

SERMON SERIES: If We/Then God
TITLE: If We Stay Close to God, Then God
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Key Line

If we remain in Jesus, then we will look like Jesus.

Introduction

Remember there is nothing you can do to make God love you more or love you less. His love is unconditional. But the Bible does describe conditional blessings. Just as parents love their children unconditionally but may give rewards for good behavior.

Seek the Word

Genesis 1:27 We are made in the Image of God. We were made to show the world who God is.

Galatians 5:22-23 The fruit of the Spirit helps show us what it means to be in the image of God: ". . . love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

- These qualities will improve every area of your life, every relationship.
- We would never complain that a person has "too much" of one of these qualities. They are unquestionably valuable qualities that are in short supply in today's world.

John 15:1-3 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardner. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you."

- If we remain in Jesus, then we will look like Jesus. You can't remain in Jesus from a distance. "Remaining" means staying emotionally connected to Jesus.
- If a grapevine is distressed or diseased it may grow "suckers," extra vines that are taking energy away from the main vine and making it less fruitful. These have to be pruned off. Will your life bear good fruit, or simply grow useless wood that has to be pruned off?

Talk About It

- Discuss the idea that God's love is *unconditional*, yet there are things you might do that bring additional blessings to your life. How can we keep this distinction in mind and avoid drifting into a performance-based mentality in our Christian lives?
- What sorts of activities might absorb our energy and resources without bearing good fruit for the Kingdom? Is there anything God may want to prune from your life?
- Which of the fruit of the Spirit has been most plentiful in your life? Which of the fruit needs to develop more in your life?
- What specifically will you do about this week's lesson? How will you put it into practice?