

# OpenTheo

## Abiding in Christ



### Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

In "Abiding in Christ," Steve Gregg explores the concept of remaining connected to Jesus Christ as one's Lord and abiding in Him as a dynamic relationship that requires continual effort and interaction. Gregg emphasizes the importance of abiding in Christ for salvation and remaining faithful and fruitful. This ongoing process involves keeping His commandments and walking in love, and requires intentional effort and ongoing commitment.

### Transcript

I was asked if I would teach on the subject of abiding in Christ, which by the way I had never ever prepared a teaching by that title before. It's a great subject. Of course I've talked about abiding in Christ in different connections, because it comes up, especially in John's writings.

John is the one who uses this word abide a great deal. The idea of being in Christ certainly is a Pauline concept largely and even goes back to Jesus himself that people are in him but this idea of abiding in Christ is a Johannine expression. John is the one who uses it in his writings.

To study this concept we'll be looking at the Gospel of John especially and at the first epistle of John and it's the first epistle of John where you find it most often but look at John chapter 15 and that's where we'll start. As far as I know I'm trying to think the upper room discourse where this passage appears is the first time as I recall that Jesus talked about being in him and Paul of course develops that theme in his writings quite a bit. The idea of being in Jesus was not an option until the very end he began to talk about it because it's by the Holy Spirit being in us that Christ is in us.

Christ is in us because his spirit is in us and he hadn't given his spirit yet until he rose from the dead so in his earlier ministry he didn't talk about being in him but he did in the upper room discourse at the very end just before he was arrested he spoke about giving the Holy Spirit and him being with them and them being in him and him being in them and so forth. You find this language introduced first in the 14th chapter but the discourse

continues through chapter 16 and in chapter 15 this is the context that we find the idea of abiding in him. Jesus said I am the vine and my father is the vinedresser 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 you are already clean because of the words I've spoken to you 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 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 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 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 and now I think that's as far as we'll go in this passage now here's where Jesus talks about the need to abide in him and you'll notice that where he talks about he uses that synonymously and I in you in verse 4 and then later on again he says if you abide in me or abide in me and I in you and then later in verse 7 he says if you abide in me and my words abide in you we're gonna find that Jesus uses several different phrases kind of interchangeably abiding in Christ does involve him abiding in you so that you are in him and he is in you okay we're gonna talk about those concepts in a moment but he also and John also in first John when he talks about these subjects talks about abiding in Jesus's commandments or abiding in his word abiding in his love these are all things that that are used kind of interchangeably in especially in first John so abiding in Christ and oh by the way when you come to first John you'll find that abiding in Christ is also used interchangeably with abiding in God the Father abiding in the Son and in the Father are kind of the same thing so we've got quite a few different phrases that are all if they're not identical in meaning I think most of them are identical in meaning but if they're not all identical in meaning they are at least wrapped up together into one whole concept now I like to start here with this vine and branches thing because it it connects so well with Paul's talking about being in Christ in the form of a body and in fact later on as a plant also in G when Paul talks about the olive tree and branches in olive tree also the idea here is Jesus is an organism with multiple parts okay a vine is an organism that has roots and a stalk and branches and twigs and leaves and eventually grapes all of these are part of the whole organism called the vine we shouldn't think of the word vine referring only to the stalk and maybe you don't have that tendency but growing up as a child and being less familiar than I am as an adult with these things I always thought Jesus and I I'm the stalk and you're the branches but he didn't say I'm the stalk I'm the vine that's the whole plant Christ is the whole plant and as I mentioned when we talk about the kingdom of God the imagery of a vine or a vineyard and producing fruit for God begins in Isaiah chapter 5 where Israel is sent to the vineyard and the fruit that God is seeking is justice and righteousness and that God gave Israel every advantage that they should be able to be a just and righteous society gave them the most just laws that were given to any nation ever he gave them prophets to pull them back the right direction when they went the wrong way he gave them a land that the unbelievers were not in control of so they

