

Abide

We are beginning a new series this week called "Juicy Fruit" We are going to look at what Paul told the Galatians and what we call fruit of the Spirit.

As always, I believe that this series could be one of the most important series for all of us. I know it has been for me. God created us for one reason.

He created us in His image because He wanted to have a relationship with us. God is a relational God. He has always existed in relationship between the Father, the Son, and The Holy Spirit. He wanted to create us to join Him. He wanted us to commune each day with the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

Everything that God does in every page of His Holy Word is to establish, deepen, and maintain our relationship with Him Every story in the Bible, every promise of every prophet, every message from His disciples, all were based in relationship. The entire message and mission of Jesus was to make sure that we knew...through His blood...that we could still be in relationship with Him.....through Him.

Why are we here this morning? To establish our relationship with Him. We are here to deepen our relationship with each other. We are here to offer that same relationship to others through Christ. Jesus went to the cross for one reason. To establish a path through which we, though sinners, could be in relationship with Holy God. And not just now, but for all of eternity.

God will allow anything to happen in our world if it brings more of those He loves into eternal relationship with Him. It is God's desire that all men be saved....why? So He does not have to sever His relationship with someone He loves.

Satan will allow almost anything in your life that can weaken your relationship with Jesus. He may bring riches, power, success, drugs, alcohol, sex, pornography....all for one purpose....to keep you from abiding...from establishing or deepening your relationship with God.

The greatest achievement that believers can have on this earth, is to prioritize our relationship with Christ above all else.

James 4:7-8 (ESV) 7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

Note the order here. First you submit your SELF. Give up your desires and submit to God's desire for you. I say it all the time. Surrender to God and allow Him to change you. You don't change yourself. All you do is surrender.

It is only after you have surrendered to God that you can resist the devil. It is the Holy Spirit that gives you the power to overcome the lies of Satan. It is the presence of God...God's holiness through you....that Satan can't stand. He always flees anytime Christ is glorified. He can't stand in the holiness of God.

Notice how personal this verse is...YOU draw near...Satan will flee from YOU....and God will draw near to YOU. This is a personal promise from God to His children. If you are being tormented by Satan, the solution is easy. Draw near to the Lord.

OK so how do we do that exactly? Well that is what this new series is all about. It can be summed up in a few steps. Surrender....Abide...Surrender...Abide...Repeat as long as you still have breath. Then when you meet Jesus in heaven..abide.

You see, our world is a fallen and weak expression of our creator and the creation that He initially entrusted to us. This world has been shattered by man's sin. It is a weak representation of what God intended and it barely seems to reflect Him any more.

We think we know what love is....we think we know what peace is....the are worldly examples of joy, patience...we even see kindness in our world....but these are the best that we can do...given the sinful state of our condition.

So we think we know love...until we experience God's love....Our love is conditional.....God's love is unconditional....Our love is saved for those we know and love...God's love is for everyone...including our enemies...So we know the world's love....

but the unbridled, unlimited, expressive, and transformative love of God is something foreign to us. We can't develop it, grow it, or express it because it doesn't come from anything we have ever seen on fallen earth. God's love....by definition....only comes from the Throne of God...through the Spirit of God....because of relationship with the Son of God.

God teaches us that He has in His very nature....the pure essence of what love is....He also teaches us that is nature exudes...not only love, but joy, preace patience, kindness, goodness, forbearance...self control. All of these exude from God's nature. They originate in God and flow though God to those who can receive it. The world has counterfits....and since that is all we have known, we think the world's love is all we can hope for. God's love is so foreign to our world that He had to send Jesus to us so we could see it.

Why did the Father send the Son on mission to Earth?

For God SO loved the world that He gave His only Son.

Those who believe in Him shall not perish but will have eternal life. Those who believe, trust, surrender to God receive and are born again Spiritually.

No longer limited by the fallen world we live in, but rather lifted up above our circumstances. Through Christ....through our faith in His sacrifice...we are no longer covered in the filth of our sins...we are covered in the Righteousness of Jesus....It is our relationship with Him that opens the door for us to experience the incredible nature of God. It is our relationship with Christ and our rebirth Spiritually that allows some of us to experience this heavenly love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, forbearance and self control.

