

John 15 Commentary

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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
Another Chart from Charles Swindoll

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John 15:1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

- **true:** John 1:9,17 6:32,55 1Jn 2:8
- **vine:** Ge 49:10,11 Ps 80:8-19 Isa 4:2 Isa 5:1-7 Jer 2:21 12:10 Eze 15:2-6 Ho 10:1 Zec 3:8 Mt 21:33 Lu 13:6
- **vinedresser:** Song 7:12 8:11,12 Isa 27:2,3 60:21 61:3 Mt 20:1 Mk 12:1 1Co 3:9
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Hosea 10:1 **Israel is a luxuriant vine**; He produces fruit for himself. The more his fruit, The more altars he made; The richer his land, The better he made the sacred pillars.

Psalm 80:8-19[±] You removed a **VINE** from Egypt; You drove out the nations and planted it. 9 You cleared the ground before it, And it took deep root and filled the land. 10 The mountains were covered with its shadow,

And the cedars of God with its boughs. 11 It was sending out its branches to the sea And its shoots to the River. 12 Why have You broken down its hedges, So that all who pass that way pick its fruit? 13 A boar from the forest eats it away And whatever moves in the field feeds on it. 14 O God of hosts, turn again now, we beseech You; Look down from heaven and see, and take care of this **VINE**, 15 Even the shoot which Your right hand has planted, And on the son whom You have strengthened for Yourself. 16 It is burned with fire, it is cut down; They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance. 17 Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand, Upon the son of man whom You made strong for Yourself. 18 Then we shall not turn back from You; Revive us, and we will call upon Your name. 19 O LORD God of hosts, restore us; Cause Your face to shine upon us, and we will be saved.

*I expected it to produce good grapes
did it produce worthless ones*

Isaiah 5:1-7+ Let me sing now for my well-beloved (ISRAEL) A song of my beloved concerning His **VINEYARD**. My well-beloved had a **VINEYARD** on a fertile hill. 2 He dug it all around, removed its stones, And planted it with the choicest **VINE**. And He built a tower in the middle of it And also hewed out a wine vat in it; Then He expected it to produce good grapes, But it produced only worthless ones. 3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge between Me and My **VINEYARD**. 4 "What more was there to do for My **VINEYARD** that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones? 5 "So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My **VINEYARD**: I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. 6 "I will lay it waste; It will not be pruned or hoed, But briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it." 7 For the **VINEYARD** of the LORD of hosts is **the house of Israel** And the men of Judah His delightful plant. Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; For righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.

Ezekiel 17:6-10 "Then it (ISRAEL) sprouted and became a low, spreading **VINE** with its branches turned toward him, but its roots remained under it. So it became a **VINE** and yielded shoots and sent out branches. 7 "But there was another great eagle with great wings and much plumage; and behold, this **VINE** bent its roots toward him and sent out its branches toward him from the beds where it was planted, that he might water it. 8 "It was planted in good soil beside abundant waters, that it might yield branches and bear fruit and become a splendid **VINE**." 9 "Say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots and cut off its fruit, so that it withers—so that all its sprouting leaves wither? And neither by great strength nor by many people can it be raised from its roots again. 10 "Behold, though it is planted, will it thrive? Will it not completely wither as soon as the east wind strikes it—wither on the beds where it grew?"'"



The Vine was a Symbol of Israel Who Was to Bear Fruit

JESUS IS THE VINE

The Context - John 13-17 was Jesus' private teaching to His disciples (including His prayer to His Father in Jn 17) which took place in the Upper Room less than 24 hours before He was crucified. The last words of any person are usually significant (Borrow fascinating book [The Last Words of Saints and Sinners](#)) but in this case these last words of Jesus to His disciples take on incredible significance. It behooves all disciples to read and meditate deeply on these precious promises to us from our Lord. As a generalization, John 14 deals with our Hope in Heaven, John 15 deals with our Help on Earth. The location of the discourse in John 15 and following is debated. Because of Jesus' last words in John 14 "**Get up**, let us go from here." (Jn 14:31) some think the words in John 15 and following were spoken as they walked through Jerusalem on the way to Gethsemane. Others feel the little band did not actually leave the upper room until John 18:1 which says "When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples."

See Danny Akin's outline of John 15 [The Real Deal! The Authentic Christian Life John 15:1-16:4](#) (scroll down to page 3)

[Charles Smith](#) general thoughts on John 15 - The text of John 15 has been one of the historical battlegrounds of doctrinal interpretation. Perhaps only the passage in Hebrews 6 has been the scene of more battles between the [Calvinistic](#) and [Arminian](#) schools of interpretation concerning the matter of eternal security. Not only has this text provided the field for many battles between these two schools of theology, but there have also been a great many skirmishes ~~ the two camps upon this same battlefield. Particularly among [Calvinists](#) there has been disagreement as to the interpretation of this passage.....[Arminians](#) have generally understood the unfruitful branches as representative of true believers who, because they become unfruitful, lose their salvation and consequently are ultimately cast into the fires of hell. [Calvinists](#) have been divided as to the identification of these branches. Some have taught that they represent true believers. Most have taught that they represent unbelievers who profess to be believers. Still others have taught that two kinds of unfruitful branches are discussed: professing Christians, and true Christians who do not produce the fruits of Christianity. (Article - [THE UNFRUITFUL BRANCHES IN JOHN 15 - Page 3-22](#))

[Warren Wiersbe](#) introduces this great chapter - This is the seventh and last of the "I AM" statements of Christ recorded in the Gospel of John. However, Jesus did not stop with this image, but went on to use the picture of "the friend." These two pictures of the believer—branches and friends—reveal both **our privileges** and **our responsibilities**. As branches, we have the **privilege** of sharing His life, and the **responsibility** of abiding. As friends, we have the **privilege** of knowing His will, and the **responsibility** of obeying. (bolding added)

Some like Warren Wiersbe feel this is a parable and therefore we should resist drawing conclusions from the details of this description. But [Rodney Whitacre](#) disagrees stating "The image is not a parable, since it is not a story, but rather an extended metaphor (Carson 1991:513), that is, basically an allegory, for all the details have significance." (**BORROW** D A Carson's [The Gospel According to John and see page 511ff](#) -- Carson has over 3 pages of discussion on this important distinction. Click the pages 511, 512, 513 in left column. If page not visible, then refresh your screen and it should be legible)

I am (ego [eimi](#) - present tense - continually) **the true** ([alethinos](#) - genuine, dependable) **vine** ([ampelos](#) - grapevine) - Literally "The Vine genuine." It is interesting that in the Lord's Supper they had just shared literal fruit of the vine (Mk 14:25; Mt 26:29). Compare Jn. 1:9+ the **TRUE** Light and Jn. 6:32+ the **TRUE** Bread. Obviously Jesus is speaking metaphorically, so this begs the question of why does He use this metaphor? The following passages will answer that question. If there is a **true vine**, what is the implication? There is a false vine. It is very likely that Jesus is calling Himself the "true vine" because the nation of Israel had been called God's vine in the OT. In Jeremiah 2:21 Jehovah declared

"Yet I planted you (ISRAEL) a choice **VINE**, a completely faithful seed (all of it true seed). How then have you turned yourself before Me into the degenerate shoots of a foreign **VINE** ("something like a wild vine that produces rotten, foul-smelling [putrid, stinking] grapes?" **NET**)?"

Related Resources:

- ["I AM"—The Eternal Self-Existent God](#) - Dr Henry Morris
- [What did Jesus mean when He said 'I AM'? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Israel was to have been the tool in God's hand to spread the gospel to the nations, but Israel failed miserably, was faithless and fruitless and produced the corrupt fruit of idolatry and immorality. And by Jesus' day the religious leaders were just that - RELIGIOUS! But they had no RELATIONSHIP with God and could bring no one else into a vital, living relationship with the Living God! And so in His last "I Am" statement Jesus refers to Himself not just "the Vine," but as the **TRUE VINE**, the One through which a sinner could enter into a living relationship with the righteous and holy God. Jesus as the **TRUE VINE** was all that the vine Israel sadly could have been had they obeyed Jehovah. Not only will the TRUE VINE accomplish God's desire of redemption of sinners, but He will also rejuvenate the dead vine of the nation of Israel at this Second Coming and setting up of His Messianic Kingdom.

[Rodney Whitacre](#) adds this note on the **true Vine** - On the temple there was a "golden vine with grape clusters hanging from it, a marvel of size and artistry" ([Josephus Antiquities of the Jews 15.395](#)), and the vine was used to represent Jerusalem on [coins made during the first Jewish revolt](#) (A.D. 66-70), so the vine was clearly a symbol of Israel. Furthermore, even the notion of a true vine shows up in the Old Testament: "I planted you as a fruitful vine, entirely **true** [[alethinos](#)]. How have you become a wild vine, turned to bitterness" (Jer 2:21 LXX). Here, as also in Isaiah's Song of the Vineyard, God, the gardener, cared for his vineyard but got sour grapes. Consequently he will destroy the vineyard. This theme of judgment accompanies virtually every use of this imagery in the Old Testament. Therefore, when Jesus refers to himself as the *true vine* (v. 1) he is once again taking an image for Israel and applying it to himself.... Israel's place as the people of God is now taken by Jesus and his disciples, the vine and its branches. This is not a rejection of Judaism as such, but its fulfillment in its Messiah. The identification of the people of God with a particular nation is now replaced with a particular man who incorporates in himself the new people of God composed of Jews and non-Jews. Israel as

the vine of God planted in the Promised Land is now replaced by Jesus, the true vine, and thus the people of God are no longer associated with a territory (Burge 1994).....Given this strong association of the vine with Israel, when Jesus refers to himself as the vine that is *true* he signals a contrast between himself and the official Judaism as represented in the Jewish leaders who have rejected him and thus cut themselves off from him and his Father.

