

Opening: In John Ch. 15 Jesus pulls His disciples aside and gives a simple yet perfect picture to describe their relationship to Him and how it is that they can sustain their passion and love for God through all circumstances bearing the fruit of the Kingdom. These valuable principles from our Lord are vital to our health today and learning them will ensure we produce fruit that lasts.

John 15:1-11 (Read All Stand)

1“
I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser (Gardener). 2“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 3“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6“If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 7“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 9“Just as the Father has loved Me; I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10“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. 11“These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

The Key Word: ABIDE- It appears 10 times in this passage.

The word Abide in the Greek is menó it is a verb that means I remain, I stay, I wait, to wait for.

- 1. Jesus is our Root in God: Vs:1 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.** We are involved in a process of sanctification from the moment we begin our journey with God.

A. Jesus is the source of our life: in Him we are hidden, safe and secure.

However, the church throughout History leading to the present has, instead of offering a real and life-giving relationship with Jesus, replaced Him with a counterfeit experience wrapped in comfortable religion.

Pew Research: In 2007 a study was done of the state of Christianity in America, it found that 78% of Americans considered themselves Christians. The same study was done in 2015 and it found that the number had declined to 70% of the population as of 2022 64%. Another survey done by the Barna Group found in 2013 revealed that 57% of Americans read their bible 4 times a year. While only 26 percent said they read their bible regularly equaling 4 times a week. Most Christians in America spend on average 9 minutes a day doing **“Spiritual”** activity.

Question: Are you struggling in your walk with Christ today? Wait and draw near to your source.

Life Lesson: It is impossible to give what you are not receiving. You are producing what you are feeding your soul with.

2. Bearing Fruit vs: 2 “Every fruit bearing branch is pruned.”

A. A warning: “Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He (God) takes away” ** Jesus is not saying here that He desires people to leave but instead is stating the truth that God has an intent that those who are his should constantly bear fruit. If we are not willing to bear fruit than we will be cut off from Jesus, we are the cause of the cutting off God is the one who cuts us off.

i. Why does God remove the fruitless branch from the Vine? In the hopes that He can graft us in again and so that we do not cause others that are bearing fruit to cease to do so. What does Hot or Cold mean in relation to this truth?

B. What is Fruit? Galatians 5:22 - The fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

i. The fruit of God is also doing the works of God.

1st Peter 4:7-11 ** We cannot do the works of God without the fruit of God or the character of God.

c. The Pruning: From the Greek: Kathairo meaning - To cleanse, purge or

purify.

What is Jesus saying

about our bearing fruit? From time to time to abide a purging will need to occur.

1. God purges our **focus**, so we do not lose sight of Him along life's journey.

2. God purges our **motives**

3. God purges our **minds**, so we do not become double minded, never able to walk in peace.

4. God purges our **relationships** because we are the people, we surround ourselves with.

i. God will cut down the wild growths in our life that are sapping the life of Jesus from producing real fruit in us.

ii. This also explains why Jesus says, “the fruitless branches (people) are taken away” because they do not yield to the “work of God,” and they harm the other branches.

Life lesson: God saves us a result of His loving will and desire, since sin separates us from God, we must stay with Jesus and continuously walk out our faith in Him.

iii. It hurts when God cuts us down to size. We often misunderstand what He is doing when He cuts branches, we thought were doing good in our lives. Do not forget that you are in a process that will fulfill your great purpose in Jesus.

When God prunes us, we must remember 3 important things.

1. Had God not pruned our life we would have not fulfilled our purpose in Him.

2. What looks like growth is not always the will of God for our lives.

3. The result will be

better than the previous situation and you will thank God for His pruning.

Remember Hebrews 12:11 For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Practical Examples of wild growths:

1. A job you took that ended up taking **more** from you than it gave you.
Life Lesson: Some **opportunities** are not always what they appear to be.

2. A **relationship** that did not bring the best out of you but only the worst.

Life Lesson: Remember that Satan will gladly offer you the benefits while masking the consequences.

3. A hobby that turned into an obsession robbing your focus and energy.

Life Lesson: Every **decision** you make has consequences: some short term; some are long term; and some are eternal.

3. Nothing apart from Jesus vs: 3-5 “Abide in Me and I in you.”

A. **The Word (Logos) cleanses us vs3:** Jesus again reminds us that the words He speaks are life and truth that cleanses us inwardly from all deception and lies. ** We must take a bath in the word of God which is part of our daily abiding relationship with Jesus. **Ephesians 5:26 “ The word of God washes us.”**

B. **You in Him and Him in you vs4 “I am the Vine you are the Branches.”**
i. **You must abide in me:** Here we are called to a life of separation from the world and connection to Jesus resulting in our waiting (**Abiding**) on Him. ** This is a daily pursuit of God putting before all other pursuits in this life.

