

SCANNING YOUR DASHBOARD

WARNING LIGHTS
& HOLY HABITS

=====*for*=====

A LEADER'S SOUL

ROWLAND FORMAN

Dashboard Indicator #1

Am I Drifting, or Abiding in Christ?

Caring for Your Own Soul

Effective leaders care deeply for the souls of others. Yet this often comes at the expense of their own soul's well-being—and sometimes that of their family as well.

Scanning Your Dashboard invites you to regularly attend to your inner life. Just as a driver watches the dashboard for warning lights and fuel levels, wise leaders learn to notice what is happening beneath the surface of their lives.

Each **Dashboard Indicator** in this mentoring resource pairs a Warning Light with a Holy Habit—helping you not only to recognize areas of vulnerability, but also to respond with practices that cultivate a healthy, Christ-dependent life.

A dashboard doesn't only warn you when something is wrong—it also reassures you when things are functioning as they should.

Dashboard Indicator #1:

Am I Drifting, or Abiding in Christ?

As you work through Warning Light 1 and Holy Habit I, take a moment to reflect. Over the past six months, have you been gradually drifting from your first love for Christ, or intentionally cultivating a close abiding relationship with him?

In each of the seven letters to the Churches in Asia Minor (Revelation 2-3), Jesus repeats this invitation: *Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches* (Revelation 2:7).

Begin by processing Warning Light 1 and Holy Habit 1 on your own. Then, if possible, meet with a mentor-friend or small group, to share what the Holy Spirit is bringing to your attention.

Working with Warning Lights and then Holy Habits together, helps you not only to see what you need to work on, but to step into a grace-filled response.

WARNING LIGHT #1:

DRIFTING: *Am I Trading Performance for Intimacy with Christ?*

Drifting from Christ rarely begins with rebellion. More often, it begins with success. Ministry continues. Responsibilities grow. Fruit appears. Yet somewhere along the way, intimacy with Christ is quietly replaced by activity for Christ.

So, let me ask you plainly: over the past six months, have you been close to Christ—or merely busy for him? Has performance for Christ become a substitute for a deeper knowledge of Christ? Are you depending on him moment by moment, or only crying out to him when you reach crisis point?

More importantly, what would Jesus say about your relationship with him at present—not your ministry, but your nearness to him? Would he say that you are abiding in him, staying close and dependent, or that you are mostly disconnected and distant?

How does this distance from Christ take place? It rarely announces itself through blatant disobedience. Like other warning signs, it's often a gradual shift—from feeling close to Christ to slowly engaging with him less.

Pause for a moment and reflect on some of Jesus' final words to his disciples before he was crucified:

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:4-5)

- Are you disconnected from the “vine” – the true source of your strength?
- Are you doing the work of Christ while neglecting communion with Christ?
- Are you serving Christ as if he said, “You can do most things on your own—just check in on me occasionally?”

What is the solution to the warning lights of pride, prayerlessness, fatigue, impurity, isolation, and inauthenticity? It is not trying harder or performing with greater precision. It is restored closeness to Christ. The answer is not striving; it is abiding in Christ daily.

Take note of this warning light. It says:

**“Pull over. Rekindle the flame of your love for Christ.
Stop trying to drive on empty.”**

Reflect & Discuss:

1. When you think about the past six months, would you describe your relationship with Christ as close, drifting, or distant? What has most shaped that reality?
2. In what ways might activity for Christ be crowding out intimacy with Christ in your life right now?
3. Jesus says that “apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). How does that verse challenge the way you currently approach your leadership, work, or ministry?
4. What are some early signs that you are operating on “performance” rather than “dependence”?
5. What would it look like this week—not to try harder—but to simply abide more intentionally in Christ?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I confess how easily I substitute activity for intimacy, and performance for dependence. I thank you that you do not shame me for drifting but gently invite me back to yourself.

Forgive me for trying to bear fruit apart from you. Teach me again what it means to abide—to stay close, to listen, to depend on you moment by moment.

Rekindle my love for you. Restore my joy in you. And may whatever fruit comes from my life flow not from striving, but from remaining in you.

