



## SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

### Cross Training

October 1, 2022

## 1 PREPARING

### A. THE SOURCE

**Matthew 6:1 (NIV)** • “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.”

**Philippians 3:17-21 (NIV)** • “Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”

**2 Corinthians 3:17, 18 (NIV)** • “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

**Romans 12:1, 2 (NIV)** • “Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and

pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

**Luke 11:39-41 (NIV)** • “Then the Lord said to him, ‘Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? But now as for what is inside you—be generous to the poor, and everything will be clean for you.’”

**Luke 14:12-14 (NIV)** • “Then Jesus said to his host, ‘When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.’”

**1 Corinthians 13:3 (NIV)** • “If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.”

**2 Corinthians 9:6-15 (NIV)** • “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in

all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: 'They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.' Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"

**Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)** • "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

**Revelation 3:1-3 (NIV)** • "These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you."

(See additional passages in student material.)

## **B. WHAT'S TO BE SAID ABOUT "SPIRITUAL EXERCISE"**

It's not easy discussing spiritual growth. Yet everyone expects to grow in Christ after they have surrendered their sinful human nature to His Lordship. There are always things to learn, experiences to discover, and sinful traits to overcome and good habits to build. We will call them exercises. No one expects to build muscle by staring at a weight bench. The fat won't burn just because you bought exercise equipment, and the heart won't get stronger just because you understand the importance of jogging. Exercise. The more you do it, the stronger you become. The same is true for the spiritual life. Jesus talks about being connected to the vine and growing in such a way that you produce fruit (John 15).

What do we do to be connected? There are many exercises to help the Holy Spirit graft your life into God's. Exercise requires discipline. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, wired this concept right in the middle of His message about the kingdom of God. Make no mistake, the kingdom of God is filled with broken, struggling, sinners. But His citizens are determined to know Him, and for this to happen, they participate in the spiritual exercises that strengthen their connection to the King and give the Spirit full access to their lives.

This lesson targets the role of the spiritual disciplines/exercises in the life of the believer. What is the purpose of prayer, Bible study, giving to the needy, fasting, etc.? The focus of this lesson will be to introduce the idea of training in the spiritual life versus trying to be spiritual. What we can't do by trying hard, we can do by training well and staying connected.

The next few weeks will be an opportunity for a serious workout.

## C. WHERE WE'RE GOING WITH "SPIRITUAL EXERCISE"

As a result of this lesson we would like the students to be able to:

1. Consider spiritual growth as the fruit of the Holy Spirit when we allow Him to transform us.
2. Internalize the idea that people were created for growth.
3. Explore the spiritual exercises that allow God to work in us and help us grow spiritually.

## D. MATERIALS NEEDED

**Beginning** • (Activity A) barbells, rope, brick, thick stick; (Activity B) paper, pens or pencils.

**Connecting** • Bibles, student lessons, pens or pencils, handout (p. 14).

**Applying** • Bibles.

## 2 BRIDGING

### A. WHERE WE'VE BEEN BEFORE

**Allow 10 minutes as students are arriving to:**

1. Share anything that was meaningful to them in this lesson.
2. Engage in a discussion about the topic of the lesson in connection to the belief highlighted this week.
3. Say the Bible memory text either individually or in a group.

### B. OTHER SABBATH SCHOOL COMPONENTS

- >> Song service
- >> Mission emphasis (find a link for Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults at [www.realtimefaith.net](http://www.realtimefaith.net))
- >> Service project reports

## 3 BEGINNING

**NOTE TO TEACHER:** Put together your own program with options from the categories below—Beginning, Connecting, Applying, and Closing. Please keep in mind, however, that the students need to have an opportunity to be interactive (participate actively *and* with one another) and to study from the Word. At some point you should distribute or call their attention to their student lesson for this week.

### A. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

**Get ready** • The purpose of this activity is to get students to connect how muscles develop with exercise to how people grow stronger in the spiritual life. The students will do this by trying a few exercises that isolate certain muscles or muscle groups. Divide students into groups of two to three. Each group will do a different exercise that targets a particular part of their body. The students will continue doing that exercise until you can see them affected by the work (i.e., pain, groaning, etc.). Select exercises for the girls that can be done modestly in what they are wearing.

**Get set** • **Say:** I'm going to have you do a few exercises this morning. I want you to do the exercise accurately and for as long as you can. Think about the muscle groups that are being strengthened as a result of this exercise. Divide them into groups so that each group is doing only one exercise.

