

- Systemic Teaching about Christian Life -



The Core Principle of Life for a Christian

Series:
The Life of the
Christian in the World

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General Considerations about Using This Material:

The subject presented in this material aims to provide support to knowledge and an in-depth study of the Bible and the Christian life.

Based on the understanding that in the Christian Bible is contained the consolidation of fundamental and formal records of the writings inspired by God for humanity and each person of it, the contents exposed in this material are not intended to add, ever, anything to the Bible, nor ever remove anything from it. The aim through this subject is to contribute to the exploration of what already was registered and passed on to us over thousands of years of history by the One Creator and Lord of Heaven and Earth.

The contents presented on the next pages, of course, intend to address just a portion of the essential themes of life displayed with such great amplitude in the Bible. On the other hand, however, this subject is presented in a grouped, colligated, organized and systematized manner with the objective to serve as an aid to knowledge and understanding of the Christian life without losing sight of the main aspects of it.

Ecclesiastes 12: 11 The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.

Related words put together, as told in the biblical text above, serve as goads and nails for fixing supports and help for the life of people that hear and receive them. Therefore, one objective of this material is to study and seek a broader understanding of the truths handed down to us by the Unique Pastor and God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

We would still like to suggest that the reading and studying of this material also should always be accompanied by prudence and proper investigation, believing that this is a very healthy habit to be practiced toward any material presented to a person.

The act of acceptance, rejection, or “retaining what is good,” is a personal and individual attribute given to those who receive the wisdom from God and which should be exercised or used by them toward all that comes into their hands.

Proverbs 8: 12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And find out knowledge and discretion.

Acts 17: 11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

Proverbs 16: 1 The preparations of the heart belong to man, But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.

2 All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the spirits.

3 Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established.

More details about these initial considerations are posted at www.zoominchristianlife.org.

Ronald Gortz and Irmelin Gortz, servants of the Lord Jesus Christ!

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*Revelation 21: 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."
6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.*

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*1Timothy 2: 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,
4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

More details about these initial considerations are posted at www.zoominchristianlife.org.

Contents

Contents	4
C1. The Vital Condition of the Order of Importance or Precedence of Some Principles for a Person's Life	5
C2. The Central Principle for the Life of the Christian	9
C3. "To abide or remain in Christ," a Task Taught by God to Those Who Attend to This Call.....	16
C4. The Work of "Abiding in Christ" Should Always Precede All Other Works of a Christian	22
C5. The Central Purpose of the Abiding of a Christian in Christ	34
C6. Actions that Bear Witness of the "Work of Abiding in Christ"	40
C7. Continuity and Perseverance in Christ Consolidate the Salvation and the Life in Christ of a Christian	44
Bibliography	50

C1. The Vital Condition of the Order of Importance or Precedence of Some Principles for a Person's Life

At the beginning of this new material on some principles of high relevance to a person's life, and through which the series *The Life of the Christian in the World* is also starting, we aim, in the light of the Scriptures, to point out the fact that among the diversity of the referred principles, there are some that should be seen in a more prominent way or under the optic that they should precede other aspects that also are important.

Without knowing and following an appropriate order of importance or precedence of principles, a person may be significantly exposed to the risk of incurring wrong choices of priorities and values of the various aspects and practices related to his or her life.

The lack of an appropriate distinction of some principles, values, or practices, and of the position that they should have in relation to others, may lead a person to depreciate, diminish, or dilute the value of central and essential aspects in the midst of other points also relevant, but which should not be in the first place in one's life.

In a particular account of the Scriptures, we find the Lord Jesus Christ declaring an observation of distinctive relevance in the midst of a series of other facts and truths, exemplifying that some factors of life are worthy of a higher emphasis or which should always be in a preponderance position, as follows:

Luke 10: 19 Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.

21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight."

The Lord Jesus Christ, in His words exposed above, has shown that there is an order of greater and lesser degree of importance in the aspects related to a person's life. The Lord Jesus Christ pointed out that He was indeed granting authority for His disciples to act in His Name for them to use it as protection against their enemies, but He was also telling them that from the eternal perspective, the most prominent was the salvation of their lives. The main point referred to the fact that they had their names written or inscribed in Heaven.

The salvation of the soul to eternal life with God is the most necessary aspect of every human being.

Matthew 16: 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

*1 Peter 1: 9 ... **receiving the end of your faith: the salvation of your souls.***

Many daily points in life are of great importance, and which can represent significant potential regarding the natural course of people's lives, but as much as a person achieves success or even failures in the human optics, a person does not reach the eternal life only by natural targets or aspects.

Eternal life, or the salvation by which a person receives eternal life, comes from God through Christ Jesus. The newness of heavenly life or eternal life is granted to human beings by the grace of God and can be accessed through faith in Christ and by receiving Him as the Lord in the heart. And this, regardless of whether a person is prosperous according to human concepts, an aspect exposed by another series of texts below:

*John 3: 16 **For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.***

*17 **For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.***

*18 **He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.***

*Ephesians 2: 5 ... **even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).***

*Ephesians 2: 8 **For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,***
*9 **not of works, lest anyone should boast.***

*Romans 11: 6 **And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.***

*Romans 10: 13 **For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."***

Therefore, **to understand that the salvation offered by the Lord precedes in importance the authority of a disciple of Christ over the forces of darkness so that they do not harm him or her, as well as it precedes the authority to perform works in the name of the Lord, is crucial for a person**

not to become excessively inclined to what is secondary or to the detriment of what is essential and indispensable for life.

What good would it do, for instance, for a person to have exercised authority over enemies or to have done what some call as good works if, at the end of the process, one did not remain linked to the source of life for eternity by putting aside the central work which the Lord instructs to be performed by every individual?

*John 6: 28 **Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"***
*29 **Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."***

There are many priceless principles to be followed and practiced in the Christian life, but the instruction of the Scriptures about them is for them to be practiced as a consequence or result of a person's faith in Christ Jesus, not as aspects that keep a person from the life in the Lord.

Paul, an apostle of Christ, also teaches how preponderant faith in the Lord is in order that the inheritance of eternal life becomes consistently established in a person, as follows:

*1 Timothy 6: 12 **Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.***

It is very significant for Christians to grow in the knowledge of the principles that govern the Christian life and that serve as a robust help for the safety and the strengthening of their faith in the Lord. However, before or together, it is also crucial for a person to know which principles precede others and what is the order of importance and essentiality of these principles. And this, in order not to come to invert what should never be inverted or abandoned.

*Matthew 6: 31 **Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'***
*32 **For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.***
*33 **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.***

The individualized understanding of the various principles about the Christian life can highly contribute to the advancement in the new life that a person can have in God. However, without understanding that there are aspects that should precede others, and that should never be overlooked, a person may even know some principles in detail, but still be lacking the wisdom on how to put them into practice adequately or so that they

will not harm the greater purpose of their salvation, which is: Eternal life in the grace of the Lord.

The fact that a person knows the content about various principles of the Christian life does not mean that one knows how to apply them to every moment of the dynamics of his or her life, since the Christian is not called to be guided only by a written letter, as it was in the priesthood according to the Law of Moses. A Christian is called to be guided in a living and continuous way by the Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

*Romans 8: 14 **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.***

Thus, in the present subject, we do not intend to re-address the same level of detail that has been carried out, for instance, in the subjects on The Gospel of the Creator, The Gospel of Salvation, The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, or The Gospel of the Righteousness of God, from the series The Gospel, The Good News of God, but rather to emphasize or highlight, in particular, the unique and essential position of some aspects addressed in these materials in reference. And this, to cooperate even more so that what is more prominent and indispensable in no way might become neglected or underestimated.

*Hebrews 2: 1 **Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.***

*2 **For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,***

*3 **how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,***

*4 **God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?***

*Hebrews 3: 14 **For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.***

*Hebrews 10: 23 **Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.***

C2. The Central Principle for the Life of the Christian

Considering that eternal salvation is the most essential and vital aspect of every person's life, but also that, after welcoming this salvation, there are fundamental and crucial aspects that should receive the primacy of those who have received the newness of life that accompanies salvation, we would like to highlight once more, in the present subject, these very essential principles, but at this time more from the specific perspective of a Christian's positioning towards them.

