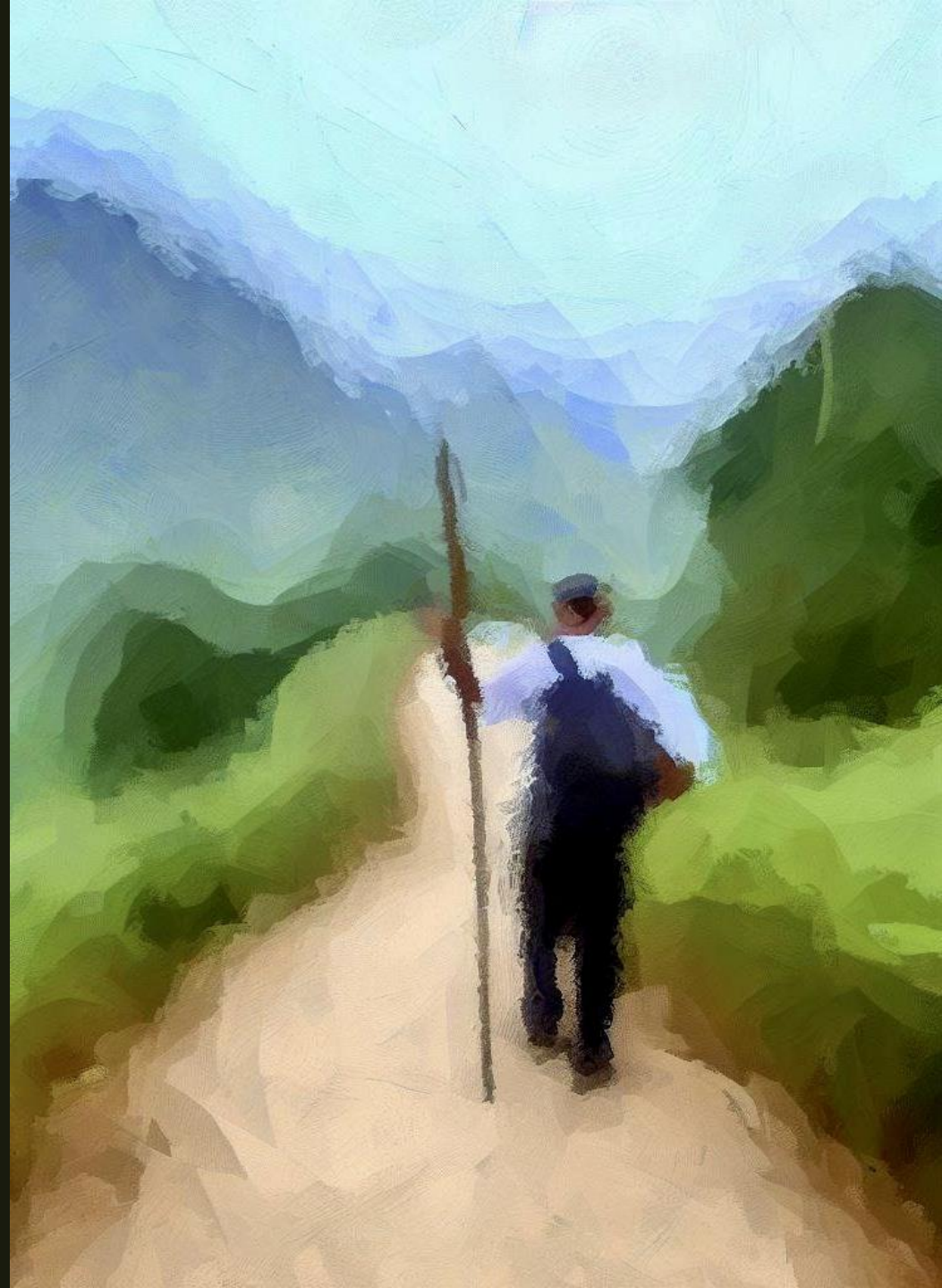


THE UPWARD JOURNEY 2
CONNECTION WITH JESUS



Connection

- What do you do that helps you feel the **most connected** with Jesus? .
- What action allows you to strengthen your connection with Jesus the most? For example, is it prayer, Bible study, fellowship/relationships, worship, evangelism, meditation, or something else? ·Why?
- Why does this action help you get connected with Jesus? ·How? How has it been going recently connecting with Jesus?
- Have you been practicing the discipline that brings you closest to him?



