

1 (4s):

If you are new here or you've been here for a while, this is going to be a great series. So I'm glad that you guys are here for this. I think this is so important for us in all of the phase that we're in, in life because the last 17 months have been difficult. They've been challenging for us, some of us that the most challenging months of our lives, I, you already saw some of the statistics in this video, but I wanted to read you a few other ones. Over the last 17 months, you saw that two out of three adults are experiencing anxiety, social isolation, or the loss of significant relationships. And why that's such a problem is that social anxiety that we found through studies is actually worse for your physical body, let alone the emotional and mental toll that it takes on you. But for your physical body, it's worse than dealing with obesity.

1 (47s):

It is the equivalent of smoking six, 15 cigarettes a day on just your physical body, social isolation, but here's one of the status statistics is that of those people who are struggling in that way, only one out of 10, actually reaches out for help. Only one out of 10 reaches out for health help. It goes on to depression of clinical depression, clinical depression. It went up from an average in our nation of 8.5% of people struggling with clinical depression to now 27.8% of people struggling with it. 42%. If you include anxiety of adults in the United States experienced either anxiety or depression, that's almost one out of, two of the people that we run into.

1 (1m 28s):

Some of us are like, yeah, that's me. It's bad for leading suicide. And it leads to suicide over the last 20 years, suicide rates have been growing and growing and growing, and they just took another leap forward this last year. So that now when we look back over the last 20 years, suicide rates have jumped by 40%,

2 (1m 45s):

40%.

1 (1m 46s):

And it's leading here in Colorado to a lot of relapse and overdose. I looked nationally, it's bad, the overdose numbers, but here in Colorado, it's actually twice as bad as the national average that right now they are seeing a 59% surge in overdose deaths here in Colorado NPR in one of their reports said that right now with the pace things are with overdose deaths is that we are on pace to see more deaths from overdose due to drugs. Then we're seeing deaths from COVID-19 very soon, those numbers will flip, but perhaps the craziest statistic of all, as you saw it in the video is that only 9% of people actually want life to go back to the way it was pre pandemic.

1 (2m 32s):

So what that tells me is a lot of the problems we've seen over the last 17 months are really just we're already there. And they got exacerbated. They got pushed and exploded over the last 17 months to be much worse because people are saying, Hey, life wasn't even good before then I want something better. So in this series,

that's where we're going to talk about how do we not go back to the way things were when they were just mildly bad or moderately bad, but how do we normalize a better life? That's what this series is going to be about. And I hope that you are interested in this. So what we're doing in this series, it's actually very simple. I don't, you might go through this whole series and say, Matt, you never taught me anything that I didn't know, but there are things that we're not doing, right?

1 (3m 13s):

So what we're going to see is we're going to learn five different practices we have kind of today is our intro message, kind of given an overview of the series, what we're gonna be talking about. And then we're gonna learn five practices over the next five weeks. That will help you form the better life. Because when Jesus calls us to follow him and our church is all about that, helping people follow Jesus. When Jesus calls us to follow him, he says that if you follow me, you will have life and have it to the full, the fullest. Life is part of what it means to follow Jesus. Now it is not the easiest life. It's not the most comfortable life. There may be more difficulties and challenges and trials. If you follow Jesus, and yet he says, it's the fullest best life you could ever have. So that's what we want for you.

1 (3m 53s):

And if you're here for this year, as if that's what you want for yourself, maybe you're realizing that today, or you've realized it for months. He said, I do want better. If that's you, I want you to commit to being here for this entire six weeks series you're already here today. So you only have five more and we have five more. So I want you to commit to this. This is going through the first week in September, and you're saying I'm going to be here. And if you're like, well, Matt, I already have plans to be out of town for labor day or something like that. That's okay. Join us online. We can do that now. Right? You can subscribe on YouTube. You can subscribe on the podcast app. If you have to be physically gone, one of those Sundays, join us online. Don't miss it. Set your alarms right now. I know some of you like barely made it here for 10:45 AM set your alarm for next Sunday. I won't be mad if you pull out your phone right now, set your alarm, get it on your calendar.