In the subjects of the series The Gospel, The Good News of God, the essential aspects in reference have already been addressed. However, as these subjects were more focused on the exposition of the Gospel of the Lord and what the Lord offers us through it, it still seems to us very relevant to review some aspects from the specific perspective of a Christian's positioning regarding what God grants him or her through the Gospel.

In the present subject, or in this series on The Life of the Christian in the World, we will see that some topics covered in it are similar to what was already exposed in the specific series on the Gospel of God, for it is through the Gospel that the Lord grants us His novelty of life and clarifies the purpose of life according to His Gospel. Nevertheless, to look the same theme more emphatically from the viewpoint of those who receive the Gospel surely can also point out in a practical way how a person, graced by the Gospel, can interact appropriately and more intensely with what is offered to him or her.

Through the Gospel, the Lord teaches us, for instance, that the eternal life that He grants to those who receive Him is expressed by knowing the One True God and His Only Begotten Son Jesus Christ.

*John 17: 3 **And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.***

Nevertheless, when we see the aspect of eternal life from the standpoint of the person to whom it is offered, and the eternal life as being to know God and the Lord Jesus Christ, we can also see that it is necessary to advance to the practical aspect of how this “knowing God” will be effectively granted and, in turn, reached by the one to whom it is offered.

The foundation of the newness of life granted by God to a Christian is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, but knowing indeed from what conditions the Lord supports, instructs, and guides a Christian is also of the utmost importance so that what the Christian has available in the Lord may come to express or become a reality in all areas of his or her life.

Just knowing that eternal life is to know God and the Lord Jesus Christ, without knowing the way for this to be fulfilled and without practicing what is instructed to be accomplished, does not turn into reality, for an individual, what is announced as being eternal life, which, once again, is expressed by knowing God and Christ in the measure in which the Lord wants each person to know Him.

Eternal life is to really know God as the Lord wants people to know Him, and not that people only know that there is a possibility to know God.

In declaring about his life as a Christian, Paul says:

*2 Timothy 1: 12(b) ...**for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.***

The Gospel of God was not manifested to the world as a proclamation of a theoretical or symbolic possibility by which people could figuratively be reconciled with God to know the Lord more. The Gospel has come to offer the way for people to effectively reconcile themselves with the Lord in order to know who the Unique God of all the universe and all life is, as well as to come to know the Lord in a personal, more intense, and more profound way.

Furthermore, **once the Gospel is seen by the aspect of what God offers indeed through this offer, to know the practical way of how one can reach what is offered through the Gospel becomes also as important as knowing what it offers.**

In the various subjects on the Gospel of God referred to above, it has been emphasized, several times, that **the basis or foundation of a Christian's life is the Lord Jesus Christ.** However, going further, what is also essential to emphasize to Christians, again and again, is **that the vital aspect for each of them to be firmly established on this foundation, or to remain in it, is the personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Hearing about Christ in His condition of the Unique Savior, Lord, High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek, King of Righteousness, King of Peace, Pastor, King of Glory, and a series of other marvelous characteristics of His glory, is very different than coming to know Christ, in these various expressions, from a continual experience of a living fellowship with the Lord.

When the Scriptures explain that eternal life is to know the Unique God and the Lord Jesus Christ, they are not teaching that mere abstract knowledge and obtaining information about God are eternal life. What the Scriptures teach as eternal life is to know the Eternal God through a fellowship or from the experience of a living fellowship with the Lord granted through His Gospel, as Christ Himself explained to those who thought they could obtain life only through informative knowledge of the Scriptures:

*John 5: 39 **You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.***

*40 **But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.***

A person, for instance, may have a lot of information about God and still have not minimally known the Lord according to the way in which God wants him or her to know Him.

An individual may even have accumulated a lot of informative knowledge about God and yet have not known and enjoyed a fellowship with the Lord, while another, perhaps even with less information about God, may know the Lord very well in the sense of having experienced a living fellowship with God through Christ and the Spirit of the Lord.

- 1 Corinthians 8: 1* **Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.**
2 **And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.**
3 **But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.**

The Lord Jesus said that those who are His own know His voice. And this, is also the kind of knowledge that the Scriptures tell us about what eternal life is, for there are people who even know to quote numerous names of God which are in the Scriptures and know to list several characteristics that these names expose about the Lord, but who, on the other hand, do not recognize the voice of Christ when He calls them directly and simply.

Thus, **without the individual and direct relationship of a Christian with the Lord Jesus Christ, the possibility of living the Christian life in fact or experiencing a genuine Christian living and walking is also far from being achieved.**

The attempts to establish a Christian life disassociated from a fellowship between a Christian and the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, no matter how many they are or how much effort people put into them, simply cannot, in fact, achieve a Christian living.

- Galatians 2: 20* **I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.**

The Lord Jesus Christ declared that He came into the world so that those who believed in Him and received Him should also have life and abundant life in Him. He did not say that He would send an autonomous or dissociated life from Him, or that He would send a code of conduct and rules by which people could obtain this newness of life.

The Lord Jesus declared that He Himself is the newness of life from God for human beings!

- John 11: 25* **Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.**
26 **And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"**

27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

John 10: 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Therefore, **the central or core point for a Christian to live the Christian life is in one's fellowship with the resurrected, living, eternal God, and almighty Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Colossians 3: 11 ... where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, **but Christ is all and in all.***

*Colossians 3: 4 **When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.***

or

When Christ who is our life will manifest Himself, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

(Translated from Portuguese, Spanish, or German)

Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, and receiving Him as the Lord in personal life, represents the beginning of Christian life and not the final point of salvation.

In this way, considering that Christ is the very newness of life, a Christian is also called to live in a continual fellowship with the Lord.

*1 Corinthians 1: 9 **God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.***

After the receiving of salvation, each person is called by God to grow in the understanding that Christ is the life of the Christian and that every Christian is also called to advance in the comprehension that, for him or her to remain in this newness of life, it is also necessary to abide in Christ Jesus.

Eternal life in the Lord is granted when one receives Christ, but it is through the continuity of the fellowship with Christ that a Christian obtains the growth and firm establishment in this newness of life that is in the Lord.

If, however, an individual departs from the continuity in the relationship or fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, or also called abiding

or remaining in Christ, the Christian also deprives oneself of experiencing the fruits of life that come forth from living in the Lord.

The granting of the salvation provided by the Lord is compared to new birth, and for this reason, it is also followed by a new life after this new birth. And since there is a new life, it also needs to be cared for and nurtured.

- John 6: 51 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."*
- 52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?"*
- 53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.*
- 54 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*
- 55 For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.*
- 56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.*
- 57 As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.*
- 58 This is the bread which came down from heaven, not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."*
- 59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.*
- 60 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"*
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The central point to indeed living the newness of life offered by the Lord is found through the practical action by which the Christian feeds oneself on Christ Jesus, the source that gives the life necessary for this new living!

As the Lord Himself stated, anyone who does not feed on Christ, the source and the supply of the newness of life, does not become the holder of this life in oneself.

A very relevant aspect of the words of the Scriptures about salvation, life, and eternal life is that they are, in general, expressed in a "present continuous." The Scriptures do not say that "the one that believed" shall be saved, but it says that "whoever believes" shall be saved.

The novelty of life mentioned in the Scriptures is always current, as well as associated with expressions presented in the "present continuous."

The Lord Jesus, in the last text seen above, does not say "who fed on me," but says "who feeds on me," "who eats the bread will have everlasting life," and "he who feeds on Me will live because of Me."

And in turn, what does it mean to feed on Christ? What does it mean to eat His bread and drink His blood?

We know that in the Bible blood is also expressed as a typology for life. Thus, **drinking from the life of the living Christ speaks of the living and personal**

fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, it speaks of fellowship with the person of Christ.

The relationship with the person of Christ, to seek Him for a fellowship, to pray to Him continually, to separate a time to be with Him through songs, praise, or supplications, to receive from Him the inner witness of peace, to receive from Him the cleansing of conscience, and to receive from Him the same feeling and virtue that are in Him, that is like drinking from Him.

