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*Abide with Me*

*Abide with me:  
 fast falls the even tide;  
 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 fade away;  
 Change and decay  
 in all around I see;  
 O Thou who changest not,  
 abide with me!*

*I need Thy presence  
 ev'ry passing hour:  
 What but Thy grace  
 can foil the tempter's pow'r?  
 Who like Thyself  
 my guide and stay can be?  
 Thru cloud and sunshine,  
 O abide with me!*

*Hold Thou Thy cross  
 before my closing eyes;  
 Shine thru the gloom,  
 and point me to the skies;  
 Heav'n's morning breaks,  
 and earth's vain shadows flee;  
 In life, in death,  
 O Lord, abide with me!*

WORDS: Henry F. Lyte (w. 1847)  
MUSIC: William H. Monk (w. 1861)



**Abide**

Often when I am studying the Bible and the English language with a FriendSpeak reader, I come upon a word where I have to say, "So, this is one of those English words that can have different meanings. Like, completely different meanings, depending on how it is used." The reader will look at me with a sense of disbelief as I review all the different definitions of the word.

The word *abide* is that kind of word. It can mean "to accept or act in accordance with a decision or rule," as in "I can abide by their decision" or a "law-abiding citizen." On the other hand, it can have the negative meaning of barely being able to tolerate someone or something, as in "If there's one thing I cannot abide, it's someone who is perpetually late." It can mean "to continue without fading or being lost" as in "Now abides faith, hope, and love."

There is, however, one other, somewhat archaic meaning for *abide* – "to live, or dwell somewhere." We might be more likely today to say something like "to lodge, to be housed at, to reside, to stay put, to hang out." This definition of *abide* has the connotation of remaining and not wandering off.

And *abide* – or at least, the Greek word *meno* which is translated as *abide* in a number of versions – was one of the apostle John's favorite words. We think of John as the apostle of love, and he was that, but he also wrote over and over about abiding. In fact, he used the word 34 times in the Gospel of John and a total of 19 times in his epistles. So, let us just look at one of those epistles, the book of I John, and glean a few of the lessons the apostle offered his Christian readers about the spiritual meaning of abiding.

First, the concept of abiding is inextricably linked with faith, specifically faith in Jesus as the Son of God. John writes very plainly in I John 4:15, “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God.” We are made in the image of God and made to have relationship with God, to dwell with Him and He in us. But that relationship doesn’t happen on our terms. Jesus is the only Way to God. If a woman lacks that belief in Jesus, she will not have God abiding, living within her, and she cannot live her life in God. It does not matter how much she believes in some vague “higher power” or regards herself as “spiritual.” John pulls no punches in telling us that everything revolves around the belief in Jesus.

Second, to abide has to do with our behavior. I John 2:6 states, “...whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked.” The context makes clear that John is talking about the way in which Jesus walked, as He lived His life on earth giving us that perfect example. We just fool ourselves if we say we believe in Jesus, even that we love Him, but make no effort to model our lives after His teachings. “Whoever says ‘I know him’ but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” I John 2:4. These are strong words from John, and they should get our attention.

So, does this mean that I’m hopeless and should just give up when I sin? No, John has already addressed that in the first chapter when he says God is always faithful and just to forgive us our sins when we are willing to confess those sins. But God does not want us to willfully continue in sinful practice; He wants us to have obedient hearts that seek to do His will. “Whoever keep his commandments abides in God, and God in him.” I John 3:24. It is to this life of obedience and growth that God has called us.

And of course, John, the apostle of love, ties the concept of abiding to love. He teaches us in I John 2:10,11, “Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.” We can have faith and we can model our behavior after Jesus, but if our hearts are loveless, if we harbor ill will toward a brother or sister, we are not dwelling in that light where there is redemption and relationship. “So

we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God in him. By this is love perfected for us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.” I John 4:16,17.

To live, to dwell daily with God – to have God dwell within us daily – what does that mean? What does it look like to make our home with God? John tells his Christian brothers and sisters, and therefore us, that it means to believe in Christ, to obey, to love ... Abide.

Ina McKune, Rolla, MO

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### **Shadowing**

Psalm 91:1 begins, “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.” (RSV) We might paraphrase the verse, if one walks closely with God, he will be surrounded by His protection and care.

One definition of a shadow is something produced by light hitting the object and reflecting it. We have all been in the shadow of a tree when we have been outside, and the sun is in a position to cast a reflection on the tree. To be in the shadow of the tree, we must be near it.

A second definition of shadow is someone who follows another person around. Shadowing is an informal way for someone to learn what it is like to perform a specific job at a workplace.

“Shadowing” is a popular concept today. Spending time with a professional helps one see what it is like working at a particular job. The opportunity to work alongside another and gain experience of the job assists in deciding on a career choice.

