



CONNECTED -

(SERMON SERIES ON JOHN 15)

(From 9/24/17 sermon - Spencer)

I. OPEN - See if there is anyone who wants to share a short testimony, or if there are there specific praise updates or victories that someone might want to share?

II. PRAY

III. READ TOGETHER john 15:1-5 - *“ I am the True Vine, and my Father is the Vinedresser. 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. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 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.”*

*Be sure to take time to slowly walk through this passage, preferably having a Bible teacher provide context and overview.

Q - Sermon takeaways from those who were in attendance? (Spend time receiving reflections from those who were in the service.)

IV. REFLECT

As we continued into our *Connected* series using John 15, much time was spent Sunday on the concept of *abiding*. To ABIDE means to submit to, to accept, to dwell, to live in, to stay, to remain, to inhabit. It is the source that you are *connected to* and from where you find your actual being. Even the concept of persevering is derived from the word abide.

As Christians, we understand from this passage that He...Christ...is the source of our connectivity (“I am the True Vine...”). In three short verses we are told to abide in Him eight different times. It must be important. And even though our society fights against the notion that joy and contentment can come through ONE source only, Christ is saying that we must abide in Him and Him alone and that true spiritual fruit can only be produced if we do so. To not abide in Him means that we will be living a disconnected life. No Source/Vine = No purpose = No joy = A disconnected life. Remember, the only reason that the branch has value is because of The Source that it is connected to.

This week we are asking those within our community group structure to spend their time walking through the Abiding Assessment ‘homework’ that was included in the worship guide. The three areas that show true abiding are: 1) *Time with Jesus*, 2) *Listening to Jesus*, and 3) *Obeying Jesus*.

Discuss your responses within the group.

ABIDING ASSESSMENT

Abiding in Christ simply means to be ‘intimately connected’ to Jesus. This fall, we’re asking the Lord to clearly show us ways we can continually stay connected to Jesus rather than being distracted by the world. Below you will find what we are calling an Abiding Assessment (Adapted from The Oaks Church and J.I. Packer’s similar assessments). There are 3 simple questions that should give you a good snap shot of your “connectivity.”

Each question will be placed through the filter of either: Evidence where my life is connected to Jesus, or, Evidence where my life is disconnected from Jesus. The Scriptures are clear when Jesus says, ‘Apart from me you can do nothing.’ We all want our lives to matter, to have purpose, and to overflow with fullness. This life can only happen through Jesus’ strength, presence, and guidance evidencing itself in your life.

	Evidence where my life is connected to Jesus	Evidence where my life is disconnected from Jesus
<p><u>Time with Jesus</u> <i>Those who really are connecting to Jesus take action and demonstrate initiative both in their public and private lives.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I need to cut out of my life? What commitments do I need to say ‘no’ to? • What can I do to build health margins and priorities to better manage my schedule? • Am I regularly carving out times throughout my day to connect to Jesus: practicing healthy spiritual rhythms of rest, focused prayer, silence, and Scripture reading? 		
<p><u>Listening to Jesus</u> <i>Those who really are connecting to Jesus fill their minds and hearts with awe-inspiring reminders of Jesus’ greatness and listen for His promptings.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is my life too busy, hurried, and distracted to hear Jesus’ voice speak to me? • Have I been walking in step with Jesus’ promptings and convictions? • Am I genuinely listening to what God may be saying to me? 		
<p><u>Obeying Jesus</u> <i>Those who really are connecting to Jesus don’t hesitate to obey by faith even when it might cost them.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How am I living out a life of self-sufficiency? • What areas of faith and boldness are Jesus asking of me? • Am I obeying what He’s asking from me? 		

V. FURTHER APPLICATION -

What tangible adjustments will you make this week to spend more Time With Jesus, Listening to Jesus, and/or Obeying Jesus? Discuss.

VI. BE ON MISSION - Is there someone going through the pruning process right now that could use a word of encouragement from you?

VII. LOOKING AHEAD-

We encourage all CG members to continue reading, praying, and worshipping through John 15 each week.