

Resources for “Abiding” in the midst of COVID-19

Jesus encouraged the disciples in the midst of uncertain and perilous times to “abide” in him, in his love, and in his words. The promise that accompanies that encouragement is that to the extent we abide in him, he and his love and his words will also abide in us. As some practical applications of that truth, I offer the following resources to help us all “abide” in these days of uncertainty and peril.

It is vital to remember that the tools offered here are not equivalent to abiding in Christ. It is possible to make two equal and opposite errors when it comes to the disciplines.

One is to adhere to them as rote exercises and never even look for the reality of the presence of Christ by the Spirit as we engage in them. The other is to neglect them as meaningless rituals and imagine that we can encounter Christ’s powerful, life-giving presence apart from his words. John 5:39-40 is Jesus’ answer to the first error, and John 15:4-5 is his answer to the other.

I have found the image of breathing in and breathing out to be a helpful one in thinking of the disciplines. They are tools ultimately to foster relationship. Relationships are mutual and two-way interactions. God initiates, beginning with creation in speaking to us and we must “breathe in” the words God “breathes out”. Our response then, must be to “breathe out” what we have “breathed in” and speak back to God. The disciplines of reading, studying, memorizing, preaching, silence and meditating constitute some of our inhaling activities. Prayer, including praise, lament, intercession, supplication, confession, and blessing are some of what are included in our exhaling activities.

Below you will find three resources that are intended to help you engage in abiding in these extraordinary days. They are not intended to replace existing rhythms you practice as though they are superior. There is no “one way” to abide, and often changing our rhythms helps us refresh our connection to Jesus. Use them, modify them, or pursue your own. If you have other tools you have found useful, share them with us!

Annual Bible Reading Plan

A foundational discipline is regular Scripture reading. An annual reading plan like that below, helps anchor us in a comprehensive understanding of the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). I have found that even at my best, I miss days and inevitably have to catch up. So I have arranged this by weeks, leaving it to you to determine how to apportion the readings within each week. It aims for a chronological approach, weaving psalms and prophets, wisdom books, and epistles in with the narratives they relate to most. I have found that listening to an audio bible in the car to be a great way to engage in this type of discipline.

Week 1 - Genesis 1-27

Week 2 - Genesis 28-46

Week 3 - Genesis 47-Exodus 19

Week 4 - Exodus 20-37

Week 5 - Exodus 38-Leviticus 17

Week 6 - Leviticus 18-Numbers 10

Week 7 - Numbers 11-29

Week 8 - Numbers 30-Deuteronomy 9

Week 9 - Deuteronomy 10-31

Week 10 - Deuteronomy 32-Joshua 19

Week 11 - Joshua 20-Judges 11

Week 12 - Judges 12-21, Ruth 1-4, 1 Samuel 1-8

Week 13 - 1 Samuel 9-28

Week 14 - 1 Samuel 29-31, 1 Chronicles 10, Psalms 1-37

Week 15 - Psalms 38-41, 2 Samuel 1-12, 1 Chronicles 11-20

Week 16 - 2 Samuel 13-24, 1 Chronicles 21-29

Week 17 - Psalms 42-72, 1 Kings 1-2

Week 18 - 1 Kings 3-11, 2 Chronicles 1-9, Proverbs 1-4

Week 19 - Proverbs 5-27

Week 20 - Prov. 28-31, Song of Songs 1-8, Eccl. 1-12, 1 Kings 12-14, 2 Chron. 10-16

Week 21 - 1 Kings 15-22, 2 Chronicles 17-20, 2 Kings 1-8

Week 22 - Obadiah 1, 2 Chronicles 21-27, 2 Kings 9-15, Joel 1-3, Jonah 1-4

Week 23 - Hosea 1-14, Amos 1-9, Isaiah 1-3

Week 24 - Isaiah 4-16, Micah 1-7

Week 25 - Isaiah 17-35, 2 Kings 16-17, 2 Chronicles 28

Week 26 - 2 Kings 18-21, 2 Chronicles 29-33, Isaiah 36-45

Week 27 - Isaiah 46-66

Week 28 - Nahum 1-3, 2 Kings 22-23, 2 Chron. 34-35, Zephaniah 1-3, Jeremiah 1-5

Week 29 - Jeremiah 6-20, 26, 46-47*

Week 30 - Hab. 1-3, Jer. 25, 35-36, 45; 22:10-30; 23:9-24:10; 27-29; 34:8-22, Dan. 1-2, Ezekiel 1-5

Week 31 - Ezekiel 6-24, Jer. 21:1-22:9; 34:1-7; 32:1-33:13; 23:1-8; 33:14-26; 30-31

Week 32 - Ezekiel 25-29, Jer. 37-44, 2 Kings 24-25, 2 Chron. 36, Lamentations 1-5
Week 33 - Jeremiah 48-52, Ezekiel 30-39, Daniel 3
Week 34 - Ezekiel 40-48, Daniel 4, Psalms 73-88
Week 35 - Psalms 89-106, Job 1-15
Week 36 - Job 16-42
Week 37 - Daniel 5-12, Ezra 1-3, Haggai 1-2
Week 38 - Zechariah 1-8, Psalms 107-141
Week 39 - Psalms 142-150, Zechariah 9-14, Esther 1-10, Malachi 1-4, Ezra 7-10
Week 40 - Nehemiah 1-13, 1 Chronicles 1-9**
Week 41 - Matthew 1-21
Week 42 - Matthew 22-28, Mark 1-9
Week 43 - Mark 10-16, John 1-11
Week 44 - John 12-21, Luke 1-6
Week 45 - Luke 7-21
Week 46 - Luke 22-24, Acts 1-14, James 1-5, Galatians 1-6
Week 47 - Acts 15-18, 1 Thess. 1-5, 2 Thess. 1-3, Acts 19-20, 1 Cor. 1-10
Week 48 - 1 Cor. 11-16, 2 Cor. 1-13, Rom. 1-8
Week 49 - Romans 9-16, Acts 21-28, Ephesians 1-6, Colossians 1-4, Philemon 1
Week 50 - Philippians 1-4, 1 Peter 1-5, 1 Timothy 1-6, Titus 1-3, Hebrews 1-10
Week 51 - Heb. 11-13, 2 Pet. 1-3, 2 Tim. 1-4, Jude 1, 1 John 1-5, 2 John 1, 3 John 1
Week 52 - Revelation 1-22

