

Parent Guide

THEO™

Teaching Children God's Word

God's Truth Volume 4

LESSON 11 - Abiding in Christ

In this lesson, Theo teaches us what it means to abide in Christ. He tells us that abiding in Christ is like fruit abiding in the vine. While pruning his vines, Theo illustrates how the grapes grow by receiving nutrients and water from its vine. This is like our relationship with Christ: if we abide in Jesus, then we too will bear fruit. As we abide in Jesus, the Holy Spirit living in us gives us the spiritual nourishment we need to thrive. Theo tells the story about the apostle Paul who suffered many difficult circumstances. He was imprisoned, beaten, even shipwrecked, and yet still found peace and joy by abiding in Christ through prayer and faith. Theo reminds us that the Bible is God's Word and John 1 tells us that Christ is the "Word of God," so keeping the Bible in our hearts and minds and obeying it is an important way to abide in Christ. What are some other ways we can abide in Christ?

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

John 15:1-10 (Abiding in Christ)
Acts 13:4-14:28 (1st missionary journey)
Acts 15:39-18:22 (2nd)
Acts 18:23-21:17 (3rd)
2 Corinthians 11:23-27 (Paul's list of sufferings)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What funny action do Theo's mouse friends, Luther and Belfry, do to illustrate what abiding in Christ means?
2. Who do you look up to in your life? It could be a family member, a friend, a teacher at school. What about them makes you want to be like them?
3. The Bible tells us to be like Jesus. In what ways can you imitate Jesus and abide in him?
4. Theo tells the story of the apostle Paul. What types of things did Paul suffer from? How did he find such peace and contentment despite his difficult circumstances? What did he do to abide in Christ?
5. Theo says that by obeying God's Word, listening to God in prayer, fellowshiping with other believers, and doing works of love that flow from our faith, we will bear much fruit. What does it mean to bear fruit? Can you think of any examples of where your own life or those people you look up to bear fruit?

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Have your family sit in a circle. Designate someone go first and have that person repeat an action (for example, they might tap their nose). Everyone else then should repeat what they do. Then have the person to the right come up with a new action in addition to the previous one (they might grab their knee while tapping their nose). Everyone should imitate them. The next person will likely have to get creative. They might twist their body, or bend their head a certain way (think Twister™ game). Once everyone has had their turn and is all tied up in knots, remind everyone how important it is to be a good example to each other, realizing how much we influence each other. Jesus showed us what pleases God, so we should all strive to act like Him. Spend some time expressing some practical ways to abide in Christ better.

FINAL THOUGHT

In 1 Corinthians 11:1 Paul says, “Be imitators of me as I also imitate Christ” (ESV). The whole “copycat game” is really about imitating godly people (see Hebrews 6:12) who imitate Christ. Our lives should reflect Christ, because we abide in Him, and we should strive to set an example of abiding in Christ.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help us to abide in Jesus and remember your Word. Just as grapes need their vines for nutrients, we need your Holy Spirit to be fruitful. Help us obey your Word, encourage us to fellowship with other believers, and enable us to do works of love that flow from our faith. In Jesus' name, amen.

NIGHTLY DEVOTIONS

Each nightly devotional will come from John 15:1-10. Read the passage each night and follow the devotional questions.

Day 1

Christ tells us to abide in him. What benefit do we receive by doing this? Spend some time thinking about Christ's obedience to his Father and how you can better obey Christ. You might pray for help in obeying God's Word and in abiding in Christ.

Day 2

Imagine a tree branch trying to thrive without being attached to the tree! Christ tells us that we cannot bear fruit unless we are in him. What is this fruit? It's the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, that Christ grows in us by His indwelling Spirit. To bear much fruit is to have a

character that resembles that of Jesus. Can we bear this fruit ourselves? No, this fruit is produced in us by the Holy Spirit as we abide in Christ. Pray tonight for help from the Holy Spirit to bear fruit.

Day 3

In addition to the John passage, look at Acts 14:19-23. Paul is stoned almost to death for preaching the Gospel. What is Paul's response? Does it keep him from doing good works of love? Notice how God protects Paul, despite the great difficulty he faces. Tonight, pray for God's encouragement to be fruitful in your life and for help when difficulties arise for you.

Day 4

Look closely at John 15: 9-10. Christ says he loves you and that our response should be to abide in his love. How do you abide in Christ's love? Look at verse 10! Think about how you can better obey Christ tomorrow and pray for help to do so.

Day 5

Read Hebrews 6:11-12. Paul tells us to imitate those who are faithful to God's word. When they obey, they inherit God's promises. Who in your church or circle of friends sets a good example to imitate? Praise God for the community of believers and pray that you would set a good example, too.

