



# God Abides In You!

A SUMMER SERIES ON THE EPISTLE OF 1 JOHN

Ezekiel 36:24-28 Eph 3:14-19 1 John 4:11-16 John 14:16-26

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One of the most fascinating, yet mysterious, teachings of the Bible is the **Mystical Union**. The term **Mystical Union** describes *God living within you*<sup>1</sup>. The Bible speaks about all three Persons of the Holy Trinity *living and dwelling* within you in a real, special, and unique way<sup>2</sup>.

The Apostle John teaches us about the **Mystical Union**. In 1 John 4, he references it 5 times! Here are two examples:

Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. 1 John 4:4

God is love, whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. 1 John 4:16

In the context of 1 John, the Apostle John is encouraging his people that they are in the *right place* spiritually when they stay with Christ and His Apostles, rather than follow the false teachers. One sign of staying with Christ is the **Mystical Union**: God abides with His People who hold to the truth of His Holy Word.

The doctrine of the **Mystical Union** teaches that **God lives within you personally**; that He knows you and that He is at work in and through you with His grace and His power.

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<sup>1</sup> The “mystical union” means that God, the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, dwells in your heart and in your life in a special way. God is united *with you* through faith in Jesus Christ. One theologian wrote: [It is a] true, real, proper and most intimate union. Quenstedt, III.623 Another commentator said, “In the action of the ‘mystical union’, the Triune God takes up His habitation in the hearts of believers . . . In a special way, God is united with each believer personally.”

<sup>2</sup> The Bible speaks about each Person of the Holy Trinity living within you, for example in John 14:23 both the Father and the Son are mentioned; and in 1 Corinthians 6:19, the Holy Spirit is named. In 1 John 4, the Mystical Union is referenced 5 times (4:4, 12, 13, 15, 16) , and it is God the Father who “abides in us.”

The **Mystical Union** is **not** simply the influence of God in your life; **nor** is it another way to describe the spiritual gifts that have been given to you. The **Mystical Union** is something else; it is something **special**, something **real**, something **unique**, and its *only given to believers in Jesus Christ*.

**There is nothing like it in all the world<sup>3</sup>.**

The **Mystical Union** is a gift of salvation that was given to you in Holy Baptism. Just as your sins were washed away, so too God made His home within you. Just as you were declared “*Not Guilty*” of your sins and given new life in Christ, so too God came into your life and lives within you in a special and unique way. God has been abiding in you, *living in you*, since your Baptism. This is so unique and so mysterious that the only term that the Holy Christian Church can use to describe it is the “**Mystical**” Union.

The Apostle John describes it as God **ABIDING** in you. The word “*abide*” means that God *makes His home* in you. He *remains* with you and is *at work* to strengthen your faith and *empower* you for holy living.

**In 1 John, the Apostle John focuses on the result of God living within you; the fruit of the Mystical Union is seen in concrete ways.**

The first is that you *love other people* as Christ has loved you. Love is the key sign that you know Christ and are His disciple.

No one has ever seen God; but if we *love one another*, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us. 1 John 4:12

The **Mystical Union** empowers you to love other people as Christ has loved you. This kind of love for other people is objective; it's not driven by feelings but rather by your will. You help and care for others; you make sacrifices; you are

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<sup>3</sup> Be sure not to get this confused with New Age ideas. You do not become God; it is not a possession where you lose your will, God does not appear to you, He does not give you private revelations, nor is this just a “sense and awareness” of the sacred and divine. **This is the Holy Trinity living in you.** John calls it “abiding” --> God is making His home in you. Perhaps Psalm 46:1 is a good way to think about it: “God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in time of trouble!”

other-centered rather than self-centered; you obey the 10 commandments when it comes to other people; you are patient and kind with others. We love, because God first loved us with this kind of self-sacrificing love<sup>4</sup>. The *Mystical Union* empowers you to love other people as Christ has loved you.