Spurgeon - All other vines are but shadows of Christ. They represent Christ, but he is himself the substance. the essence, the one great reality. He is the truth of all things that exist: "I am the true Vine." ([Expositions in John](#))

Andreas J. Köstenberger adds that "Theologically, John's point is that Jesus displaces Israel as the focus of God's plan of salvation, with the implication that faith in Jesus becomes the decisive characteristic for membership among God's people" (SEE [John - Page 448](#))

One striking feature of John is the **seven "I Am" statements** none of which are found in the Synoptic Gospels (in fact **92% of John** is unique material not found in the Synoptic Gospels!). And so we see Jesus' repeated use of these striking metaphors: Bread, Light, Door, Good Shepherd, Resurrection and Life, Way, Truth and Life, and Vine.

It is interesting that in Isaiah's prophecy of the Messiah (Isa 53:2), Jesus is described as "like a root out of parched ground," but here He is the fully grown, fruitful Vine. Even as a literal vine is the source of life for the branch, so too Jesus is the Source of life for His disciples, His life flowing through us, now and forever (He is our eternal life)! Paul understood this vital relationship to Christ writing

Philippians 1:21+ For to me, **to live is Christ** and to die is gain.

Galatians 2:20+ "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Colossians 3:4+ When **Christ, Who is our life**, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Lowell Johnson has an interesting thought on Jesus self-designation as the **TRUE Vine** - Jesus knew His disciples would soon be kicked out of the temple worship, barred from the synagogue, ostracized from the traditions of Judaism. I think Jesus is saying, "I am the True Vine. Don't be deceived. It is not Judaism. It is not religion. It's ME!" Jesus Himself is the vine.

And once we are IN Him, the life we have is really His life flowing through us. We never stop receiving our life from Him. (Phil. 1:21; Gal. 2:20)

John Calvin on the **Vine** - Let us here remember the rule that ought to be observed in all parables, that we should not minutely examine every property of "the vine," but only take a general view of the object which Christ uses to apply his teaching. **There are three principal parts of this illustration of the vine: first, that we have no power of doing good except that which comes from Christ; second, that we, having been rooted in him, are dressed and pruned by the Father; third, that Christ removes the unfruitful branches in us so they may be thrown into the fire and burned.** Scarcely any are ashamed to acknowledge that every good thing that they possess comes from God, but after making this acknowledgment, they imagine that universal grace has been given to them as if it were implanted in them by nature. But Christ principally dwells on this, that the vital sap—all life and strength—proceeds from him alone. It follows that the nature of man is unfruitful and destitute of everything good; no man has the nature of the true vine till Christ is implanted in him. This is given to the elect alone by special grace. The Father is the author of all blessings, who plants us with his hand, but the commencement of life is in Christ, in whom we take root. When he calls himself "the true vine," Christ means he is truly the vine. Therefore men toil to no purpose in seeking strength anywhere else, for useful fruit will proceed from nowhere but "the branches" that are rooted in Christ. ([John 15](#))

And My Father ([pater](#)) is the vinedresser ([georgos](#) - farmer, "one who tills the soil")(as in Mk 12:1; Jas 5:7; 2Ti 2:6) - We get the name "George" from [georgos](#) so have a modern somewhat slang paraphrase "My Father is George." That sounds Note that Jesus is calling God His Father again, and in so doing is repeating the emphasis on His deity as the Son of God. The Father as the vinedresser depicts Him as the Owner of the Vineyard, the One Who is complete control of the whole process of bearing fruit and in carrying out His word, the Father takes away and prunes (Jn 15:2) the branches, taking these actions based upon whether the branch has no fruit (takes away) or fruit (prunes). We are the branches (John 15:2-5). Our job is simple. If we are faithful, God will make us fruitful.

Brian Bill on the Father as the **vinedresser** - The gardener's primary task is to grow grapes. In order for that to happen, the ground must be cultivated and fertilized, pests must be controlled, weeds must be pulled, the roots must receive water, the vines must be cared for, the grapes must be cleaned, and pruning must take place. A vine needs a gardener in order to produce grapes. A vineyard is planted for a different purpose than a flower garden. We plant flowers because they're pretty. A vineyard is planted in order to get grapes. The goal is not flowers, but fruit..... I see four levels of fruit bearing in our passage that are demonstrated with these four baskets.

Basket 1 (John 15:2a) "does not bear fruit" NO FRUIT (Muted Fruit)

Basket 2 (John 15:2b) "does bear fruit" MEAGER FRUIT (Minimal Fruit)

Basket 3 (John 15:2c) "bear more fruit" MORE FRUIT

Basket 4 (John 15:5) "bears much fruit" MUCH FRUIT

One author believes that **50% of all Christians bear little fruit and only about 5% bear a lot of fruit**. Do you think that's true? Here's the principle. God the Gardener loves us so much, and is so committed to displaying His glory, that He actively cultivates our lives so that we will move from no fruit, to meager fruit, to more fruit, to much fruit. Friend, which basket represents your life right now? If today were harvest day, how many grapes would be in your basket? Here's the good news. More is always possible because you and I were created for this very purpose. ([Brian Bill](#))

My Father ([pater](#)) is a **KEY WORD** in **John 15 - 10x/9v** - John 15:1 John 15:8 John 15:9 John 15:10 John 15:15 John 15:16 John 15:23 John 15:24 John 15:26 (**ABIDE** is 12x/8v and **FRUIT** is 8x/5v)

Gilbrant on **vinedresser** - the farmer who owns the land and cares for the vineyard. The "husbandman" works the earth as a farmer tills his land to produce crops. The Father owns the land and tends the vineyard. He is vitally interested and cares for it. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

NET NOTE - The vine became symbolic of Israel, and even appeared on some coins issued by the Maccabees. The OT passages which use this symbol appear to regard Israel as faithless to Yahweh (typically rendered as "Lord" in the OT) and/or the object of severe punishment. Ezek 15:1–8 in particular talks about the worthlessness of wood from a vine (in relation to disobedient Judah). A branch cut from a vine is worthless except to be burned as fuel. This fits more with the statements about the disciples (John 15:6) than with Jesus' description of himself as the vine. Ezek 17:5–10 contains vine imagery which refers to a king of the house of David, Zedekiah, who was set up as king in Judah by Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah allied himself to Egypt and broke his covenant with Nebuchadnezzar (and therefore also with God), which would ultimately result in his downfall (17:20–21). Ezek 17:22–24 then describes the planting of a cedar sprig which grows into a lofty tree, a figurative description of Messiah. But it is significant that Messiah himself is not described in Ezek 17 as a vine, but as a cedar tree. The vine imagery here applies to Zedekiah's disobedience. Jesus' description of himself as the true vine in John 15:1 ff. is to be seen against this background, but it differs significantly from the imagery surveyed above. It represents new imagery which differs significantly from OT concepts; it appears to be original with Jesus. The imagery of the vine underscores the importance of fruitfulness in the Christian life and the truth that this results not from human achievement, but from one's position in Christ. Jesus is not just giving some comforting advice, but portraying to the disciples the difficult path of faithful service. To some degree the figure is similar to the head-body metaphor used by Paul, with Christ as head and believers as members of the body. Both metaphors bring out the vital and necessary connection which exists between Christ and believers.

True (adjective) ([228](#)) **alethinós** from **alethes** = true, one who cannot lie) is an **adjective** which pertains to being in accordance with historical fact - genuine, real, true, valid, trustworthy (worthy of confidence, dependable). **Alethinós** describes that which has not only the name and resemblance, but the real nature corresponding to the name, in every respect corresponding to the idea signified by the name -- thus genuine not spurious, fictitious, counterfeit, imaginary, simulated or pretended. In describing God as "True God" Paul is saying that He is a genuine, truthful (and thus trustworthy) God, as opposed to the counterfeit gods of idolatry that have no objective existence nor divine truth. Paul is emphasizing the monotheistic character of the Deity the Thessalonians now served which sharply distinguished them from the pagan so-called gods.

True God - This phrase is also found in 2Chr. 15:3 (Lxx = alethinós); Jer 10:10; Jn. 17:3; 1Th 1:9; 1Jn. 5:20. Beloved, aren't we glad we worship and serve the One Who Alone can truly be called the "True God!" Praise Him today for revealing His truth to our blind, spiritually darkened hearts in Jesus Who is the Truth (Jn 14:6, cp 2Cor 4:6, Acts 26:18).