These are expressions of the very nature of God. Their source is God...their depth is God's....their expression through us is God's.

Throughout the Scriptures, God uses the image of a vineyard to explain our relationship with Him. The Father is the Gardener.....the world is the vineyard....Jesus is the vine.....we are the branches. The evidence of life...is the grape or the fruits of the vine. The joy of life is when those fruits are used to glorify God. Jesus builds on that image in an incredible moment in history recorded by John

John 15:1 (ESV) 1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

Note that there is a true vine...and that must mean that there are false vines. There are those who try to manifest the fruit of the vine themselves...what the world defines a love, joy, peace...

But Jesus says that there is a true vine...A vine connected to the Father, a vine that flows from the very essence of God and from the throne of God And also note that Jesus doesn't say He knows of it, knows how to find it...HE IS IT. I am the TRUE VINE. Also note that there is only one true vine. The true vine is singular.

John 15:4 (ESV) 4 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.

Abide....understanding this word...is the key to your spiritual life. Abide...it means to be focused and present....in relationship...with the intention of staying. Abide means to be fully locked in...emotionally, spiritually, physically....fully connected...without distraction....intent in one unrelenting pursuit....to position yourself to be fully present in relationship with Christ.

This term is so important that Jesus repeated it 3 times in just this one verse. He uses it over 15 times in just this one chapter. So let's camp out here for a moment. What are we to do? Abide How do we grow closer to God? abide...How do we learn the character of God? abide. How do we know the truth of God? Abide. How do we know our mission for God? abide. How do we know the plans of God? abide. How do we get guidance from God? abide. How do we grow in the Spirit of God? abide. How do we become secure in our salvation? abide. How do we reach others for Christ? Abide. How do we grow in the character and understanding of God? Abide. How do we grow in our faith in God? Abide....How do we draw near to the heart of God? Abide. How do we avoid the trappings of this world? abide. How do we overcome the temptations of this world? abide. How do we help others to know Christ? abide. How do we find true meaning and fulfillment in life? abide.

Its kind of important I think. We all abide in something. Many abide in their social media presenece....many abide in the praises of others....Many abide in the world's definition of love or success...Every day you and I make a conscious decision to abide in something. Abide means to focus your attention, devotion, and time onto something. Some people devote their lives to alcohol. Others to fame, fortune, pleasure, self promotion, self interest, self worship. Some become devoted to movie stars, rock stars, models, influencers....we all know how to abide. How to focus our undivided attention on something. How to live in and driven by something.

Have you ever wondered why we all abide in something? Because abiding is another way of saying...what relationship are you in? We have an incredible ability to abide..to focus our intention, efforts and attention because...don't miss this...we are created in the image of God and God put in us a homing beacon....A desire for relationship with Him. We were created with a desire to know and be known by God.

However, our world had produced fake replicas of God. God calls them false idols. False because only Jesus is the true vine....and idols because we worship them.

That is what Jesus meant when He said, "I am the true vine"

You must choose to surrender yourself and abide in me.

John 15:5 (ESV) 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

For now notice the last truth in this verse.....Apart from me...you can do nothing. God desires that we devote our lives to His mission...His mission to manifest His Spirit to a lost and dying world. To show them the True fruits of the Spirit so they will stop pursuing...stop abiding in what is false....true vines produce true fruit.

Show me the fruit of your life and I can tell which vine you have devoted your life to. There is only one true vine...and Jesus is it

I am currently, while writing this, sitting in the shade next to a pool. I know...hard life...I chose the shade because I don't want to be sunburned. I didn't want to come in here today with a bright red face....why? Because it would draw attention to me and it would literally reflect where I have been spending my time. Everyone would know that I have spent a lot of time in the Sunshine. What do we call them? Sun worshipers.

You and I are going to manifest where we have devoted our time...where we abide....We become like that which has drawn our attention and devotion. If you are devoted to success and riches, you will manifest to the world...your wealth. You will begin to worship your wealth.....Jesus taught...

