

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

ABIDING
IN CHRIST

BY MINDING
THE SPIRIT

WITNESS LEE

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

ABIDING
IN CHRIST
BY MINDING
THE SPIRIT

WITNESS LEE

Living Stream Ministry

Anaheim, CA • www.lsm.org

ABIDING IN CHRIST BY MINDING THE SPIRIT

[Romans 8](#) is the kernel not only of the book of Romans but also of the whole Bible. For this reason, the experience in this portion of the Word must become our daily life.

THE SPIRIT IN ROMANS 8

In [Romans 8](#) the Spirit of God is called the Spirit of life and the Spirit of Christ, terms not used in the Old Testament, the Gospels, nor the Acts. The term the Spirit of God, however, was used many times before Romans, but [Romans 8](#) reveals that the Spirit of God is the Spirit of life and the Spirit of Christ. In [verses 9 and 10](#) the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ are used interchangeably. This indicates that the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ and that the Spirit of Christ is Christ Himself. Today Christ as the Spirit of life indwells our spirit. We experience this as we walk not according to flesh but according to spirit.

LIFE AND DEATH

Verse 6 says, “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.” Here we see that the result of minding the flesh is death and that the result of minding the spirit is life and peace. In the very beginning of the Bible life is signified by the tree of life, and death, by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. These two trees represent two different sources with two opposite results. The tree of life brings us into life, and the tree of knowledge brings us into death. Furthermore, the Bible concludes with two consummations: the lake of fire, which is the second death, and the New Jerusalem, which is the city of life. Therefore the Bible ends as it begins, with death and life.

Romans 8 is on the way between the beginning in Genesis and the consummation in Revelation. Between the two sources and the two consummations there are two lines: the line of life and the line of death. Sometimes we may have one foot on the line of life and the other on the line of death. At other times we may be altogether on one line or the other. **Romans 8** deals with these two lines from the aspect of our experience.

THREE QUESTIONS

In [John 15](#) the Lord Jesus reveals that He is the vine and we are the branches. He also says that we need to abide in Him and that, if we do, He will abide in us. What a wonderful life this mutual abiding is! Although [John 15](#) tells us to abide in Christ, it does not present the way to abide. As we shall see, the way to abide in Christ is found in [Romans 8](#), which is a progression from [John 15](#).

For more than fifty years, I have been considering how we can abide in Christ. Christ is far away in the third heaven, and we are on earth. How can we abide in Him? Years ago, the Bible teachers under whom I studied could not answer this question adequately. They could only tell me that we abide in Christ through the Holy Spirit. But in [John 15](#) Christ does not say to abide in Him through the Spirit. As a young man who desired to know the Bible in a logical way, not according to superstition or tradition, I thought it was not logical to say that we abide in Christ through the Spirit. How can you abide in one person through another person? Thus, concerning the abiding in Christ, we first need to seek

the answer to this question: Where is the Christ in whom we must abide?

The second question is this: What is the “Me” spoken of in [verses 4 and 5 of John 15](#)? To answer we must know not only *who* Christ is but also *what* Christ is. If we would abide in Christ as the vine, we must be able to answer this question. How can we abide in something if we do not know what we are to abide in? How can Christ be the One in whom we abide? We can understand the meaning of the words “Follow Me,” but it is not easy to understand the words “Abide in Me.” To follow the Lord means that He goes ahead of us and that we walk behind Him. But what does it mean to abide in Him? We can easily understand what it means to abide *with* Christ, but not what it means to abide *in* Him.

The third question is this: How can we abide in Him? Even if we know where Christ is and what the “Me” is in whom we must abide, we still need to know how to remain in Him. The words “Abide in Me” certainly are mysterious and perplexing. Like many other sayings in the Gospel of John, these words are simple, but their meaning is profound.

In order to answer all these questions we have raised regarding abiding in Christ, we need to

come again to [Romans 8](#). The divine revelation in the holy Word is progressive; therefore, to understand this matter of abiding in Christ we need to proceed from [John 15](#) to [Romans 8](#). Suppose your father wrote you a long letter of many pages. In order to understand your father's thought as revealed in the letter, you would need to read the whole letter, not just the first few pages. The thought in his letter would be revealed progressively. Likewise, as we go on from [John 15](#) to [Romans 8](#), we see a progression in the matter of abiding in Christ.

CHRIST IN US

Firstly, in [Romans 8](#) we find the answer to the question concerning where Christ is today. This chapter reveals that Christ is not only in the heavens but also in us. [Verse 34](#) says that Christ is at the right hand of God, whereas [verse 10](#) reveals that Christ is in us. The very Christ who is seated in the third heaven is now living in us. How wonderful! Thus, through [Romans 8](#) we know where Christ is.

THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

Now we come to the question concerning the "Me" in [John 15:5](#). This involves the matter of

what Christ is. Most Christians know Christ merely according to an objective doctrine of the Trinity. We definitely believe that God is triune. As the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, God is three-in-one. This is a heavenly, divine, spiritual mystery which no one can explain adequately. We do not even have a thorough understanding of ourselves, much less of the Triune God. In the Bible, the Triune God is not for us to analyze in a doctrinal way, but for the dispensing of Himself into us.

The Gospel of John reveals that God the Father is embodied in God the Son and is made known through the Son. [John 1:18](#) says, “No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” When Philip asked the Lord Jesus to show the disciples the Father, the Lord was apparently surprised at such a question, and He said to him, “Am I so long a time with you, and you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father” ([John 14:9](#)). The Lord answered Philip in a mysterious way, telling him that as long as he had seen the Lord Himself, he had seen the Father. In [John 14:10](#) the Lord went further: “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words which I speak to you,

I do not speak from Myself; but the Father Who abides in Me, He does His works.” Here we see that the Father is embodied in the Son and seen in the Son.

[John 14](#) reveals even more of the Triune God. In [verses 16 and 17](#) the Lord Jesus speaks of another Comforter, the Spirit of reality. If we consider carefully [verses 17 and 18](#), we see that the Spirit of reality is actually the Lord Jesus Himself. The Spirit of reality is the very realization of the Son. The Father is embodied in the Son, and the Son is realized as the Spirit. Therefore, in [1 Corinthians 15:45](#) Paul can say, “The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.” The last Adam, Jesus in the flesh, was transfigured through death and resurrection to become the life-giving Spirit. For this reason, [2 Corinthians 3:17](#) says, “And the Lord is the Spirit.” In experiencing the Triune God, we all need to know that God the Father is embodied in God the Son and that God the Son is realized as the Spirit who gives life. For this reason, [Romans 8:2](#) speaks of the Spirit of life, who is Christ the Son of God realized as the Spirit.

Because the Spirit is the realization of the Son, we get the Spirit whenever we call on the name of the Lord Jesus. If I call a certain brother by

name, that brother responds because he, the person, is the reality of his name. In like manner, when we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, we get the Spirit because the Spirit is the reality of the name of Jesus. This is our experience. You may say, “Lord Jesus, I believe in You, I receive You, and I love You.” Whenever you pray in this way, you receive the Spirit. We call on the name of Jesus, but we experience the Spirit as the realization of Christ. This indicates that the life-giving Spirit is the reality of Christ.

We have seen that the Son is the embodiment of the Father and that the Spirit is the reality of the Son. The Spirit today is in our spirit. Therefore, the totality of the wonderful Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, is in our spirit for us to experience. This wonderful One is all we need: our life, our food, our living water, our light, our strength, our comfort, our holiness, our victory, our wisdom, our peace, our humility, our submission, our love, our everything. This is not a doctrine; neither is it a method nor a system. It is the enjoyment and experience of the living Triune God who dwells within us. After accomplishing creation and passing through incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, this living One reaches us and even dwells

within us, in our spirit. This living One, Christ as the all-inclusive, life-giving Spirit, is the very “Me” in whom we are to abide.

MINDING THE SPIRIT

How can we abide in Him? [Romans 8:6](#) points the way: “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.” Because the divine Spirit is mingled with our spirit, it is difficult to say whether the spirit in this verse refers to our spirit or to the divine Spirit. The spirit here is the mingled spirit. As [verse 16](#) says, “The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit.”

Opposed to this wonderful, mingled spirit is the flesh, our corrupted body. In the body originally created by God there was no sinful element; on the contrary, the human body was pure and sinless. Through the fall, however, Satan, the evil one, injected himself as sin into man’s body. This happened when man took into him the fruit of the tree of knowledge. After Satan entered into man’s body, the body was contaminated and polluted and thereby became the flesh. Therefore, our spirit is mingled with the Triune God, and our body, which has become the flesh, is mixed with the sinful element of Satan.

This makes the Christian a miniature garden of Eden. In the garden man faced the tree of life on the one hand and the tree of knowledge on the other. Now, as those who were represented by Adam in [Genesis 2](#), we have the tree of life in our spirit and the tree of knowledge in our flesh. We need to decide whether we shall set our mind on the flesh and suffer death or whether we shall set our mind on the spirit and enjoy life and peace. By setting our mind on the spirit we abide in Christ who as the life-giving Spirit dwells in our spirit.

