

# **“I Am The Vine, You Are The Branches”**

## ***John 15:1-17***

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**Teaching Aim:** To examine the metaphor of the vine and the branches in **John chapter 15** to see how it relates to Christian living today. To realize, Jesus often used examples from agriculture in His teachings because the Jewish people lived in an agrarian society. To recognize the vine has two kinds of branches: 1) branches that bear fruit; and 2) branches that do not. To understand the importance of abiding in Christ and loving one another if we are to bear the kind of spiritual fruit that our heavenly Father (the Vinedresser) desires.

### **DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)**

#### **Part I: Jesus is the true vine; His Father is the vinedresser (John 15:1-4)**

1. **Verse 1** brings us to the last of the seven great “*I Am*” statements by Jesus in the Gospel of John. What metaphor did Jesus use to describe Himself and His heavenly Father? Jesus declares His deity and describes something about His ministry in each of the “*I Am*” statements. What can we learn about the ministry of Jesus from the following Bible verses? (See **John 6:35, 41, 48, 51; 8:12; 10:7,9,11,14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1,5**)
  
2. There are only two types of branches on a grapevine: 1) Those who bear fruit; and 2) Those who do not. In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel was often referred to as a grapevine. Unfortunately, God’s chosen nation Israel often acted as if it were a wild grapevine. What can we learn about the fruit Israel produced from **Isaiah 5:7**?
  
3. God had a special plan for the nation of Israel, but there was a conditional clause required. What was this clause? (See **Exod. 19:5-6**) Note: Israel failed miserably to live up to the terms of **Exod. 19:5-6**. Therefore, Jesus being Israel’s Messiah declared in **verse 1**, “*I am the true vine.*”
  
4. In **verse 2**, Jesus said, “*Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit,*” He [meaning the Father], takes away. What did Jesus mean? (See Commentaries) What did Jesus promise to believers who are already bearing fruit (**vs. 2**)? Why? What are some ways that The Lord has pruned you over the years so that you could become more productive as a Christian? (See **Gal. 5:22-23**) Is there anything in your life that you need to prune (or cut off) to be more effective?

5. What did Jesus mean when He said, “*You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you?*” (See **Titus 3:5-7**) Why is it important for every branch (or every true believer) to remain in Christ (**vs. 4**)? How would you rate your daily walk with Jesus?

## **Part II: The secret to bearing much fruit is to abide in Christ (John 15:5-11)**

1. **Verse 5** is a picture of the Church. In this metaphor, Jesus is the vine and we as born-again Christians are connected to the vine producing spiritual fruit. What promise did Jesus make to every believer who abides in Him (**vs. 5**)? What did Jesus mean when He said, “*Without Me you can do nothing?*” Was Jesus speaking literally or spiritually?
  
2. Some have tried to say that **verse 6** refers to born-again Christians losing their salvation. Others have said it is born-again Christians losing their rewards. (See **1 Cor. 3:12-15**) I don’t believe either. Theologically, there is a difference between “*the visible*” and “*invisible church*.” What is it? (Hint: Search Online) Which group of people are represented by the withered and broken off branches thrown into the fire to be burned? (See **Matt. 7:21-23**) What does this fire represent? (See **Matt. 25:46**) Who is doing the burning?
  
3. What does the word “*abide*” mean? (See Dictionary) We have already learned that abiding in Christ leads the regenerate Christian to bear much fruit. According to **verse 7**, what second topic does abiding in Christ also affect? What two conditions in **verse 7** does Jesus give for receiving answered prayer. How can you improve your prayer life?
  
4. Was Jesus offering His disciples a blank check for anything they wanted in prayer (**vs. 7**)? (See **John 14:12-14; 16:23-24**) What did Jesus mean when He said, “*Whatever you ask in My Name?*” What kind of things would we ask for if we are truly in Christ? Why is it helpful to use the Bible as your prayer guide? Have you ever tried this? What can we learn about prayer from the following Bible verses: **Psa. 66:18; 1 Thess. 5:16-18**? Do you have any cherished sin in your life that you are not letting go of? How can we pray without ceasing?

5. According to **verse 8**, what glorifies the Father? What kind of fruit is Jesus talking about? What is one of the proofs that you are a true disciple of Jesus Christ (**vs. 8b**)?
  