Day 6

In this last devotional, read the passage with your experiences from the week in mind. Think about what it means to abide in Christ and how your life can reflect this. Where in your life can you improve? Remember, it's important to keep God's Word in your heart and mind and to obey his commandments. Pray tonight that you will bear fruit for Christ and that you will walk in faith and love.

LESSON 12 - Light Unto My Path

In this lesson, Theo teaches us that the Bible is like a light in the darkness for us. Just as Luther and Belfry roam through the dark woods tripping over rocks without a flashlight, without the Bible we stumble through the world. Theo says that the world is spiritually dark and that the Bible helps illuminate what is good and what is bad for us. He tells the story of King Amon who ignored the Bible's teaching and instead encouraged the worship of idols and false gods, causing the nation of Judah to fall into spiritually dark times. It wasn't until his son, Josiah, became king at just eight years old that the Book of the Law of Moses was recovered. This book of God's Word showed Josiah right from wrong, and Josiah learned that he should remove all the false gods and wicked priests from the land. Remember, the Bible isn't like other books. It is the very Word of God. It enables us to see the world more clearly, so we know which obstacles to avoid and how to obey God. Without God's Word, we wouldn't know right from wrong and what pleases Him. We would be lost in the world. But, with the Word of God we can clearly see the path laid out for us.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Psalm 119:105 (God's Word is a lamp unto our feet)

John 8:12 (Jesus is the Light of the world)

2 Timothy 3:16 (All Scripture is God-breathed)

2 Kings 22:1-23:30 (Story of King Josiah)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does a flashlight help you see in the dark? What obstacles might it help you avoid? How might a flashlight have helped Luther and Belfry be less afraid in the dark?
2. Theo reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world and that the Bible helps us to know how to walk in his light. What are some ways you can walk in Christ's light?
3. Can you imagine being a king at eight years old? Josiah was just eight years old when he was made king of Judah and he wanted to please God by obeying him. The Bible celebrates Josiah's obedience and love of God. What did he do as king to obey God?
4. What did Josiah discover that helped him obey God better? What can we read to better obey God?
5. Theo tells us that the Bible is not like other books. How is it different? What can it offer us that other books cannot? What would it be like if we didn't have the Bible to guide us?

FAMILY ACTIVITY

You'll need a flashlight or a cellphone with a strong glow. Make the living room as dark as possible. If it's night, turn off the lights. If it's day, close the blinds. Scatter some "obstacles" around the room—pillows, books, toys—and move the furniture out of its usual place. Then, using the flashlight, let each child take a turn leading the family single-file around in the dark, avoiding obstacles. Ask your children if they think they would be able to see the obstacles and find their way without the light. Once you've walked around, sit down and remind your children that Jesus, like the flashlight, helps us find our way in the world. Without him, we'd be lost. Share with each other how you can remember the light of Christ. What are some ways to understand Christ's light and to implement it in your lives?

FINAL THOUGHT

Psalm 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (ESV). Because we'd be absolutely lost in the spiritually dark world without the Bible, we should take time to read it and keep it in our thoughts. This way, we'll know how to live our lives for Christ.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for the light of Christ. May Jesus shine on our paths and help us see what obstacles lay ahead of us. Help us to keep your commandments like King Josiah, who obeyed you and kept your word, knowing that by obeying you we are in your light. Whenever we find ourselves in difficult circumstances, may we seek you and your guidance in the light of Christ.

In Jesus' name, amen.

NIGHTLY DEVOTIONS

This lesson's devotionals include various passages from the Bible.

Day 1

The Bible isn't like other books. Read 2 Timothy 3:16 and think about why the Bible is different than other books. How can you better treat the Bible as God's very Word? Pray that you would better understand God's Word.

Day 2

Just as the Bible is a light unto our paths, Jesus is the light of the world. Read John 1:1-18 and then 8:12. Since Jesus is the light of the world, what should you do to be in his light? What does following him look like? Pray tonight that you can follow Jesus and that your obedience to Christ would be like a light to those around you.

Day 3

Imagine being a king or queen at your age. What would you do with your authority? Read 2 Kings 24-25. King Josiah obeyed God and the Bible says there was no king like him. Can you remember what he did to earn the Lord's favor? What things can you do tomorrow to turn to the Lord with all of your heart, soul, and strength? Pray for guidance on how you can better obey God.

Day 4

Have you ever felt lost? It's a lot like being in the dark! Read John 8:12 again. If we follow Jesus, we won't be in darkness. Pray tonight that you would continue to follow Jesus, turning to him when you feel lost.

Day 5

Read Matthew 5:14-16. We have already learned from John's gospel that Jesus is the Light of the world (John 8:12). But here, in Matthew's gospel, Jesus says that "You are the light of the world." What did He mean by that? How do we let the light of Christ shine through us? What did Jesus mean when He said not to hide our light under a bushel?

