

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #154

True Believers Abide in Jesus' Word

John 8.31-36

31 To the Jews who had permanently believed in him, Jesus said,

"If you abide in my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"

34 Jesus replied, *"Very truly I tell you, everyone who continues to sin is a slave to sin 35 Now a slave does not abide permanently in the family, but a son abides in it forever. 36 Therefore, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	The Temple Courts in Jerusalem
Timeline	September (Month 31)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VI: Jesus' Later Judean Ministry
	B. Jesus' Ministry at the Feast of Tabernacles
	3. Jesus' 2 nd Teaching in the Temple: "I AM the Light of the World"
Title	iv. True Believers Abide in Jesus' Word

COMMENT:

Today's reading includes one of the most famous sayings of Jesus: **"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."** 8.32. However, that promise was not a universal one--it was limited to those who first fulfilled the condition Jesus stated in 8.31: **"If you abide in my teaching, you are really my disciples."** This is a crucial discipleship concept we need to fully understand, and obey.

Our reading began with an important qualification. **"To the Jews that had permanently believed in him, Jesus said..."** These were brand new disciples, who had just believed in Jesus minutes earlier as he talked about his cross (8.30). Jesus declared one of the primary identifying marks of a true disciple right away. He immediately began their discipleship training by giving them his primary and life-long expectation.

Jesus was a "Rabbi," a teacher of the things of God. When a person was accepted by a Rabbi as a "learner," or "student" (the meaning of "disciple") into his "school," their sole concern was to listen to and soak up the teaching of their Master. Most disciples studied at the feet of their Rabbi for at least 6 years--many for an entire lifetime. Jesus was building upon this common cultural expectation of what it meant to be a "disciple" when he made this statement.

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Jesus was telling his new disciples (every believer is a "disciple"--a learner of Jesus) that he expected them to "abide" or continue daily in his teachings for the rest of their lives. The process of "learning" from Jesus was never to end--forever. **Disciples learn the "teachings" or "word" of their Teacher. This is the essence of a disciple's job description.**

Jesus used one of the most important verbs in the gospel of John here: to "**abide**." This word means to "remain, continue, live, or make one's home" within the influence and protection of the four walls and roof of a house, or the person and teachings of their Master. Jesus used it to describe a slave or son "abiding" in their household in 8.35.

Jesus expected everyone who believed in him to make a life-long priority of constantly learning and living his teachings. Those teaching are found primarily in the four gospels and the book of Acts, are supplemented by the rest of the New Testament, and given context and background by the Old Testament. Believers are serious, dedicated, committed students of Jesus' life and teachings. Every disciple should become an expert on the teachings of Jesus over time.

Believers who obey Jesus' directive to "abide" in his teachings will continue to grow in the knowledge of his truth, and thereby experience growing freedom from the power and influence of sin. Everything begins with real dedication to daily study of Jesus' life and teachings.

APPLICATION:

The DAILY JESUS NEWS is an attempt on the part of ATJ Ministries to enable believers to "abide" in Jesus' teachings by reading one event or teaching of Jesus every day, 365 days a year. The fact that you are reading these words indicates you are taking your role as a life-long "student" of Jesus seriously. However, Jesus meant much more than this kind of daily devotional when he said "abide." He meant reading from the gospels directly, repeatedly, systematically, and obediently, as the foundation for your spiritual life--every day.

It is hard to imagine that a Bible Reading plan than does not cover the content of all four gospels at least three or four times a year would satisfy what Jesus had in mind when he made this statement. Furthermore, that kind of reading plan should continue every year of a disciple's life. That is what "abide" means.

Reading basically one chapter in the gospels and the Book of Acts every day will take you through it four times a year. That is a reasonable pace. I have attached a sample copy of a 90 Day Reading plan that includes the four gospels, rest of the New Testament, the Psalms and Proverbs.

How does your daily study plan for the life and teachings of Jesus match up with his expectations for you?

What do you need to change? When will that happen?