

UNIT 3

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ABIDE

Christ IN You

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me.

—John 15:4

ABIDE

Christ IN You

YOU CAN'T SUCCEED

You will never succeed at living the Christian life on your own.

The sad part about this is not that the statement is true; the sad part is that many Christians never realize it. It is possible to live our entire lives with this thought in the back of our minds: “If only *I try hard enough*. Someday I will get it.” Thus, every failure is met with this thought: “Must be I didn’t try hard enough.” Instead of drawing from the life of Christ for power to live, we place our confidence in our own abilities.

“Someday I will have victory over my failures.”

“If I try hard enough, I will stop having these wrong thoughts.”

“If I develop enough discipline, I can overcome this habit.”

“If I work really hard, I’ll finally be consistent in this area.”

You walk away from sermons and retreats with an ever growing checklist—do this, get better at that, work on this, etc. You may even have success for a while, but then, the battle returns. Failure again. And you say to yourself again, “I must try harder.” But the reality is that you cannot live the Christian life. At best, you will live a constant cycle of trying and failing, and trying harder and failing.

CHRIST IN ME SUCCEEDS

The underlying reason for our repeated failure is the belief that “if I try hard enough, I won’t fail.” The problem is that we are looking to ourselves to live the Christian life. You see, deep down we have an inner drive to make life work on our own. Our flesh doesn’t want to be dependent on anything or anyone else.

Think through the following question: *In your flesh, who are **you** without Christ?*

The correct answer is obviously, you are nothing.

Now, answer this question: *As Christ begins to work His character into your life and you begin to see victories, who are **you** without Christ?*

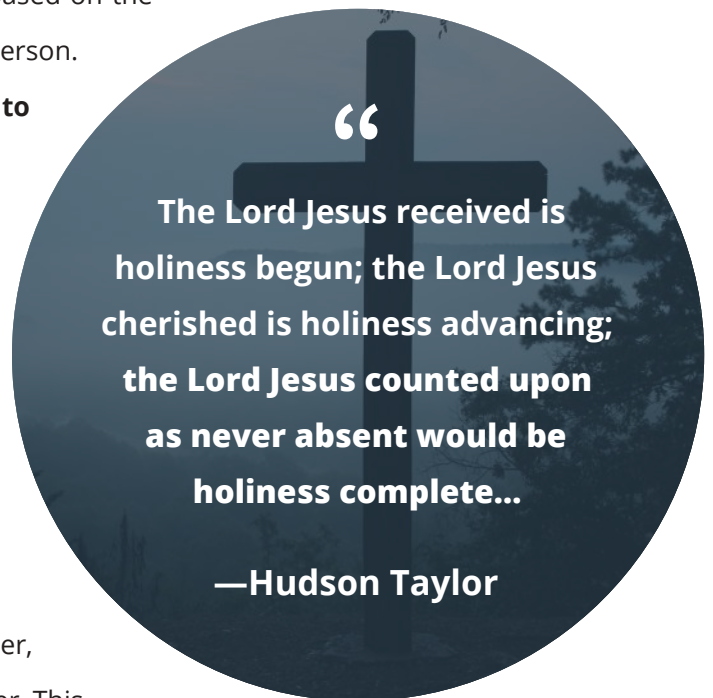
The answer is still the same, you are nothing.

Struggle comes because deep down we believe we can do it on our own. Without realizing it, we place our confidence in our ability to perform. With this mindset comes a drive to make our flesh better. We must realize that this attempt is futile—we can never make ourselves good enough! The drive to make ourselves better is based on the false belief that Jesus died to make you a better person.

Take time to let this sink in: **Jesus didn't die to make you a better person.** Jesus didn't die to improve your flesh.

Because of your sin, you were condemned to die. And when Jesus died, you died with Him. When He was raised from the dead, it wasn't so that you could live; it was so He could live through you. You are nothing; it is the life of Christ in you that is something. And it's not you who improves and gets better; but rather, the manifestation of Christ in you becomes greater. This is exactly what Galatians 2:20 is talking about: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Are **you** trying to live the Christian life? Stop. It is futile to try to improve your flesh—it can never be good enough (see Romans 7:18). You need another life to live by—you need the Son of God living His life through you. He can live the Christian life; you can't!



Now you might ask: “But God asks so much of me as a Christian! How will I ever meet those demands if I don’t try?” God’s confidence is not in your ability. His confidence is in His Son, and His Son lives inside you! Amazing, isn’t it?

BUT . . . I STILL HAVE PROBLEMS

You might be thinking, Christ living in me is a cool truth, but what about my problems? And I still have things I’m struggling with. Just knowing this truth doesn’t seem to fix me.


How does lasting change happen in our lives? We would love an “instant fix.” We would love God to snap His fingers and make us permanently free from temptation and sin. But God has a method that He has chosen whereby He works the life of His Son in us. That method is called *process*. It is a growth process; God chooses to transform us little by little into the image of Jesus. It is a gradual transformation that requires walking daily with Him. We are impatient and want immediate results, but *process* keeps us dependent on God. We will never come to the place where we don’t need Him.

The key to this process is found in several passages of Scripture. Take a look at the following verses:

“Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind . . .” —Romans 12:2

“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.” —Ephesians 4:23

The renewing of our mind occurs as we let the Word of God replace our natural, fleshly thoughts. We do this by meditating on Scripture. As God’s Word begins to replace our thoughts, God transforms us into the image of Jesus Christ!



