

4. Indwelling Life

Core DNA Trait: A church living by Christ's indwelling life.

The Abiding Life

"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me" (John 15:4).

a) The Christian Life Is Not Trying Harder

- Striving cannot produce:
 - Lasting victory over sin
 - Spiritual fruit
 - Genuine transformation
 - Christlike maturity
- Jesus invites us into something far greater than self-effort. He calls us to live from His life within us.

b) John 15:1–11 Is the Abiding Life Passage

- Jesus spoke these words shortly before His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.
- He knew His disciples would soon live without His physical presence beside them.
- He was preparing them for life after the Holy Spirit came to dwell within them.
- But this teaching was not only for the twelve disciples.
- Jesus was also preparing His church throughout history—including us.
- John 15:1–11 is critical for understanding how to live the life Christ desires us to live.

c) The Abiding Life Changes Everything

- You begin to:
 - Live as a new creation
 - Bear fruit for God
 - Experience deep fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
 - Live in victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil
 - Mature into Christ's image and likeness

d) A Common Struggle

- Many believers know abiding is important but don't know how to do it.
- They struggle with questions like:

- How do I abide in Jesus if He is enthroned in heaven?
- What does it actually mean to abide?
- Does abiding mean I stop doing anything and simply let God do it all?
- Do I have a role to play?

What Does It Mean to Abide?

a) Abide Is *Menō*

- To remain (stay where you are)
- To dwell (make your home in something)
- To continue (not depart or drift away)

b) *Menō* In Context

- To stay connected relationally
- To continually draw from your union with Christ through your relationship with Him
- Not visiting Christ—living from Him in you
- About connection, dependence, and flow of life
- The active, conscious, relational experience of the life that is already yours in union with Christ
- Union (positional) to communion (experience)
- Experiential participation in the life of Christ in you

c) How Do You Abide in Christ?

- Abiding is not a single action—it's a way of living from your union with Christ.
- Abiding is recognizing that union and living from it instead of self.
- You abide by prayerful dependence on Christ—not by self-effort rooted in independence.
- You abide by maintaining relational connection through:
 - Conversations with the Lord, not just prayer requests
 - Awareness of His indwelling presence
 - Acknowledgement of His indwelling presence
 - Dependence instead of self-reliance
 - Yielding to the Spirit's promptings
 - Receiving rather than striving

- Letting His Word dwell richly in you
- Hearing His voice
- Obeying His Word and voice
- Resting in His love
- Abiding is relational—not mechanical or formulaic.

d) A Helpful Contrast

- Not abiding
 - Living from self: self's wisdom, strength, and effort
 - Reacting from the flesh or soul
 - Living independently of Christ
 - Forgetting He is in you
- Abiding
 - Living from Christ within
 - Responding from the Spirit
 - Depending on Him moment by moment
 - Remaining aware of His presence

God Designed You for the Abiding Life

a) God Created Humanity with Abiding in Mind

- The Lord created us as spirit, soul, and body (1 Thess. 5:23).
- His purpose was that we would live by Christ's indwelling life.
- From the beginning, God formed humanity from the dust so we could live from the tree of life.
- The tree of life points us to Jesus Christ as our true source of life.

b) Divine Order Is Essential to the Abiding Life

- God's prescribed order is:
 - Spirit first
 - Soul second
 - Body third
- This order is essential to the abiding life.

- When your spirit is first, your soul second, and your body third, you become a spiritual person who experiences, expresses, and releases Christ's indwelling life.

c) Your Spirit Was Created to Lead

- Your spirit is God-conscious.
- Your spirit was created to be:
 - The dwelling place of God's Spirit
 - The place where you commune with God
 - The part of you that discerns His voice and leading
 - The leader of your soul and body
- Your spirit is the most important part of your being.
- Even though you cannot see it, touch it, or easily feel it, your spirit is central to the Christian life.
- The abiding life must be lived from your spirit first—then overflowing to your soul and body.

d) Your Soul Was Created to Serve Your Spirit

- Your soul is self-conscious.
- Your soul is self-aware.
- Your soul includes your mind, will, and emotions
- These form and express your individuality and personality.
- The soul is important, but it was never meant to govern your life independently.
- Your soul was not created to be your life source.
- When the soul leads, the Christian life becomes intellectual, emotional, and self-driven.
- Your soul was created to receive from your spirit and express Christ's indwelling life.
- When the soul rules, you live from self.
- When the spirit rules, your soul becomes a servant of Christ's life within.

