THIS IS JESUS

UNIT 1: THE MESSIAH NAMED JESUS
PART 2: HE IS
Lesson 3: He Is The Vine

Devotion 1

Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. (John 15:2)

Imagine a big apple tree that has many branches. Some of the branches look strong and healthy, but others... they are rotting away so badly that even the birds know not to make their homes there.

Read John 15:2.

When we see an apple tree, it is much easier to identify the branches that need to be pruned and those that need to be completely removed. But how can we know which branch we are when it comes to our spiritual lives? Does God look at us with a pair of clippers or a chainsaw?

This week, you will spend some time thinking more deeply about what kind of branch you are when it comes to your life with Jesus. To begin, here are a few ways that you will want to prepare:

- Prepare your heart to receive God's Word. Try to begin each devotional with a posture of reception.
- Reflect on your relationship with God. Have you been seeking to align yourself with Him?
- Pray that God will give you encouragement in the areas you are doing well and illuminate the areas that need growth in your spiritual life.

Devotion 2

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)

How has your life changed since first knowing Jesus? Has it changed at all?

Read John 15:5.

Jesus tells us that whoever abides (or lives) in Him/whoever He abides in, is the one who will bear fruit. And then, He drops the really big news: Apart from Jesus, we can do nothing.

Let that sink in for a minute. Jesus isn't talking about what we are physically or mentally able to do, like run a marathon or beat our grandpa in chess. Those things are done all the time by all sorts of people, regardless of their spiritual lives. What He means in this verse is that unless we are spiritually alive in Him, then we are not really alive at all. And dead branches don't produce fruit.

Take a look at your life. Are you connected to the Vine (Jesus)? Do you abide in Him? Or are you seeking to do things apart from Him, and finding that you cannot do anything at all?

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Devotion 3

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:11)

What happens when we abide in Jesus?

Read John 15:11.

Joy is a gladness of heart that comes from God. Imagine full joy, like the one that Jesus mentions in the verse. It might look like experiencing God's joy, in the best and worst of times. Not in a way that puts a band-aid over grief, but a joy that stands alongside our grief.

This joy is a great way to experience life, and it's also a way that God is displayed through us. Think of this as one of the fruits that grow on our branch. But this fruit is unlike the fruit that we are used to seeing in our own gardens. This fruit is bright and beautifully displayed, whether it is in the middle of a cold winter or a warm summer day.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:

- Have you experienced the joy of Jesus in your life?
- How does it look for someone to bear this kind of spiritual fruit?

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Devotion 4

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. (John 15:16)

Jesus is clear in John 15 that if we abide in Him, then there will be evidence of our relationship with Him.

John 15:16.

This week, we have focused a lot on the truth that Jesus is the Vine, and we are the branches. Apart from Him, we produce nothing. But with Him, we bear fruit. Just as a branch is an extension of the vine, we are extensions of Jesus. Our life is only possible because of Him.

Did you know that vines and branches share the same source for water and nutrients? However, the water and nutrients MUST flow through the vine to the branches. When Jesus says, "You did not choose me, but I chose you," think of it like this relationship. The vine chooses to send life-giving water and nutrients to the branches so that they can bear fruit.

What do you need today from the Vine (Jesus)? Do you need more nutrients? More water? Spend some time in prayer and ask God to continue His provision so that you can bear even more fruit!

Devotion 5

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

At the beginning of this week, you reflected on what your branch looks like. Let's take a closer look at the fruit you should be seeing in your life!

Read Galatians 5:22-23.

Take a moment to think about each of these spiritual fruits. Ask yourself:

- How am I displaying God's love to others?
- How have I experienced God's joy recently?
- Does God's love fill me with peace, even when things seem out of my control?
- Do I show patience for myself and others, even when it would be easy not to?
- How have I been kind to others recently?
- Have I sought after God's goodness? Have I celebrated and displayed God's goodness?
- What does my faith in God look like?
- Am I being gentle in how I live and communicate?
- Do I practice self-control?