



Part 3: The Necessity of Abiding in Jesus

John 15:1-4

The first step in becoming like Jesus is learning to be with Him – cultivating our attentiveness to His presence.

I. Our Deepest Longings

“Thirsty hearts are those whose longings have been awakened by the touch of God within them.” – A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*

Personal change begins with desire. We have to want to be different...less impulsive, more patient; less anxious, more peaceful; less angry or bitter, more compassionate and loving...we no longer are content with the way things are.

Tozer writes of our deep longings once we've been touched by God's grace. We find that what we want is changing. Becoming a disciple of Jesus changes what we want. We want to become more like Jesus, and this is the best thing that can happen to us.

II. Learning to Live in Jesus' Presence and Power

A. The Holy Spirit unites us to Jesus (John 14:15-20)

“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you...Because I live, you also will live...you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.” John 14:15-20

The way we are “with Jesus” now is through the Holy Spirit, who unites us to Jesus.

B. Living in Jesus' presence (John 15:1-5)

“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”
John 15:4-5

1. Our union with Jesus through the Holy Spirit is intended to produce the “fruit” of Jesus life in us – his life, character, mission, and ministry.
2. Our formation into Jesus' likeness is dependent on our “abiding/remaining” in Jesus like a branch is connected to a vine.
3. If we neglect this commitment, we will lack the life of Jesus to transform us and we will waste time and energy like a vine needing to be pruned.

“Your life is a byproduct of your lifestyle...The first step in discipleship to Jesus is learning to live in constant attentiveness to the Spirit. This is the baseline for all of life in the Kingdom of God.” – John Mark Comer

“Your natural life is derived from your parents; that does not mean it will stay there if you do nothing about it. You can lose it by neglect, or you can drive it away by committing suicide. You have to feed it and look after it; but always remember you are not making it, you are only keeping up a life you got from someone else. In the same way a Christian can lose the Christ-life which has been put into him, and he has to make efforts to keep it. But even the best Christian that ever lived is not acting on his own steam – he is only nourishing or protecting a life he could never have acquired by his own efforts.” – C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 62-63

“...to acknowledge the presence of the God who is really there is actually a form of prayer, a way of praying always as the Scriptures exhort us to do. When we do this, the eyes and ears of our hearts are opened to receive the word He is always speaking...It requires discipline...To acknowledge the unseen real requires a concerted effort of the will at first. We might think of it as actually practicing the presence...The practice of the presence, then, is simply the discipline of calling to mind the truth that God is with us. When we consistently do this, the miracle of seeing by faith is given. We begin to see with the eyes of our hearts.” – Leanne Payne, *The Healing Presence*, p.23-24

“The first and most basic thing we can and must do is to keep God before our minds. This is the fundamental secret of caring for our soul. Our part in practicing the presence of God is to direct and redirect our minds constantly to Him. In the early time of our practicing, we may well be challenged by our burdensome habit of dwelling on things less than God, but these are habits and not the law of gravity and can be broken. A new grace-filled habit will replace the former ones as we take intentional steps for keeping God before us. Soon our minds will return to God as a needle of a compass constantly returns to the north. If God is the great longing of our soul, He will become the polestar of our inward gaze.” – Dallas Willard

C. The Necessity of Practices

“The spiritual disciplines are practices based on the lifestyle of Jesus that create a time and space for us to access the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, and in doing so be transformed from the inside out.” – John Mark Comer, “Practicing the Way” sermon, Part 6

Resources:

1. [Greenwoodcc.com/Resources/Practices/Life with Jesus in Worship](http://Greenwoodcc.com/Resources/Practices/Life%20with%20Jesus%20in%20Worship)
2. Lectio365 (app)
3. Dwell (app)
4. Pause (app) (Ransomedheart.com)
5. *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer

III. Made for God (John 15:9-11)

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full.” John 15:9-11

“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” – Augustine

“Once taste God, and nothing else but God will ever do again.” – Oswald Chambers

Discussion Questions:

1. Read John 15:1-5. What have you been taught about the commitment of “abiding/remaining” in Jesus? Is anything in this teaching new to you?

2. Have you tried any of the practices of Jesus in Greenwood's resources (greenwoodcc.com/resources/practices)? If so, what has been your experience?
3. Doug's main point is: *The first step in becoming like Jesus is learning to be with Him – cultivating our attentiveness to His presence.* What is your greatest challenge to developing this commitment? Are you willing to pray for one another towards this goal?