MacArthur - Alēthinós (true) refers to what is real as distinct from a type (cf. Heb. 8:2; 9:24), perfect as distinct from the imperfect, or genuine rather than what is counterfeit (cf. 1 Thess. 1:9; 1 John 5:20; Rev. 3:7, 14; 6:10; 19:11). (See [John Commentary - Page 144](#))

Summary of uses of **alethinós** to help quickly discern what this adjective (alethinós) is modifying -

Alethinós - 28x/26v - sincere(1), true(26), true one(1). Lk. 16:11 = who will entrust the **true** riches; Jn. 1:9 = the **true** Light; Jn. 4:23 = the **true** worshipers; Jn. 4:37 = the saying is **true**; Jn. 6:32 = My Father who gives you the **true** bread out of heaven; Jn. 7:28 = He who sent Me is **true**; Jn. 8:16 = My judgment is **true**; Jn. 15:1 = "I am the **true** vine; Jn. 17:3 = You, the only **true** God.; Jn. 19:35 = his testimony is **true**; 1Th 1:9 = serve a living and **true** God; Heb. 8:2 = the **true** tabernacle; Heb. 9:24 = copy of the **true** one; Heb. 10:22; 1

Jn. 2:8 = which is true in Him; 1 Jn. 5:20 = so that we may know Him who is **true**; and we are in Him who is **true**, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the **true** God and eternal life. ; Rev. 3:7 = He who is holy, who is **true**; Rev. 3:14 = The Amen, the faithful and **true** Witness; Rev. 6:10 = O Lord, holy and **true**; Rev. 15:3 = Righteous and **true** are Your ways; Rev. 16:7 = O Lord God, the Almighty, **true** and righteous; Rev. 19:2 = HIS JUDGMENTS ARE **TRUE** AND RIGHTEOUS; Rev. 19:9 = These are **true** words of God; Rev. 19:11 = called Faithful and **True**; Rev. 21:5 = these words are faithful and **true**.”; Rev. 22:6 = These words are faithful and **true**

Vine (288) **ampelos** - Literal vine - (Mt. 26:29; Mk 14:25; Lk 22:18; Jas 3:12). Metaphorical use - Of Jesus Jn 15:1,4, 5. **W E Vine** - (a) lit., e.g., Matt. 26:29 and parallel passages; Jas. 3:12; (b) figuratively, (1) of Christ, John 15:1, 4, 5; (2) of His enemies, Rev. 14:18, 19, "the vine of the earth" (RV, "vintage" in ver. 19), probably figurative of the remaining mass of apostate Christendom. **Ampelos** in the papyri (Moulton and Milligan's *Vocabulary*) is sometimes used in the sense of *ampelōn* (vineyard), but not so in John 15:1. The vine was common in Palestine. See Psalm 80:8-9. "On the Maccabean coinage Israel was represented by a vine" (Dods).

Gilbrant - Classical Greek - Like the olive tree and the fig tree, the vine, especially the grapevine, (**ampelos**) was an economic staple in the ancient world. From the vine came grapes, currants, raisins, wine, and other food and trade products. Evidence from classical sources shows that **ampelos** was also used for a variety of gourds (*bryony*) and in another sense it stood for an "engine for protecting besiegers" (Liddell-Scott).

Septuagint Usage - In the Septuagint **ampelos** replaces four Hebrew words; in most cases it corresponds to *gephen*, "a creeping plant, vine" (often mentioned with fig trees and other fruits). It refers to a "vine" such as the one Pharaoh's cupbearer dreamed of (Genesis 40:9,10). The "vine" was an economic staple throughout Israel's history (e.g., Leviticus 25:3,4; Numbers 20:5). The "vine" holds religious significance in different ways. The Nazarite was not to eat of anything from the vine, including wine, raisins, or even the grapes' seeds or skins (Numbers 6:4; cf. Judges 13:13, of Samson's mother). The **vine** is also a symbol for Israel (Psalm 80:8-16; Hosea 10:1; Jeremiah 2:21; Ezekiel 17:6-10; cf. Isaiah 5:1-7), and was highly estimated in Biblical time. It is called "the dearest plant of the Lord." The Lord had done everything possible for it, but in spite of this, it nevertheless brought forth wild grapes. In a picture of the age to come "each man" will sit under his vine and fig (Zechariah 3:10 [LXX 3:11]; 1 Maccabees 14:12). The imagery signifies a time of peace and prosperity (Isaiah 36:16).

NEW TESTAMENT USAGE - Jesus himself is in His person the completion of all that which the people of God should have been. He is the "seed of Abraham" who effects blessing to all the earth (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:16). In Christ the community of faith is now formed: "You are the branches." He is the true vine. In Him the concept of the "new people of God" is realized. Furthermore, Scripture teaches that only the branch that remains in the vine can bring forth fruit. The Father is the husbandman who takes away the barren branches, but the branches which bring forth fruit, "He purgeth." Christ, as the true vine, stands in contrast to "the vine of the earth" (Revelation 14:18f.) which brings forth its harvest of sin and judgment. This bad vine is harvested, and its "blood" goes out of the winepress (wine in Genesis 49:11 is called "the blood of grapes" because of the red color). The eschatological judgment pictured in the Old Testament (see Isaiah 63:1-3) is also presented as a picture of a harvested vine. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Ampelos - 9x/9v - Matt. 26:29; Mk. 14:25; Lk. 22:18; Jn. 15:1; Jn. 15:4; Jn. 15:5; Jas. 3:12; Rev. 14:18; Rev. 14:19

Ampelos in the Septuagint - Gen. 40:9; Gen. 40:10; Gen. 49:11; Lev. 25:3; Lev. 25:4; Num. 6:4; Num. 20:5; Num. 22:24; Deut. 8:8; Deut. 32:32; Jdg. 9:12; Jdg. 9:13; Jdg. 13:14; 1 Ki. 4:20; 2 Ki. 4:39; 2 Ki. 18:31; Ps. 78:47; Ps. 80:8; Ps. 80:14; Ps. 105:33; Ps. 128:3; Song 2:13; Song. 2:15; Song. 6:11; Song. 7:8; Song. 7:12; Isa. 5:2; Isa. 7:23; Isa. 16:8; Isa. 16:9; Isa. 24:7; Isa. 32:12; Isa. 34:4; Isa. 36:16; Jer. 2:21; Jer. 6:9; Jer. 8:13; Jer. 48:32; Lam. 2:6; Ezek. 15:2; Ezek. 15:6; Ezek. 17:6; Ezek. 17:7; Ezek. 17:8; Ezek. 19:10; Hos. 2:12; Hos. 10:1; Hos. 14:7; Joel 1:7; Joel 1:12; Joel 2:22; Mic. 4:4; Hab. 3:17; Hag. 2:19; Zech. 3:10; Zech. 8:12; Mal. 3:11;

DICTIONARY OF BIBLICAL IMAGERY - VINE, VINEYARD - This is an excerpt. [Click here for full 9 page discussion](#)

Israel was a land of vineyards. Even today, traveling through the central hill country of Israel during the right season, one can see abundant evidence of fruitful vines. The fruit of the vine, of course, is the grape, whose juice, when fermented, produces wine. Perhaps then it is not surprising that the vine and the vineyard, so characteristic of this country's agricultural fertility, serve as potent images for the land itself. For good reason most discussions of the biblical image of the vineyard begin with Isaiah 5:1-7....The parable of the vineyard, as this text is often called, describes Israel as God's vineyard. It is God's not only because God loves it, but because he painstakingly prepared the land and planted it. He also carefully protected it. In this way the parable describes God's election of Israel as a nation (Deut 7:7-11) and his providential care of it. As with any vineyard, the vinedresser does all this work with the expectation of a fruitful and bountiful harvest. ([Click here for full 9 page discussion on VINE, VINEYARD](#))

Vinedresser (Husbandman, farmer) ([1092](#)) **georgos** from **ge** = the earth + **ergo** = to work) describes one who tills or works the soil or the ground. A husbandman (one that plows and cultivates land). One who does agricultural work on a contractual basis, vine-dresser, tenant farmer

Georgos - 17v - Matt. 21:33; Matt. 21:34; Matt. 21:35; Matt. 21:38; Matt. 21:40; Matt. 21:41; Mk. 12:1; Mk. 12:2; Mk. 12:7; Mk. 12:9; Lk. 20:9; Lk. 20:10; Lk. 20:14; Lk. 20:16; Jn. 15:1; 2 Tim. 2:6; Jas. 5:7

QUESTION - [What is a husbandman in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - The term *husbandman* means “farmer” or “worker of the soil.” *Husbandry* is an agricultural term related to the production of crops or livestock. And to husband is to manage something well, showing prudence and economic sense. The word *husbandman* is not often used anymore.

In the New Testament, the word *husbandman* is a translation of the Greek word *georgos*, as in 2 Timothy 2:6 and James 5: 7. In the Old Testament, the word *husbandman* comes from the Hebrew word *adamah*, which simply means “land” or “of the earth.” This is the same Hebrew word from which we get [Adam](#), the name of the first man, whom God placed in Eden “to work it and take care of it” (Genesis 2:15; cf. 5:2). In Genesis 9:20, Noah is called a husbandman when he plants a vineyard.

The word *husbandman* is found primarily in the King James Version of the Bible. Other versions use the word *gardener*, *vine-dresser*, or *farmer*, instead (see Jeremiah 51:3; Amos 5:16; Zechariah 13:5). In Genesis 4:2, Cain is called a husbandman because he raised crops. Later, in Genesis 25:27, Esau is also called a husbandman because he loved the outdoors, as opposed to Jacob, who worked indoors.

Jesus compared God to a husbandman in John 15:1–2: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (KJV). A good husbandman works the earth, cultivates his plants, and naturally expects them to produce fruit commensurate with the amount of effort he has invested in them. Our heavenly Father, the divine Husbandman, seeks to produce fruit through us as we [abide in Christ](#).

Just as God is a good husbandman, bringing forth fruitfulness in our lives, so should we be good husbandmen with the resources He has entrusted to us.

F F Bruce in his book [Answers to Questions](#) - “John 15:4, 6. **‘What is meant by the expressions “unless you abide” and “if a man does not abide” in John 15:4, 6? Is it possible not to abide in Christ?**

“Passages like these are not difficult in themselves; the difficulty arises when we try to make them and other Scriptures square with our theology, instead of using them as the basis for our theology. At the very time when our Lord was speaking there was a glaring example of one who failed to abide in Him—Judas Iscariot, who had just left them. Judas was chosen as his eleven colleagues were (Luke 6:13; John 6:70); their association with the Lord brought them no privileges which were not equally open to him. The plain passages of Scripture which teach the final perseverance of the saints should not be misused as an excuse for soft-pedaling the equally plain passages which speak of the danger of apostasy” (pp. 71–72).

