



WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“ON TRYING TOO HARD”

John Galbreath
Bible Study Series

Text: John 15:5
Date: Undated

About Westminster's Galbreath Bible Study Series:

This lesson is one taken from a sermon preached by John Galbreath at Westminster Presbyterian Church on an unknown date

To complete the lesson, we suggest that you begin by reading the designated Bible passage (John 15:5).

Next, review the outline of the sermon. Reflect on the chosen scripture and how you would “fill in” the remainder of the message from the chosen passage.

Then, review the study questions posed about the lesson — whether by yourself or in your small group.

Finally, share your thoughts on the Galbreath Bible Study blog on the Westminster Intranet.

I. Introduction – We come as those in need.

A. “Overcommitted” is the word that perhaps best characterizes most of us.

- 1. We are not without affluence – or intelligence – or leadership.**
- 2. We have overcommitted our finances, our time, our strength.**

B. Pressure of work, of family responsibilities, of social demands, threatens to unnerve us.

II. Many of our needs may be met by pulling ourselves together.

A. There is need to pause, to reassess our resources.

- 1. Is it time to stop using the charge plate for two months?**
- 2. Is it time to resign an extra job?**
- 3. Are we so busy running hack service for kids that we haven’t time to do anything together?**
- 4. Trim sails a bit.**

III. Many of our needs may be met by looking to those about us.

A. We receive a steady barrage of commercials from banks and personal loan companies offering us their resources to bail us out of our fiscal inundations.

B. Our friends are our first line of defense in dealing with many of our problems.

- 1. It isn’t that their advice is so good, but often in talking over a problem with a trusted friend, we can resolve them.**

C. Family is our constant source of inspiration to live up to our best.

IV. There are those needs that God alone can meet.

- A. When we are discouraged with our own performance, as parents, in our vocation, in our behavior.
- B. When the freshness of faith has become encrusted with cynicism.
- C. When loneliness closes in and all but smothers out all joy.
- D. When grief seems to have undercut all reason for living.
- E. "I am the vine; ye are the branches."
 - 1. Exhortation to try harder can do no good to the branch that is cut off from the vine.
 - 2. Example of the fruitfulness of other branches does no good.
 - 3. All a branch can do is give itself fully to the strength of the vine. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself save as it abide in the vine, neither can you except you abide in me."

V. Conclusion

In the sacrament, we feed upon Christ, acknowledging that ultimately in him alone is our strength. The analogy seems to break down – for the branch cannot occasionally feed upon the vine, but must constantly draw upon the life-giving courage of Christ.

Study Questions -- Part I

Bible Reading: John 15:5

John 15:5 says: ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

- In what ways do you abide in Jesus?
- What fruit do you bear?
- Why do you think this verse was chosen to be placed on the lectern in the Sanctuary?

Study Questions -- Part II

Sermon :

I. In what ways do you go to God in need?

I.A. In what ways are you overcommitted? How can you step back from that to lead a life more in tune with God's expectations for you?

II.B. What pressures cause you the greatest challenge in living a Christian life?

II.A. Dr. Galbreath deleted an item: Stop and catch our breath. Why do you think he chose to remove that?

II.A. If you reassess your resources, what do you notice?

III.A. We don't know when this sermon was preached. Do you think this comment would be different today?

III.B. Do you think it is still true that our friends are the first place we go to seek help with our problems?

III. What are the needs in your life that only God can meet?

III.E.3. When you have felt cut off from God, what did you do to rebuild the connection?