1 (4m 34s):

Say for the next six weeks. Cause some of you are brand new to Christianity. I get it. You're brand new to our church. And you're like, I don't know. But can you give yourself even just a six week commitment to say, I'll check it out because if it is the fullest life, I want that. I want it. And I want you to have that to just give it a chance. Okay? Just try it out and see if these practices we're going to talk about actually can develop. And I believe that God will show up in your life that you'll begin to experience something in God that you didn't have even before the pandemic. So for some of you, it might be re-engaging or for some of you engaging for the first time. So that's why this series is called engage. And they're simple practices. I'll give you an overview. The first one is to worship weekly. Second one is going to be to serve somewhere.

1 (5m 15s):

The third one is to choose community. The fourth one is to give generously and the fifth one is to help

somebody else follow Jesus. Very simple practices yet. I believe if you practice them, you will be amazed at how Jesus will show up in your life. And you will experience a better life than what you had even pre pandemic. So that's my challenge to you be here for these six weeks. And today we're going to get an overview. Some been very simple. We're going to see from Jesus, what he teaches us in John chapter 15. So if you have a Bible, go ahead and open to John chapter 15. You can also follow along on your smartphone. We have, if you use the YouVersion Bible app, the Bible app has a little event section. You can find the arise church Denver event, and you can follow along with the scripture notes. It even has the quote from today that you can pull it up, save the notes right there on your phone.

1 (5m 60s):

So we're going to be in John chapter 15. And what we're going to learn is a very simple, basic thing because Jesus is talking about the better life. He really is talking about a fruitful life. And those as we're going to use, it are interchangeable a better life, a fruitful life. And he's going to say, if you want this type of life, very simple, get this fruit only grows on the vine. Okay? Simple concept. But I want you to learn this memorize it. Fruit only grows on the vine. So we're going to see this. As we look at John chapter 15. Now this whole passage is incredible teaching from Jesus. We're going to just dive in at two different points. So we're going to start in verse four of John 15, where Jesus says remain in me.

1 (6m 40s):

As I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 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. And then he let's jump down to verse eight. Jesus says, this is to my father's glory, that you bear much fruit showing yourselves to be my disciples. My followers, verse nine, as the father has loved me. So have I loved you now remain in my love verse 10.

1 (7m 22s):

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. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. Do you know what joy is? True happiness. He said, if you want true happiness, if you want happiness remain to me, that sounds good. Verse 12. My command is this love each other as I have loved

2 (7m 50s):

You.

1 (7m 52s):

So here's Jesus talking about the fruitful life. And there was one word that got repeated over and over and over again. And we just looked at it a little chunk of this scripture. Didn't we? What was the word remain? I heard it over here remain. I think there was already about five times and there's some over 10 times he uses this in one passage that Jesus teaching remain, remain, remain, remain. Guess what the word remain

means. Remain. Some of the older translations have abide there because it can be a word that says, this is where you live. Like your house. You live in this house, you remain in it. You abide in this house, but it's also a word for a relationship. You remain in a relationship. You connect in this relationship.

1 (8m 33s):

So it's a byte. It's connection. It's engagement in a relationship that Jesus saying, and if you have that relationship with me and I with you, then you will bear much fruit. You'll be happy. You'll have meaning. You'll have purpose. It's bringing glory to God. This is the type of relationship. The fruitful life that you're looking for. You want a better life remain. Jesus says, he's saying, and I know you want to bear fruit. So fruit only grows on the vine. Fruit only grows on the vine. That's what he's teaching us here. Very simply. So it's to remain and it's to remain in relationship. Now I think this is so important. So he uses this metaphor here of the vine and branches and the branches are bearing fruit.

1 (9m 17s):

And if it's a vine, he's talking here about grapes, right? This is a great vine. And I did a lot of research on, on great vines this week for you guys, you can thank me afterwards. It is kind of research for you guys on great vines and what Jesus is telling us. It's like something that you probably didn't know this, but if you want to grow fruit, if you want to have grapes, the branch has to be connected to the vine. That's a really special fact. I'm teaching you guys this today. I don't know if you knew that if you want fruit, you must remain on the vine. It must because fruit only grows on the vine. So this is what Jesus is teaching us here. And it's so simple yet. I think we miss it. So often who in here has, has gone on a vacation this summer.

