



Jennifer Sands is a retired pharmacist and a lifelong resident of Point Pleasant, NJ, located on the beautiful Jersey Shore. Her life took a radically new direction after her husband was killed on September 11, 2001. Not only did she become a follower of Jesus, but she also became a Christian Author, Speaker, Bible teacher, and Israel Tour Leader. Jennifer has written 3 books about her spiritual journey since 9/11: *A Tempered Faith*, *A Teachable Faith*, and *A Treasured Faith*. She also regularly addresses audiences both nationally and internationally with her message of hope and trust in Jesus Christ. For more info on Jennifer's ministry, visit www.jennifersands.com.

Abiding in Christ: The Claim Versus the Evidence

By Wagdy Wahba

Introduction

The mission of Christian Pharmacists Fellowship International¹ (CPFI) is to serve Christ and the world through pharmacy. CPFI's Core Values¹ are excellent guidelines for Christian pharmacists to reflect on for guidance and application. Two of those core values exhort us: 1) to challenge and promote spiritual growth of members, and 2) to promote evangelism and the integration of faith into practice. These core values are essential ingredients for the CPFI mission to be successful and fruitful. However, some questions arise: What are we to do? How can we adopt and implement these core values? By claiming that we are serving Christ without abiding in Him, we are actually serving our own selfish ambition and the world. Thus, we observe that achievement of the CPFI core values of spiritual growth, evangelism, and integration of faith in every aspect of our personal and professional lives require intimacy and a strong connection with the Lord... to know Him, to be in Him, and to walk in the light. Jesus said in John 15:5, *"without Me, you can do nothing."* But as we abide in Him, we become more fruitful and we can say with confidence, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* (Philippians 4:13).

In this article, we will look at some of the *claims* versus the *evidence*

(manifestation) of our abiding. Claiming that we abide in Christ is only evident by knowing Him, by living (abiding) in Him, and by walking in the light.

What is Abiding?

Webster defines abiding this way: "to remain in the faith (faithful); to continue to believe in; to trust or support someone or something when it is difficult to do so." Bible Expositions Commentary² defines it this way: "Abiding means that we are willing to do God's will. It may mean that we must deal radically with some sin or injury. If we abide in Him, we are prepared to do what He asks of us. It means we accept our present situations. We may not like it, but we believe in His Sovereign hand on our lives." The website www.Blueletterbible.org defines abiding this way: "To continue to be present; to be held; kept continually; to endure." Another website, www.Abideproject.org states that abiding is "a firm commitment of faith; standing fast in your confession of faith." In John 15:5, Jesus said, *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."*

Who are we Abiding in?

We have a choice to either abide in Christ or to abide in the sinful lifestyle

of the world. Abiding in Christ is an essential foundation for spiritual growth, for evangelism, and for the integration of faith into practice. Jesus said, *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love"* (John 15:10). Such abiding produces fruit that is evident in our actions and interactions. This abiding is not founded on our own strength but requires that we remain steadfast in our faith in Christ, remain in fellowship with the Son and the Father, and stand firm on what we have been taught from God's Word (See 1 John 2:24-28, John 15:4-7).

Evidence of Knowing Christ

My wife and I live in Florida. Several months ago, I received a random text message: "Hi I arrived at LAX airport, come and pick me up." I responded, "I am sorry, maybe you have the wrong phone number?" She immediately responded, "This is Jennifer. Maybe you don't recognize me because I am using my friend's phone." I replied, "I am sorry, but I can't help. We live in Florida." Of course, I don't know this poor woman who needed help but was seeking it from the wrong source. She and I are not connected in any way, and we were a long distance away from each other. This incident reminded me of the Lord's statement in Matthew 7:7-8 about asking and receiving, seeking and finding...all

from the right source, our heavenly Father and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. By being continuously connected to and having a relationship with Him, we grow daily in knowing Him. In 1 John 2:4, the Apostle John challenges us by stating, *"He who says <claims>, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."* Such a strong statement should prompt us to examine ourselves. Do I really know Him? Do I grow daily in my personal knowledge of Him? Do I love Him enough to submit to His authority and His commands? Knowing Christ is such a dynamic relationship that requires continual connection with Him, investing time and energy in communicating daily with Him, growing in our love for Him, and walking in obedience to His commandments. The Apostle John offers the evidence in 1 John 2:3, *"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments."* As stated earlier, the Lord Jesus Himself declares, *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."* (John 15:10; see also John 14:15).

Charles Spurgeon³ (1834-1892) commented on the importance of our obedience to the Lord: "Holiness of life is the best proof that we know God. It matters not how readily we can speak about God, nor how much we suppose that we love Him; the great test is, do we keep His commandments? What a heart-searching test this is! How it should humble us before the mercy-seat!"

God's inspired Word reveals to us His commands in scripture (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17). Let us develop the discipline of reading and studying His Word daily, keeping in mind that it is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Psalm 119:105). Let us apply His commands into our actions and interactions as evidence of knowing Him.

Evidence that We Abide in Christ

"By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked." (1 John 2:5-6). If we claim that we abide in Christ, then we must live a Christ-like life. Jesus is the vine, we are the branches... therefore, for us to be fruitful in serving Him, we must always stay connected to Him. Jesus said, *"As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me"* (John 15:4). Abiding in Christ produces good fruit for the Father's glory and is evidence of being Christ's disciples who abide in Him (See John 15:7-8).

Charles Spurgeon³ explained the contrast between the claim and the evidence: "When we try to be, in every respect, what God's word tells us we ought to be, then may we know that we are in God; but if we walk carelessly, if we take no account of our actions, but do, after a random fashion, whatever comes into our foolish hearts, then have we no evidence at all that we are in God."

