

MIDDLE SCHOOL GUIDE 3

ABIDING IS PURSUING WHO JESUS CALLS US TO BE

YEAR: TRANSFORM / FOCUS: I AM GROWING
SERIES: GOD IS THE VINE - I AM A BRANCH

BIG TRUTH: ABIDING IS PURSUING WHO JESUS CALLS US TO BE

1 Peter 1:13-17; Colossians 1:28-29

BIBLE VERSE: HEBREWS 5:14

"But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil."

BIG IDEAS

- Following Jesus is wanting to be like Him.
- Jesus makes us more like Him through constant practice.

BIBLE PASSAGE: HEBREWS 5:11-6:1

TRANSFORM - I AM GROWING

The Transform Year is an exploration of what it means to become a "new creation" in Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17) In order for this to happen, we must first find our identity in Him. Many of us live in a consistent state of identity crises. We wrestle with questions like who am I, where do I belong, why do I exist? The answer to these questions is found in Jesus. Our prayer for this semester is that like the Apostle Paul we would be able to say, "I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." (Galatians 2:20).

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know that...

- God is the vine and they are a branch
- We can do nothing apart from Jesus
- Abiding is both position and pursuit



Every student should feel...

- Insufficient and inadequate in their own power and might
- Thankful for the Savior who abides in us
- Overwhelmed by Christ's sacrifice for us



Every student should strive to...

- Read and meditate on John 15:1-5 each week
- Memorize Galatians 2:20
- Pursue an abiding relationship with Jesus in community with their local church



Every student should want to...

- Abide in Jesus
- Pursue spiritual disciplines
- Continually aim higher in their pursuit of Him

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



Property of Tri-Cities Baptist Church
171 Promise Land Dr. Gray, TN 37615

ABIDING IS PURSUING WHO JESUS CALLS US TO BE

BIBLE VERSE: HEBREWS 5:14

“But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.”

Abiding in Christ daily leads to spiritual maturity.

“But solid food is for the mature...”

- Growing spiritually isn't possible without a deepening relationship with Jesus. To abide in Jesus means to make knowing Him the number one priority in your life. As Jesus becomes the main focus in our lives, we will grow in our understanding of Him and in our love for Him. To know Him is to love Him and the more we know Him, the more we will love Him.
- As we grow in our knowledge of Him, we will grow spiritually. We will move from being spiritually immature people to spiritually maturing people. The more we seek Jesus, the more we will receive. God gives generously to those who ask Him in faith. The author of Hebrews reprimands the Hebrews for their lack of spiritual growth. The truth that is revealed here is that one cannot grow without abiding in Jesus.

Abiding in Christ daily yields spiritual discernment.

“for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.”

- As a believer grows in Christ, he or she grows in their ability to understand God's commands. A believer grows in understanding and distinguishing between what is of God and what is of the world. This spiritual discernment is possible because a person seeks daily to be like Christ.
- When a person has spiritual discernment, he or she is becoming more and more like Christ. This growth is possible because of the work of Christ inside of a person as they seek to know Him and to grow spiritually.

ABIDING IS PURSUING WHO JESUS CALLS US TO BE

BIG IDEA #1: FOLLOWING JESUS IS WANTING TO BE LIKE HIM.¹

[THIS]

Every believer desires to know Jesus and to grow more like Him. Believers desire to know Jesus because of the Holy Spirit who works inside of them to make them more like Christ. At times this desire can fade as our hearts turn away from Jesus and toward earthly things. We may get distracted by the cares of this life and our desire to be like Jesus wanes a little. In Hebrews 5:11-12, the author scolds the Hebrews for their lack of desire to grow spiritually. Every believer is commanded to grow up in their faith that they might be like Christ and a light in this dark world. Believers who are abiding in Christ are not satisfied remaining the same. They desire to spiritually mature.

[THEREFORE]

How does a desire to be more like Jesus motivate us to pursue spiritual growth?

Colossians 2:6-7 tells us that those who are followers of Christ will grow in their faith and should grow in their faith. Psalm 92:12-15 teaches us that those who follow Christ will desire to grow more like Him for all of their lives. Those who desire to be like Christ will continue to spiritually mature and to bear fruit all the days of their lives.