The mention of bread in the Bible often also expresses the idea of fellowship, but it can as well be related to the practice of feeding on the word of God.

Feeding on Christ, therefore, can also refer to feeding on the instructions that Christ gives through the Scriptures, as well as through the instructions that Christ, by the Holy Spirit, personally confers to a Christian about the way and the steps in which the Lord wants him or her to walk.

Feeding on Christ encompasses being in fellowship with the Lord to know the judgments (directions) He wants to instruct us on the various aspects of our life. (An aspect seen in the subject on the Gospel of Christ's Glory in His position of the Righteous Judge).

Moreover, **feeding on Christ also includes our strengthening by His words so that our hope and faith may always be established firmly in the promises and the living precepts of the Lord.**

*Matthew 4: 4 **But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'**"*

The Lord Jesus longs to share His own life with those who call on His name and seek to follow Him. And the means by which the Lord does so is the fellowship with those who also accept the call to this relationship or fellowship with Christ.

On the other hand, if we look at the text of John 6 exposed above, we can observe that ***"many of His disciples found this discourse a hard saying."***

And why would a declaration of an offer of the so expected novelty of life be a "hard saying"? Why could a speech that instructed a person to feed on God be hard to be accepted?

Among the aspects by which a person may find the discourse of being called to feed on Christ as a "hard saying" is most likely the fact that this call also proposes an act of continuity, perseverance, or repetition, and perhaps the most difficult point to be accepted by many, is that it is a call to a continual dependence on God!

Believing in God at a particular moment, believing in the Lord in a specific circumstance, is a very different situation than keeping oneself continually dependent on Christ or in fellowship with Him.

Nevertheless, **Christ's proposition for us to have life in Him or to have the newness of life that comes from Him is precisely a life of remaining in Him.**

And this, for those who want to maintain some independence from God, sounds like some “hard saying” to be followed.

The call to continually “be in Christ,” however, is essential for a Christian's life, for without “being in Christ,” the Christian life of a Christian is also deprived of the spiritual provision that it needs

John 15: 4 Abide in Me, and I in you.

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Finally, in this chapter, repeating once again, we point out that **after acknowledging Christ Jesus as Lord and receiving salvation from the Lord, the primary, central, or core principle for a Christian to live the Christian life is, and will always be, the practice of remaining or abiding continually in Christ Jesus!**

A Christian life may become genuinely fruitful, or bear fruits that indeed are according to the will of the Lord, when the fruits of it are the expression of the life of Christ in the Christian, which, in turn, can be strengthened by the continual abiding of a Christian “in Christ.”

Thus, considering the essential condition that Christ is the life of the Christian, and that it is also necessary for the Christian to remain in Christ to be strengthened in the newness of life that the Lord offers him or her, we suggest once again an attentive reading to the precious text that follows:

Colossians 3: 1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

or

When Christ who is our life will manifest Himself, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

(Translated from Portuguese, Spanish, or German)

C3. “To abide or remain in Christ,” a Task Taught by God to Those Who Attend to This Call

Every Christian who has sincerely tried to live a life of abiding continually in Christ has probably already faced also the enormous difficulty of establishing a discipline to fulfill this task, for when the aspect of “remaining in the Lord” is approached, this point also opens the range for several other words that carry similar connotations, such as “continuity,” “perseverance,” and “constancy.”

To believe in God in some specific or isolated situations is one standard or measure of confidence to be practiced, but persevering in faith or staying continually in a life of trust in the Lord is something that goes far beyond a sporadic practice of faith.

Seeking to “be in Christ” one time or another, when some needs arise, is something very different from remaining in Him continually and regardless of the circumstances.

As already seen in the previous chapter, a life of abiding in Christ or continually being in Him also reflects directly on the possibility of a person bearing fruits in accordance with the will of God, for **the Lord Jesus Christ stated that for a Christian to come to produce the fruits of the new life that is granted to him or her through the Gospel of God, or the so-called Christian life, one needs “to remain in the Lord,” that is, the Christian needs to persevere or have a continuity in the abiding in Christ.**

In the subject on the Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, it was explained in more detail about the abiding of a Christian in Christ also from the perspective of the branch that remains in the vine so that the branch receives the life of the vine to produce its fruits from this received life.

On the other hand, the absence of remaining in the Lord, as well as the inconstancy of this abiding in the Lord, may cause privations to the life of the Christian, for this type of attitude also causes that an individual, because of the negligence in one's positioning, does not reach the life of fruits and abundance to the extent that it is offered to him or her by the Lord.

If a Christian says that he or she wants to live according to the Lord's instruction, but does not remain in the Lord to be instructed by Him through fellowship, this Christian utters words and declarations of an intention but, in practice, does not act with attitudes or postures consistent with what has been said.

*James 1: 5 **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.***

*6 **But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.***

*7 **For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;***

*8 **he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.***

At first glance, looking at the text above of the book of James, one may come to understand that the original reason why people do not attain God's wisdom for their lives is doubt. However, if the text is observed in more detail, it may be seen that the

origin of the doubt is in the double-minded position and the inconstancy of a person regarding his or her paths.

Thus, **God restricts the granting of His wisdom to inconstant people, to people who do not persevere, or in other words, who do not continually abide in Christ.**

It makes no sense for a Christian to want the Christian life, the salvation of God, or to have Christ as Lord, but not to remain in the continuity of fellowship with the Lord to be instructed by Him in how to live the Christian life that one declares to have as a target.

In the eyes of God, inconstancy may even come to the point to be compared with stubbornness and rebellion.

Psalms 78: 8 ***And may not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not set its heart aright, And whose spirit was not faithful to God.***

In addition, inconstant people are also more easily moved and manipulated by their fellow men, they are more easily induced by others to error, as mentioned in the following text:

Ephesians 4: 13 ***Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;***
14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,
15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ.

Considering that Christ is the essence for a Christian to live the newness of life granted by the Gospel, and that every Christian needs the Lord in everything to live in conformity with God's will, and yet, considering that "Christ is all and in all," why then would a Christian cease to aim for continual fellowship with the Lord?

Responding, in part, to the previous question, we understand that it should be highlighted here that **precisely because "abiding in Christ" is "the means for a Christian to grow in the newness of life in the Lord," that this aspect also becomes such a unique challenge and that suffers such expressive resistance and opposition.**

Since it is "in Christ" that a Christian finds the newness of life presented by the Gospel, even though one is dwelling in the world that is in a context of darkness, it also becomes more evident the reason why the darkness strives so hard to try to break the fellowship of a Christian with the Lord Jesus Christ, an aspect seen in more detail in the materials on The Other Gospel and The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ.

Therefore, **the circumstances that seek to approach and attack a Christian to turn away his or her eyes from Christ are innumerable. On the other hand, however, they are no more powerful than the grace of the Lord and cannot dominate the one who remains in fellowship with the Lord of the heavenly grace.**

*John 16: 33 **These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.***

*Hebrews 12: 1 **Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before***

us,

2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

*Romans 6: 14 **For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.***

In this way, yet **another aspect that we would like to emphasize**, in this chapter, **is that the Lord does not call Christians to try to achieve the status of remaining in Christ according to their own understanding or merely carnal efforts.**

The Lord Jesus Christ does not call Christians so that they alone have to fulfill the task of remaining in Him. When God calls people to abide in Christ, the Lord also offers all the provision so that they can achieve this goal, as exemplified in the following text:

*1 John 2: 27 **But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.***

Once a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Only Begotten Son of God, one receives salvation through Him, but also, together with salvation, one receives the “Anointing of God” that teaches him or her in all things so that one can “abide in the Lord.”

And the anointing of God that instructs and assists a person to remain in Christ Jesus is expressed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the one who received Jesus Christ as Lord. Aspect this, also taught by the Lord Jesus before He was crucified, resurrected, and raised to heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Heavenly Father, as it is shown in the following words:

John 14: 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

John 16:13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

The Holy Spirit, “constantly remaining in the heart of the one who receives Christ as the Lord,” is the provision of God to help the Christian in how to live and walk in God's newness of life, but primarily to teach every Christian in how to “remain in Christ and His words!”