1 (9m 58s):

Anybody. I want to see some hands of people on vacation, anybody on a vacation. This has been like the most traveled summer ever. June and July was like the most traveled months in like American history, maybe world history who had the best vacation. Who in here? Shout it out. If you went on a really cool vacation, anybody know shit. Where'd you go? Maui. Oo, Maui, Wowie. Who else? Anybody can anybody talk? Maui? W Nebraska. It's the good life. Okay. Who over here? Rica. Pura. Vida, right? Okay. The pure life down there. Anybody else can top that vacation here, buddy? Montana.

1 (10m 38s):

Big sky up there, right? We a big sky country yet. Some great vacations. Some of you have been on. If you're online, leaving, leave a little comment. I'd love to see. Maybe even leave us like a picture of where you went on your vacation this summer. So you have gone on some great vacations. And I just want to imagine you pick up the phone and this time it's actually a real person and they call you and say, you've won a vacation. Okay? It's a real person this time. Right? We get enough of those junk calls. Pick it up in there. Like you've won a vacation, all expenses paid trip to the board. DOE region of France. Okay. If wine country, okay. The best wine country, not in Napa. Okay. We're going to Bordeaux region of France. We're going to pay for your flight. We're going to play for the place. You're going to stay. It's going to be right in the vineyard.

You're going to love it.

1 (11m 18s):

Everything is taken care of. Congratulations. You'd be like done on there. Right? I'll go see, fly over there. You're so excited for your first night in France. And you're sitting down in the restaurant and here comes your waiter. <inaudible> and, and you say, well, we'll, we'd love an appetizer. Of course. Right. We'd be. And then you say, and since we're staying at this vineyard, could we have a bottle of wine from the vineyard and the waiters? Like on Saudi Amancio we have known bottles of wine here.

2 (11m 52s):

Okay. And

1 (11m 54s):

You're like, well, what about from just the region? Do you have any bottles of wine from the Bordeaux region we're here, right? This is why the wine region. Right? We want something from Bordeaux and your waiter's like I'm studying. I'm studying Mozu can I drop the accent now? Is that okay? That's awesome. Yeah. I'm bad at accents guys. Okay. We're just going to be watching those, one of those movies where the accent just kinda like drops out halfway. You've seen those ones, you know what I'm talking about? Okay. So the waiter's like, I'm sorry, we don't, we don't have any bottles of wine from the Bordeaux region. And you're like, what the heck? Well, do you have any wine? They're like, yeah, we can get you something from Napa. Oh, come on. Okay. I didn't fly around the world. I flew around the world to try French wine from Bordeaux. Right? So you're like, well, monster, okay.

1 (12m 35s):

What is going on here? Why don't you have any bottles of wine from the region what's going on? And your waiter says, well, you know, people love our wine, our grapes, the best in the whole world. We've grown them for generations, but people love them so much that we would go to the vine and we've been cutting off all the branches. And we've been giving the branches to people so that they could take it home with them. And everybody has been able to take a branch with them. And so every time a branch comes up, we just cut it off. It's the best fruit you're going to want some of this, these grapes. And we were finding out, he says, is that when you take the branch, it's great. It has some grapes on there. And people take it on. They're really excited. And then a few hours in the sun later, it's dead. Right? So we decided we'd put it in these fancy little wine glasses with water in it and we'd give people, oh, that's a great thing to take home with them.

1 (13m 21s):

And the branch would stay alive for a little bit longer. And then it would dine with her. Right. And what would you tell your waiter at this point? You'd say, are you an idiot? Everyone knows fruit only grows on the vine. Right? Okay. If you cut the branches off, it's not going to grow food. Maybe it'll stay alive for a little while, but the grapes won't keep growing. It's done. You'd say what an idiot. And yet, somehow we don't understand

this. When Jesus teaches us

2 (13m 53s):

About it for life in our own lives,

1 (13m 57s):

We think things are going pretty well for me right now. Life is good. So, you know, I'm just going to go about my business. I'm going to stop going to church. I'm going to stop spending time reading God's word or praying. So for those of you who have been followers of Jesus and you drift away and you drift away, and then years later, you and your life is going to pot, when things are breaking up and you had a breakup, things are not going well. You're, you're struggling. And you're like, what the heck? Why is my life? So why does God hate me? But the whole time you've been apart from the vine, you haven't remained. And maybe for a little while you do okay. But there comes a point where you two will dry up with her and die

2 (14m 38s):

Spiritually speaking.

