

## Introduction

When I read the statistics from George Barna a couple of years ago about Biblical worldview, I was greatly saddened. Only 37% of Christian pastors hold a Biblical worldview. Senior pastors held a slightly higher Biblical worldview, 41%. Only 12% of Youth and Children's Pastors hold a Biblical worldview. With the leaders in churches not holding a Biblical worldview, it is no wonder that most believers do not have a Biblical worldview. Their surveys showed that only 6% of people identifying as Christians hold a Biblical worldview. Unfortunately, the Barna survey showed that "one-third of all pastors do NOT read the Bible during a typical week." We need pastors to embrace God's word, by reading, studying, and applying it in their lives, and then to diligently teach God's word. We also need congregants to embrace God's word, by reading, studying, and filling their minds with God's word, and then to apply it in their lives.

In John 8:31-32, Jesus said, "If you continue in My word then you are truly disciples of Mine, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." True disciples of Jesus continue or abide in God's truth. They read God's word. They study God's word. They meditate on God's word. They fill their minds with God's word, and it richly dwells within them. If there was ever a message that needed to be preached at this hour, it is for Christians to abide in God's word and to gain a Biblical worldview.

(Jn 8:31–32) "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; {32} and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

Jesus is at the Feast of Tabernacles, and it is the last day of the feast, the Great Day of the Feast. He has been speaking to the Jews in the temple, and as He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. So, Jesus was saying to those who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine..." Jesus did not waste any time in starting up His discipleship of new believers; He started immediately. His first message to these new believers is that they need to continue or abide in His word. There is great debate among scholars whether Jesus was just talking to those that now believed, or to a mixed crowd of believers and unbelievers. From the context of the passage, I believe Jesus addressed His initial comments to these new believers, but then the unbelieving Jews got involved and the conversation was switched to speaking with these unbelievers.

Abiding in God's word is not the only characteristic of a believer, but it is obviously a very important one. In John 13:34-35, Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." Love is the earmark of the church, and a very important mark of a Christian. One of the main reasons that John wrote 1 John is to give us characteristics of a true believer. He wrote, "These things I have written so that you know that you eternal life." And in that book, he gave eight to ten characteristics of a true believer. So, there are many characteristics of a true believer, not just abiding in God's word.

(Jn 13:34–35) "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. {35} "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

(1 Jn 5:13) "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

In our passage today, we will look at three characteristics of a true disciple. First, a true disciple abides in God's word. Second, a true disciple has been set free from sin. Third, a true disciple knows God. He has believed in Christ, and now has a relationship with Him.

### Three Characteristics of a True Disciple

1. Abides in God's word
2. Set free from sin
3. Knows God

(Jn 8:31-33) "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; {32} and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." {33} They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?"

(Jn 8:34-38) "Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. {35} "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. {36} "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. {37} "I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. {38} "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father."

(Jn 8:39-47) "They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. {40} "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. {41} "You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." {42} Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. {43} "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. {44} "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. {45} "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. {46} "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? {47} "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

(Jn 8:48-59) "The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" {49} Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. {50} "But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. {51} "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word, he will never see death." {52} The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.' {53} "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?" {54} Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'; {55} and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. {56} "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." {57} So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" {58} Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." {59} Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple."

## 1. Abides in God's word

First, a true disciple abides in God's word. What does it mean to be a true disciple? Does that mean that there are false disciples? Does that mean that there are nominal disciples, or marginal disciples, and great disciples? What does it mean to be a true disciple?

(Jn 8:31) "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine;"

I believe that a true disciple is a genuine disciple. He believes that Jesus is the Messiah, and has made a commitment to Him. Jesus had just finished telling those in the temple that He is the Light of the world (Jn 8:12). He has told them He has come from heaven and has been sent by the Father (Jn 8:16, 18, 26). He has told them that they are going to die in their sins unless they believe that He is the Messiah (Jn 8:24). As Jesus spoke those things, many came to believe in Him. A true disciple believes in Christ; he is a believer. It is not an outward appearance or façade; He truly believes in Jesus as the Messiah, and has placed his faith in Christ. I have heard different quotes about the percentage of people in churches today that are not believers, and it is a pretty high number. Only God knows how many people in churches are true believers.

