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The Connection

Key References: John 15:1-12; *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 73, pp. 674-678; *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 259; Our Beliefs, nos. 14, 11, 12.















power**text**

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

power**point**

Through a close friendship with Jesus we can build truly loving friendships with others.

Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 88.

Do you get along with everyone? Have you ever wished that you could show sympathy, love, and kindness to everyone, just like Jesus?

One evening, while walking with His disciples, Jesus brought their attention to a vine. He wanted them to understand two spiritual lessons about relationships.

"I am the true vine," Jesus said (John 15:1). He could have compared Himself to a stately tree, but He wanted them to understand that even He, in His humanity, needed the support of His heavenly Father, just as a vine needs to be supported by a trellis. "I can of Myself do nothing," He said (John 5:30). The same is true of you and me.

"My Father is the vinedresser," He continued. "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:1, 2). Here Jesus points out that many will profess to be His followers, but their character and how they treat others shows they have no relationship with Him. They are like dead branches, which bear no fruit.

Jesus' greatest desire is to see us become like His Father. That's why the Bible tells us that having the Spirit of God within us develops the fruit of love, joy, peace, kindness, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (see Galatians 5:22, 23).

If we each developed such fruits, we would act differently, wouldn't we? We wouldn't get caught up in arguments or feel envy

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Sunday

READ Read John 15:1, 2 and this week's story, "The Connection."

MAKE Draw a grapevine with fruit. Write the power text on it.

REVIEW Review the power text, John 15:5.

PRAY Ask God to "prune" you so that you can "bear fruit."

Monday

READ Read John 15:3, 4.

RESEARCH From a science book, encyclopedia, Internet, or a gardener, learn about "grafting" and "pruning."

NOTE In your Bible study journal, write what you learned.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you stay connected to Jesus. Pray for good fruits in your life, the evidence of your connection with Jesus.

Tuesday

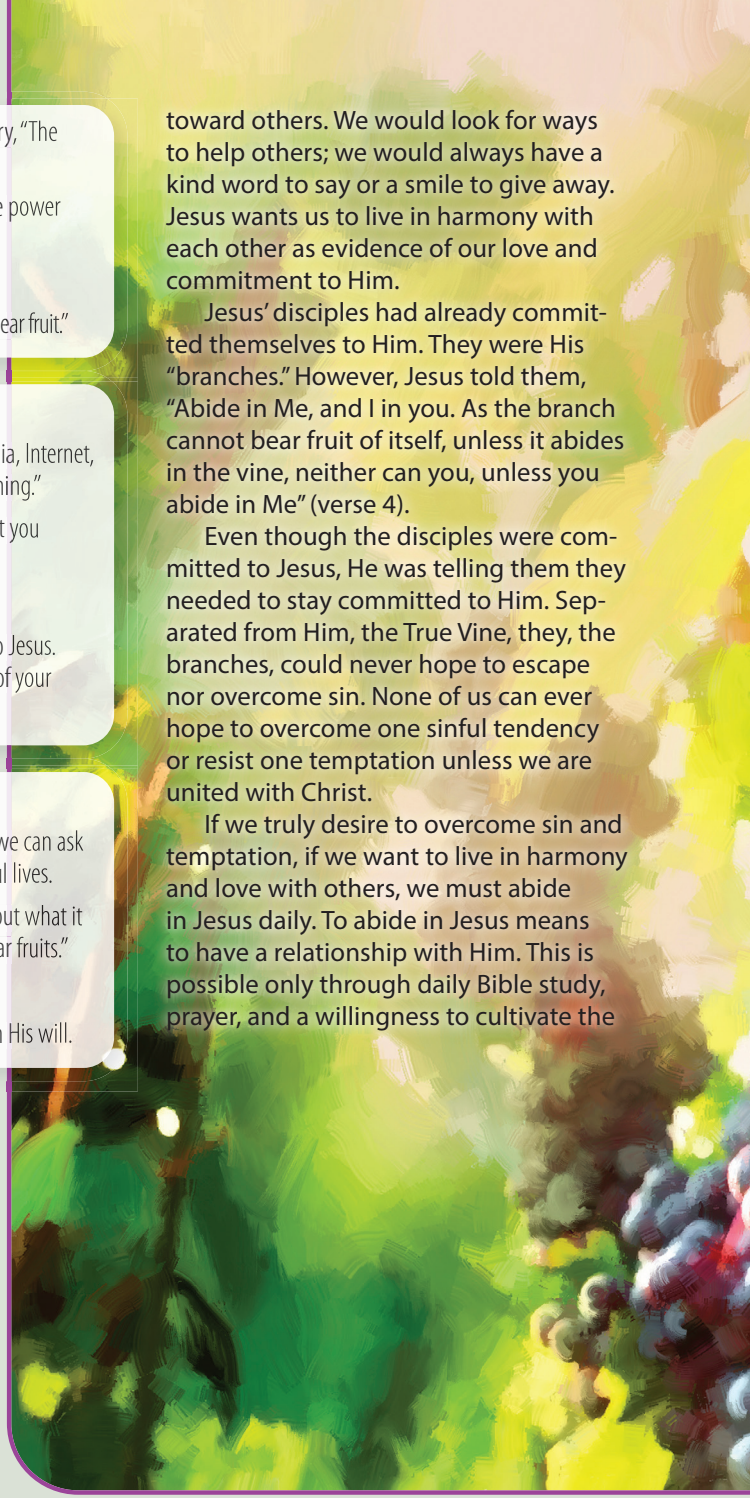
READ Read John 15:5-8.