1 (14m 40s):

This is what Jesus is telling us here. Fruit only grows on the vine. If you want to have a fruitful life, you have to stay connected, remain in the vine. Jesus is very clear about this. And I want you to hear this. So when Jesus talks about fruit here, I believe he's talking about two different things. It's what God is going to grow in you and what God is going to grow through you. So it includes the fruit of the spirit. So you becoming the person, you were meant to be like the fruit of spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control it. Remember those, the character that's developed in your life. If you want that in life, if you want God to do something powerful and amazing in your life so that you grow and mature to become the person you were meant to be, you need to stay connected to the vine.

1 (15m 24s):

The same thing, if it, because there's growth through you, there's fruit through your lives that you're serving other people, seeing other people's lives transformed. And if you want to do that, if you want to impact other people and make a difference in the world, you have to stay connected to the vine. Fruit only grows on the vine.

2 (15m 39s):

Jesus tells us very simple fruit only grows on the vine.

1 (15m 44s):

And so there's two simple little points here that we need to realize. And the first one is that the vine is Jesus, right? The vine is Jesus. He's saying fruit grows on the vine. I am the vine. Did you see this in verse five? In

case you didn't get his metaphor? What he was, if he didn't pick up what he's laying down. And he says, in verse five, I am the, I am the vine right case. You're wanting, I am the vine. You are the branches. You're a branch. If you want to bear fruit, you have to stay connected. You get snipped off, you go off on your own. You're going to stop bearing fruit and you will wither and die. At some point, if you want something good to happen inside you and through you, you have to stay connected. Fruit only grows on the vine.

1 (16m 24s):

So remain in me, stay connected to Jesus. Now, now this is so important for us to hear that we have to be connected. If we want to bear fruit, you know, the most amazing thing about grapes. And I did some research on grapes. Like I told you for you guys. So from one branch, one branch can have between one and three different groupings of grapes, right? And of these, you can have some up to about on average, a hundred grapes, right? A hundred. So that means on your own, you can have 300 different fruit, every single season. Okay. That's the cool thing. I don't know if you know this about grapevines. Anybody ever looked at a great vine before there's one vine goes into the ground, has roots down there.

1 (17m 9s):

Okay? And then you grow it and you can put it on your trellis. You can put it, you know, some of you guys have it on your house or whatever. And it grows all over the place. One vine with one set of roots and it connects to all these different branches and each branch can, can have up to 300 fruit on it. If it's connected to the vine and with the coolest thing, it's not just one time. Every single season, it goes through the winter months. It comes back. Especially if you learn how to prune. And we'll talk about that in a little bit, because then every year there'll be even more fruit and better fruit. And sometimes it takes a few years for the fruit to start coming. But once it does, it keeps growing and growing, growing. But only if it's connected to the vine, cut off a branch, it's worthless, throw it away, burn it.

1 (17m 49s):

It's no good, but in the compost. So we do here in Denver, right?

2 (17m 53s):

Compost bend it.

1 (17m 55s):

But if it stays connected to the vine, it can grow. When Jesus is saying, I'm the vine. This means we must have a relationship with Jesus. He's saying I'm a person. And I want a relationship with you. Remain in me, means have a relationship with Jesus and relationships are important. And relationships take communication. They take time in order to build and be healthy, right? So this means in this passage, Jesus talks about it. He's like we can talk to Jesus through prayer, tell him what's going on in our life. Tell them work. We're angry, we're upset. What's going on. And we also can listen to him through his word, which are the 66 books we call the Bible. Jesus wants to speak to us.