Thus, among many aspects concerning the reasons why many Christians have not remained in Christ, there is undoubtedly also the fact that many of them were not taught or do not know the principle that the Holy Spirit, the Anointing of God, abides in the heart of Christians precisely to instruct and to sustain them in love so that they may learn to abide in Christ and that they may be strengthened to continue to remain in Christ Jesus.

Romans 5: 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

To remain in Christ, and to persevere in abiding in Him, is something that every Christian needs to learn through the shared Anointing of the Lord, that is, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in the heart of a Christian to teach him or her in this objective.

The circumstances of life, which so closely approach people, are the most diverse and presented in varied ways, which generates a need for individual instruction of the Lord for each Christian so that each one knows how to persevere in remaining in Christ. A need that the Lord offers to supply through the Holy Spirit granted to the heart of everyone who believes and receives Christ in his or her life.

Every individual is a distinct person with a differentiated life, and the Holy Spirit thoroughly knows how to lead and teach each person how to remain in Christ in the most different moments of life so that one may be guided with continuity in all truth.

It is not through a “code of previously established disciplines” that a person might achieve continuity in the abiding in Christ. Life is more dynamic than this. One of the reasons why the search for a life of carnal disciplines can never reach the fulfillment of continual remaining in Christ in the most several moments of a Christian’s life.

The search for a “disciplines code” or a “list of beforehand defined works” is a search for a return to the works of the law or the so-called Old

Covenant, not a search for a life instructed and strengthened by the Spirit of God, as the following text also teaches:

- Galatians 3: 1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?*
- 2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*
- 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?*
- 4 Have you suffered so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vain?*
- 5 Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*
-

In His position as the Anointing of God in the Christians and Who is granted to remain with them always, the Holy Spirit knows all things and can teach every Christian, under all circumstances, not to take one's eyes off the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as He can teach every son of God to remain "in Christ," both in moments of peace and in moments of tribulation.

In many situations, it seems that the human being has a strong tendency to move away from God more in times of peace than in times of distress. However, this should not be so, and neither is this the will of God. God desires that His children continually may have peace with Him so that in times of peace and also in times of tribulation in the world they may remain in fellowship with Christ and grow in the faith and the love of the Lord.

- Romans 5: 1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*
- 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*
- 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;*
- 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.*
- 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

1 John 2: 20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.

The fellowship with the Holy Spirit that is made available to each person at the moment when one receives the condition of genuinely becoming a Christian or a son of God, by believing in Christ and receiving Him as Lord in the heart, is the provision and assurance of the teaching or instruction of how a Christian can abide or remain in Christ continually!

*1 John 4: 13 **By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.***

The same Holy Spirit who anointed the Lord Jesus Christ on Earth for His mission as the Unique Redeemer and taught and sustained Him to remain in the Heavenly Father is also the Spirit that is given by God to abide in every Christian to assist each one of them to remain in Christ, the Unique Lord and Shepherd of all those who have faith in Him!

*1 Corinthians 2: 12 **Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.***

*13 **These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.***

C4. The Work of “Abiding in Christ” Should Always Precede All Other Works of a Christian

If a Christian longs to advance in his or her Christian life in the period in which he or she is dwelling on the Earth, or to be fruitful in the Lord during this same period, one will need to practice with continuity the primary work that God instructs him or her to do, an aspect that is remembered once more below by the following texts:

John 6: 26 Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.

27 Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

*29 Jesus answered and said to them, "**This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.**"*

*John 15: 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. **He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.***

On the other hand, as has also been seen in previous chapters, many of disciples of the Lord Jesus found the discourse of being called for a personal and continual fellowship with Christ too hard, to the point that many turned away from following the Lord.

And once again, **considering that the “work of abiding in Christ” is the basis or foundation for other genuine Christian works, it is no wonder that human flesh, the world, and the devil are so opposed to this task.**

We believe that it is also fitting to emphasize here that **“abiding in Christ” is not the same as “doing nothing.” On the contrary, it is to be intense in the disposition, awakening, and attention to fellowship with Christ and the instruction of the Lord.**

*Ephesians 5: 14 **Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light."***

The “work of remaining in Christ” is the most essential work to be practiced by a Christian, and for it to be accomplished, it requires a different disposition of what many people around a Christian or in the world have.

The “work of abiding in Christ” is an active, challenging, and intense work that does not follow the flow of the majority, that does not run with the flow of the world, that does not take the course given to the world by the so-called prince of this present world.

The Scriptures teach that people who merely live their lives and are led by the thoughts of their carnal paths, the flow of the world, and finally by the course that is presented by the prince of the so-called present age are people who are like dead in their trespasses and sins, are people who are as if "asleep" by the general stream of facts and thoughts.

*Ephesians 2: 1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,
 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,
 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

Therefore, the “work of abiding in Christ” is very distinct from the will of the flesh, from the thoughts of the flow of the world, or from the ways of the natural man.

The “work of abiding in Christ” involves an active disposition to place oneself personally in front of Christ, even if it requires moments of separation from the general course of the world or requires moments of solitude to stand before God.

The “work of remaining in Christ” is non-transferable, it is individual, it is personal, a reason why it is so precious, but also, at the same time, a reason why it may become so challenging to be practiced.

In the subjects of the Series on the Gospel of God, it has been commented, on several occasions, that one of the most aggressive forms that the devil and the natural man try to oppose the personal fellowship of a Christian with Christ also includes the attempts to introduce the concept that seeks to disseminate the idea that it is possible for a person to rely on “mediators” in their relationship with God. These are attempts to induce people to think that the work of “abiding in Christ” could be facilitated or avoided by a supposed transference or “outsourcing” for others to do it for them.

Following still about the propositions mentioned in the last paragraph, that is, if mediators between a Christian and Christ would be accepted by God, and if we also return to the example of the branch in the vine already mentioned in this subject, the supposed mediation proposed would be as if a branch “A” would accept that a branch “B” would be in its place on the vine. And yet, with the expectation that the branch “A,” without a direct connection with the vine, would bear fruit by the connection of the branch “B” in the vine. Something that is simply absurd!

No mediator, and not even the collective or community life of Christians, can supply the personal need for a branch to abide or remain on the vine.

Christ did not say that Christians who remained attached to other Christians would bear much fruit, but that Christians who remained directly in Him, the Lord, would bear fruit according to the kind of fruit that comes from Christ Himself.

Christ did not say that the branch that remained attached to another branch would give the fruit according to the vine, but that the branch that

remained connected directly to the vine would also bear fruits according to the true vine.

*1 Timothy 2: 5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,
6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

Nevertheless, in addition to the propositions of the so-called “spiritual mediators,” there are still other ways that try to oppose the work of a Christian remaining in Christ.

And another aspect or agent, among the most active, that intensely seeks to oppose “the work of Christians abiding in Christ” is the proposition that aims to lead Christians to act “primarily” in “other good works.”

Carrying the banner that seeks to overestimate the performance of the so-called “good works for God” has always fought and continues to strongly resist “the work of a Christian to abide in Christ.”

The “work of remaining in Christ,” as a work of trust and surrender to God, as well as the practice of quieting oneself before the Lord, often requires even a slowdown of the rhythm of life that a person practices, for the Lord says that He is meek and humble and says that blessed are the meek, for these are they who will obtain the inheritance or the promises of the Lord.

*Matthew 11: 28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle (or meek) and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

Psalms 37: 11 But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Part of the “work of abiding in Christ” encompasses to present ourselves to the Lord Jesus to let Him relieve us of the overburdens. Part of the “work of remaining in Christ” includes to present ourselves to the Lord Jesus to let Him help us to quiet our soul and lead us into a position of readiness to, thus, listening to Him. An aspect which, in some situations, may even involve broader periods and extend to a multi-step process.

