



## Abiding Tools

A Study in John 15:1-17

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Hudson Taylor was the founder of the China Inland Mission. At his death in 1905, there were 125,000 Chinese Christians in the mission – a fruitful life! But Hudson writes about a time in the early years of his ministry when his life was marked by exhaustion and deadness in his spirit. He belonged to God, but he was not experiencing the joy and rest God promised. He said, “I prayed, agonized, fasted, strove for faith, read the Word more diligently, sought more time for meditation, but all with no benefit.”

Finally, he found the answer in a letter from a friend who wrote to him about his “discovery of abiding, not striving nor struggling; trusting God for present power; resting in the love of an almighty Savior.” Hudson said, “How can I have my faith increased? Only by thinking of all that Yeshua is, that He be the subject of our constant thoughts. Not striving to have faith but looking off to the Faithful One.”<sup>1</sup> He said, “I am no longer anxious about anything. My work has never been so difficult, but the weight and strain are all gone.” Hudson had found the secret of **abiding in Yeshua instead of relying on his own strength.**

The Psalmist writes, “He who *dwells* in the secret place of ‘Elyon (the Most High) shall *abide* under the shadow of *Shaddai* (the Almighty).” (Psalm 91:1) The Hebrew word for  *dwell*  is *yāshab* meaning to *linger, stay, remain, abide.*

Yeshua (Jesus) said, “**I am the Vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him bears much fruit for apart from Me, you can do nothing.**” (John 15:5) Abiding in Yeshua means to *linger* and *live* in His life as our own. It means to *rely on, rest in, and receive* His life. **Abiding is a restful activity.**

So, how do we abide in Yeshua? How do we live in Him and not in our own effort and strength. I am going to share tools I found in John 15. I call them Abiding Tools. Let’s begin with the context of John 15:

Yeshua’s words to His disciples came just after His intimate time with them at His last Passover meal on earth. They had all left their meeting place; Yeshua and the men had walked over the Kidron Valley toward the Garden of Gethsemane at the base of the Mount of Olives just outside the walls of Jerusalem where they would spend the night in the olive groves. Each word Yeshua spoke on this short walk was precious. He would soon be arrested there in that grove by the Roman cohort.<sup>2</sup>

Yeshua’s words in John 15:1-17 reveal five tools for abiding – **Look, Linger, Listen-Loosen-Let go, Love, and Lift.** When we use them, we bear the fruit of **Power, Productivity, Purpose, Pleasure, and Praise** for His kingdom.

As we look at these tools, Yeshua’s words are indicated in **crimson text**, and lines are provided for you to write your own thoughts and other connecting Bible verses you may find as you linger with Him in His words. Keep your Bible with you to read all the verses of John 15. If possible, gather a few friends to share your findings.

<sup>1</sup> From *Hudson Taylor’s Spiritual Secret* by Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor.

<sup>2</sup> For detail on Jesus’ last days on earth, please see the booklet *The Feast of the Lamb, Past, Present, and Future.*

## Tool 1 – Look

Looking to Him produces the fruit of **Power**. Power is *energy, passion, and motivation*.

We open our eyes! We **recognize** and **remember** that apart from His Spirit, we cannot follow Him. This is good news – we cannot, but He can in us!

- <sup>4</sup> **Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.**

We **pray** and **ask** – We feel dead inside if we try to work in our own strength. Pray: Father, motivate me by the power of Your Spirit. Fill me with Your resurrection energy.

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## Tool 2 – Linger

Lingering with Him produces the fruit of **Productivity**. Productivity is *results*.

Years ago, I had a peach tree. The luscious peaches did not toil. They just appeared in abundance as a result of the nourishment the soil gave to the roots of the tree. Bearing fruit is a restful activity.

**Focus on the abiding, not the fruit.** Set aside time on your calendar to linger with your Father.

“...As you have received Messiah Yeshua the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.” (Colossians 2:6)

- <sup>5</sup> **I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, He bears much fruit for apart from Me you can do nothing.** Linger in the soil of His word.
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## Tool 3 – Listen-Loosen-Let go

Listening to Him, loosening, and letting go produces the fruit of **Purpose**. Purpose is discovered in *simplicity and focus*.

On my peach tree, I cut off all the little branches called *suckers* that drew life out of the main purpose of the tree, which was to bear fruit. In the same way, the caretaker of a vineyard gives daily attention to the vines to be sure they are pruned to bear the best grapes. In the spring, major pruning is needed.