didn't have to live in a corrupt culture they had everything going for them to live a righteous life but they didn't they produced bad grapes not good grapes now Jesus did say to them in Matthew 21 he says the kingdom of God is taken from you and given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits of it and he's talking about his people the the church the body of Christ now the body of Christ will therefore bring forth the fruits of it and Jesus talks to his disciples as members of the body of Christ now Jesus doesn't use the term body of Christ no one in the Bible uses that term but Paul that's Paul's favorite term it would seem and and the connected term in Christ you see we are in Christ in the sense that we are like organs in a body Christ is the body well Christ is the body and he's the whole he's the whole person but Christ functions as the head of the rest of the body he's a member of the body like we are but he's the ruling member the head is the ruling member of the body if you're you know a hand or a foot or an eye or a nose or an ear you are in him just like your organs and your limbs are in you they're in your body they're part of you they're part of one organism we are not a Jesus fan club we are in a sense Christ embodied in a corporate way where Jesus is the head and the rest of us have the same spirit the same life the same mission and every one of us is simply like an organ or a limb of the body and we follow the heads instruction so that the global body of Christ is like Jesus himself moving massively on a global scale through the members of his body now while it is Paul that gave us the image of the body of Christ it's not fundamentally different than this idea of a vine now it is different because a doesn't technically have a head or a ruler and Jesus is not denying that you know that he's the ruler I think he's just using a different image than Paul used a vine is an organism like a human body is an organism and Christ compares himself with a vine here because he's the new Israel Israel to the to the disciples the vine is Israel Jesus I'm the true line there's I'm the true Israel I'm the real Israel Israel the nation did not produce fruit but I will and I will do it through my branches which is you and those branches as part of the vine are the part that brings forth the fruit now certainly it's by attachment to the rest of the whole organism the root and the stock and and you know so forth it's by being part of the organism that this fruit is born Christ is the one who creates the fruit we're the ones who carry it to bear fruit means to carry the fruit the branches carry it it's produced by the vine itself but the branches are part of the vine they're part of the organism now this is how he's talking and then Paul talks that way too in Romans 11 he talks about the olive tree which is another image for the same concept he talks there about some of the branches which were the Jews being broken off all of tree and vine were both images of Israel in the Old Testament and Paul's making a slightly different point when he points out that some of the branches of that olive tree have been broken off and others have been grafted in nonetheless we're all part of the same olive tree we're all part of the same organism now the point we want to talk about here is abiding in Christ now abide I don't know if you I don't know if anyone uses the word abide in modern English I think I think if you hear someone's talk use the word abide in a sentence you figure that must be a Christian who's familiar with the King James Version because abide isn't really a very common I'm not sure if I can I guess some people in South Africa I cannot abide that

kind of behavior or something like that you know the Greek word abide is meno m-e-n-o meno there's also a noun form mone it's the same word with the vowels interchange meno means to remain or dwell or stay or continue in the same place or abide abide is a somewhat older English word which you know those who are biblically literate know how to make sense of it but I think that not very many people use it in common speech but an abode is a place where someone abides okay and a mone in the Greek is a place where people meno meno is the abiding mone is the abiding place now to therefore we have the word meno it's there's all these synonyms for it you could translate it remain dwell abide continue stay endure in fact the King James translators were not really sure what to do with it they they used many different words for it like there's one verse in 1st John 224 which in the King James version translate the same verb three different ways that the verb meno is three times in 1st John 224 but it's translated three different English words in the King James it goes let that therefore abide in you which you have heard from the beginning if that would remain in you then you also shall continue in the father and in the son all three of those are the same Greek words three different English words now in the New King James we have a similar phenomenon in John 139 here the New King James actually uses two different words though the word the same word here is twice meno in John 139 the disciples asked where he was staying he says come and see and they came and saw where he was staying that's the word meno and remained that's also meno with him that day so they press it stay and remain within the space of three words of each other just because I don't know why just just so you don't have to use the same word as often as a Greek does I guess but but think about that when she says abided me what he means is stay in me remain in me continue in me which which has very strong implications that one might not necessarily automatically remain in him whenever you have such an imperative abide in me he's basically it's like it's like if I was about to leave you know would you stay for dinner well you're at you're telling me to do something I mean it's I mean I could say no but it's more than I mean it's an invitation but it's also an imperative stay so when Jesus stay stay in me then it means don't stop being in me don't change your status with reference to me now the reason that's kind of important is because some people many Christians teach that if you are ever in Christ you're always in Christ that is once saved always stay if you if you come to be a Christian ever you are always a Christian and that's inevitable because that's you know it's just the way it is Jesus apparently did not think so Jesus said it was not inevitable for example in verse 6 of what we just read he says if anyone does not remain in me he is cast forth as a branch and they wither and they throw them in the fire and they're burned that doesn't sound like staying saved but he does talk about someone not staying and the person who's not staying is one who was in him there's no sense talking about some not staying in him if they never were in him in the first place and say they're cast forth as a branch that means they were a branch they must have once been part of the vine they're once part of the plant but they're thrown away like a cut off branch now they cut themselves off they did not remain and we see the same thing when Paul is using the illustration of a of an olive tree in Romans chapter 11 again Israel is the olive tree but

but this is now the true Israel Christ and he says those Jews who are the natural branches who believe are still there but the Jews who didn't believe are cut off they're not part of the branch they're not branches on the olive tree anymore he says that you Gentiles who believe you're standing you've been grafted in and you participate in the root and the fatness of the olive tree you're part of a tree now but he said in verse 22 this is Romans 11 22 he says consider therefore the goodness and the severity of God on those who fell severely but upon you goodness if you continue in his goodness otherwise you also will be cut off now the word continue there doesn't happen to be minnow it's not the same word it's another Greek word for the same concept but the point here is that Paul said that as one who's been grafted into Christ and you're participating in the life of Christ the branch that's gradually participants in the root and the fatness of the tree the life of the tree he says continue if you don't continue you'll be cast off too so both Jesus and Paul use this idea of someone who is a living branch on a living in a living organism and does not continue to be a living branch in a living organism they do not remain they don't abide in him and this is something that is not easily answered by those who think that salvation is inevitable once you've accepted Christ I believe in eternal security I don't believe in unconditional eternal security you need to make that very clear if someone says do you believe you can lose your salvation I would say why would anyone want to are you asking for permission no why would you want to do that no you don't have to you can I believe you can be eternally secure but you're saved by faith if you have faith you're saved if you continue in the faith you continue to be saved if you depart from the faith you depart from being saved that's just I mean how how could it be simpler you're saved by faith now you have to abide therefore by faith in Christ or else you won't abide at all you won't be there you'll be cut off and be one of those branches that's gathered up and burned according to Jesus and similarly talked about by Paul so there is there are many expectations in the scripture for us to continue to be saved but those who believe that salvation is unconditionally secure and what that means usually is you accepted Jesus maybe when you're five years old maybe when you're 16 years old maybe when you're 23 but you never follow in any you never really you never really live like a Christian and later on you know I'm sure how much you believe it anymore maybe maybe you'll even leave I know of people I've heard them debate who are atheists today who used to be Christians they were raised Christians they believed everything you and I believe apparently and some of them were pastors and preached the gospel now someone could say well if they fell away became an atheist they never really were saved well I couldn't be the judge of that maybe they weren't maybe they were I mean we can't just assume that to be true the Bible does say that some people don't abide in Paul said many will depart from the faith you don't depart from something you've never been in so I mean maybe these particular people never were saved or maybe they were we don't know but there are people who say if you just accepted Christ you're you're unconditionally saved forever once they die saved and I I know I told this story those who listen to me a lot probably have heard several times when when Jimi Hendrix died I I was riding in a car with another brother my age