In fact, from the human or natural point of view, the task of quieting before God is not easy to be accomplished. However, as already mentioned, in granting the Holy Spirit to dwell with those who receive Christ as their Lord, God also grants the perfect provision for a person to be instructed and strengthened for the task in reference. The Holy Spirit is also given to the heart of the Christian to teach him or her to seek and maintain one's position of abiding in Christ even though there is a context of resistance to these practices.

People who think that they are very active and productive, according to their measurements on the human or natural scale, may also consider that inclining themselves to fellowship with the Lord or seeking the wisdom of God is something unproductive or merely contemplative. They may presume that this is compared to not producing or accomplishing anything. However, they deceive themselves, because, before God, the “work of abiding in Christ” is central and essential for all other works of an individual.

Once people respond to the call to remain in Christ, God shows them that it is the Lord Jesus who renews their strengths and that it is He who cooperates with them so that their other works may also be performed in conformity with the will of the Heavenly Father.

God, in the first place, does not call Christians to a fellowship with Him because they perform or fail to do works. God, first of all, invites Christians to fellowship with Christ because it was the Lord who created them, loves them, wants to be with them, and wants to instruct them because He is the Heavenly Father of each one of them.

God's call for fellowship with Him is a calling that takes precedence over the call to other works, and in no way should this order be inverted, for when this occurs, the Christian is no longer fit to do other works in the Lord.

There are several accounts of the Scriptures expressing how improper the attempts at inverting the value of the “work of abiding in Christ” with other works which may even appear to be works made to please the Lord are, and of which, in the sequel, we will address two examples, beginning with the following text from the book of Luke:

Luke 10: 38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.
*39 And she had a sister called **Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.***
*40 **But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."***
*41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "**Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.***
*42 **But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.**"*

In this first example presented above, we find initially the narrative of a woman named Marta, and who was agitated by the many services she thought she had to perform.

This woman, called Martha, was so overwhelmed by the restlessness and zeal for her services and works that she could no longer perceive the importance that there was in the “work of fellowship with the Christ who was in her house.”

However, in the face of this fact, the Lord Jesus, with much love and compassion, exposes light to Marta's attitudes and, primarily, to Marta's motivation that was leading her to such intense dedication to her duties.

And what Martha so intensely presented as an attitude or an action of devotion and dedication to Christ, did not impress the Lord Jesus, for the root that gave rise to the works she performed was not appropriate.

The root that drove Martha to perform so many duties was restlessness and concern for many things.

Martha directed her restlessness and preoccupations toward performing tasks, works, and duties instead of trusting the Lord when He was waiting for her to practice fellowship with Him in the first place.

To work can be very good and productive, and God wants people to work, just as He instructs them to do it in the proper time. Doing good works can be very beneficial, and God wants people to do good works. We were created to do “the good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Nevertheless, the dedication to the performance of works should not occur, in the first place, because of restlessness, anxiety, or worries, but it should arise from the life granted by God, from the peace in the Lord, from the fellowship with Christ, and from the instruction of the Spirit of the Lord.

Performing many duties or many works, however vast their diversity or quantity, cannot compensate for the lack of faith in God and the fact that a person does not settle down to remain in Christ, nor can it counterbalance the lack of confidence that God will care well for those who abide in Christ.

Involvement with “many duties, works, or tasks” cannot replace fellowship with the Lord Jesus and the hearing and practicing of the teachings given personally by God to a Christian through the “work of abiding in Christ.”

It is even possible for a person to have remarkable “zeal” for things called as being of God, but if this zeal lacks the understanding that comes from the Lord, it does not lead individuals to perform works in conformity with the will of the Heavenly Father. (According to Romans 10: 1 to 3).

On the other hand, Mary, the other woman quoted in the text of Luke presented above, chose, unlike her sister Martha, the good part, the part that would never be taken away from her, to the point of the Lord saying to Martha:

*Luke 10: 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.
42 **But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.**"*

What, then, is the work that the Lord wants each Christian to do before other works? Or which is the work that should always take precedence over the other works of a Christian?

God first calls every Christian to make oneself available to the Lord Jesus to be taught and strengthened by Christ, and to learn also that a Christian, “without Christ,” cannot do any work according to the Heavenly Father's will.

God calls every Christian to first abide in Christ, for it is through remaining in Christ that the Lord's teaching, instruction, and strengthening for the other works of the children of God are granted to them. A matter in which there are no other practices, tactics, or means that might supply what can only be reached through fellowship with the Eternal Lord.

Without the fellowship with the source of the newness of life, a person also deprives oneself of continually receiving this life, which in no way can be accessed by bargaining or manipulations that people seek to follow or practice as an attempt to use them as an excuse for their negligence regarding the work of abiding in the Lord.

The Lord Jesus Christ calls people to Him also saying, "learn from Me." And this is what Mary did, just as it was also this part that the Lord Jesus wanted Martha to understand. The Lord Jesus wanted Martha to know that He is all she needed before all other people or things, that He is the vine that provides everything the branch needs to present the other fruits at the proper time.

Isaiah 30: 15 For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength. But you would not."

The Lord Jesus Christ is sovereign over all things a Christian needs to accomplish the works in one's life, but first Christ wants to relieve a person of the weariness of the many works and the oppression of the overloads that have been put on him or her. And this, so that the person may know the Heavenly Father, who in Christ is revealed, so that one may also know the eternal life and the will that the Heavenly Father has for him or her.

Matthew 11: 27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

Following, as a second example previously mentioned, we will seek to approach another text that presents the aspect of the precedence of abiding in Christ regarding other works, which, in a sense, is perhaps even more comprehensive than the narrative about Martha and Mary, as follows:

Revelation 2: 1 To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, "These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

- 2 I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;*
- 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary.*

- 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.*
- 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place; unless you repent.*
- 6 But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.*
- 7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”*
-

In the book of Revelation, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, for the purposes of teaching and admonishing, expressed a severe rebuke about the events which occurred among Christians in Ephesus, warning that those events represented a sharp deviation from the essential and primary purpose of the Christian life to which people are called by God.

In this last text, we can learn that **works and zeal can never be presented as a compensation for the abandonment of the “first love.”**

Now, what, then, is or ought to be the “first love” of a Christian?

The “first love” of a Christian can only be the HEAVENLY FATHER and the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Alpha and Omega, the firstfruits of God to those who believe in Him, the reason why a Christian also receives the name “Christian.”

God has established that Christ is all in all, as we have seen previously, and Christ is all in all from eternity to eternity.

Revelation 1: 17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.”

So, the expression “first love” is not referring to the feeling that a person experienced the first time that one met someone he or she came to love, it is not the initial feeling in the relationship with someone else, but it is who or what is, or should be, in the first place in the heart of an individual.

The expression “first love” refers to who or what has, or should have, the primacy of love in one's life.

The words “first love” refer to who or what is, or should be, positioned in the first place or before everyone and everything in a person's life.

John 1: 15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’”

Colossians 1: 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

*19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,
20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.*

In this way, the “**primacy**” of the love of everyone who truly became a Christian should always be the Lord Jesus Christ. Or still, someone who calls oneself a Christian should not have any other person or anything else in higher esteem than the Lord Jesus Christ, even much more in the subject of love.

Let us note, however, once again, that the people of the Church in Ephesus, mentioned by the Lord, abandoned “the first love” even though they were intensely involved with “Christian works.” They forsake the “work of abiding in Christ” in the midst of their intense dedication to the works they wanted to accomplish for God or in the name of God.

And if a person persists in neglecting the “first love,” the recognition of the primacy of Christ, or the “work of abiding in Christ,” that is, if a person who has distanced oneself from the “first love” does not repent of one’s posture and does not return to the “first love,” he or she places oneself in a position of high risk and with the possibility of terrible consequences, according to the words of the Lord Jesus exposed once more below:

Revelation 2: 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

From the Scriptures and dictionaries of ancient history, we may know that the word “lampstand” often refers to an instrument or a small jar to provide light, or rather, to house the oil to produce light.

Thus, if it reaches the point where the “lampstand is removed from a person,” this implies that the person no longer has the aspect necessary or vital to house the light and, consequently, no longer has the light for his or her living and walking, returning to the stage of walking in darkness as people who do not know Christ.

