

## ABIDING IN CHRIST – AND PRAYING

Excerpts from the book 'How to Pray' by R A Torrey

Jesus says in John 15:7, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Here we find the secret of prayer that has power – we have to abide in Him and His words have to abide in us.

What Jesus meant was really very simple. He had been comparing Himself to a vine and his disciples to the branches in the vine. Some branches continued in the vine or remained in living union with the vine, so that the sap or life of the vine constantly flowed into these branches. They had no independent life of their own. Everything in them was simply the outcome of the life of the vine flowing into them. Their buds, their leaves, their fruit, were not really theirs but those of the vine. Other branches were severed from the vine or the flow of the sap or life into them was in some way hindered. Now for us to abide in Christ is for us to bear the same relation to Him that the first sort of branches bear to the vine. To abide in Christ is to renounce any independent life of our own, to give up trying to think our thoughts, or form our resolutions, or cultivate our feelings and simply and constantly look to Christ to think His thoughts in us, to form His purposes in us, to feel His emotions and affections in us. It is to renounce all life independent of Christ and constantly look to Him for the inflow of His life into us and the outworking of His life through us. Then, our desires will not be our own desires but Christ's, and our prayers will not in reality be our own prayers but Christ praying in us. This is what is meant by "praying in the Spirit." Such prayers will always be in harmony with God's will.

When our prayers fail, it is because they are indeed our prayers and we have conceived the desire and framed the petition of ourselves, instead of looking to Christ to pray through us. When we abide in

Christ, our thoughts are not our own thoughts but His, our joys are not our own but His. To abide in Christ, one must of course already be in Christ through the acceptance of Christ as an atoning Saviour from the guilt of sin, a risen Saviour from the power of sin, and Lord and Master over all his life. Thus being in Christ, all we have to do is abide in Him – utterly renounce every thought, every purpose, every desire of our own and just looking day by day and hour by hour for Jesus Christ to form His thoughts, His purposes, His affections and His desires in us. It is a wonderful life of privilege and power.

The practical method by which we abide in Him is through His words. The words He speaks to us, they are Spirit and life. It is vain to expect power in prayer unless we meditate much upon the words of Christ and let them sink deep in our hearts. We literally have to ‘hide’ God’s word in our heart – by feeding upon His word and obeying His word. Neglect of the Word of God will most certainly lead to powerless prayer. George Muller, one of the mightiest men of prayer, when the hour of prayer came would begin by reading and meditating upon God’s Word until **out of the study of the Word, a prayer began to form itself in his heart.** Thus God Himself was the real author of the prayer. If we would thus feed the fire of our prayers with the fuel of God’s Word, all our difficulties in prayer would disappear and our prayers (and our whole life) will be the manifestation of abiding in Christ.