

The devotionals this week are designed to help you dive deeper into understanding your own spiritual growth, honestly assessing where you are and taking steps to grow deeper with Jesus.

Are you new to doing daily devotionals? Here are a few tips:

- When you're ready to sit down for your devotional time, find a quiet and comfortable place, free of distractions. Spend time in prayer asking God to prepare your heart, just sitting with Him.
- It's okay (and human!) to get distracted during your daily devotional, just gently redirect yourself back to what you were meditating on. Don't give up because you missed a day, just start up again!
- You can end your time with God in prayer, thanking Him for the ways he met you and asking for help with the things you may have learned. Try to take away one thing from each devotional and meditate on it throughout the day.

Monday, September 24th

Read John 15:1-17

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² 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. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹ "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for ...

one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

What do you observe in this passage? Which parts interest you, are repeated, or contrasted?

What "hits" you from this passage?

What does this passage teach us about the Lord? What difference does it make that He is like this?

Tuesday, September 25th

Refresh your memory and read John 15:1-17, remind yourself of the things you observed yesterday. Focus in on verses 1-4.

When have you experienced the "cutting of a branch" that "bears no fruit"? What was hard about that? What was liberating about that?

Verse 4 says, "No branch can bear fruit by itself." What implications does this have for your growth?

How have you struggled to remain in the Lord? What joys have you experienced when remaining in the Lord?

Why do you think God would design us like this?

Wednesday, September 26th

Refresh your memory and read John 15:1-17, remind yourself of the things you observed and brought to the Lord. Focus in on verses 5-8.

What does "bearing fruit" look like? What kind of fruit would you like to see from your relationship with Jesus? (continued on next page.)

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Why do you think Jesus uses such strong language in verse 6? Think back to verse 2, what do you think Jesus intends with his language?

When have you found it difficult to trust God in his pruning? When have you found it freeing?

With such strong language, we can see that the benefit of remaining in Jesus is becoming who we were created to be—his disciples (v.8). What next steps do you need to take to remain in Jesus, pursue spiritual growth and continue looking like Him?

Thursday, September 27th

Refresh your memory on what you've observed and encountered in John 15. Focus in on Verses 9-17.

What contrasts do you notice in this section compared to the sections you studied earlier this week?

How does Jesus' emphasis on love and servanthood interact with your interpretations of "branches being cut off"(v.2)?

It's easy to say "love one another" but what could that actually look like? In your family? In your workplace?

What would need to change in your spiritual life in order to remain in Jesus and live out servant love?

Friday, September 28th

Read John 15:1-17 in its entirety. Reflect on some of the truths you have encountered in this passage.

How has Jesus met you in John 15? How have you been honest with yourself about your own spiritual growth (or how you "remain in Jesus")? What next steps in Jesus leading you towards, spurring you on to deeper connection with Him?

What resources do you need? (Accountability, classes, groups, etc.)

IF I WERE HONEST

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