The Connection

Key References: John 15:1-12; The Desire of Ages, chap. 73, pp. 674-678; Selected Messages, book 1, p. 259; Our Beliefs, nos. 14, 11, 12
“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” (John 15:5).

One evening, while walking with His disciples, Jesus brought their attention to a vine. He wanted them to understand two spiritual lessons about relationships.

“I am the true vine,” Jesus said (John 15:1). He could have compared Himself to a stately tree, but He wanted them to understand that even He, in His humanity, needed the support of His heavenly Father, just as a vine needs to be supported by a trellis. “I can of Myself do nothing,” He said (John 5:30). The same is true of you and me.

“My Father is the vinedresser,” He continued. “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit” (John 15:1, 2). Here Jesus points out that many will profess to be His followers, but their character and how they treat others shows they have no relationship with Him. They are like dead branches, which bear no fruit.

Jesus’ greatest desire is to see us become like His Father. That’s why the Bible tells us that having the Spirit of God within us develops the fruit of love, joy, peace, kindness, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (see Galatians 5:22, 23).

If we each developed such fruits, we would act differently, wouldn’t we? We wouldn’t get caught up in arguments or feel envy.
**Sunday**

**Read** John 15:1, 2 and “The Connection.”

**Make** Draw a grapevine with fruit. Write the power text on it.

**Review** Review the power text, John 15:5.

**Pray** Ask God to “prune” you so that you can “bear fruit.”

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**Monday**

**Read** John 15:3, 4.

**Research** From a science book, encyclopedia, Internet, or a gardener, learn about “grafting” and “pruning.”

**Note** In your Bible study journal, write what you learned.

**Review** Review the power text.

**Pray** Ask God to help you stay connected to Jesus. Pray for good fruits in your life, the evidence of your connection with Jesus.

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**Tuesday**

**Read** John 15:5-8.

**Think** Jesus said that if we remain in Him, we can ask for what we need. He wants us to have fruitful lives.

**Write** In your Bible study journal, write about what it means to you that through Jesus you can “bear fruits.”

**Review** Review the power text.

**Pray** Pray that you may abide in God and in His will.

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**Note**

In your Bible study journal, write what you learned.

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**Review** Review the power text, John 15:5.

**Pray** Ask God to help you stay connected to Jesus. Pray for good fruits in your life, the evidence of your connection with Jesus.

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**Pray** Pray that you may abide in God and in His will.

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**Think** Jesus said that if we remain in Him, we can ask for what we need. He wants us to have fruitful lives.

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#### Toward others. We would look for ways to help others; we would always have a kind word to say or a smile to give away. Jesus wants us to live in harmony with each other as evidence of our love and commitment to Him.

Jesus’ disciples had already committed themselves to Him. They were His “branches.” However, Jesus told them, “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me” (verse 4).

Even though the disciples were committed to Jesus, He was telling them they needed to stay committed to Him. Separated from Him, the True Vine, they, the branches, could never hope to escape nor overcome sin. None of us can ever hope to overcome one sinful tendency or resist one temptation unless we are united with Christ.

If we truly desire to overcome sin and temptation, if we want to live in harmony and love with others, we must abide in Jesus daily. To abide in Jesus means to have a relationship with Him. This is possible only through daily Bible study, prayer, and a willingness to cultivate the
fruit of the Spirit. Jesus does not ask us to work at bearing the fruit of the Spirit; instead, He asks us to abide in Him, and the fruit will naturally develop.

Abiding in Jesus is the secret of unity within the church. He is the center to whom everyone should be attracted. When we come closer to Jesus, we will also come closer to each other. The result will be unity of purpose and harmony as we work together and live for Jesus.
In this last meeting with His disciples, Jesus’ greatest desire was for them to love one another as He had loved them. More than once He said, “Love one another.” The disciples had not loved one another as Christ had loved them; they spent a lot of time arguing. Jesus saw they needed a new understanding of love that included self-denial and self-sacrifice. Jesus is our supreme example in how we may truly love one another.

In His last recorded prayer, Jesus had a burden on His heart for us to become unified. He said: I pray “that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:21). When we are drawn close together, not by circumstances or self-interest, but by love, we will show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this unity exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in us; that He is able to subdue the selfishness in our hearts.

These are the spiritual lessons Jesus wanted His disciples to learn. If we have a daily living connection with Jesus, He will change our character. As we spend time learning from Jesus daily, following His example, and obeying His teachings, we will receive spiritual nourishment. Then the Holy Spirit will produce in our lives the fruit of the Spirit.
Replace the missing vowels in the Bible verse below to find a special message. The chapter and most of the book in the Bible are given, but the verses are not shown here.

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A = 10
E = 13
I = 7
O = 15
U = 2
Y = 4
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“Th__s __s M__ c__mm__ndm__nt, th__t _____ l__v__ n__ n__ th__r __s __ h__v__ l__v__d __ __ __. Gr__ `t r l__v__ h__s n__ n__ th__n th__s, th__n t__ l__ d__wn __n__’s l__f__ f__r h__s fr__ nds” (J__hn 15:__, __).