

ABIDE
IN
CHRIST



ANDREW MURRAY

— *Foreword & Afterword by* —

DOUG NUENKE US President, The Navigators

Abide in Christ brings a sense of restoration in relating to and experiencing God. If you long for harmony of your soul with God, a freshness to engage with and enjoy God in a deeper, life-changing way, this devotional is for you.

KAREN TANIGUCHI, associate director, International Student Ministry,
The Navigators

When I was invited to read the manuscript for this version of *Abide in Christ* by Andrew Murray, I had just finished listening to an audiobook of the classic version. I'd not read it in many years, and it was so refreshing to dive into this timeless message again. The one thing I found myself wishing was that there was an updated version in today's English. Voilà! It's here. Thank you, NavPress! I commend to you this refreshing version of Andrew Murray's classic. Prepare to have your soul refreshed.

TOM BOURKE, associate field director, Navigators Cities

Jesus invites us to follow Him, and yet we often live as if we are following from a distance. If you are weary in your work, take thirty-one days to intentionally abide. See if you don't find yourself closer to Him, intimately at His side.

AIMEE HAYWOOD, manager, Donor Care, The Navigators

This is an amazing work created to help believers worldwide go deeper in relationship with Jesus. As you read it, pray that the Holy Spirit will take you to the next level in your spiritual life. I highly recommend it!

ARMANDO DÍAZ, LaVida Network director, Nations Within,
The Navigators

The Bible is our ultimate guide to life, but oftentimes it is fruitful to have a tool that helps us dive deeper into its pages and reintroduces us to its powerful yet refreshing truths. Andrew Murray has given us a practical way to “gather a day's portion every day.” Enjoy.

MARK HEFFENTRAGER, director, Eagle Lake Camps

We have often found the fuller meaning of words in the Scriptures helpful to our understanding. Andrew Murray takes this a step further by exploring the concept of abiding to new and profound levels. This book is best savored slowly as it prompts us to deeper and deeper contemplation of what it means for us to make our home in Jesus Christ.

KEN AND TINA LARSON, associate field directors, The Navigators

Living overseas for years taught me another language, affected my outlook on life, and yes, changed my driving habits. Jesus' invitation to abide is quite similar to living in another place. Andrew Murray draws our attention to the amenities of our new home and eagerly reminds us of the privileges that we are missing out on. Where we live changes everything.

JOHN HESS, director, Nations Within, The Navigators

Each of these daily readings is a refreshing and meaningful chance to engage with Jesus in deeper ways. Andrew Murray draws us to a commitment of the timeless opportunity of abiding in Christ that still transforms our lives today. We are trusting God for more of this in The Navigators.

ADAM SPERLING, EDGE director, The Navigators

The invitation to abide in Christ has wooed and inspired generation after generation for millennia, and this fresh edition of Andrew Murray's work will lead many more into what Jesus meant when He promised, "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full." I want more of that! It really does work. It really is practical. And it really is contemporary.

DAVID LYONS, international vice president, The Navigators

In this timeless book, Andrew Murray illuminates Christ's glorious gift of a life spent abiding with Him. This book is an invitation for us to seek God and to make Him our dwelling place.

SUSAN FLETCHER, historian, The Navigators

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Foreword

HAVE YOU EVER FOUND YOURSELF WONDERING, *There must be more to the spiritual life than this?* Perhaps you have longed for a sense of fullness that isn't just relegated to church services or earnest quiet times. Maybe you have desired consistency in your relationship with God, for a faith that doesn't swing between highs and lows but is characterized by ongoing communion with Christ.

Is this life of faith even possible?

In this Christian classic, Andrew Murray answers with a resounding *yes!* Not only is it possible, but abiding in Christ is our God-given destiny.

Toward the end of Jesus' life, as part of His final instructions, He commanded His disciples to "Abide in me" (John 15:4). The timing of this command seems a little strange if you consider that He told the disciples to stay close after He had just revealed He was going away. But I believe it was at this exact point in time that the topic of abiding was of the most visceral importance to the disciples. Jesus was going to leave earth *physically*, but He intended for their normal, daily experience to be rooted in His ongoing presence.

The Christian life was meant to be a life of perpetual connection with the Almighty. Because of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, and because of His grace, God welcomes us into fellowship with Himself. Abiding in Christ is our birthright as children of God.

