

Week 8, 8/19/18
What She Said!
Tuesday

Jesus, Our Relationship Redeemer Ellen Dykas - Guest Writer

Today's Treasure

*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 15:5*

Have you ever, like me, had the humbling experience to realize that a certain electrical gadget or appliance wasn't broken but just needed to be switched 'on'? After getting myself in a frenzied, frustrated state with "Ugh! Yet another broken thing to get fixed," I remembered to check that important little on-off knob.

Sometimes we forget the 'on-off' knob, or power supply when it comes to our relationships. In John 15, the metaphor of the vine and the branches, God describes the 'secret' to living a fruitful and loving life, including godly relationships. Our 'love' supply comes through Jesus, as we 'abide' in Him through intimate connection. Our union with Jesus enables us to love others and to receive love in satisfying and godly ways.

Jesus promised that we can do nothing apart from him. *Nothing means nothing!* This means that without Him, I can't be a good friend, mentor, sister, or daughter. Independent from Jesus, a wife and mother cannot be a godly spouse or parent. If we're not receiving nourishment from Him and His word, it's easy for selfish desires to hijack our focus. This heart-hijacking slides quickly into me-ism and self-protection. Been there, done that? Me too.

Relational wholeness with people happens as we walk in holiness before God, our relationship Redeemer. This means that we seek to worship Him, more than we seek to secure the love and affection of a person. It also means that we believe and anchor ourselves in our identity as loved, called and kept by God (Jude 1:2).

Here's a redemptive way of considering the phrase, "put you in your place," that helps me in the realm of relationships. When Jesus is in His rightful place, then relationships and the disappointments I encounter through them, will be in their rightful place.

Jesus in His rightful place. God meant it when he said, "I will have no other gods before me in your life." (Exodus 20:3). Jesus is the true vine, and people are branches we live alongside of, abiding in Jesus side-by-side. Scripture never encourages us to attempt to 'abide' in people, even though there are many beautiful exhortations to live in unity and to love one another selflessly. Only Jesus is to be our focus of worship, and our source for unfailing love, as well as our security. He's the bread of life and living water for which our hearts hunger and thirst.

People in their 'rightful' place. When my eyes are fixed on Jesus, then my heart won't be fixed on people and what they can give to me. As I grow in delighting in His comfort, love and presence, my heart's demand that people make me feel comforted and loved will lessen. I can rest in allowing people to be... well, people! Friends, spouses, children, pastors, mentors etc., can be what God has intended: a gift given for a season and purpose for His glory and my good. Their good too!

With Jesus and people in their 'rightful' place in my life, I'm prepared to face disappointments and trials which *will* come in relationships. It's not the platform for 'bearing much fruit' that I'd choose, but relational disappointment is one of many aspects of life that Jesus our Redeemer will use to make me more like Him.

LIFE-GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

Do you need the deep comfort of Jesus for wounds and heart-bruises you carry as residue of relational disappointments? He wants to hear from you, and help you make your home in Him, afresh or for the first time. He knows what you need, and is able to give it as you remain in intimate relationship with Him!