THINK Jesus said that if we remain in Him, we can ask for what we need. He wants us to have fruitful lives.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write about what it means to you that through Jesus you can "bear fruits."

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray that you may abide in God and in His will.



toward others. We would look for ways to help others; we would always have a kind word to say or a smile to give away. Jesus wants us to live in harmony with each other as evidence of our love and commitment to Him.

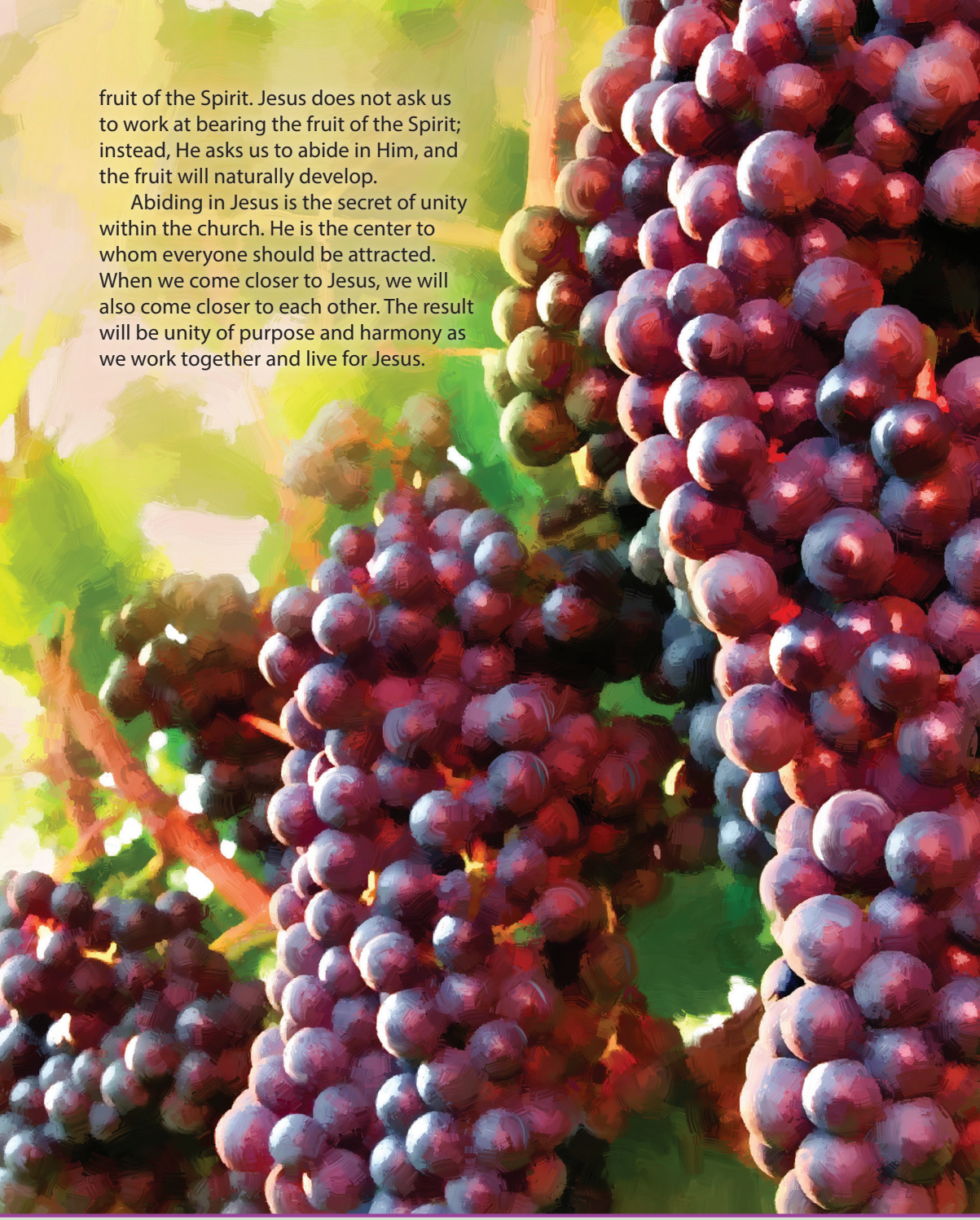
Jesus' disciples had already committed themselves to Him. They were His "branches." However, Jesus told them, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (verse 4).

