

John 15:7-8 -“If you abide in Me, and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be my disciples.”

Abide is a word we don't use too frequently these days, except in reference to the scriptures that contain it. It means to live or dwell - but also to obey, observe, follow, or uphold. God tells us that if we live in Him - if we uphold and obey Him - and if His words live in us, then we can ask what we desire and it will be done for us.

God hasn't designed us as automatons that He tries to control by remote. He has made each of us in His image in order that we might have relationship with Him. He wants for us to be His friend, to be in such fellowship with Him that we trust His ways and His heart. He wants us to seek Him for who He is, not just what He can provide.

The late Hudson Taylor, a missionary to China, wrote of his struggles to walk more closely with God. “I prayed, agonized, fasted, strove, made resolutions, read the word more diligently, sought more time for retirement and meditation - but all was without effect. I knew that if I would abide in Christ, all would be well - but I could not.” Then he received a letter from a colleague that unlocked the door. His friend wrote, “Friendship with God comes not from striving after faith, but from resting in the Faithful One.”

Some years ago when I was making hospital rounds, I saw a woman emerging from her room in a hospital gown, followed closely by a nursing assistant. The patient census indicated that this woman had an altered mental state, so I asked the attendant if I could speak with the patient, to which she replied, “If she wants to speak to you.” I prayed silently for guidance and then gently asked the patient if I could join her on her walk. She hesitantly agreed and we walked in silence for several paces.

Every few steps, the patient would declare, “I have to keep on going...I have to keep on going.” So I kept walking right alongside her. When we reached the end of the hall, I asked if she would like to sit together on a bench, and she agreed. When I asked if she knew Jesus, she nodded and then agreed to pray together.

As we joined our hearts in prayer, a peace came over this precious woman as she felt the presence and the love of Jesus being poured out on her. I assured her that God was with her and that He loved her and resumed my rounds. A few hours later, this dear woman was once again standing in the hall, but this time with a radiant smile, clear eyes and open arms. She embraced me and said that I had blessed her. I enfolded her in my arms and assured her that she had also blessed me.

This is the abiding love that Jesus offers - fellowship and friendship with God. He walks alongside us through all of the trials of life and celebrates our triumphs. His presence is freely offered to all who come to Him, overcoming any barriers, whether they are physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, societal, cultural, denominational. He is no respecter of persons, for He says, "Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Let Him walk with you today, wherever you are. You have a friend in Jesus.