves most people more than He loves us. After all, if you really knew me... But God makes it abundantly clear that **absolutely nothing** can separate us from God's love:

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38,39 NASB

○ So, in light of all that, what reason would you give that so much power is needed to experience the full scope of all the love God has for us?

There is another very interesting phenomenon going on here... Our normal MO (modus operandi) is to figure things out in our head, with our intellect, then possibly move that information to our heart. That's pretty much how our society works, but that is not how this prayer works. This love bypasses our head and goes straight to our hearts! It surpasses understanding!

Consider this: I can only love you to the extent that you allow me to love you, regardless of the amount of love I have for you.

- Do you believe this?
- Would the same be true of God loving you?
- We must "put our arms down" and let God love us.

PRACTICE:



- How would these two critical needs result in us being **filled up to all the fullness of God**?
- What would your life look like if God answered this prayer in your life?
- How can you cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the fulfillment of this prayer in your life?
- What if you prayed this prayer for yourself and your friends everyday for a month? Watch to see the results!
- What is God saying to you about abiding more deeply?
- How will you live differently?