Day 6

Reflect on Psalm 119:105. What spiritual obstacles might the light of Christ reveal? What are some good ways to avoid them? Pray for guidance.

LESSON 13 - What is the Church?

In this lesson, Theo teaches us that the Church is not just a building made of bricks and wood, nor is it an exclusive club. No, the church is an inclusive body of believers from all races, ethnicities, and nations. It is the people of God worshipping together. The people of God are those that believe in Jesus and follow him. Theo tells the story of the early church in the first century. The early church began on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit filled believers with the ability to walk as Jesus walked and gave them spiritual gifts to spread the Gospel. As more and more people believed in Jesus, they started fellowshiping with each other in their homes and communities. Just like the first century church, we should fellowship with fellow believers and pray and worship together. We “grow” the church by doing good works and loving our neighbors and showing the world Christ’s love in this way. The church reflects God’s glory not by being a big building, but by Christians reflecting this glory.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Matthew 18:20 (where two or more are gathered)

1 Corinthians 12:12-20 (Church is the Body of Christ)

John 4:23-24 (true worshippers worship God in spirit & truth)

Revelation 14:6 (Church is universal)

1 Corinthians 1:26-30 (Church is comprised of people from all walks of life)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Luther and Belfry start a club in this lesson. What kind of club is it? Who gets to belong to it? Do you belong, or have you ever belonged to any clubs? How is the church different than a club?
2. Christ says in Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them” (ESV). What do you think this means? Why is it important to pray together? Why is Christian fellowship important? How does the church make this possible?
3. Theo tells us that the church is motivated by a love of God and a love for one another. How can you love God and each other? What are some things you might do this week to love your fellow believers?
4. The early church was centered on God’s Word and the apostles’ teaching. How is it possible for the church today to do the same?

5. Theo says that when people see Jesus in your church they will give glory to God and come to know him. How can you reflect Jesus in your church?

FAMILY ACTIVITY

The activity for this lesson allows for your family to help those in need. Everyone will need a sheet of paper and some crayons or markers. Have everyone sit around the table or in a circle on the floor. Remind your kids that the early church was motivated by a love for God and a love for one another, and that it helped care for those who were in need or who were sick. Ask if anyone can think of someone in need. If the family thinks of one person, or of a few, the family can then draw that person (or persons) a picture, or write a note, telling them that you all are praying for them. Find a way to send your pictures and notes to the person in need. End the activity by praying together for the people discussed. If opportunity allows, you might find a way to help the person in tangible ways as well (providing a meal, helping them in their home, mowing their lawn, and so on).

FINAL THOUGHT

The church is not an exclusive club, but is *instead* the inclusive body of believers around the world.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we know the church is not a club, but a community of believers. Help us to be motivated by both a love for you and a love for each other. Grow our church and may it reflect Christ's glory in such a way that our neighbors will be drawn to you.

In Jesus' name, amen.

NIGHTLY DEVOTIONS

This lesson's devotionals include various passages from the Bible.

Day 1

Write down the names of some people you know who are in need. Maybe they are ill or are facing difficult circumstances, or maybe someone just comes to mind. Commit to praying for them throughout this week. Pray for them now.

Day 2

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-20. Paul says that all believers are part of one body. Notice how he says that both Jews and Greeks and slaves and free are part of this one body.

Think about how Jesus draws us together as believers and how, no matter what race, ethnicity, or nationality we might be, we're still one in Christ. You might pray tonight for the unity of the church and that all people would continue to be drawn to it.

Day 3

Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-30. Notice that people from all walks of life are called to God. What binds Christians of all languages, races, jobs, skills, and interests together? Continue to pray for the unity of the church. How can we promote this unity in our local church? (hint: read Colossians 3:12-14) Praise God for his love of all people.

Day 4

Again, read Corinthians 1:26-30. God wants you just as you are. You don't need any particular skills or job to be a Christian. What is so marvelous about the church is that God uses all kinds of people with all kinds of different interests and spiritual gifts to bring him glory. Think about your own interests and spiritual gifts: how might you use these to glorify God?

Day 5

Theo reminds us that on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit enabled Christians to walk in the Spirit as Jesus did (Acts 2:1-4). God guides us with his Spirit to do good works and to spread his Gospel. You might pray for the Spirit's leading and for help when opportunities arrive to share the Good News. Does anything or anyone in your life come to mind?

Day 6

Read Ephesians 3:20-21. Paul writes that all the generations of the Church, of every nation and tribe, give glory to God. It's amazing to think that for over two thousand years churches have been meeting and worshipping together. When you pray tonight, thank God for preserving his Church.