

CONNECTED – Uniting People February 4, 2018

John 15:4 Remain in Me & I'll remain in you. A branch can't produce fruit if it's severed from the vine & you can't be fruitful unless you remain in Me. Yes, I'm the vine; you're the branches. Those who remain in Me & I in them will produce much fruit. **Apart from Me you can do nothing.** 6 Anyone who doesn't remain in Me is thrown away like a useless branch & withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. 7 But if you remain in Me & My words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want & it'll be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you're my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

We must stay connected to Him. We're commanded not to go off on our own way in life - we won't survive spiritually. God's Word says that not only will the branch not survive, it won't bear fruit. A broken branch eventually dies. It has no life support & death is inevitable. Same w/ us, apart from God we die a spiritual death that separates us from Jesus.

Jesus says, "Abide in Me as I abide in you." Abiding isn't just dropping in for a visit. Abiding means living & staying connected to the source. Abiding means to hunker down & plan on staying for the long haul. No turning back, no looking back, keep moving forward w/ God, regardless of the cost. The reality is that God is w/ us wherever we go. He's the vine that the branch must stay connected to.

Stay connected to Jesus! How? Through prayer, worship, study of His Word, church, serving people... God is our power source; apart from the power, there's no light & we walk blindly in darkness. It's critical that we stay connected.

*How do we stay connected to God? By living **in** the world & not **of** the world & not following its standards for life & living. We use God's Word as our standard for living. To bear fruit, we must be connected to the vine. To continue to produce fruit, you & I must stay connected to Jesus, "**apart from Me you can do nothing**"! Allow God to be God in our lives & "stay connected to Him".*

Acts 17:28a For in Him we live, and move, and exist (have our being).

A newspaper reporter went to interview a very successful & prosperous small business owner. “How’d you do it?” he asked. “How did you make all this money?” “I’m glad you asked,” the businessman said. “It’s a great story. When my wife & I married, we started out w/ a roof over our heads, some food in our pantry, & 5 cents between us. I took that nickel, went down to the grocery store, bought an apple, shined it up, & sold it for 10 cents. ““What did you do then?” the reporter asked. “Well,” he said, “I bought two more apples, shined them up, & sold them for 20 cents.” The reporter thought this would be a great human-interest story, so he asked excitedly, “Then what?” The businessman replied, “Well, then my father-in-law died and left us \$20 million”... (Pause)

*The businessman prospered not because of his own ingenuity, but because he was **connected!!** It’s not what you know, but who!!*

*Living a “connected” life is a major focus of Kings Circle. We make every effort to stay connected to God & people based on **5 Biblical purposes:***

1. Knowing God- **Romans 10:9** If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.

2. Relating to God- **Matthew 22:37** Jesus replied, “**You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’**

3. Growing in **God-** **Romans 12:2** Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

4. Serving God- Romans 12:10 Love each other w/ genuine affection & take delight in honoring each other. 11 Never be lazy but work hard & serve the Lord enthusiastically. 12 Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble & keep on praying. 13 When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

5. Sharing God- Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere...

*We're all in this together! We want to help you connect to God & people
Let's all work together to help people make a connection!*

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BUT, we have an enemy who's out to steal, destroy, divide, separate...

Romans 16:17 I make one more appeal my brothers & sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions & upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you've been taught. Stay away from them.

Colossians 2:17b Christ Himself is that reality. **18** Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels, saying they've had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud, **19** & they're not connected to Christ, the Head of the body. He holds the whole body together w/ its joints & ligaments & it grows as God nourishes it.

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*The Internet is a powerful tool. It's the place we go to stay in touch w/ friends, watch videos, listen to music & shop for just about everything. As long as we're connected to the Internet, we can seamlessly move from page to page. But the second our Wi-Fi connection is dropped, or service goes down, the dreaded "Connection lost" message pops up on our screen. When our access to the source is interrupted, we do **whatever it takes** to be connected again.*

Jesus establishes a connection w/ us to Himself through the Holy Spirit. Through this connection we communicate, worship, share our needs, listen for His guidance & grow closer to Him step by step. We maintain this connection through regular time w/ Him. For the connection to remain powerful, it must be something we do regularly. We should connect intentionally & w/ expectation that God will honor our efforts. Successful connection results in moving us closer to God rather than trying to move Him closer to us. God's power enables our success, as long as we stay connected to Him.

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The world has never been more connected

*There're millions of miles of fiber optics
Satellites are circling the globe
Social media – Instagram, Facebook, FaceTime, Twitter,
Kids are texting each other on cell phones – even in the midst of jungles.*

*Yet I talk to people all the time who feel more and more disconnected.
They feel like they're out of it. Alone. "Nobody gets me."
Loneliness is a pandemic in America.
We can close our electronic garage door and step into our house
without greeting our neighbors.*

Our "instant everything" lives have wreaked havoc on our relationships.

Yet we were created for relationships. In fact, God said early on, "It's not good for man to be alone." Humans were not made for isolation. We were made for connection. Why? We were created in the image of God. The Bible says God is love. And to love, you've got to have somebody to love.

One of the crucial purposes of our church community here at Kings Circle is to help alleviate this sense of disconnection. There are probably people in our midst every week who aren't connected to our church in a meaningful way. We need to talk about why it's important to get & stay connected.

Join us each week and let's journey through life together...

It all starts w/ your relationship w/ God...