Even though the disciples were committed to Jesus, He was telling them they needed to stay committed to Him. Separated from Him, the True Vine, they, the branches, could never hope to escape nor overcome sin. None of us can ever hope to overcome one sinful tendency or resist one temptation unless we are united with Christ.

If we truly desire to overcome sin and temptation, if we want to live in harmony and love with others, we must abide in Jesus daily. To abide in Jesus means to have a relationship with Him. This is possible only through daily Bible study, prayer, and a willingness to cultivate the

fruit of the Spirit. Jesus does not ask us to work at bearing the fruit of the Spirit; instead, He asks us to abide in Him, and the fruit will naturally develop.

Abiding in Jesus is the secret of unity within the church. He is the center to whom everyone should be attracted. When we come closer to Jesus, we will also come closer to each other. The result will be unity of purpose and harmony as we work together and live for Jesus.



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Wednesday

READ Read John 15:9-12.

DISCUSS Ask an adult to tell you about a time he/she has come to know Jesus better. What situation or life event led him/her to recognize Jesus as a personal Savior and Friend? Talk about times you have experienced that Jesus loves you and has a plan for your life.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to show you how to know Jesus better.

Thursday

READ Read Hebrews 4:15, 16.

THINK Think about emotions that you feel (sad, glad).

TALK With an adult, talk about how Jesus experienced human emotions and can identify Himself with us.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for sending Jesus to show us how human beings can live connected to the Father.

Friday

READ Read 2 Corinthians 3:18 and 1 Peter 1:8.

DO Find a wastebasket and a ball that will fit into it. Stand five yards (or five meters) away from the basket and try to throw the ball into it five times. Come a few steps closer and try five more times. Repeat this three times. Keep score at every distance.

THINK The closer you come to Jesus, the better able you are to be on target in all of your relationships.

SERVE Plan to participate in a service or mission project with your Sabbath School and church youth next Sabbath!

REPEAT Say the power text by memory.

PRAY Ask God to help you be closely connected with Him as the branches are to the grapevine.

In this last meeting with His disciples, Jesus' greatest desire was for them to love one another as He had loved them. More than once He said, "Love one another." The disciples had not loved one another as Christ had loved them; they spent a lot of time arguing. Jesus saw they needed a new understanding of love that included self-denial and self-sacrifice. Jesus is our supreme example in how we may truly love one another.

In His last recorded prayer, Jesus had a burden on His heart for us to become unified. He said: "I . . . pray . . . that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17: 20, 21). When we are drawn close together, not by circumstances or self-interest, but by love, we will show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this unity exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in us; that He is able to subdue the selfishness in our hearts.

These are the spiritual lessons Jesus wanted His disciples to learn. If we have a daily living connection with Jesus, He will change our character. As we spend time learning from Jesus daily, following His example, and obeying His teachings, we will receive spiritual nourishment. Then the Holy Spirit will produce in our lives the fruit of the Spirit.



PUZZLE
11

A SPECIAL MESSAGE

Replace the missing vowels in the Bible verse below to find a special message. The chapter and most of the book in the Bible are given, but the verses are not shown here.

A	=	10
E	=	13
I	=	7
O	=	15
U	=	2
Y	=	4

"Th__s __s M__ c__mm__ndm__nt, th__t __ __ __ l__v__ __n__ __n__ th__r __s __ h__v__ l__v__d __ __ __. Gr__ __t__r l__v__ h__s n__ __n__ th__n th__s, th__n t__ l__ __ d__wn __n__'s l__f__ f__r h__s fr__ __nds" (J__hn 15:__, __).