who was also in the ministry we're driving somewhere and we heard on the news Jimi Hendrix had died and we were both we're both stunned and I remember telling him I says you know it's amazing like yesterday he is at the top of the world he's you know at the he's a multi-millionaire a rock star everyone knows his name he's a esteemed as the greatest guitar player ever and that was yesterday today he's in hell and my friend said yeah then he said oh wait maybe not maybe he accepted Jesus when he was a kid and I because I was still a Baptist at the time said yeah maybe so maybe Jimi Hendrix is in heaven because maybe he accepted Jesus when he was a kid no no worries that he became a Satanist later on you know as a young black boy raised a black man he might have been raised in a Christian Church lots of black children raised in church and maybe he accepted Jesus and maybe he you know he never thought another thing about Jesus again but hey once saved always saved I actually believed that because my church taught that of course that would make the words of Jesus nonsensical about the need to remain in him to abide in him now I'll tell you what I've made this point on the air sometimes someone will call me up say Steve you don't understand the parable of the vine and the branches that Jesus use he's not talking about salvation here he's talking about fruitfulness if this is not a parable about salvation it's a parable about fruitfulness he says that those who abide in will bear fruit and those who don't will not bear fruit so this isn't really talking about any possibility of losing salvation but only living an unfruitful life I don't think they're right about that for a number of reasons one of those reasons is because of the way that abiding in Christ is spoken of in first John but even the way it's spoken of in this parable she said if anyone does not abide in me he is cast forth as a branch and withered and they are thrown in the fire and burned that sounds like worse than just not being fruitful you know he goes he could say well if he's not if they're not fruitful we're just not going to you know they won't have any fruit but he said another of you burn that doesn't sound like a saved person being described in and if in some remote sense I could imagine that it was a safe person I would be disabused of that by first John let me find the passage here first John 2 24 25 therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning if what you heard from the beginning abides in you you also will abide in the Son and in the Father and this is the promise that he has promised us eternal life the promise for what for abiding in the Father now that that verse was the one that has three different words of the King James but here it's abide all the way through it the new King James if you abide in what Jesus said then you will abide in Christ and in the Father in the Son and in the Father and this is the promise associated with that eternal life now if you look at first John chapter 5 verse 12 it says he who has the Son has life he who does not have the Son of God does not have life now throughout the gospel of the epistle of John the first epistle of John the idea of abiding in Christ is the same as having Christ here he says if you have the Son you have life if you don't have the Sun you don't have life that's no different than abiding in him let me show you why oh actually I didn't put in my notes the references I had them on my rough draft I didn't give him this note just put it this way first John if you read through it it does talk about abiding in Christ the person who abides in him has the Father and the Son it says so this