Evidence of Abiding in the Light

The inspired Word of God declares to us that at the birth of Jesus, *"the true Light which gives light to every man was coming into the world."* (John 1:9). Jesus Himself said, *"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."* (John 8:12); and again, He reveals to us the contrast between light and darkness, stating, *"This is the verdict <condemnation>, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed"* (John 3:19-20). Therefore, we have the choice to either walk in the light or in darkness. When we abide in Christ, we walk in the light. When we love the world or get attached to the things of the world that will perish, we walk in darkness and the love of the Father

is not in us (See 1 John 2:15). We should acknowledge and confess our iniquities to the Lord and ask for His forgiveness (see Psalm 32:5), and we should always remember that *"friendship with the world is enmity with God."* (James 4:4).

The Apostle John writes in 1 John 2:9-10, *"He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him."* The Old Testament commandment to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18) was displayed in the new and dramatic show of divine love on the Cross (see John 3:16), in Christ's exposition of the Old Testament Law in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, and in the daily experience of believers as they grow in their love for God and each other.

Spurgeon³ said, "God is love, and God is light; therefore, love is light, and the light of God is love. Where enmity and hatred are 'till in the heart,' it is proof positive that the grace of God is not there. For this sinful world is directly opposed to the Father. You cannot send your heart at the same time in two opposite ways — toward evil and toward good; you must make a choice between the two."

Conclusion

Any effort to achieve CPFI's mission of serving Christ is founded on a strong relationship with – and abiding in – Christ, who is the vine. Personal efforts without a strong relationship are useless, unproductive and unfruitful. On the other hand, if we are abiding in Him, knowing Him, being in Him, and walking in the light, then we will produce much spiritual fruit. CPFI's core values of promoting spiritual growth, evangelism, and the integration of faith into practice cannot be achieved without the Lord of our faith being the cornerstone of all we are doing and building.

The evidence that we know God is our

intimacy with Him, through fellowship with Him daily through prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:18) and the study of His Word (Psalm 119:105); and also, being obedient to His commands (John 14:23; 1 John 2: 3-5).

The evidence that we are in Christ is being Christ-like in our daily life, being His hands and feet, touching other people's lives with His love, and providing healing and compassion (John 15:4; Colossians 1:27).

The evidence of walking in His light is showing love to God and others (see John 1:4-5; 1 Peter 2:9). We cannot claim to know Christ by saying we are serving, evangelizing, and promoting spiritual growth while adopting a sinful lifestyle of disobedience and attachment to this dark world (see Galatians 6:7-8; James 4:4; 1 John 2:4). Spurgeon's words should echo in our mind: "You cannot send your heart at the same time in two opposite ways — towards evil and towards good;

you must make a choice between the two."³

Let us reflect and examine ourselves: Are we prepared to serve Christ based on knowing Him, being in Him, and walking in the light? What steps do we need to take to establish a stronger abiding in Him?

Let us also allow His truth to abide in us: *"Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that He has promised us-eternal life."* (1 John 2:24-25).

References:

1. *Christian Pharmacists Fellowship International (CPFI); Serving Christ and the world through Pharmacy.* www.cpfi.org. Accessed August 9, 2023.
2. *Bible Expositions Commentary* (April 30, 2001).

3. *Spurgeon's Verse Expositions of the Bible; 1 John 2.*

All Scripture references were taken from the New King James Version (NKJV).

Core Values of CPFI:

- Provide Godly encouragement and fellowship among like-minded professionals.
- Challenge and promote spiritual growth of members.
- Advance student chapter ministries to strength and equip student pharmacists.
- Encourage the advancement of knowledge and ethics in practice.
- Promote evangelism and the integration of faith into practice.
- Provide support and opportunities for Christian service and outreach.



Dr. Wahba graduated from Alexandria University, College of Pharmacy with a BS in Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Chemistry. After his graduation, he purchased his own drug store in Alexandria, Egypt, where he practiced retail pharmacy. Dr. Wahba joined Duquesne University School of Pharmacy in Pittsburgh as a research associate and a graduate student. After earning his PhD in pharmacology and toxicology in 1972, he worked as a forensic toxicologist at the Crime Laboratory of Allegheny County, Pittsburgh, PA until August 1979. Dr. Wahba and his family moved to Hamilton Ontario, Canada, where he established and worked as a manager of the first Drug Information Center at McMaster University Medical Center. He returned to Pittsburgh in September 1997 and re-joined the Allegheny County Department of Laboratories as a forensic toxicologist. He was promoted to the position of manager of the toxicology section and continued serving there for thirteen years. During his tenure as a forensic toxicologist, Dr. Wahba

taught pharmacology and toxicology on a part-time basis at two universities and one college in the Pittsburgh area. Dr. Wahba is still available as a forensic toxicology expert witness in civil and criminal court cases. He is a life-time member of the Society of Forensic toxicology (SCOFT) and is a Diplomat of the American Board of Forensic Toxicology (Ret.).

In August 2001, Dr. Wahba joined Palm Beach Atlantic University (PBA) as an associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences and as director of Spiritual programs until he retired from full-time teaching in 2013. Currently, he is associate professor emeritus and serves as adjunct faculty at PBA. Dr. Wahba enjoys teaching at a Christian School of Pharmacy where integration of faith is an integral part of the curriculum.

Dietary Supplements to Enhance Immunity By Mary J. Ferrill

As pharmacists and student pharmacists, you have probably received questions (or have your own questions) regarding the appropriate use of natural medicines (NM) and/or dietary supplements (DS) to enhance immunity. A 2021 study showed that approximately 80% of adults living in the US use dietary supplements and consider them to be trustworthy.¹ However, a study from 2003 involving 428 registered pharmacists in California reported that only 5% considered themselves to be completely knowledgeable and 42% somewhat knowledgeable about NM; whereas 11% felt completely comfortable, and