Matthew 6:24 (ESV) 24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

You can't be fully devoted to two vines. Since you worship what you devote yourself to....you will hate all other vines. Satan has surrounded us with thousands of fake vines to catch our attention to pull us away from the only vine he cares about. If you choose one of Satan's vines...you will hate the true vine of Christ and those who are abiding and worshiping Him. IN just a few words later in John 15 Jesus continues this truth.

John 15:18–19 (ESV) 18 "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. 19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

God or money...chose one...you will hate the other.

No matter your relationship with God...you were created in His image....deal with it....You must...as an expression of your creator...Abide in something...Worship something...and reflect something. Every human is abiding, worshiping, and reflecting. They are expressing their God given desires. So the issue is not our ability to abide, worship, or reflect....we can't help it...it is our nature. ..the key is who or what gets that attention from us.

Because we are all created in the image of God we are going to abide...we are going to worship something....and another truth....we will reflect to the world that which we have chosen to worship. You choose what to abide in....and then that determines what you choose to worship...and then you reflect that which you worship.

God knew that through our relationship with Him that we would reflect to the world that which grows from our spiritual relationship with Christ. It is through those who abide in Christ that God reveals to the world His image. Paul used the fruit of the vine to illustrate this for us.

So we Begin the Series Bearing Good Fruit But as we start this series...I really want you to focus on Good Fruit.... I want you to see your life and the fruit that is produce through you Picture the juiciest best piece of fruit you have ever eaten Busting with flavor...almost exploding...perfect in season...the best You have seen fruit before...but that one Had something special inside. Something about the way it was grown...watered...fertilized...cared for...made it special

The image of fruit and a fruit tree are all throughout Scripture We know Adam and Eve had issues with their fruit trees Ironically though God uses the idea of fruit to represent our relationship with Him He uses the analogy of trees bearing fruit to represent the way He lives through us. Hundreds of years before God, Jesus, walked on earth...

The Prophet Isaiah told us about Him and about us.

Isaiah 11:1–3 (ESV) 1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. 2 And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. 3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

We have looked at this passage before...the prophecy of the foretelling of the Messiah coming from The family of Jesse The Spirit of the Lord will rest and stay upon Him Isaiah told of Jesus' coming long before His arrival. But this passage also talks about us... Do you see it? A branch from His roots..shall...bear fruit. There will be a branch....rooted in Jesus....a group of people...connected to Him They will bear fruit.

The prophet Jeremiah spoke similarly

Jeremiah 17:7–8 (ESV) 7 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. 8 He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit."

Jesus said it this way....

John 15:4–5 (ESV) 4 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. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

Jesus says that if we don't abide in Him..we cannot produce fruit. Only those who abide....who spend time with....Jesus Produce fruit.

Jesus goes on to say.... The fruit that we produce defines us.... He told the disciples that false teachers would be defined by their false fruit.

Matthew 7:15–20 (ESV) 15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

In Galatians .Paul contrasts two type of fruit.... One type comes from being rooted in our sinful nature.... Paul calls it the fruit from our flesh....

Galatians 5:19–21 (ESV) 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

The other type of fruit comes from being rooted in Jesus... Paul calls it the fruit of the Spirit...

Galatians 5:22–23 (ESV) 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

People often look only at the fruits of the Spirit and miss the contrast Paul is trying to make between works of the flesh and works of the Spirit in distinguishing false teachers. Context is Key. Paul is speaking to us about how to recognize false teachers.

He is not saying that if you don't exhibit these 9 things at all times that you are somehow a false prophet. None of us fully express the fruits of the Spirit in our lives. But we should be growing and moving in that direction.

Paul lists 9 things that are evident of the fruit of the Spirit. And we are all in Christ unfinished products. Then he encourages the Galatians....

Galatians 5:24–25 (ESV) 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

Crucify the flesh.....Grow in the Spirit.

