

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. ²He 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. ³You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. ⁴Remain 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. ⁶Anyone 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. ⁷But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ⁸When 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. ¹⁰When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹I 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: John 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: John 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.
 - 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. What specific ways could there be an enhancement of:

- *My acknowledgement of Your presence:*

- *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: John 15:2 AMP-- 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: John 15:3--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].

D. PERSONAL APPLICATION

- **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.