

Have you ever experienced a verse from the Bible that seems to be *jumping off the page* at you? Maybe a word or phrase from Scripture keeps showing up in your life during a particular season—so much so that you begin to pay closer attention.

Since being in Dinuba, one of these highlighted words for me has been Jesus' declaration in John 15:5:

"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."

Now, maybe it's just because we live in an ag town in the heart of the Central Valley, but from a prayer meeting in my very first month here, to the theme of our summer youth missions training with SOAR (complete with green t-shirts!), to this week's Raisin Day Festival worship night, this passage's call to "abide" in Jesus has been echoing across our community—spoken by messengers young and old. So how might this word shape us in this season of our shared life?

The larger passage on the vitality of God's love is undeniably poetic and beautiful—a favorite for weddings, and rightly so! But the verse that has most captured my attention is where Jesus, in His characteristic way of keeping it real, gives what almost sounds like a de-motivational speech: *"Apart from me, you can do nothing."* This runs contrary to the "believe in yourself" mantra of pop culture today. With this gut-punch of a statement, Jesus cuts through illusions and provides a reality check: lasting fruit in our spiritual lives is impossible apart from Him.

Not even our God-given strengths or giftedness—not even if we pooled them all together—can generate true life apart from Christ. Jesus paints the almost humorous image of a severed branch trying to bear fruit on its own, even as it dries and withers. Such efforts will always amount to nothing.

I don't know about you, but I often catch myself planning, preparing, calculating, and dreaming based on my own best intentions and efforts. But the truth is, these qualities are limited and fragile. They cannot sustain or generate life. They must be connected to the source—Jesus Himself—who gives us life, sustenance, and growth.

As we celebrate the incredible fruit of 100 years as a community striving to abide in Christ, let's begin this new century not with a flurry of activity aimed at earning Christ's acceptance or approval, but with the deeper work of evaluating our connection to Him as our true and only trustworthy source of life.

This month, I encourage you to read John 15:1–17 and reflect: Where in my life am I moving apart from Christ? Where am I attempting to do things on my own? Where am I frustrated or unfruitful because I am attempting to do for myself what is not in myself or power to accomplish? Then invite God to lovingly prune these areas of your life.

May we bear much fruit through Christ our vine, to His glory and the increase of His kingdom.

Pastor Brad

October 2025

New Life Community

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| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|-----------|--|--|--|-----------|--|
| <p>Memory Verse for this month: James 1:22</p> <p><i>Be Doers of the Word...</i></p> | | <p>30 (No Men's Bible Study)</p> <p>6:30 PM GriefShare</p> | <p>1 (Open Gate food distribution 2 PM each Wed.)</p> <p>6:00 PM Discipleship Initiative</p> | <p>2</p> <p>6 PM Open Gate Anniv. Dinner--LWF 6:00 PM Celebrate Recovery</p> | <p>3</p> | <p>4 (Family event)</p> |
| <p>5</p> <p>8:30 Growth Class 10 AM Worship Service & Communion 5 PM Youth Group</p> | <p>6</p> | <p>7 (No Men's Bible Study) 9 AM LIFT Women's Bible Study 6:30 PM GriefShare</p> | <p>8</p> <p>6:00 PM Discipleship Initiative</p> | <p>9</p> <p>6:00 PM Celebrate Recovery</p> | <p>10</p> | <p>11</p> <p>Immanuel Schools' 17th Annual Auction-- Reedley</p> |
| <p>12</p> <p>8:30 AM Growth Class 10 AM Worship Service 5 PM Youth Group</p> | <p>13</p> | <p>14 (No Men's Bible Study)</p> <p>6:30 PM GriefShare</p> | <p>15</p> <p>6:00 PM Discipleship Initiative</p> | <p>16</p> <p>6:00 PM Celebrate Recovery</p> | <p>17</p> | <p>18</p> |
| <p>19</p> <p>8:30 Growth Class 10 AM Worship Service 11:30 AM Members' Mtg. 5 PM Youth Group</p> | <p>20</p> | <p>21</p> <p>6 AM Men's Bible Study 9 AM LIFT Women's Bible Study 6:30 PM GriefShare</p> | <p>22</p> <p>6:00 PM Discipleship Initiative</p> | <p>23</p> <p>6:00 PM Celebrate Recovery</p> | <p>24</p> | <p>25</p> |
| <p>26</p> <p>8:30 AM Growth Class 10 AM Worship Service 5-7 PM Family Fun Night</p> | <p>27</p> | <p>28</p> <p>6 AM Men's Bible Study 6:30 PM GriefShare (final session)</p> | <p>29</p> <p>6:00 PM Discipleship Initiative (final session)</p> | <p>30</p> <p>6:00 PM Celebrate Recovery</p> | <p>31</p> | <p>1</p> <p>TURN YOUR CLOCKS BACK</p> |
| <p>2</p> <p>8:30 Growth Class 10 AM Worship Service & Communion 5 PM Youth Group</p> | <p>3</p> | <p>NOTES</p> <p>NOVEMBER PREVIEW: Missions Month! 1--Turn clocks back one hour tonight; 2--Communion Sunday; 4--Election Day; 4&18--LIFT Bible Study; 6--Dawnings Fundraiser Banquet in Dinuba; 6-7--PDC Convention at Bethany Church in Fresno; 11--Veterans Day Holiday; 16--Women's Ministries' Bake Sale; 23--Missions Emphasis & Thanksgiving Meal; 27--Thanksgiving Day; 30--1st Sunday in Advent</p> <p>Calendar accurate as of 9/26/25 -- most events also on website calendar at www.newlifedinuba.org</p> | | | | |