QUESTION - [What Did Jesus Mean When He Said, “I Am the True Vine” \(John 15:1\)?](#)

ANSWER - “I am the True Vine” (John 15:1) is the last of seven “I am” declarations of Jesus recorded only in John’s gospel. These “I am” proclamations point to His unique divine identity and purpose. Jesus said “I am the True Vine” to closest friends who were gathered around Him at a table in Jerusalem. It was only hours before Judas would betray Him. Jesus was preparing the twelve men for His pending crucifixion, His resurrection, and His subsequent departure for heaven. He had just told them that He would be leaving them. Knowing how disturbed they would feel, He gave them this lovely metaphor of the True Vine as one of His encouragements.

Jesus wanted His friends, not only those twelve, but those of all time, to know that He was not going to desert them, even though they would no longer enjoy His physical presence. His living energy—His spiritual reality—would continue to nourish and sustain them just as the roots and trunk of a grape vine produce the energy that nourishes and sustains its branches while it develops their fruit. Jesus wanted us to know that even though we cannot see Him, we are as closely connected with Him as the branches of a vine are connected with its stem. Our desire and energy to know and love Him and to tell others about Him will keep flowing into and through us as long as we are attached to Him as branches to a vine. This is why we must ‘abide’ in Him, remaining attached to the source of all spiritual life.

Then Jesus went on (John 15:4) to remove any misunderstanding about what He meant. He said that no branch can even live, let alone produce leaves and fruit, by itself. Cut off from the trunk, a branch is dead. Just as much as the vine's branches rely on being connected to the trunk from which they receive their energy to bear fruit, Jesus' disciples depend on being connected to Him for our spiritual life and the ability to serve Him effectively. The fruit we produce is that of the Holy Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23). Our source of life and energy and spiritual fruit is not in ourselves; it is outside us, in Christ Jesus. We can live, live rightly, and serve Him effectively, only if we are rightly connected with Him in a faith/love relationship.

Then Jesus underscored His point even more strongly by saying, “without Me, you can do nothing.” That is no thoughtless generality or careless simile. It is absolute, stark reality. No believer can be anything or achieve anything of spiritual value independently of Christ Jesus. He also reminds us that there are some who are “in” Him that bear no fruit. But these are not, as some would suppose, true branches that just don't bear fruit. All true branches bear fruit. Just as we know a healthy living tree by the good healthy fruit it produces, so do we recognize fruitless branches as having no connection to the True Vine. This is why Jesus tells us “by their fruit you will know them” (Matthew 7:16–20). Those that do not produce good fruit are cut away and burned. The reference here is to apostates, those who profess to know Christ but whose relationship to Him is self-attached. He neither called them, nor elected them, nor saved them, nor sustains them. Eventually, the fruitless branches are identified as not belonging to the Vine and are removed to their own righteous judgment and for the benefit of the other branches.

So, not only do Jesus' disciples depend on connection with Jesus for spiritual energy to serve Him, we depend on Jesus for everything, starting with our very life—“for in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28)—and including our reconciliation with God through Him (Romans 5:10). And no one can serve God effectively until he is connected with Jesus Christ by faith. Jesus is man's only connection with the God who gave life, the true Vine who sustains life, and who produces in them the fruitful life of righteousness, holy living, and service.

James Smith - FRUIT-BEARING John 15:1–8

Israel, as a vine, was brought out of Egypt and planted in Canaan, after the heathen had been cast out like weeds (Psa. 80:8). This vine, though noble, and of a right seed, soon degenerated into a strange plant to God (Jer. 2:21). But Jesus Christ is the TRUE Vine, brought down from Heaven and planted in the earth. He was the faithful and true witness. There was nothing in Him to create a feeling of “strangeness” or disappointment in the heart of God. He was true to God, true to His own nature, true to His environment, and to the sons of men. But the principle thought here is that, as a Vine, He is true to those who are associated with Him as branches, so that they might bring forth fruit. Note the—

I. Source of Fruit. “The vine.”

The branch cannot bear fruit of itself (v. 4). “Apart from Me, ye can do nothing” (v. 5, R.V.). Impoverished branches in this vine is no evidence of an impoverished vine, for God giveth not the Spirit with limitations to Him (John 3:34). All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, of grace and power, are in Him, even the “fullness of the Godhead.” “From Me is thy fruit found” (Hosea 14:8).

II. Removal of the Fruitless. “Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away” (v. 2). “If any man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered” (v. 6).

This may refer to those who are in Him religiously, but not spiritually: those who have been from their birth brought up in the form of godliness, but who have never known the power and sweetness of His fellowship. There is an outward resemblance to the vine branch, but no production of the vine fruit, so the husbandman deals with it as having no connection with the vine. Such a branch “cast forth” can do nothing else but wither. Apart from Christ, there is no saving or preserving power in man. It is only those whose roots are in the river of God whose leaves shall not wither (Psa. 1:3). These withered branches are gathered, not by the angel reapers, but by men, who cast them into the fire of testing, and they are burned. A religious, Christless life will never be of much use to men, far less to God. Like savourless salt, they are good for nothing.

III. Pruning of the Fruitful. “Every branch that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit” (vv. 2, 3).

There are growths about the Christian life, as there are about the vine, which do not tend to fruitfulness, shoots that show signs of a vigour which is only fit for the pruning knife. The riches of the grace of God is seen here in seeking to make the fruitful more fruitful. Those fit for His service He desires to make more fit. The process may be painful, to have our new-born desires and fresh efforts nipped off and thrown away as hindrances; but His will be done. The heart life is to be kept pure by faith (Acts 15:9). The pruning knife is the Word of God which is sharp and powerful ... discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. “Now are ye clean through the Word.”

IV. Nature of the Fruit. "Bear much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples" (v. 8).

That branch is a true disciple of the vine that bears much of the fruit of the vine. We are the true disciples of Christ when His character manifests itself in our lives. What the sap of the vine is to the branch, the Spirit of Christ is to the Christian. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, etc., because the Spirit Himself is all this, and when He has free access into our hearts, and full control of them, His own personal characteristics will appear as fruit in our lives.

V. Condition of Fruitfulness. "He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (v. 5). The human side is, "He in me;" the Divine, "I in Him." "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself ... no more can ye except ye abide in Me" (v. 4).

"In me," that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing, but in HIM all fullness dwells. His grace will be perfected in us, as we by faith abide in Him. Constant contact with Him implies the attitude of continual receptiveness, "I in Him." To abide in Him is to abide in His Word, His will, and His work, then God works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

VI. Results of Fruitfulness. "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples" (v. 8).

The results are twofold: the Father is glorified, and our true discipleship is proven. It is to the honour of the husbandman that the tree brings forth fruit abundantly. It is also to the credit of the tree that it so proves its good character by its works. Where there is wholehearted discipleship there will be fruitfulness and a life glorifying to the Father. Fruit is the natural outcome of a faithful following of Christ, as well as an evidence of it. The life lived in Christ, and for Him, is the only God-glorifying life. "Much fruit" means much love, much joy, much peace, etc.

Beecher - I know enough of gardening to understand, that, if I would have a tree grow upon its south side, I must cut off the branches there. Then all its forces go to repairing the injury; and twenty buds shoot out, where, otherwise, there would have been but one. When we reach the garden above, we shall find, that, out of those very wounds over which we sighed and groaned on earth, have sprung verdant branches, bearing precious fruit, a thousandfold.

When trees grow so that their branches are mostly on one side, we never restore branches to the deficient side by cutting the opposite side. We cut the most barren side, and there nature in seeking to restore what we cut, drives out new buds and branches. So the gardener knows that where he puts his knife there will follow the fruit of the tree. And blessed are they whom the Heavenly Husbandman prunes, that they may bring forth more fruit, if, when He cuts, there is a bud behind the knife. But woe to them who, being cut, have no bud to grow, and are more disbranched and barren from being pruned.

C H Spurgeon - [A Sharp Knife for the Vine Branches](#) (full sermon)

'Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.' John 15:2

Learn, beloved, especially you under trial, not to see an angry God in your pains, losses or crosses; but instead see a husbandman, who thinks you a branch whom he estimates at so great a rate that he will take the trouble to prune you, which he would not do if he had not a kind consideration towards you. The real reason is that more fruit may be produced, which I understand to mean more in quantity. A good man, who feels the power of the word pruning him of this and that superfluity, sets to work in the power of the Holy Spirit to do more for Jesus. Before he was afflicted he did not know how to be patient. He learns it at last—a hard lesson. Before he was poor he did not know how to be humble, but he learns that. Before the word came with power he did not know how to pray with his fellows, or to speak to sinners, or lay himself out for usefulness; but the more he is pruned, the more he serves his Lord. More fruit in variety too may be intended. One tree can only produce one kind of fruit usually, but the Lord's people can produce many; and the more they are pruned the more they will produce. There will be all kinds of fruits, both new and old, which they will lay up for their beloved. There will be more in quality too. The man may not pray more, but he will pray more earnestly; he may not preach more sermons, but he will preach them more thoroughly from his heart, with a greater unction. It may be that he will not be more in communion with God as to time, but it will be a closer communion; he will throw himself more thoroughly into the divine element of communion and will become more hearty in all that he does. This is the result of the pruning which our heavenly Father gives.

[Streams in the Desert](#) - "My Father is the husbandman." (John 15:1.)

IT is comforting to think of trouble, in whatever form it may come to us, as a heavenly messenger, bringing us something from God. In its earthly aspect it may seem hurtful, even destructive; but in its spiritual out-working it yields blessing. Many of the richest blessings which have come down to us from the past are the fruit of sorrow or pain. We should never forget that redemption, the world's greatest blessing, is the fruit of the world's greatest sorrow. In every time of sharp pruning, when the knife is deep and the pain is sore, it is an unspeakable comfort to read, "My Father is the husband-man."