1 (18m 35s):

And if you want a healthy relationship, here's a bonus point for anybody in a relationship or married. If you want a relationship, you should talk to them, but you should also listen. Okay? Listen, there's a new insight for someone. Most of us are terrible at listener listening, right? We talk too much. Okay. But if you want a good relationship, you have to communicate. It goes back to forth and debt. Jesus says that you want to remain in me, have a relationship with

2 (18m 55s):

Me. Talk with me. Listen to me.

1 (18m 58s):

Talk with me. Listen to me. That's what a relationship takes. Remain in me. Fruit grows on the vine, have a relationship with me. Now, this is so important for, for us because some of you have been like the husband that takes off and is like, oh, I'm married. You know, we already said our vows put the rings on. So if I go and live overseas for 15 years, we're going to be fine. Right? What happens when that guy comes back? Right? Yeah. Ma divorced. She's probably moved in married, remarried and had a few kids. Right? Okay. That's why being in the military so hard because you go overseas or some of you have traveled overseas. It's so hard to have a relationship when you're apart, long distance relationships are difficult because you have to communicate, communicate, communicate all the time.

1 (19m 38s):

You have to listen to each other. Okay. So if you do leave the home and you know, for a few years, are you still married? You are married maybe. Yes, but you haven't terrible relationship. And your spouse may leave you. Right? And your relationship is not going to grow when you're

3 (19m 58s):

Apart. Okay. That's a load of hokey, right? Absence

1 (20m 1s):

Makes the heart grow mad. Okay? So here's a little bonus point for you. If you want to stay married, spend time with your spouse. Okay? Really Marvel, really brand new idea for some of you. If you want a good relationship, it takes communication. It takes spending time together, and relationships are so good at that way. So if we want to grow fruit in our life, if we want to develop character, if we want to impact other people, it means we have to stay in relationship with Jesus. Fruit only grows on

2 (20m 31s):

That's your first relationship. You got to focus on vertical with Jesus.



1 (20m 35s):

But yeah, there's more relationships to this because here's the thing. If you are a branch on the vine, there are other branches as well. And that's why the vine connects us to others. The vine connects to others. Here's a fascinating thing in mind research. Okay. On average it takes, guess how many grapes it takes to make one bottle of wine,

2 (20m 59s):

300

1 (21m 1s):

Somebody who is your first service. Okay. 1,204 grapes, 1,204 grapes. Okay. And I told you, the best branch can produce maybe 300. So at minimum you need four branches to make one bottle of wine. It could be more than that. If you're not producing a lot of fruit that year, right? Meaning if you want to do something significant, it's going to take other people. You cannot do it on your own and we're not supposed to. That's why on the vine one branch is connected to all the other branches on the vine as well. We are all connected to each other as followers of Jesus, whether we're here in Denver or around the world in Estonia or north Africa. Okay? We have so many people around us that are part of the vine and we need to connect with them as well.

1 (21m 44s):

The relationship with them needs to remain as well. I want you to see this. How, how clearly Jesus teaches this in verse 10. If we can look at that, Jesus says this. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love remaining in Jesus's love. Doesn't that sound awesome. I want to relay in. Jesus' love. I want it to shower down on me. I want to take a bath in Jesus's love. Right? I just want it all around me. That sounds so good. We all want that. We're going to come here on Friday night to worship Jesus. Just experience his love. It's going to be awesome. We want that. But how did Jesus tell us? We remain in his love.

2 (22m 16s):

If you

1 (22m 17s):

Keep my commands.

2 (22m 21s):

Hmm?

1 (22m 22s):

Can a lot of people, oh, I want Jesus' love. I want it. It's so good. If we want it, we have to do what he says. He's telling us part of our relationship with Jesus. If he is our Lord, we do what he says. This relationship is

obedient to hear his commands and do them. And we should study to learn all of his commands. But there's one in particular that he emphasizes. There's one in particular. He emphasizes in this passage, verse 10 and then verse 12, look at it. He says, my command is this

2 (22m 49s):

What love each other? As I have loved you,

1 (22m 54s):

Here's the command. Yeah, you should have had all the commands I tell you. But this one in particular kind of sums up all the commands, love one another elsewhere. He says, love your neighbor as yourself. This means we need to love the other branches on the vine. This also means we need to love the people who aren't on the vine yet, because maybe we can get them in so that they can experience the fullness of life. That they can have a better life. We love other people. And if, if we want a fruitful better life, it means we must stay connected, remain in relationship with other people. And I think that's why this social isolation has been so bad over the last 17 months. We need other people. Now I'm extroverted. So it was hard for me the last 17 months.