Let me ask you this... Are there any of these 9 that you do not want in your life? If God promised to pour out these 9 things in your life Would you be disappointed? If you could add to your Spiritual life....wouldn't this be what you want?

Imagine your life one year from now... What if God began working through you.... And you exploded in love....you had so much joy you couldn't stand it Your life is crazy but somehow you abound in peace. You use to get really frustrated with others....but you now have this weird patience. You replaced your selfish thoughts with kindness....goodness...

You use to have a fear of everything...tied up in anxiety....trying to control it all... And yet welling up inside of you.... Is an enormous sense of faith Your trust in God grows and as you do so... You become faithful in all areas of your life. Your once harsh exterior is replaced with gentleness toward others. You have areas in your life that have always been out of control.... And yet somehow....you can now control impulses and urges with a power that is now from you.

Can you imagine what could happen..... In your relationships? Imagine how it would transform your marriage....your parenting...your friendships... Think about how your coworkers would change. Think about your outlook on the future.

Now imagine.... That this transformation is not just in you... But in every person in your church family... Imagine if Remnant exploded in love....expressing joy....at great peace.... Abounding in patience...kindness...goodness... faithfulness...gentleness and self control What if we not only were fruitful...but so full of the Spirit.... So ripe and plump and juicy That everyone could see these things pouring out of us. These things don't come from us..... They only come from God living through us.

We become Ripe....Juicy....GreatFruit Not because of our efforts.... But because of the depth of our intimacy with Jesus. Juicy Fruit is the result of a deep...solid....commitment to stay rooted in Jesus....

So often we strive to create what God wants to give us We try to make ourselves more loving...more joyful.... We try to conjure up a bunch of peace....or patience... We go through contortions to try to find self control. We try to beat gentleness into us. And when these things don't grow in our lives... We begin to feel like we are failing as Christians...

We see others...and are envious of their internal joy... We watch some in our small groups...who abound in faithfulness Others seem to have genuine goodness and kindness But we are fighting...and internal war with ourselves And it seems like we are losing....failing at this Jesus thing

IF that is you....This series is for you... My prayer for you is that you will stop striving And position yourself to receive... You don't create the fruit in your life... You express it. Because it flows through you In this series we are going to learn.... Some things we need to do..... Some things we need to stop doing.... To become Great Fruit

Maybe you really want intimacy with God. You see people that seem to have it... And you say...I want to love God like that.... But truthfully I don't right now... You see...honestly...I have all these other desires right now. My heart is pursuing other things... I want to pursue God...but really... My heart is not into that right now.

How do I get there? I would tell you...to pray. You see you don't have the ability on your own to love God. If you want to know how messed up we are..or how fallen we are... We do not have the capacity to love God. I can't muster up a bunch of love for God. I have a sin nature that loves me. I need God to grow in me a love for Him and others

We have to pray each day.... God I need you.... I need you to grow in me a love for you I need for you to grow in me a love for others.

This series is all about growth. We are going to focus on growing fruit in our lives... But fruit doesn't just happen... It is the evidence of something much deeper. You can trust that Great Fruit only comes from....deep roots...to the source of growth. No tree produces fruit...until it has first developed roots. And no Christ follower produces the fruit of the Spirit. Without deep roots invested in the Spirit.

How do we do that? Developing roots.... Strong roots that connect to Jesus. If we really desire to become Christians overflowing with Great Fruit. We must make a commitment to connect our roots to the source of the Spirit. IF you want the life change that comes with the Fruit of the Spirit

You must remember that it is not just Fruit... It is Fruit OF THE SPIRIT

The only way you grow this fruit in your life. Is to grow your relationship with the Holy Spirit... Through a deeper connection to Jesus. I only have one objective for this series.... I have been praying that God will give me the words....the images... That will get you to stop believing.... That anything on this earth will bring you more pleasure... Than knowing God....knowing Jesus....intimately.

That you will become so convinced of that truth... That you pursue Him more than anything. And I know it can be hard to believe.... Because so many in this room are here hurting today.... Your desire is to just get rid of the pain. And I just want you to be open to the idea... That possibly....getting to know God intimately.... May be more important than even getting rid of that pain.

