



Abide

The Power and Beauty
of God's Word

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of God's Word

Family Devotional

MIDYEAR PRAYER, FASTING, AND CONSECRATION



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Contributors: Pastor Ernie and Michelle Aragon, Bishop Manny Carlos,
Daisy Cayos, Pastor Edgar Gorre, Dr. Winston Reyes,
Victory Kids Fort Writers Pool

Illustrations by Michelle Ortiz

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**This family devotional is designed to be used
by parents with children from the ages of
four to twelve.**

Fasting 101

Connect

All of us have needs and wants. Needs are things that we can not live without. Wants are things we would like to have. What are some of your needs? What are some of your wants? There are many things we need and want. But sometimes, we focus so much on our needs and wants that we put aside our relationship with God. Fasting lets us focus more on God by setting aside our needs and wants.

What is fasting?

Fasting is stopping an activity (usually eating) for a period of time to know and hear God more. We replace eating or using our gadgets with time with God. This means praying, worshiping, and reading the Bible. These activities strengthen our relationship with God.

When our parents speak to us, we should pay attention and listen to them. Fasting helps us pay attention and listen to God. It helps us put aside distractions. We say to God, "I am going to listen to You because You are my Father. I trust You!"

Jesus gave us an example of fasting in Matthew 4. Jesus knew that He would need strength and power for His ministry. He prepared by fasting for forty days in the desert. During this time, He was tempted by Satan. His response to that temptation is the truth we can hold on to for strength when we fast:

"People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Matthew 4:4 (NLT)

Fasting is usually keeping yourself from eating and drinking as you devote more time to God. But you can also fast from different media (TV, video games) and technology (gadgets, Internet) if you can not fast from food. The important thing is to keep your focus away from the things the world offers to spend more time with God.

Before Fasting

1. Pray

Spend time reading the Bible before the fast. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in your prayers. Write down your specific prayer requests for your family, friends, church, and nation.

2. Commit

Pray about the kind of fast that you will do and commit to it ahead of time. Ask God for grace to help you follow through with your decision. Also, ask your parents and maybe even your doctor if you are allowed to do a specific type of food fast.

3. Act

If you will be fasting from food, start eating smaller portions a few days before you fast. Avoid sugary and fatty foods. Ask someone to be your prayer partner throughout the fast.

While Fasting

1. Focus

Set aside time to read God's word and pray. This devotional will help you go through your fast. Just be ready to listen to God's voice and do what the Holy Spirit is telling you.

2. Pray

If you can, join at least one prayer meeting in your church. Pray for your family, church, pastors, nation, campuses, and missions throughout the week.

3. Fill Up

During mealtimes, if you're fasting from food, read the Bible and pray instead. Drink plenty of water and rest as much as you can. Keep in mind that you may find yourself becoming physically weak, tired, impatient, or irritated. If you're doing a different type of fast, read the Bible and pray during the time you would normally do what you are fasting from (for example, browsing through social media or playing video games).

After Fasting

1. Eat

If you fasted from food, reintroduce solid food gradually. Your body will need time to adjust to a normal diet. Start with fruits, juices, and salad, then add more vegetables. Eat small portions throughout the day. It may be tempting, but try not to eat junk food and sweets right away. If you've finished a different type of fast, remember what God revealed to you as you spent time with Him. Take what you learned from the fast into your everyday life.

2. Pray

Don't stop praying! Trust that God will keep His promises and knows what He's doing. Don't stop believing in and listening to God all year. Be in faith and expect God to answer your prayers!

Our Plan

Day 1

FASTING OPTIONS

Social media fast

Gadget fast

Skip one meal

Other

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

FAMILY MEMBERS

Write down the names of the parents and kids who will do this type of fast for today.

Day 2

FASTING OPTIONS

Social media fast

Gadget fast

Skip one meal

Other

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

FAMILY MEMBERS

Write down the names of the parents and kids who will do this type of fast for today.

Day 3

FASTING OPTIONS

Social media fast

Gadget fast

Skip one meal

Other

Prayer Meeting(s) to Attend:

FAMILY MEMBERS

Write down the names of the parents and kids who will do this type of fast for today.

We are thankful to God for . . .

How did God answer our prayers in 2022 so far?

For the rest of 2022, we are seeking God and trusting Him in these areas . . .

What are our prayer requests for the rest of 2022?

Family (e.g., good health for parents and siblings)

School (e.g., good grades)

Friends (e.g., for friends to know Jesus)

Others (e.g., for more people to know Christ)

"Again, here is what I tell you. Suppose two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for. My Father in heaven will do it for you."

