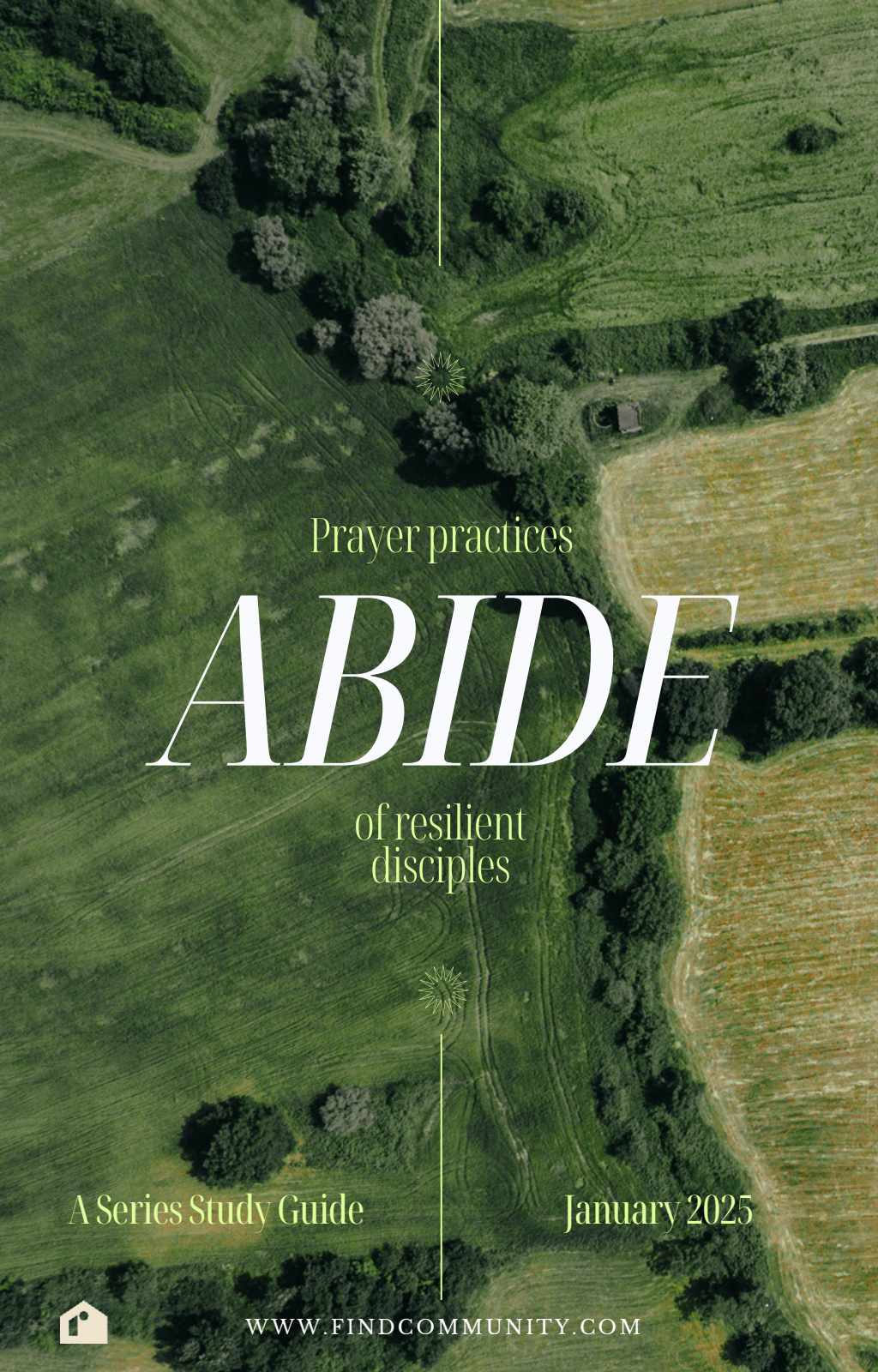
Prayer practices
ABIDE
of resilient disciples
A Series Study Guide
January 2025
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WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

