

## THE BEAUTY OF INTIMACY

**“Remain in me, and I will remain in you.” – John 15:4**



One of my favorite Hawaiian native plants is the *'uala*. It grows easily and close to the ground. Its fruit, the sweet potato, tastes *'ono* (delicious). Mashed and mixed with water, the *'uala* made a “sweet potato” *poi*. Its leaves were steamed, boiled, or baked. For early Polynesians, *'uala* was an important staple of their diet. They grew nearly 200 varieties of this plant. It was very vigorous and would grow in areas of little rainfall, even, poor soil, yet flourish in areas where the soil was loose and porous. This food source was drought-resistant and when well-tended, produced a bountiful crop. As an old *'ōlelo noeau* (wise saying) stated: *“He `uala ka `ai ho`ola koke i ka wī”* (The sweet potato is the food that ends famine quickly). The vines of the *'uala* grew extensively, often times, taking over an area and expanding in ground cover. It was used as medicine as a laxative and for the treatment of asthma and sore throat. One variety was used for fish bait, while old vines and leaves were placed beneath the floor mat as padding. The *'uala* expresses the natural connection of the vine and its branches as it bore fruit in abundance for our ancient ones.

In our scripture today, God draws for all of us a picture of intimacy between “vine” and “branch”.

He desires a close relationship with us and our relationship with Jesus is the key to getting connected. For example, anyone who has ever dated and gotten serious with someone knows that as two people get to know each other, a growing process of intimacy develops. In doing so, a transformation will occur over time. That’s what happens with God. As you and I come to know Him, we will discover a growing process of closeness where you feel that you know Him and desire to know Him more and more. There’s a popular commercial, that features an “Energizer Bunny” that promotes a power that “keeps going and going and going...”, yet we all know that the life of a battery will eventually, end abruptly. However, when we utilize an electrical outlet, we now, have access to a greater, longer-lasting power! That’s what this devotional is all about. Getting “plugged” into God and getting God “plugged” into you! Our intimacy with our heavenly Father is built on knowing that we were “pre-wired” to fellowship daily with Him.

While on earth, Jesus had an intimate relationship with His disciples and they with Him, but when He was crucified, they were devastated. When life throws you a disruption, how you respond will depend on your intimate communion and abiding with Christ. It challenges us with the question, “How serious are you in making your intimacy with Him a priority?”. How much time are you spending with Him? How often do you spend praying and reading His words? After all, you’re serious about your workout time at the gym or watching a favorite movie, yet when it’s time to spend with God, you’re too tired. As you spend time with your family, how much time are you spending with God and sharing your joys and disappointments? All of us cling to things that give us a sense of identity and importance, whether job titles, family heritage, bank accounts, or material possessions, but ask yourself, what would happen if one day, you lost it all. My friend, when we grow intimately with God and God in us, we can still say that things are OK because we have a personal relationship with the true God and that’s enough.

**“As you abide and live in Him may the unseen hand of God rest upon you with the assurance of His protection, presence, power and love as we point others to the “vine”. Amen.**