e) Your Body Was Created to Express Christ's Life

- Your body is world-conscious and interacts with the material world.
- Sin dwells in the fallen body (Rom. 7:17–20).
- But the body itself is not evil.
- When energized by the indwelling Spirit, your body can express the life and nature of Christ.
- Your body was created to carry out the direction of a soul submitted to the spirit.

f) Your Heart Is the Channel Between Spirit and Soul

- The heart is the deepest part of the soul.
- What flows through your heart shapes your life (Prov. 4:23).
- As the heart is, so are you.
- The condition of your heart determines what flows into your thoughts, desires, choices, and actions.
- If your heart is submitted to the Spirit, Christ's life flows freely.
- If your heart is hardened, distracted, or divided, the flow of life is hindered.
- Whoever dwells in your heart—whether self or Christ—will be the life source that you automatically live from (autopilot).

The Indwelling Spirit Makes Abiding Possible

a) The Indwelling Spirit Is the Secret of the Abiding Life

- John wrote, "By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit" (1 John 4:13).
- This means abiding is not possible by human effort.
- Abiding is possible because the Holy Spirit dwells within you.
- The Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead dwells within your spirit.
- The Spirit who hovered over creation has made His home in you.
- The Spirit who brought forth Christ in Mary now brings forth Christ in you.
- The abiding life is possible because the Spirit of Christ is joined to your human spirit.

b) Having the Indwelling Spirit Is Better Than Walking with Jesus Physically

- Jesus said, "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7).
- Jesus told His disciples that it was better for Him to leave. That sounds almost impossible to believe.
- The disciples had:
 - Walked with Him for three-and-a-half years;
 - Seen Him heal the sick, cast out demons, raise the dead, walk on water, calm storms, open blind eyes, and teach with unmatched authority;
 - Heard His voice, looked into His eyes, touched His resurrected body, and lived beside the eternal Son of God in human flesh.
- But God had a more intimate plan—Christ would dwell within us by His Spirit.

c) The Difference Maker

- Christ in you is the difference maker in your life.
- But if you don't know He dwells in you, this truth will not make much difference in your life.
- A revelation of Christ in you is the difference between:
 - Joy and sadness
 - Peace and anxiety
 - Hope and despair
 - Purpose and aimlessness
 - Victory and defeat
 - Faith and unbelief
 - Maturity and immaturity
 - Humility and pride
- It is the difference between knowing Christ intimately and merely knowing about Christ intellectually.

One Spirit with Christ

a) Joined to Christ Spirit to Spirit

- 1 Cor. 6:17: "The one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him."
- My skin graft on my left index finger is a *visible* sign to me of my *invisible* spirit-to-Spirit union with Christ.
- Your human spirit has been grafted to the indwelling Spirit.
- You can experience spiritual growth because the indwelling Spirit has been grafted to your spirit.
- Your life can be fruitful because the Spirit has been fastened to your spirit.
- You are connected to Christ the Vine through your spiritual union with the indwelling Spirit.
- This means you have a direct pipeline to His life.
- You are always connected to Him, whether you feel it or not.

b) The Life of Jesus Christ Has Been Grafted to Your Spirit

- Romans 6:5 speaks of being grafted to Christ.
- You have been born together with Christ.
- You have Christ's nature implanted by new birth to you.

- His divine nature is an innate part of your spirit.
- *Life* you did not possess is now grafted into you.
- *Righteousness* you did not possess is now grafted into you.
- *Holiness* you did not possess is now grafted into you.
- *Victory* you did not possess is now grafted into you.

