

The result, of maintaining a vital relationship with Christ, is we experience the spiritual vitality that comes from him. The passages listed below describe the results of our union with Christ.

*14:21 Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”*

*14:23 Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.*

*14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

*15:5 “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.*

*15:7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

*15:10 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.*

*15:11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.*

1. What are some of the ways these passages describe spiritual vitality?
2. Which of these is most appealing to you? Why?
3. What are some steps you can take in the weeks to come to nurture your relationship with Christ and experience the spiritual vitality that comes from Him?

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2017

## 360 DISCUSSION GUIDE



We used to have a brush pile in our backyard. On occasion we would trim our trees and toss the branches on the pile. When you initially cut a branch out of a tree, there is a lot of life in it. The leaves are green and vibrant. The branch is nearly impossible to break. Some of the branches that have been on the pile a while longer are faintly green, but the leaves have lost their vitality. The branch is still resilient and difficult to break. The branches that have been on the pile for a few months or even a year are a different story. While the leaves are still intact, they have lost all their color and crumble in your hand. The branches break with a crisp snap when you bend them across your knee

From the moment you remove a branch from the tree it begins to die. While it still has the appearance of life, it has been cut off from the source of life.

Jesus uses a similar image to describe our connection to him. He tells us, “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.”

When we are cut off from Jesus we are cut off from the source of life.

## OUR UNION WITH CHRIST

John 13-17 records the final moments Jesus spent with his disciples before going to the cross. Jesus prepares them not only for the next few hours, but for a lifetime of following him. He speaks passionately about the coming of the Holy Spirit and the vital union we have with the Father and the Son through him.

*14:15 "If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever —17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you... 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.*

*15:5 "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.*

1. Our union with Christ is the result of the indwelling presence of the Father and Son through the Holy Spirit. How does Jesus describe the Holy Spirit in these verses?
2. How does he describe the union we have with the Father and the Son through the Spirit?
3. Why is the image of the vine and branches an apt illustration of the importance of our union with Christ?

## MAINTAINING A VITAL CONNECTION TO CHRIST

While our union with Christ is a gift of the Father through the Spirit, and we are kept by the Father and the Son through the Spirit, we are also responsible for maintaining a vital connection with Christ. The passages below describe the essential ingredients for maintaining a vital union with Christ.

*14:15 "If you love me, keep my commands.*

*14:21 Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."*

*14:23 Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.*

*15:7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

*15:10 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.*

*15:12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.*

1. According to these passages, what are the essential ingredients for maintaining a vital connection with Christ?
2. Why do you think Jesus places a premium on "obedience"?
3. In 14:15 and 14:23, Jesus can speak of keeping his "commands" plural. In 15:12 he speaks of "My command" singular. How do the "commands" of Jesus inform the "command" of Jesus?
4. How does the "command" of Jesus inform the "commands" of Jesus?
5. What do you think it means to "have" our Lord's commands (14:15) and for his "words" to remain in us (15:7)?
6. How would you describe the kind of involvement we should have with God's word in order to thrive in our relationship with him?
7. How would you describe the role of "prayer"?