

**THEME: WHO I AM IN CHRIST**

**TOPIC: I AM DEVOTED**

**TEXT: DEUTERONOMY 6:5; MATTHEW 22:37; MARK 12:30-33; LUKE 10:27**

## **INTRODUCTION**

We've been taught that our faith saves us, but God takes the first step—through Christ, by his Spirit—providing the faith (*emudab*) to develop our relationship with Him. **It is Christ's faithfulness that saves us.**

The Hebrew word for faith is *emunah*; it means faithfulness, persistent determination, holding steady, holding firm, holding true to what is true: the faithfulness of God. Our readiness to fully devote our lives to the service of God and sacrifice our lives for the sake of God is the expression of our *emunah* in God.

*Emunah* means to believe in the truthfulness of a person as well as having emotional trust in a person. In the desert, the children of Israel complained that God brought them out there to kill them. God says that they did not have **emunah (Psalm 78:37)**. They did not trust God.

Trust (faith, *emunah*) is important in every relationship we have. Trust removed can destroy friendships, marriages, businesses, and governments. Trust is grossly underestimated. It impacts us daily, not only in our relationship with God, but with every relationship and every endeavour in which we are occupied.

### **1. God Longs for Our Devotion!**

God longs for our devotion, rock-solid faithfulness, loyalty, truthfulness, honesty, and integrity. He desires us to have absolute trust in His Word and trustworthiness (**Proverbs 3:5; Isaiah 12:2**).

**Q:** What is the relationship between Trust and Devotion?

**2. God wants Loyalty** – God does not want a people who simply adhere to a set of rules, no matter how well intended (**Hosea 6:6**).

**Q:** How does loyalty show devotion?

**3. God wants Obedience** – Sacrifices meant nothing because their hearts were unfaithful to God. God wants obedience, and not sacrifice (**1 Samuel 15:22**), mercy and not religious rituals.

**Q:** Is it possible to live a sacrificial life and still not be devoted?

### **4. God Actively Seeks an Intimate, Loving Relationship with Us**

Like the other fruits of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control), faith is a category of relationship.

We are amazed to hear the stories of Israel losing trust in God again and again, resulting in disobedience and sin. However, we do the same thing each time we lose faith in God.

5. **God wants us to be a Branch** – If you want to produce spiritual fruit, remember that your job is to be a branch. A branch is a growth from the main stem or root of a plant (John 15:6)

**Q:** What is the relationship between you being a branch and devoted to Christ?

6. **Abiding in the Vine** – Sometimes we feel like we just can't live the Christian life—and we can't, without abiding in the Vine. We have a responsibility to submit to the Vine and the Vinedresser. The Spirit can do His work only as we yield to Him. (John 15:4)

**Q:** What are the challenges of abiding in the Vine?

### 7. **Christ the Vine Points to God the Vinedresser**

When we are saved, we are grafted into the living Vine, Jesus Christ. Without the Vine to bring nourishing sap to the branch, there can be no fruit (**John 15:5**).

**Q:** Is there a way to circumvent being reliant or dependent on the Vine?

### **Conclusion**

Without the Vine, we cannot produce Christ like character—full of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The branch and the Vine share one life. (**Colossians 2:1–5**).

When we yield or surrender to Christ, we abide in the Vine and no longer live only for ourselves. Christ's life flows through us and produces fruit. The Vinedresser is able to conform our thoughts and will to provide us with the strength and energy to develop Christ-like behaviours.

Is this your goal to become Christ-like? Do you want to show love, forgiveness, and kindness? Then stop trying to do it on your own. **Be devoted; be a branch!**