Connection

Each of us needs to understand what connects us with Jesus **the most**. It is important that we continue to practice the discipline that allows Jesus to strengthen us.

John 15

- John 15:1–17 (HCSB): I am the true vine, and My Father is the vineyard keeper. 2 Every branch in Me that does not produce fruit He removes, and He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me.
- 5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me. 6 If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be My disciples.
- 9 “As the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you. Remain in My love. 10 If you keep My commands you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commands and remain in His love.
- 11 “I have spoken these things to you so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. 12 This is My command: Love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, that someone would lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do what I command you. 15 I do not call you slaves anymore, because a slave doesn’t know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from My Father. 16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you. I appointed you that you should go out and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give you. 17 This is what I command you: Love one another.



Staying Connected

- Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. (Jn 15:4)
- As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. (Jn 15:9-10)
- Read Jn 15:1-17. What are the *imperatives* (commands) in this passage?
- Not love
- Not go and bear fruit.
- Not “love one another
- It is “remain” x 2, ask x 1

Staying connected

- Remain (in Him)
- Ask (of Him)
- Remain (in his love)
- Do I think my relationship with God in this way?
- Why or why not?



Benefits of Connection

- ❖ Bear Fruit

 - Becoming more like Jesus*

 - Fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)*

 - Influencing others with the gospel*

- ❖ Jesus remains in us

 - Confidence and security.*

- ❖ Prayer

 - Ask whatever you will*

Key to Growth is Health

Health
Then
Growth

Do we think like this?



Let's talk about Spiritual Health

- Homework: Meditate on Jn 15:4-5
- *Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*
- What does it mean to abide in Jesus?
- Your actions
- Your relationships



Ingredients of Spiritual Health

- 1) Nourishment
- 2) God
- 3) Pruning
- 4) Abiding/Remaining
- 5) Holy Spirit

Need to top up in any area?

How to abide in Jesus: 3 Key Ideas

(1) Abide in his Word

(2) Abide in his Love

(3) Abide by Obeying His Commandments

Abiding in His Word

We have to *allow* it.

Really connecting and listening to it... Eg “turn the other cheek”

Do I filter it out, or drink it in?

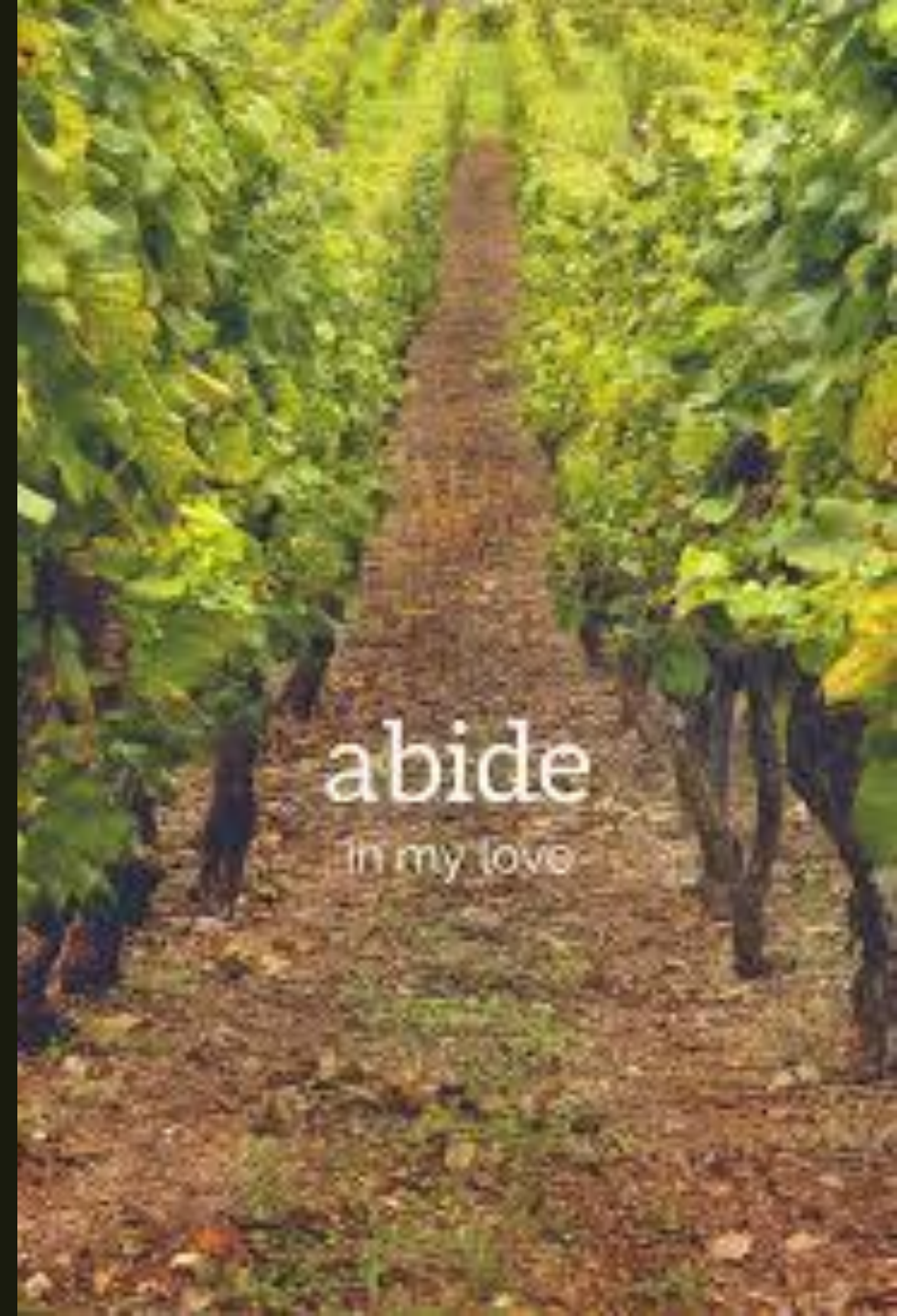
Exercise: Sit down with open journal and write out Jesus’ words as they come to mind...



