

Abiding Today - The Present - This Moment

God wants me to be free from the burden of “unresolved issues” of the PAST or the FUTURE, allowing Him freedom to produce His fruit through my life.

PAST

- Do I need to resolve issues from my past?
- Do I need to forgive or reconcile with someone, or confess a wrong to someone?
- Do I need to make restitution for harm done? (physical, financial, etc.)
- Do I need to confess any sins to the Lord?

PRESENT

“Am I in fellowship with (“abiding with”) the Lord at this moment?”

IF NOT, WHY NOT?

FUTURE

- Do I have worries about the future disrupting my fellowship with the Lord?
- Do I need to acknowledge my worry or anxiety as sin?



1. Issues related to others - in the past, or at this moment.

- a. If I think I can maintain good fellowship with God, and at the same time disregard relationships with others, I am deceiving myself.

1 John 2:9-11 The one who says he is in the light but hates (*see note*) his brother **is in the darkness** until now. The one who loves his brother remains in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates (*see note*) his brother is in the darkness, **walks in the darkness**, and doesn't know where he's going, **because the darkness has blinded his eyes**.

1 John 4:20-21 If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates (*see note*) his brother, he is a liar. For the person who **does not love** his brother he has seen **cannot** love the God he has not seen. And we have this command from Him: The one who loves God must also love his brother.

NOTE: “**Love**” is a choice “**to do what is best for someone.**” That is not necessarily the same as “doing what is pleasing to someone” (see also Heb. 12:6,11). I do not have to “feel affectionate” toward someone, but I do have to “love” them. In this context, don't equate “**hate**” to “hostility” or “intense dislike”, but rather as “**not doing what is in someone's best interest,**” (**the absence of love** or **not loving**).

- b. My unwillingness to forgive someone can limit my availability and usefulness to God, and can thus affect His fruit through my life.

Mark 11:25 And whenever you stand praying, if you have **anything** against **anyone**, **forgive** him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your wrongdoing.

Col. 3:12-13 Therefore, God's chosen ones, holy and loved, put on heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, accepting one another and **forgiving one another** if anyone has a complaint against **another**. **Just as** the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive.

- c. Does the Holy Spirit want me to apologize to someone I have offended? It is my responsibility to pursue restoration of fellowship.

Matt. 5:23-24 So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something **against you**, leave your gift there in front of the altar. **First go** and be reconciled with your brother, and **then** come and offer your gift.

- d. Does the Holy Spirit want me to pursue reconciliation with someone who has offended me? It is my responsibility to pursue restoration of fellowship.

Matt. 18:15 If your brother **sins against you**, go and rebuke him **in private**. If he listens to you, you have won your brother.

- e. Does the Holy Spirit want me to make restitution to someone to whom I have caused loss? (Repay a debt? A loan? Taxes owed?)

Num. 5:5-7 The LORD spoke ... When a man or woman commits any sin against another, that person acts unfaithfully toward the LORD and is guilty. The person is to confess the sin he has committed. **He is to pay full compensation**, ... to the individual he has wronged.
Rom. 13:8 **Do not owe anyone anything**, except to love one another,...

- f. I am not responsible for someone else's unwillingness to love or forgive me, but God does hold me accountable for loving and forgiving others.

Rom. 12:10 **Show family affection** to one another with brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor.
Rom. 12:16-18 ... **Do not repay anyone evil** for evil. Try to do what is honorable in everyone's eyes. **If possible**, on **your part**, live at peace with everyone.
Rom. 12:20-21 But If **your enemy** is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.... Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.
Phil. 2:1-4 ... Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but **also** for the interests of **others**.

NOTE: Remember – “Love” is a **choice** “to do what is in someone’s best interest.”

2. Personal issues - just between the Lord and me.

- a. Is there an unresolved personal issue(s) that the Holy Spirit wants me to acknowledge and confess to Him?

1 John 1:9-10 **If we confess** our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say, “We don’t have any sin,” we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

b. Important points to contemplate:

1) Accountability - Most Christians subconsciously reason that God leaves it up to them to determine when there is a problem between them and God that needs to be resolved. That is wrong! I am **not** the one who decides for what I am being held accountable. The Holy Spirit **alone** makes that determination. In a parent-child relationship, the parent's responsibility is to **explain** to the child the nature of the problem. The child's responsibility is to **attentively listen** and **respond**.