In her 1987 devotional, Kay Arthur writes, “The pruning of the dead branches is laborious to the vinedresser and traumatic to the vine. Often there is a struggle in trying to cut it loose, but the branches are relieved to have the dead wood hauled away. If the dead wood is not removed, the vineyard becomes infected with rot, fungus and insects bringing disease.”

- <sup>2</sup> **He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes so that it will bear even more fruit.**

- <sup>3</sup> **You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.**

The light of His Word hauls away the clutter of our spirits, clarifying our focus. It rids our minds and schedules of endless, undirected activity and, also, leaves space for play. Just as the vines are majorly pruned in the spring, we experience greater pruning times that result in the fulfillment of our purpose.

We can let our Father prune us by:

**Listening.** He will show us where we are putting energy in wrong places.

**Loosening.** He will help us loosen our hold on what we *think* we should do.

**Letting go.** Sometimes the good is not the best. We receive His best by letting go of our own will.

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## Tool 4 – Love

Loving produces the fruit of **Pleasure** to God, to others, and to me.

There is nothing like the pleasurable taste of carefully nurtured, homegrown, pesticide-free fruit. I cannot get strawberries like mine anywhere. Their shape, color, smell, warmth, and taste delights the senses! In the same way, as our roots abide in the soil of His pure love, the nutrients supply us with **power** to be **productive** and fulfill our **purpose**. The well-tended, Son-ripened fruit is a **pleasure** to God, to others, and to me. In our weakness, His love clothes us and shines through us.

### His love in us is a pleasure to God

<sup>8</sup> My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit.

“The Lord your God in the midst of you is a Mighty Warrior; He will save. He will delight in you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with joyful singing.”  
(Zephaniah 3:17)

### His love in us is a pleasure to others

<sup>9</sup> Just as the Father has loved Me, I have loved you; abide in My love.

John 13:34 – A new commandment I give to you that you love one another even as I have loved you. All men will know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another.

<sup>10</sup> If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.

<sup>12</sup> This is My commandment that you love one another just as I have loved you.

“But thanks be to God Who always leads us in triumph in Messiah and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life.” (2 Corinthians 2:14-16)

Abiding in Him may lead us to forgive a coworker or to ask for forgiveness of a coworker. Humility speaks volumes to a world that is holding on to their own goodness.

### His love in us is a pleasure to us

<sup>11</sup> These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be made full.

There are seasons in our lives when we don’t experience happiness due to trial or grief. But His joy is a constant undercurrent, a knowing that He is with you.

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## Tool 5 – Lift

Lifting our hearts to Him produces the fruit of **Praise** and increases our joy!

<sup>15b</sup> I have called you friends for all things I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.

<sup>16</sup> You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My Name, He may give to you.

Wow! He chose us as His friends! We lift our hands and hearts in praise to Him!

Over 20 years ago, a friend, Mike, received sudden news that he would die in three months due to brain cancer. He began to spend fifteen minutes a day singing to the Lord. His life was filled with a joy greater than he had ever experienced. Soon, he was asked to speak about God's love at many events, even his workplace. As He abided in praise, he was flooded with joy. Mike is still alive!

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Soon after the events of John 15, Yeshua gave His life to pay our debt and save us. More than ever, we must abide in Him in His word. **Father, teach us to abide!** Consider these words from a song written by Nathan Partain – *Come and Drink (words and music by Nathan Partain)*

Leave everything you know,  
the way that it should go.  
Give all your control, ease your will,  
and I will lead.  
Leave your anxious thoughts,  
the answer you can't reach.  
Leave what you will never understand,  
and come to Me.

### *Chorus*

You're so deep in My love  
if you'd only believe,  
After all that I've done,  
all the wonders you've seen.  
And I'll give so much more,  
never end the increase,  
So, will you just stop,  
will you rest a while  
And be with Me.

Leave your self-contempt,  
your inability.  
Don't look at yourself, lift your eyes  
and look at Me.  
Let your reason go,  
your defenses leave.  
Let your heart lay bare before Me  
only to receive.

### *Chorus*

You're so deep in My love  
Come down to the waters,  
come and drink.  
Leave your work and effort,  
come and drink.  
Overflowing favor,  
come and drink.  
I am yours forever,  
come and drink.  
Be with Me!  
Be with Me!  
Be with Me!  
Be with Me!