

Friday, January 12: Read [John 15:1-17](#)

What can you learn about the Christian life from Jesus' analogy of grapevines in John 15? What kind of fruit does God expect us to bear? (Note [Galatians 5:22-23](#)) According to Jesus, what determines if a branch is fruitful? What do you think remaining/abiding in him should involve each day and every week? How can you do better at staying closely connected to Jesus in this coming year? According to this passage, what impact could abiding in him have on your relationships with others?

Choose a section of this passage to memorize -- like verse 4, or verses 7-8, or verses 12-13. The verses can serve as an excellent reminder of what God wants to do through us in 2018 and beyond.

Notes:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+5%3A22-23&version=NIV>

Pray for Our Missionaries

Juan & Adriana Palacios (Angola, Africa), **David & Miriam Trott** (Cochabamba, Bolivia), **Mario Bloise** (Argentina), **Dan & DeAnn Gerard** (San Antonio, TX), **Robert Newkirk** (Jesus Film), **Craig & Shelly Shafer** (Sentani, Indonesia), **Sue Sanders** (Detroit, MI), **Matt Kooi** (Tijuana), **Daniel Jezonski** (Wycliffe), **Andrew & Sara Williams** (New Tribes), **Brad Babjack** (Intervarsity), **Salomon Guzman** (Tijuana), **Alvaro and Rachel Garriga** (Interserve USA)



Spiritual Disciplines

- *Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your reading each day.*
- *Read the chapters and underline any meaningful verses and take note of specific advice or wisdom gleaned from your reading.*
- *Note any unclear passages or teaching and seek insight, answers or help.*
- *Think about what you're reading. Ask:*
 1. *How does this apply to me?*
 2. *Are there any temptations to avoid, sins to confess, commands to obey or promises to claim?*
 3. *What insight do I gain on God, myself, others, or life?*
- *Ask God to show you any specific action you need to take as you read.*

Monday, January 8 Read [Luke 14:15-24](#)

This past week, we launched the New Year by looking at five different Old Testament passages, each touching on God's purpose for our existence as described by Moses, Hezekiah, Nebuchadnezzar, Elijah and David. This week we'll do a similar exercise, this time going to the words of Jesus in the Gospels. Read through the Luke 14 story of the Great Banquet. Jesus is illustrating what the kingdom of God is like. How does a banquet feast of a king help us imagine what God is doing in the world? Everyone is invited but many turn down the invitation. Why? What distractions are you facing that could compete with God's kingdom in your life? If God's objective is that "his house will be full" (verse 23), what part in the kingdom work do we as Christians play here and now? Who are you trying to compel to enter God's kingdom? Is there room at Bethel Gilead for the poor, the disabled, and the disadvantaged? Are we willing to receive into our fellowship all those God brings our way? Read [Matthew 6:31-33](#). What will putting God's kingdom first in 2018 look like in your life? Try to be specific in your answer.

Notes:

Pray for: My relationship with God, my life roles, my personal needs/weak areas, my goals and objectives.

Tuesday, January 9: Read [Matthew 25:1-30](#)

Both parables of Jesus deal essentially with the same thing -- the final judgment at the second coming. The first parable contrasts wise and foolish maidens. What was the difference between them and how might this relate to your life today? What might the oil signify? Note Jesus' admonition to us in verse 13. Do you live as though his coming were near? What could you change in order to better live that way in 2018?

The second parable compares three stewards put in charge of their master's goods and services (talents). Who is the master and who are his stewards today. What "goods and services" does Jesus expect us to negotiate with in his absence? (Note [John 13:12-17, 33-35](#)) Are you using the gifts he has given for his purposes, or simply for yourself? What ministry of service to others does God expect you to faithfully steward this coming year? Are you set to go? Ask God to help you clarify how best to invest and not bury your talents for his kingdom's sake.

Notes:

Pray for family and friends by name.

Wednesday January 10: Read [Luke 12:16-34](#)

Jesus' parable of the Rich Fool stands as a challenge to those of us who have so much in this world and who so often find our security in material resources and wealth. What was the philosophy of life of this wealthy farmer? How would you describe your philosophy of life (what life is all about)? Do you live out your philosophy? What is God's philosophy of life? If the rich farmer was foolish, (verse 20) what would God consider wise living? How can we practice being "rich toward God"? What could this kind of lifestyle look like for you in the coming year, especially if you learned to treasure what God treasures (verses 33-34)?

Notes:

Wednesday: Pray for Bethel Gilead Community Church (Consider fasting one, two, or all meals this day.)

- a. Pastors: Pray for God's grace and guidance in Pastor Jim and Pastor David's ministries and families. Pray for Linda Penn in her work at BGCC.
- b. Worship: Ask God to strengthen our devotion to Him, in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.
- c. Fellowship: Ask God to deepen our love and commitment to one another as a family of believers.

- d. Discipleship: ask God to develop the faith, dedication, and leadership of our people. Pray for the children and youth ministries here at BGCC.
- e. Outreach: Pray that God will use Bethel Gilead to make a positive impact on our community so that many would come to Christ.
- f. Future Faith Goals: Ask God to give our congregation a united vision for the future. Pray for God's clear leading in 2018 and beyond.

Thursday, January 11: Read [Luke 15:1-32](#)

Here Jesus tells three parables about lost things (sheep, coins and sons). While we can gain insight into God's heart for the lost, note the context of the stories in verse 2. These stories challenge the hardhearted pharisees of Jesus' time. They also challenge the hardhearted pharisee in each of us, especially when we don't care enough about lost people to reach out to them! Ask God today to show you someone near you who is truly "lost". Commit to pray for him or her starting now. And, ask God to open your heart to start the necessary steps toward searching for that lost friend, neighbor or loved one. A lost friend becoming found (by Jesus) could produce the greatest joy of all in 2018!

Notes:

Thursday Pray for "My World"

- Neighbors • People who live around me.
- People at Work • Others God brings into my life. Begin to take note of specific needs around you and ask God what he wants you to do to help. Who can I invite to church this Sunday?
- Ask God to bring revival and a spiritual awakening to Branch County. Pray for the area churches and a greater spirit of unity and cooperation.
- Continue to pray for the nation, our national leaders and a revival in America.