

W E E K T W O

Abide



DAY EIGHT: DECEMBER 7

*God rest ye merry gentlemen
Let nothing you dismay
Remember Christ our Savior
Was born on Christmas Day
To save us all from Satan's pow'r
When we were gone astray
Oh tidings of comfort and joy*

*(“God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen,” composer unknown,
16th Century England)*

As you make your way through the busyness of the season, the idea of someone recommending some rest probably sounds appealing. But the greeting that begins this traditional Christmas hymn isn't about taking a break (or about a bunch of jolly gentlemen for that matter).

In the 16th Century—when the original iteration of this song was likely written—the word “rest” held the meaning of keeping, continuing, remaining.

In the Bible, the words “remain” and “dwell” are most commonly translated to the Greek word *meno* (μένω), a verb that also means “to abide.” Abide is a gorgeous word and sometimes hard to fully grasp when it comes to applying it to our faith and understanding what Jesus means when he tells us:

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.”

(John 15:4)

The most prominent modern definitions for “abide” are around acceptance (obedience) and continuance (remaining). Another definition speaks of tolerance (endurance), and another refers to a dwelling place (residing).

Each of those is relevant to what it means to “abide” in Jesus, but for me, the last one—residing—provides the best picture. Abiding in Jesus means we decide to set up our permanent residence in him. Send all mail here, please because this is where I’m staying!

The beauty of Christmas is this:
True love came to dwell among on
the earth in the person of Jesus—
and remain among us through the
gift of the Holy Spirit.

He is calling you to rest—keep,
remain, abide—in him; not just at
Christmas, but every day.

READ: John 15:4-7

*REFLECT: How are God's attributes
of permanence and faithfulness
described in this passage?*

*PRAY: Thank You, God that you as I
remain in You, Your steady branches
sustain and strengthen me.
This week, I want to answer Your call to
draw near to You and abide in You.
Show me what it means to rest in Your
comfort and joy. Amen.*



DAY NINE: DECEMBER 8

Usually when you hear the word “dwell” it’s to remind you of where you shouldn’t linger: doubt, the past, your mistakes. It makes a difference where we dwell which is why Jesus makes a point to beckon us to dwell in him.

Think of your home. Your home is unique compared to any other place you frequent. It’s where you do most of the mundane tasks of life that prepare you for the world —shower, dress, nourish.

You rest in your home. It’s in your home that you decide who you will be when you walk out the door and into your school or job and even your relationships.

Now imagine Jesus as your place of preparation.

No matter the state of your physical home, Jesus is a reliable place to abide—to rest, be strengthened and prepared, and be known and loved.

READ: Psalm 84:1-4

REFLECT: What words or phrases about dwelling stand out to you from this passage?

PRAYER: Thank You. God that You are dependable as my place of rest, my source for nourishment, and as my provider and protector.

Today, I ask You to show me any thoughts or words that reveal that I am dwelling in things that are not of You and lead me back into the peace of Your presence. Amen.



DAY TEN: DECEMBER 9

Yesterday's devotional talked about desiring to dwell in the presence of God the way you would want to in your own home. Your home is a place you can find rest, strength, and preparation because your home is where you always belong.

God established belonging from day one when He created Adam. God literally made humankind for belonging: to be loved, blessed, and looked after. His goal was always to give you what you hunger for: beloved belonging.

This phrase—beloved belonging—captures what it feels like to experience the perfect love of God. Beloved belonging speaks to our most basic questions...

Who am I? Am I loved? Do I belong?

When you truly grasp and receive it, your beloved belonging brings:

- Certainty in who you are (and Whose you are)
- Comfort that you are loved, and
- Confidence that you belong.

God knows you need reassurance and affirmation in these things, and He doesn't skimp on giving it to you. He articulates it over and over again, speaking words of value, tenderness, provision, and promise over you throughout His Word.

READ: Psalm 91:1

REFLECT: God's presence is a place of peace and safety. How does this build certainty, comfort, and confidence in you?

PRAY: Thank You, God that You already answered every deep longing in my heart. Help me today to not only receive my beloved belonging in You, but to demonstrate it to others in my words and actions. Amen.



DAY ELEVEN: DECEMBER 10

At The Last Supper, around the table with his close friends, Jesus spoke of remaining in him, the true vine.

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.”
(John 15:4)

He doesn't ask us to remain connected to him in an attempt to limit or control us—this wisdom is motivated by love for the purpose experiencing the love, blessing, and sustenance that comes through connection.

