



Opening Introduction

As we learn to walk in the way of Jesus, Lent invites us to consider another dimension of formation: staying present rather than rushing ahead, pulling away, or distracting ourselves when things feel unresolved or uncomfortable.

Staying present is often harder than starting well. It requires patience, attentiveness, and trust, especially when change feels slow or when clarity has not yet arrived. Lent trains us to remain with God in the ordinary, the unfinished, and the in-between moments of our lives.

Reflection

Jesus uses simple language to describe the heart of the spiritual life: “Abide in me.” Abiding is not striving or achieving. It is also not just sitting still. Abiding is an active form of presence where we remain and are formed. Abiding is about refusing to disconnect when growth feels slow or when answers are not immediately clear.

Many of us are tempted to move on too quickly, fix what feels unresolved, distract ourselves from discomfort, or assume that if we are not progressing, something must be wrong. But Scripture consistently shows us that God often works most deeply in seasons that feel quiet or mundane.

Staying present – abiding in Jesus, also reveals our avoidance habits. We notice when we reach for distraction, control, or busyness instead of remaining attentive to God. This is slow work. Abiding forms us over time, shaping our hearts through faithfulness rather than urgency. We learn that abiding, especially when things are un-resolved, is itself an act of trust.

John 15:1–16

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

*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. ⁵I 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. ⁶If anyone does not **abide** in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you **abide** in me, and my words **abide** in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ⁹As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. **Abide** in my love.*

*¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will **abide** in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and **abide** in his love. ¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*

¹²“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants,^[a] for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

Consider

1. Where or how do you tend to pull away when things feel unresolved or uncomfortable?
2. What helps you remain present with God rather than seeking distraction or control?
3. How do you respond when growth feels slow or invisible?
4. What might it look like to stay with Jesus this week without trying to fix or rush anything?

Prayer Prompts

- **Pray John 15 slowly.**
Read the passage aloud, lingering over Jesus’s invitation to “abide.” Notice what words or images stay with you. Rather than asking what you should do, ask what it might look like to stay connected to Jesus today.
- **Notice your impulse to escape.**
When discomfort, boredom, anxiety, or restlessness arises, pause and ask: What am I wanting to avoid right now? Bring that awareness to God without trying to change it. Let noticing become an act of prayer.
- **Practice presence without agenda.**
Set aside brief moments during the day to become aware of God’s nearness. Resist the urge to fill the space with requests or analysis. Simply acknowledge that God is with you here, now, in this moment.

Intercede

Join us in praying for 20 new Gospel apprentices to connect in our house churches and join us on mission.

Please pray for eyes to see the good works, and open doors God has lined up for each of us to bless people (Eph. 2:10)

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