

Week 6

Dependence

“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.”

John 15:5

“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”

Philippians 4:13

Think about all the toys and electronics you use and play with throughout the day. Many of those items likely depend upon a battery or electrical power in order to operate. Just as those things are unable to function apart from an outside power source, we too need to stay connected to God’s unlimited power in our lives if we are to accomplish the things that God wants us to do.

John 15:5 helps us to better understand this important truth. In the same way that no branch can live on its own or produce fruit or leaves by itself if it is no longer connected to a trunk or a vine, neither can we have life or power apart from God. Jesus said that anything we try to do on our own or in our own power is hopeless. It’s wasted effort.

But the apostle Paul said that through Christ he could do *“all things.”* Paul’s complete dependence upon God’s power is what enabled him to endure difficult times throughout his life as a Christ-follower. And in the same way, our complete dependence upon God is our only hope if we are to make progress in the different areas that we’ve covered in these devotional readings. We need to rely upon God’s strength if we are to learn to have unity, to forgive others, to accept others who are different from us, and to live at peace with others.

This means that we need to continually stay connected to God. We need Him not just on Sundays and not just when we’re at church, but for every moment of every day. God wants you to trust Him and to completely depend upon Him. And as you do, He will do more through you than you could ever do on your own.

Do

- How many items in your home can you find that require some type of power source in order to operate? If you want, you can turn this activity into a timed challenge and see how many items your family members can find in one minute.
- Plant something together as a family that will be a visual reminder of your family's need to depend upon, and to stay connected to, the Vine (Jesus).

Discuss

- What part do you play and what part does God play in helping a plant to grow? How is this similar or different from the way that we grow in our faith?
- Jesus promised that if we stay connected to Him, we will bear much fruit. What specific "fruit" do you think should be evident in your life if you are depending upon Him?
- Name a time in your life when you tried to do something in your own strength instead of depending upon God. What did that experience teach you?
- As you reflect on the various topics we've read about and discussed in these six Family Devotions, which one of the topics do you personally need God to help you with the most in order to make greater progress? Why? How can your family members help you grow in this area?