A disconnected branch will not grow fruit—or if somehow it manages to, the fruit will whither and sour. A disconnected branch has to strive to manufacture its

own strength. But a branch that stays connected to the vine, remains supported.

A connected branch will bear good fruit and the weight of that fruit will be sustained by the vine.

READ: John 15:16

REFLECT: Do you sometimes feel overwhelmed by the strain of striving?

What does it mean to you to know that God chose you for connection to Him so that he can give you strength?

PRAY: Thank You, God that You made the first moved through love, for the sake inviting us into love. Today, show me where I am attempting to earn or bear fruit detached from You, and help me to reconnect fully to Your sturdy, faithful vine. Amen.



DAY TWELVE: DECEMBER 11

Jesus asks us to remain in him, and it's a reminder we need often. We know that when we acknowledge and receive Jesus as our Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell inside of us. Why then would Jesus make a point to say in John 15:4, "Abide in me, and I in you," as if it were optional?

Imagine being invited into a friend's home only to have them ignore you. At first, you'd probably try to make your presence known. But without acknowledgment or engagement, you might eventually stop trying—or, more likely, you'd leave.

The Holy Spirit is too kind and faithful to leave you, but your hospitality toward him makes

all the difference in hearing his voice and embracing his influence in your life.

Perhaps you'll be hosting family or friends this Christmas. How will you prepare for them? Will you consider or even ask what they like and don't like?

Honoring the Holy Spirit requires similar consideration. If you're not sure what pleases him, you can always ask.

READ: James 4:8

REFLECT: Think of a person who always makes you feel welcomed and valued, and the specific things do they do or say to communicate that. What can you do to host the Holy Spirit well?

PRAY: Thank You, God that You desire closeness with me and that You have given me the gift of Your Holy Spirit to dwell in me. I want to be a good host for You, Lord and I ask you to show where I need to be attentive to making my heart a place where You feel honored and welcomed. Amen.



DAY THIRTEEN: DECEMBER 12

Though not a Christmas hymn, the classic song “Come Thou Fount” by Robert Robertson contains a relevant prayer for us in Advent:

*Prone to wander, Lord I feel it
Prone to leave the God I love
Here's my heart, oh take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above*

These stanzas reflect the honest confession of a man who understands our tendency to wander and that cleaving our hearts to Christ, and Christ alone, provides the sturdy anchor we need.

While you need to continuously choose to remain in Jesus, God doesn't need that reminder about you.

There is a specific word in Greek for the love God has for you: *agape*; *agapaō* in verb form. *Agapaō* is the action of loving what is beloved.

Agapaō isn't a decision God needs to make about us every day.

Agapaō is established in the same way that God is already established and His view of you as His beloved is established. It is immovable, unchangeable, and unaffected by your circumstances or your past.

Evidence of *agapaō* isn't something you have to seek or hope for. You simply have to accept it.

READ: Romans 8:38-39

*REFLECT: The Greek word for love used in verse 39 is *agape*—perfect, sacrificial love. How does knowing that nothing can separate you from God's perfect love for you motivate you to remain in Him?*

PRAY: Thank You, God, that You are perfect love. Help me grow in revelation and understanding of what that means and help me release any insecurities or deceptions that are keeping me from receiving it. Amen.



DAY FOURTEEN: DECEMBER 13

In the account of Jesus's birth in the Gospel of Luke, we see citizens of both heaven and earth coming together on a starry night in the humble town of Bethlehem to witness a seven-hundred year-old prophecy be fulfilled:

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.
(Isaiah 7:14)*

In our Christmas carols, we sing about the night of Jesus's birth as still and quiet and I imagine the weight of the reverence felt in that manger probably made it seem like time was standing still. Scripture tells there was a lot going on.

With angels heralding, shepherds arriving and testifying, and new parents attending to their child, Mary takes in the significance and beauty of this miracle night:

*But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.
(Luke 2:19)*

She is doing more than taking in memories as a mother, she is abiding in the presence and glory of God Himself.

READ: Luke 2:15-20

REFLECT: In this season of hurry and rushing to and through Christmas commitments, how can you be mindful to ponder the glory of God in your heart?

PRAY: God, I thank You for the miracle of Christmas.

Help me to be quick to draw near to Your presence and give me tender moments of reflection and remembering to ponder the glory of Immanuel. Amen.