



# reflecting Jesus

BETA

I am as strong as  
my connection to Jesus **01**

?

*did you know that...*

### **living as a Christian is like a television plugged into the wall**

If you are watching television and someone accidentally pulls the plug out of the wall, the picture disappears immediately. If you want sound and a picture, you have to have continuous power that stays at a constant level. That's why the plug is so important. The plug connects the power supply to the television.

### **living as a Christians is *not* like running on batteries**

If you have a toy car using rechargeable batteries, you have to charge the batteries before the car will run. Once the batteries go flat, you have to plug the batteries back into the mains charger. Some Christians think that life with God is like that—charge your batteries with God in the morning by praying and reading the Bible, and then, and then recharge them later. But that can be a dangerous way of thinking about it.

### **Jesus says we are branches on a vine**

Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. When we are connected (like the plug), and his nature is able to flow from him into us, we will automatically bear fruit—because his character is now inside us. But we have to be connected at all times. Because the moment we are disconnected, fresh power cannot come into us. When this happens, we face the danger of trying to live like Christians, but without God's power!





## the facts of his story

Jesus describes our relationship to him as branches in a grape vine. His character flows from him into us only as we are connected to him. In John 15:1-17, Jesus reveals four connection points—points where we remain connected to Him so that his character can continually flow into us.

1. First of all, what is the purpose and consequence of being connected to Jesus? (verse 8)

---

2. *Connecting to the mind of Jesus—through studying His word.* Look at the times in this passage where Jesus uses the term “words” or “commands”. What is He trying to tell the disciples?

---

3. *Connecting to the heart of Jesus—through communion with Him.* What three terms does Jesus repeatedly use to reveal intimacy with God in the following verses?

9-10 \_\_\_\_\_

11 \_\_\_\_\_

14-15 \_\_\_\_\_

4. *Connecting to the will of Jesus—by yielding our will to His.* In the passage, how many times is the word “if” used, and what does this mean?

---

5. *Connecting to the work of Jesus—by joining Him in service.* Why does Jesus say we must be willing to do in serving others? (verses 12-13) How convenient or easy do you think such service is for you?

---



## thinking it through

1. What has your relationship been like with Jesus recently—constant like a TV, or more like a battery powered car?
2. How connected have you been recently to the mind, heart, will, and work of God? Which is easiest for you? Which has been the hardest?
3. Are there any things stopping you from becoming more closely connected to God that you need to deal with?

Things to remember:

---

---



## habits for reflecting Jesus ~ evaluating my connection to Jesus

Weeds may grow in our garden without any help from us, but as every gardener knows, beautiful flowers do not grow by accident! Roses and other flowers have to be pruned, have fertiliser added, and the weeds removed.

It is the same in our spiritual life. As we noted in an earlier lesson, we don't grow spiritually by accident! We have to be deliberate and thoughtful about how and where we grow.

To help us deepen our connection with Jesus in the future and bear good fruit, it can be helpful to evaluate our life with God every so often. As always, we will ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in this process because without Him, we will not be able to see our spiritual condition clearly.

Spend a moment to pray for the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Then complete the questionnaire, "Connection Point Assessment: How connected am I to Jesus?"

When you have finished, consider the following questions:

1. What are my strongest connection points to Jesus?

---

---

2. What are my weakest connection points to Jesus?

---

---

3. Do I need to talk to someone about something I have discovered?

---

---

4. What do I need to do in the future to strengthen my connection to Jesus?

---

---

---

---

---

---



## putting the pieces together

In "the facts of his story" we looked briefly at four points at which we connect to Jesus. We could call this, The Law of Fruitfulness: I am transformed into the character of Jesus when the nature of Jesus flows into me through my constant connection to him. This brings me new life and gives honour to the Father when people see I am related to Jesus. I bear fruit as I am filled by His Spirit which increasingly allows a) the opening of my mind to live according to his word, b) the craving of my heart for His intimate fellowship, c) the submission of all my choices to His will, d) the sacrifice of my life for serving the ambitions of His kingdom.

In "thinking it through" you had a chance to think about your own connection with God. The challenge is to live a life where we are continually connected to Jesus, so that his nature can flow into us at all times.

In "habits for reflecting the character of Jesus" you had an opportunity to examine your own connection to Jesus more closely. It is really helpful to spend times at regular intervals to evaluate our spiritual growth. Because remember, reflecting the character of Jesus doesn't happen by accident!