Matthew 18:19 (NirV)

Pray in Pairs

Each family member will pray with a relative or friend. Write down the prayer partner's name after each family member's name.

Family Member	Prayer Partner
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
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.....
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Introduction

The Word of God Prunes



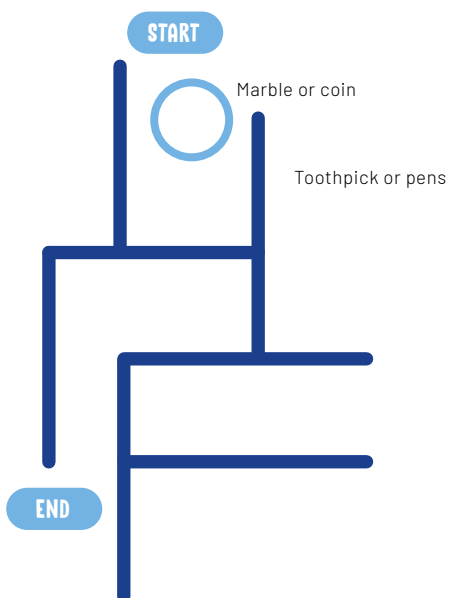
Connect

Prepare:

- 7 toothpicks, pens, or pencils
- 1 marble, small ball, or coin

To start:

Arrange the toothpicks into a puzzle like this:



Puzzle instructions:

Remove one stick from the pile so the marble can roll from the top to the bottom. If you don't have a marble or small ball, you can demonstrate the activity using a coin and guide it through the spaces between the sticks until it reaches the end of the puzzle.

(See the end of this day's devotional for the answer to the puzzle.)

Was it fun figuring out the puzzle? You know what? Sometimes, we can be in situations like that puzzle, where we have to figure out how to get to our goal.

The good news is the Bible tells us how we can do that.

Read the Word

Let's read John 15:1-4 from the Bible:

¹"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me."

John 15:1-4

A vinedresser's job is to oversee, cultivate, and ensure the grapes in a vineyard are growing well and plenty. The vinedresser strategically removes branches from a grape vine so that new shoots can grow. And because the vinedresser studies and watches over the vineyard daily, he or she knows each branch and how much fruit is expected to be harvested in the next season.

This process of removing branches to grow new shoots is called pruning, and this term is often used in the Bible to describe how God removes some of our bad attitudes, bad habits, and all kinds of sinful thoughts and behaviors. This is so we can become more and more like Jesus in the way we think, speak, and behave. As our vinedresser, He

takes care of us, lovingly pruning away the things in our lives that drag us down or hinder us from becoming more like Jesus. This is not always an easy experience; sometimes, it hurts. This is why it is important to remember that God does this because He wants the best for us.

God nourishes and prunes us as we continually abide in Him. We do this by continuing to trust in Jesus and by praying and studying His word.



Huddle

Parents to Kids

4–6 years old

- ▶ Have you prayed to God today? What did you tell Him?
- ▶ What story from the Bible do you like the best? Why?

7–12 years old

- ▶ Have you read the Bible and prayed to God today?
- ▶ Is there something that bothers you today? Do you want to talk about it now so we could pray to God and ask Him to give us a verse from the Bible to guide you?

Kids to Parents

- ▶ Can you share to me an instance when God was removing a bad habit in your life, and it was very hard for you. How did you handle it?

No matter how young or old we are, we need to make it a habit to read the Bible and pray to God every day. As the vinedresser diligently takes care of the vines every day, God will be with us all day, every day. We can trust Him as He works in our lives.

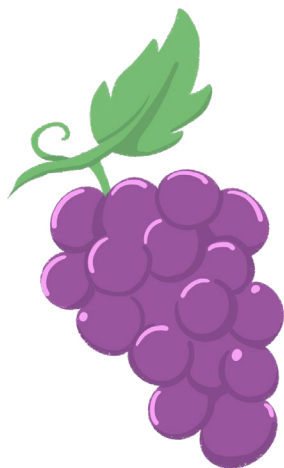
Pray

Dear God, we thank You for watching over us daily. We want to abide in You and trust You every day. Please help us obey You even if it hurts sometimes. We know You love us and we love You, God. We surrender to You our plans. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Discover

Gardening is a wonderful hobby.

