

TALKING POINTS

NEXT LEVEL - CONNECTION TO JESUS

LEANING IN

If we want joy, the power of God and fruit in our lives, these things are all available to us through connection. To gain these blessings, we have to be aware of three simple connection truths:

1- Jesus is the true vine - the vine in the vineyard is the source of all life. If there is a true vine, then there are counterfeit vines - things like money, power, sex, body image, misplaced pleasure are all false vines. Jesus is the *only* true vine.

2 - God wants abundant fruit in our lives - fruit which comes from the Holy Spirit cannot be faked. We either have it or we don't. We must remember, it's not *our* fruit, it's *His* fruit *in us*. The only way to have this abundant fruit is to patiently wait on God to produce the right "crop" inside of us.

3 - We are responsible to abide in Christ - abiding isn't something we have to *do*, it's someone we have to *be*. It means we must be in an ever-growing relationship with him which transforms our character to be more like His.

Read John 15:1-2, 1 John 3:24

What kind of spiritual "fruit" should we see in our lives as we abide in Jesus?

LIVING IT OUT

To have the connection with God which changes our lives, we have to *abide* in Christ. To abide is to connect, to be dependent, and ultimately to reside - to live *in* Christ. Here are four results of *abiding* in our lives:

The Presence Of Christ - as we commit to abiding in Christ, we *will* experience the presence of Jesus in our lives as He engages with us in deeper and more meaningful ways.

Read John 15:4

Can you share a time when you personally experienced the presence of Jesus in your life?

The Power Of Christ - as we abide in Jesus, we begin to see His genuine power working both in our lives and the lives of others.

Read John 15:5, Ephesians 1:18-21

How do we know God is actually working in our lives? What does that look like in the day-to-day?

Answered Prayers - answered prayer isn't the result of praying harder, it's the result of abiding in Jesus. As we abide in Jesus, we see the power of prayer working out in our lives.

Read John 15:7, 1 John 5:14-15

What is a balanced view of answered prayer? We get everything we ask for, or is there something more to it?

Joy - not to be confused with happiness, Joy is something deeper, something stronger. When we abide in Jesus, we begin to experience a joy in *all* circumstances which is not of the world. It is greater than this world.

Read John 15:11, 1 Peter 1:8-9, James 1:2-4

If joy *isn't* happiness, what exactly *is* it? Have you experienced it?