(Jn 8:30) "As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him."

There are many that think that living a pretty good life compared to others, doing some good deeds, or going to church makes them a true believer. John made it clear to Nicodemus that unless a man is born again, he will not enter into heaven. When a person is born of the Spirit, the Spirit of God comes into him. He is a new creation, and is born into God's family. His sins are forgiven, and he will live with God forever. He is not a slave, but is now a son, and will remain with God forever.

When a person is born into God's kingdom, he is a new creation. There will be changes in his life because Jesus is now Lord of his life (Ro 10:9-10), and he is now being led by the Spirit (Ro 8:14). Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." There will be changes in his life because he is not the same person; he is a new creation.

(2 Co 5:17) "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."

There was much debate about the book of James before it became part of the canon of Scripture. Some felt like James was telling people that they are saved by works, rather than by grace. That is not the case at all. James was trying to communicate that when a person receives Christ, there will be changes in his life. There will be fruit in his life. He wrote, "If someone says he has faith, but he has no works, can that faith save him?" He was not saying that those works save a person; he was saying that a true believer's faith is evidenced by his works.

(Jas 2:14) "What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?"

What Jesus was telling these new believers was that if they were truly His disciples they will abide or continue in His word. The Greek word is *meno* (Strong's G3306), which means to abide, continue, dwell, remain, or to stay in a place. A true disciple is going to live in God's

word. He is going to be in God's word every day. God's word has become a big part of his life, and he lives in God's word. The Greek word for disciple is *mathetes* (Strong's G3101), which means a learner, or pupil. The Word Study of the New Testament Dictionary says that a disciple is "an adherent who accepts the instruction given to him and makes it his rule of conduct." A true disciple is one who is abiding in God's word, learning the truth, and applying it in his life.

(Jn 8:31) "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine;"

Notice what happens when we abide in God's word; we will know the truth, and the truth will make us free. Intellectual knowledge of truth does not set people free from sin. It is the application of God's word in our lives that sets us free. However, it begins with knowing the truth. When we immerse ourselves in God's word, and get it in our hearts, our minds are renewed. Paul wrote that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we can prove what the will of God is, that which is good, acceptable, and perfect. When we renew our minds by filling it with God's word, we know the truth and we are set free.

(Jn 8:32) "and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

(Ro 12:2) "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

I received Christ into my life during the Labor Day weekend of 1974 at the Chisholm Trail Motel in Duncan, Oklahoma. I was there to play in the Elks Labor Day Golf Tournament, and I read a devotional put there by the Gideons. After I received Christ, I did not see any fruit in my life; I did not see much outward change. I had a huge internal change, and I was not against Christianity like I had been. In the summer of 1975, I stayed for summer school at TCU and God put a man named Jim in the room next to me. As we talked, he shared with me some things for me to do so that I could grow in my faith. He told me to start reading my Bible. He did not give me a reading plan or show me how to have a quiet time; he simply said that I needed to start reading my Bible. He also shared that I needed to have fellowship with other believers, and he invited me to the Campus Crusade meetings on Wednesday nights. I opened my Bible and started reading in Proverbs, and found that I loved it. I began reading eight chapters of Proverbs every day. I would read chapters 1-8, and the next day 2-9, and so on. I also began going to the Wednesday night meetings, where I heard teachings from the Word of God. My life began to change. I stopped swearing, and I became less selfish. I was a new creation, and the old things were now starting to pass away, and new things were coming. It happened when I began to abide in God's word.

When we become a Christian and the Holy Spirit comes inside of us, the Holy Spirit guides us in the truth. In verse forty-three, Jesus said, "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father." Then in verse forty-seven, He said, "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them because you are not of God."

(Jn 8:43-47) "Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is* because you cannot hear My word. {44} "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father.... {47} He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God."

In John 16, Jesus was teaching about the coming of the Holy Spirit. He said, “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth.” When we receive Christ, we receive the Holy Spirit, and we can now hear the word of God because the Holy Spirit guides us in the truth.