1 (23m 36s):

But the thing is, some of you are very introverted and you're like, Matt, I'm glad that you're an extrovert because I don't want to be up there talking to anybody. That's fine. But introverts need relationship just as much. We all do. We, and sometimes extroverts are the worst because we pretend like we know everybody, but we know nobody, right? So it means that we all need to develop relationships with other people to connect, to have relationship so that we can be loved. But more importantly, that we can love. Cause that's the command. If you want to remain in my love going

2 (24m 7s):

Love others. Jesus says,

1 (24m 9s):

It's going to flow through us. It's got to connect with other people in love. That's what we do in relationship to love one another. And, and this is a tough command guys,

2 (24m 18s):

Because some people are hard to love.

1 (24m 20s):

You know, you know him too. Okay? Right. Aren't there. Some people that are really hard to love that are just frustrating to be around. In fact, I think the closer you are to people, the more frustrating they become. Like, you know what I'm talking about? I think that's one of the most powerful things about marriage and

about having kids. Okay. You're in marriage. Like you have to see that person all the time. The love wears, you know, you're not in love anymore. And like, now I have to, I have to love you. Right. Is a choice. It's a verb. You, you grow as a person. The more you love other people, because now it's an action. It's a choice all the time. I'm going to love you with your kids. It's even more so I'm learning this right now. Okay. I've got three kids, four and under, right?

1 (25m 1s):

Okay. I'm learning that. I have to love them all the time. Even when I'm frustrated and I'm tired, you know, when we finally get them down at night and I got like an hour to myself and then it's like, oh, but you gotta do those chores, man. Ah, you know, you learn to become more and more selfless. You have to, when you're in close relationship with other people, because they need things, they need encouragement. But it's not just marriage. It's not just family. It's with friendships as well, because you'll talk with someone and they will offend you. I promise you. They will say something that hurts your feelings. That is just ignorant. And we have a choice to make in those moments. Will we choose to love them, even though they have offended me. And when we do that, you got two choices. One, I'm going to tell you that you offended me and let's work it out in love or two, as it says in the Proverbs it's to one's glory to overlook an offense, I'm going to choose not to be offended, even though that was offensive, but it's hard.

1 (25m 50s):

And either way, it's developing fruit and character inside yourself to love the person who in that moment is not lovable, not even likable, right? And that's why we are commanded to love one another. It actually develops fruit in you. And when you love other people and impact them, develops fruit in their life as well, the fruitful life, the better life is always found in relationship. And that's why right now we need to talk about this because some of us have been unengaged disengaged for months, for years. Some of you you're like 17 months, man, are you kidding me? It's been like two decades since I've been in church, but you're back. And I think Jesus calling you to engage once again, to re-engage in relationship with Jesus in a relationship with one another, because fruit only grows on the vine and the vine is connected to Jesus vertically, but also connected to others.

1 (26m 41s):

Horizontally fruit only grows on the vine. And the vine goes both ways, right? Fine. It goes both ways. Dietrich, Bonhoeffer, the great German theologian said this. He said, we are not allowed to separate God from our sister or brother. God does not want to be honored. If a sister or brother is dishonored, the love comes from Jesus goes out. And one of the most amazing things about this passage, Jesus told us how to love. Did you notice that? Did you notice what he said? He said, you must love one another as I have loved you. Did you notice that? And I think this is the most important thing.

1 (27m 21s):

What Jesus is teaching us here. He was with his disciples, teaching this on the last night he was with them.

But you know what happened that night? One of his closest friends betrayed him. The other 11 ran away, abandoned him in his hour of need. And then the people he had loved and come to save his own people. The Jews took him, they arrested him. They beat him, they mocked him. And then they took him out and hung him up tree. So that just as grapes are crushed and wine comes out, juice comes out. So his body was crushed and his blood came out and Jesus did this because he loved us.