is talking about having Jesus and him having you him dwelling in you and you dwelling in him and this is something that is it's on us in a way now some people say well if it's on us none of us will be saved I've heard people say that before yeah if it's up to us to remain faithful then no one will be saved I'm not sure why they say that that's like saying if it's up to me to be faithful my wife then no marriage could survive why not why can't I be faithful in life I mean I realize some people are unfaithful to their wives but is it really impossible to be faithful to you I don't think so some people are unfaithful to Christ but is it impossible to be faithful to Christ I don't think so I mean why would it be more impossible to be faithful to Jesus than to be faithful to your husband your wife faithfulness is simply a choice you make you're going to be loyal you're not going to give up you're going to be faithful and I think that a lot of people just assume well I'm just trusting in God to keep me from falling after all doesn't Jude say now unto him who's able to keep you from falling he's able to he's going to keep me from falling well it says he's able to keep you from falling I said I think that's the testimonies but the point is that God is able to keep you from falling but not without your agreement not without your participation he's able to save people too but not without their agreement he could save everyone in the world but not unless they agree to it because salvation is a relationship it's not a transaction merely we think of salvation as a transaction a times okay it's like you get saved now you've got this deposit in the bank that you can never lose you know that salvation is yours and you can't touch it until you until time comes in this case till you die and then you cash in on all of it but that's what salvation is not a transaction sure you enter through a transaction of repentance and conversion so forth but it's like marriage is marriage a transaction or is a relationship well it's both it starts with the transaction it's called a wedding at a wedding two people vow to be faithful to each other then they go home and either they are or are not faithful to each other the wedding is the transaction the marriage is the relationship and will the marriage last well if both of them remain faithful it certainly will if one of them ditches it then apparently not there are unfortunately many people who got married at weddings and are not married to the same person anymore which is very tragic but the only way that can ever happen is for someone to be unfaithful someone who didn't have to be unfaithful you know if I say well if God doesn't keep me faithful my wife then I just can't do it really is it really that hard you know apparently for some people it is and indeed we everything we do we need God for Jesus said abide in me he says without me you can do nothing okay I agree without him I can do nothing I can't take a breath I can't have my next heartbeat I can't I can't love I can't I can't do anything good can't do anything at all without him so I mean abiding in him is required in order to do something to do anything but he didn't say you can do nothing while you're abiding me there are things we have to do also one of them is to abide one of them is what he tells us to do the Bible does not anywhere say that God will make you be faithful it says that he can keep you he can keep you but you have to keep yourself in the love of God I debated a the Baptist pastor what's he he challenged me so I went in I don't usually try to pick on people but he wanted to debate about eternal security and actually that debate is online but you know he said the Bible

says that God will keep you it never says that you have to keep yourself I thought well if you take a few books out of the Bible it doesn't say the very last verse in 1st John says little children keep yourselves from idols in Judah says keep yourselves in the love of God what do you mean it doesn't say keep yourself keeping yourself is your obligation keep yourself from idols the reason Israel fell is because they didn't keep themselves from idols was it impossible to keep themselves from idols I don't think so why would God blame them if he if they had no choice people are given free choice now it's true we're corrupted we've got sins but we also have God and through him anything can be accomplished when Paul said I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me he was in the context of as he was in prison and his circumstances were very severe he was poor and he needed support and the Philippians had sent him some support and he said I'm writing to thank you for that support it's really been a blessing to me but he says I'm not he says but I have learned whatever state I'm in to be content he said I can abound or I can be a based I could be empty or I can be full I've learned whatever state I'm in to be content I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me what's he saying he's saying if I am poor through Christ who strengthens me I can stay faithful if I rich through Christ who strengthens me I can stay faithful nothing's going to move me I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me this you might say well how is that why do you need Christ to keep you faithful in those cases you know in the Old Testament there's a guy named Agur who wrote the 30th chapter of Proverbs Proverbs 30 is written by Agur and there's a real famous statement of his in there he says he says give me neither poverty nor riches lest I be poor and steal and take the name of my Lord my God in vain or lest I be rich and forget the Lord now this guy said I can't be poor or rich I can't trust myself if I'm poor I'll probably steal if I'm rich I'll probably forget God Paul says boy sucks to be you Paul says I can be poor or rich I can do all things through God I'm not going to steal when I'm poor and I'm not going to forget God when I'm rich because I have God through Christ I can do all things but it's I who have to do it through him I have obligations here because there are Christians who have had Christ and they have not kept themselves from idols and they have not kept themselves from covetousness they have not kept themselves in the love of God and they have not remained faithful when tested with riches or tested with poverty there's all kinds of tests and I can pass all those tests through Christ who strengthens me but it's not automatic that's why the Bible talks about the Christian life as a warfare that's why it says we wrestle what are you wrestling for if you can just cruise if you're gonna be saved no matter what you do then why wrestle what's who am I wrestling against anyway I'm wrestling against principalities and powers or what do they have in mind for me maybe it'd be okay if I didn't wrestle with him what then well the Bible's in 1st Peter chapter 5 he says your adversary the devil roams around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour well if I'm a Christian what do I care about that he can't devour me right well then why mention it Peter's writing to Christians there's no question about that he makes that clear in opening verses of his book when he says you guys need to be vigilant you need to be sober because your adversary the devil is roaming around seeking whom he may devour and



therefore look out for him in fact the next verses whom resist steadfast in the faith you need to be steadfast of faith and resist the devil why well because he's out there to devour you otherwise that's I think that's fairly clear in the passage can the devil devour a Christian well if they don't resist can a Christian lose the wrestling match we wrestle against principle I can we lose of course why else would we wrestle why put out the effort to wrestle why put on the whole armor of God so that we might be able to stand in the evil day if standing in the evil day is inevitable it's not inevitable what we have just like a marriage we enter a marriage through a transaction we became Christians through the transaction of repentance and faith and baptism and so forth but then it's a relationship and relationships are dynamic not static anyone who's been married and especially who's been married and isn't married the same person again knows very well that marriage is static it's dynamic you've got to you got to apologize when you do the wrong thing you've got to forgive when they do the wrong thing you've got to you know make sacrifices for their good and I mean there's relationships a lot of give-and-take a lot of interaction and if you don't do it it doesn't last I mean it might it might last just through the sheer loyalty of both parties to their oaths and it should but the truth is it'll hardly be worth a marriage worth lasting but I mean if you're not working on the relationship if there's if the relationship is something that is continuous and dynamic the same is true of Christ Jesus said come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden I'll give you rest okay that's like come and get saved come and receive rest but they says take my yoke on you and learn from me what's yoke mean that means you become my slave you become my servant just like an ox or two oxen wear yokes why because they're serving the man who owns the yoke and who's steering the yoke you come under the control of the one whose yoke you're wearing that's the rabbis in in Jesus Day when when someone became a disciple one of the rabbis they took that rabbi's yoke upon them it's the figure they used when she said take my yoke upon you learn from me he's basically saying come under my leadership under my control follow me do what I'm telling you to do so I mean sure you come unto him but then you have to come after him she said if anyone will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me now those verses aren't in your notes but the the one was at the end of Matthew 11 I think around verse 28 for 930 and then the others of course in Matthew 16 around verse 24 I think so so in other words being a Christian doesn't just mean getting saved it means living in a relationship with God and with Jesus and that means remaining in him continuing in him staying in him which as I say is not something that the Bible treats as an inevitability let me just show you a couple other verses that make that clear before I go on to the question of how does one abide in Christ okay if you look at Colossians chapter 1 Paul seems pretty clear about this he doesn't use the word minnow like John does but he uses a term that has essentially the same meaning actually it's a form of it I looked it up the other day I don't remember what it was now but minnow is part of this Greek word that Paul uses but it's it's not exactly the same word he says in Colossians 1 21 through 23 and you who were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works yet now he has reconciled in the body of his flesh through death to

present you holy and blameless and above reproach in his sight if indeed you continue in the faith that sounds conditional if indeed you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel that is from your faith which you heard which was preached to every creature in their heaven center etc now Paul says this is all true of you if you continue if you're not moved away from your belief in the gospel your hope in the gospel sounds like he's suggesting continuing is not inevitable if you look at the book of Hebrews which I don't personally think Paul wrote but I think it was written by somebody who is a companion of Paul's and who thought very much as Paul did about matters there's a lot of Pauline thought found in the book of Hebrews in Hebrews chapter 3 verse 12 writing to Christian now first of all is that is he writing to Christians well who is he writing to verse 1 of this chapter should give us a clue therefore holy brethren partakers of the heavenly calling these people are holy brethren they're partakers of the heavenly calling sounds like they're Christians to me verse 12 he says beware brethren same brethren I assume is in verse 1 the holy brethren beware brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God but exhort one another daily while it is called today lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin for we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end now that all sounds kind of conditional beware lest there be in any of you who you holy brethren an evil heart of unbelief wait how can there be an evil heart I'm a believer well but you're a believer now but that's if you hold fast the confidence to your faith can till the end otherwise you may be led astray by an evil heart of unbelief that takes you away from the living God that's what he says and he says your heart may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin so exhort one another daily so when you see a Christian who's sinning exhort them why because if they aren't quickly brought to repentance if they continue in sin they may become hardened in that way and they may depart from the living God okay so what does it mean how does one abide in Christ well John tells us that Jesus is the light and he also tells us to remain in the light which must be another way of saying remaining Christ because in John chapter 1 remember he says in the beginning was the word the word was with God the word was God the same was in the beginning with God all things were made by him without him was nothing made that was made in him was life and that life was the light of men and in verse 9 he says that was that true light that enlightens every man that conserves Jesus the word the life the light all the same Jesus later said I am the light of the world in John chapter 8 and then in first John where we have the exhortations so many times abiding in Christ he starts talking about people who say they have fellowship with God but they don't abide in the light they're not walking in the light in first John chapter 1 verses 5 through 7 this is the message which we've heard from him and declare to you that God is light of course Jesus is light too but John uses God and Jesus not interchangeably but in such a way that whenever you have God you've got Jesus whenever you have Jesus you've got God if Jesus is in you then God is in you you know if you're in God you're in Jesus I mean that's how John uses phrase so God is light and in him is no darkness at all if we say that we have fellowship

with him and walk in darkness that is we are not in the light we're not remaining in Christ in the light we lie and do not the truth but if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ the son cleanses us from all sin now I want to make this clear what he's what he's saying and not saying when he says we have fellowship one with another almost everyone I've ever heard who talks about the passages that means you and I have fellowship with each other now he's talking about our fellowship with God he says if anyone says they have fellowship with God and walk in darkness they're not telling the truth but if we walk in the light we do have fellowship one another and the blood of Jesus his son cleanses us he's talking about fellowship with God here I'm not denying anything about Christians having fellowship I'm just saying that's not the train of thought that John is on he's talking about people who say but do not have fellowship with God they say they do but they don't and those who really do have fellowship with God who also experienced the cleansing from all sin but notice this is not a once-for-all this is a walking as you're walking in the light the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin and then he goes on in verses 8 through 10 and he's talking about what walking in the light means he says if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not it's but if we confess our sins that's walking in light then we have it says then the blood of Jesus Christ son cleanses us from all sin or we it says he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and it cleanses from all righteousness see verse 9 and verse 7 both talk about being cleansed by the blood both of them talk about it's through walking in the light confessing our sins is walking in the light why it's the opposite saying we have no sin now we do have sin and anyone who says they don't is not being honest they're not coming into the light they're not they're hiding they're hiding in the dark but the person who's open and confesses their sinfulness is somebody who is in the light they're walking in the light we can see that is an idea that John got from Jesus in John chapter 3 the Gospel of John verses 19 through 21 says and this is the condemnation that light has come into the world but men love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil for everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed he who does good or does the truth comes to the light that his deeds may be clearly seen that there been wrought of God now he talks about two people two kinds of people those who do righteous things they come to the light why they want to be exposed the light exposes those who do evil don't want to come to light let so their deeds not be exposed walking in the light means being transparent and open it and exposed that's why John in first John says if we say we have no sin that's not walking in the light you're denying what's true you're hiding something if we confess our sins we're being open we're coming to the light if you walk in the light the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us that's present tense ongoing as we're walking walking is not an event it's a process walking is something we do through our whole Christian life and being cleansed happens as we walk in the light as we confess our sins that is this we're as we're not pretending to be something we're not one of the biggest temptations in any religion and that would include Christian religion is to pretend to be more than you are more holy more obedient more whatever than you are well let's