Abiding in His Love

“Abide in my love.” Do you sense the love of Jesus in your heart? Do you meditate on his love? Do you feel connected to his love? Do you allow his healing love to work on your hurt, your pain, your disappointment, your regret? Also, do you allow his love to pass through your heart to others? Do you demonstrate the love of Jesus in your life?

Journal Exercise: I abide in the love of Jesus, when .
. . Or I feel the love of Jesus in my life, when . .



Keeping his commandments



part of abiding in Jesus is keeping his commandments. Jesus says, “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.” How do you view Jesus’ commandments? Do you see them as a shackle? Do you think of them as burdensome? Or, are they life-giving and life-affirming?

Journal Exercise: Read 1 John and note what he says about “abiding/remaining in Jesus.

Telios Gap

- **Telios** (or maturity) gap. The difference between where we are now and fully being like Jesus. ‘Mature and complete” (James 1:4).
- How do you feel/what’s your reaction to this idea?
- What do you mean I’m not like Jesus?
- Yeah-nah.
- Sounds great. Tell me more!

Closing the gap

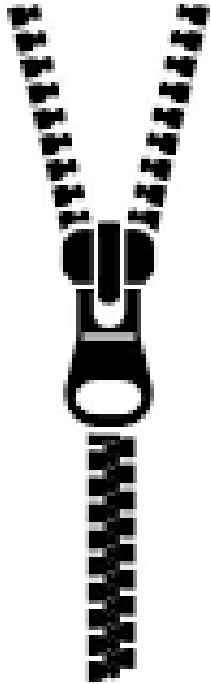
- 2 Corinthians 7:8–11 (HCSB): For even if I grieved you with my letter, I do not regret it—even though I did regret it since I saw that the letter grieved you, yet only for a little while. 9 Now I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because **your grief led to repentance**. For you were grieved as God willed, so that you didn't experience any loss from us. 10 For godly grief produces a **repentance not to be regretted** and leading to salvation, but worldly grief produces death. 11 For consider how much diligence this very thing—**this grieving as God wills—has produced in you**: what a desire to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what deep longing, what zeal, what justice! In every way you showed yourselves to be pure in this matter.
- Godly sorrow response of repentance “jarred into turning things around” (2 Cor 7 MSG).
- How do we respond to “regret” and “pain”?