SERIES INTRODUCTION

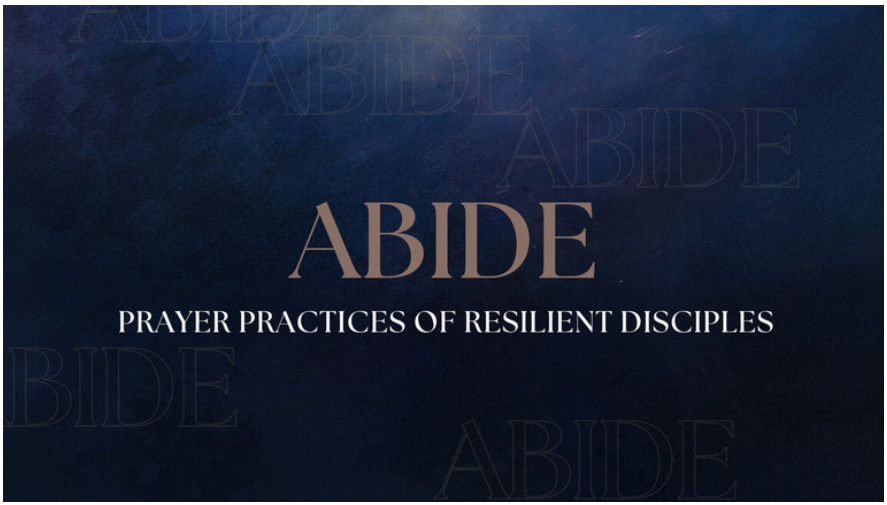
Week 1: Abiding Prayer, John 15:1-5

Week 2: Worship as Prayer, John 4:4-30

Week 3: Fasting as Prayer, Judges 19:30; 20:26-27

Week 4: Praying God's Word, Psalm 1; Acts 17:11

NEXT STEPS



Invitation to a life of prayer

“Pray without ceasing...” 1 Thess. 5:17

Prayer is an act of resistance in a world of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Prayer draws us to God and invites us to stay in His presence. Prayer forms our hearts to reflect His, opens our eyes to His Spirit’s work around us, and constantly reminds us that our greatest strength does not come from our own efforts or thinking.

The call to abide in Jesus is a call to prayer – a habit of prayer, a lifestyle of prayer. While this includes our “prayer time” – it’s so much more. We worship as an act of abiding prayer. We fast as a whole-body hunger for God. We receive scripture in communion with God, listening and responding to Him. For the Christian, the presence of God becomes our fuel for and our goal in living.

Prayer is the practice of intentionally entering into the presence of God, cultivating an awareness of Him that transforms everyday moments into sacred encounters. It is

more than just speaking words to God—it's about living in constant connection with Him, learning to recognize His presence in all things.

Rather than abandoning our connection with God in order to deal with the stuff of the world (work, appointments, dishes, kids, etc.), we want to learn to find the presence of God in the midst of these everyday tasks.

We meet with Him as we're doing the dishes. We listening for His Spirit as we make the kids' peanut butter and jelly sandwich. We enjoy His presence at the office. Prayer isn't a time to retreat from the world in order to know God. Prayer is an opportunity to know and hear from God right in the midst of our everyday world.

As we practice this abiding prayer, we become more resilient disciples. We know God is present even in our disappointments. We wrestle with God through our doubts. We learn to turn towards -- rather than away from -- God when the storms of life come. And they will come. Abiding prayer reminds us, though, that He is present with us in life's storms.

This series, "Abide: Prayer Practices of Resilient Disciples," will explore how to practice a life of prayer. Each week, we will learn more about abiding in Jesus through various prayer practices:

- Week 1: Abiding Prayer (John 15:1-5) – Jesus is the source of life and strength, and we are called to abide in Him. Our strength comes from remaining in Him, and prayer is a key part of that abiding relationship.

- Week 2: Worship as Prayer (John 4:4-30) – Worship is more than just singing; it's an outpouring of our heart to God, living in His presence in all of life. True worship leads us into deeper connection with God and overflows into mission.

- Week 3: Fasting as Prayer (Judges 20:26-27) – Fasting is a whole-body act of prayer. It's a response to sacred moments and a way of expressing our spiritual hunger for God, drawing us into a deeper dependence on Him.

