PWOC LDP
Leadership Development Program

## TOPIC: REMAIN IN ME—STAYING CONNECTED TO CHRIST

**The Bottom-Line Up Front:** Jesus is interested in a relationship with us that is not limited to pockets of time—such as the time we spend in the Word or at PWOC. He wants our whole hearts 24/7. When we learn to "remain" in Him, we are better equipped to love His people.

1. **Read John 15:1-13 (NIV). Circle the word "remain/remains" every time it appears.** (5 minutes):

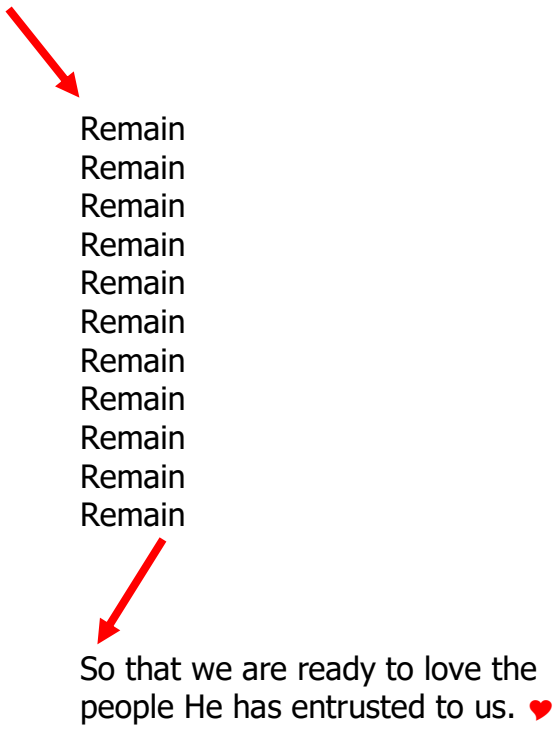
   *[1] I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. [2] He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He trims clean so that it will be even more fruitful. [3] You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. [4] Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. [5] I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. [6] If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. [7] If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. [8] This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. [9] As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. [10] If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His love. [11] I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. [12] My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. [13] Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.*

   - How many times does the word *remain* or *remains* occur?
   - *Remain* in Greek means "to dwell" or "live there." How do we do that? The go-to answers are: pray, read your Bible… What else? Think of churchy answers and write them here:

   - So, let's say for the sake of argument that I have a vibrant quiet time that contains the elements of prayer, Bible reading, and the other items we discussed. Let's say I consistently start my day with these practices. Is that enough? Will I "remain" in Christ all day long? What about when my thoughts are negative? What about when I am sad/scared/anxious/alone/angry… a.k.a. human? We need to *proactively reconnect* with God. Think of it in terms of reconnecting with a spouse or a friend—relationship is not broken; it just needs to be renewed.

2. **Think outside the box. What are some unconventional ways that you connect with God?** (10-15 minutes): *Take 5 minutes to brainstorm answers to these questions in a group of 2-3. Write your responses below. If time allows, small groups can share their thoughts with the whole group.*

   - When do you sense His presence or feel close to Him? When is a good time for you to talk with Him? What makes your heart skip a beat? What recenters your soul? How does He speak to you? How does He communicate His love to you?

   - What could "remain in Me" look like for you today? Did you hear a new idea that you would like to try? Be intentional. When will you do it? How? Make a plan.

3. **A leadership lesson "To Go"**
   - Though Jesus was not specifically speaking to leaders in John 15:1-13, we can apply the same principles to our leadership roles.
   - Look at verse 12, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." So, perhaps Jesus would coach his leaders to: