

A. PRESENCE

- Jesus is our example of living from a place of abiding. He stayed connected to the Father's presence and depended on Him for everything. (John 12:49-50)
- He gave us His testimony to instruct us on the great importance of abiding and how it results in fruit bearing: John 15:1-11 NLT-- "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. ³ You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.5 "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. ⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. 9 "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!
- Abiding in Christ isn't a passive thing. It requires us to deliberately and continuously choose intimate relationship with Him.
- Let's learn to abide by following this progression:
 - Acknowledgment
 - Whether we feel it or not, we must choose to believe that God is present with us right now: Mt 20:28b NLT-- Be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
 - Acknowledge = to accept the truth or recognize the existence of something." (Dictionary.com)
 - Knowledge of God is good. But acknowledging His presence in the present tense is far greater because it requires our faith and this makes it personal.
 - Begin abiding by being still and acknowledging the truth that God is here with you and lives inside of you: Ps 16:8a NAS--I have set the LORD continually before me

Engagement

- We are called to go beyond acknowledgment to the point of intimately connecting to our Vine, Jesus: James 4:8--Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.
- Engaging means, "to begin and carry on an activity, to take part in something, to give attention to something, to come together and interlock" (Merriam Webster)
- Jesus is telling us that we must participate in the relationship. Both parties, the Vine and the branches, play an active part in abundant fruit being produced.

Receiving

- We must abide in the Vine to receive the power and truth we need for bearing fruit: <u>John</u>
 3:27 ESV--A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven
- Jesus did nothing without receiving the Father's instructions and enabling power: <u>John</u>
 5:30 NAS -I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
- o It was by listening to and receiving from the Father that Jesus lived victoriously on earth.
- When we engage with God, seeking His life and wisdom, we're set to receive His
 personal (rhema) words to us ("that which has been uttered by the living voice" G4487)



- Keeping in mind this progression, let's set our intention each day to continuously remain connected to Jesus!
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
 Lord, please show each of us how we can grow at every point on this continuum.
 - My acknowledgement of Your presence:

What specific ways could there be an enhancement of:

- o The way I engage with You:
- My ability to receive from You:
- Insights:

B. PRUNING

- Jesus lets us know that an important component of our spiritual growth will come through the Father's pruning work in our lives: <u>John 15:2 AMP</u>-- Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit [that stops bearing] He cuts away (trims off, takes away); and He cleanses *and* repeatedly prunes every branch that continues to bear fruit, to make it bear more *and* richer *and* more excellent fruit.
- "Prune," in the original language, means to cleanse from impurity or guilt and to remove useless shoots. (Strong's G2508)
- He goes on to explain that, as true members of the Vine, we have already been permanently cleansed: <u>John 15:3</u>--You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.
- "When we are converted, we are decisively cleansed from sin such that we enjoy salvation permanently. Yet, Christians continue to sin and need cleansing of that sin. Postconversion sin does not so dirty us that it makes us kingdom outcasts, but it still needs to be dealt with." (Ligonier.org)
- Our sins can interrupt our fellowship with God and others, therefore, let's make it our habit to handle it quickly:
 - Heb 4:16 JBP-- Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with fullest confidence, that we may receive mercy for our failures and grace to help in the hour of need.
 - 1 John 1:9 AMP-- If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just [true to His own nature and promises], and will forgive our sins and cleanse us continually from all unrighteousness [our wrongdoing, everything not in conformity with His will and purpose].



 The cleansing work of pruning includes removal of those things that interfere with fruitfulness. They may not be sinful, but they are not part of God's best plan for us: <u>1</u> <u>Thes 5:21 AMP</u>—But test *and* prove all things [until you can recognize] what is good; [to that] hold fast.

LISTENING EXERCISE:

Holy Spirit, I want to bear abundant fruit and experience the fullness of joy that you promise. Please search my life and show me:

- 1) Anything that is sinful and offensive to You:
- 2) Anything that needs to be trimmed from my life so that it will become more abundant:
- Insights:

C. PRAYER

- Jesus' emphasis in this parable is on the fruit of answered prayer as we continuously abide in Him (though we see growth in godly character implied as well).
- Effective prayer requires that we be willing and able to consistently remain in connection with Jesus and His Word: <u>John 15:7-8 NAS</u>--If you remain in Me, and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.
- Let's come to God's Living and Active Word, seeking to know Him and His ways: Psalm 25:4--Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths.
- Seek the Lord in prayer for direction for any matter that is on your heart, You can come with an attitude of expectancy based on what Jesus taught: <u>John 16:24 MSG--</u>
 This is what I want you to do: Ask the Father for whatever is in keeping with the things I've revealed to you. Ask in my name, according to my will, and he'll most certainly give it to you. Your joy will be a river overflowing its banks!
- Once you've received direction from God's Word, write it down. Now meditate on it, pray it back to Him, and let Him do His work in you through this process.
- When we pray like this it involves 1) letting go of the way we think it should happen,
 2) learning to wait on God's timing, and 3) experiencing the joy of seeing God work.
- Only God can produce the fruit of answered prayer. Our part is to continue abiding, exercising our faith, and confidently believing that He will keep His Word: 1 John 15:14-15-- Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.
- Insights:



D. PERSONAL APPLIC	CATION
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ONE THING

The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

PONDER THE TRUTH

Which verse or principle stood out to you this week? Write it below taking some time to review it often. Be still in God's presence, alert for new insights. Record them here.

• PROCESSING THE TRUTH

Prayerfully consider the Listening Exercises from this lesson. Ask the Spirit to guide you into a deeper understanding of the truth and to reveal any specific faith steps He his calling you to take. Write down your insights.