face it nobody wants to talk about their failures we can hardly be blamed for that it's not that edifying you know I mean there are things I've done in my life that I'll never mention publicly not because I want you to think I'm better than I am it's just I don't want to talk about you know they weren't good things you know I'll let you know they were there I confess I confess I did bad things at times but but the truth is it's not that edifying and it's embarrassing but it's especially embarrassing if I want to give you the impression that I'm a pretty exemplary Christian because some of the things I've done my passion saying if he did that I don't know if I respect him I thought he was more spiritual or whatever you know and of course we all have that temptation think you know in a fellowship of people who are all they all look pretty Christian to me you guys all look perfectly righteous as near as I can tell I'm in a sinless group here I certainly don't want you to know that I'm a sinner you know but you see when people say well if you can if you can lose your salvation how many sins can you commit before you lose your salvation never heard that one oh how many you're not perfect how many sins can you do before you lose your salvation I don't think there's any given number because if we walk in the light even if we sin we get cleansed we confess our sins and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses abiding in Christ abiding in the light doesn't mean you're not ever committing a sin it means that you're never going to excuse or lie or be hypocritical like the Pharisees and pretend to be more righteous than you are become a whitewashed to you're going to keep short accounts with God and where necessary with people to now not every sin you commit has to be confessed to people I was I was teaching at it I was a teaching at somebody else's discipleship school in Hawaii years ago and one of the students came up to me on a break and said you know our our group leader tells us that we have to make public confession of everything and he says and this guy said Frank I have a problem with masturbation he says and I confessed it to my leader he said we have to you have to announce that publicly at the next public meeting and this guy was saying I don't think I don't think that'd be a good thing to do and there's enough you got to do it right so this guy's actually what I think I think well there's a really there's a really simple rule about confession you confess to the offended party if you have a secret sin and no one knows about the God God's offended but you can confess to God and he'll be unoffended he's faithful and just to forgive us if your sin was against somebody and they know it they're and they're holding against you go confess to them Jesus said if you bring your gift to the altar and there you remember your brother's holding something you should go leave your gift go make it right and then come off you get because you've got an offended brother but what if you did a public sin that offended the whole church or the public well then that's when you need a public confession yeah I think it was virgin who said your repentance needs to be as notorious as your sin was so in other words how whoever has been offended by your sin needs to hear your confession but you don't have to confess everything you've ever done publicly sometimes just confessing to God is what takes because he's the only one offended now I will say this there are people who have secrets since they're really wrestling with they're kind of in bondage to and while there's no obligation to confess it to anyone but God often there are certain kinds

of things that it wouldn't hurt might even be helpful to have an accountability partner who you share those things with because sometimes someone keeping you accountable can help I'm not the same kind of believer in that kind of accountability that some people are some people just assume accountability partners that's the that's the answer to all your problems but I happen to know people who've been accountability groups who still hide the things they want to hide you know you can always hide from it you have to be accountable for God in your heart but the thing is you want to be in the light you want to welcome the light you want to live in the light you don't want to live in the darkness because you won't have fellowship with God and you won't have the blood of Christ cleansing you from all sin I mean John says it John says if we walk in the light that's an if then the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin cleanses it it's it's ongoing as we walk this is a relationship you know taking marriage again which is the frankly a biblical analogy God made marriage to be a picture of Christ in the church so this is a biblical analogy if if a man sins against his wife well she might forgive him but if he keeps sinning and he doesn't repent well then there's there really is any reason for her to continue to formally forgive in her heart she should forgive it she can't trust him mmm and God God intends for us to keep short counts and be honest that's abiding in Christ requires abiding in the light because he is the light and abiding in him is abiding in the light a second thing I would say is that abiding in him is abiding in his love and we have several passages about that of course we know John 3 13 John 13 34 and 35 that's the great commandment you said a new commandment I give it to you that you love one another as I have loved you he said by this all men will know that you're my disciples if you have loved one for another so that's the great commandment to love one another and John in his epistle first John takes that and runs with it and he makes remaining in love the same thing as remaining in Christ or in God in first John 2 10 first John 2 10 says he who loves his brother abides in the light that is in Christ you abide in Christ in the light if you love your brother and there's no cause for stumbling in him of course if you turn over first John chapter 4 it's even more really uncompromising it sounds to me if that wasn't all first John 4 7 and 8 says beloved let us love one another for love is of God everyone who loves is born of God and knows God he who does not love does not know God for God is love so God is love so to abide in love you abide in God if you abide in God you abide in love it's there there Simon they're the same thing and in chapter 4 there first John a couple other verses verse 16 John 1st John 4 16 and we have no verse 12 first then 16 verse 12 no one has seen God at any time if we love one another God abides in us and his love has been perfected in us so if we love one another God is dwelling in us which John takes Simon as the same thing as us dwelling in God as we shall see verse 16 and we have known and believed the love that God has for us God is love he who abides in love abides in God and God in him so God dwells in us and we've on God if we abide in love what does abide in loving means we continue to live in love living in love means you loving that's that's your life loving is your lifestyle loving is your habit loving is your nature it's this it's the fruit of the Spirit and if you're if you're born of God you have the Spirit of God and if you have the Spirit of God the fruit of the Spirit is