Doctor Vincent tells of being in a great hothouse where luscious clusters of grapes were hanging on every side. The owner said, "When my new gardener came, he said he would have nothing to do with these vines unless he could cut them clean down to the stalk; and he did, and we had no grapes for two years, but this is the result."

There is rich suggestiveness in this interpretation of the pruning process, as we apply it to the Christian life. Pruning seems to be destroying the vine, the gardener appears to be cutting it all away; but he looks on into the future and knows that the final outcome will be the enrichment of its life and greater abundance of fruit.

There are blessings we can never have unless we are ready to pay the price of pain. There is no way to reach them save through suffering.—Dr. Miller.

"I walked a mile with Pleasure,
She chattered all the way;
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.

"I walked a mile with Sorrow,
And ne'er a word said she;
But, oh, the things I learned from her
When sorrow walked with me."

NORMAN GEISLER - JOHN 15:1 —Was Jesus the vine or the root?

PROBLEM: John portrays Jesus as the vine of which believers are the branches. But elsewhere the Bible calls Him a "root out of dry ground" (Isa. 53:2).

SOLUTION: Both of these are appropriate figures of Christ, each describing a different aspect of His ministry. Jesus was a root (source of life) in relation to the vine (Israel) in the OT. But He is the vine in which believers abide for spiritual life in the NT (John 15:1, 3).

SOURCE - [WHEN CRITICS ASK - SEE PAGE 357](#)

Precious Fruit

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. —Galatians 5:22-23

Today's Scripture : Galatians 5:22-26

How much would you be willing to pay for a piece of fruit? In Japan, someone paid more than \$6,000 for one Densuke watermelon. Grown only on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido, this beautiful dark-green sphere looks like a bowling ball. The nearly 18-pound watermelon was one of only a few thousand available that year. The fruit's rarity brought an astronomical price on the market.

Christians have fruit that is far more precious than the Densuke watermelon. It's called the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23). Each "fruit" is a different aspect of Christlikeness. In the Gospels, we see how Christ exemplified these virtues. Now He wants to produce them in our hearts—in what we say, how we think, and how we respond to life (John 15:1-4).

A rare and delicious fruit may bring a premium price in the marketplace, but Christlike character is of far greater worth. As we confess all known sin and yield to God's indwelling Spirit, our lives will be transformed to the likeness of Christ (1 John 1:9; Eph. 5:18). This spiritual fruit will fill our lives with joy, bless those around us, and last into eternity. By: Dennis Fisher

Think not alone of outward form; Its beauty will depart; But cultivate the Spirit's fruits That grow within the heart. —D. De Haan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Fruitfulness for Christ depends on fellowship with Christ.

John 15:2 "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.

- **branch:** John 17:12 Mt 3:10 15:13 21:19 Lu 8:13 13:7-9 1Co 13:1 Heb 6:7,8 1Jn 2:19
- **and:** Job 17:9 Ps 51:7-13 Pr 4:18 Isa 27:9 29:19 Ho 6:3 Mal 3:3 Mt 3:12 13:12,33 Ro 5:3-5 8:28 2Co 4:17,18 Php 1:9-11 1Th 5:23,24 Tit 2:14 Heb 6:7 12:10,11,15 Rev 3:19
- **may:** John 15:8,16 Ga 5:22,23 Php 1:11 Col 1:5-10
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

John 15:6 "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.

Hebrews 12:4-11+ You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; 6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it **yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.**

Psalm 119:67+ Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word.

Psalm 119:71+ It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.

Psalm 94:12+ Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O LORD, And whom You teach out of Your law;

Matthew 7:18-20+ (HOW IMPORTANT IS FRUIT BEARING?) "A good tree cannot produce **bad fruit**, nor can a bad tree produce **good fruit**. **"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.**" "So then, **you will know them by their fruits.**

Matthew 7:22-23+ (PROFESSORS BUT NOT POSSESSORS - EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO DO NOT BEAR FRUIT AND WILL BE TAKEN AWAY INTO ETERNAL PUNISHMENT DESCRIBED IN Jn 15:6) "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never (**NB: NOT "I ONCE KNEW YOU, BUT NOW I DO NOT"!** IT MEANS **NEVER** AT ANY TIME!) knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' (COMMENT - SOME ARGUE JUDAS WAS SAVED BUT THEN LOST HIS SALVATION. JESUS DOGMATICALLY EXCLUDES THAT POSSIBILITY IN THIS PASSAGE).

John 4:36+ (CONVERTS AS SPIRITUAL FRUIT) "Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is **gathering fruit for life eternal** (cf Jn 15:16+); so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

John 12:24+ (THE KEY TO FRUITFULNESS) "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it **bears much fruit.**

Matthew 3:7-10+ (EXAMPLE OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A "TREE" DOES NOT BEAR GOOD FRUIT!) But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 "Therefore **bear** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) fruit in keeping with repentance; 9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. 10 "The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore **every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.**"

Romans 11:20+ Quite right, **they** (MOST IN ISRAEL) **were broken off for their unbelief**, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;

REMOVAL OF DEAD WOOD PRUNING OF LIVE WOOD

This is a very important verse to interpret correctly because there are 3 views that are taught BUT **only one** is what Jesus intended!

Every branch in Me ([note below](#)) **that** (present tense - continually) **does not bear fruit** ([karpos](#)), **He** (the Father - present tense - continually) **takes away** ([airo](#)) - I will discuss the phrase "IN ME" more below, but at the outset it should be emphasized that Jesus is not teaching the Pauline concept of "IN CHRIST," as some erroneously teach in this verse (e.g., J Vernon McGee which unfortunately leads him to misinterpret much of Jn 15:1-6) Jesus continues the metaphor, and in context uses **branch** as a metaphor for human beings. A fruitless **branch** is a useless **branch** and thus is taken away or removed. Some interpret [airo](#) to mean He "lifts up" the vine off of the ground. While [airo](#) clearly can have the meaning of lift up (e.g. Jn 8:59 "picked up stones") it also clearly can mean take away or remove (e.g. Jn 11:39 "remove the stone"). If we compare the fate of the branch that does not abide in Jesus and thus is not fruit bearing, it is clear that the branch that does not bear fruit is "thrown away." (Jn 15:5,6+). Given that fate in the immediate context, the most accurate sense of **takes away** in this verse is that it is literally taken away or removed.

The question is who is the branch (the person) that the Vinedresser takes away? (FOR IN DEPTH DISCUSSION SEE 20 PAGE ARTICLE BELOW BY CHARLES SMITH "[THE UNFRUITFUL BRANCHES IN JOHN 15](#)")

(1) Are they believers who lose their salvation? Clearly Jesus words in Jn 10:27-29 rules that possibility out. Not to mention that eternal life is called eternal and not "temporary!" (cf Jn 6:39-40, Ro 8:28-36, Php 1:6)

(2) Are they believers who lose their life because they are fruitless? Some writers like Charles Ryrie say this is "a reference to the physical death of fruitless Christians (1 Cor. 11:30)." (J Vernon McGee is also like Ryrie.)

(3) The third possibility (which I favor) **is that the non-fruit bearing branches represent non-believers** They are individuals who professed to know Christ and like Judas identify themselves with the Christian community, but their failure to produce fruit identifies them as those who have never been born again. Their fate of eternal punishment is described in John 15:6+.

*You may think you're a Christian but you're not following Christ.
A true Christian will bear fruit.*

Brian Bill on **takes away** - The simple explanation comes from the context (**ED: IT IS CRITICAL TO REMEMBER THAT CONTEXT IS KING IF WE WANT TO HAVE ACCURATE INTERPRETATION!**). Just hours before, Jesus announced that there was a traitor on the team. In John 13:10+ Jesus said, "*And you are clean, but not all of you,*" referring to Judas. A couple chapters later in John 17:12+, Jesus said, "*Not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction*" Judas had **no fruit** because he had **no faith**. His real **god** was **greed**. As a result, he was **cut off and thrown into the fire**. John the Baptist shook up the religious crowd when he said this in Matthew 3:10: "*Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*" This is similar to what we read in Romans 11:20 where Israel is pictured as an olive tree and some branches are broken off because of unbelief. In their place, believing Gentiles are grafted in. This is shocking to many Jewish people because they think they're good to go. But, if they don't confess Christ, they will be cut off. Listen. Some of you are holding on to your church background even though you might not have Christian belief. You can be connected to a church and not be converted. I talk to some who assure me quickly that they've been Baptist all their life but there doesn't appear to be any fruit. Let me say it this way. If you don't have any fruit (pick up basket), it might be because you don't have saving faith. You may think you're a Christian but you're not following Christ. A true Christian will bear fruit.

