**Without Me You Can Do Nothing**

*John 15:5*

**Introduction**

1. Jesus said without Him a disciple could ***“do nothing” (John 15:5).***
2. But what did He mean by, “can do nothing?”
   1. NOT – absolutely nothing at all – do people who aren’t abiding in Jesus experience any success at all? (Business, education, relationships, family, etc.)
   2. BUT – nothing as it pertains to bearing fruit to God’s glory. (Fruit of discipleship)
      1. **(vv. 1-4)** – bearing fruit and pruning to bear more fruit.
      2. Requisite – abiding in the vine **(v. 1** – Jesus is the vine).
      3. How? – abiding in His word, His word abiding in you (**v. 7)** – **John 8:31** ***(v. 8b – “so you will be My disciples”)***
      4. **(v. 8)** – by bearing fruit in accordance with Christ’s word God the Father is glorified.
   3. Opposite – with Me you can do all things – **Philippians 4:13** – but all things is contextually limited to the will of Christ. (Namely, contentment in immediate context.)
3. It is paramount that we understand our absolute dependence on Christ – we cannot be pleasing to God apart from Him.
4. Those Who Could Do Nothing Without the Lord
5. God’s Conditions and Warnings to Israel
   1. The warnings to the generation that would possess the Promised Land illustrate the impossibility of success without God.
   2. Do not forget God by failing to obey Him – **Deuteronomy 8:11, 14, 17**
      1. **Deuteronomy 8:18** – It is God’s abiding presence which allows your success – FOR THE SAKE OF HIS COVENANT.
   3. Obedience followed by Lord’s blessing and success as His nation – **Deuteronomy 28:1-2**
   4. Disobedience followed by Lord’s cursing and failure as His nation – **Deuteronomy 28:15**
6. Rebellion at Kadesh Barnea
   1. 12 spies sent from wilderness of Paran into Canaan to spy it out.
   2. The report – **Numbers 13:26-29**
   3. Caleb’s suggestion – **Numbers 13:30**
   4. The response of the 10 (negative) – **Numbers 13:31-33**
      1. Congregation – **Numbers 14:1-4** – complained, have we been brought here to die, let us return to Egypt.
   5. Joshua urges the people – **Numbers 14:6-9** – do not rebel, nor fear these people – It is God’s will for us to take the land, and we need to trust Him enough to obey Him.
   6. The congregation’s response – **Numbers 14:10** – sought to stone them.
   7. God’s response – **Numbers 14:22-23** – they will not enter the Land (except Caleb and Joshua).
      1. Where it was God’s will for these people to take the land, now they weren’t given that privilege.
   8. After the 10 spies died by the plague, and the people were told their sentence – **Numbers 14:40-45** – sought to go take the land against the Lord’s command, Lord not with them, they failed miserably.
      1. **(vv. 41-42)** – the Lord is not among them because they have no command to do what they were going to do.
      2. When the Lord was telling them to take the land they would have succeeded.
      3. When the Lord told them they would not take the land they failed when they attempted to do so.
      4. THE LORD WAS WITH THEM IN THE COMMAND, BUT NOT WITH THEM WHEN THEY TRANSGRESSED THE COMMAND.
7. Joshua Separate from the Word
   1. When Moses died, Joshua was to take his place in leading the Israelites into the Promised Land.
   2. Joshua was given clear foreknowledge of what would lead to his successes and failures as the leader – **Joshua 1:5-9** – be strong and courageous but do the will of God.
      1. ***(v. 5) – “I will be with you.”***
      2. ***(v. 7) – “that you may observe to do according to all the law”***
      3. ***(v. 8) – “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth”***
         1. Observe what it says, ***“THEN you will make your way prosperous”***
   3. Joshua’s success rested on the Lord being with him in all that he did. HOWEVER, THE LORD WOULD ONLY BE WITH HIM IF JOSHUA KNEW AND OBSERVED HIS LAW.
   4. If Joshua ever failed to do according to God’s word or failed to hear instruction from God, then he would fail in his endeavors.
8. Defeat at Ai
   1. Jericho taken – **Joshua 6:2** – God had given it to them, and they were given instruction to take it (**cf. Hebrews 11:30** – by faith).
   2. Joshua sends spies into Ai, then seeks to take it with 3,000 men – **Joshua 7:2-5** – they failed.
      1. Joshua and the people are distraught, and don’t understand.
      2. Questions God.
   3. The Lord tells Joshua why he failed – **Joshua 7:10-12** – He wasn’t with them because of sin in the camp and wouldn’t be with them without them rectifying the situation.
      1. **Joshua 7:1** – Achan had taken of the accursed things.
   4. NOTE:
      1. Where Joshua received instruction to take Jericho, HE RECEIVED NO INSTRUCTION TO TAKE AI.
      2. Sin separated them from God, and God was not with them – they could do nothing without Him.
9. **Romans 15:4** – written for our learning (**cf. 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11** – so that we don’t make the same mistakes.)