Did you know that pruning determines how many shoots will grow the next year and where they will be located?¹ This process involves a lot of knowledge and skills so a vinedresser usually has to have a college degree in cultivating grapes which may require courses in different sciences and wine-making.²



Also, apart from knowing exactly which branch to cut, a vinedresser also has to be familiar with the different types of grapes. There are more than 10,000 varieties worldwide and each of them would need unique care.

Such an amazing job and it's not as easy as you thought, right? Even experienced vinedressers still make many mistakes! But our Vinedresser, God, never makes mistakes. He is the perfect vinedresser and that's why we can trust Him all the time.

Answer to the puzzle: Remove the topmost horizontal stick.

¹ Caleb Mosley, "Vine Pruning", GuildSomm, September 7, 2019, Youtube video 5:16, accessed March 28, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-ltkKSxEy8>.

² Mary Dowd, "Job Description of a Vinedresser," Chron, updated December 21, 2021, accessed March 28, 2022, <https://work.chron.com/job-description-vinedresser-7358.html>.

Day
1

The Word Is Like Rain



Connect

How Deep Does It Go?

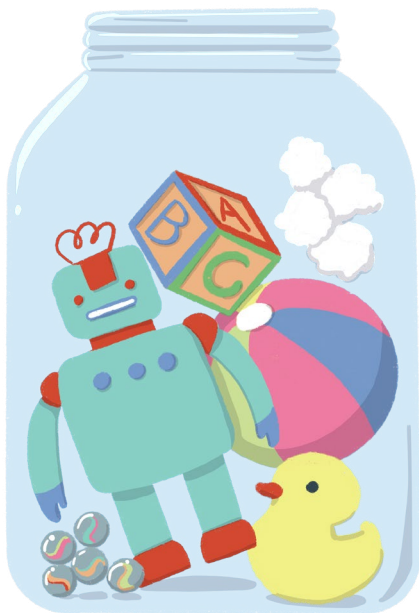
Prepare:

- a glass of colored water (you may use juice or add food coloring to the water)
- another container (preferably see-through) filled with different materials like marbles, cotton, and small toys (or anything that can get wet or thrown out after)

Instructions:

Pour the colored water gently into the container filled with different items. Start with a small amount and watch how deep it will go through the container. Most likely, even with a tiny amount, the water will still land at the very bottom.

This is how the word of God sinks deep in our hearts, once we hear and receive it. Even with a small amount, it will find its target—our hearts—in which God's word will take seed and grow.



Read the Word

How do we know how God's word works?

Let's look at Isaiah 55:10-11:

¹⁰"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

Isaiah 55:10-11 (NIV)

Just like how rain falls and waters and nourishes the ground that it lands on, the word of God will do its work in the hearts of those who hear it. All who hear it will be touched by it. For some, we can see changes right away. For others, it may take awhile. Either way, we can trust that God's word will accomplish the purpose it was sent for.

Hebrews 12:1-3 says:

¹Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Hebrews 12:1-3 (NIV)

As children of God, let us continually persevere to fix our eyes on Jesus and on what He has done for us, knowing that Jesus saved us and will continually grow and mature us until we become perfect like Him when He returns.

Huddle

Parents to Kids

4–6 years old

- ▶ Do you like rainy days? What do you think will happen to the plants around us if there were no rain?

7–12 years old

- ▶ Do you read God's word every day? How do you think it helps you grow?
- ▶ What do you think will happen if you stop reading the Bible?

Kids to Parents

- ▶ How can we continue to grow with God as a family?

Like seeds, our faith needs some time to grow. Isn't it good news that God's word is like rain that pours out from the heavens to renew our spirits and prepare us to grow in faith and walk with Jesus? Why not make a commitment as a family to read God's word and learn from it daily?



Pray

Dear God, thank You for giving us Your word to nourish us and help us know You more. Please help us be diligent in reading and studying it every day. Continue to work in our hearts and minds so we can learn from Your word, grow, and have a deeper relationship with You. In Jesus' name, Amen!

Discover

Speaking of rains, did you know that ancient Rome constructed aqueducts to collect and transport water to different parts of the cities? The first aqueduct was built around 312 BC. The purpose was to supply water from a fountain to a city cattle market. Later, its purpose grew until water was distributed throughout Rome. Eventually, this system became the springboard for the technology that gets water to our cities today.³

³ "Roman aqueduct," Wikipedia, last edited March 7, 2022, accessed March 28, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_aqueduct.