love abiding in Christ is abiding in love but the fact that he says abide in my love or and he does say that in I think John 15 10 if I'm not mistaken also and here talks about abiding in his love means it's not inevitable again if you're told to do something it means that you might or might not do it it's not something that's going to happen automatically wouldn't have been told to do it and therefore a person who's a real Christian might in succumbing to some temptation some offense some grievance might fail to love somebody else and if they don't repent of that failure then they're not abiding in love yes I think all of us have our times where we don't immediately feel loving towards somebody or don't immediately act lovingly towards someone but when we realize it we're walking in the light and we therefore confess it and renounce that we love is the habit of a person who's in Christ if a person doesn't abide in that habit of love in that policy of love of that spirit of love that person is not abiding in Christ according to or in God according to what John said there's really no flexibility given there about that and then the last point I want to make and then we will take questions is that abiding in Christ is said to be abiding in his commandments or in his words that's what being a disciple is Jesus said in John 8 31 if you continue in my words or abide in my words you are my disciples indeed now continue in my words is again an ongoing an ongoing responsibility that's why it's continuing it's not if you obey me this once and and and repent or if you obey me this once and get baptized if you obey me just this once and get converted then you're in no if you continue in my words then you are my real disciples if you don't continue then you don't really qualify to be real disciples in John 15 10 this is again right after that vine and branches section it says if you keep my commandments you will abide in my love now we're already told to those who abide in love abide in God if you abide in my commandments you'll abide in love now what does this mean it means that his commandments are simply descriptions of love when we read the Sermon on the Mount Jesus did not intend to give us another kind of legalism just more strict than the legalism in the Old Testament you know he said in the Old Testament it did say don't commit adultery but now say if you look at a woman's last time you've committed adultery it's harder now you know in the Old Testament you'd be facing you know the court if you murder your brother now you'll be facing the court if you're even angry it's like people sometimes take what Jesus said in the sermon that's it well this is way hard that's like it's if you live by the Sermon on the Mount it feels like legalism on steroids you know like keeping the Old Testament law that was legalism keeping the Sermon on the Mount that's that's major legalism right well no that's Jesus didn't come to for legalism he does intend for us to keep his words he did not give the Sermon on the Mount as some people like to say just to show us how far short we fall he doesn't lots of people say Jesus never really expected us to do those things he just set the bar that high so we'd know how much we need grace okay no how did he end the Sermon he said anyone who hears these words of mine and does them it's like a wise man that builds his house on a rock and who hears these words mine and does not do them is a foolish man but Jesus expected you to do it but not legalistically you see Jesus said a new commandment I give you you love one another read the Sermon on the

Mount it tells you how to love one another it tells you what love looks like what does it look like to love your enemy it means turn the other cheek it means give to him who asked you it means if you're and he wants to sue you give him your cloak also if he makes you go on I'll go to the teaching on the Sermon on the Mount it's really a commentary on love you see if we just say all you need is love like the Beatles said well they're right in a sense but they're wrong majorly because to them love meant free love you know love meant you know just that one you know sex have sex you know all you want and and other emotional aspects of love I mean certainly there's people who are not in are not promiscuous but they still say well Jesus just said you need to love and I love everybody well what do you mean you love everybody what is love love Jesus a greater love has no one in this than lay down his life for his friend to lay down your life is love not to feel warm fuzzy feelings towards someone that's not love that's liking them that's being fond of them love is more of it's made of sterner stuff than just fuzzy feelings in fact you can love someone you don't care for very much you know let me just say this loving and liking are not just the same thing in different degrees most people when they say it says when I love you what they mean is I really like you a lot you know how I feel toward people I like why that feeling is like amplified when I think about you I feel like it's an emotion it's it's it's a taste really do you like butterscotch I don't particularly like butterscotch I like caramel but I mean there's no moral issue in liking or not liking something's taste because it's a matter of taste and you can't always help whether you like somebody or not somebody might be extremely unlikable you might not even you might not like your sense of humor you might not like the way they they tell the jokes they tell and you may not like their may not like the way they laugh you might not like the way they smell you might not like anything about them but you can love them now my my parents when I was a kid you say you don't have to like people but you have to love them and I used to think that doesn't make much sense at all because I was thinking that loving is is just like liking turned up to a higher voltage no liking is 100% a feeling you cannot command your feelings you cannot make yourself like being tortured you can't like it if you can you're insane you shouldn't like everything you shouldn't like everyone some people are just an offense to God and offense to all decency and you can't like that can you love them of course you can love them because loving is not a feeling the command love your neighbors you love yourself Jesus paraphrase it this way what you want people to do to you do that to them there's loving is what you do more than it is what you feel I know what I want people to do to me because I love myself so I should do the same to them because I love them as I love myself it's more about what you do now sure it's great if you like them too it makes a lot easier to love them but you can love somebody that you don't even know you can lay down your life you can give a huge donation to somebody that you saw on Facebook a fundraiser for somebody who's in the hospital and needs a bunch of money you say your heart goes up and you makes a sacrificial gift it that's an act of love you don't even know them you don't even know if you like them you have no feelings about them at all you know that they're a righteous thing and a good thing to do love it Jesus describes what

