



REMAINING IN HIS PRESENCE

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This session closes our retreat by reflecting on Christ's presence, not just here at the retreat, but as we return to the hustle and bustle of life.

This session focuses on recognizing Christ's presence, not only during our time together but as we transition back into the busy rhythm of daily life. The retreat has been refreshing—time away from responsibilities—but now it's time to return to the demands of everyday living.

You might find that, beyond household chores, your return is filled with tasks like paying bills, returning to work, facing relationship challenges, dealing with job-related stress, managing health issues, or even the loss of a loved one. In this session, regardless of the challenges you face, we will center our attention on one vital theme: how to maintain a strong connection to God's presence in your life.

1. Defining the Connection

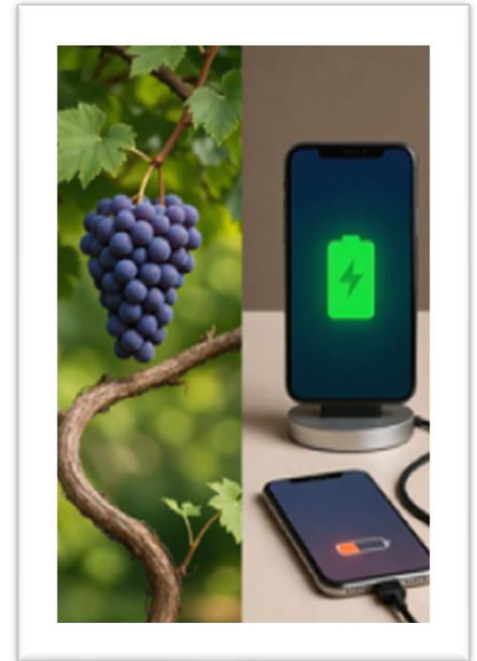
A. What does it mean to “*Remain in His Presence?*”

Jesus gives us the clearest picture in John 15:4:

- **John 15:4 (NIV) ~ *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.**
- **John 15:4 (NKJV) ~ *Abide* in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it *abides* in the vine, neither can you, unless you *abide* in Me.**

Remaining or abiding in His presence is not about a place; it's about a relationship. It's the steady, moment-by-moment awareness that He is with you and you are with Him.

- **Illustration of the grape vine.** Grapes don't have to work to grow; they simply stay attached to the vine. In the same way, staying in His presence is like a branch being connected to the vine—fruitfulness comes effortlessly from that connection.
- **Illustration of a phone left on a charger:** A phone stays fully powered when left plugged in. Unplug it too early, and the battery drains quickly. You can get charged up at a ladies' retreat, but when you get home, if you do not continue to stay plugged in to His presence, your spiritual batteries can drain quickly.



B. Walking in the Spirit: What is the role of the Holy Spirit?

- Jesus said that He would pray to the Father that He would send the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit would dwell in you (John 14:16-17).

The power to live your Christian life comes not only from abiding in Christ but also from the Holy Spirit living within you (Ephesians 3:16-17).

C. The Connection: What is the connection between abiding in Christ and walking in the Spirit?

- **Abiding in Christ:** This concept refers to maintaining a close and intimate relationship with Jesus on a moment-by-moment basis.
- **Walking in the Spirit:** This practice supports abiding in Christ by highlighting your reliance on the Holy Spirit's power for everyday living.
- **Together:** When combined, abiding in Christ and walking in the Spirit lead to a Spirit-filled life marked by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, which are the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).



2. The "Home" Hurdle

A. Discussion: Why is remaining in His presence sometimes difficult when you return home?

B. Illustrations

- Lord, I trust you, but...
- Martha in the kitchen...
- Interruptions...



3. Real Life: Remaining in His Presence

A. Examples with Application

a. Sara, an Overwhelmed Mother of Toddlers

- **Application:** When you're overwhelmed with work, emails, kids' schedules, toddler tantrums, or rush hour traffic, pause and pray, and let God know that you need His help to get you through (Psalm 27:14). Take a moment and reconnect to the vine.

b. Lisa, a Single Mom with Cancer

- **Application:** When driving to a difficult doctor's appointment or parent-teacher conference, or a difficult meeting with your boss, remember that even here, in whatever darkness you are in, God sees you and is with you (Psalm 139).

c. Linda, Recently Widowed

- **Application:** Pray Scripture when you are feeling down and all alone. Talk to God when you are lonely, "Lord, I know you are always with me" (Matt 28:29). "Lord, thank you that you will never leave me" (Hebrews 13:5).

d. Grace, Exhausted from Caring for an Aging Parent

- **Application:** When you feel exhausted from your day, stop and pray before sleep: "Lord, thank you for being my strength today." If you are caring for someone, pray for rest for yourself and for the one you are caring for (Psalm 73:26; Psalm 91:1).

For these women, abiding is not an extra burden, but a lifeline woven into their daily life. By reading and applying God's word, by spending time with Him in prayer, by claiming God's promises in His Word, they remain in Christ—and His life, peace, and joy flow through them.

B. How-tos: Practical, everyday ways to remain in His Presence.

a. Discussion: What is one simple practice that helps you stay aware of Jesus in the middle of your day?

b. Practical How-to Examples

- 1. When Stressed Out:** You're driving, and your mind starts racing toward schedules, responsibilities, or worries. Instead of letting anxiety take over, you remember: **Isaiah 26:3** ~ "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You."
You pray: "Jesus, stay at the center of my thoughts." That simple prayer is abiding in His presence.
- 2. Overwhelmed When You Arrive Home:** You step through your front door and immediately see dishes, laundry, or the remnants of a busy weekend. Instead of feeling the retreat 'fade,' you pause and whisper a prayer: "Lord, you are here with me, help me serve with your strength, not mine" (Ephesians 3:16).
- 3. Relationship Problems:** You just returned from a ladies' retreat, and you are faced with a difficult relationship problem. You pray: "Lord, I need your right now. Be my strength. Give me wisdom to know what to say" (James 1:5,19).

c. How to Ideas

1. The Morning Invitation: Invite Jesus into your day.
2. Phone Scripture: Set recurring alarms with Scripture verses.
3. Prayer Walks: Take a walk with the Lord.
4. Review at the End of the Day: Spend time talking to the Lord before sleep.
5. Presence Reminders: Place Scripture reminders around your house.
6. Text a Verse to a Friend.

Challenge: Pick 1 or 2 Exercises. Try them daily for one week.



Staying in God's presence is a lot like Wi-Fi—you don't have to see the router to know it's working. You just have to stay in range. And guess what? His range is everywhere!

Remember: He's with you in the car, in the kitchen, and in the laundry pile!