*Faithfulness is our obligation.
Fruitfulness is God's concern.*

Spurgeon -There are many such branches, in Christ's visible Church, which are **not fruit-bearing branches**, and consequently **are not partakers of the sap of life and grace which flows into the branches that are vitally joined to the central stem**. These fruitless branches are to be **taken away**. There is some work, then, for the knife upon all the branches; cutting off for those that are fruitless, cutting for those that are bearing some fruit, that they may bring forth yet more....If there be any, who are **only nominally in Christ, and who therefore bear no fruit, their doom is to be taken away**; for, in order to final perseverance and eternal safety, there must be fruit-bearing....In some sense, men and women may be in Christ by a **mere outward profession; but if they have no evidence of a real union to Christ, if they produce no fruit, they will be taken away**, some by death, and others by apostasy; but they will be taken away.....It is a necessary part of vine-dressing to remove the superfluous shoots. Too much wood-making, which does not lead to fruit-bearing, is but a waste of strength. And so in the Church there are those that bear no fruit, and for a while they appear to be fresh and green, and they who are the under-vine-dressers dare not take them away. But the Father does it —sometimes by removing them by death; at other times by permitting them openly to expose their own character, until they are then amenable to the discipline of the Church, and are removed. ([Expositions in John](#))

Steven Cole - In the allegory, there are two types of branches: Some do not bear fruit and some bear fruit. Those that do not bear fruit are not fulfilling their purpose. They're dead wood. They get cut off and thrown into the fire. They represent those who profess to

believe in Jesus, but their lives give no evidence of saving faith. They don't bear fruit. In the context, it would refer to Judas Iscariot, who professed to believe, followed Jesus for three years, and went out preaching in His name, but whose real god was greed. In support of this, in verse 3 Jesus tells the eleven, "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you." That takes us back to John 13:10, where after the foot washing, Jesus said, "and you are clean, but not all of you." John explains that He was referring to Judas as the unclean one. Judas was the unfruitful branch that was taken away and whose final end was to be cast into the fires of hell. ([Fulfilling Your Purpose in Life John 15:1-6](#))

One of the phrases that potentially creates a problem in interpretation is the phrase **Every branch IN ME.** Specifically the problematic phrase is **IN ME.** As alluded to above, some say this is similar to Paul's phrase **IN CHRIST** and if that is the case they say such a person is a believer because there can be no break in the union with Christ. So what happens to such a person? This is where some like Ryrie postulate that for this branch to be taken away it must mean they lose their life because they cannot lose their salvation.

*The transparent purpose of the verse is to insist
that there are no true Christians without some measure of fruit...
Fruitfulness is an infallible mark of true Christianity*

D A Carson has some cogent comments relating to the problematic phrase **IN ME** - The Father (Jesus says) cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, i.e. he gets rid of the dead wood so that the living, fruit-bearing branches may be sharply distinguished from them, and may have more room for growth. The phrase **IN ME** has prompted considerable speculation as to whether John is thinking of Jews who were once in God's vine but who have now been cast off, or of apostate Christians. The former does not easily suit in me: it is hard to see in what sense Jews who never put their trust in Jesus were once 'in him', even if they once belonged to the vine of Israel before it was superseded by Jesus. But the latter view, that these dead branches are apostate Christians, must confront the strong evidence within John that true disciples are preserved to the end (e.g. [notes on](#) Jn 6:37-40; [notes on](#) Jn 10:28). It is more satisfactory to recognize that asking the **IN ME language to settle such disputes is to push the vine imagery too far.** The transparent purpose of the verse is to insist that there are no true Christians without some measure of fruit. Fruitfulness is an infallible mark of true Christianity; the alternative is dead wood, and the exigencies of the vine metaphor make it necessary that such wood be connected to the vine....If we must think of 'branches' with real contact with Jesus, we need go no further than Judas Iscariot (cf. [notes on](#) Jn 6:70-71; [notes on](#) Jn 13:10). Indeed, there is a persistent strand of New Testament witness that depicts men and women with some degree of connection with Jesus, or with the Christian church, who nevertheless by failing to display the grace of perseverance finally testify that the transforming life of Christ has never pulsated within them (e.g. Mt. 13:18-23; 24:12; Jn. 8:31ff.; Heb. 3:14-19; 1 Jn. 2:19; 2 Jn. 9)." (BORROW [The Gospel according to John PAGE 514](#)) (BOLDING ADDED)

*If a person has really been saved by the grace of God,
then that grace working in him will result in fruit
somewhere, sometime, in some form, and to some degree.*
-- James Rosscup

James Rosscup on "IN ME" in John 15:2 writes

How diverse have been the interpretations of these words of our Lord! Some have held that the first part of verse two teaches that a person may be "in" Christ in a saving sense and yet lose that salvation. He may be "taken away" from salvation. Others have rightly answered that such a teaching would contradict various statements in Scripture, including strong statements by Christ to the effect that a man once truly saved is saved forever (John 6:37-40+; John 10:27,28+). There are ways of harmonizing Jn 15:2a with other biblical teaching when that verse is understood in its proper sense. These we will consider in [this chapter](#) and the next two, with a preference for the second of the views given below. The two main proposals are:

(1) The branch "**in me**" represents a person truly saved but temporarily not bearing fruit, whom the Father "takes away" to heaven in discipline. Having once been saved by grace, he is forever saved on that basis. His lack of fruit, or works, which do not merit salvation in any degree, cannot later cause him to forfeit it.

(2) The branch "**in me**" but with no fruit represents a person who has only nominally or seemingly had a relationship to Christ. Fruit cannot help a person gain salvation and it cannot keep him saved. **But fruit is a mark of the truly saved and, since this person has none, he has never been actually regenerated.** (FOR EVEN MORE IN DEPTH DISCUSSION OF THE MEANING OF "IN ME" SEE [ROSSCUP'S 7 PAGE DISCUSSION](#) IN WHICH HE GIVES 7 REASONS SUPPORTING THE INTERPRETATION THAT "IN ME" IS NOT INDICATIVE OF A VITAL UNION WITH CHRIST - PAGE 197-203)

...Certain expositors, reacting to the false teaching of salvation by works, overstate the case in the other direction by inaccurate emphases like this: "*If a person never has any fruit at all in his entire Christian life, he is*

still saved, for salvation is by grace alone.” (ED: SEE [FREE GRACE THEOLOGY](#)) Certainly salvation is by grace alone, but if that statement is to be made true to the Bible’s concept of saving grace and its practical effects, it must be qualified and modified. Paul argues in Romans 5:12ff that we are justified on the basis of the one act of Christ’s death and not by any acts of our own; however, he goes on to show in Romans 6:1ff that the genuinely saved are not to continue in sin but are to bring forth fruit in a life of sanctification (ED: cf Ro 6:19, Ro 6:22 “derive your **benefit**” [[karpos](#) ~ fruit]). If a person has really been saved by the grace of God, then that grace working in him will result in fruit somewhere, sometime, in some form, and to some degree (Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:11-14+). When we rightly understand the epistle of James, we see that men are not saved by their works but by grace — through faith that shows forth its reality in works. (BORROW [Abiding in Christ: Studies in John 15](#) -- See [Table of Contents](#)) (Bolding added)

Rosscup on **He takes away** ([airo](#)) - Some link the removal idea with the claim that the unfruitful person is saved. They believe that Christ means a believer is taken home to heaven early, and they point to cases in which God took men away in death. Sometimes these were saved men. He took unbelievers, as the ungodly of Noah’s day, the firstborn of Egypt, the forces of Pharaoh at the Red Sea, those destroyed by fiery serpents (Num. 21:4-9), those in the plague at Midian (Num. 25), and many more. But He also judged believers; e.g., Moses (Deut. 34), who disobeyed Him in striking the rock in Horeb and was removed before Israel entered Canaan (Num. 20); and Samson, who, though a man of faith (Heb. 11:32), nevertheless wasted much of his life in unfruitful compromise and was finally put to death when he might yet have had many good years (Judg. 13-16). A prime New Testament example involves those who sin at the Lord’s table and are judged, resulting in weakness, sickness, and death (1 Cor. 11:30,31). It is true that these are good examples to show that God sometimes takes away the saved. But still it is more likely that in this specific passage the unfruitful branch represents an unsaved person. Why is this so? **First**, the specific imagery of the vine has an Old Testament background. The vine which God removed and burned with fire was largely an unsaved Israelite nation (Isa. 5:1-7, 24; Ps. 80: 16; Ezek. 15). It is more likely, then, that in a similar picture of removal and burning (John 15:2a, 6) those judged are unsaved. ° **Second**, it is more fitting to relate the words “takes away” to similar horticultural imagery in the olive tree illustration of Romans 11:16-24 than to passages where no such specific picture is in view. In Paul’s analogy of the tree, Israelites with only an external connection (opportunity of a privileged relationship to God in the Abrahamic Covenant of Genesis 12:1-3) but with no true, inner union, are branches depicted as having been removed (Rom. 11: 17, 19, 20). If they were broken off, and yet a saved person cannot lose his salvation, then it is apparent that their previous contact in the place of blessing must be understood in some way other than in a vital, saving sense. As McClain says: *Abraham is the root, for through him and his seed the favor of God has flowed into the world. The natural branches are Jewish, because “salvation is of the Jews.” But on account of unbelief certain of the natural branches were broken out, and wild Gentile branches were grafted in. This does not mean that all Jewish branches were saved. As a matter of fact, they were not saved, or they would not have been broken out. But it does mean that during the present age the Gentile is enjoying a place of favor which properly belongs to the Jew.* The fact is that in this place of privilege those with true faith persevere (they stand by faith, v. 20), while those possessed by unbelief do not. Continuance by genuine faith is a mark of those really saved, as in Colossians 1:23, where it is assumed that they will continue. Salvation, then, finally is involved in this picture of the place of privilege or blessing. If what we have said is true in the similar horticultural figure of Romans 11, then the removal of unfruitful branches in John 15:2a can also have in view those who are not really saved. **Third**, the unfruitful branch must represent an unsaved person because the removal is in itself a problem for those who hold the view that this branch represents the believer. While it is true that a saved person may be taken to heaven in discipline as in 1 Corinthians 11:30, 31, he is not removed from Christ the Vine but still is in union with Him. It is difficult to conceive of our Lord as using this picture of clear-cut removal from the vine if He had a saved man in view.

