



ABIDE Weekly Devotions: Week Three

By Elizabeth Maxwell

“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. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.” **John 15:5-6**

As embarrassing as it is to admit, I've often been known to focus on the wrong things. When friends or family come to stay with us, I can easily get so caught up on making sure the house is spotless and everything is in its place rather than focusing on the quality time we have to look forward to. Or when I look at our calendar and see that we are completely booked for the weekend (even though the days might be filled with good things and great people) all I want is a weekend of nothing. Why is it that instead of focusing on the good, my mind and heart quickly jump to the other?

When I read these verses, I hear the “bear fruit” part. Yes we are to bear fruit, and yes we are to love others. But there’s something greater here that I’m missing: ABIDE. When we abide in His never-ending, always and forever love, then and only then the fruit will come. Abiding must come before the fruit bearing. The abiding part can take more intentionality and more effort and often more patience, which is maybe why I like to try and skip ahead to the bearing fruit part. I mean, don’t we all want to see the fruits of our labor anyway?

We can only bear fruit when we keep ourselves attached, closely attached, to the Vine. May we continually let Jesus prune back the branches. May we allow Him to strip us from our pride and our selfishness, and may He open us up to His grace-filled, abiding love. We can only love others when we truly abide in God’s perfect love.

Father, thank You for the Truth of Your Word. Teach us what it looks like to abide in You first and foremost. May we rest in Your never-ending love. Amen.