So why is it so hard to keep this command?

To start, a big roadblock to this kind of abiding is our perception of the gospel. For many, many believers, the gospel has

been reduced to a ticket to heaven when we die. That is a travesty which threatens to leave us with a powerless church, impoverished believers, and an unattractive witness to a world desperate for *real life*. While the Cross and Resurrection are central to our Christian faith, the gospel was never meant to become only a reprieve from the grave. The bottom line is that when we reduce the gospel to only a transaction that secures us heaven, we may actually miss the abundant life God intended us to have, both now and forever.

Another barrier is that many of us get stuck thinking that communion with God hinges on us doing the right thing or being in the right place. We think it depends on *us*!

The Old Testament provides a framework for this way of thinking. Before Jesus came, heroes of the faith were called to go somewhere and do something to connect with the God of Israel. God was always “over there,” and to connect with Him, they had to perform a ritual or make a sacrifice. But God, through the death and resurrection of His Son, initiated a rebirth that sweeps believers into union with Christ. The realities of the Old Testament are no longer the realities of people who have come *into* Jesus.

For believers, God is no longer “over there.” He is “in here.” God’s people are called to believe in the accomplished work of Christ. There is not one more work *we* must do. We must only yield ourselves more fully to the work *He* has done on our behalf.

I first read *Abide in Christ* as a nineteen-year-old student who had just come to faith in Jesus. Through Murray’s words, I was introduced to a powerful way of living the life God intended for us. It wasn’t a life of striving but of *abiding*. Now, many years removed from that first reading, the message of *Abide in Christ* still rings true. In fact, it has only grown more precious to me as the years have passed.

Abiding is about staying permanently, intimately, constantly united with Jesus. We are branches that are created anew to find abundance of life in our organic connection to the Vine.

To quote Eugene Peterson's beautiful rendering of John 15:5:

[Jesus said,] "I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing."

As you read this book, I pray that you would be stirred to pursue an abiding life with Christ. This life, as described by Murray, is "nothing but giving up yourself to be ruled, taught, and led by Jesus, and so to rest in the arms of everlasting love."

I pray that you will be moved, as I was at nineteen and still am now, to "be ruled, taught, and led" by the presence of Jesus. I pray that you would rest in the completed work of Christ, and in doing so, grow in expectation for what God can do in and through you as you abide in Him.

Doug Nuenke
US President, The Navigators

Preface

DURING JESUS' LIFE ON EARTH, the words He used most when speaking to His disciples about their relationship were "Follow me." He gave them new words, however, when He was getting ready to leave for heaven. These new words, expressing the more intimate and spiritual union between them and His glorified self, were "Abide in me."

There are many earnest followers of Jesus from whom the meaning of "Abide in me," with the blessed experience it promises, is very much hidden. They trust in their Savior for pardon from sin and help in their struggles, and they even seek to live in obedience to Him. But they have not realized the depth of intimate fellowship and the wondrous oneness of life He has invited them to in this command: "Abide in me." This lack of understanding leads to unspeakable loss for themselves, but also for the whole church—and even the whole world.

If we were to probe into why these people, who have accepted the Savior and experienced the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, have nevertheless missed out on the fullness of the salvation prepared for them, I am sure we would learn that, in very many cases, the reason is ignorance. Our churches do not preach the idea of abiding in Christ—the living union with Him, the experience of His daily and hourly presence and care in our lives—with the same distinctness and urgency as they do His atonement and pardon through His blood. If they did, I am confident that many more Christians would welcome the invitation to such a life with Christ,

and in fact that the world would observe their purity and power, their love and joy, their fruitfulness and blessedness—all character traits that our Savior associates with abiding in Him.

This book is meant for those Christians who have not yet fully understood what the Savior meant with His command to abide in Him, or who have feared that such a life was beyond their reach. Like a child who learns only by repetition, believers must regularly fix the mind on the lessons of faith in order to fully assimilate them. My hope is that some—especially young believers—will find this book helpful as day after day they work through this month full of meditations on the parable of the vine, these precious words “Abide in me.” Step by step we shall get to see how this promise is meant for us, how God’s grace empowers us to live into its command, how the experience of its blessing is indispensable to a healthy Christian life, how so many unspeakable blessings flow from it. As we listen, and meditate, and pray—as we surrender ourselves and accept in faith the whole Jesus as He offers Himself to us—the Holy Spirit will enliven the Word for us, so that Jesus’ command to “abide in me” will itself become the power of God unto salvation, and through it will come faith to grasp its full blessing.