Closing the gap

- Response A: Worldly Sorrow
 - *Feel grief over the pain but no actual change.*
 - ***Discouragement.*** “*Shouldn’t I know this by now?*”
 - However, if you are thinking through this, that could be growth right there!
 - Talk about it.
 - ***Indifference/Apathy.*** “*Won’t grace be covering me?*”
 - Exist, but no care, no life, no love. Toxic.
 - Luke 17:26-30. Days of Noah. Indifference = not paying attention.



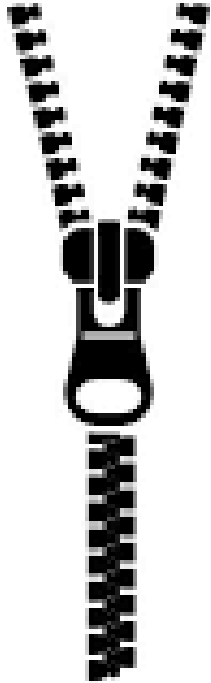
Closing the gap



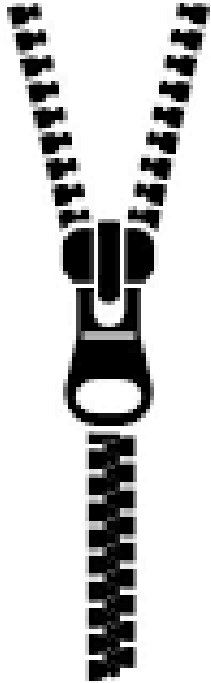
- **Response B: Godly Sorrow**
- “For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what punishment. At every point you have proved yourselves guiltless in the matter.” [2 Cor 7:11]
- See as Opportunity to grow.
- *“We study scripture. We pray. We journal. We share our feelings with a safe mentor. We move toward Jesus. We abide in Jesus. This is the proper response to distress and/or regret. This is true repentance, a change of heart that leads to a change of life.”* [Kinnard]
- What do you think about that?

Spirituality is Intentional

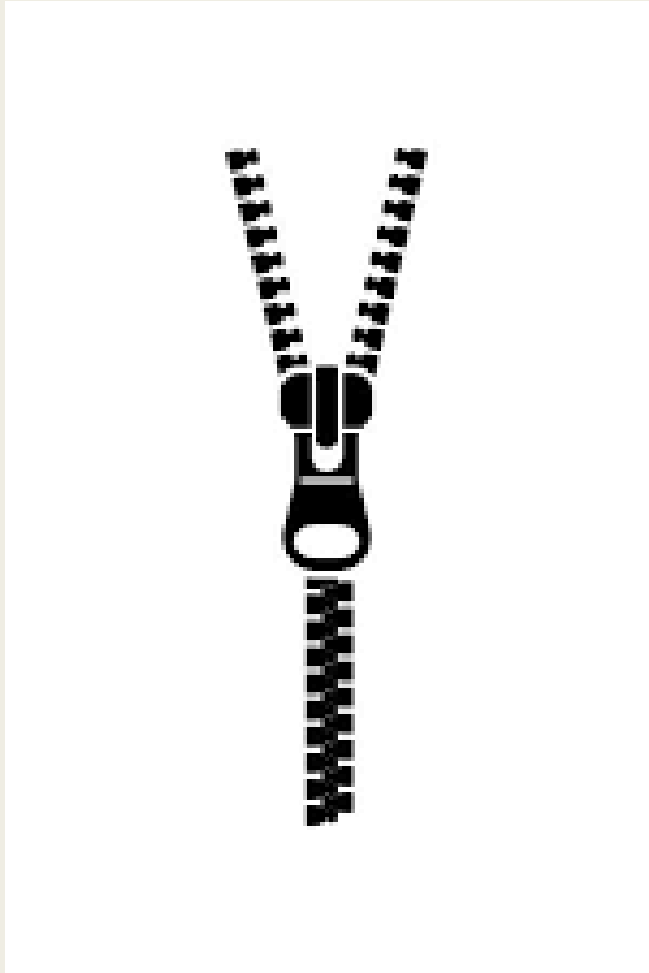
- Setting our personal goals
- Study how to become mature
- Read books by Spiritual writers.
- While planning, reading and studying Scripture.
- Holy Spirit – the spiritual change-agent
- Waiting for God without grumbling.
- Steady and consistent. “Habit is more dependable.”[Octavia Butler].