The *Mystical Union* also leads you into **the truth about Christ**, so that you know, believe, and confess who Jesus is and what He has done for you.

We have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God. 1 John 4:14-15

1 John teaches us a great deal about *Jesus, the Son of God*.

- ⇒ He is the Christ, the long promised Messiah of the Old Testament
- ⇒ He is Life, and He gives eternal life to all people
- ⇒ He is Light, and in Him there is no darkness whatsoever
- ⇒ Jesus, the Son of God, made propitiation for our sins; that means He turned the wrath of God away from you when He suffered and died. Instead of the wrath of God, you know receive the grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ
- ⇒ He took your sins away, fully paying for them with His life when He died on the cross
- ⇒ His death has eternal significance for every man, woman, and child
- ⇒ He has destroyed the devil and set you free from his power
- ⇒ He laid down His life in *agape* love for you, so that you can be reconciled to the Father
- ⇒ He is incarnate, *in the flesh*, to do the work of salvation for us
- ⇒ He is the Savior of the world; He does the work that we could not do
- ⇒ In Him we are *always, everyday, without ceasing* forgiven of our sins
- ⇒ In Him, we have *perfect tense forgiveness*: we are forgiven and we remain forgiven throughout our lives
- ⇒ Jesus is True God and eternal life.

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<sup>4</sup> This kind of love is the New Testament Greek word agape. It is an objective kind of love; it's other centered, not self-centered. It is concerned about giving and not receiving; its focus is on the other person and it makes sacrifices for them. This kind of love continues to love no matter what it gets back. It shows patience and kindness to all people, even enemies. This kind of love is a choice of your will, not of your feelings. This is how God's love for us is described; and when it's used to describe our love, it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and a work of Christ in your life.

John teaches us that the **Mystical Union** leads you into the truth about Jesus, the Son of God. The Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to teach you about Christ, to strengthen your faith in Jesus, to love the Father, to hate the world, and to deepen your conviction in the Lord. When you hold to the Word of God, to Christ and His Prophets and Apostles, then you are exactly where you need to be in your faith<sup>5</sup>. *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God.*

A third thing that the Apostle John highlights as a blessing of the **Mystical Union** is an ever growing confidence and conviction in your faith.

And so we have come to know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 1 John 4:16

**Conviction** is *knowing and relying* on the love of God in His Son Jesus Christ. *Knowing and relying* on the love of God means that you are reading, hearing, learning, studying, memorizing, and understanding God's Holy Word. It is only through the Holy Scripture that you can *know* God and *rely* on His promises.

**THERE IS NO OTHER WAY.**

Conviction comes from *knowing and relying* on the love of God; and that is a fruit of the **Mystical Union** !

One of the blessings of God's grace in your life is the **Mystical Union**! God Himself abides in you! The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit make their home in you!

Because of the **Mystical Union**, you are empowered to love other people; you know, believe, and confess the truth about Jesus, the Son of God; and you have an ever growing confidence and conviction in the love of God for yourself!

Amen!

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<sup>5</sup> For us, that means that we hold to the teachings of the Old and New Testaments which is the Word of Christ's Prophets and Apostles, chosen and sent by Him, and inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Prophets and Apostles teach us a Christological interpretation of Scripture, where everything is focused on Jesus, the Son of God!

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Holy Trinity, we thank you for abiding in us through faith. We thank you for revealing the Mystical Union to us, and for making Your home in us. Empower us to love our neighbor as you have loved us. Continue to teach us through Your Word about Christ and His work of salvation. And Lord, deepen our confidence and conviction in faith. Help us to abide in You as You abide in us! We ask this in Jesus' Name, Amen!

### **Ezekiel 36:24-28**

“For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 28 Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

### **1 John 4:11-16**

11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. 13 This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. 16 And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.

### **Ephesians 3:14-19**

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith--that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

### **John 14:16-26**

15 “If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be[c] in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.” 22 Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” 23 Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. 24 Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. 25 “All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.