

Can I live in Christ permanently? – only in Christ can I bear fruit

The following three verses from John chapter 15 state three of the most central truths of Christianity (1) God's purpose for the Christian (2) The only way God's purpose can be fulfilled, and (3) The reason why many a Christian's life remains unfulfilled:

John 15:4 (Jesus speaking) **Dwell in Me, and I will dwell in you. [Live in Me, and I will live in you – Let me live in you TLB]. Just as no branch can bear fruit of itself without abiding in (being vitally united to) the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me.**

5 **I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing.**

7 **If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.** AMP

God's primary purpose for the Christian? To bear much fruit. The fruit of the vine contains the seeds of the vine and are attractive to eat so that the seeds may be dispersed. And what exactly then is the fruit of the spiritual vine (Jesus) and His branches (Christians)?

Luke 6:44-45 **For every tree is known by its own fruit...A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good...For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.** (And what does the mouth speak? Words, they're his fruit)

The fruit of a Christian are his words. When a Christian's words are from his heart and Christ's words dwell there, and his words are anointed by God's Spirit because he is living in Christ, then those words are living fruit and contain the seeds of Christ. These seeds are ready to be planted into the heart of another when they hear with their heart the words spoken by the fruit bearing Christian and thus eat the living fruit that contain Christ's seed.

Clearly a Christian cannot bear living fruit, or speak living words, except Christ's words remain in his heart and he remains in Christ, that is, under the immediate control of Christ's Spirit. And so God's primary purpose for a Christian, to bear fruit and this includes the fruit of effective prayers, can only be fulfilled when that Christian has learned to live in Christ and for God's words to live and remain in him. If a Christian chooses not to live in Christ – and the above three verses from John chapter 15 make it clear that it is our choice – then that Christian's life cannot be anything but barren, fruitless and unfulfilled, because he has chosen to live apart from Christ and not as a Christ-one.

For a Christian to live "In Christ" is the central doctrine of the New Testament. Except for limited portions that focus on the start of the Christian life by being born again, most of the New Testament is addressed to and can only be understood by Christians living "In Christ". After that, most of what then remains of the New Testament scriptures focus on exhorting

carnal Christians to become “In Christ” Christians (see I Corinth. 2-3, 2 Corinth. 3, Romans 6-8, and Galatians). Because of the importance of this subject, this is the seventh in a series of truth papers on the subject of living “In Christ”. The previous 6 were:

1. Christian – do you know you could be living “in Christ”?
2. “In Christ” – God’s only place of safety for the Christian
3. That I may...be found in Him (in Christ)... Phil 3:8-9
4. Living in our new nature – in Christ – not in our human nature
5. In Christ we are under Grace – in our flesh we are under Law
6. In Christ – contentment, out of Christ – bemoaning or bragging

Christ’s two great invitations to every human being, both made possible by the Cross

Invitation # 1 Jesus says: **“Come unto me...”** Mat 11:28

Invitation #2 Jesus says: **“Live in me..MSGE...and let me live in you...TLB** John 15:4

In order to be a Christian at all I must have received the grace of Christ’s first invitation, “Come unto me” and how did I receive this grace? By believing with my heart the truth of it and the basis for it, the forgiveness of my sins purchased for me by Christ’s blood. And how will I receive the grace of Christ’s second invitation “Live in me”? By believing with my heart the truth of it, what it means and God’s desire and ability to establish me in Christ,

Can a Christian live (abide) in Christ continuously in unbroken fellowship with God?

To live “In Christ” is the spiritual equivalent for God’s people under the New Covenant to “Living in the promised land” for God’s people under the Old Covenant. So for a Christian to ask the above question is the same as an Israelite asking if it is possible for him to live in the promised land (in Christ) continuously and not keep crossing back over the Jordan (humility) into the wilderness (the flesh or human nature). Andrew Murray the widely acclaimed Bible Teacher of yesteryear in his book “Abide in Christ” gives God’s answer:

A vineyard (The true Vine and its branches) of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Isaiah 27:2,3.

Murray states: “What an answer from the mouth of God Himself to the question so often asked: Is it possible for the believer always to abide in Jesus? Is a life of unbroken fellowship with the Son of God indeed attainable here in this earthly life? Truly not, if the abiding is our work, to be done in our strength. But if the Lord Himself will keep the soul (and spirit) night and day, yes, will watch and water it every moment, then surely the uninterrupted communion with Jesus becomes a blessed possibility to those who can trust God to mean and to do what He says”.

Is it possible for a Christian not to yield to the sin nature of his flesh and to stay in Christ?

Gal 5:16 **I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.**

Murray states: "A second objection (to abiding in Christ) has reference to our sinfulness. Christians are so accustomed to look upon sinning daily as something absolutely inevitable, that they regard it as a matter of course that no one can keep up abiding fellowship with the Savior: we must sometimes be unfaithful and fail. As if it was not precisely because we have a nature which is a very fountain of sin, that the abiding in Christ has been ordained for us as our only and sufficient deliverance! As if it were not the Heavenly Vine, the living, loving Christ, in whom we have to abide, and whose almighty power to hold us fast is to be the measure of our expectations! As if He would give us the command, "Abide in me," without securing the grace and the power to enable us to perform it! As if, above all, we had not the Father as the Husbandman to keep us from falling, and that not in a large and general sense, but according to His own precious promise: "Night and day, every moment!" Oh, if we will but look to our God as the Keeper of the Christian, of whom it is said, "**The Lord shall keep you from all evil; He shall keep your soul,**" Psa. 121:7 we shall learn to believe that conscious abiding in Christ every moment, night and day, is indeed what God has prepared for them that love Him.

Take for the rule of your daily experience the language of faith: "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." And be assured that, if God keeps the branch night and day, and waters it every moment, a life of continuous and unbroken fellowship with Christ is indeed our privilege".

To remain in Christ and bear fruit I must surrender all of my natural abilities to God

Rom 12:1 **I APPEAL to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of all the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies, presenting all your members and faculties as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is ... your spiritual worship.** AMP

Murray states: "Incalculable harm has been done to the deeper spirituality of the Church, by the idea that when once we are God's children the using of our gifts in His service follows as a matter of course. No; I must see how all my gifts and powers are, even though I am a child of God, still defiled by sin, and under the power of the flesh. I must see that they are most dangerous to me, because through them the flesh, the old nature, self, will so easily exert its power. In this conviction I must part with them, giving them entirely up to the Lord. When He has accepted them, and set His stamp upon them, I receive them back, to hold them as His property, to wait on Him for the grace to use them aright day by day, and to have them act only under His influence.

Believer, would you abide in Christ, see here the blessed path. Nature shrinks back from such self-denial and crucifixion in its rigid application to our life. But what nature does not love and cannot perform, grace will accomplish, and make to you a life of joy and glory. Do you but yield up yourself to Christ your Lord; the conquering power of His incoming presence will make it joy to cast out all that before was most precious. And the secret of a life of close abiding will be seen to be simply this: As I give myself wholly to Christ, I find

the power to take Him wholly for myself; and as I lose myself and all I have for Him, He takes me wholly for Himself, and gives Himself wholly to me”.

John 15:4-5 (Jesus) **Live in me and let me live in you...and you shall bear much fruit**