6. If someone were to ask you, *“How close was Jesus to His Father,”* what would you say? (See **John 1:1-3; 10:30; 17:20-21**) The Bible is a love story between the Father and the Son. It is also a love story between the Holy Trinity and us. How do you see this love story being played out in redemptive history?
  
7. Loving obedience to God and His Word lead to blessing. Who is the ultimate example of genuine love (**vs. 10**)? How do you see a love and obedience leading to blessing in the following verses: **John 14:15-17a, 21, 23**?
  
8. What is the key word in **verse 11**? Why is it so important for the Christian to have a joyous lifestyle? Was Jesus joyous, even during the difficult times? (See **Heb. 12:1-2**) Jesus has been speaking of love and joy in that order. What is the fruit of the Spirit? (See **Gal. 5:22-23**) When referring to the fruit of the Spirit, what are the first two in order?
  
9. William MacDonald writes, *“Man’s idea of joy is to be as happy as he can by leaving God out of his life. The Lord taught that real joy comes by taking God into one’s life as much as possible.”* How important is your relationship to God in comparison with other things in your life?

### **Part III: Christ commands us to love one another (John 15:12-17)**

1. As we come to **verse 12**, the time of darkness is quickly approaching. What command did Jesus give to His disciples? Why is it so important for Christians to love one another, especially as our culture moves towards times of persecution? Can we love one another as Christ has loved us without the help of the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?

2. According to Jesus, how far might we have to go in that love (**vs. 13**)? Would you be more likely to lay down your life for family and friends, or for a complete stranger? Why? How much did Jesus love us? (See **Rom. 5:7-9**)
  
3. According to Jesus, how do we prove that we are His friends (**vs. 15**)? What did Oswald Sanders mean when he said, *"Each of us is as close to God as we choose to be?"* How close do you choose to be to God? What are some things that you can do to get closer?
  
4. In **verse 15** we find that the disciples of Christ had moved from being servants to being His friends. How did this change affect their relationship? Have you ever experienced something like this in your own life? If so, when? What caused the change?
  
5. Jesus was a peripatetic rabbi, a rabbi whose disciples followed Him from place to place as He traveled and taught. In biblical days, disciples often requested a particular rabbi to teach them. How was the relationship between Jesus and His disciples different (**vs. 16**)? According to **verse 16**, why did Jesus choose these men? What would their purpose be? Is the same true for us today?
  
6. What can we learn about the doctrine of election from studying each of the following: an elect representative (**Gen 2; Rom. 5:12-15**); an elect nation (**Deut. 7:6-8**); elect angels (**1 Tim. 5:21**); an elect people – the Church (**Eph. 1:3-6; Col. 3:12-14**)?
  
7. Israel failed miserably to live up to the conditional clause in **Exod. 19:5-6a**. As a result, Israel has been *"temporarily"* set aside and the church has been called to the forefront in ministry. What can we learn from **1 Peter 2:9-10**? How can you be a royal priest today?

8. What command did Jesus repeat to His disciples in **verse 17**? As noted last week, *“The mark of the true Christian is love.”* What are some ways that we can love one another today? How do we see this love at work in **Matt. 28:18-20** and **Acts 1:8**? Are you loving others enough to take the gospel to your community? To the world?

**MINER’S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!***

- Jesus is the true vine, the branches (or true believers) must receive their nourishment from Him if they want to bear any spiritual fruit.
- The Father is the vinedresser who will judge the fruitless branches.
- Branches that never bear fruit (or unbelievers pretending to be Christians), will be gathered up and thrown into the fire during the end time judgment.
- The secret to a believer bearing much fruit is to abide (or remain stable) in Jesus Christ!
- As Christians, we abide in Christ when we spend time with Him in His Word, as we get to know Him more deeply and intimately through prayer, as we worship corporately with the body of Christ, and as we fellowship with other believers who share a common faith.
- A major theme from the Upper Room Discourse has been for believers to love one another.
- Jesus said, *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends;”* He was about to do just that within the next 24 hours.
- Jesus pointed out the fact that the disciples did not choose Him first, He chose them that they should go and bear much fruit; the same is true for born-again believers today.