**Go** • Assign each group one of the following: (1) Stand on their tiptoes and slowly return to their standing position; (2) Jog in place; (3) Do arm circles, making a circular motion with their arms extended out to their sides. Continue the circular motion until they can't hold their arms up any longer; (4) Curl a barbell that is relatively heavy.

**Debriefing** • **Ask:** Where did you feel the workout the most? Which specific muscles were used? What are some benefits of building that particular muscle? How would you describe

**your fitness if you exercised only that one muscle over and over? In what ways do you see a connection between this exercise and growing in the spiritual life? What if listening to Christian music were your only spiritual exercise? Do you think you would grow spiritually if you served people but never stopped to talk with God or read your Bible? What does doing these exercises tell us about a well-rounded spiritual life?**

## **B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY**

**Get ready** • This activity is one way to get students to consider the kind of training it takes to prepare for a marathon and to compare that to developing their strength and endurance in the spiritual life.

**Get set** • In groups of two or three, have the students construct a workout program for someone who rarely exercises to prepare for a marathon (26.2 miles) in six months. **Ask: What exercises and activities would you prescribe? How much would you have them run? How often would you have them run? How would you tell them to begin? How would you have them increase their ability? Be as specific as you can. Write your plan on a piece of paper and be ready to share.**

**Go** • After students have completed their workout plan, have them share their approach with the rest of the class. Note some of the similarities and differences among the students' responses.

**Debriefing** • **Ask: What did you learn about training for a marathon that you didn't know before?** (Resting is important. It is well-paced.) **How were your plans for endurance different from the plan suggested by those who have run?** (We tried to run too far too fast. We didn't plan any time for rest.) **How was it similar?** (We just knew you would have to push yourself at times.) **Why do you think it is healthy to look at spiritual growth through the lens of physical training?** (Everyone wants to be physically fit.) **What are some things to be cautious of?**

(Getting so caught up in the rigor and routine you miss the point.)

## **C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION**

**In your own words, tell the following story:**

The northern coastline in Australia is famous for its colorful coral reefs that stretch out for hundreds of kilometers. What is interesting is that the coral that is close to the coast is less colorful than the reef further out. Why do you think this is true?

The coral that lives close to the coastline sits in mostly still water. The challenge and struggle for survival is not as extreme, whereas the coral that lives further away from the coast constantly battles severe surges of waves, storms, and harsher elements. The coral has to adapt, change, and grow in order to survive. This constant struggle for life causes the coral to grow healthy and vibrant.

That is how it is with people too. When challenged and tested, we come alive. Like coral pounded by the sea, we grow. Our growth comes from participating in the exercises of the spiritual life that are constantly pressured by the flow of the world. It feels as if there is a constant pressure or tidal pull against prayer and Bible study, serving others or surrendering our prize possessions for a selfless cause. Sometimes this pressure feels like a tidal wave that crashes against us, keeping us from being quiet and alone, or joyful and worshipful. Know that those who shine brightly usually have undergone a struggle.

**Debriefing** • **Ask: Can you think of times in your life when a struggle has made you stronger? What other examples can you think of that demonstrate or illustrate this principle?**



## **CONNECTING**

### **A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM**

**Present the following ideas in your own words:**

How would you feel if you saw students studying the Bible in the halls of your school or praying

together on the ball field? Would it seem out of place to have someone announce in class that they were struggling with the sin of cheating and would like someone to help them overcome? Would it be normal to see students sitting alone just taking time to be with God? Would it be normal to hear someone shamelessly sing at the top of their lungs praise and worship songs in assemblies, church, or even Sabbath School? Sometimes, when we see people praying or practicing their faith we think they are showing off.

**Say:** Please listen to the two verses I am going to read and then answer these questions. Do these two verses seem to be contradicting each other? In what way? How are they striving for the same goal? (One is saying to let your deeds be seen by others. The other says to be careful not to do your acts of spiritual growth to be seen by others. They are not in conflict because one says to do your acts of righteousness in such a way that they will glorify God. The other says, When you do your acts, don't do them for the purpose of being seen by others.)

**Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV)** • "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

**Matthew 6:1 (NIV)** • "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."

**Present the following ideas in your own words.**

It is essential to remember that doing the things that cause us to grow do not cause God to love or accept us more. We have to remember that when we believe and receive God as our Father and Savior, we are in His kingdom. Consider how a child is born into a family. Doing their chores is not what makes them a member of the family, but

as they grow and mature, surrounded by the love of the family, they learn to work together with the family.

Similarly, when a person accepts Jesus as Savior, that person will naturally want to live like a member of God's family, sharing love and kindness with everyone. Such actions will be visible to others.