Dedication to works in general, and even to some Christian works, but to the detriment of the “first love,” to the detriment of “the work of abiding in Christ,” is like putting oneself on the path that, if there is no repentance, leads to darkness and obscurity because of the rejection of the fellowship with the eternal light of the Lord.

Martha’s many tasks, the many Christian works performed by Christians in Ephesus, or the zeal without proper fellowship with the first love or without the precedence of abiding in Christ may become one of the main reasons for great darkness in the life of

an individual, and may even occur in the life of those who have previously attended to the call to believe in Christ, but who no longer keep the Lord in their life in the place that is due to Him.

Galatians 5: 6 **For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.**

- 1 Corinthians 13: 1* **Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.**
2 **And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.**
3 **And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.**

On the other hand, **if the faithfulness to the first love or the practice of abiding in Christ is found in the Christian, the result promised by the Lord Jesus Christ in the book of Revelation is the same result that comes from the eating and drinking of the Lord also described in the first book of John, already seen previously.**

Revelation 2: 7 **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.**

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Tree of Life found in the paradise of God.

So, everyone who abides in the first love, whoever perseveres in remaining in Christ, will be nourished by Christ and will have the newness of life in oneself, will have the life of Christ flowing in him or her to live and to walk in the Lord.

And finally, in the text of Revelation 2 used as the second example, we can still see once again that **He who teaches, exhorts, admonishes, and corrects a Christian to remain in Christ is the Holy Spirit, the Anointing of the Lord, which is in every Christian and that speaks to each one of those who are part of the Body or the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

It is also important to note here that the text of Revelation, in declaring “he who has an ear” and “to him who overcomes,” is referring to individuals, to people with an individual capacity for decision and positioning.

The “work of abiding in Christ,” therefore, is a personal decision, just as it is the experience of listening to the Holy Spirit. Thus, acting according to the Lord's instructions so that the first love does not become neglected is also a personal positioning.

Who, then, has an ear to hear the Holy Spirit?

Who has an ear to give preference to the voice of the Anointing of the Lord, who is in the heart of every Christian, instead of only paying attention to the many external voices that press for works and tasks at the cost of abandoning the fellowship with Christ?

To hear the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit, calling for the work of abiding in the first love, is incomparably better than just listening to the appeals that so many make for the performance of external works, even if denominated Christian works, for the Holy Spirit is the one who teaches a Christian to put first the true and prior work of “abiding in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 8: 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

17 and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Additionally, we highlight here once again that resistance against a person's fellowship with Christ, so that one does not actually receive the Lord's teaching, may become intense and very close. In Maria's case, this opposition came from her sister Marta, who saw herself as more productive than Maria. Nowadays, several Christians, although they even read a lot about the importance of personal fellowship with God or hear preaching about the necessity of the relationship with God, also find in daily practice, like Martha, a considerable difficulty to rest in the Lord, to be taught by God, or to be attentive to the direction of Christ during the activities of their lives.

Therefore, in the midst of the many voices in the world that propagate words similar to those uttered by Marta, which insistently press for the performance of works, we would like to emphasize also the following words:

Acts 5: 29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Faced with the difficulties of establishing personal fellowship with Christ or not knowing how to do it, we would like to remind once more the texts below:

Matthew 11: 28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

John 16: 13 ... the Spirit of truth, ... He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Revelation 2: 7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

Furthermore, any Christian who remains in Christ is the Church of God and has in one's heart the Holy Spirit, whose intent is to guide a Christian to eat of the tree of life or to drink and to eat of Christ. It is to lead to the truth and in all truth, which is Christ and to be in Him, that God grants the Holy Spirit to dwell in the heart of those who trust in Him.

And after a Christian eats from the Tree of life, after an individual has the life from God in oneself by remaining in Christ, the true and eternal vine, Christ also instructs and strengthens this Christian to act in harmony with the heavenly will in the other areas and works of his or her life.

John 6: 57 As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me.

1 Corinthians 15: 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

*John 8: 12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying:
"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."*

*1 John 5: 20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ.
This is the true God and eternal life.*

Faith in Christ and the "work of abiding in Him" are the way to grow in the newness of life and productive condition in God. And this is the work that the Lord asks to be practiced by each Christian in a continual and priority way, so that from this first work one may perform the other works in the Lord and according to His instruction and strength.

From remaining in Christ, from the continual and increasing fellowship with Him, the Lord manifests the other instructions, guidelines, and strength for a Christian to live and walk according to the will of God.

By abiding in Christ, the Lord offers us the true freedom to walk under His light and bear fruits that glorify God, because in this way the fruits that the Christian comes to produce are the very expression of the life of Christ in him or her.

C5. The Central Purpose of the Abiding of a Christian in Christ

The first and great goal for which God calls every Christian to abide in Christ or the primary and special fruit that results from being in Christ, and which God wants to grant to a Christian, is that one may come to know his or her Lord more, for the essence of eternal life is to know the Lord through a living and continual fellowship with Him.

Philippians 3: 7 till 10(a)

But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him.

The knowledge of God and the Lord Jesus Christ brings outstanding effects to those who draw near to God, because for those who draw near to God, God also draws closer to them.

*James 4: 8 **Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.** Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

When a person comes to God to know the truth about the Lord and His ways, the Lord also promises to manifest Himself to the one who approaches Him.

In turn, **the knowledge of the Lord is vital so that every Christian may know and receive what God wants to share with him or her from whom the Lord is, as well as from what is contained in God and what the Lord reveals to His children through the knowledge of His glory.**

It was because of his growth in knowing Christ, and through Christ in knowing the Heavenly Father, that Paul could assert his confidence and his unwavering faith in the Lord.

*2 Timothy 1: 12 **For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.***

Similarly, the prophet Hosea also declares the vital relevance of the continual search to know God and what comes from the growth of knowing more the Lord:

Hosea 6: 3 Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, Like the latter and former rain to the earth.

After salvation, it is from knowing Christ, the Only Begotten Son of the Heavenly Father, and from knowing God, that a person comes to receive the multiplication of God's grace and peace in one's life, as well as the other aspects that are necessary for a Christian life in conformity with the will of the Lord, as it is also objectively taught in the following text:

2 Peter 1: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,
3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,
4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.
5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,
6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,
7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.
8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.
10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;
11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

According to the text of the apostle Peter exposed above, when a person, with the help of the Holy Spirit, diligently and with perseverance applies oneself to know God more through fellowship with the Lord or when one draws near to God, and God draws near to him or her, this person, among other beneficial aspects, receives:

- ⇒ 1) The multiplication of the Lord's grace and peace in one's life;
- ⇒ 2) The divine power of God in all that concerns life and godliness;
- ⇒ 3) Access to the precious and magnificent promises of the Lord to, through them, become a partaker of the divine nature;
- ⇒ 4) Access to the possibility of adding to faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, true piety, brotherly love, and love of the Heavenly Father, aspects that are also the expression of what the Scriptures call as the "Fruit of the Spirit;"
- ⇒ 5) Access to the possibility of not ceasing to know Christ and access to the opportunity of not being idle in the growth of the knowledge of the Lord Jesus;

- ⇒ 6) Understanding and constant remembrance of the cleansing of sins provided by Christ Jesus on the cross of Calvary;
- ⇒ 7) Understanding of the Lord's will in order not to incur the subordination to a life of stumbling or blindness in the journey in the present world;
- ⇒ 8) The supply of an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the call of God for a Christian to “abide in Christ” is for the central purpose that one should know more and more Christ, the Heavenly Father, the Holy Spirit, and the kingdom of God so that one may also live and walk in God, in Christ, and be part of the Heavenly Kingdom. And yet, to such an extent that the virtues of God, also presented as the fruit of the Holy Spirit or the Heavenly Kingdom, may even become part of the life of the one who attends to the Lord's call to know Him in a continuous and growing way.

When a person remains in Christ, God also offers to grant to the heart of this individual the virtues of the Heavenly Kingdom that one needs to have the confidence in the Lord strengthened and to act accordingly to the will of the Heavenly Father.