Amen

HOLY HABIT #1:

ABIDING: *Depending on Christ Daily*

How can holy habits like humility, purity, and integrity become part of our everyday lives?

My first reaction to that question was simply: *This is beyond me!*

What is your response? Do you ever feel too inadequate to live like this consistently? Do you wonder if lasting Christlike character is even possible?

Jesus gently reminds us all, using the same words that he spoke to his disciples,

Without me you can do nothing! (John 15:5).

“Nothing, Lord?” “Yes ... not one thing to produce the fruit of an attractive Christlike life: fruit such as kindness, joyfulness and love”

Jesus spoke these words using the metaphor of a grapevine bearing luscious fruit at harvest time.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes.

(John 15:1-2)

If you’ve ever seen grapevines pruned in winter, you know it isn’t a pretty sight. The branches look bare, even lifeless. But pruning is not destruction—it’s preparation. It’s the only way to produce an abundant harvest.

Has the all-wise Gardener lovingly pruned you lately?

It’s a reminder that God is the One producing the fruit.

So, what is our part? We cannot manufacture the fruit of Christlike character. But we can abide.

One of my life verses captures it perfectly:

If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

(John 15:7)

This verse makes it clear that fruitfulness depends upon our practicing the following three habits:

Stay Connected to Christ

The recurring phrase in John 15:1-17 is: **remain in**. It means stay connected to, abide or make your home in.

Holy habits grow only as we stay close to Christ, interacting with him not just weekly, but daily ... even hourly.

Have you gone quiet on him lately? Do you acknowledge him before you even roll out of bed? Do you talk with him and listen to him throughout your day?

Stay Connected to His Word

Jesus adds: ... and **my words remain in you** ... His words are meant to find a home in us. We read them, meditate on them, and slowly, imperfectly, yet purposely align our lives to them.

That's what I love about the YouVersion Bible app. It helps you to stay in God's Word, until God's Word stays in you—to turn verses over in your mind, until your thoughts are saturated with Scripture.

Stay on Your Knees in Prayer

The outcome of abiding in Christ and his Word is prayer:

... ask whatever you wish ...

This fits so beautifully with Habit #2: praying as a way of life. As God's Word reshapes your desires, your prayers become less self-oriented and more Spirit-led.

You talk to Christ about your schedule. You bring him your burdens. You seek his help in small crises and quiet decisions.

Abiding turns ordinary moments into holy dependence on Christ.

Much Fruit

What happens through God's pruning, and our abiding? Jesus says we will bear **much fruit**. Not forced fruit. Not performance-based fruit. But Spirit-produced fruit: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

And that is the goal of these two parallel plans: **7 Warning Lights** and **7 Holy Habits**—an abundant life to God's glory.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. What might it look like for you to “abide in Christ” in the ordinary moments of life this week?
2. Has God been pruning anything in your life recently? How have you responded?
3. What does it look like to practice what Jesus meant by *If ... my words remain in you* (John 15:7)?
4. As you reflect on Warning Light #1 and Holy Habit #1, what has the Holy Spirit been saying to you? What steps will you take?

Prayer:

Lord Jesus,

I confess that without You I can do nothing of lasting spiritual value. I cannot manufacture humility, purity, integrity, or love through effort alone.

Teach me to abide in You. Keep me close.

Let Your words find a home in me and reshape my thoughts and desires.

When You prune me, give me trust instead of resistance.

Produce in me the fruit that brings glory to God —love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness and self-control.

Today, I choose dependence over striving. Help me remain in You.

Amen.

The 7 Dashboard Indicators

- Indicator #1** Am I Drifting, or Abiding in Christ?
- Indicator #2** Am I Praying Less, or Praying More?
- Indicator #3** Am I Proudful, or Humbly Serving Others?
- Indicator #4** Am I Running on Empty, or Learning Unforced Rhythms of Grace?
- Indicator #5** Am I Slipping Morally, or Guarding my Heart?
- Indicator #6** Am I Isolated, or Investing in Others?
- Indicator #7** Am I Pretending, or Leading with Integrity?



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