

John 15:1-4 *Abide in the True Vine*

Additional Reflections

*Our goal this week is to slow down and meditate upon the Word of God. In Donald Whitney’s excellent book, **Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life**, he talks about the difference between hearing the Word, reading the Word and meditating on the Word with a tea bag illustration. He says “In this analogy your mind is the cup of hot water and the tea bag represents your intake of Scripture. Hearing God’s Word is like one dip of the tea bag into the cup. Some of the tea’s flavor is absorbed by the water, but not as much as would occur with a more thorough soaking of the bag. Reading, studying, and memorizing God’s Word are like additional plunges of the tea bag into the cup. The more frequently the tea enters the water, the more permeating its effect. Meditation, however, is like immersing the tea bag completely and letting it steep until all the rich tea flavor has been extracted and the hot water is thoroughly tintured reddish brown. Meditation on Scripture is letting the Bible brew in the brain.” Let us mull over God’s Word, pondering, praying over and thinking on the text, and then we just might know the transformation that happens as our minds are renewed in the Scriptures (Romans 12:2).*

Read John 15:1-4

One way we can slow down and meditate on the Word of God is to write it out. Pay attention to each word as you write. Circle or underline the words, phrases or verses that stand out to you.

Meditating on the Word of God

Bible reading fuels meditation and meditation fuels prayer. Puritan preacher Thomas Watson rightly says “the reason we come away so cold from reading the Word is, because we do not warm ourselves at the fire of meditation.”

Bible  Meditation  Prayer

George Mueller helps us understand this transition from Bible reading to meditation when he says: “the most important thing I had to do was to give myself to the reading of the Word of God...not the simple reading...so that it only passes through my mind just as water runs through a pipe, but considering what I read, pondering over it, and applying it to my heart. To meditate on it, that thus my heart might be comforted, encouraged, warned, reproved, instructed”.

Consider, ponder and apply John 15:1-4 to your heart. What phrase or verse comforts you? Encourages you? Warns you? Instructs you?

I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. (Ps. 119:15)

What have you been fixing your eyes on this week?

How is John 15:1-4 calling you to set your heart on things above?

Respond to the Lord in prayer. Here are some ideas:

Praise the Father for His nearness and active hand in your life. Praise Jesus for being the source of eternal life and fruitfulness. Praise the Holy Spirit for convicting our hearts and leading us in the truth.

Repent of fixing your eyes on other things and failing to know Jesus as our source of comfort, strength, and fruitfulness. Repent of self-sufficiency and self-reliance.

Ask God to help you learn the discipline and delight of abiding in Christ. Ask Him to work in you greater fruitfulness for other’s good and His glory.

There are many metaphors, word pictures and expressions in Scripture about our union with Christ. Thus far, we have focused exclusively on our union with Christ as branches connected to a vine.

For extra study, look up the verses below. Meditate on the other Scriptures that speak of our relationship with the Lord.

Read Galatians 2:20.

What do you observe? How do you think this relates to being branches in a vine?

How does this encourage you or convict you today?

Read Colossians 1:27.

What do you observe? What is the hope of glory?

How does this encourage you or convict you today?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.

What do you observe?

How does this encourage you or convict you today?

Read Ephesians 5:23 & 5:31-32

What do you observe? What is the metaphor of union used of Christ and the Church in verse 23?

How does this encourage you or convict you today?

Read 1 Peter 2:4-6

What do you observe about Christ? About the church?

How does this encourage you or convict you today?

Read Hymn: Abide With Me

Author Henry Francis Lyte was a minister, poet and hymn writer. He suffered poor health most of his life and developed tuberculosis at age 54. Near the end of his life he had a strong to desire to preach one last time though weak and breathless. Many believe that after preaching that night, he penned this hymn. Weeks later Henry Lyte went to be with Jesus. His true abiding relationship with the Lord can be seen in the fruit of his lips. His last words were 'JOY! PEACE!'

Slowly read through or listen to this beautiful hymn and mark the words or lines that stand out to you.

Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away.
Change and decay in all around I see.
O thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need thy presence every passing hour.
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like thyself my guide and strength can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless,
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes.
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks and earth's vain shadows flee;
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

This song is a prayer for God's continual presence in every season of our lives. The more we feel our need for God, the more the truths of this song will resonate with our hearts. Make it your prayer this week that you would abide in Him and that He would abide in you.