(Jn 16:12–13a) “I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. {13} “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth...”

In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul wrote that God reveals things to us through the Spirit. The Holy Spirit knows the thoughts of God, and we have received the Holy Spirit, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God.

(1 Co 2:10–12) “For to us God revealed *them* through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. {11} For who among men knows the *thoughts* of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the *thoughts* of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. {12} Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,”

Even though believers have the Holy Spirit and can hear and understand the truth, we do not automatically know the truth. We have a responsibility; we must abide in God’s word. We have to do our part and fill our minds with the word of God. Three of the things that I commonly pray for people is that they would long for the pure milk of the word, that the word of God would richly dwell within them, and that God’s work would perform its work in their lives.

(1 Pe 2:2) “like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,”

(Col 3:16) “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

(1 Th 2:13) “For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.”

Notice in Colossians 3:16 that when the word of Christ richly dwells within us, we will teach and admonish one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. We will be speaking truth to one another. John uses the word, truth, seven times, and “word” seven times in our passage. It is pretty easy to see that the passage is about believers abiding in God’s word or the truth. He also writes In verse forty-five, Jesus said two time, “I speak truth.” It is important not just to hear the truths in God’s word, but to speak truth. The confession of God’s word is powerful in our lives and to those who hear us speak truth.

(Jn 8:45–46) “But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. {46} “Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?”

There is one more aspect of abiding in God’s word that is important to look at. In John 8:51-55, Jesus uses the phrase, “keep His word” three times. The Greek word is *tereo* (Strong’s G5083), and it means to keep, hold, observe, or to watch. We must keep, hold, observe, and do God’s word.

(Jn 8:51–55) “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.” {52} The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets *also*; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.... {55} and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.’”

James wrote that we are not to be hearers (of the word) who delude themselves, but prove to be doers of the word. True believers abide in God’s word, and being a doer of the word is a big part of abiding in it. He went on to say that we must look intently at it and abide in it so that we are not forgetful hearers, but effectual doers.

(Jas 1:22–25) “But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves... {25} But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.”

## 2. Set free from sin

The second characteristic of a true disciple is that he has been set free from sin. Jesus told the Jews that if they were truly disciples of His they would continue in His word and know the truth, and the truth would make them free. In that sense, freedom is a result of continuing in the Word of God.

(Jn 8:31–33) “So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; {32} and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

Upon hearing this, the Jews answered Jesus, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You will become free’?” This was not a very honest reply by the Jews. The Jews had been enslaved in Egypt, and God used Moses to bring them out of bondage. Once in the Promised Land, they had sinned and worshiped other Gods, and God had delivered them over to their enemies. They had been taken over by the Babylonians and the Persians.

(Jn 8:33) “They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You will become free’?”

The Jews were thinking in the physical realm, but that is not what Jesus was speaking about. So He answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.” Jesus was talking about being enslaved to sin. Every one of the Jews had committed sin, and was enslaved to sin. The Jews did not think of themselves as being enslaved to sin, but they were slaves of sin.

(Jn 8:34) “Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.”

The Apostle Paul wrote a similar thing in Romans 6. He said that we are slaves to the one whom we obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness. Then, he gave thanks to God that though we were slaves of sin, we became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which we were committed and were freed from sin, and became slaves of

righteousness. That form of teaching is the Word of God. When we abide in God's word, and know God's truth, and become obedient to the Word of God, the truth sets us free.

(Ro 6:16–18) “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? {17} But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, {18} and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

Jesus continued by saying that “the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.” Jesus was speaking in the natural but giving them a spiritual truth. If a slave was redeemed, or paid his debt, he could leave. He did not remain in the house forever. However, a son was part of the family, and would always be part of the family; he remained forever.

(Jn 8:35-36) “The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. {36} So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.”

On the Spiritual level, Jesus is telling them that they are slaves of sin, and cannot remain in the house forever. In order for them to get into the kingdom of God and remain in God's house, they must become sons of God.