I know that many sit in this room today with so many problems.... and you believe your greatest desire is....I just have to fix this problem... I need God to fix this problem for me....I have come here looking for a solution to my problem. Can I ask you to just be open to the possibility that it is not just about that problem. That knowing God more intimately could be even greater.... than fixing that problem.

Some are here today struggling with temptation... You know God has a different plan for you.... But you are tempted and you love it so much... You want it so much...even though you are in church.... You are already planning it...to dive right back into your sin when I am done....

I am just asking you to consider the possibility...that intimacy with God... Will bring you more pleasure than that sin that you are involved in. I know you can't see it... I know that temptation may be everything to you... But my prayer is that you would realize... that knowing this God is better That there is nothing on this earth....that will bring you more personal satisfaction That nothing on earth will bring you more pleasure... Than knowing Jesus intimately.

You may be thinking.... How could that possibly help my problem? How could a relationship with Jesus help anything? I desperately want you to know today.... That a relationship with Jesus changes everything.

Even if your situation never changes.... Going through it with Jesus changes everything.

I remember the day that I decided to marry Tammy... I didn't know the future...I was struggling with problems... But I knew to my core...that whatever the future held... I wanted to experience that future with her... That relationship changed everything. I would rather have gone through tough times with Tammy Than smooth sailing without her. The relationship was the most important thing...

I want you to just consider the possibility.... That an intimate relationship with Jesus.... Trumps every other circumstance in your life.. That it is better to go through trials with Jesus... Than living a wrinkle free life without Him. There is something about this relationship.... That says...I would rather be with Him... Than anywhere else. Nothing else compares to knowing Jesus...

So we walk with Jesus In our hearts we want to grow deep roots We want to spend time with Him....to understand His word. We can't believe that we are in a relationship with God. It is so exciting...we wonder how we ever lived without it Church, small group, baptism, worship, gifts, serving... we almost can't get enough of it Every day we read our bible and pray... Jesus is without a doubt the most important thing in our life

Things are really...really...good Sure you still have problems....but you have Jesus Your life is still challenging but you are no longer alone You are in a relationship with God You can't believe your good fortune You...dirty...undeserving..sinful...fallen Have been pursued and loved by perfect...holy...God.

It is sort of like the movie Hitch...

In that movie a beautiful woman named Allegra Cole.... Falls for a man named Albert Brennaman who it appears Has no business being in a relationship with her. She is way out of his league... Rich...beautiful... Seemingly self assured He is ordinary...overweight...clumsy and somewhat neurotic.

You look at them and you wonder....How could he ever be with her? Not only that but Albert wonders how he could ever be with...Her. She is way out of his league...and he knows it. Yet the movie ends with Albert marrying Allegra.... He can't believe his good fortune Allegra married Albert... What else could he possibly need or want He had no business being with her So surely they will live happily ever after...right?

But you know that doesn't just happen The excitement of a new relationship wears off eventually Part of our fallen state is that we take for granted what we have been given

Unless we fight against it...our selfishness takes over. We start to see other things....things we don't have... Things we want...things we choose to pursue.

The world bombards us with what we don't have Without realizing it...we drift away from the most important things.... Our relationships....to pursue....things. Because we easily forget what we have been given..... And because we take it for granted....we begin to covet...to desire other things.

That is why we have to work so hard... To protect...nurture...and grow our relationships Great marriages take commitment....and work. We have to prioritize spending time together... We have to cherish the memories of time we have spent together. We remind ourselves each day of why we fell in love in the first place Returning often to the photo album of our times together- reminding ourselves

We have to say no to a lot of other things....because we are committed to the relationship If we want the fruit that comes from a great marriage We will be asked to sacrifice our wants for theirs. It always costs us something...to really love someone else. We have to stay committed to each other

We know that as parents too... We must prioritize spending time with our families and our children No one has great relationships without investing time in others. Can you imagine having a friend... Sure you use to spend a lot of time together.... But you have been busy Sort of took that friendship for granted You trust that they will be there for you...if you need them. But will they?