Together with knowing God, a Christian also receives from the Lord the understanding of the Heavenly Kingdom, the will of God, and His instructions in such a way that the Lord's commandments are not painful to him or her.

The Christian who knows God comes to have a heart inclined to spontaneously keep the commandments of the Lord, for to know God is the way by which the Lord prepares the Christian to advance to the assurance of hope so that one may also be prepared to follow or practice God's instructions, not the other way around.

*1 John 2: 3 **Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.***

By knowing the Lord, God also enlightens the eyes of the Christian's understanding.

In abiding in Christ, the light of the lampstand shines and grants the Christian an understanding of the will of God so that the Christian, enlightened by God, may also be strengthened to do or practice what has been instructed to him or her by the Lord.

*Romans 7: 25 **I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind (or with understanding) I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. (AV)***

Through the knowledge of God and the understanding of His will, the Christian takes pleasure in following the judgments (directions) of God on his or her life because, by knowing God, the Christian becomes more aware of who is his or her source of eternal life, as well as becomes more aware of the newness of life that has been deposited in him or her.

*1 John 5: 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.
4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith.*

We understand that it is propitious to highlight here again the aspect mentioned in these last paragraphs and texts, for **a Christian who knows God and carries the love of God in the heart has, as a result, or fruit, pleasure in the commandments or instructions of God for his or her life.**

Nevertheless, when a Christian does not abide in Christ and does not know his or her Lord, one is more exposed to be reluctant to understand and follow the Lord's instructions, and yet, one may also incur the wrong thought that the fulfillment of the commandments will lead him or her to know God and His love, but the process is the opposite.

The one who knows God, -> keeps the commandments that the Lord instructs him or her to follow, and it is not the one who tries to keep the commandments of some written law to know God who will come to know God.

When the expression “keeping the commandments of God” is used in the context of the New Covenant in Christ, it is necessary to understand that this has nothing to do with keeping the Law of Moses or the commandments of the Law of Moses, a topic which was widely exposed in the subjects on the Gospel of God.

The “work of abiding in Christ” prepares a Christian to receive “willingly” or in a “good spirit” precisely the instructions that are in conformity with the New Covenant in Christ Jesus and with the eternal will of the Heavenly Father.

When one abides in Christ, the Lord operates in the life of this Christian the “will of the Heavenly Father” as well as strengthens him or her to “accomplish” this will.

On the other hand, **if a Christian encounters much difficulty or high reluctance to follow the Lord's instructions, one of the main reasons for this difficulty may be precisely the lack of knowledge of the Lord caused by the lack of remaining in Christ or by the negligence of the fellowship with Him.**

Through remaining in Christ, a person is prepared to understand the will of God and to align his or her will with the will of God, to the point of also being willing to allow God to guide and strengthen him or her for the accomplishment of the Lord's will.

When the Christian fulfills the call to “remain in Christ,” the Lord operates in him or her the disposition toward the heavenly will, and if there is continuity in this abiding, God also operates everything that is necessary for this Christian to accomplish, in the Lord, the heavenly will which has already been deposited in him or her.

Philippians 2: 13 **For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**

The “work of abiding in Christ” is not an inexpressive or unproductive work. On the contrary, it is a work of fellowship with the Lord which has many significant and practical effects on those, for those, and through those who live a life of remaining in Christ.

The “work of abiding in Christ” is a work by which a person allows God to act in him or her to the most profound or most intimate places of his or her life, and by which the Lord also leads those who believe in Him to do works in conformity with the heavenly will and which a person, only in one's natural condition, would never be able to attain or practice.

When a Christian remains in Christ, Christ works intensely in and through one's life far beyond what even this Christian may think or imagine in his or her natural understanding.

When a Christian abides in Christ, he or she allows the Lord to remove from one's heart what needs to be removed and establish what needs to be set for this Christian to be in line with the perfect, good, and pleasing will of God.

The Christian who abides in Christ has as a consequence the hope strengthened in the Lord, the faith firmly established in the unshakable and eternal foundation, and the work of God's love perfected in the most diverse areas of his or her life.

Finally, in this chapter, we would like to mention that **yet another way of speaking about “abiding in Christ” is to approach this theme more specifically by the aspects of “being in Christ,” “living in Christ,” and “walking in Christ.”** And this, because the Scriptures show us that in all and always the Lord wants us to be in Him so that in everything and every moment our life may be manifested in Him and through Him.

When a Christian “lives in Christ,” one allows the Lord to produce in him or her the will of the Heavenly Father. And when a Christian is willing to also “walk in Christ,” one allows the Lord to produce in him or her the fulfillment of the will that the Heavenly Father has already worked out in one's heart.

Considering, however, that a broader description about abiding in Christ to “live and walk in Christ” is already described in the subject on The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, and also in the subjects of the series Walking in Newness of Life, we intend not to extend this aspect at this point, since the purpose here is to keep in focus how indispensable it is for a Christian to practice abiding in Christ with continuity or primacy so that the benefits that come from it may also be manifested effectively in the life of this Christian.

The benefits that come from fellowship with Christ are so many that it would be impossible to list and describe them all, but more important than having a list about them is that a Christian passes to experience them personally by the Lord, and to the extent and at the time that Lord understands to be more appropriate to reveal each of them to the person who abides in Him.

On God's part, everything has already become available to us in Christ. However, the Heavenly Father has also determined that the propitious access to all that we need for the newness of life in the present time and eternity is given to us in Christ and through the living fellowship with Him.

*Romans 8: 32 **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?***

The possibility of abiding in Christ is a result of the righteousness, the grace, and the love of God for us. However, the practice of remaining in the Lord is an act to be practiced by each Christian in reciprocity to the love already granted to him or her in Christ Jesus.

*1 John 4: 16 **And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.***

C6. Actions that Bear Witness of the "Work of Abiding in Christ"

The Lord Jesus Christ affirms that those who remain in Him will also bear fruit resulting from this abiding even in the time they are living on the Earth, making that the work of fellowship with Christ also becomes witnessed by practical actions in the daily life of a Christian.

Ant, in turn, the practical actions that result from remaining in Christ may serve as one of the parameters to see whether a Christian is indeed abiding in Christ. These actions allow a Christian to check if he or she is truly remaining in Christ or not.

Nevertheless, it is very relevant to recognize these fruits or results according to what the Scriptures teach us as being the result of the abiding in Christ, and not according to what people who do not abide in Christ propose or want to define as fruits.

There are many people, like Martha exemplified in the previous chapters, who create their own concepts of what they think to be works or services to the Lord, without actually performing the principal and essential work of remaining in Christ. And so, the definitions of these people on what are "Christian works" more cooperate to distance people from Christ than to bring them closer to the Lord. What they propose may become hard and heavy burdens that counteract what the Lord calls people to do in the first place.

Many people in the World perform many works said to be made to God, but which are works that do not receive recognition from the Lord because they do not heed what the Lord declares to be the work that should precede all the other works. Thus, they practice these many works in vain for not practicing the work of abiding in Christ first.

*Mark 7: 7 **And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.***

*Mark 7: 6 **He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.'"***

Therefore, following, we will look at some actions that result from remaining in Christ according to what the Lord declares as results related to the work of abiding in Him.

As a first point, then, we can see that the "work of abiding in Christ" causes Christ and His life to become the model of life for the one who has fellowship with Him, as follows:

*1 John 2: 6 **He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.***

As a child of light and exposed to the light of the Lord, the Christian also begins to understand his or her call to walk as a child of light.

Furthermore, it can be observed in the Scriptures that the “work of abiding in Christ” also cooperates in the strengthening of the Christian regarding the confession of the Lordship of Christ in one's personal life. The Christian starts to become more confident and bolder in confessing and assuming the belief in the Lord Jesus as the One who is the Savior and the Son of the Only living and eternal God.