Earlier, in John 8:23-24, Jesus had said to everyone, not just to those who were now believing, that He was from above and not of this world, but they are from below, the world. He said that they would die in their sins unless they believed that He was the Messiah. The only way to be set free from our sins is by placing our faith in Christ.

(Jn 8:23–24) “And He was saying to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. {24} “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.”

Jesus has spoken about two kinds of freedom. When we place our faith in Christ, our sins are paid for. Jesus took the punishment for our sins; He paid the penalty for our sins. When we receive Christ, our sins are paid for and we are justified, which means to be declared innocent. Theologians say that we are positionally sanctified; we are made holy by Jesus' sacrifice.

However, when I received Christ, my life did not reflect Christ. I had selfish attitudes and pursuits, wrong desires, sinful habits, and was not free from my sins. Positionally, I was free, but I was not free from sin in my life. The other freedom from sin comes from knowing the truth and abiding in God's Word. It comes from renewing our minds and having our lives transformed. It comes from presenting ourselves to God as living and holy sacrifices, and becoming slaves to righteousness. This type of freedom from sin takes time; it is not instantaneous, and it is called progressive sanctification.

I like what God tells us in Proverbs 4:18, that “the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn that shines brighter and brighter until the full day.” As we abide in God's word, our lives are transformed, and we are set free from sinful habits and actions. We become more conformed to the image of Christ and shine brighter and brighter.

(Pr 4:18) “But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter until the full day.”

### 3. Knows God

Third, a true disciple knows God. He has believed in Christ, and now has a relationship with Him. A true disciple has been born into the kingdom of God and is now part of God’s family. Jesus went on to explain to them, “I know that you are Abraham’s descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which heard from your father.” He told them that being a physical descendant of Abraham did not set them free from their sins and their bondage to sin. He made a distinction between His Father, and their father, the devil.

(Jn 8:37-38) “I know that you are Abraham’s descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. {38} “I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.”

This was a slap in the face to the Jews, and they answered, “Abraham is our father,” to which Jesus responded, “If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham.” Then He gave them an example of what they were doing, and how that was not what Abraham would have done. He said that they were seeking to kill Him, a man who has told them the truth, and that He had heard it from God, and this is not what Abraham did. Jesus said that they were doing the deeds of their father, and he was not Abraham. They were not of the same spirit as Abraham, and they had a different spiritual father.

(Jn 8:39–41a) “They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham. {40} But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. {41} “You are doing the deeds of your father....”

Upon hearing that the Jews said, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God.” Jesus had clearly stated that God is not their father and they are disputing what Jesus said. Scholars say that their statement about fornication is a dig at Jesus’ birth, and Mary’s pregnancy before marriage. Jesus responded by saying, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.” Jesus has repeatedly told them that He has come from above and was sent by the Father. The Jews believed that the Messiah would be sent by the Father, so this is not a new belief. The issue is believing that Jesus is the Messiah, and He has been sent by the Father.

(Jn 8:41b-42) “They said to Him, ‘We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God.’ {42} Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.”

Jesus asked them a question, and then gives them the answer to the question. He said, “Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word.” We saw earlier that when a person is born into the kingdom of God, he receives the Holy Spirit and becomes spiritually alive. The Spirit of Truth gives understanding and guides us into truth. Since they were not born of God, they were not able to understand what Jesus was saying.



(Jn 8:43) “Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is* because you cannot hear My word.”

Then Jesus makes it very clear that they are of their father, the devil, and that they were doing the desires of their father. They were not doing the deeds of Abraham. They were not doing the deeds of God. They were trying to put Jesus to death, a man that had spoken truth to them. Satan was a murderer from the beginning. It was Satan who deceived Adam and Eve and brought sin and death to men. In John 10:10, Jesus said that the thief has come to steal, kill, and destroy. That is what Satan does, and that is the influence that these Jews were operating under.

(Jn 8:44) “You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

(Jn 10:10) “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.”

Jesus made a statement about the nature of a person. When Satan speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Since the Jews had not been into God’s kingdom, they did not have a new nature, and were operating from their sin nature. Since believers are a new creation, and have a new nature, the lives of believers should be radically different than the lives of unbelievers, who are carrying out the desires of their sin nature.