***"If we really abided in His love, we would come away feeling so nourished, so cherished, so liked, that we would rush back to him whenever we could."***

**Bruce Wilkinson**



## my time with God

This week, spend some time each day to look at these questions based on John 15:1-17,

1. According to the text, what is the purpose of the vine and what does this mean for you?
2. Can you think of any problems that might happen if someone gets baptised before learning how to become a disciple who is closely connected to Jesus?
3. How many times is the word "remain" used? What is Jesus trying to teach us who want to be his disciples?
4. It is possible to know the words of Jesus but still not be connected to him. How is this possible, and how would you help someone in this situation?
5. Verse 8 says that when we bear fruit, the Father is glorified. What does this mean?
6. If you would have to make your own definition of a disciple of Jesus based on this passage, what would it be?



## pass it on!

Can you teach someone about the four connection points to Jesus, and why these are so important?

*"Hold out the word of life..."*

*Philippians 2:16*



## extra help

1. Secrets of the Vine by Bruce Wilkinson
2. Desire of Ages, page 674-680.



<b>General</b>		
1	I can easily explain what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
2	I believe that honouring the Father through reflecting the character of Jesus is the most important purpose for my life.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
3	I can see I have been growing spiritually recently.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
4	I think that my church will reflect the character of Jesus more effectively when we are helping each other to do this.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
<b>Connection Point 1— Connecting to the mind of Jesus through his word</b>		
5	I can see the Bible as a single complete story and can explain the order and significance of the major events in this story.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
6	I am able to study the Bible on my own without any help.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
7	When I read the Bible, I find it enjoyable and relevant.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
8	I regularly spend time to study and apply the teachings of the Bible to my life.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
9	<p>How many minutes have you spent each day in studying the Bible during the last week?</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all                      <input type="checkbox"/> 15-30 minutes  <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 minutes        <input type="checkbox"/> More than 30  <input type="checkbox"/> 5-15 minutes </p> <p>I consider this enough time to maintain my connection to Jesus.</p>	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
10	I am familiar with the purposes, plans, and promises of God for me and can see them working in my life.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree

11	I can clearly see how the values, principles and laws of the Bible create a lifestyle which is very different from what I see around me in my culture.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
12	When I read the Bible, I sense the teaching and direction of the Holy Spirit.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
<p><b>Connection Point 2— Connecting to the heart of Jesus by pursuing intimacy with him</b></p>		
13	I am often aware of the Holy Spirit pointing out things I need to change.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
14	I think that praying for spiritual things is more important than praying for physical things.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
15	I regularly worship God during the week, and this fills me with joy.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
16	I regularly see God answer my prayers.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
17	I fast when I have a difficult issue to deal with or want to deepen my relationship with God, and I have seen the difference it makes.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
18	I see many reasons in my life and in the lives of others to thank and praise God.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
19	I generally have an attitude of thankfulness within me that draws me closer to God.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
20	I normally remember what I have been praying about.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
21	I use the Bible to guide the things I pray for.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
22	I regularly have time alone to pray to God each day	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
23	<p>How many minutes have you had on average for personal prayer <i>each day</i> with God during the last seven days?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 minutes      <input type="checkbox"/> 15-30 minute  <input type="checkbox"/> 5-15 minutes              <input type="checkbox"/> 30+ minutes</p> <p>I think that this is enough time to maintain a personal and fruitful relationship with Jesus.</p>	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
24	I know what it means to have intimacy with Jesus.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
25	I know personally what it means to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
26	I can see that prayer really helps strengthen my faith and confidence in God.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
27	I can see that prayer helps me to resist temptation.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree

28	I can see that prayer helps me to serve others more effectively.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
29	There are a number of things I do not want to talk to God about.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree

**Connection Point 3—  
Connecting to the will of Jesus through submitting my will to Jesus**

30	Whenever I have a decision, I ask God what choice should make.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
31	Outside of my personal devotional times, I am conscious of the presence of God during the day.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
32	When trials or difficulties come, I am able to go through them with peace and confidence knowing that God is working everything out for my best.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
33	I make all my decisions based on biblical principles, and can explain where these principles are in the Bible, and why I live by them.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
34	I regularly take time to reflect on the things that are happening to me, and can often see the work of God through these events.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
35	I am patient while waiting for God or others to act, even though I would like them to act now!	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
36	How much do you agree with the statement, "I am who I choose to be."	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
37	I understand quite well what Jesus meant when he said, "if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, pick up his cross and follow me." (Mark 8:34)	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
38	I know what it means to be a "living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1)	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree

**Connection Point 4—  
Connecting to the work of Jesus through sacrificial service**

39	If someone asked me why I am a Christian, I would easily be able to tell them.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
40	I often take opportunities to talk about Jesus with people who have not heard it before.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
41	I know what my spiritual gifts are, and am active in using them in building up my local church.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
42	I regularly spend time with people who do not know Jesus.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree

43	I regularly spend time praying for people in need of help, or who have not yet become a disciple of Jesus.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
44	I am always available for God to use me to serve others who are in need.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree
45	I am able to sacrifice for others, even for people who hurt me.	Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Agree