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YOUR BELIEF SYSTEM

Another question you might ask is, How does meditating on Scripture change me?



There is always “rhyme and reason” behind your actions—you have something called a *belief system*. Your belief system dictates what you do. Mental agreement is different than your belief system. A person can hear thousands of sermons and mentally agree with them, but if his belief system remains untouched, there will be no lasting change in his life. This is why you can have repeated failure in your life even after hearing all the right truths. You will always act out your belief system.

*Your actions
come from your belief
system; **your belief
system is formed by
your thoughts.***

Basically, your belief system is what you hold to be true. Where did this belief system come from? Your belief system is formed by what you think about. It is the result of what you meditate on. Do you see the incredible power of your thought life! See the sequence that occurs: **your actions come from your belief system; your belief system is formed by your thoughts.** This is why meditating on Scripture is so powerful!

As you meditate on God's Word, you open the doors for fellowship and conversation with Him to take place. As you humbly receive His Word, His thoughts are able to enter in and change your mind—this is repentance! To repent is to change your mind and agree with God. Out of that repentance, your belief system is transformed. And this will, in turn, affect your actions.

As you “keep” God's Word—meditating on it, treasuring it, keeping it before your eyes, and obeying it—you are actually planting something inside you that is living and powerful (see Hebrews 4:12). The reason meditation on Scripture is so powerful is because the Word of God

is Jesus (see John 1:1). As you meditate on the Word of God, the life of Jesus replaces the life of self within. He gets inside you and changes you from the inside out.

IT'S ABOUT ABIDING

John 15 talks about abiding. The branch cannot live on its own; it must stay connected to the vine and have the life sap from the vine continually flowing in order to live. It must abide. It is the same in our relationship with Christ. We cannot live apart from His life within us. The “life sap” of the Word of God must continually be flowing into our lives through meditation on Scripture. We must abide. For the rest of our lives, God will be growing us into the image of His Son. The growth will never stop. We will never reach a place where we won't need to be connected to the vine.

Remember, God's confidence is not in your ability to live the Christian life. His confidence is in the life of His Son. The more you meditate on the Word—the more you abide, the more you are letting Christ live inside you!



“

... it is impossible for a man to manufacture what God alone can produce. **But he who truly abides in Christ, seeking to be energized by His Spirit, 'produces much fruit' (John 15:5).**

—D.A. Carson

Unit 3—Abide

STUDY QUESTIONS

1 Write down the top three things that stood out to you in this unit.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

2 Why is it impossible for you to succeed in the Christian life on your own?

3 If Christ lives in us, why do we still have problems? _____

**“NO MAN KNOWS HOW BAD HE IS UNTIL HE HAS TRIED VERY
HARD TO BE GOOD.”**

—C. S. LEWIS

4 In your own words, describe one’s belief system: how it is formed, how it affects one’s life, and how it can be transformed, etc. (feel free to look back at the video or chapter as you write). _____

5 Tell a friend or family member something that you have learned this week.

THE RISE UP CHALLENGE

The Rise Up Challenge is perhaps the most important part of this course. The goal is for you to personally encounter God as you develop the daily disciplines of Bible reading, memorizing and meditating on Scripture, and spending time in prayer.

The goal for this week is to set aside at least 30 minutes a day to spend with God—10 minutes in each activity. Use the following chart to keep a record of your times.

READ. Read the Scripture passages listed for the day, and write down insights in a notebook or journal.

MEDITATE. Memorize and meditate on John 15:4:

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in ME.”

PRAY. Learn to pray Scripture by using **Galatians 2:20** in your prayer time for yourself and others. Personalize the hymn **“Our Great Savior”** and pray through it during your prayer time this week.

Day	Bible Reading	READ Time Spent	MEDITATE Time Spent	PRAY Time Spent
Day 1	Psalm 15, John 8			
Day 2	Psalm 16, John 9			
Day 3	Psalm 17, John 10			
Day 4	Psalm 18, John 11			
Day 5	Psalm 19, John 12			
Day 6	Psalm 20, John 13			
Day 7	Psalm 21, John 14			

OUR GREAT SAVIOR

BY J. WILBUR CHAPMAN

Jesus! what a Friend for sinners!
Jesus! Lover of my soul;
Friends may fail me, foes assail me,
He, my Savior, makes me whole.

Refrain

Hallelujah! what a Savior!

Hallelujah! what a Friend!

Saving, helping, keeping, loving,

He is with me to the end.

Jesus! what a Strength in weakness!
Let me hide myself in Him.
Tempted, tried, and sometimes failing,
He, my Strength, my vict'ry wins.

Jesus! what a Help in sorrow!
While the billows o'er me roll,
Even when my heart is breaking,
He, my Comfort, helps my soul.

Jesus! what a Guide and Keeper!
While the tempest still is high,
Storms about me, night o'ertakes me,
He, my Pilot, hears my cry.

Jesus! I do now receive Him,
More than all in Him I find.
He hath granted me forgiveness,
I am His, and He is mine.

GALATIANS 2:20

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

WEEK 3 CHECKLIST

- Watch Unit 3 video.
- Read Chapter 3 and complete assignments.
- Complete *The Rise Up Challenge* for this week.
- Participate in group call.
- Call accountability partner.