

FYI.

FROM ILLINOIS CONFERENCE  
PRESIDENT, RON AGUILERA



## DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

*"Then He said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.'"*

Matthew 4:19

Matthew 4:19 is this year's theme verse...a reminder that we are called to follow Jesus faithfully. My desire, for my life, and for yours, is that we grow in our Christian life, in our walk with Jesus. John, chapter 15, mentions three things that demonstrate your growth, or lack thereof, in the Christian life.

The first demonstration of this growth is being fruitful in life. Reading through John 15, you'll notice the word fruit comes up repeatedly. That's because Jesus used the analogy of fruit growing on a vine to describe Christian growth: *"I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."* There are a few obvious characteristics of fruit: it's natural, noticeable, and nourishing. Though each believer's output of fruit will vary, at some point the fruit will show, whether it's in the fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23), people you win to Christ, living a holy lifestyle, your giving, or your praise. All these things visibly demonstrate that growth is happening in and through you as you abide in Christ and seek Him.

The second demonstration of growth is being powerful in prayer. As John 15:7 says, *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."* With a promise like that, it's a wonder more Christians don't pray! I invite you to make this a priority this year. Now, I believe there are conditions to this promise. First, you must abide in Christ; second, He must abide in you; and third, His words, Scripture, must also abide in you. It's then your desires will become His desires, and then that *"you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."*

The third demonstration of spiritual growth is being joyful in spirit. *"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."* True, lasting, authentic joy is one of the things this world craves the most, and it's the very thing Jesus promises you. The question is are you willing to go God's way to get it, by growing and abiding in Him?

Here's the thing about spiritual growth I want you to understand, you can grow as much as you want to. All the resources you need have already been given to you, and you can either employ them or let them lie dormant. May you sense God's presence as you continue to Follow Jesus Faithfully.

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### Stay Connected

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# NEWS

## Church Visit

This past Sabbath, I had the opportunity to be at our Hinsdale church for Pathway to Health kickoff event sponsored by Advent Health. This event is scheduled for April and will take place in Indianapolis. For more information, go to: <https://www.pathwaytohealth.org>

## Summer Camp at Camp Akita 2022

We are planning now to have Camp Akita open this summer. Plan now to attend Summer Camp 2022, "The Great Adventure". Look for more information on our website soon. In the meantime, the youth department is looking for young people, 18 and older, to join our Summer Camp team. Visit [campakita.com/apply](http://campakita.com/apply) to submit your application today, or contact our Youth Department via phone (630) 716-3555 or email [youthdept@ilcsda.org](mailto:youthdept@ilcsda.org)!



[campakita.com/apply](http://campakita.com/apply)

## Ten Days of Prayer

We are in the midst of Ten Days of Prayer through our Conference. I had the opportunity to join Pastor Josh Voigt and Pastor Gabriel Bardan, and members of their churches in a time of prayer. Thank you for the opportunity to meet online through Vimeo and spend some time praying for each other, for our churches, and for our Conference. Also, many thanks to all our pastors and churches that are highlighting prayer during these 10 Days of Prayer!



## Waves of Grace

Check out this great evangelism story about one of our Illinois Conference Pastors, Matthew Lucio at the Peoria Church and the impact of the church's online presence. Thank you, Pastor Matthew for your leadership. Click the link below for the article, <https://www.lakeunionherald.org/archive/articles/waves-of-grace>

# RESOURCES



## Adventist World Radio Apps

Looking for new resources? Looking for inspiration? Check out <https://awr.org/impact/apps> for access to a full media library of fantastic resources.



## DID YOU KNOW?

A Pew Research Center survey conducted in 2014 found that 45% of Americans, and a majority of Christians (55%), say they **rely a lot on prayer and personal religious reflection when making major life decisions**. The same survey found that 63% of Christians in the U.S. say praying regularly is an **essential part of their Christian identity**.



God does not love us because we are valuable. We are valuable because God loves us.