**Jeremiah is not written in chronological order, and this plan follows one reconstruction of the chronological sequence of Jeremiah's ministry. While it can be hard to follow, reading it this way can enlighten some of the passages.*

***The extensive genealogies in Chronicles have been placed here because they relate those Israelites who returned from exile (the last significant event in the Old Testament) and also because they foreshadow the genealogy that begins Matthew's gospel.*

Psalms Prayer Plan

Eugene Peterson recommends, in concert with ancient Christian practice, to pray the Psalms through once a month. The Psalms are a comprehensive prayer book that covers almost every imaginable human experience and gives language for how to address our responses to God. Using the Psalms this way, allows us to have God's word abiding in us so that the language of our prayer is formed by God's word. Below is a plan for 30-day cycles of praying the Psalms.

- Day 1** - Psalms 1-7
- Day 2** - Psalms 8-14
- Day 3** - Psalms 15-18
- Day 4** - Psalms 19-24
- Day 5** - Psalms 25-29
- Day 6** - Psalms 30-34
- Day 7** - Psalms 35-37
- Day 8** - Psalms 38-41
- Day 9** - Psalms 42-46
- Day 10** - Psalms 47-51
- Day 11** - Psalms 52-57
- Day 12** - Psalms 58-64
- Day 13** - Psalms 65-68
- Day 14** - Psalms 69-72
- Day 15** - Psalms 73-76
- Day 16** - Psalms 77-78
- Day 17** - Psalms 79-84
- Day 18** - Psalms 85-89
- Day 19** - Psalms 90-95
- Day 20** - Psalms 96-102
- Day 21** - Psalms 103-105
- Day 22** - Psalms 106-107
- Day 23** - Psalms 108-113
- Day 24** - Psalms 114-118
- Day 25** - Psalm 119:1-96
- Day 26** - Psalm 119:97-176
- Day 27** - Psalms 120-130
- Day 28** - Psalms 131-137
- Day 29** - Psalms 138-144
- Day 30** - Psalms 145-150

Daily Meditations for Lent

The resource below was forwarded to me by Marg Halka from her sister's prayer group.

It is a simple guide to daily meditations on God's character, informed by Scripture.

Taking just five minutes each day to pray over these verses and reflections on God's nature is an excellent tool for abiding during the season in which we reflect on Christ's suffering and anticipate the glory of His resurrection.

- Day 1:** God is All Powerful (Psalm 19:1-4, Isaiah 40:26, Ephesians 1:15-23)
- Day 2:** God is Present Everywhere (Deuteronomy 21:6, Hebrews 13:5, John 14:16-17)
- Day 3:** God is Always With Us (Psalm 22: 9, 23-24, Joshua 1:9, Psalm 16:11)
- Day 4:** God Knows Everything (Proverbs 15:3, Psalm 33: 13-15)
- Day 5:** God Knows Everything About Us (Is. 49: 15-16, Jer. 29:11, Jas. 1: 5-6, Rom. 5: 3-5)
- Day 6:** God is Sovereign (Psalm 24: 8-10, Revelation 19: 1-6)
- Day 7:** God is Holy (Exodus 15:11, Isaiah 6: 1-4, Revelation 4:8)
- Day 8:** God is Absolute Truth (2 Timothy 3:16, Numbers 23:19)
- Day 9:** God's Truth Sets Us Free (John 10:28, Titus 1:2, Hebrews 6:16-18)
- Day 10:** God is Righteous (Psalm 11:7, 1 Peter 3:14)
- Day 11:** God is Just (Deut. 32:4)
- Day 12:** God is Love (1 John 4:7-8)
- Day 13:** God is Merciful (Romans 9:15-16)
- Day 14:** God is Gracious (Psalm 145:8, Ephesians 2: 8-9)
- Day 15:** God is Faithful (Deut. 7:9; 2 Timothy 2:13; 1 Corinthians 13:12)
- Day 16:** God Enables Us to Be Faithful (Psalm 89:8, Deuteronomy 7:9)
- Day 17:** God Never Changes (Malachi 3:6, Romans 8:35-39)
- Day 18:** God Gives Us Rest in Him (Phillipians 4:6-7, Hebrews 13:8)
- Day 19:** God is Good (Psalm 34:8)
- Day 20:** God is Infinite (Colossians 1:17, Psalm 147:5)
- Day 21:** God is Self-Sufficient (John 5:26, Ephesians 3:20)
- Day 22:** God is Omnipotent (All-Powerful - Psalm 33:6, Job 11: 7-11)
- Day 23:** God is Omniscient (All-Knowing - Isaiah 46: 9-10)
- Day 24:** God is Wise (Romans 11:33)