No doctrine, method, nor system can subdue the satanic element in our flesh. In the whole universe only God is more powerful than Satan; no doctrine can prevail against him. Do you think you can defeat Satan by sound teachings, by correct methods, or by the knowledge of the Scripture in letters? How absurd! Praise the Lord that the very Triune God who is now within us has already conquered Satan. Instead of following certain methods, we should simply depend upon the Lord constantly. The Lord's word in [John 15:5](#) applies here: "apart from Me you can do nothing." We simply need to abide in Him by setting our mind on the spirit.

Now we have the answers to the three

questions we have raised concerning abiding in Christ. Where is Christ? He is in our spirit. What is Christ? He is the life-giving Spirit who dwells in us. How can we abide in Christ? We abide in Him by setting our mind on the spirit. The setting of the mind on the spirit actually is the abiding. Day by day and even moment by moment, we need to set our mind, which represents our whole being, on the mingled spirit. The result is always life and peace.

[Romans 8](#) surely is a progression from [John 15](#) regarding the abiding in Christ. If we did not have [Romans 8](#), we would still be groping to find the practical way to abide in Christ. Praise the Lord that we are no longer groping in the darkness searching for the way! Instead, we have learned from [Romans 8](#) that all we need to do is turn our being to the living One who indwells our spirit and stay one with Him. When we turn to Him and set our mind on Him, we have life, peace, light, comfort, strength, and all we need. Our thirst is quenched and our hunger is satisfied.

SETTING THE MIND ON THE SPIRIT BY PRAYER

In order to set our being on the mingled spirit,

we need to pray. How easily we are distracted from the divine Spirit in our spirit! Our mind is so quickly drawn to other things. Therefore, we need to pray, not mainly to ask the Lord to do things for us, but to keep our mind set on the spirit. Be assured, the Lord will take care of you and do everything for you. Hence, in prayer you need not be occupied with your needs. Instead, pray to keep in touch with the living One in your spirit. The more you keep in contact with Him, the more you will enjoy Him. Do not pray about your need for love or patience. Our experience proves that the more we pray about such things, the more we are distracted from the mingled spirit and the less we abide in Christ. We should simply praise the Lord that He is our love, our patience, and our everything. If we praise Him in this way, declaring how good the Lord is, spontaneously love and patience will flow out of us, whether we are conscious of it or not. Others will be surprised at the change in us. They will not see the temporary results of our own efforts, but they will see Christ as the life-giving Spirit being lived out of us. The more we set our mind on the living One in our spirit, the more He lives Himself out of us. This is the Christian life. This is the way to a life of holiness and victory. Let us

forget systems and methods and instead turn to the living Person within us and set our mind on Him. He is waiting for us to do this. This is the way to abide in Him.

OUR FLESH

In order to be deeply impressed with the need to abide in Christ by minding the spirit, we need to see even more clearly just what dwells in our flesh and what dwells in our spirit. The word “dwells” is used in [Romans 7:17, 18, and 20](#). In [verses 17 and 20](#) Paul says that sin dwells in him, and in [verse 18](#) he says that in him, that is, in his flesh, nothing good dwells. In [Romans 5 through 8](#) sin is revealed as being the personification of Satan. In a sense, the sin that dwells in our flesh, the fallen body poisoned by the nature of the evil one, is Satan incarnated. Satan as sin is in our flesh. In [7:21](#) Paul says, “I find then the law that, at my willing to do the good, the evil is present with me.” The word “evil” in this verse denotes the evil nature of Satan. Therefore, [Romans 7](#) reveals that Satan as sin dwells in our flesh.

The Greek word rendered “dwells” in these verses is not the word elsewhere rendered “abide.” Rather, it is a word whose root meaning is “house.”

The same word is used in [Ephesians 3:17](#) concerning Christ making His home in our heart. Hence, the meaning here is that sin is making its home in our flesh. We, however, may be blind to this fact. Through experience, Paul discovered that there was something evil, the evil nature of Satan, living and dwelling in his flesh. If the fact of indwelling sin is unveiled to us, we shall see that we have such a terrible thing, the very personification of Satan as sin, making its home in our flesh. How we praise the Lord for revealing this to us!

