

## JOHN 15:1-5 (NASB)

**1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 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.**

**1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.**

I really like this description that Jesus gives of Himself. "I am the true vine". Have you ever noticed how very definitive that Jesus spoke about Himself? Jesus does not mince words when He describes Himself:

**John 14:6 (NASB)** 6 Jesus \*said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

**John 6:35 (NASB)** 35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.

**John 8:12 (NASB)** 12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

There is a word that stands out to me in all of these verses that Christ used for Himself...**The**. Notice He said I am The bread, The Light, The Way, The Truth, The Life.

A few years ago Ohio State University began doing ads for their school and they began emphasizing "The" Ohio State University. Players followed suit and now it is almost common verbiage to say The Ohio State University. Why did they do that...the same reason that Christ does it here. Because it is a definite article it is making a statement, it is saying there may be other universities in Ohio but we are The University.

While it is an arrogant thing for Ohio State University to say for Christ to say it is simply an acknowledgement of who He is. Jesus Christ is so much more than any of us can comprehend:

**Colossians 1:15-18 (NASB)** 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

In other words when Christ says He is THE True Vine we are to understand that He is The True Vine.

There is some important meaning here for us.

## **A vine does what?**

Everything that is needed for a branch to **grow, produce fruit to exist and live** for that matter the vine provides.

Another way to think about this reality in nature is to see that the fruit that a vine produces it is done through the branch. In other words the fruit that is seen on a branch is ultimately fruit that came from the vine it is simply produce through a branch.

CHRIST does all of this for the believer. This is the image of Christ here for the believer. **Ultimately it is really all His fruit...**He simply chooses to produce it through us.

### **1 "I am the true vine**

Are there other vines out there? Sure. **There are other vines that are out there** that you and I can tap into but they do not produce true life.

There are other vine's out there that we can believe in for salvation

- for example there is **more than one way to heaven**,
- that there is **no heaven and science** can prove everything man doesn't need God and when we die there is just nothing.
- **belief in christ plus** something.

The problem with these beliefs for salvation is that there are eventually **contradictions** that have to be explained away in order to continue down this path.

But the focus for this passage is **Sanctification** because Christ is **speaking to believers** in this passage. So when He says I am The True Vine He is speaking to us for our sanctification.

So are there other Vine's we can tap into for our Sanctification other than Him...of course!

- You need to have a quiet time every morning.
- You ought to memorize 25 scriptures/week.
- You ought to be on such and such a committee at church.

The biggest lie that Satan has sold to believers everywhere is that **we can be the Vine**.

### **To effectively understand this let's go back to the first sin:**

**Genesis 3:1-6 (NASB)** 1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" 4 The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! 5 "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also

to her husband with her, and he ate.

Notice how subtle and sly Satan is. Notice in verse 1 how he talks with Eve. **And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"**

**Notice that he addresses her in the form of a question.** What's he doing? He's trying to **create doubt**. Doesn't he do that to you and I? Am I really not supposed to do such and such? I've had a hard week or a hard few months, I deserve to allow myself some slack here.

**2 The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"**

Notice here we can begin to get a glimpse of Eve's mental state. Eve adds to what God has said. Notice she says that they weren't supposed to touch it. God never said that they couldn't touch the fruit. Let me ask you, how do you get when there's someone who is really cool, really smooth, really convincing who begins talking to you about something maybe you shouldn't do? Do you find yourself just kind of talking or saying things and you don't know why. I believe that is where Eve is right now. Why would she say that they couldn't touch it? God never said that. Because she is unsure of herself.

It also gives us a glimpse into Eve's grasp on what God has said she knows in her mind what He said but it hasn't penetrated her heart. **When we only know His word in our heads** but not our **hearts** it will be evident when Satan comes at us.

**BTW** - Satan will always try to come at you in a way that makes you off balance. That's how he works.

**2 Corinthians 11:3 (NASB)** 3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

**Craftiness** - cunning, a specious (misleading in appearance, *especially misleadingly attractive*) or false wisdom.

**2 Corinthians 11:14-15 (NASB)** 14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

**"You will be like God"** - Now let me ask you something. Why would Satan tempt Eve with this if it wouldn't mean anything to her?

**Because he knew that it would be meaningful** to her. He just needed her to begin to see how enticing it is to be your own authority. Of course Satan knows this idea well:

**Isaiah 14:12-14 (NASB)** 12 "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!  
13 "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. 14 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

Satan tempts Eve with the exact same thing that caused him to fall. In a nut shell what is it? **PRIDE OR ARROGANCE**. I don't need to submit to God's authority...at least not every time. I have a mind, I can think for myself. And isn't that what all sin ultimately is? Me deciding for myself what is ultimately best in this situation?