- Week 4: Praying God's Word (Psalm 1; Acts 17:11) – God's Word is a prayer book that shapes our hearts. Praying the Scriptures allows us to align our hearts with God's, trusting in His promises and deepening our walk with Christ.

Additional Resources

Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools, Tyler Staton (An invitation to the wonder and mystery of prayer)

The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry, John Mark Comer (Learning to slow down and embrace the unhurried presence of God - in a culture of busy.)

Fasting, Scot McKnight (An overview of the why and how of fasting in scripture.)

Praying the Bible, Donald Whitney (Using the Bible as your prayer book.)

The Liturgy of the Ordinary, Tish Harrison Warren (Observing everyday invitation to prayer.)

Practicing the Presence of God, Brother Lawrence (A monks journey towards cultivating awareness of God's presence and unceasing prayer.)

With, Skye Jethani (An invitation to re-think spiritual life as life with God.)

Abide

Week 1

Date:

Speaker:

Main Scripture: John 15:1-5

SERMON TITLE

Abiding Prayer

Main Points | Verses Used	Notes

REFLECTIONS

Reflect on how to apply today's sermon to your life

Quotes:

“The greatest hinderance in the church today is the people of God attempting to do the work of God apart from the power of the Spirit of God.” - Charles Spurgeon

“Abiding means hour by hour trusting Jesus to meet all my needs and be all my treasure.” - John Piper

Week 1: Reflect and Discuss

1. As we begin 2025, what vision do you believe God has for your life and for our church? How does this vision impact how you approach this new year?

2. In what ways do you feel there is a "gap" between where you are spiritually and who God is calling you to become? How do you typically respond to this gap?

3. Jesus says, “Apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). In what areas of your life do you feel tempted to rely on your own strength instead of abiding in Jesus?

4. What does spiritual pruning look like in your life? Can you share a time when God pruned you? How did it lead to greater fruitfulness?

5. How might you integrate "abiding prayer" into the everyday tasks of your life? What steps can you take to remain aware of God’s presence during routine activities?

7. How is God calling you to respond to this passage? Try writing an “I will” statement (“I will _____”) that captures your response. Then, go and do!

8. Who can you tell about how God has met you in His Word? Pray for an opportunity to share it with them.

Practice: Listening Prayer

God doesn't ask for our busyness, but our stillness. "Be still," scripture reminds us (Ps. 46:10).

It's tempting to think that stillness is about waiting for some profound insight from God. While that can happen, it's not the point. Stillness is about surrender—saying "yes" to the Spirit's work within you. It's giving God the first word in your time together (too often, we've done all the talking - and find that our allotted time is over - never even pausing to hear from God).

How do you go about stilling your heart and listening to God in prayer? First, find a time that works for you—whether it's the quiet before your busy morning starts, the calm after dropping the kids off, or during your lunch break. It doesn't matter when, but make it consistent. Habits only take root through repetition. Make this a sacred ritual.

Choose a simple, ordinary spot that can become your holy ground: your favorite chair, the back porch, a park bench, or a seat on your commute. Sit comfortably, but attentively. Acknowledge God's presence with a short prayer like, 'I'm here, Lord,' or 'Come, Holy Spirit.' Then just sit. Be still. Wait. Set a timer—just two minutes to start. Over time, increase the duration as you feel ready.

Remember this is not about feeling instant results; it's about trusting that simply being present in silence before God is meaningful. Don't judge whether you're "hearing" something. This is just as much about the state of our hearts: ready and willing. Yes, at times God will speak -- bringing a scripture to mind, a holy nudge, a timely reminder. But ultimately, this isn't about getting something from God—it's about offering Him a part of yourself.

Add two minutes of listening prayer to your routine this week. Give God the first word.

Pray Until You Pray

This is how I will pursue growing in my prayer life this year. I want to slow down a bit, focus my mind on the Lord, and pray a little longer. I want to “pray until I pray,” as the Puritans used to say. That is, I want to continue on in prayer until I break through the repetition or niceties of formal prayer, and my heart’s longing and need for God is revealed. Persist in prayer! I want to keep at it...

Pray until the pretense fades.

Pray until sin loses its appeal.

Pray until the burden is lifted.

