

LIFE'S MOST IMPORTANT CONNECTION

John 15:1-8

Jesus said, *"I am the true grapevine, and My Father is the gardener. **2** He cuts off every branch of Mine that doesn't produce fruit, and He prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. **3** You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. **4** Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in Me. **5** Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in Me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing. **6** Anyone who does not remain in Me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. **7** But if you remain in Me and My words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! **8** When you produce much fruit, you are My true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.*

- **The CONNECT MORE series will help people become better connected to the Lord, His Church and His ministries so they can be winners in the "game of life."**
- ***What kind of important "connections" have I tried to make throughout my life?***
- **We can experience "life" in many activities, circumstances and relationships, but Jesus wants us to understand that He is the source of spiritual life (John 15:1-8)**
- Jesus - *"This is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16)
- Jesus - *"My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life."* (John 10:10)
- **We begin to experience the "life" that Jesus offers when we receive Him as the Savior and Lord of our lives.**
- Jesus - *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6)
- **We are to live life connected to Jesus the way a branch is connected to a tree, experiencing His presence and power on a daily basis.**
- *"For in Him (the Lord) we live and move and exist."* (Acts 17:28)

- **We can be successful in some areas of life, but we won't experience success in the important areas of life if we're not connected to Jesus' presence and power.**
- ***What are some principles that we need to embrace in regards to "connecting with the Lord"?***

Connecting With The Lord Requires Understanding:

THE <u>NECESSITY</u> OF CONNECTION

- Jesus - *"Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in Me."* (John 15:4)
- **Jesus is the vine and we are the branches, and we cannot bear fruit apart from Him; and"abiding in Him" brings spiritual growth and purpose to our lives.**
- **"**Without God, Life has no purpose, and without purpose, life has no meaning." - Rick Warren
- *Jesus said, "<u>Abide in Me, and I in you</u>."* (John 15:4 NKJV)
- **Abiding in Jesus involves *Daily Interacting With Him*.**
    - **We experience the Lord's presence in our lives through prayer, worship and Bible reading.**
    - Jesus - *"When you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you."* (Matthew 6:6)
    - Jesus - *"People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."* (Matthew 4:4)
- **Abiding in Jesus involves *Weekly Connecting With Other Believers*.**
    - **We "connect" with other Believers by joining with them regularly for Small Group studies, ministry activities and Worship services.**
    - *"Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near."* (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- **Abiding in Jesus involves *Regularly Serving Him And Others*.**
    - **We serve the Lord by living for Him and by helping others through personal ministry, community service and through the ministry of our Church.**
    - *"Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless."* (1 Corinthians 15:58)
- **Our connection with the Lord is not just about what He can do for us, but about what He can do through us to make a difference in the world around us.**

Connecting With The Lord Requires Understanding:

THE <u>CRISIS</u> OF DISCONNECTION

- Jesus - *"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in Me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing."* (John 15:5)
- "The greatest tragedy in life is not death, but a life without purpose. A life without relationship with God is a life without purpose." - Rick Warren

- **One of the primary tactics the enemy uses to keep us disconnected from Jesus is to keep us focused on the distractions of the world.**
- ***"****Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you."* (1 John 2:15)
- **The more we are distracted by the world, the more we are conformed, compromised and corrupted by the world (Romans 12:2; James 1:27, 4:4).**
- "We must not allow the noise of the world to drown out the voice of God." - Dieter F. Uchtdorf
- **When we are distracted and disconnected it leads to us neglecting prayer and our quiet time with the Lord; which leads to sin and disobedience in our lives.**
- "Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay." - Unknown
- Jesus - *"Anyone who does not remain in Me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned."* (John 15:6)
- ***"****This world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever."* (1 John 2:17)

Connecting With The Lord Requires Understanding:

THE <u>BENEFITS</u> OF CONNECTION

- Jesus - *"But if you remain in Me and My words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are My true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father."* (John 15:7-8)
- **Staying connected with the Lord brings answered *Prayer* to our lives.**
    - Jesus - *"You may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!"* (John 15:7)
- **Staying connected with the Lord brings lots of *Pleasure* to our lives.**
    - Jesus - *"I have told you these things so that you will be filled with My joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!"* (John 15:11)
- **Staying connected with the Lord brings *Peace* to our lives.**
    - Jesus - *"I am leaving you with a gift - peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid."* (John 14:27)
- **Staying connected with the Lord brings *Power* and strength to our lives.**
    - *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* (Philippians 4:13 NKJV)
    - **Our connection with the Lord is like a tree with roots that go deep into the ground - and the deeper our roots, the stronger we are and the more we are able to withstand the storms of life.**
- **Staying connected with the Lord brings *Productivity* to our lives.**
    - *"When you produce much fruit, you are My true disciples."*
    - **When we stay connected with the Lord, He works through us to lead others to become His disciples.**
- **When we "abide in" Jesus our prayers will be answered, our needs will be met, we will have joy and peace, we will live productive lives, and we will bring glory to our Heavenly Father.**
- *"How joyful are those who...follow the Lord's ways! You will enjoy the fruit of your labor. How joyful and prosperous you will be!"* (Psalm 128:1-2)

- ***What are some steps that I need to take to become better connected to Jesus?***
    - **_____ Receiving Jesus as my Savior**
    - **_____ Taking the step of Baptism**
    - **_____ Having a daily "devotional time" with the Lord**
    - **_____ Getting involved in a *Life Group* with others pursuing the Lord**
    - **_____ Joining a *Serve Team***