

YOUTH CONFERENCE 2024 - FRIDAY AM | Deante Lavender

Overview:

Speaker (Deante Lavender) kicked off the session talking about his love for kite-flying. As a boy he wanted his kite to fly higher than others and he thought if the string wasn't holding it back, it could go higher. At one point his string broke and the kite started to go higher but eventually came crashing down to the ground. Many people think they can go further, higher, better if they go solo, but the bible teaches that once you disconnect from the vine (from God) you will start to wither. This message will help students see that while the string might feel restrictive, it is actually the think that gives you life.

Key Scripture: John 15:1-8

Ice-breaker Question: If you could describe your relationship with God in five words or less what would it be?

Dig Deeper:

READ John 15:1-8

The word 'abide' means to obey; to trust; to follow; to stay connected. Another way of reading this verse could be using the word 'trust' every time you see the word 'abide.

Trust is a two-way street. In Deante's story about loving kites, his mom once told him, the height of the kite is dependent on the guidance of the string. While we can often feel (just like young Deante did) that the string is too restrictive, we need that string in order to keep that kite flying high. Otherwise disconnected from the string, the kite will eventually come crashing to the ground.

- *Do you see your relationship with God as being too restrictive? If so, why?*

This passage of scripture gives us the picture of a vine producing fruit.

- *What does it mean to bear fruit? And what kind of fruit is Jesus referring to?*

YOUR GROWTH IS A REFLECTION OF YOUR CONNECTION

It is easy to be that person that is quick to show off all that you have accomplished or accumulated, but often times these people have very little depth. And it is easy to buy into the 'fake fruit' illusion. As a Christian you don't have to fake your fruit. God says you will grow, you will accomplish, you will produce fruit.

- *What fruit do you already see in your life? What fruit do you need to ask God to produce more of in your life?*

The enemy wants you to believe that you can still flourish even if you are disconnected from God. He wants you to believe that you can do whatever you want and it will feel great. But just like a clump of grapes separated from the vine, the minute you disconnect the process of withering and death begins.

- *Have you disconnected from God in some way?*

THE GOOD NEWS IS: IN CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS CAN ALWAYS RECONNECT!

READ John 15:7

- *Being connected or reconnected with Jesus comes with blessings! How have you seen the blessings of God in your life?*

CONNECTION COMES WITH BLESSING

Group Discussion:

1. What's a situation in your life that feels restrictive but is actually life-giving? (Like the string to the kite)
2. Read John 15:1-8. What does it mean to abide? What would it look like for you to abide in Christ?
3. What are the things in life that you abide in that are not Christ? (They may not be sinful things, but just consumers of your time) How do you see those connections affecting your spiritual growth?
4. "The righteous can always reconnect with God." How does your heart feel and respond to this truth?