Next, Jesus defends His righteousness and the things that He has been telling them. He asked, “Which one of you convicts Me of sin?” None of them could convict Jesus of sin. Even when Jesus was arrested and they brought in false witnesses, the religious leaders were not able to convict Jesus of sin. Jesus was brought before both Herod and Pilate, and neither of them convicted Jesus of sin. Jesus lived a perfect and sinless life. He was tempted in all things, yet without sin.

(Jn 8:46a) “Which one of you convicts Me of sin...”

(Heb 4:15) “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin.”

Then Jesus asked them another question, “If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?” Jesus used questions to help them understand the things that He was going to tell them. He tells them that those who are of God hear the words of God, and that they do not believe Him because they are not of God. The Jews were God’s chosen people. They thought that because they were Abraham’s descendants and God’s chosen people that they were of God. This is a serious challenge to their perception of who they are and their status with God.

(Jn 8:46b–47) “Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? {47} “He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God.”

Upon hearing that the Jews accuse Jesus of being a Samaritan and having a demon. The Samaritans were “half-breeds” and the Jews did not want anything to do with them. Jesus responded to them telling them that He did not have a demon and He was honoring His Father,

and that they were dishonoring Him. He told them that He was not seeking His own glory, and that there is One who seeks and judges. He said that if anyone keeps His word, he will never see death.

(Jn 8:48-50) “The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” {49} Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. {50} But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges.”

Then Jesus said something to them that really got them riled up. He said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.” Earlier he had told them that unless they believed that Jesus was the Messiah, they would die in their sins. Now He tells them that they will never see death. Jesus was not speaking about physical death, but spiritual death, but they were only thinking in the natural realm.

(Jn 8:51) “Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.”

The Jews replied, “No we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.’ Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?” What Jesus had said did not make sense in the natural; therefore it must be demonic.

(Jn 8:52-53) “The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets *also*; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.’ {53} “Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out *to be*?”

Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.” He said that God is His Father, making Him the Son of God; and it is His Father who is glorifying Him. Then, He told them that they do not know God. They profess to know God and belong to Him, but He said that they do not know Him. He said if He said He did not know the Father, He would be a liar like them, but He does know Him and keeps His word. One of the characteristics of someone who knows God is obedience. True believers abide in His word and keep it.

(Jn 8:54-55) “Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’; {55} and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word.”

Then Jesus said something that really grabbed their attention. He said, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” This statement indicated that He knows Abraham and was there when Abraham rejoiced to see His day.

(Jn 8:56) “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.”

The Jews responded, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” They had asked Jesus who He was and He has set them up for this question and answer. He said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I Am.”

(Jn 8:57-58) “So the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham? {58} Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”

In Exodus 3, God revealed Himself to Moses at the burning bush. He told him to remove his sandals for the place he was standing was holy ground. God told Moses He was the God of his father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He told Moses that He had seen the affliction of His people in Egypt and was now going to deliver them. Then He told Moses that He was sending Him to Pharaoh to bring his people out. Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?’ And God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM’; and He said, ‘Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” Therefore the Jews think of God as “I AM”. (haya, Strong’s H1961, related to YHWH, or YAHWEH, I AM)

(Ex 3:13–14) “Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?’ {14} God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

When Jesus told the Jews that He was “I AM”, He was calling Himself God to them. Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him. They had asked Him who He was, and He had told them that God was His Father, and had been sent by the Father. He told them that He was eternal, and was before Abraham. Now He tells them that He is the I AM. They did not believe that Jesus was God, so that was why they picked up stones to stone Him.

(Jn 8:59) “Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

The temple still had parts under construction, and there were stones lying around on the pavement. There was also a crowd of people around. We do not know exactly how Jesus hid Himself, but most scholars say that He disappeared into the crowd and went out of the temple. He may have done that, and He may have supernaturally hid Himself. It will be a question we can find out when we are with Him.

