

Pruning Hurts
John 15:1-8
10 of 14

Nearly seven years ago, I started a business. I prayed diligently about the decision and sensed God's confirmation to move forward. Because of my inexperience in retail operations, I depended heavily on God for wisdom and direction. Between the first time I caught a vision for this venture and the day we opened our doors, I prayed every step of the way.

On opening day, customers lined up around the building. With pounding heart and sweaty palms, I became acutely aware of the fact that the success or failure of this business rested on me. For the next four years, I ran the store as if this were true.

Instead of praying for God's wisdom or listening to the counsel of trusted advisors, like my husband, Dan, who was also my business partner, I relied on my own understanding. I simply was too busy and preoccupied to spend time reading my Bible. And when I did make time, I found myself re-reading the same passage over and over and never grasping the words. Daily preoccupation over my work took the place of daily quiet time with God.

Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). I discovered how true his words are. The longer I skimmed in my spiritual life, the further I fell from the vine. And the further I fell from the vine, the more all my efforts proved fruitless.

Making decisions apart from God and Dan started to have a snowball effect that eventually led to the demise of our business—and nearly our marriage.



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Looking back on those four years, I know now what was at play: apart from Christ, I could do nothing. Instead of remaining in Jesus, as he instructs us to do in John 15:5, I ran on ahead without him.

[Marian V. Liataud, "Remain in Me," *Christianity Today's Kyria blog* (12-22-09)]

Our Daily Bible Reading for this week will challenge us to remain in Christ.

- DAY ONE – John 15:1-17
- DAY TWO – Psalm 46
- DAY THREE – Proverbs 3:1-6
- DAY FOUR – Colossians 2:6-23
- DAY FIVE – 2 John 1:5-9

Memory Verse:

"I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)



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