Pray until I delight in God’s presence.

Pray until I’m seeking first the kingdom.

Pray until my heart is ready to sing His praise.

Pray until I’m emboldened to share.

Pray until I’m eager to love.

Pray until I’m resolved to do His will.

Pray until I’m at rest in his sovereign grace.

I’m not sure how you’re planning on growing in prayer this year, but I hope you’ll join me in praying until you pray.

This is how I will pursue growing in my prayer life this year...

Abide

Week 2

Date:

Speaker:

Main Scripture: John 4:4-30

SERMON TITLE

Worship as Prayer

Main Points | Verses Used	Notes

REFLECTIONS

Reflect on how to apply today's sermon to your life

Quotes:

“Worship is the believers’ response of all that they are -- mind, emotions, will, body -- to what God is and says and does.”
- Warren Wiersbe

“If you come to worship for any reason other that the joy and pleasure and satisfaction that are to be found in God, you dishonor Him...God's greatest delight is your delight in Him.”
- Sam Storms

Week 2: Reflect and Discuss

1. What does it mean to be spiritually thirsty? How do you see this thirst in your own life or in the world around you?

2. Jesus offers living water that satisfies truly and eternally. How have you experienced this satisfaction in your relationship with Jesus? If you haven’t, what might be holding you back?

3. Worship is more than just singing songs; it's the outpouring of our whole being in response to God. How can you incorporate worship into your everyday life?

4. Reflect on the quote: "God's greatest delight is your delight in Him." What does this mean to you, and how does it challenge your view of worship?

5. Jesus was on a divine appointment in meeting the Samaritan woman. How can you be more aware of the divine appointments God sets up in your life for mission?

6. How is God calling you to respond to this passage? Try writing an “I will” statement (“I will _____”) that captures your response. Then, go and do!

7. The woman at the well couldn’t keep her encounter with Jesus to herself. Who can you tell about how God has met you in His Word? Pray for an opportunity to share it with them.

Practice: Prayer Walk

Prayer walking is simply taking your everyday walk and turning it into an opportunity to intercede for others and ask God to move in your neighborhood (connecting worship and mission). As you walk, open your heart to see the world around you through God's eyes. Ask Him to guide your prayers for the homes, schools, and people you pass by.

In the Bible, we see examples of this kind of intentional walking and praying. The Israelites marched around Jericho, lifting up prayers and praise to God (Joshua 6). Jesus often walked with His disciples, and in one scene, He wept over the city of Jerusalem, praying for its people (Matthew 23:37-39). Paul, too, was moved to share the gospel in Athens as he walked through the city (Acts 17:16).

Before you go on your walk, ask God to reveal the needs of your community. As you pass by homes, you might pray for the families inside, that they would experience God's love and peace. If you walk near a school, lift up the students and teachers, praying for their safety and wisdom. As you pass folks on the sidewalk, be friendly. Strike up a conversation (if appropriate). Who knows, this may be a divine appointment for you today!

As you walk, ask God to **Reveal** (God, what's your will for this place? Where are you already moving? What are the barriers to your work), ask God to **Renew** (Where are people hurting or alone? Where is faith unseen or failing? Where do you need to be renewed?), and ask God for **Revival** (What would revival look like here? Where can you pray for other Christians? Where can you pray for non-Christians to come to know Jesus?).

You'll think of many other things to pray for as you go! You might even let your neighbors know you'll be praying for them as you walk by them and ask them if they have any prayer requests. Your prayers could be the beginning of a neighborhood revival!

When You Don’t Feel Like Praying

Prayer can be one of the most challenging disciplines for Christians, leaving us feeling guilty when we struggle with it. You’re not alone:

“Everything we do in the Christian life is easier than prayer” (Martyn Lloyd-Jones, pastor and author). “There is nothing that we are so bad at all our days as prayer” (Alexander Whyte, Christian author/liturgist). “There are times in my life when I would rather die than pray” (Thomas Shepard, Puritan pastor and author).

Often it’s the same for many of us. If you’re in a rut or finding prayer difficult, it’s important to remember that prayer is meant to be a conversation with a beloved friend. “Acts of friendship and communion must not be rare and unfrequent, but constant and often” (Thomas Merton). It’s not about meeting religious expectations but about cultivating a relationship with God.