1 (28m 4s):

He loved us so much that he was willing to go on the cross to show us how much God loves us all the time. No matter what we've done, not just while we're his friends and doing what we're supposed to and being obedient. But while we were his enemies, he went on the cross and died for us to shed his blood. Jesus, I just did this. And then he said, now go into likewise, as I have loved you. So you must love one another. And that means for that person, who's hard. The enemy, the person you can't stand. We love them. The people that are annoying or frustrating or offend us, we love them for the people that hurt us. We love them because Jesus first loved us. And that's what it means to remain on the vine.

1 (28m 46s):

Because fruit only grows on the vine. If you want the fruitful life, this is the first commitment you have to make. Say, I will remain in the vine. And that means connected to Jesus and connected to others, always connected to Jesus, connected with others. And that's going to kind of set us up for all the practices. We're going to see over the next several weeks. And I know what this means is that some of you, some of you need to re-engage today. You've drifted away for months, years. Maybe the last time you were in church was when you were 12, you know, at confirmation or whatever, right? But you're back. It's time to re-engage with Jesus and others because you know that the life you're living is not the one you want.

1 (29m 27s):

You want a better life.

2 (29m 28s):

Choose Jesus today. Choose

1 (29m 31s):

To re-engage. Some of you may be just a few months or few weeks, but you've, you've grown apart and you realize, oh yeah, I need Jesus. Things are not going the way I wanted. I feel lonely. I feel distressed. I feel depressed. I need so re-engage today with Jesus. But some of you need to engage for the very first time. Maybe you've never had a true relationship with Jesus Christ and you need to make a decision to make him your Lord and savior today to say, I will remain in the vine. I will connect to him. So what we're going to do here right now is I have a prayer here so that if for some of you, it's going to be a re-engagement prayer and others. This will be the engagement prayer, right? This is I'm engaging for the first time connecting to the vine. I want to remain. I want to grow. And I'm going to give you guys an opportunity to say this prayer.

1 (30m 11s):

What we do here is anyone who already is a believer in Jesus Christ. Say this prayer out loud, repeating after me. And if this is the first time and you're ready to make Jesus, your Lord and savior. I want you to say this prayer as well for the first time. So please bow your heads with me. Close your eyes. And would you please repeat this prayer after

2 (30m 27s):

Me, dear God, I'm a sinner. I need a savior. Save me. Forgive me in faith. I declare Jesus is Lord. Fill me with your spirit. Help me to follow you to bear fruit and to love others. And with eyes still closed. If you are here. And that was

1 (30m 59s):

Your re-engagement prayer. You're saying I'm back. I've been away for a little while drifted, but I'm back. I want to engage again with Jesus. Would you slip your hand into the air? I just want to see if some of you are saying, I want to re-engage today. Praise God, praise God. I'm so glad Jesus is so happy

2 (31m 12s):

Because he loves you. But your hands

1 (31m 14s):

Down, if you're here today and you've never made Jesus, your Lord and savior, but today you said that prayer and you meant it. Would you slip your hand into the air right now? Would you slip into your hand in the air? We'd love to see you. If you're online, go to rise. Dendro COMSEC follow.

2 (31m 26s):

We'd love to hear for you,

1 (31m 28s):

Lord God. I pray for all of us, whether we are engaging for the first time or re-engaging from a time away, Lord God, I pray that you would just have your love coming. We want to remain in your love and stay in your love. We we've been drifting apart. And because of that, we've, we've drawn stale in our faith. Maybe we haven't seen the fruit. We want it. Or the fruit of bad things are coming. Lord, God, we feel lonely. We feel depressed. We feel anxious and we need you. I pray that you fill us with your love, that we would stay connected to you now forever. Whether reengaging or engaging in Lord, God help us to remain in you in this relationship that we might bear fruit and a fruit that alas

2 (32m 7s):

Bless us today. And Jesus' name. Amen.

4 (32m 13s):

Hey Matt, are you, are you busy? Are you doing anything important? Well, what

5 (32m 18s):

Do we got here? I was wondering if you wanted to, well, you were talking about like relationships and connecting and I was wondering if you wanted to play connect for sure. Let's play. Yeah, you guys don't mind, right? You're not doing anything important now. Okay. Let's play. Who adheres to play connect four before couple of people. So what's the goal of connect four to win. How do you win? How do you win

4 (32m 40s):

Road? Right? It's a block.