Colin Kruse agrees adding that “The Father, as the gardener, Jesus said, cuts off those branches ‘in me’ that fail to produce fruit. (Elsewhere in the NT the cutting off of branches denotes the rejection of unbelieving Israelites Ro 11:17–21, but here it refers to apostate Christians - ‘branches in me’) In the context of the Last Supper, just after Judas Iscariot went out to betray his master, the branch that is cut off would have as its primary reference the betrayer.” (BORROW [The Gospel According to John : An Introduction and Commentary PAGE 318](#))

William Hendriksen writes, “In no sense whatever do such passages as 15:2 and 15:6 suggest that there is a falling away from grace, as if those who were once actually saved finally perish. This allegory plainly teaches that the branches which are taken away and burned represent people who never once bore fruit, not even when they were ‘in’ Christ. Hence, they never were true believers; and for them the in-the-vine relationship, though close, was merely outward. There is, accordingly, nothing here (in 15:1-11) that clashes in any way with 10:28. ... The true believers of chapter 15 are represented by those branches which, abiding forever in the

vine, bear fruit, more fruit, much fruit. These never perish!" (BORROW [Exposition of the Gospel according to John PAGE 296](#))

See [Bob Deffinbaugh's](#) lengthy discussion of the meaning of **IN ME** after concluding "I believe the weight of the evidence falls on the side of that interpretation which concludes that the unfruitful branches are removed from the vine and destroyed. (The best defense of this interpretation I have seen is that of James E. Rosscup) (ED: [SEE ABOVE](#)) In much more blunt language, the unfruitful branches burn in the eternal fire of hell. If this is the case, then how do we explain the phrase "**in Me**" (verse 2)? *Three passages in the Gospels and one in the Book of Romans* help me to understand what Jesus is saying here in verse 2.

Fruit is not simply nice; it is necessary.

James Rosscup writes that "Some say, correctly, **"Fruit bearing follows conversion, and is not a means of salvation"** (ED: COMPARE SALVATION IN Eph 2:8-9+ and FRUIT in Eph 2:10+) The point is certainly right in countering false teaching that would posit works or fruit as somehow being the basis of salvation. One problem, however, is that some cloud the issue by making it appear that if we say fruit is necessary in the Christian life, we are then subtly teaching a salvation by performance rather than by grace. Their emphasis is relevant against a works-salvation system, but it is a "straw man" if used against the view taken in this chapter. It springs from misunderstanding or else misrepresentation of what the view actually is. **Fruit is not simply nice; it is necessary. It does not merit salvation, but does manifest it once it really is there. It does not earn it, but does express it; it does not secure it, but is a sign of it; it is not a condition of conversion, but a consequence of it.** (BORROW this excellent work - [Abiding in Christ: Studies in John 15 - notes above are from chapter entitled "God's Judgment on Professing Believers."](#) -- **If you are wrestling with the true meaning of John 15:2** let me recommend you take time read Rosscup's entire well reasoned chapter on [God's Judgment on Professing Believers.](#)-- See [Table of Contents](#))

To bear fruit is to see God produce Christlikeness in you.

-- Steven Cole

[Bob Utley](#) - The PRESENT PASSIVE PARTICIPLE occurs twice in this verse. **Fruit bearing, not germination, is the evidence of salvation** (cf. Matt. 7:16,20; 13:18ff; 21:18-22; Luke 6:43-45). The context implies that Jesus was speaking of (1) Judas' betrayal (cf. John 15:6; 13:10; 17:12), (2) false disciples (cf. John 2:23-25; 8:30-47; 1 John 2:19; 2 Peter 2) and (3) There are levels of belief in John.

Steven Cole on "**IN ME**" - what about the phrase "in Me"? That sounds like it describes someone who is a true believer. But this is an allegory or analogy, and you can't press every point in such figures of speech. Also, in Matthew 3:7-10+, John the Baptist reams out the Pharisees who thought that being children of Abraham would get them into God's kingdom, even though their lives did not bear the fruit of repentance. He tells them (Matt. 3:10b), "Therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." Also, in Romans 11, the apostle Paul pictures Israel as an olive tree, where some branches were broken off because of unbelief, while the believing Gentiles were grafted in. The Jewish branches who thought that they had a sure place in God's kingdom because of their Jewish religion, but who rejected Christ, would be cut off. Only those who truly believe in Him will be saved. Since Jesus is the true vine, the fulfillment of how Israel is pictured in the Old Testament, the branches in Him that are taken away and cast into the fire do not represent true believers, but rather those who think that they're Christians because they go to church. But they lack the genuine evidence that they are believers; they lack the fruit of Christlikeness in their lives. They are like those that James speaks about who say they have faith, but have no works. Their claim is bogus. ([Fulfilling Your Purpose in Life John 15:1-6](#))

Edwin Blum - **Every branch in Me** that does not bear fruit **He cuts off**. The phrase "**in Me**" does not mean the same thing as Paul's words "in Christ." Here it is part of the metaphor of the Vine and seems to mean, "every person who professes to be My disciple (a 'branch') is not necessarily a true follower." A branch that bears no fruit is obviously dead. Therefore, like Judas, it is cut off. (See [comments on John 15:6](#)) Every year in Palestine gardeners prune their vines. They cut off the dead wood which has no life in it and trim the living branches so that their yield will be greater. (See [Bible Knowledge Commentary - Page 325](#))

John Calvin - "Many are reckoned by men's opinions to be in the vine who in fact have no root in the vine"

*The branches which bear no fruit,
which are taken away
and finally perish
do not represent true believers at all.*

A C Gaebelein - The branches which bear no fruit, which are taken away and finally perish do not represent true believers at all. Whenever a person takes upon himself the profession of a Christian, he claims by that outward profession to take the place, the position, the privileges and responsibilities of a believer in Christ, a separated one and also a branch in the vine. But while his profession in church membership indicates all this, in reality this person is only nominally a follower of Christ. He has not the reality of it, he does not possess what he has taken upon himself in profession, for he was never born again. As a result there is no fruit, because there is no life.... That there are thousands upon thousands of such branches, dead and unfruitful in the professing church,

does not need any demonstration.... It is only too evident.

Pastor Phil Newton on branches that are taken away - Who are the non-bearing branches? These are those who appear to be Christians but are actually false believers. We can refer to them as apostate Christians, that is, those who make an outward profession of Christ, but ultimately turn away from Him. In terms of outward appearance, they seem to be religious, they may use the words of "Zion," they may exercise many fine religious traits, but they are devoid of the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus spoke clearly in many passages about such false professors of Christianity. Matthew 7:21-23+ tells how Christ declares, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven." Jesus then describes their religious activity which they purport to be enough evidence of being a Christian, but which Christ does not accept: "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'" Notice the emphasis on **what they did**, but **no reference to what Christ had done in them**. **Genuine salvation is not what we do but what Christ does**. That's why Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3 that he must be 'born again', a work which is clearly of God and none of man. The declaration of Christ is shocking to those who are false professors of Christianity, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice ([ergazomai](#) in present tense = a lifestyle of) lawlessness'." **We have already seen several instances in John's Gospel of false professors of Christianity**. I mention just one thing Christ said to the group who claimed to disciples to show how there are many who outwardly appear to be Christians, but are truly lost. "But there are some of you who do not believe," our Lord told the ones following Him as noted in John 6:64+. Right after this many withdrew from Christ or "apostated" by falling away. (Jn 6:66+) Did they lose their salvation? Of course not! **They never had a salvation to lose, because they had never truly believed**.

And every branch that (present tense - continually) **bears fruit** ([karpos](#)), **He** (present tense - continually) **prunes** ([kathairo](#)) **it so that** ([hina](#) - purpose clause) **it may** (present tense - continually) **bear more fruit** ([karpos](#)) - How does one know he or she is abiding in the Vine? First, the simple answer is you will bear fruit. No fruit, not root. Second, you will (not might) experience "pruning" by the Father. Third, one who is abiding will experience answered prayer (Jn 15:7). Fourth, the life of this person will bring glory to the Father (Jn 15:8). Finally, the one who abides will experience supernatural joy (Jn 15:11).

Don't miss the fact that no fruit bearing branch escapes pruning (cf "**every branch**"). Note that the difference in this branch is that it bears fruit, but even that does not prevent it from being pruned. However, there is a big difference between a branch that the Vinedresser takes away and a branch that the Vinedresser prunes. For one thing, the pruned branch is still attached to the vine and secondly the purpose of the pruning is not to remove the branch but to improve the branch's fruit bearing capacity. Note the progression in bearing fruit -- **Fruit** > **More Fruit** (Jn 15:2) > **Much Fruit** (Jn 15:5, 8).

Spurgeon - Pruning, then, is for fruit-bearers. If the branch were dead, what would be the good of pruning it? Say not, dear friends that your afflictions must be caused by your sins; nay, rather **they may come in consequence of your virtues**. Because you do bear fruit, it is worth while for the Husbandman to use his knife upon you, that you may bring forth more fruit....The vine is very apt to become unclean and unhealthy; there are all sorts of creatures that love to suck its juices, so that even the most fruitful bough needs to be cleansed. Besides, the vine has a great tendency to run to wood, so the pruning-knife must be used very sharply.From these words, it is clear that, many of the afflictions which we have to endure are not brought upon us because we are unfruitful, but because we are bearing fruit. ([Expositions in John](#))

Colin Kruse gives a good summary of ancient viticulture practices noting that pruning was "an essential part of first-century viticultural practice, as it is today. The first pruning occurred in spring when vines were in flowering stage. This involved four operations: (1) the removal of the growing tips of vigorous shoots so that they would not grow too rapidly; (2) cutting off one or two feet from the end of growing shoots to prevent entire shoots being snapped off by the wind; (3) the removal of some flower or grape clusters so that those left could produce more and better-quality fruit; and (4) the removal of suckers that arose from below the ground or from the trunk and main branches so that the strength of the vine was not tapped by the suckers. The Father prunes the true branches (ED: GENUINE BELIEVERS) by removing anything that would sap their spiritual energy and hinder them from fruitful results. His pruning involves cutting away anything that limits righteousness, including the discipline that comes from trials, suffering, and persecution. The knowledge that the Father uses the pain that Christians endure for their ultimate good should eliminate all fear, self-pity, and complaining. (BORROW [The Gospel According to John, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries PAGE 316](#))

THOUGHT - **Every** fruit bearing branch is subject to pruning which is another way to describe disciplining of disciples. Pruning is critical so that anything that hinders our spiritual growth is removed in order to maximize fruitfulness. This is an important principle in the Christian life. So if you think you are a true branch (genuine believer) and yet you have not experienced the disciplining hand of the Father in your life, then you need to carefully contemplate whether or not you are indeed a true branch, a genuine believer. The writer of Hebrews warns that "if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons." (Hebrews 12:8+) The writer of Hebrews goes on to describe the desired effect of discipline in our life writing that "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have

been trained by it (WHAT TRAINS US? DISCIPLINE!), afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness (NET = "later it produces the fruit of peace and righteousness")."

