



LESSON 3 DEVOTION 1

“I AM THE VINE; YOU ARE THE BRANCHES. IF A MAN REMAINS IN ME AND I IN HIM, HE WILL BEAR MUCH FRUIT; APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING.” -JOHN 15:5

When your phone’s battery dies, what is your phone good for? Really, not a whole lot. You can get the most technologically advanced smart-phone on the market but without a battery, it’s about as useful as a brick.

We’re kind of the same way. Disconnected from God, our potential to make a true impact in this world is... well, zero.

What Jesus said in John 15:5 should make us think about a power source. With Jesus as our power source, we have all we need to be used by Him to do awesome things in this world. But if we don’t stay plugged into Him, we’ll find that we’ll have no ability to impact the world for Christ. It’s not enough to just say we know who Jesus is. Along with knowing His name, we have to set up camp in His presence and seek Him daily so that we know Him more personally.

So what does it mean to “remain” in Jesus? Easy. We’re to continue to seek Him out. To be close to Him through prayer and through meeting Him in the Bible. We’re to think about Jesus and His ways. Remaining in Jesus means keeping Him as the top priority of our thoughts and affections.

Remaining in Jesus? It’s a crucial part of your identity as a Christ-follower.

LESSON 3 DEVOTION 2

“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 so that it will be even more fruitful.” John 15:1-2

If a plant could talk, what do you think it would say about being pruned? (“Pruning” is trimming branches and leaves so that a shrub or plant can either take a desired shape so that it might grow more effectively.)

If we had to guess, you can bet the plants didn’t like it all that much. Getting part of you cut off can feel like an attack more than help. But here’s the deal: Chances are, the plants would recognize that pruning is good for them. It allows them to grow healthier. It prevents disease. It encourages new growth. And so while pruning means that some of the plant is cut off, it also means that new, healthy growth takes its place.

Can you see the parallel in your life?

Jesus says that God prunes you, just like a gardener prunes a shrub. God knows the things in your life that keep you from following Him wholeheartedly. And so God, being a loving gardener, removes those aspects of your life to help you follow Him more.

Pruning isn’t fun. But we know that God prunes us because He loves us. Whatever it is He cuts away, we can trust that it was keeping us from being fully devoted to Him.

LESSON 3 DEVOTION 3

Your challenge today is to simply meditate on this thought:

What evidence do you see in your life that you are remaining in Jesus?

After all, Jesus said if we remain in Him, we bear much fruit. The idea of bearing fruit is a way of saying, “our lives will show a lot of evidence that we’re staying totally dialed into God.”

So, look at your life. What evidence is there that Jesus is working in and through you? Think about two or three specific ways. Now, here’s the hard question: if there is not a lot of fruit in your life, don’t you have to ask if you’re truly remaining close to Christ?

Spend some time in prayer today talking with God about this concept. Listen to Him as He points out any aspects of your life where you are distant from Him.