

One word Jesus used ten times

Written by Bill Perkins

All of the resources available to Jesus are there for us. The question is, how do we follow his example and draw on such wisdom and strength. The night before his crucifixion, after leaving the upper room, and leading his disciples out of Jerusalem, Jesus answered that question.

A Grapevine in His Hand

Pausing at a vineyard, Jesus took a grapevine in his hand and said, “I am the vine, you are the branches: he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5 NASB).

One Word, Ten Times

Jesus could have told his followers the key to victorious living involved performing a religious ritual, abstaining from certain foods and drinks, giving money to help the poor, or attending church. “Instead he repeated a single word ten times:

Abide, Abide, Abide, Abide, Abide, Abide, Abide, Abide, Abide, Abide.

Not Rules — Friendship

It occurred to me that unlike the Ten Commandments that Moses received on the mountain, Jesus repeated one word ten times. The Israelites were given a rock-hard set of rules. Jesus offered a flesh-and-blood friendship--remember he told his disciples, "

But I've called you friends, for everything I've heard from My Father, I've made known to you. "You didn't choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give you. "This is what I command you: love one another. "If the world hates you, you know it hated Me before it hated you." (John 15:15 NASB).

Jesus knew what the disciples would soon discover and what we must learn. Namely, friendship with him, not iron-willed determination to live up to the standards of God or man, produces a life that pleases God and changes the world."

A Spiritual Umbilical Cord

The imagery is profound in its simplicity. Just as a branch draws nourishment from the grapevine to bear fruit, so we draw from Jesus all we need to bear spiritual fruit. It's as though when we became Christians, God attached a spiritual umbilical cord to our spirit so he could impart his life and strength to us. But unlike our physical birth,

where a doctor cut the cord, God remains attached to us.

Of course, we can pinch the cord so that his nourishment and strength don't reach us. But all of his resources are still available. And when they flow from his Spirit through us, they produce the fruit of the Spirit in our thoughts, words and deeds.

Next week we'll examine how Jesus said we could abide in him.

Adapted from: *The Jesus Experiment*, Bill Perkins