

## WHO IS THIS MAN

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes<sup>[a]</sup> so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.<sup>4</sup> Remain in me, as I also 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. <sup>5</sup> "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. <sup>7</sup> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.<sup>8</sup> This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

John 15:1-8

John 14- He promises the Holy Spirit- He follows that up with telling us to remain in Him- He gave us the power to do so before He even told us to do it.

### KEYS TO A FRUITFUL LIFE:

#### 1. Focus on connection.

He calls us to BEAR fruit- not PRODUCE fruit

In order to have a healthy, producing plant, the right plant must be chosen for the right conditions.

He is the vineyard keeper. He plants each person where He knows they are suited to the conditions.

I have to trust the vineyard keeper.

He prepares the soil- my job is to stay planted in the soil He chose

If I'm not connected to the vine, my branch becomes useless. I am not useful because I produce fruit. I produce fruit because I stay CONNECTED to the vine.

The fruit is simply the natural outcome of the health of whatever I am connected to.

Don't like the fruit? Check the connection.

The fruit we are called to bear through our connection with the Holy Spirit:

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Galatians 5:22-23

It's not a checklist- it's an indicator. It's supposed to be an overflow of what we are connected to.

The branches don't give the fruit it's health. The vine does that. A branch disconnected from the vine will bear no fruit and the fruit it already has will not be sustained.

#### 2. Pruning is preparation.

For a healthy vine, pruning is best done in the winter, the dormant season. Vines are best pruned before they are expected to produce. Pruning is not punishment. Pruning is preparation.

[He cares for the branches connected to me by lifting and propping up the fruitless branches and pruning every fruitful branch to yield a greater harvest.](#)

[John 15:3](#)

From Bruce Wilkerson (Secret of the Vine):

A sun-browned man came up to me...he began to talk about the life of a grower – the long hours spent walking the vineyards... ‘New branches have a natural tendency to trail down and grow along the ground,’ he explained. ‘But they don’t bear fruit down there. When branches grow along the ground the leaves get coated in dust. When it rains, they get muddy and mildewed. The branch becomes sick and useless.’ ‘What do you do?’ I asked. ‘Cut it off and throw it away?’ ‘Oh no!’ he exclaimed. ‘The branch is much too valuable for that. We go through the vineyard with a bucket of water looking for those branches. We lift them up and wash them off. Then we wrap them around the trellis or tie them up. Pretty soon they’re thriving.’

As he talked, I could picture Jesus’s own hand...showing how the Father makes sure His crop comes in full and sweet. When the branches fall into the dirt, God doesn’t throw them away or abandon them. He lifts them up, cleans them off, and helps them flourish again. For Christians, sin is like the dirt covering the grape leaves. Air and light can’t get in. The branch languishes, and no fruit develops. How does our Vine-dresser lift us from the mud and misery? How does He move our branch from barren to bountiful so we can start filling up our basket? The answer to this is the first vine secret.

The fruit we bear is what will attract people to the vineyard and ultimately to the VINE-Jesus.

Pruning is best done by a skilled vinekeeper, one who knows exactly where to cut with a sharp instrument to make the most impact with the least stress.

A vine that is not pruned will not only not bear as much or as healthy fruit, but the branches of that vine will become brittle, compete with unnatural attachments for the natural resources of the vine and begin to separate from the healthy canopy.

He is pruning because He knows what’s coming. Our vinekeeper’s hands are steady and sure- like a surgeon- knowing when and where to prune our lives, our minds, our hearts, our emotions, our behaviors to cause maximum impact with the least amount of stress. When we remove ourselves from the pruning process we think we are saving ourselves stress or hurt- but He knows what’s coming and what attachments we can’t even see that are trying to drain us. We circumvent the process and then get mad when the fruit isn’t what we want. Stay in His hands- see the process through- it is for our good and the glory of the King.

Another word for pruning = training. His pruning is training us up. It's His love.

"...My child, don't underestimate the value of the discipline and training of the Lord God, or get depressed when he has to correct you. For the Lord's training of your life is the evidence of His faithful love..."

Hebrews 12:5 & 6

### **3. It's His vineyard.**

for dominion belongs to the Lord  
and he rules over the nations.

Psalms 22:28

Every living creature  
is in the hands of God.

Job 12:10

Who has done such mighty deeds,  
summoning each new generation from the beginning of time?

It is I, the Lord, the First and the Last.

I alone am he."

Isaiah 41:4

"Be still, and know that I am God!  
I will be honored by every nation.  
I will be honored throughout the world."

<sup>11</sup>The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us;  
the God of Israel is our fortress.

Psalms 46:10-11

The branch's job is to be still and know that the Vinekeeper will take care of the Vine.  
He is trustworthy.

It's not about me- my wants, my desires, my "self"

Every day- die to self, pick up my cross & follow HIM- the branch simply points to the VINE

We can stop striving and just rest in the VINE.

It's a growth cycle- not a starting and stopping point. He harvests, then rests, then prunes, then prepares, then grows, then harvests...over and over.

Will I trust in and submit to the growth cycle in the vineyard owner's hands?

### **RESPONSE:**

-Salvation- trust Him for the 1<sup>st</sup> time

-Put yourself back in His hands

-Trust Him at an even greater level to lead your growth cycle