

“Remain In Me” - John 15

How do we learn to remain/abide in Jesus? Practice. Practice makes progress. Below are some suggested exercises (literally practices) which we encourage you to try. You don't have to do all of them. In fact, trying to do all of it at once would probably miss the point entirely.

These practices aren't a programme to complete or a checklist to get through. They're invitations - different doors into the same room. Some of them will feel natural to you. Others might feel awkward or unfamiliar, and that awkwardness is worth paying attention to, because it usually signals the place where the most growth is waiting.

The goal isn't to become someone who has an impressive spiritual routine. The goal is to become someone who is deeply, genuinely, consistently connected to Jesus - and to discover, slowly, that the fruit takes care of itself.

Pick one practice that genuinely appeals to you, and one that doesn't. Start there. Return to it across the coming weeks, not as a discipline to master, but as a way of staying close to the one who said *remain in me*.

PRAYER

Prayer shapes us most not when we bring God our longest list, but when we bring him our full attention. The practice of simply *being with God* - without an agenda, without filling every silence - is one of the most countercultural things a busy person can do. It's also one of the most transformative. These two practices invite you to come to God not as someone with requests, but as someone who is loved.

- ★ This week, set aside thirty minutes with no prayer list, no requests, and no plan. Just show up. Tell God you're there. Then be quiet. Let Him lead the conversation. If you find the silence uncomfortable, sit with that discomfort - it's usually telling you something worth hearing.
- ★ It's easier to believe God loves the world than to believe He loves *you* specifically. This short exercise is an invitation to receive what you may have been deflecting. Sit quietly, and read Romans 8:38–39 aloud, slowly, with your own name in it. Then stay there. Let it take root in you.

WORD

God's Word isn't just information about him - it's one of the primary ways He speaks to you. When His words remain in you, they begin to do something: they quietly reorder how you see yourself, how you see others, and what you believe is possible. These two practices aren't about getting through a reading plan. They're about slowing down long enough to let what God says become more real to you than what everything else is saying.

- ★ We absorb a lot of messages about who we are - from our past, our failures, other people's opinions. Most of them are wrong. Spend time this week letting God's voice be the loudest one. Read each of these verses aloud, slowly, one at a time. Don't rush. Let each one settle before you move to the next.

Suggested verses:

- *Psalm 139:13–14*
- *Isaiah 43:1*
- *Zephaniah 3:17*
- *John 1:12*
- *Romans 8:1*
- *Romans 8:38–39*
- *2 Corinthians 5:17*
- *Ephesians 1:4–5*
- *Ephesians 2:10*
- *1 John 3:1*

"You are the beloved. That is the voice Jesus heard when he came out of the Jordan River: 'You are my beloved son, in you I am well pleased.' And the same voice speaks to you and to me." - Henri Nouwen

- ★ Psalm 23 is one of the most familiar passages in the Bible - which means most of us have stopped actually hearing it. This week, read just one verse a day. Sit with it for fifteen minutes. No agenda. No notes. Just you, the words, and the Shepherd they describe.

LOVE

Jesus doesn't separate abiding from loving. In John 15, He moves from "remain in me" to "love one another" without pausing - as if they're the same thing. That's because they are. Love that costs nothing is not yet the love Jesus is describing. The practice below isn't about grand gestures. It's about one deliberate, specific, costly act of love directed at one real person.

- ★ Think of someone in your life who is difficult to love, easy to overlook, or someone you've been meaning to reach out to but haven't. Now think of something you could do for them that would genuinely cost you - time, money, pride, comfort. Then do it this week. Don't announce it. Just do it. And see how God uses it.

SABBATH

Sabbath is one of the oldest acts of trust in Scripture. To stop - really stop - is to declare that the world does not depend on you holding it together. That God is the vine and you are not. Most of us find that harder than it sounds, which is exactly why it matters. This practice isn't about doing nothing. It's about doing *nothing productive* long enough for the noise to settle and the truth to resurface.

- ★ Choose one extended period this week to stop completely. No work, no scrolling, no productivity. Let yourself be still. As the stillness settles, let it remind you of what is actually true: he is the vine - the source, you are the branch, and the fruit was never yours to manufacture.
- ★ This week, choose one thing you genuinely enjoy that produces nothing — a long bath, cooking something unhurried, sitting in a garden, reading something purely for pleasure — and do it without guilt. Don't frame it as productive. Don't turn it into a lesson. Just receive it as a gift from the God who rested on the seventh day and called it good.

WORSHIP

Worship is paying attention to God and glorifying Him. Sometimes that happens through music or liturgy. Sometimes it happens when you slow down enough to notice that the world around you is full of evidence that He exists and that He is good. Both practices below are invitations to lift your gaze - one outward into creation, one inward into stillness.

- ★ Get outside and walk for as long as you can manage. Leave your phone in your pocket. Slow your pace deliberately. Notice what's around you - light, colour, texture, sound, smells. Let what you observe become a conversation with the One who made it. You don't need the right words. Just notice, and let noticing become gratitude.
- ★ If getting outside isn't possible, put on some music - classical, hymns, worship songs, whatever moves you - and simply listen. Not as background noise. Actively, with your full attention. Let the music carry you somewhere words can't quite reach, and stay there for as long as it takes to feel the weight begin to lift.

CONFESSION

Unconfessed sin doesn't announce itself. It doesn't immediately detach the branch from the vine, but it does slow the flow of life from source to recipient. It quietly increases the distance between you and God - and between you and the person you're becoming. Confession isn't about punishment. It's about honesty, and honesty is what keeps the connection clean. The practice below is simple. It may not feel simple when you try it. That's normal.

- ★ Find a quiet place and a few minutes of stillness. When you're ready, let your mind move honestly over the recent past - things done that you knew you shouldn't have, things left undone that you knew you should. Don't rush through the list. Name them, quietly and honestly, to God. Then receive what He has already promised: that if we confess, He is faithful and just to forgive. Sit with that forgiveness until it feels more real than the guilt. Jesus moves from "remain in me" to "remain in my love" - forgiveness enables us to do just that.