Early in His ministry, Jesus called Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John to “come follow me.” They did not shadow Jesus for just one day, week, or month, but for His entire ministry. They walked, talked, and ate with Him. They heard what He said. They noticed what He did. They observed Jesus heal, listened to Him teach, and watched Him suffer. It was not about a career; it was about living as a disciple. Were they successful?

When we turn to the book of Acts, we are given a clue. In Acts 4 Peter and John are questioned by the

Sanhedrin in response to their teaching about Jesus and His resurrection. Peter, boldly and without hesitation speaks of Jesus, as the only means of salvation. "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). In the next verse, the astonished leaders come to one conclusion. Peter and John, who were ordinary unschooled men, "had been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13).

For 3 years the disciples followed Jesus. We might conclude they shadowed Jesus day and night. It was evident to others who they shadowed.

Would others know who you shadow?

Stay close to Jesus. Spend time with Jesus. Shadow Jesus!

Sally Shank, Oklahoma City, OK

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### Abide in Me

*"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup>Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. <sup>5</sup>"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."* John 15:1-7 (NKJV)

These are words Jesus spoke to His disciples. Jesus calls Himself the "vine," and the Father is the "vinedresser." The branches are His children. The branches (Christians) receive all their nutrition from the vine, but a branch can die. If it stops taking much needed nutrition from the vine, it is only fit to be cut off and burned in the fire. We must remain connected to the vine; we must be active, feeding ourselves spiritually through listening to God's word and studying. We must stay close to all the other branches to stay encouraged and uplifted.

I am reminded of an illustration our dear brother and elder, Loyd, likes to give. He talks about coals of a fire or a group of pencils. As long as coals are together in the fire, they will burn brightly with light and warmth. But if one coal is removed from the fire, it will soon become black and cold because it is not receiving any fuel from the rest. It is the same with the pencils. It is hard to break a bunch of pencils, but just one is easily broken.

This is especially true for Christians. If we fail to meet regularly with our brothers and sisters in Christ, if we fail to study and pray daily, if we do not keep the communication line with the Father open, we begin to die spiritually. We will become just like the isolated coal—dull and cold. Like one pencil alone, we will be easily broken when we face life's trials and tribulations if we do not abide in Him and in His word. If we *cannot* be there, God knows the reasons. He strengthens and guides us by His Holy Spirit during difficult times.

As Joshua said in Joshua 24:15, <sup>15</sup>*"But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."*

Mary Anna Melton, Rolla, Missouri

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### Monsters Under the Bed

How many parents have been awakened in the middle of the night by screams of, "Mama, Daddy!" and the sound of footfalls thudding down the hall? The bedroom door slams open and little Suzy launches herself into the middle of your bed crying, "There's a monster under my bed. Can I sleep with you?" So you let her slip under the covers, hug her tight and calm her into sleep before you return her to her own bed. Most parents either have or will experience this sort of thing somewhere along the line.

What is that child seeking? Safety. She knows her mother and dad will protect and take care of her. No matter what lurks under her bed, her parents will deal with it. She knows they will stay with her through her terror.

My question is: Do we know the same thing about our God? We often give lip service to God, but do we really believe He will be there when things get tough? Our theme song is, "Abide With Me," and it speaks of those hard times. When we sing that song in our services, do we really believe God will abide with us through all our trials and triumphs? Have we given any thought to what abide means?

Definition of abide:

(transitive verb)

1a: to bear patiently; tolerate- 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance

1b: to endure without yielding; withstand-Matthew 10:22 And you will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.

2: to wait for; await-Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

3: to accept without objection-Mark 12:30 and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.

intransitive verb

1: to remain stable or fixed in a state-Luke 16:10 The one who is faithful in a very little thing is also faithful in much; and the one who is unrighteous in a very little thing is also unrighteous in much.

2: to continue in a place - Philippians 2:1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, <sup>2</sup> make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

abide by

1: to conform, to abide by the rules-Matthew 5:19 Therefore, whoever nullifies one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

2: to accept without objection-John 14:21 <sup>21</sup>"The one who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and the one who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will reveal Myself to him."

In I John 2:18 John tells us there are antichrists about, in other words, our monsters under the bed. Do we run to the Father and beg to abide with Him, or do we take up the battle on our own, or worse yet, hide away and ignore the enemy?

The entire second chapter of I John speaks of remaining faithful, letting our faith abide in us, so that God can abide with us. Do we do that? I pray we do, but I do realize, as John did, that it is not always easy. Sometimes, there are monsters under our beds, and those are the times we need to run screaming, "Father, can I stay with you?" When we do that, we can rest assured, God will hug us tight and say, "...behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20.

By Wilburta Arrowood, Napoleonville, Louisiana  
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**RED RIVER FAMILY ENCAMPMENT**  
**JUNE 25-JUNE 30**  
**RED RIVER, NEW MEXICO**  
**MAKE LODGING RESERVATIONS NOW!**

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