To reignite your prayer life, try these three simple steps to move towards cultivating a more regular connection:

1. Begin every day with God – Start each morning with a word of thanks or a request for help. It’s essential to dedicate the beginning of your day to your Heavenly Father, committing your day to Him.
2. Spend the day with God – Pray throughout your day. Whether you’re happy or sad, take it to God. Keep that open line of communication as you move through life’s moments.
3. End every day with God – At the close of your day, thank God for His provision, reflect on His mercy, and lay down in peace knowing He is watching over you.

What, then, is the solution to our lack of prayer? Prayer.

Prayer begets prayer.

Abide

Week 3

Date:

Speaker:

Main Scripture: Judges 19:30; 20:26-27

SERMON TITLE

Fasting as Prayer

Main Points | Verses Used	Notes

REFLECTIONS

Reflect on how to apply today's sermon to your life

Quotes:

“Christian fasting, at its root, is the hunger of a homesickness for God.” - John Piper

“Fasting unto our Lord is therefore feasting -- feasting on Him and doing His will. In fasting, we learn how to suffer happily as we feast on God.” - Dallas Willard

Week 3: Reflect and Discuss

1. How does the idea of fasting as a whole-body prayer, similar to raising hands in worship or kneeling in confession, reshape your understanding of fasting?

2. In Psalm 35, David's sadness led him to fast. Can you recall a time when your emotions or spiritual condition felt like they needed to be expressed physically? How might fasting be a helpful response in moments like these?

3. Dallas Willard describes fasting as “feasting on God.” How does this perspective challenge the way you have traditionally viewed fasting?

4. How can earthly hunger during fasting serve as a window into deeper spiritual hunger? What are you truly hungry for, and how can fasting help express that?

5. Does the practice of fasting excite or intimidate you? Why?

6. How is God calling you to respond to this passage? Try writing an “I will” statement (“I will _____”) that captures your response. Then, go and do!

7. Who can you tell about how God has met you in His Word? Pray for an opportunity to share it with them.

Practice: Fasting

“Without a purpose and plan, it’s not Christian fasting; it’s just going hungry.” - David Mathis

Chances are, like many Christians, you may rarely fast, even if you've heard of its power or seen its importance in Scripture. In our society, food is so abundant that we often eat when we don't need to or even want to, making fasting seem even more daunting. In our culture, fasting is as countercultural as abstaining from sex until marriage. It just doesn’t seem to fit into today’s world.

But fasting, at its core, is a spiritual discipline—a way of expressing a deep longing for God by going without food (or another good gift) for a time. Our purpose in fasting is to find our satisfaction in God rather than the food, habit, or item that we’re fasting from. It teaches our hearts to hunger for God -- the only one who can satisfy our deepest needs.

Jesus didn’t say, “If you fast,” but rather, “When you fast” (Matthew 6:16). Fasting is not just about skipping meals; it’s about drawing closer to God. In fasting, we express our discontent with the brokenness of this world and our longing for more of Christ. Fasting can stretch our hearts and heighten our awareness of God’s presence.

This week, consider fasting—not just from food, but anything that distracts you from God (TV, scrolling social media, soda, video games, etc.). Start small, have a plan, and make your fast purposeful, seeking more of Him in the process. Through fasting, we hunger for God in a way that invites His presence into our daily lives.

Take a baby step into this spiritual practice -- and take note of what God reveals to you (about Himself, about yourself, about the world around you, etc.).

How We Spend Our Days

“How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives. What we do with this hour, and that one, is what we are doing.

A schedule defends from chaos and whim.… It is a peace and a haven set into the wreck of time; it is a lifeboat on which you find yourself, decades later, still living.”

—Annie Dillard

Abide

Week 4

Date:

Speaker:

Main Scripture: Psalm 1; Acts 17:11

SERMON TITLE

Praying God's Word

Main Points | Verses Used	Notes

REFLECTIONS

Reflect on how to apply today's sermon to your life

Quotes:

“I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil.” Ps. 119:162 (ESV)

“A man can no more take in a supply of grace for the future than he can eat enough for the next six months, or take sufficient air into his lungs at one time to sustain life for a week. We must draw upon God’s boundless store of grace from day to day as we need it.” - D. L. Moody

Week 4: Reflect and Discuss

1. What does it mean to "delight" in God's Word, as described in Psalm 1? How can you cultivate this kind of delight in our daily lives?

