



Growing in Christ Together

FALL CHURCHWIDE SERIES

WEEK 1 - AN ABIDING CLUSTER

SEPTEMBER 14, 2025 - PASTOR BRIAN COLES

WORSHIP

Begin your group with a time of worship. If someone in your group can lead worship, invite them to lead two or three songs. Alternatively, consider using one or more of these songs from our Sunday morning worship time:

- **Faithful And True** (*New Life Worship*)
- **Great Are You Lord** (*Bethel*)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- John 15:5; 17:20-26
- Colossians 3:12-14

OPENING PRAYER

Begin your session with a prayer, asking God for protection, wisdom, and guidance as you discuss the questions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The foundation of both individual Christian life and Christian community is a vibrant personal relationship with God.
2. We are designed for community, but that community should be rooted in our individual relationships with Christ.
3. Unity among believers is a powerful witness to the world about God's love and Jesus' mission.
4. Spiritual growth involves both personal disciplines (prayer, fasting, giving) and communal practices.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to you that Jesus prayed for unity among believers in John 17? How does this impact your view of Christian community?
2. The sermon emphasized the importance of both personal and communal relationships with God. How do you balance your individual walk with God and your involvement in Christian community?
3. Pastor Brian mentioned that "if you are not receiving from Christ... you will look to the community... to fill parts of your life that they were never intended to fill." Have you experienced this in your own life? How can we ensure we're primarily seeking fulfillment in Christ?
4. Discuss the metaphor of branches and the vine (John 15:5). How does this image help you understand your relationship with Christ and with other believers?
5. The sermon states, "Abiding in Christ as a community is central to our identity in Christ." What does this look like practically in our daily lives and in our church?
6. Reflect on Colossians 3:12-14. Which of these virtues do you find most challenging to "put on" in your interactions with fellow believers? Why?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

1. Commit to a daily practice of "abiding" in Christ through prayer, Scripture reading, or meditation.
2. Identify one area where you may be looking to the community (or others) to fulfill a need that should be met in Christ. Pray about this and discuss with a trusted friend or mentor.
3. Choose one of the virtues from Colossians 3:12-14 to focus on this week in your interactions with others.
4. Take a step towards deeper community involvement:
 - a. Join a small group if you're not in one
 - b. Volunteer for a ministry team
 - c. Commit to arriving at church early to connect with others
 - d. Start or join a prayer group

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank God for the gift of community and ask for His help in growing both individually and collectively in Christ.