



News to Know

DiscipleNow 2026

The deadline was yesterday, but it's not too late to attend! I'm ordering shirts today, so [sign up here](#). I am mailing out host home information, details about the weekend, and waivers today. You should receive those later this week. Most of you guys are volunteering, and I really appreciate that. If you haven't heard details from me yet, I will let you know soon!

Refuge: Wednesday at 6:30

After a couple of weeks off, Refuge worship will start back this Wednesday at 6:30 in The Harbor. It will be great to worship with everyone again!

Sunday Morning Small Groups

Our small groups discuss the previous Wednesday's message. We talk about the truths presented and how to apply it to our lives. This is a great opportunity for your student to build community while growing their faith. Groups meet at 9:45 and 11 every Sunday.

The Bridge: Middle School Ministry

The Bridge meets again at the end of the month on January 25. Mark your calendars and join us for another semester with our ministry for 6th-8th graders.

Summer Camps

Even though our deadline has passed for Generate and MissionFuge, it's not too late to sign up. If you missed the deadline and would still like for your student to attend, please let me know!

Refuge this Week

This week, Trent Wineberg will be teaching from John 15. In this passage, Jesus defines what a true believer and authentic disciple really looks like. He makes it clear that it's not about activity, appearance, or religious effort. It's about abiding, remaining, and staying connected like a branch to the vine. Because the truth is, it's possible to look alive on the outside while slowly withering on the inside.

The passage begins with Jesus declaring that He is the True Vine. This statement echoes the Old Testament, where Israel is often described as God's vine. Yet Israel failed to live faithfully in that role. Now, Jesus steps forward and declares that He is the True Vine, the one Israel could never fully be. And if Jesus is the True Vine, then life does not exist apart from Him. Just as a branch has no life, no growth, and no fruit on its own, we have no true life apart from Christ. Everything we long for like meaning, purpose, righteousness, love, and lasting fruit, flows from Him alone. Being connected to Jesus is not optional; it is essential.

Then the passage gives us the characteristics that show whether we are truly connected to the vine, how we know we are authentic disciples. First, true believers allow God to prune them. Pruning can be painful, but it is never punitive. God is not punishing us; He is preparing us. He doesn't cut us to harm us, but to help us. He lovingly removes what is unhealthy so that we can grow into what is fruitful. True believers also abide in Christ. Abiding speaks of closeness, dependence, and an ongoing relationship. It is not a once-a-week connection or a seasonal faith we pick up when it's convenient. Abiding is a continual, daily reliance on Christ. True believers bear fruit. Fruit is the undeniable result of remaining in Christ. It is the visible outcome of an invisible relationship with Him. Fruit reveals authenticity and exposes spiritual fraud. True believers obey. When Jesus speaks of His words remaining in us, He is not referring merely to hearing Scripture or memorizing Bible verses, but to living in obedience to what He commands. True believers pray. As we grow in Christ, His desires increasingly become our desires, shaping both what we pray for and how we pray. True believers love. They love Christ and they love others sacrificially, reflecting the love they have received from Him. Finally, true believers have joy. Joy in Jesus is inseparable from knowing Him and following Him. You cannot truly know Christ and lack joy. You cannot follow Christ and remain joyless. To be united with Christ is to experience the deep, abiding joy that flows from Him.

Resource of the Week

This week's resource is titled, "New Year's Goal Setting for People with Actual Lives." It can be found [here](#).



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