Day
2

The Word of God Is Like the Breath of Life



Connect

Take a deep breath and see how long you can hold your breath. Take turns doing this. Now exhale completely and see how long you can hold it until you need to inhale. Share your experience with one another.



Breathing air is so essential for life that we can not live without it. A person could survive more than a week without food and much less without water. However, a person can not survive beyond a few minutes without breathing. It is that important!

In Genesis, we see that it is God who breathed into the first man, Adam, the breath of life and he came to life:

Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Genesis 2:7 (NIV)

God is the source of life. Just as breathing air is important for us to live physically, there is also something that we need to live spiritually. We will see what that is today.

Read the Word

⁵⁴“Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” ⁵⁹Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum. ⁶⁰When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” ⁶¹But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? ⁶²Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?”

John 6:54-62

In John 6:54-62, Jesus was teaching His disciples the importance of believing in Him. He used the metaphor of Him giving His body and blood to the people. And those who would eat His body and drink His blood will live forever. Of course, Jesus did not really mean that the people were supposed to take a bite out of Him. They did not understand then that He was really talking about Him sacrificing His life on the cross for people so that those who believe in Him will have eternal life. So, the people said that what Jesus had said was difficult to accept and some even left Jesus. So Jesus responded:

*"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.
The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."*

John 6:63

The word translated into English as "spirit" is also translated as "breath" in other parts of the Bible. Jesus was using the image of God's breath of life in Genesis 2:7 to describe the words He just taught them. Jesus was basically saying to them that His words are just like the breath of life. In the same way that breathing air is needed in order to live physically, receiving and believing in His words are also essential so that we may have spiritual life and live forever. His words also produce faith and spiritual power in order to live the kind of life that God wants us to have in this world.

Today, we have the Bible as a record of what God wants to communicate to us. It was the Holy Spirit who inspired and guided the writing of the Bible. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul describes the words of the Bible as being breathed out by God.

¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

It is through the Bible that we get to know and believe in Jesus and His words.



Huddle

Parents to Kids

4–6 years old

- ▶ What are some things you need every day that keep you alive (e.g., air, food, water, love from your parents)? What do you think will happen if you do not receive these?

7–12 years old

- ▶ What would you say truly gives meaning and purpose to your life?
- ▶ During our prayer and fasting, what can you refrain from doing as part of your fasting?

Kids to Parents

- ▶ What would you say truly gives meaning and purpose to your life?
- ▶ How can I start devoting myself in learning more of God's word and starting to pray and fast?

Just like we do not neglect breathing, let us not neglect reading God's word, so that we may know and believe what Jesus did for us. By this, we can experience true life.

Will you take in this breath that God gives you?



Pray

Dear God, thank You for breathing life to us and for giving us Your word that truly satisfies all our needs. Thank You for giving Your Son, Jesus, to mankind so that we can have a relationship with You. Please help us enjoy learning and growing in Your word as we walk with You and share Your good news to others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Discover

Do you know how long you can live without the following?

- air
- water
- food

Different people and different circumstances can yield different results, but generally, the rule of threes apply to the majority: three minutes without oxygen, three days without water, and three weeks without food.⁴



How about our spiritual lives? How long do you think we can live a life that honors God without God's word in our lives? Never be in the habit of living without God's word!

⁴ Sean Kane, "Here's the longest people have survived without air, food, water, sunshine, or sleep," Insider, June 9, 2016, accessed March 28, 2022, <https://www.businessinsider.com/longest-survival-records-water-food-sleep-breathing-2016-5>.

Day
3

The Word Is Like Fire



Connect

As a safety precaution, make sure that the kids are at a safe distance for the activity.

Have an adult boil water in a kettle or covered pot. As it begins to boil, observe it and share your thoughts about what is happening. (For example, the lid starts to rattle, steam comes out, water is bubbling, etc.)

The heat or fire causes the molecules in the water to start moving and become gas. That is what usually happens when heat or fire is applied. Things get stirred up.

In people, when we usually say someone is on fire, it is like the person is excited or passionate about something.

Read the Word

This was what the prophet Jeremiah felt in Jeremiah 20:9:

If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name," there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.

Jeremiah 20:9

Jeremiah was called by God to be a prophet. He experienced much rejection when he delivered the message of God to people. Even when he was deeply hurt, he faithfully served as God's messenger to spread His word to people. He did this because God's word was in Him. No matter how much he was rejected by people, he could not contain God's word in his heart. He just had to tell others about it. Sometimes being the bearer of news that people do not want to hear is hard, but Jeremiah continued to obey God.

