

## “2012: Living the Good Life!”

Series: *Non-Series*  
New Year's Weekend 2012  
(Part 1 of 1)

**Open:** What is one thing you learned from 2011?

**Explore:** Read John 15:1-17.

John 15 is a strong reminder that spiritual growth doesn't happen in a vacuum. We need a strong connection to God in heaven, as well as people to love and share life with here on the earth.

1. Jesus called Himself the vine, and the Father the true gardener of our lives. What does God do to branches which do not bear fruit (vs. 1-4)? What does God do to branches that do bear fruit?
2. The phrase “remain in me” was repeated to drive home a point (vs. 5-8). What was the point? In what ways can a believer “remain in” Christ?
3. How do verses 9 and 12 tie together (vs. 9-13)? What did Jesus say was the greatest expression of love? How can we, practically speaking, “love” one another in the church?
4. What is the connection between bearing fruit and prayer (vs. 14-17)?

**Reflect:** Review key points from the lesson before discussing the questions.

1. What is one goal you have for 2012? What is the purpose of writing your goals down and posting them in a place you can see them?
2. Scripture must be the foundation of everything we do in our personal lives as well as the church. Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. How have you benefited from the Word of God in your own life?
3. Jesus came to the earth so that we might experience not only fellowship with God, but fellowship with one another. What does it mean to truly belong to God's family?
4. Once we become part of God's family, God wants to transform our lives more and more into His image. How does God use people in that process? Is there an area of your spiritual life that you would like to grow/stretch/improve in 2012?
5. Being part of a church is exciting because together we can accomplish more for God's kingdom than we could alone. How will you get involved with God's church family in 2012? For example, you could volunteer to serve during weekend services, go on a short term mission trip, or step out in faith and lead a CARE Group.

**Apply:** Next steps.

**As a group:** The people of the church are always better together than alone. Share one benefit that has come from meeting with the people in your group. Discuss one goal you would like to set for the group in the year 2012.

**On your own:** Now that 2011 is over, it is time to look back and reflect on your life. Are you currently doing something that does not honor God, is not good for you, or is not the most loving thing to do? What steps can you take to get where God wants you to be?

## Listening Guide Notes

**Those most likely to succeed...**

a. Write down their goals.

b. Spend time with people who have similar goals.

**2012 will be better with...**

1. A place to believe.

<sup>[16]</sup> “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,<sup>[17]</sup> so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” –**2 Timothy 3:16-17 (p. 833)**

2. A place to belong in God's family.

<sup>[5]</sup> “A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.  
<sup>[6a]</sup> God sets the lonely in families.” –**Psalm 68:5-6a (p. 401)**

<sup>[3]</sup> “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.<sup>[4]</sup> For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,<sup>[5]</sup> so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” –**Romans 12:3-5 (p. 790)**

3. A place to learn to behave.

<sup>[2b]</sup> “...godliness and holiness.<sup>[3a]</sup> This is good, and pleases God our Savior...”  
–**1 Timothy 2:2b-3a (p. 829)**

4. A place to live big.

“After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken.” –**Acts 4:31 (p. 761)**

“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” –**1 Peter 5:8 (p. 852)**