OUR SPIRIT

In contrast to [Romans 7](#) which exposes sin dwelling in our flesh, [Romans 8](#) reveals that something wonderful dwells in our spirit. [Verses 10 and 11](#) say, “And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from among the dead dwells in you, He Who raised Christ Jesus from among the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit Who indwells you.” If Christ is in us, the spirit is life because of righteousness, even though the fallen body remains dead because of sin. Thus, in [verse 10](#) we have two facts:

the first that our body is still dead, and the second that our spirit is life. As long as Christ is in us, our spirit is life. There are no other conditions or qualifications. Nevertheless, our body remains dead because of indwelling sin.

OUR BODY

The word “but” at the beginning of [verse 11](#) is very significant; it indicates that something better is coming. This verse speaks about the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead dwelling in us. Firstly, Christ is in us. This is the initial stage, the beginning. But for Christ as the Spirit to dwell in us, that is, to make His home in us, is the continuation. Because Christ is in us, our spirit is life, although our body remains dead. But if the Christ who is in us is also making His home in us, the indwelling Spirit will give life to our mortal body.

Our body is enlivened by the indwelling Spirit. Whether or not our mortal body is enlivened depends on whether or not we allow the Spirit to make His home in us. Yes, Christ as the Spirit is in you; this causes your spirit to be life. But whether or not the Spirit can make His home in you depends on your attitude. Are you willing for Him to make His home in you, or will you

confine Him to a certain corner of your being? Suppose I am invited to the home of a particular brother and sister. However, after I come into their home, they limit me to a small corner of the house; they do not allow me to move freely about and to make myself at home. This means that I do not have the liberty to do anything in their home. Likewise, Christ may be in our spirit, but we may not give Him the liberty to move throughout our being. As a result, the inner circle of our being, our spirit, is life, but the outer circle, our body, is still dead. In order for our mortal body to be enlivened, the indwelling Christ must have free course to spread Himself throughout our being. He must have the liberty to settle Himself in all of our inward parts and to thereby make His home within us. If we allow Him to do this, life will be imparted not only to our spirit but also to our body.

THE PLACE OF THE MIND

In [Romans 7 and 8](#) we see that two things indwell the believers. In [chapter seven](#) we have the indwelling sin, the evil nature of Satan, and in [chapter eight](#) we have the indwelling Spirit who is Christ Himself. Sin is the personified nature of Satan indwelling our flesh, and the Spirit is

Christ indwelling our spirit. Between the indwelling sin and the indwelling Spirit stands our mind, which represents ourselves. [Romans 7:25](#) says, “So then with the mind I myself serve as a slave the law of God.” Please pay careful attention to the words “...with the mind I myself...” These words indicate that the mind is our representative; it is our very self. When Paul said that with the mind he was serving the law of God, he meant that he himself was trying to keep the law, endeavoring to please God by obeying the law. In attempting to fulfill the requirements of the law, the mind was doing something good, but it was acting independently.

[Romans 8:6](#) gives us another view of the mind: “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.” We have seen clearly that Satan as sin dwells in our flesh and that Christ as the life-giving Spirit dwells in our spirit. If we make up our mind to do good, the indwelling sin in our flesh will be activated and will defeat us. The law of sin will war against the law of our mind and make us captive in the law of sin in our members ([7:23](#)). Thus, we need the revelation of sin in our flesh and of Christ in our spirit. Then we need to see that as independent persons we cannot deal with the sin in our

flesh. In order to deal with this, we need to call on the very Lord Jesus who dwells in our spirit and keep our mind set on the spirit. This is not a matter of following a method but of touching a living Person. Time and time again we need to say, “Amen, Lord Jesus, I love You.” When we do this, the indwelling sin is subdued, and Christ becomes everything to us. The Lord Jesus is then wrought into our being to permeate and saturate us with Himself. This is what it means to be sanctified, transformed, and conformed to the image of Christ. This is the experience of abiding in Christ by minding the mingled spirit, as revealed in [Romans 8](#).

This booklet is compiled from
Life-study of Romans
© 1984 Living Stream Ministry

Please feel free to share this eBooklet with others.

See more titles in this series at
www.lsm.org/booklets.

SEE LINKS TO PURCHASE

Life-study of Romans

AUDIOBOOK • EBOOK • PRINT

Purchase *Life-study of Romans*

*Click on the badge for the format
you wish to purchase.*

Audiobook

available at

amazon



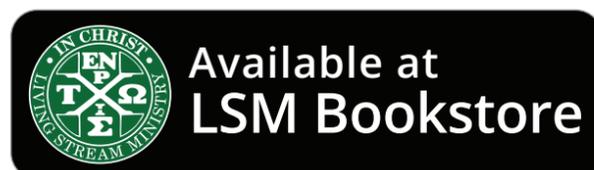
eBook



available at

amazon

Print



www.lsm.org/life-study-romans