

Do You Know That “One Thing”?

Jeremiah 29: 12 In those days when you pray, I will listen. 13 If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. 14 I will be found by you,” says the Lord.

I know that for some of you this message may seem like a “broken record” (remember vinyl records?) but I feel compelled to analyze a core biblical concept that relates to everything we’ve discussed over the past five weeks. The concept is this: **“remaining in Him”**

John 15: 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.

Another popular translation:

John 15: 5 “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. (NASB)

The practice of abiding in Him cannot be emphasized enough as it is the key to growing spiritually. It is also the difference between life and death. Jesus continues...

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.

It only makes sense. The spiritual world mirrors gardening in so many ways. Not only do we reap what we sow, but if we are not growing, we are dying. Just like any relationship, it either moves toward oneness or isolation.

Although the Bible can sometimes be mysterious and

complicated, there are core doctrines (teachings) that are very simple, understood by all readers, and repeated throughout all of Scripture. Do you know how a speaker will sometimes say “If you receive only one thing out of this message, this is it.”? I believe the message of remaining in Him is the “one thing” that really matters.

1 Corinthians 13: 1 If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. 3 If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.

There's that word “nothing” again. We can do nothing apart from Him and we are nothing if we don't love others. We cannot love others apart from Him. Only because of His love are we able to truly love others. He is the one who created us, in His image. We enjoy life only when we work with Him, but are nothing and have nothing when we're not working with Him. This is all by His design. He simply wants us to respond to His love, to turn to Him:

Matthew 4: 17 From then on Jesus began to preach, “Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”

This was His main message. He began His ministry with this message and the rest of His time on earth He taught how to live it. Repenting and turning to God is not a “one-time” event. As long as we pursue Him He requires continual repentance. This is dying to self. We are counted righteous and Holy in Christ Jesus, but He continues to transform us when we submit to Him.

In light of all this, doesn't make sense that His greatest commandments are as such:

Matthew 22: 37 Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

This is the "one thing" that God wants us to get and in doing so we remain in Him. The rest of Scripture helps us to get to understand Him better. The more we understand Him, the more we can trust Him and learn how to really love Him. He not only tells us what we need to live and have eternal life, but also how to achieve it.

John 3: 36 And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment."

This belief in God's Son for most starts out at an intellectual level and for some it is emotional or both. God wants this belief to grow deep in our hearts. The levels of belief are quite evident in Scripture and we observe the disciples achieving a deeper and deeper level of conviction as they witness Jesus and His works. As the disciples walked with Him on a daily basis, so are we to do so, this is what discipleship is all about. Over the past five weeks, I covered the essential disciplines.

Wherever you're at, regardless of how your relationship is with God, let go of anything keeping you from getting to know Him more. I know I may be the only person telling you "read your Bible daily", but let this brief, weekly message sink deep. Think hard about who Jesus is to you and how you relate to Him. Is He the most important person in your life? Are you

at peace with that? Or do you desire something greater?

***Luke 13: 22** Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he went, always pressing on toward Jerusalem. **23** Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few be saved?" He replied, **24** "Work hard to enter the narrow door to God's Kingdom, for many will try to enter but will fail. **25** When the master of the house has locked the door, it will be too late. You will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Lord, open the door for us!' But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from.'*

Do not allow your failed, broken and strained relationships keep you from knowing God. Do not put the failures of your parents on Him. He keeps His promises, He is gentle and sweet. He is completely reliable and will never let you down. If you can trust Him with your salvation you better believe that you can trust Him with all your daily cares and worries. He is always there for you and desires you to become one with Him. You'll never find a greater person to fall in love with. The investment of time and losing whatever else that has to go by the wayside, like you, is worth it. You need to just keep pursuing Him, asking Him to reveal Himself to you. Consider what the apostle Paul had to say regarding himself:

***Philippians 3: 8** Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ*

***Matthew 13: 44** "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field. **45** "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. **46**When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!*

Will you remain in Him?

“Dear Lord, I do want to know you more. You’ve been so good to me and you’ve blessed me in so many ways that I don’t know how to thank you. You are so great and have been so patient with me. Please help me do whatever it takes for me to move closer to you. Teach me your ways as I become one with you. In Jesus’ name.”

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