

Bonus Points
"Uncommon Connection"
01/13/08
John 15:1-11



Our deep desire at Grace Community Church is not only to help people get into the Word of God, but to help get the Word of God into people. But we realize that most people don't have the advantages of a Bible degree, a library full of books, or the freedom to devote many extra hours to study. So we want to help make the Scripture more accessible to you by offering additional commentary, insight, and other suggested resources to enhance your own study of God's Word. Each week we'll offer these tools that will coincide with the passage taught that Sunday. As you spend time in Scripture on your own, we hope this will enhance your study, develop your insight, and build your confidence in handling God's Word well.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.
2 Timothy 2:15

John 15:1-11

"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

Introduction

Kevin Seacat reminded us that abiding is our responsibility. Abiding does not mean inactivity, rather it is restful, obedient activity. We are responsible for remaining connected to Christ. We stay connected by continued obedience to God's word. However all our abiding actions are determined by God, guided by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit and are for the glory of the Father and the Son.

Opening Questions

1. Have you ever felt far from Christ since becoming a Christian? What made you feel that way?
2. We are often very intentional about our career growth. We pursue education, training, on the job experiences to help us become more effective and enhance our careers. However, we are often not as intentional about our spiritual growth. How would you respond if you were asked what you have done over the last year to become more connected to Christ and a better Christ-follower?
3. Why is it difficult to maintain a personal relationship with Jesus?

Digging Deeper

Read John 15:1-8

1. In John 15:2, it says that the Father's ministry is to cut off every branch that bears no fruit. What do you think this means? If God were to do some pruning in your life, what might that look like?
2. What is fruit bearing? (read also Galatians 5:18-23) What is not fruit bearing? When is your life barren or void of fruit-bearing?
3. Describe how fruit can come from your own behavior and how fruit can come through your impact on the lives of others. What kind of fruit do you think Christ is talking about in this passage, when he says you will bear much fruit?
4. Describe which fruit is harvested here on earth and which fruit is harvested in heaven? How do we know we are doing something that counts for eternity rather than something that will just pass away? What are some examples of fruits that spoil and pass away? What are some examples of fruits that are preserved for eternity?
5. Why do you think Christ describes us as branches? If you were going to pick an illustration of staying connected to Christ, what picture would you paint to describe how Christ is the essence of our being and He is the one who supplies our Spiritual sustenance? Make up a few pictures of your own describing how we actively stay connected to Christ, but Christ is really the one setting the direction for our lives. Try using some illustrations using technology or some things that were not available in the time of Christ, but are available today. Try to paint some really vivid pictures.
6. There are three types of branches described in this passage. Those bearing no fruit, those bearing some fruit and those bearing much fruit. If you were to describe your life today which category would best describe you? Why?
7. Read verses 9-11. Based on these verses what steps could you take so that you could bear more fruit in the future?
8. According to verse 7, what benefit is there to abiding in Christ? How does this promise differ from the promises delivered by a genie in a bottle? How do we get our wishes and desires so aligned with Christ that our requests are perfectly aligned with His will?
9. What do you think are the barriers to abiding in Christ? Do you have relationship problems with others, especially Christians which are putting a wall between you and Christ? How do difficulties in our horizontal relationships impact our vertical relationship with Christ? (Matt. 6:14-15, Eph. 4:30-32, James 4:17)

Application

1. What steps can you take this week to develop a more intimate relationship with Christ?
2. How can you be a better friend to Jesus beginning today?

Closing

Abiding in Christ is an uncommon practice that yields uncommon fruit. Abiding is a choice and the choice is always available to us. Pursue Christ by practicing Jesus presence and abiding in Him.

"Bonus Points" by Jim Oatman



1200 E. Southern Ave.
Tempe, AZ 85282
PH. 480.894.2201
www.gracecommunityaz.org