C. **Life Lesson:** When Jesus is all you have you discover that He is all you really needed.

ii. **He must abide in you:** It sounds the same as you abide in Him but Him abiding in you means we allow Him to have full access to our lives.

Question: Is there any area of your life that you are afraid to let Jesus have access too?

D. **What are some Practical examples of areas we need to allow Jesus’ access too?**

1. Allowing Jesus to deal with those hidden “Personal” struggles that we deal with in private lives that no one else knows about.

2. Allowing Jesus to establish that ministry through your life by giving Him your time, talents, and treasure.

3. Allowing Jesus to fill you with the Holy Spirit afresh, giving you new power and passion for victorious living.

4. Wounds from past relationships that need to be healed. i.e., forgiving those who hurt you.

5. Receiving a new slate and fresh start being forgiven by God and forgiving yourself from failures of the past.

E. **Nothing means nothing vs: 4-5** Jesus reminds us that our ability to be healthy Christians living in healthy families and being a part of healthy churches is **impossible** without our connection to Him.

i. We do not possess in ourselves the ability to be Christian enough or good enough but only Jesus alive within us gives us the ability to be something different than who we are.

ii. This is Jesus really warning His followers not to make a religion out of what was intended to be an intimate relationship.

iii. When Jesus says that apart from Him, we can do nothing He really means it. We cannot produce anything of value in the Kingdom of God without Jesus. If we do not abide in Him our good works will be lacking in purpose. Jesus brings the meaning to work we are doing. Jesus himself is the why to the service of our lives.

F. **Life Lesson:** Believing that without Jesus we can do nothing is harder to believe than it sounds when in our own strength we have power to do something of value without Jesus.

4. Fuel for the Fire vs: 6 “If anyone does not Abide in Me.”

A. Our Vibrant lives will shrivel up: ** It will not happen immediately but eventually if we distance ourselves from Jesus, we will lose the spiritual life He alone offers and will begin to struggle in our Christian walk.

What are some signs we are withering?

1. We have become critical of others who are growing in Christ, or of those who serve for no biblical reason.
2. Church has become more of a social club that we attend than a place we go to meet with God and grow spiritually.
3. We have not heard the voice of God in our devotional life in a long time. Our prayer life is struggling.

4. Issues we once overcame as young Christians we begin to struggle with again.
5. The work of God seems more like a burden and less like a labor of love.

What is the Result? We will get burned-out but not on Jesus, instead on Religion. We will settle for a counterfeit religion instead of the real thing. If it continues, we will leave Jesus altogether.

Life Lesson: Many burned out Christians attend church every week lacking vision and purpose for their lives, but God has the power to graft them back into His Son if they will only believe Him.

5. Abiding is Remaining in His love vs 7-11 “My Father is Glorified that you bear much fruit.”

A. “If you abide in Me and my word (**Rhema**) abides in you” vs7 ** The term Word or (Rhema) in the Greek means “A word uttered by a living voice” Jesus uses this specific word to give us a better understanding of what abiding looks like.

i. In using “Rhema,” Jesus lets us know that to abide with Him means to listen to His voice, and not just read His word . Rhema is a now spoken word of the Lord which is in the context of conversation. Rhema is also.

1. Prophetic word from God for your life unique to your circumstance.

2. A word from the scriptures that comes alive to you during your daily devotionals.

3. A word of promise concerning your future or past that can come to you in times of focused prayer.

ii. How do we abide in the voice of God? We must get close enough for conversation with God.

Life Lesson: The Rhema words of God open promises up for your life and come with fresh power from God to walk in them. God’s words of promise are accompanied by the grace of God to live them.

6. Conclusion: “Grafted into the Vine” Romans 11:17-21

A. The Price Paid by the Vine: Jesus was cut so you could have an opening into His life. The heart of Jesus was pierced to make a way for you.

- B.** You must be cut away from everything else that you hold onto. You also must be cut to the most vulnerable areas to be grafted into Jesus.
- C.** The grafting process means that you must be tied to Jesus tightly without any space in between, only then can the Vine recognize the foreign branch as its own.

Life Lesson: Nothing that you are willing to surrender any part of your relationship with Christ for will be remembered in eternity.