2. May we "chew on Scripture day and night" (1:2, MSG). What are some ways we can meditate on the Word throughout our day?

3. How does praying the Scriptures expose our sin and lead us to repentance? Can you share an example of how Scripture has convicted you in order to move you closer to God?

4. Praying the Scriptures involves asking God’s Spirit to guide us, to teach us, and to help us apply the Word. How can we invite the Holy Spirit to guide us during our prayer times?

5. How can praying God’s Word help us align our hearts with God’s will?

6. How is God calling you to respond to this passage? Try writing an “I will” statement (“I will _____”) that captures your response. Then, go and do!

7. Who can you tell about how God has met you in His Word? Pray for an opportunity to share it with them.

Practice: Scripture

Psalm 23:1–2,
1 The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

"*Lord, thank you that you are my shepherd. You are a good shepherd. Shepherd my family today, Lord. Remind them of your care and guidance. I pray for those lost sheep, Lord. I know your heart for lost sheep - bring them home. I pray for Arjay, Doug, and Cindy - reveal yourself to them. Lord, I praise you because you have provided so much for me. I am grateful for all your good gifts Lord."*

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

"*Lord, yes, lead me in that decision that I have to make about my future. I want to do what you want, O Lord. Lead me into your will in this matter. Let the waters be still, Lord, that I would know your peace. May the turbulence in my heart be stilled by trusting in you and your sovereign hand over all things."*

Work your way through Psalm 23 using it as a prayer prompt and prayer model. Let the heart of God guide your prayer priorities. Let the words of scripture enliven your imagination. Let the Spirit of God apply these passages to your hearts -- convicting, challenging, encouraging.

These aren't "magic words" that we speak like voodoo over our problems. No, instead, take the words of scripture as an invitation into the heart of God. Examine the Word for where your heart falls short - and repent. Search the Word for God's wisdom - and practice it. Chew on the Word, letting the Spirit shape your heart with its revelation.

Use Psalm 23 as a prompt for your own prayer this week.

How to be a Berean

Ready to be more intentional about knowing, living, and praying God's word? Be like a Berean (Acts 17:11). How?

1. Listen to the Sermon With an Open Bible
There is no authority we have in preaching except in so far as it is derived from the word of God. Don't take my word for it, open up the scriptures and write down notes, questions, objections, and applications.

2. **Don't Be in Such A Rush**
The Bereans saw Scripture as something that deserved their attention. It merited their time and effort. They examined it daily. They were not skimming; they were searching. And to do that, you have to give yourself unhurried time in the word.

3. **Get In the Word as a Way of Life**
The Bereans examined the Scriptures daily. They came to the Bible and kept coming back. Is there a frequency and consistency to your spiritual consumption? Make it a habit. You wouldn't expect one meal a week (no matter how good) to feed you for the week, so to with God's word.

"Our behavior with the Scriptures is an indication of our belief about the Scriptures. The Bereans looked into the Bible every day because they expected to find something there. Do we?"
- Kevin DeYoung

Next Steps

Congratulations on making it through Abide! If you've made it this far, I'm confident that you've been challenged and encouraged by these prayer rhythms.

So, what's next?

There's no cookie-cutter next step, but here are some possible response to what we've encountered through this teaching on abiding prayer.

Getting baptized (go public with your faith!)

Add something "extra" to your ordinary prayer life -- let that "extraordinary practice become your new ordinary for the next 30 days.

Getting in a discipleship huddle for support and accountability

Sharing with a friend or family member about how God has been at work in your life

Giving back to your church and community

Or some other step God's Spirit is leading you to take.

Remember, no one drifts towards spiritual maturity and resilience. Let's be intentional about living and loving like Jesus. How is God leading you to respond to His Word?

*Want to talk with a pastor or ministry leader about your next step? Email (info@findcommunity.com) or call (909-945-5001) to set up a conversation.

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