2) Disagreements - Newlyweds often have many differing opinions. Hopefully, as they nurture their relationship, many of those differences will diminish. Some will not. Some differences of opinion will remain until death. That is okay; we are each designed with a unique personality, and we should respect that difference in others. Do I really want everyone to think as I do? My goal should be to live in harmony (fellowship) with others, not to pressure everyone to hold my views. That is true of my spouse and my children as well as others.

I need to ask myself: Am I bothered by my spouse's (or friend's) behavior, or views, because it's not the way "I" do things, or the way "I" think? Does God say their behavior or view is displeasing (sin) to Him? If I am bothered or offended by another's beliefs or behavior, yet God does not say it is sin, then I may need to examine my own heart. Maybe I'm judgmental. Maybe God is trying to show **me** an area He wants to change in **my** life. It is perfectly normal to hold different opinions and yet maintain mutual respect and fellowship.

3) Growth - Having no unresolved issues for which I am being held accountable does **not** mean that everything I am now doing is pleasing to God. What does the concept of growth mean? We grow "**to**" something and "**from**" something. As we grow physically, we are advancing **from** a level of weakness **to** a level of increased physical capability. Likewise, as we grow spiritually, we are advancing from a level of reliance on **self** to a level of increasing reliance on **God**.



I need to understand that spiritual strength is not what **I** can do, but rather what God is able to do through me. There is only one thing that hinders the Lord from using my life, unconfessed sin (anything that displeases the Lord) for which He is holding me accountable. The term "**growth**" implies then that there are things in my life today that are displeasing to the Lord, hence the need "to grow." Thankfully He does not hold me accountable for all that displeases Him. In fact, I am not even aware of all that He would like to change. If I am growing spiritually, I will become increasingly more sensitive to His voice. He wants me to learn to hear His whisper without having to shout at me.

Consider this age-appropriate growth example: My 6-month old baby messes in his diaper. Am I shocked? Do I scold him or spank him? Do I find it pleasing that he ruined his diaper? Of course not! I know that he does not yet understand. However, if he does the same thing when he is 6 years old, it will be quite different. That is the same way the Holy Spirit trains me, except that He is more patient and gentle than we tend to be.

Again, what I need to remember is that the Holy Spirit is the **only One** who is able to determine what is displeasing to Him. He is not waiting for me to make those determinations. Do you expect your baby to tell you the rules by which he will live in harmony with you? That would be ridiculous. Neither does the Holy Spirit expect **me** to tell Him what is acceptable!

3. Issues related to the future. God does not want me to be weighed down by either the past or the future.

a. It is good to be “concerned” about the future, but concern can become worry, and worry can become anxiety. I need to be careful to not allow those emotions to become a pretext for not trusting in God’s care for me.

CONCERN ➡ WORRY ➡ ANXIETY ➡ PANIC

b. It is okay to be concerned (wise, prudent) and to plan and prepare for the future. Paul’s “concern” for the welfare of the believers was correct.

2 Cor. 11:28-29 (*Paul said*) ... there is the daily pressure on me: my care for all the churches.

Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?

Prov. 10:5 The son who gathers during summer is prudent; the son who sleeps during harvest is disgraceful.

c. But I am told to “not worry” about the future. I should not regard that instruction as just a “suggestion.” Worry and anxiety about the future can be the evidence of an unwillingness to trust God, and can become sinful.

Matt. 6:31-34 So don’t worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ... your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Phil. 4:6 Don’t worry about anything,...

d. I can count on the Lord to faithfully and lovingly take care of my need.

Phil. 4:6-7 Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 5:6-7 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your care on Him, because He cares about you.

e. I am told to “follow” Him, even though it is always tempting to “lead.” He wants me to allow Him to be intimately involved in all my future plans.

Prov. 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. (NKJV)

Luke 9:23-24 Then He said to them all, “If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me...”

James 4:13-17 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit.” You don’t even know what tomorrow will bring ... Instead, you should say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”