## **B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON ILLUSTRATION**

**Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath's section of the lesson.**

**Say:** This week's illustration of the tangerine tree that was destined to remain the same portrays the frustration that is felt when you expect something to grow only to find that it never will. God intended us not only to grow, but to blossom and flourish.

Call the students' attention to the Scripture passages in their lesson. **Ask:** Which verses from Scripture seem to demonstrate that we were meant to grow? In what ways do you think people don't ever expect to grow? (Most people don't think they will ever be perfect, so I guess they don't try to do the right thing. Who wants to fail? Some people say that people don't really change.) **How would you explain the difference between training for growth and trying to be good, or else?**

## **C. CONNECTING TO LIFE**

**Pose the following scenario:**

Michelle has been attending church all her life. Lately she senses that her childlike trust in God is different now and she wants to grow closer to God. She feels as if she is missing something, but she doesn't really know how to go about getting in touch with God again. Her prayers seem to repeat what she has heard herself or someone else say before. She tries to read her Bible but nothing seems to stick. There doesn't seem to be any energy in her relationship with God and she wants that to change. Have you ever felt this way?

**[Note to the teacher:** This is one of the

struggles adolescents face as they move from concrete thinking to the world of abstractions. Their faith, when they were children, was lively and measurable. Now the world, ideas, relationships, contradictions, and tensions fill their lives with uncertainty about how to have a relationship with God. It is actually helpful to let them know that this is not a failure to grow on their part but proof that they are growing. They need to be willing to exercise their faith in God and allow Him to direct them.]

**Distribute the handout found on page 14.**

**Say:** Everyone who wants to grow closer to Christ can look at their life and find areas which are strong and some which are weak. Look at the handout which lists the disciplines/exercises of the spiritual life and rank yourself accordingly. Place a number 1 by the activity in which you participate most regularly, a 2 by the next most frequent activity for you, and so on until you have ranked all the activities. A 7 will be by the activity in which you have seldom or never participated, or about which you have never even thought.

## 5 APPLYING

### A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

**Say:** In groups of two or three (or with an adult in small groups), read Matthew 6 and see if you can notice the exercises of the spiritual life in Jesus' teaching. Use the survey to remind yourself of the different exercises. Give the students a set time and then ask the following.

**Debriefing • Ask:** What does Jesus say about helping or serving the poor (verse 2)? What does Jesus say about praying (verses 5-15)? What does Jesus say about fasting (verses 16-18)? What does Jesus say about simplicity with money and other resources (verses 19-21, 24)? What does Jesus say about purity (verses 22, 23)? What does Jesus say about leaps of faith and dealing with worry (verses 25-34)?

Referring to the handout, invite students to share the exercises they might like to do more frequently in their own life. Have them pick three or four exercises to practice this week. In the Friday section of the student lesson there is a track with a cross at both ends. Have them read the Tuesday section and discuss how they might plan to experiment with a few exercises this week. Point out that taking time to reflect on Calvary and what God has done for them, to save them, is essential.

**Ask:** Which exercises did you choose to experiment with? What do you think will be the most challenging exercise?

### B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What exercises do you think are the most important ones to do consistently?
2. Which exercises would be good every once in a while? Why?
3. Which exercise do you think would change the world the most if it were practiced by many? Why?
4. Who do you know that regularly practices the exercises of the spiritual life? How does it impact their life? How does it affect others around them?
5. Think of Bible characters who were famous for their training. Not everyone is famous for all the disciplines, but if you were to pick Elijah or Esther or Daniel or David—which disciplines are prominent in their life? (David for worship, Daniel for prayer, Esther for leaps of faith, etc.)
6. How can you be consistent in your journey with Jesus

## 6 CLOSING

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### SUMMARY

#### In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

Jesus is the ultimate dreamer! Do you really think He believes that we can grow to be united with God the way He was when He was on earth? It's not the result of some superhuman awareness that kept Christ connected with His Father. It wasn't genetics or the result of perfect parenting or an easy life that Jesus found Himself closely knit with heaven's agenda. Was it because Jesus was good at school that He was such a powerful tool for God? Look at the Gospels and notice that Jesus, even from His childhood, is diving into the Scriptures and talking to the teachers about their application. Luke tells us that people liked Him as

He was growing up. Does that sound as if Jesus was a recluse or a bookworm as a teen?