3 (32m 42s):

Oh yeah. Okay. Okay. I just put two in a row. I don't know if that's allowed, right?

5 (32m 47s):

Oh, well you put two in there. I wouldn't write

4 (32m 50s):

Pretty sneaky. Pastor Matt

5 (32m 53s):

Foreigner. Thank you, Sawyer. He's associate Federalist say thank you Sawyer. So if you

1 (32m 58s):

Look on your seat, not only we have this magnet, but we also have this little card that says connect four. Okay? Our campaign that we're doing over the next three months, we believe that these next three months are so important. You saw the statistics for the people who need Jesus. Right? And there's been some people in those winter months and there's been some pruning and it's time to grow again, right? It's time to bear fruit. And that means we've got to connect with people. So our challenge to you guys over the next three months, August, September, October is to connect with four people. Okay? So we're talking about other people here. That's why we have all these events going on on this calendar. It's not so we can have a fun event. You can have fun anywhere, right? You don't need to go to church to have fun.

1 (33m 39s):

Gabe, we're having these events so that you can meet other people. So if you come to one of these events and we've got a bunch of stuff and you don't meet anyone and you come and you leave, even if you had a grand old time, it has been a failure. We want you to connect with people and we believe that you could

connect for over the next three months. So what we want you to do is start meeting people, get to know people's names and then go do something outside of church, four times over the next three months, you can go on a walk with them, go on a run in the morning. It doesn't even cost anything. Take them out to coffee, go get lunch after church brunch. Okay? There's some great brunch places around here. Aren't there, right? Don't go to Chick-fil-A. It's not open today, but you can go tomorrow. You can go tomorrow. You can meet somebody. We got a new Starbucks that opened up during the pandemic right next to the church, right?

1 (34m 19s):

Let's let's meet some people before church and grab coffee together. I don't care what the connection is. Maybe you meet someone at one of these events and you're like, your kids are the same age as my kids let's have a play date. Okay. Awesome. Do it. That's a connection. And what we want to challenge you guys to do is connect with four people and it can be people you maybe haven't seen in a very long time. That's fine too, or brand new people you've never met. So whether this is your first Sunday or your thousandth Sunday, we want you to connect four. And if you fill out the back of this card with the four people that you have connected with and you turn this card in, and if you're online, you can write those down. We'll we'll we'll trust you. Or you can come grab one of these cards. And if you turn it in, we're going to have some prizes and maybe one really big price for, you know, that we'll draw a name or something. So we want you to connect for over these next three months.

1 (35m 0s):

Okay? So this is our campaign. You're going to be hearing about this every single week. In fact, I think we're going to give away some like gift cards every single week so that you can take somebody out to lunch or do that stuff. But whatever it is, just hang out with people, connect, make some connections because that's what it means to grow fruit. We've not only got to connect with Jesus, but we've got to connect with one another and love one another. So connect four. That's our challenge to you right now. Okay. Do you want to grab this swear? Thank you. Can we give a hand to Sawyer? Our great stage hand. So we are going to conclude our service as the band is coming up right now, man, the band sounds good today. What we're going to do is we're going to worship Jesus right now. We're going to respond in praise and prayer, loving Jesus today.

1 (35m 43s):

And then we are going to take communion that halfway through the song, we're going to take communion. You should have one of those little communion bubbles on your chair. If you don't have one, raise your hand, or if you need gluten-free maybe raise your hand if you need gluten-free we have some of those and we can bring you one. But what we're going to do, if you're online, maybe get a piece of bread or a cracker, any carb and some juice or a drink or whatever. And we're going to take this communion together because Jesus took a cup on that night that he was betrayed

2 (36m 8s):

A cup of wine

1 (36m 10s):

From the grapes that had been squeezed. And he took it and said, this isn't just wine anymore. This cup is the new covenant in my blood. So we're going to remember what Jesus did on the cross

2 (36m 20s):

As his blood was shed. So would you please stand as we worship the king of Kings.