The same thing happened to Jesus' disciples after He appeared to them on the road to Emmaus:

³²They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" ³³And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Luke 24:32-35

For those people who have encountered Jesus, they can not contain the good news to themselves. They have to share it with other people. That is the power of God's word! It can not be hidden. And when we have it in us, it will compel us to let people know God's amazing love for them. And who knows? That may be the exact message they need to hear!



Huddle

Parents to Kids

4–6 years old

- ▶ Was there a time you were so excited to share some good news to your friends that you couldn't wait any longer to tell them? Share your experience.

7–12 years old

- ▶ Do you find it hard to keep good news to yourself? Why or why not?

Kids to Parents

- ▶ Why is it important to tell others about the gospel?
- ▶ How has God's word changed your heart?

God's word has the power to change lives. The more we deposit it in our hearts, the more we will feel that it is not something we can just keep to ourselves!

Do you feel this fire burning in you? Ask the Holy Spirit to ignite your heart and give you the passion to tell others about God.

Pray

Dear God, thank You for reminding us that Your word is powerful and true, and we should be willing to be used by You in order to deliver Your word to people. Help us to always abide in You. May Your word be in our hearts like a fire shut up in our bones. Give us courage and strength to share Your word with love and boldness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Discover

Did you know that the prophet Jeremiah was one of the youngest prophets in the Bible?

Jeremiah 1:4–8 says:

⁴The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."⁶"Alas, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young."⁷But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. ⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 1:4–8 (NIV)

God can speak to us, no matter how young or old we are. The question is, are you listening to Him?

The Word of God Bears Fruit



Connect

What is your favorite fruit? Tell your family why you love that fruit.

Show the kids a good fruit and a rotten fruit. (If you do not have any available, you can check the Internet for pictures.)

A farmer is able to harvest good fruit when the conditions for farming are good (such as sunlight, enough water, constant pruning). When the time is right, a tree, a plant, or a field will yield a harvest of good fruit. But if good fruit is cut from the tree and left by itself, it will go bad and rot.

This is the picture of what we have been studying about abiding in Jesus.

Read the Word

John 15:4-5, 7-8, 16 says:

⁴"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. . . . ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. . . . ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you."

John 15:4-5, 7-8, 16

God wants us to be connected to Him. It is not enough to simply say we are followers of Christ. The more important thing is to be constantly connected to God, to commune with Him daily, and to run to Him anytime. And as we are connected to Him, it will show in our lives. Out of our hearts will come the things of God. Among them are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. This is the fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22–23. This is some of the fruit we bear when God truly lives in our hearts. The great thing about it is we do not have to worry about whether we are producing this fruit. When we are truly connected, when we allow God to do His work in our lives, the fruit will come naturally!

The opposite happens when we are not connected to God. The fruit that comes out of our lives will be selfishness, pride, jealousy, anger, and other things that only feed ourselves.

What kind of fruit have you observed from your own life?

Huddle

Parents to Kids

4–6 years old

- ▶ Do you love hearing stories from the Bible? Who is your favorite character in the Bible?
- ▶ Does God live in your heart? How do you know?

7–12 years old

- ▶ Does God live in your heart? How do you know? What kind of fruit do you see in your life?
- ▶ Is there any fruit you want God to cut away or remove from your heart? What are they?

Kids to Parents

- ▶ How do you stay connected to God always?
- ▶ How would you still stay connected with God, even if you do not see Him answering your prayers?

The more we abide in God and His word, the more we will hear Him and the more our hearts will turn toward the things of God. God is faithful to help us let go of the things in our hearts that do not please Him and will eventually harm us. As you read His word and pray, ask Him to help you obey Him.

Pray

Dear God, thank You for Your word through which we can come to You every day and know how much You love us. Help us love Your word. Most of all, help us believe and obey it so we will bear good fruit in our lives. In Jesus' name, amen!

Discover

What do vines consist of?

A vine has four parts:

- roots, which are underground and mainly responsible for collecting nutrients
- a trunk, or the main stem of the vine, which links the roots to the branches
- branches, where growth happens
- shoots, where fruit grows and flowering happens⁵

As we have learned, Jesus is the vine, or the main trunk. We are the branches. A branch that is not connected to the vine will no longer bear fruit.

Do you want to stay connected to Jesus?



⁵ "What do vines consist of?", Wine-of-the-Month Club, accessed March 28, 2022, <https://www.wineofthemonth.co.za/What-do-vines-consist-of>.



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