In what areas of your life do you need to grow spiritually?

Colossians 3:16 tells believers to let the Word of God dwell in them richly. Spiritual growth comes from studying and growing in our knowledge of God's Word. Hebrews 6:1-2 tells us to leave our elementary understanding of Christ and to press on toward growing in our knowledge and understanding of Him.

[THIS]

Part of spiritually maturing is seeking to grow. God makes us like Him by sanctifying us. God sanctifies us through our life experiences and the church. As we experience life, God is at work in our hearts. As we participate in the body of Christ, God uses His people to speak truth, encourage, and spur us on to personal spiritual growth. Abiding in Christ means seeking this sanctification process and not being fearful of it.

[THEREFORE]

How has your church family encouraged your own spiritual growth?

Proverbs 27:17 tells us that one person can sharpen and encourage another person to grow in their lives. The body of Christ works this way to encourage and sharpen one another's faith and knowledge. Ephesians 4:16 tells us that the body of Christ exists to build one another up. Building one another up results in spiritual growth. Lastly, Colossians 3:14-15 shows us that we are gathered into a body of Christ to facilitate growth and spiritual maturity. We are not alone in our pursuit of Christ because we pursue Him alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ.

1. Hebrews 5:11-12: Growing spiritually means seeking to be like Christ. Believers have the desire to be like Christ.

2. 2 Peter 3:18: Every believer is to grow in our knowledge of Jesus.

ABIDING IS PURSUING WHO JESUS CALLS US TO BE

BIG IDEA #2: JESUS MAKES US MORE LIKE HIM THROUGH CONSTANT PRACTICE.³

[THIS]

The author of Hebrews encourages the Hebrews to put away elementary things and to seek solid food. God's Spirit is always active and at work in our lives. It is through His Spirit that God changes us and makes us more like Him. We will desire to put away elementary things because of the Spirit inside of us. Pursuing spiritual growth is really a pursuit of God. As we pursue Him and submit our lives to His Spirit, we will grow to be more like Him. As the Spirit works in our lives, our desires will be for more of Christ and less of the world. This does result in spiritual growth.

[THEREFORE]

What are some ways that you are pursuing Jesus more now than a year ago?

1 John 2:6 tells us that we should be like Christ and we will be if we abide in Him. James 1:22 and 2:14 tell us that our faith will result in works. Our works do not save us. As Deuteronomy 4:29 shows us, when we seek God, we will find Him and He will reveal Himself to us. This will result in our spiritual growth as we become more and more like Jesus.

[THIS]

In order to truly grow, we must actively pursue Christ. We do this by abiding in Him daily. Abiding in Christ produces action resulting from knowledge. The Hebrews were guilty of not changing and not growing spiritually. Their lives revealed their spiritual immaturity. They were dull of hearing and hardly understood even the basic principles of Christ. As we abide in Christ, He works in our hearts and changes us to be more like Him. He is active in our lives, working to make us more like Him every day. The work He does in our hearts plays out in our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. It is impossible to abide in Christ and not be changed. Christ changes us always.

[THEREFORE]

How have you experienced apathy toward spiritual things in your life that has resulted in areas of spiritual immaturity?

In 1 Corinthians 3:1-2, Paul writes to the Corinthian believers that he cannot even speak to them as spiritually mature because they are infants in their faith though they should be more mature. 1 Corinthians 14:20 tells us to be mature in our thinking and not like children so we can discern the evil in this world. Ephesians 4:14 shows us that the result of being immature leads to an inconsistency in our spiritual walk.

What are you doing to make sure that you are growing spiritually?

In Matthew 6:33, we see the truth that those who seek God's kingdom first receive a blessing and a knowledge of Him. James 4:8 tells us that if we draw near to God, He will draw near to us. We can trust that when we are actively pursuing Him through His Word and prayer, we will grow in our knowledge and understanding of Him.

3. Hebrews 5:14-6:1: It is the work of Jesus inside of us that matures us spiritually as we seek to be like Him.