He stepped into the desert to prepare for His ministry by fasting and seeking God. He steps boldly into unknown territory sending demons out of helpless people. During the night He spends time alone with God in quiet communion and the next day He is speaking to the masses. He eats and drinks with sinners. Just look at the Savior, and you see the muscles of His spiritual life were not born in Him but developed through exercise and intentional connection with the Father. He lived a disciplined life. Good thing for you and me, because it took heaps of discipline to submit to the Father in Gethsemane instead of taking the easy way, and choosing not to die. So, aching and sore, destined for the most terrible experience, He steps toward Calvary. It was what He trained for. What are we training for? Think of the things that you want to train for in the spiritual life. Start exercising.

## FOR LESSON ONE:

THIS HANDOUT IS FOR THE CONNECTING ACTIVITY.

### Spiritual Disciplines/Exercises

**Directions:** Place a number 1 by the activity in which you participate most regularly, a 2 by the next most frequent activity for you, and so on until you have ranked all the activities. A 7 will be by the activity in which you have seldom or never participated, or about which you have never even thought.

- \_\_\_ Christian service (working for a tangible cause to help others)
- \_\_\_ Prayer and Bible study (regular time seeking God in prayer and devotional reading)
- \_\_\_ Authentic worship (expressing adoration and praise to God with others)
- \_\_\_ Submission (becoming honest and open with others in overcoming weaknesses)
- \_\_\_ Secret goodness (practicing acts of kindness with God alone as your witness)
- \_\_\_ Fasting, purity, and simplicity (mastering your desires and being focused on one thing)
- \_\_\_ Christian sacrifice and "leaps of faith" (learning to trust God with uncertainty)

When you think about the exercises you do least, why do you think you avoid them? Why do you think you focus on some exercises more than others?

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## STUDENT LESSON

### SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

#### Cross Training

October 1, 2022

#### Sabbath

### FOR STUDY

- » **Memory Text:** “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5, NKJV).
- » **Our Beliefs, no. 11, Growing in Christ:** “In this new freedom in Jesus, we are called to grow into the likeness of His character, communing with Him daily in prayer, feeding on His Word, meditating on it and on His providence, singing His praises, gathering together for worship, and participating in the mission of the church.”
- » Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 19

### CROSS TRAINING

As a child I watched the tangerine tree grow to monstrous proportions. Not only did our citrus tree grow in size, but it overwhelmed our family and friends with a crop of fruit that astonished people. My pride in the tree swelled from season to season, so much so that I thought the magic of growing fruit trees was simply genetic. I would certainly do the same when I was a man.

When the time came for me to plant my own fruit trees in my very own backyard, I picked out a tangerine tree to repeat the success of my child-

hood. I did everything to the soil I was taught to do. Cultivate, fertilize, mulch, protect, pray. After planting the tree in the ground, I continued the rituals week after week. I even spoke kindly and gently to the tree as I worked in the yard. On one occasion I sang to the tree. But the tree failed to grow.

My patience ran out, and I began to scorn the tree. “Silly runt weed! What’s the matter with you?” I chided. “Every other tree in the yard is doing just fine. You are turning out to be such a disappointment!” I was raking some leaves in the yard near the base of the puny tangerine tree when the rake stuck on a tag at the base of the tree. I reached down to unhook the prongs of the rake and discovered the tag of the tangerine tree was still attached. I glanced at the tag, and to my horror I read, “Tangerine (Dwarf).” I tried to take back all the horrible things I’d said. I looked at the little tree and apologized, saying, “I’m so sorry! I didn’t realize you were never meant to grow.”

Dwarf trees are not destined for tremendous growth. But that’s not the case with you and me. According to Christ, we are destined for unimaginable development. We must just make sure we are giving our spiritual growth the same attention I was giving the little tree. We need care and exercise—spiritual exercise. Cross training.

—Pastor Troy

## Sunday RESPONDING

- » Read John 15:1-17.
- » Jeff made a decision to deepen his relationship with God by trying to be consistent with his prayer and Bible study. For the first week he was consistent, but sort of slipped away the second week. He was disappointed that he couldn't even keep it going for more than a week.
- » If you could encourage him with something that was helpful for you in this lesson, what would you say to Jeff? What do you think God would want to say to him?

## Monday BIBLE ANSWERS ON GROWING IN CHRIST

- » Read Psalm 1:1, 2; Matthew 20:25-28; 25:31-40; Galatians 5:22-25; Ephesians 6:12-18; Hebrews 10:25; James 1:27.  
What does the Bible teach, based on these verses, about what it means to grow in Christ?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- » As we stay connected to Christ through daily prayer, study of His Word, and Christian service, we can grow in the likeness of our Savior, and He will enable us to live fruitful lives.  
"As we need food to sustain our our physical strength, so do we need Christ, the Bread from heaven, to sustain spiritual life and impart strength to work the works of God. As the body is continually receiving the nourishment that sustains life and vigor, so the soul must be constantly communing with Christ, submitting to Him and depending wholly upon Him" (Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 19).  
"As the flower turns to the sun, . . . so should we turn to the Sun of Righteousness, . . . that our character may be developed into the likeness of Christ" (Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 68).

