

## **“Investment Strategies”**

### **John 15: 9-17**

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This morning our attention is drawn to a passage of scripture that describes the relationship Jesus had with his disciples. In this text, Jesus leaves no doubt about his strong feelings for the disciples who helped him during his public ministry.

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.” (John 15:9)

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” (John 15:12)

“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything I learned from my Father I have made known to you.” (John 15:15)

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appoint you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.” (John 15:16a)

We know from reading the gospels that Jesus devoted much of his time to helping his disciples grow and mature in their faith. He taught them everything he knew about life, faith and relationships.

He talked to them about...

...how to develop their values

...how to arrange their priorities

...how to resist temptation, handle adversity and deal with disappointment

...how to handle grief and guilt

...how to be forgiven for bad decisions and rebuild their lives

...how to overcome failure

...how to love the unlovely and unlovable

...how to forgive people who mistreated them

...how to build bridges of goodwill, understanding and reconciliation to everyone

...how to be a good listener

...how to resolve conflict and be peacemakers

...how to turn enemies into friends and strangers into neighbors

...how to say "I'm sorry"

...how to earn and spend money

...how to distinguish between trash, trinkets and treasures

...how to be honest, trustworthy, reliable and loyal

...how to be unselfish and generous

...how to help others carry their burdens

...how to see and respond to the lonely and forgotten

...how to overcome self-indulgence, be humble and serve others

...how to get out of their comfort zones and take risks

...how to live up to their potential

...where to find joy in a depressed world

...where to find peace in a restless world

...where to find wisdom in a confused world

...where to find courage in a dangerous world

...how to be light in a dark world

...how to pray

“Everything I learned from my Father I have made known to you,” Jesus said to his disciples. Everything.

**Who has invested as much in your life as Jesus invested in his disciples?** Who loves you this much?

Who has been this accessible to you? Who has taught you what they know about life, faith and relationships?

Who has been there to help you celebrate your achievements or to rebuild your life when you thought yours was over? Who made hope visible to you with words of encouragement or deeds of kindness?

Who believed in you when you struggled with feelings of inferiority or made you feel like your life mattered when your self-esteem was at its lowest point?

Who was there to soothe your broken heart and lift your spirits when you were down in the dumps? Who wouldn't give up on you when you were ready to throw the towel in?

Are you grateful for their investment in your life? Are you listening to them? Are you seeking their advice?

“Remain in my love,” Jesus instructed the disciples, “just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

Who wants the best for you like Jesus wanted the best for his disciples? Why would you refuse to listen to the people who love you this much and continue to invest so much in your wellbeing?

Think twice before you take them for granted or rebel against them. You will be very upset with yourself in the future if you do.

**On the other hand, who needs you to invest in their life the way Jesus did his disciples?** Who needs you to teach them what you have learned so they will be prepared to embrace their God-inspired dreams and meet life’s many challenges?

Who needs your help so they can live a full and meaningful life? What do you have to offer them? What could they learn from your experiences that would help them grow and mature in their faith?

How could you provide them a safe place to ask their questions as they explore the mysteries of life and faith? How could you encourage them as they pursue their dreams and tackle their biggest challenges?

Last week my daughter, Amy, sent me a text describing a tough day she had. She received a call from the principal of Jack’s school who told her Jack got in trouble on the playground.

Jack is seven years old, and it seems he and a friend had a disagreement that was settled in an unapproved way. The principal asked Amy and John to discuss this with Jack after he got home.

During the conversation with Jack, Amy told him she, too, had a bad day. She confessed she had not handled everything that day the way she should have.

“Jack, aren’t we grateful we get another chance tomorrow? I intend to make better choices. How about you?”

Who needs you to be this transparent, honest and hopeful? Who needs you to make this kind of investment in their future?

Perhaps the greatest gift you and I can give someone, young or old, is to invest our life in theirs and give them the gift of ‘deep roots and strong wings’. Evidently, Jesus felt this way as did those who passed the gospel of John down to us. I hope we do, too.

**What opportunity lies before you this week that God wants you to seize?** Is it time for you to thank those who have invested in your life and renew your commitment to follow their good advice as you spread your wings and fly?

Is it time to begin investing in someone’s life by giving them ‘deep roots and strong wings’? Ask God to help you. I assure you He will.