

## Playing the Long Game Part 5: Stronger, Not Faster

**Objective:** To encourage us to remain faithful as we grow in Christ. .

**Read together:**

**Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.** <sup>5</sup>"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 15:4-5

**...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.**

Galatians 5:22-23

**"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.**

Matthew 7:15-20

- Are you ever guilty of settling for good enough when you should pursue excellence? Can you identify any areas of your life where you need to be patient enough to become excellent?
- When you hear the word 'remain' what comes to mind? Do think in active or passive terms? How can you be active and still 'remain'?
- When others look at your life, do you think they would see you as a fan or a follower of Jesus? How can they tell?
- Jesus said that you will recognize a tree by it's fruit. (**Matthew 7:15-20**). What is the fruit of being a follower of Jesus? Is that fruit evident in your life?
- **Galatians 5:22-23** gives a list of 'spiritual fruit'. Read over that list. Which fruits of the spirit do you think are evident in your life? Would others agree? Which ones do you know you need to work on?
- Why does it seem like it takes so long to bear real, spiritual fruit in our lives?
- In the sermon the pastor listed several practical ways to remain in Christ. Which ones do you need to focus on at this point in your life? Who will you ask to keep you accountable to that?

**Final Thought:** Becoming like Jesus takes time and requires a commitment to remain, even through difficult experiences. When you choose to remain in Jesus you choose to become like Jesus.

**This Week:** Make a commitment to actively remain in Jesus.