- » In order for plants to grow, they need seven things. Can you name them?

1. Room to \_\_\_\_\_
2. The right \_\_\_\_\_
3. L \_ \_ \_ \_ t
4. W \_ \_ \_ \_ r
5. A \_ \_ r
6. F \_ \_ \_ d (or nutrients)
7. T \_ \_ \_ e

- » Answer the following questions.

1. According to the Bible, what is our "light" (Psalm 27:1; 119:105; John 9:5)? How can Christians use the light they have received?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What does the "Water of Life" represent for a Christian (John 4:13-15)?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How does eating help us grow? In Matthew 5:6 Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." What does this mean to you?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Read John 6:35 and explain the meaning of this passage.  
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\_\_\_\_\_
5. How can you apply these principles to your daily life? Be prepared to share your thoughts in Sabbath School.  
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## Tuesday REFLECTING

- » New Year's resolutions are a lot like the exercises of the spiritual life. In a moment of conviction we express our hopes in the form of decisions to change one way or another. But our commitments are like "ropes of sand," as Ellen White says in *Steps to Christ*. Good intentions will only

get you to the place where you make promises. When the promises get broken and you fail to follow through, it feels as if your whole relationship with God is a failure. But the way to grow isn't through promises, but through the practice of staying open to God's Spirit. The work of growing closer to God is not the work of trying really hard—it is the work of training the heart and mind to stay connected to Him. If you want muscles, you have to lift the weights—not just once, but again and again. If you want to play the piano, you trudge through book 1, then through 2, and as you continue to go, you learn and become more proficient. You want to be able to run for 15 kilometers? Start training. If you miss, stumble, or struggle, you can rejoice that you are human like everyone else. The only way you fail is by giving up completely on God. Let's look at what God says about our spiritual journey.

- » First, remember that God provided grace that makes you a member of His kingdom—free and clear! See **Ephesians 2:8**.
- » Second, we can train with exercises that make our connection to God stronger. See **2 Peter 1:3-8**.
- » Third, if in your training you stumble and struggle at times, don't give up. Don't forget that you are a child of the King. Don't lose sight of your place in His family. Remember Calvary and remember how you started this journey, and by God's grace, pick up where you left off. See **1 Peter 1:8, 9**.
- » Just another thought. The Bible is God's way of communicating with us. It is encouraging to know that He is always ready to help us and keep us from falling. See **Jude 24, 25**.
- » Take heart and trust God's promises.

### Wednesday BIBLE INSIGHTS

Match the text with the phrase. All texts are from the New International Version of the Bible.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Colossians 2:6, 7**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Colossians 3:16, 17**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Colossians 1:3-6**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Colossians 1:9-12**

\_\_\_\_\_ **2 Peter 1:3-8**

\_\_\_\_\_ **John 15:16**

\_\_\_\_\_ **John 15:5-8**

1. "I am the vine."
2. "... continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him ..."
3. "You did not choose me ..."
4. "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord."
5. "His divine power has given us ..."
6. "... we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus ..."
7. "... growing in the knowledge of God ..."

### Thursday CONNECTING

- » Think of how awkward it would be if you were to read your Bible and pray in the morning, then look in the mirror to see if there was any visible change. You'd be like the small boy who planted corn seeds in the ground and every day afterward dug up the seeds to see if they were growing. The seeds won't grow if we constantly dig them up. The sun and the rain and the soil grow the seeds over time. The same is true for our spiritual growth. The spiritual disciplines or exercises strengthen you for service, but they don't make you fit for heaven. The only thing that can fit you for heaven is to trust fully in the finished work of Christ on Calvary (see **John 1:10-12**). Anyone born again is destined to grow if they stay connected to God through His Spirit (see **John 15:16**).

Friday  
**APPLYING**

- » Tuesday's study explains how our salvation is a gift of God's grace. Plan out your training for the week as an experiment. Take time at the beginning and the end of the week to reflect on God's free gift of grace to you. In the

middle of the crosses there is a track for training. Somewhere around the track, write a few exercises of the spiritual life you want to do this week. You may want to read a section of Scripture or spend time alone with God in quiet solitude. You may want to do a kind act of service for someone. Make your plan and see if you can follow through.