If you don't rearrange your priorities... and invest in the relationship The great experience that you had with that friend will become a distant memory.

At some point...we have to decide.... IF our relationship is worth fighting for. So where are you with Jesus today? How is that relationship going for you? You see I know just how Albert must have felt....

My relationship with God is like that... I look at God...perfect...Holy....righteous.... glorious in every way Then I look at me....I know what I have done...I know my failures...I know what I deserve.

And yet...Somehow...I am in a relationship with Him. God....Big God...spoke the universe into existence God God the true perfect 10 Not only wanted a relationship with me....but pursued me. Personally arranged my life....personally moved my heart....to fall in love with Him Prepared a way...paid a price for me to be able to be in a relationship with Him The God of the Universe.....loves...me...and He loves you.

It blows my mind when I think about it.... and yet as amazing as that truth is.... I am so fallen...that I can actually take Jesus for granted. I have been matched up with holy perfect beautiful God He calls me His child...He calls us His bride...He calls us friend. And yet I look around in the security of that relationship.... And complain about the things I don't have.. The problems I still have The things I want and He hasn't give me...

It is so easy for us to look around at the things we don't have.... And forget....that I have everything.. I am connected to God...we are the bride of Christ... We have friendship with...GOD Intimacy with God....

But let's get honest.... All of us have at times pursued other things... We committed to Jesus but took that relationship for granted. We get so tempted...something else...looks so good to us. We begin desiring other things more than Jesus.

One thing this year has shown us....is that...when we stop prioritizing our time with God..... the things of this world start competing for our time Like that friend we haven't seen in a while.... The relationship starts to cool.... Not that anything is really wrong.... It is just not right...and we know it.

I know we all have problems.... I don't want to trivialize your situation.... I just want to magnify Jesus above it. God loved you...you...so much... That He would rather watch His Son suffer and die...on a cross.... than to miss out on a relationship with you.

Jesus offers you a life.... Overflowing with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self control If you are following Jesus...and not seeing these things grow in your life Can I just suggest to you....that there is something in your life.... that you believe is more important than Jesus

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Jesus made it absolutely clear....if you don't abide in Him You will never....ever produce...fruit... Meditate on this verse this week... A branch cannot bear fruit by itself I am the vine...you are the branches...the ones Isaiah spoke about long ago If you abide in me....you will produce much fruit.... A lost world needs to see real God Fruit...

Fruit that has been grown in that quiet place with Jesus. Because so much time has been spent with Him... In prayer....in His word.... That the Spirit of God...the Holy Spirit.... Has grown so strong in you...that the juice in your fruit Is the Holy Spirit waiting to explode out of your life and on to others.

I want that so desperately in my own life.... And I want it for each of you....and for this amazing church. I want the juiciest fruit possible expressed in each of our lives... But I don't grow fruit...and neither do you The amount of love, joy, peace and all the others that we experience together Is directly related to how much time we spend in the Sanctuary...the quiet place with Jesus.

All we can do...is surrender our priorities to His...and position ourselves to receive. I know it can be very hard... Our problems...our issues...our struggles...they just seem so Big The immediate events in your life...seem so overwhelming That temptation that is leading you away...seems so desirable Can I just suggest to you....to consider the possibility...That those things... Are the very things God is using....to move you to the quiet place?

That it is in the sanctuary....your time alone with Jesus Where your problems become small.. Because God becomes so Big.

I want so desperately to be used by God... To show you... That the only solution to whatever you are facing... Is knowing God....knowing Jesus....intimately. That you will become so convinced of that truth... That you pursue Him more than anything. Because you know nothing else on earth... Could possibly bring you more pleasure.

So this week as we launch the series.... What do you need to do....to position yourself To abide in Jesus?

What priority are you willing to change? What temptation are you willing to walk away from? What immediate problem are you willing to set aside? What selfish desire do you need to release? To make sure that your relationship with Jesus is THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN YOUR LIFE. Don't worry that you don't know how to abide. Just pray and God will teach you....Let's pray.