Christ Living in You and Through You

a) Paul Lived by Christ's Life

- Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).
- Paul did not merely try to imitate Christ externally.
- He surrendered to Christ internally.
- As Paul yielded to the indwelling Christ, Christ lived His life in and through Paul.

b) The Branch Does Not Produce Life from Itself

- Jesus said, "You are the branches" (John 15:5).
- A branch does not create life.
- A branch receives life.
- A branch does not strive to produce fruit.
- A branch abides in the vine, receives the life of the vine, and bears the fruit of the vine.
- Illustration
 - Christ is the Vine.
 - You are the branch.
 - The Holy Spirit is the sap—His life flows through you.
 - Fruit is produced as His life flows through you.
- The indwelling Spirit's divine life flows like sap through you to produce beautiful fruit.
- Just as sap is the lifeblood of a tree or plant, the life-giving Spirit, grafted to your spirit, releases divine life to produce the fruit of Christ in you and through you.

You Are Spiritually Rich

a) 2 Corinthians 4:7

- “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves” (2 Cor. 4:7).
- Christ dwells within you by the indwelling Spirit.
- You are not spiritually poor, empty, powerless, or without guidance.
- You carry the treasure of Christ’s glory, guidance, and power within your born-again spirit.

b) The Story of Ira Yates

- Ira Yates struggled for years in poverty, debt, drought, and near bankruptcy.
- But when an oil company drilled on his land, they discovered one of the most productive oil fields in America.
- Almost overnight, he became wealthy.
- Key Ideas
 - Yates lived poor because he did not know the treasure beneath him.
 - Many believers live the same way spiritually.
 - They are rich in Christ but live unaware of the treasure within them.

c) Many Believers Live in Spiritual Poverty

- They are:
 - Born again
 - Forgiven
 - Indwelt by the Holy Spirit
 - Joined to Christ
 - Filled with spiritual treasure
- Yet they continue living from self-life in the soul rather than Christ’s life in the spirit.
 - Dead religion keeps the treasure buried.
 - Divine revelation uncovers the treasure and teaches us to live from Christ within.

Know What Is Right with You

a) Most Believers Know What Is Wrong with Them

- They are very aware of their sins, weaknesses, faults, and shortcomings.

- They often focus on:
 - Failure
 - Immaturity
 - Fear
 - Temptation
 - Wounds
 - Inconsistency
- But this is not the whole story.

b) You Must Know What Is Right Because Christ Is in You

- Do you know what is right with you because Christ dwells within you?
- Do you know what is right with you because He has transformed your spirit?
- Your born-again spirit is not dead, sinful, or corrupt.
- Your spirit has been recreated in Christ and has become the dwelling place of God's Spirit.

c) What You Focus on Shapes How You Live

- Focusing only on what is wrong with you paralyzes you.
- It produces:
 - Shame
 - Condemnation
 - Discouragement
 - Fear
 - Spiritual poverty
- Focusing on Christ within you propels you.
- It produces:
 - Faith
 - Confidence
 - Hope
 - Boldness
 - Expectation
 - Victory

- Key Ideas
 - You do not ignore your weaknesses.
 - But you must become more aware of Christ within you than the weaknesses within your earthen vessel.
 - The treasure is greater than the vessel.

The Treasure of Christ in You

a) The Treasure of Glory

- God's Spirit dwells in you, making your spirit the holy of holies of His temple (1 Cor. 3:16).
- God's glory now lives within you—the same presence that filled the tabernacle and temple now resides in you.
- You carry God everywhere you go. His presence is not external; it goes with you into every environment because He is in you.
- You have a well of divine life within you; you have rivers of living water within you (John 7:38).

b) The Treasure of Guidance

- The Holy Spirit is your Helper. He guides, strengthens, assists, and helps you know what to say or do.
- A simple prayer can be powerful: "Holy Spirit, please help me."
- The anointing is already in you. Because you are in Christ, you don't need a platform to be anointed; the Spirit has set you apart for God's use.
- The Spirit of truth lives within you. He helps you discern truth from error, glorifies Jesus, and reveals what belongs to Christ.
- You have access to the mind of Christ. The wisdom and counsel you need are available within, so learn to turn inward to the Spirit before looking outward for guidance.

c) The Treasure of Power

- Resurrection power is in you. The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you.
- His life revives dry places. The Spirit brings healing, hope, strength, and restoration to wounded or discouraged areas.
- Creative power is in you. The Spirit can flow through your writing, speaking, leading, problem-solving, ministry, and daily work.
- Because the Spirit lives in you, creative breakthrough can flow from within.
- Power for ability is in you. Through Christ within, you can do, obey, become, and overcome what God has called you to.