How do we know that this is how Eve fell? Because we can see it in verse 6:

**6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.**

**Desirable to make one wise** - In other words, she could know what God knows. Why would she desire to know what God knows? Because that kind of authority, that kind of power of knowing, it was intoxicating. She could be her own authority. In other words...**You will be like God. What had Satan deceived Eve into doing? He had deceived her into thinking that she could be her own authority without consequence. What Eve didn't take completely into account is just how heinous this is to God.**

Satan has been recycling this lie to you and I and all of humanity. Why?

**BECAUSE IT IS EFFECTIVE!!!**

**THIS IS FOUNDATIONAL FOR US IN OUR CHRISTIAN WALK.**

**WHAT IS AT THE CORE OF A DOCTRINE THAT SAYS MAN MUST DO SOMETHING FOR HIS SALVATION? PRIDE.**

**WHAT IS AT THE CORE OF A DOCTRINE THAT IS FOCUSED ON MANCENTRIC WORKS FOR HIS SANCTIFICATION? THE EXACT SAME THING...PRIDE.**

**GOD HATES PRIDE!!**

**Proverbs 8:13 (NASB)** 13 "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverted mouth, I hate.

**Psalms 10:4 (NASB)** 4 The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, "There is no God."

Why does God hate pride?

We see one reason in the last verse, notice it is man's pride that keeps him from coming to God for salvation.

It will be man's Pride that keeps him from ever coming to Him for Salvation and it is man's Pride that keeps him from growing deeper with Him for our Sanctification.

**James 4:6-7,10 (NASB)** 6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." 7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you...10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

**Submit** - to yield to one's admonition or advice, to obey, be subject.

Our walk with Him is one of consistent **SUBMISSION**. Has it ever hit you how difficult that minute by minute submission part of our walk is with Him? **WHY IS THAT?** Because we are born with a desire to meet our own needs.

**This leads us back to our verse:**

**1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.**

Understanding that **we are geared internally** to want to accomplish this **sanctification process by ourselves** I believe that is why Jesus states that He is the TRUE Vine. Why did He say it because He MADE US! If anyone would know what we are like it is our creator. He created us He knows that man wants to accomplish this task on his own because man is prideful.

**That is why He says it is me that you must stay connected to grow**, you can't do it...I can't do it...nothing outside of Him can do it. That is why Hebrews says the following:

**Hebrews 12:2 (NASB)** 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**How is it that this Vine that provides all of the perfect spiritual nutrients doesn't do that for me and I find myself feeling malnourished spiritually?"**

**The answer is that you are not tapping into the True Vine and you are trying to accomplish your sanctification walk on your own strength. And when we arrive in this place it is exhausting.**

**But the real question** isn't really why am I tired I believe the question behind the question is "How does Sanctification work? How does it Look?" The answer tends to be **elusive** for us and do you know **why?** Because I believe many times we ask that question and then **we go right back to the source of the problem** we feel like **we need to go searching** and find the answer when in actuality what **we need to do is ask Him that question** and then **wait faithfully and let Him answer.**

We want to control our lives...we want to be in charge...just like Adam and Eve. But our lives are not ours. We are branches. He is the Vine. **We must submit to that fact to grow spiritually.**

**Jeremiah 10:23 (NLT)** I know, LORD, that our lives are not our own. We are not able to plan our own course.

## **OXEN**

Training oxen is a simple and rewarding experience. Cattle are ready learners, and do not quickly forget what they have been taught. When their needs are met, oxen are patient, hard working draft animals, and will not balk at toiling at your side all day long. The

equipment needed to work with oxen is basic, and easy to use. The yoke.

Personal requirements are a willingness to spend the time needed to teach basic commands, patience, consistency, firmness, and responsibility in meeting the animal's needs.

Training oxen requires taking two separate animals, (selected for their similarities in temperament and willingness to work), which have previously been their own masters, and making them a team, that will work for another master. Behaving this way is contrary to nature. These animals have already learned many things before they began this training. It is your job to undo some of the things they have learned, and to teach many new things. Every time they are in the yoke they will learn something, either beneficial or unbeneficial. And they will challenge you as their new master, as they try to continue to meet their own needs and desires.

**Matthew 11:30 (NASB)** 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."