I pray earnestly that our gracious Lord will bless this little book to help those who seek to know Him fully. (Indeed, it has already been blessed by God with the ministry of its earlier editions.) I pray still more earnestly that He would help the multitudes of His dear children who are still living divided lives to see how He claims them wholly for Himself, and how the wholehearted surrender to abide in Him alone brings unspeakable, glorious joy. Let each of us who has begun to taste the sweetness of this life give witness to the grace and power of our Lord to keep us united with Himself! Let us seek by word and walk to win others to follow Him fully! Abiding in Christ and bearing fruit are intertwined; you can’t have one without the other.

One word of advice: Growing into Jesus the Vine *takes time*. Do not expect to abide in Him unless you will give Him that time. It is not enough simply to read God's Word, or to read meditations like this one, and then to ask God's blessing and move on into our day trusting we can hold on to the thoughts. The blessing of abiding in Christ is a matter of time—time with Jesus and with God, day by day. We all know the difference in us when we take an hour for our dinner as opposed to eating our food in a hurry. If we are to live through Jesus, we must feed on Him (John 6:57), savoring and ruminating and assimilating that heavenly food the Father has given us in His life. Therefore, if you want to learn to abide in Christ, don't just read this book: Take time each day, before and while and after you read, to put yourself into living contact with the living Jesus. Yield yourself distinctly and consciously to His blessed influence. By doing so you will give Him the opportunity to take hold of you, to draw you up and keep you safe in His almighty life.

And now, to all God's children whom He allows me the privilege of pointing to the heavenly vine, I offer my fraternal love and salutations, with the prayer that to each one of them may be given the rich and full experience of the blessedness of abiding in Christ. And may the grace of Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be their daily portion. Amen!

Andrew Murray

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 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. 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. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 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. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

JOHN 15:1-12

————— *Day 1* —————

YOU WHO HAVE COME TO HIM

“Come to me.”

MATTHEW 11:28

“Abide in me.”

JOHN 15:4

TWO MESSAGES COME from the same loving Savior. First, a call: “Come to me.” Then, to those who have heard and accepted the call, a new invitation: “Abide in me.”

If you have accepted His call, you have doubtless never regretted it. His Word is truth, His promises He fulfills, His love and blessings are yours to enjoy—you have experienced these things for yourself. His welcome most hearty, His pardon full and free, His love sweet and precious. You have, more than once since your first coming to Him, had ample reason to say, “This is more than I ever expected!”

And yet perhaps you have also experienced disappointment: You had expectations that over time were not realized. Blessings you once enjoyed were lost. The love and joy of your early life with your Savior didn’t deepen over time; it became faint, feeble. You may have wondered why, with such a Savior—so mighty and so loving—your experience of salvation has not been fuller.

The answer is very simple: You wandered from Him.

The blessings Christ bestows are all connected with His command, “Come to me.” They are only to be enjoyed in close fellowship with Him. You either did not fully understand or have not rightly remembered that implicit in the call was “Come *to me* to *stay with me*.” To stay with Him was indeed the purpose of His call to come to Him. It was not to refresh you for a few short hours after your conversion, to encourage you with the joy of His love and deliverance only to send you forth to wander in sadness and sin. He destined you to something better than a short-lived blessedness to be enjoyed only in times of special earnestness and prayer—a passing moment in the larger context of your life obligations. No, He prepared a place for you, an abiding dwelling with Himself, where your whole life—every moment of it!—might be spent. The work of your daily life was meant to be done from this place of abiding, all the while enjoying unbroken communion with your Savior.

What was implicit in that first invitation, “Come to me,” was made explicit in the second: “Abide in me.” As earnest and faithful, as loving and tender, as the compassion that breathed through that blessed command to *come* to Jesus was the grace infused in the blessed invitation to *abide*. The call to come was mighty and elicited in you a mighty attraction; just as mighty was the invitation to abide, the bonds with which it would hold you. The blessings you were met with as you came to Christ were many and great; more and greater blessings are there for those who take the further invitation to *abide* in Him.