Spirituality is Intentional

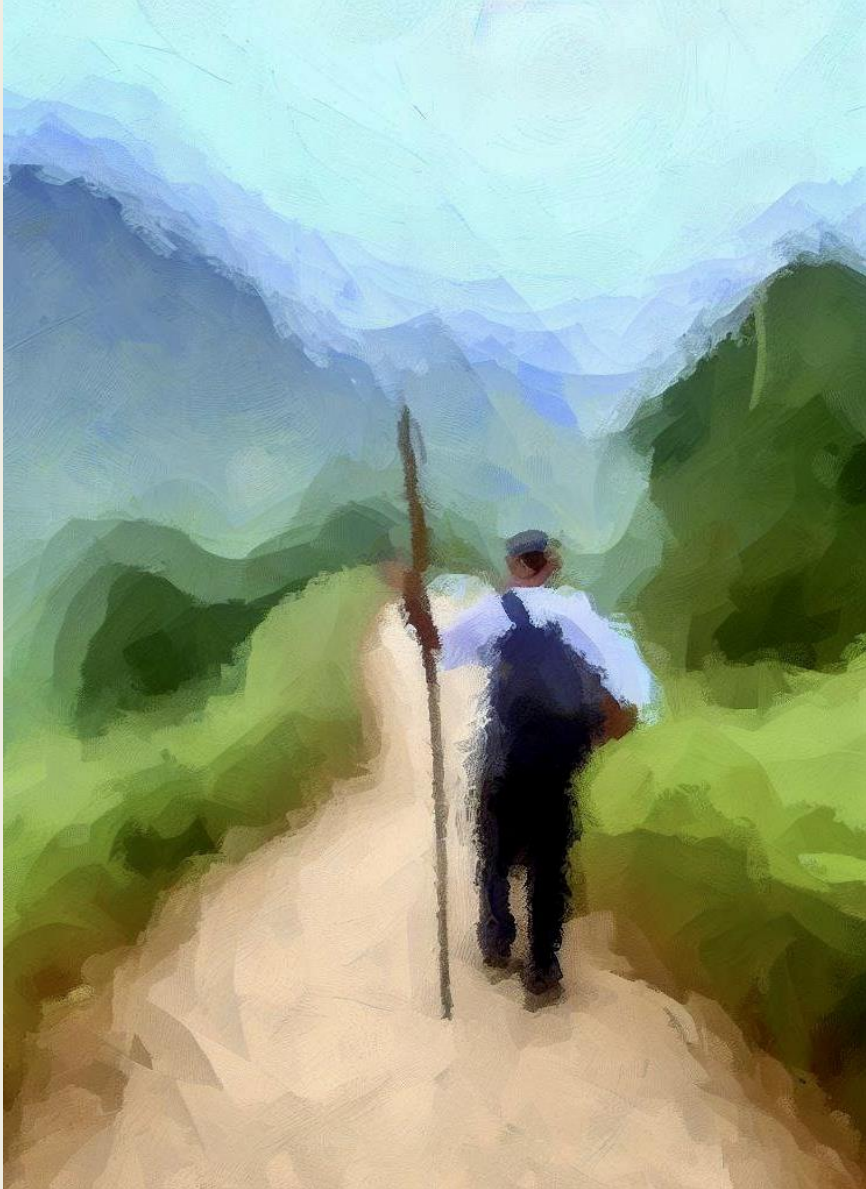


- 1 Corinthians 15:58 reads, “*Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.*”
- Galatians 6:9 reads, “*So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.*”
- How does this translate in my life?



Summary

- 1) Intention
- 2) Steadfastness
- 3) Trust
- 4) Maturing in Jesus - Progressive
- 5) Connection to Jesus – Abide.



Eternal *Living*

**Don't think of Eternal Life. Think of
Eternal Living (Dallas Willard)**

What difference does that make?

Growth goal ideas (recap)...

- A character weakness to develop or eliminate
- One or more fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)
- Victory over a sin.
- Grow in love for people.
- New frontiers in evangelism.
- Constancy and extension in your prayer life.
- Calmness.
- Developing personal warmth.
- Setting boundaries.
- Deeper engagement with the Scriptures.
- Develop discipline in some area – eating, use of leisure time etc.





Wrap-up

- Focus on Spiritual Health as the key
- Abiding in Christ
- Closing the *Telios* Gap
- Go after it!

- What are my key take-always today?