

Discussion Points

Part III – Abiding and *The Bema Seat*

1. Discuss the moment by moment experience of "**abiding**" in fellowship with the Holy Spirit as a Christian's **birthright**, in contrast to a fellowship that is presumably attained to through obedience. Each Christian who wants to experience the continual flow of the Holy Spirit's life must come to understand that God is concerned about sin because **sin disrupts fellowship**. Disrupted fellowship obstructs His blessings and my usefulness. Our tendency is to focus on obedience to a perceived **list of "dos and don'ts"**, as if the obedience were the end-goal. Oswald Chambers rightly states, "Freshness does not come from obedience, but from the Holy Spirit; obedience keeps us in the light as God is in the light." In other words, my "doing" should be the natural **by-product** of my "being." The principle of abiding focuses on the **relationship** of the believer with the Holy Spirit, out of which His fruit is **naturally** produced.
2. Many Christians find themselves habitually living in a Romans 7 experience, and some would point at the apostle Paul to prove that he too had the same "struggles." I believe every Christian must come to recognize the human nature as hopeless (the law in Romans 7 serves this purpose). Paul did pass through Romans 7, as will every Christian, but he **resided** in Romans 8. Has God not made the same provision for every Christian?
3. Discuss how God wants His children to **seek** "His" eternal rewards, in contrast to the often-held belief that to seek rewards is somehow unspiritual, and at the very least a wrong motive. If I have as my goal to be satisfied with worldly desires, i.e. material things, praise, pleasures, etc., then it is wrong. But we are commanded to seek His eternal rewards, which are **not of a worldly nature**, i.e. they cannot be measured by my physical senses and understanding. We cannot comprehend them beforehand, anymore than a person blind from birth could comprehend "color". His nature is to be the **Blesser** and **Rewarder** who always desires to give the very best to those who will trust in His character. He has chosen to bless us into eternity with rewards because of **His** goodness and grace, not because of our goodness or merit. (Heb. 11:6)
4. Discuss the need to focus our attention on **eternal** values (regarding myself as a stranger and alien here on earth), in contrast to the common understanding that it is perfectly fine with God if His children pursue the comforts, pleasures and material benefits during this short physical existence. The pursuit of these things is a hindrance that causes many Christians to **not mature**. (See - Luke 8:14, Col. 3:1-3)
5. Discuss how **the quality of my life** in eternity will somehow be affected by my willingness (by faith) to let the Holy Spirit make me into a useful instrument through which He can produce His fruit and accomplish **His** purposes here on earth. I believe the idea that we as Christians can "do things for God" reinforces the misconception that God is in heaven with a checklist, keeping track of things "**I**" do **for** him. We quickly acknowledge that God has need of nothing I have to offer. Then what does God expect of me? "*the Spirit gives life, the flesh profits nothing.*" Does that mean I can do **nothing**? Unfortunately I can do lots of things (see 1 Cor. 13:1-3). The question is, does what I do have **eternal** value (His life)? If what I do is **motivated by the Holy Spirit** it does have His life, but if it originates from me it only has **temporal** value for this time on earth.

6. Discuss how we can allow the Holy Spirit to use the resources He has given each believer. Each of us has varying degrees of three resources; **time**, **energy** and **possessions**. The new believer should understand from the beginning that God has given him **control over the choices to allow** the Holy Spirit to use those resources for His purposes, **or to deny** Him use of those resources. As I allow the Holy Spirit use of those resources (building materials) He will build for me an **eternal** structure of gold, silver and precious stones. As I deny Him use of those resources, I am building for myself a **temporary** structure of wood, hay and stubble. Is it not in a believer's best interest to understand this early in his Christian walk, rather than years later?