love looks like he doesn't describe what it feels like because love is not principally a feeling I'm not saying it's never a company by feeling I'm just saying you can't tell if you love someone or not by how you feel about them husbands are commanded to love their wives but some wives are extremely difficult even to like and I'm sure same is true on the other foot but the point is you have to love you you know when a man divorces wife is it why just don't love her anymore as a shame on you that's your responsibility to love her now if she's a shrew I can see that you might not like her but you have to lay down your life for her that's love love is laying down your life for somebody and and not just in the ultimate sense of becoming a martyr and dying but laying down your life moment by moment day by day laying aside your prerogatives your preferences your rights that's that's laying down your your life day by day that's love not how you feel about it now if you can cultivate good feelings toward the person you'll have a happier life since you have to love them anyway it's a lot easier if you like them but you can see in the notes there's quite a few scriptures I won't look at all of them I will look at one of them first John chapter 2 yeah this is a very good one for our point first John chapter 2 verses 3 through 5 or through 6 now by this we know that we know him that's another way of saying this is how we know we're Christians by this we know that we know him if we keep his commandments well that's just the same thing as if we love one another but his commandments describe love so we know that if we you know we might feel like we love someone because we feel good for them but we may not be loving them in the sense of Jesus described in his commandments his commandments tell us how to love he who says I know him and does not keep his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him but whosoever keeps his word truly the love of God is perfected in him by this we know that we are in him he who says he abides in him on himself also to walk just as he walked we're talking about abiding in Christ what's that look like it looks like keeping his commandments now you might say but don't aren't there a lot of religious people kind of outwardly keep the commandments is that really love no look further on in chapter 5 first John 5 it says in verse 2 1st John 5 to by this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and keep his commandments for this is the love of God that we keep his commandments and his commandments are not burdensome now this is how you know that you love God and how you know you love others you know you love others if you keep his commandments but the love of God is keeping his commandments and not finding it burdensome now a lot of the things Jesus said do like take up a cross and forsake all and do those kind of things don't sound like burdensome commands there's a whole class of these commands that scholars call the hard sayings of Jesus well they're hard if you don't love him hmm really hard if you find it burdensome then you know that you don't have the love of God in you now I'm not saying you won't find it a sacrifice it feels good to sacrifice for someone you love that's why people always want to do it you always want to sacrifice for something you really love and I mean think of your children primarily I mean if one of your children when your kids are in their teens or whatever and one of them breaks down they're driving some night and their car breaks down you know 30 miles out of town and they call you say dad I'm broken down dad gets



up and he's not grumbling about it his child is in danger his child needs him I mean at least this is my experience I don't know anyone else I assume everyone's like me about this if one of my children's in need I'm there man and I'm glad to be there because I love them you know I would impoverish myself for them I wouldn't count it burdensome though this is the love of God that we keep his command and we don't find it burdensome well why don't we because we love him that's why that's how you know if you love God that you are in fact loving others according to the description of his commandments of what you should do and you don't find that to be a burdensome thing the Pharisees they found it burdensome and they loaded that burden on the backs of other people there are many Christians who live externally righteous lives but they wish they didn't have to they don't love God necessarily and so they find it burdensome but if you love God you keep his commandments when you keep his commandments you are loving your neighbor and as you love your neighbor you're walking in the light as you're walking in the light you're abiding in Christ and these are I mean these concepts are all interwoven especially in first John more than anywhere else he's got this kind of language throughout the whole book but that's abiding in Christ is first of all mandatory secondly it's not inevitable and thirdly it looks like something it's not just a mystical thing that no one can tell if you're abiding in Christ it's just kind of a mystical thing just to remain God no it looks like walking in the light it looks like loving your neighbor it looks like keeping his commandments that's what abiding in him is it's basically simply remaining loyal to Christ because we do all those things as soon as we get converted anyway if we don't do those things that our conversion we weren't converted I mean the word converted means change right if someone says I got converted last night but they don't change they didn't get converted so I mean people get converted and when they get converted they determined to be obedient to God they determined to love God and love their neighbor and to walk in the light and so forth and next is do they keep doing continue abide remain in him because that's how you that's how you are in him that's how you remain in him Paul put it this way said as you have received the Lord Jesus Christ so walk in him okay so you've received Christ with certain with certain phenomena accompanying walk in the same phenomena for the rest of your life that's abiding in him