## **Conclusion and Applications**

This account that took place on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. As Jesus had taught in the temple, many came to believe in Him. He addressed those new believers, and told them that if they continue in His word, they are truly disciples of His. These are Jewish believers, and the use of the term, Jews, most often referred to the religious leaders of the Jews. Many of these Jewish religious leaders believed in Jesus. This conversation may have been started with those that believed, but most of it was with those who did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah.

Woven into this account we have characteristics of true disciples and then those who are not true believers, i.e., unbelievers. We see that believers abide in God’s word. They hear truth. They understand truth. They know truth. They are set free by truth. They keep God’s word. On the other hand, unbelievers cannot hear God’s word. It has no place in them. They cannot understand God’s word.

Second, we see that disciples are set free of their sins. They are set free by placing their faith in Christ Jesus, and His payment for their sins. Those that believe in Christ will not die, which means to taste the second death (eternal separation from God). Their sins are forgiven and they go to where Jesus and the Father are. Believers are also set free as they abide in God's word and know the truth, which sets them free. Unbelievers are not freed from their sins; they are slaves of sin. They do the things from their own sinful desires and nature. And when unbelievers die, they die in their sins. They will not get to go where Jesus and the Father are. They cannot go there because they are still in their sins, and Jesus is a holy God. The only way for them to go where Jesus was going was to believe in Jesus.

Third, believers belong to God. They know God and have come to know Him through believing in Jesus. Because they belong to God, they are sons of God and will remain in the house. They will go where Jesus and the Father are. They have a new nature and they do the things in their life that please God. Unbelievers do not know God. Their Jewish heritage and being an earthly descendant of Abraham will not get them into heaven. The Law will not get them into heaven. The only way for them to know God is to believe in Jesus, the One that the Father sent. Because they do not know God, and are slaves of sin, they will not remain in the house.

True Disciples	Unbelievers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Abide in God's word (They hear truth. They understand and know truth. They are set free by truth. They keep God's word.)</li> <li>2. Set free from sin, and they will not see death.</li> <li>3. Know and belong to God. (They have a new nature, with new desires. They love God and have believed in Jesus, whom the Father sent, are children of God.)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do not believe God's word (It has no place in them.)</li> <li>2. Are slaves of sin (And they will die in their sins)</li> <li>3. They do not know God, and they do not belong to God (They do the desires of their sin nature.)</li> </ol>

As we come to a close this morning, do you know God? Have you come into a relationship with Christ? Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah and that He came and died on the cross for our sins? Do you believe that on the third day Jesus was resurrected from the dead? Have you received Jesus Christ into your life? If you have not done that, and would like to receive Christ, pray with me right now.

Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God, and that You are the Messiah. I believe that were sent by the Father to die for our sins. I believe that You were raised from the dead. I ask You to come into my life and forgive me of my sins. I yield my life to You this morning and confess You as the Lord of my life. Help me to abide in Your word. Help me to know truth. I ask You to set me free from my sins. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

You may be a believer this morning, but you are not abiding in God's word like a true believer. I exhort you this morning to make a commitment to God to abide in His word. I exhort you to find a good Bible reading program and begin to read God's word every day. At our church website, [www.connectionchurch.org](http://www.connectionchurch.org), there are some daily reading plans under Connection Tools. Find a reading plan and begin to read your Bible daily. I also exhort you to begin to study your Bible so that you will know the truth. I exhort you to become Biblically literate and know the word of God. I exhort you to not just know the truth, but to apply it in your life, and to live and abide in God's word.

**Closing Prayer**

Father God, thank You for this passage in John 8. We want to be true disciples of Yours. Help us to abide in Your word. Give us understanding and applications as we read. Help us to be doers of Your word. As we learn Your truths, set us free. We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen.

**Discussion Questions:**

- What does it mean to abide in God's word? What are some practical applications of abiding in God's word?
- What does it mean to be a disciple?
- What does it mean to be a true believer?
- The Barna surveys show that most pastors and congregants are Biblically illiterate. They do not know the truth. Is there a correlation between this survey and the immorality in the church?
- What is one of the greatest needs in the church today? Is it a bigger sanctuary? Is it a more exciting children's ministry? Is it louder music? According to John 8:31-32, what should be one of the main emphases in the church?