   1. Throughout Israelite history it is abundantly clear that they could do nothing without God.
   2. They found no success apart from God’s work among them and through them.
   3. The times they didn’t have God are when they were separated from Him by sin, or when they did not act on His revelation.
   4. **John 15:5** – Jesus is saying we can find no success as His disciples – in bearing fruit for God and furthering His will – apart from His word.
      1. It didn’t work then, and it won’t work now.
10. Without Me You Can Do Nothing
11. Making Disciples
    1. The apostles were to bear fruit – **John 15:4**
       1. Given to ***“greater works”*** than miracles – **John 14:12**
       2. They would testify of Jesus, and bring men to Him through the gospel – **John 15:26-27** (aid of the Holy Spirit)
       3. THEY COULD NOT FIND SUCCESS IN THIS WITHOUT JESUS – **John 15:5**
    2. We are a part of the great commission – **Matthew 28:18-20** – Jesus is with us in this effort, but only as we are proclaiming His word, and not any other.
    3. Seeking to make disciples:
       1. Disciples of Jesus – **Acts 11:26** – Christians – of Christ, followers of Christ.
       2. Those who abide in His word – **John 8:31**
       3. Seed principle – **1 Peter 1:23** – born of incorruptible seed – word of God – not a disciple of Christ except by this word.
       4. Implication – TO TRY TO MAKE DISCIPLES WITHOUT THE SIMPLE TRUTH IS TO FAIL – they aren’t followers of Jesus if they don’t respond to His word.
    4. Some attempt to make disciples and fail because:
       1. They lay the wrong foundation – **1 Corinthians 3:10-11** – only Jesus Christ.
          1. Not man’s wisdom – **1 Corinthians 2:1-5** – gimmicks.
          2. Are we attracting men to Christ, or to something else?
       2. They seek to please men – **Galatians 1:6-12** – not another gospel, but the one gospel.
       3. They avoid confronting others with the difficult requirements – **Acts 2:38; 17:30; Luke 13:5** – repent or perish.
          1. Cannot avoid addressing the sin of others when seeking to make disciples.
          2. If known sin is avoided in conversation/study, thus, not repented of, DO THEY REALLY BECOME DISCIPLES OF CHRIST?
       4. They do not follow up – **Matthew 28:20** – it is not right to bring someone to the truth and not help them walk in their new life, helping them make the necessary changes.
12. Overcoming Temptation
    1. It is God’s will that we overcome temptation, and He grants us a way out each time – **1 Corinthians 10:13**
    2. Understanding temptation – **James 1:13-15** – your desire that is prohibited by God.
    3. The way to overcome such? – Knowing the word of Christ:
       1. **Galatians 5:16-17** – walk in the Spirit.
       2. **Romans 8:9-11** – the Spirit (of Christ) dwelling in us through the word allows us to overcome the use of our body for sin.
          1. **(v. 9)** – need Christ.
          2. **(v. 10)** – Christ in you, body not used for sin, but righteousness.
          3. **(v. 11)** – given ability through regenerating power of the Spirit through word to use body for God’s will, and overcome sin/temptation.
       3. Christ overcame temptation with the word – **Matthew 4:3-11**
          1. Jesus responded to temptation with the word.
          2. NOTE: Not simply knowledge.
             1. Knowledge of the word.
             2. Devotion to the word.
             3. Acting in accord with the word.
    4. **Psalm 119:11** – the word is how we’ll be kept from sin.
    5. Can’t overcome temptation in any other way:
       1. Some fail to truly conquer their specific struggles because they are seeking to do so without Christ – I.E. HANGING ON TO VESTIGES OF SIN AND NOT FULLY COMMITTING.
       2. The only way is by faith in Christ – **Galatians 2:20; 6:14** – crucifying the world.
13. Growing Spiritually
    1. Some try to grow spiritually without Christ:
       1. Worldly wisdom – **Colossians 2:4, 8, 23**
       2. Emotionalism – **Proverbs 28:26** – just because your emotions are positive doesn’t mean you’re right/growing.
       3. Zeal for the sake of zeal – **Romans 10:2**
       4. Action devoid of passion/zeal – **Revelation 2:4**
       5. Knowledge without practice – **James 1:22, 25; John 13:17**
    2. One cannot grow spiritually without Christ – **2 Peter 1:2-8**
       1. **(vv. 1-4)** – partake of the divine nature (become one with God and Christ) through the knowledge of Christ.
          1. Divine power – **Romans 1:16** – through the gospel.
          2. Knowledge – participant knowledge.
       2. **(vv. 5-8)** – diligent adding to faith – constant growth – “and abound”
    3. Imitating Christ – **1 John 2:6**
    4. There is no substitute for Christ in spiritual growth. We cannot expect to be able to bear this fruit separate from Christ – **John 15:5, 7-8**

**Conclusion**

1. It is futile to attempt any spiritual endeavor without Christ.
2. We are to place all our energy into bearing fruit for God while always recognizing that we cannot accomplish any of it separate from Christ.