Note especially that Jesus did not say, “Abide *with* me”; rather He said, “Abide *in* me.” His intent was an intimate, unbroken, complete relationship. He opened His arm to draw you close; He opened His heart to welcome you there. All His divine fullness of life and love were offered to you—you would be wholly one with Him! Such was the depth of meaning in his invitation to *abide in Him*, a depth of meaning that is easily missed.

We think of these invitations as commands, but it's equally fair to say that they are *pleas*. Each is equal to the other: The same motivations that caused you to respond to His first appeal may motivate you toward His second. Was it the fear of sin and its curse that first drew you to Christ? His pardon at your first coming, and all the blessings that flowed from it, would be fully confirmed and fully enjoyed if only you would abide in Him. Had you felt a longing to know and enjoy the infinite love you heard in His call to come? That first experience was only a taste of the satisfaction you would enjoy by abiding in Him, where you would drink your fill from the rivers of pleasure at His right hand. Did the invitation to come to Christ speak to the longing you felt to be made free of the wearying bondage of sin, your longing to experience purity and holiness, your longing for rest for your soul? Such rest and relief is experienced fully only as you abide in Him. Maybe you were motivated to come to Christ by the hope of a divine inheritance, an everlasting home in the glorious presence of the infinite God. One must prepare for such a future, and our preparation for our glorious future happens as we abide in Christ now. Not only that, but we get a foretaste of that future life in our present life—if we abide in Him.

It's a fundamental truth: There is nothing that would have moved you to come to Christ that is not satisfied a thousandfold more in our experience of abiding in Him. You did well to come; you do better to abide. After all, who would be content, after seeking the King's palace, to stand in the door? You've been invited in! You have the opportunity to dwell in the King's presence, sharing with Him all the glory of His royal life! Let us enter in, abiding in His wondrous love and enjoying to the full all that He has prepared for us!

And yet I fear that there are many who have come to Jesus and yet will acknowledge, with regret, that they have no experience of this blessed abiding in Him. Some will say that they have never

fully understood that Christ's call to come included this invitation to abide. Others may acknowledge the call to abide in Christ but considered it an experience beyond their reach. Still others will say that they have tried to abide in Christ but haven't discovered the secret to it. And finally there are those who, in all honesty, will confess that they have known but not sought the blessing of abiding in Christ. They were not prepared to give up everything in order to abide fully and forever in Jesus, and so while their Savior would have gladly abided with them, they were not prepared to stay.

To any of these people I come in the name of Jesus, their Redeemer and mine, with His blessed message: "Abide in me." In His name I invite all of us to come and, for a season, meditate daily on its meaning, its lessons, its claims, and its promises. I know how many and, particularly to the young believer, how difficult the questions are that come up when we consider the invitation to abide in Christ. There is especially the multifaceted question how one keeps up (or is kept in) an abiding communion with Christ in the midst of wearying work and continual distraction. I do not expect in this undertaking to remove all difficulties; only Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit could do that. But there is power in the mere repetition, the daily invocation of the Master's blessed command to "abide in me," until it settles into your heart, no more to be forgotten or neglected. We would do well to meditate on the meaning we find in the Scriptures, so that our understanding—the gateway to the heart—grows to apprehend what abiding in Christ offers and expects. We will thus discover how one comes to abide in Christ, learn what keeps us from resting in God, and discern what will help us in our quest. We will become increasingly conscious of Christ's claim upon us and come to trust that abiding in Christ, as with all of Christ's commands, is inherent to our full allegiance to our King. Our heartfelt acceptance of this command will be rewarded as we experience its blessings, and we will find ourselves compelled by desire to continually abide in Him.

Come, let us day by day set ourselves at the feet of Christ and meditate on this word of His, with an eye fixed on Him alone. Let us set ourselves in quiet trust before Him, waiting to hear His holy voice—the still small voice that is mightier than the storms that surround us. *Abide in Me*. Jesus Himself speaks the word. Our souls hear His voice, and the message quickens our spirits, giving us the power to accept its claim on us and receive its blessing on us.

Speak to us, blessed Savior, and let each of us hear Your voice. May the feeling of our deep need, and the faith of Your wondrous love, combined with the sight of the wonderfully blessed life You are waiting to bestow on us, hold us tight and cause us to listen and obey as often as You extend the invitation: Abide in Me. Let the answer from our hearts become clearer and fuller day by day: “Yes, blessed Savior, I do abide in You.”