*Romans 10: 8 **But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach).***

*1 John 4: 15 **Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.***

And, in turn, still through the strengthened confession, a Christian who remains in the Lord also overcomes Satan and his various oppositions, as shown below:

*Revelation 12: 10 **Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.***

*11 **And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”***

The “work of remaining in Christ” also results in love for fellow believers who similarly abide in Christ Jesus. That is, the “work of remaining in Christ” is not a work that moves a Christian away from other Christians or generates contempt for the fellow believers of the same faith in the Lord. On the contrary, abiding in Christ builds and strengthens the love of Christians for the Lord as their first love, and then also overflows with love for the members of the family of faith in Christ.

*1 John 4: 12 **No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.***

*1 John 2: 10 **He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.***

In a similar way to the last-mentioned aspect, abiding in Christ also generates, in the Christian, the disposition to remain in the word of God and to keep the instructions conferred by God to him or her, as can be seen in the text below and which was already commented in the previous chapter.

1 John 3: 24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Yet another enormous benefit that results from a life of remaining in Christ is the interruption of the constancy of a life inclined to sin. In Christ, the Lord teaches and helps a Christian how to interrupt the dominion of sin in his or her life. And if this does not occur, this person will need to review if one is, in fact, seeking fellowship with the Lord and if one has indeed remained in Christ, and Christ in him or her.

1 John 2: 1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

Romans 6: 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.

13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

16 Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

17 But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves (servants) of righteousness.

The “work of abiding in Christ” brings us a benefit of increasing fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, to the point of also guiding us to become closer and more attached to the Lord and, on the other hand, more and more positioned contrary to sin and the evil deeds and iniquities derived from it.

If a Christian is continually in fellowship with Christ, if one exposes his or her life to the Lord frequently, this Christian also shows his or her disposition to be prepared by God to receive a more intense visitation from Christ and without being ashamed of the

way Christ chooses to manifest Himself. By becoming better acquainted with the Lord, and having the confidence strengthened in Him, the Christian also realizes that the form of Christ manifesting Himself is always adequate, righteous, and worthy of exaltation.

1 John 2: 28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

And finally, as described in more detail in the subject on The Gospel of the Glory of God and the Glory of Christ, the most sublime result that a Christian may reach by remaining in Christ, beyond receiving the possession of eternal salvation forever, is to receive the transformation that leads him or her to become into the same image of Him in whom the newness of life can be found incessantly and for all eternity.

2 Corinthians 3: 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

C7. Continuity and Perseverance in Christ Consolidate the Salvation and the Life in Christ of a Christian

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the “work of abiding in Christ” is related to a life of continuity and perseverance in Christ, as well as it is related to remaining in Him who should always be the first love of every Christian.

On the one hand, these actions mentioned above are actions that a person cannot fulfill by oneself. However, every Christian can ask the Lord to guide and sustain him or her so that he or she can practice them.

2 Thessalonians 3: 3 **But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.**
4 **And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.**
5 **Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.**

Furthermore, **the Lord saved us to be in Him and to abide in Him to the end, that is, God did not save us for a passing or temporary experience, but, indeed, for eternal life.**

The Lord did not save us from momentary difficulties or just from some dangerous situations, but the Lord saved us for a new life in which we are called to persevere, with His help, until the complete redemption.

Luke 21: 19 **By your patience (perseverance) possess your souls.**

Hebrews 10: 36 **For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.**

1 John 2: 25 **And this is the promise that He has promised us, eternal life.**

Hebrews 10: 37 **“For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.**
38 **Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.”**
39 **But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.**

If a person longs for the “first love” and the “work of abiding in Christ,” and if a Christian listens to the voice of the Holy Spirit that leads him or her in a practical way

to achieve this goal, this same “work of perseverance” also cooperates so that the Lord will protect the Christian in the most challenging hours of his or her life in the world.

If a Christian receives with love the instruction of the Lord that one should always abide in Christ, the Lord Himself is in charge of protecting or preserving the one who hides in Him in the face of the tribulations that come or are yet to come upon the world.

Revelation 3: 10 **Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.**

James 5: 11 **Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord; that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.**

Moreover, perseverance in the “work of abiding in Christ” is a practical expression of the worth that a person confers to the salvation that the Lord has provided for him or her.

Psalms 91: 14 **Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name.**

1 Timothy 6: 11 **But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.**

2 Timothy 2: 11 **This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him.**

12 **If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.**

13 **If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.**

Philippians 4: 1 **Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.**

And here, once again, we point out that God Himself, through the Holy Spirit, is willing to lead a Christian to a practical life that teaches him or her to achieve this perseverance of remaining in Christ. And even when a Christian finds oneself in the midst of struggles, oppositions, or trials, the Lord assists him or her in everything so that one may attain a condition of becoming mature and perfected by abiding in Christ.

James 1: 2 **My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,**

- 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience
(perseverance).**
**4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and
complete, lacking nothing.**

- Romans 5: 1* **Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace
with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**
**3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that
tribulation produces perseverance;**
4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope.
**5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been
poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**

Remaining in Christ and in the teachings the Lord gives to those who abide in Him is the way to “knowing the freedom that truly sets free,” which only comes from the Lord and is granted by Him to lead people to a path of growing and everlasting blessedness.

- John 8: 31* **Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in
My word, you are My disciples indeed.**
32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

- James 1: 25* **But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and
continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work,
this one will be blessed in what he does.**

The Lord does not compel an individual to remain in Him. The Lord invites people to abide in Him. But without this “work of love and abiding in Christ,” no other human work can keep the “lamp” of truth and freedom alight in the heart of an individual. A reason why, it is also in Christ that a Christian is called to seek shelter to remain firm in the newness of life received from the Lord.

- Luke 12: 35* **“Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning;
36 and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when
he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks
they may open to him immediately.”**

- Psalms 139: 23* **Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and
know my anxieties;**
**24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way
everlasting.**

*Psalms 57: 1 **Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, Until these calamities have passed by.***

*Psalms 5: 11 **But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You.***

*Psalms 9: 10 **And those who know Your name will put their trust in You; For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.***

On the one hand, if a Christian begins to depart from remaining in Christ or ceases to nourish fellowship with the Lord, Christ does not impute to him or her the obligation of being in Him, for as abiding in the Lord is made through fellowship, it also depends on both parties expressing the willingness to practice it voluntarily or by free choice.

On the other hand, if a person accepts the invitation of Christ to fellowship, presented by the Holy Spirit, the Lord beforehand has been in a readiness position or willing to be with this person to also teach and help how he or she can abide continually in the Lord.

*Revelation 3: 20 **Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.***

When people receive Christ as the Lord of their lives and choose to abide in Him, they choose to remain in Him who is fully able to root and build them up in Him, thereby confirming them in their faith in God for all eternity.

Therefore, **God calls all people to be in Christ because this is the best place of all existence and because in Christ also dwells all the fullness and the virtues of God.**

*Colossians 2: 6 **As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,***
*7 **rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.***
*8 **Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.***
*9 **For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.***

Finally, concluding this present subject, we would like to emphasize that the “work of abiding in Christ” is so essential and significant to a Christian that this point was also constituted as the core, central, or more objectified aspect in the dedicated work of Paul, an apostle of Christ, on behalf of people through the Gospel of the Lord. Aspect this, expressly stated by Paul through the letter to the Christians of Colossians, as follows:

Colossians 1: 24 **I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,**

26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

3: 1 For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,

2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,

3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4 Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words.

God calls every Christian to abide in Christ because the Heavenly Father has appointed that in Christ and through Christ everything a Christian needs also becomes available to him or her.

God calls us to abide in Christ because by remaining in Christ, we can also remain in the Heavenly Father to the point where the Lord is our sufficiency in everything.

So, when God invites people to receive Christ in the heart, so that they may also abide in Christ, the Lord does not only offer us the best things that He has, but He offers Himself to us so that He may be in us and that we may be in Him forever.

1 John 4: 16 **And we have known and believed the love that God has for us.**

God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

1 John 5: 20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Bibliography

Note on Biblical Texts referenced:

- 1) The biblical texts without explicit indications of reference were drawn from NKJV Bible, as indicated below.
- 2) Highlights in the biblical texts, such as underline, bold, or similar were added by the author of this study.

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