John MacArthur explains that discipline includes suffering which "is merely the handle of the Father's knife; the blade is the Word of God....The Word is instrumental in believers' initial cleansing at salvation (cf. Ro 1:16), and it also continually purges, prunes, and cleanses them. God uses His Word as the pruning knife, because it "is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12), but He uses affliction to prepare His people for the Word's pruning." (SEE [John Commentary - Page 148](#))

There are myriads of professing Christians in every Church whose union with Christ is only outward and formal.

J C Ryle - We are meant to learn, secondly, from these verses, that **there are false Christians as well as true ones**. There are "branches in the vine" which appear to be joined to the parent stem, and **yet bear no fruit**. There are men and women who appear to be members of Christ, and yet will prove finally to have had no vital union with Him. There are myriads of professing Christians in every Church whose union with Christ is only outward and formal. Some of them are joined to Christ by baptism and Church-membership. Some of them go even further than this, and are regular communicants and loud talkers about religion. But they all lack the one thing needful. Notwithstanding services, and sermons, and sacrament, **they have no grace in their hearts, no faith, no inward work of the Holy Spirit**. They are not one with Christ, and Christ in them. Their union with Him is only **nominal**, and not real. They have "a name to live," but in the sight of God they are dead. Christians of this stamp are **aptly represented by branches in a vine which bear no fruit**. Useless and unsightly, such branches are only fit to be cut off and burned. They draw nothing out of the parent stem, and make no return for the place they occupy. Just so will it be at the last day with false professors and nominal Christians. Their end, except they repent, will be destruction. They will be separated from the company of true believers, and cast out, as withered, useless branches, into everlasting fire. They will find at last, whatever they thought in this world, that there is a worm that never dies, and a fire that is not quenched. ([John 15 - Ryle's Expository Thoughts on the Gospels](#)) (Bolding added)

W Hall Harris has an interesting analysis on the meaning of takes away and concludes " the branches who do not bear fruit and are taken away and burned **are not genuine believers**. They are those who profess some sort of allegiance to Jesus but who in reality do not belong to him. In the Gospel of John, the primary example of this category is Judas. In 1 John 2:18-19 the "antichrists" fall into the same category; they too may be thought of as branches that did not bear fruit. They departed from the ranks of the Christians because they never did really belong, and their departure shows that they did not belong.....for John, to have life at all is to bear fruit, while one who does not bear fruit shows that he does not have the life (once again, conduct is the clue to paternity, as in Jn 8:41; compare also 1 John 4:20) (See his exegetical analysis that leads him to this conclusion [Exegetical Commentary on John 15](#))

Alexander Maclaren has presented in masterful fashion the view that the unfruitful branches represent unsaved professors -- It seems to me that the very language of the metaphor before us requires us to interpret the fruitless branches as meaning all those who have a mere superficial, external adherence to the True Vine. For according to the whole teaching of the parable, if there be any real union there will be some life, and if there be any life, where will be some fruit, and, therefore, the branch that has no fruit has no life, because It has no real union. And so the application, as I take it, is necessarily to those professing Christians, nominal adherents to Christianity or to Christ's church, people that come to church and chapel, and if you ask them to put down in the census paper what they are, they will say Christians. . . . but who .have no real hold upon Jesus Christ, and no real reception of anything from Him.

Henry Morris - The true Christian will bear good fruit; the pseudo-Christian will not bear good, lasting fruit and will therefore ultimately be cast into the fire and burned (John 15:6), just like the pseudo-wheat in the parable of wheat and tares (Matthew 13:28-30, 41-42). Note the threefold categories of Christians: (1) fruit-bearing (John 15:2); (2) more fruit-bearing (John 15:2); and (3) much fruit-bearing (John 15:5). These seem to correspond to the three categories of wheat-producing Christians: those producing thirtyfold, sixtyfold and hundredfold returns (Matthew 13:8,23). The "purging" or "**pruning**" obviously refers to bringing whatever pressures on the believer may be needed in order to lead him into a more fruitful Christian life and witness.

God removes the dead wood from his church and disciplines the life of the believer

Merrill Tenney has an interesting way to phrases **takes away** and **prunes** - Dead wood is worse than fruitlessness, for dead wood can harbor disease and decay. An untrimmed vine will develop long rambling branches that produce little fruit because most of the strength of the vine is given to growing wood. The vine-grower is concerned that the vine be healthy and productive. The caring process is a picture of the divine dealing with human life. **God removes the dead wood from His church** and disciplines the life of the believer so that it is directed into fruitful activity....Judas was an example of a branch that was **cut off**. (BORROW [The](#)

THOUGHT - Dearly beloved, are you going through a trial (most of us are either in a trial, coming out of a trial or getting ready to go into a trial)? If so, it could be the Father, the Vinedresser, the Owner of the vineyard, is pruning you (disciplining you Heb 12:5-10) that you might bear more fruit. Hebrews 12:11 calls it the "peaceful fruit of righteousness."

Bob Utley - "**He prunes it**" This is literally "cleanses." The word was used by Philo for pruning grapevines (BDB 386). It is found only here in the NT. It is another word chosen by John for its dual connotations (i.e., pruning and cleansing, cf. John 15:3; 13:10). This is a PRESENT ACTIVE INDICATIVE. Suffering has a purpose in believers' lives (cf. John 15:17-22). It maximizes fruit bearing, exposes fakes, and keeps them dependent on God (cf. Matt. 13:20-23; Rom. 8:17; 1 Pet. 4:12-16).

A prayer to consider:

*Father, prune me so I might bear more fruit
for Your glory. Amen*

Brian Bill on **prunes it** - New shoots, called "sucker shoots," must be sliced off because they can end up sucking the life out of the vine, causing grapes to not grow. I'm told that most new grape growers fail because they don't prune enough. Good pruning creates a strong root system, improves the health of the vine and most importantly, increases the yield. Pruning must take place in order for grapes to grow. Dead wood must be ruthlessly removed and live wood must be cut back drastically. Are you being pruned right now? If so, ponder these points:

- God does not prune us indiscriminately. He knows what He's doing because He always follows a precise plan. Since He's working to make us more like Christ, He only removes what is necessary and avoids unnecessary injury.
- Pruning involves pain. The Father's pruning knife is sharp but it is not designed to ultimately damage or destroy us. He uses all sorts of unpleasant things to prune us – circumstances, failures, ruptured relationships, illnesses, and trials in order to get us to bear more fruit.
- Pruning can last a long time. The pruning process doesn't continue for one day, or for one week, or one year. We really can't say, "Well, I've been through that, and I'm glad there's no more pain coming my way." In fact, the longer a grapevine is alive, the more pruning it needs. Some of us who are older in our faith may need more pruning than we think we do.

Is God pruning you right now? If so, remember it's not ultimately for your pain but for your gain and for His glory. David realized this when he wrote in Psalm 119:67, 71 "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word...It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees." Do you want to be more fruitful than you are right now? The only way for that to happen is to go under the knife. You may wonder what the difference is between discipline and pruning. While they both hurt and they're both for our good, discipline primarily comes as a result of sin while pruning deals with the problem of self. You don't have to stay where you are right now. You can fast forward to fruitfulness but you must run to Him, not away from Him any longer. God's discipline is always intended to be redemptive and restorative. He is more interested in propelling you toward fruitfulness than He is in punishing you. Is there a meager amount of fruit in your basket? Don't spend a minute longer languishing in the muck and mire of sin. You are not stuck where you are with no way out. Allow Him to lift you up. If we are faithful, God will make us fruitful. I love the prayer found in Psalm 80: "Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven and see; have regard for this vine...Then we shall not turn back from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name! Restore us, O Lord God of hosts!" (Psalm 80:14, 18-19). ([Brian Bill](#))

NET NOTE on **prunes** - Or "trims"; Grk "cleanses" (a wordplay with "clean" in v. 3). Καθαίρει (kathairei) is not the word one would have expected here, but it provides the transition from the vine imagery to the disciples—there is a wordplay (not reproducible in English) between ἀρει (airei) and καθαίρει in this verse. While the purpose of the Father in cleansing his people is clear, the precise means by which he does so is not immediately obvious. This will become clearer, however, in the following verse.

Spiros Zodhiates - It is evident from a study of John 15 that Christ expects much fruit from His branches. **If there is no fruit on a branch, that branch is not truly attached to Christ.** He is not satisfied with little, but demands that our fruit may be commensurate to His investment in us as indicated by the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30 [cf. Luke 12:48]). Our rewards or lack of rewards in heaven are commensurate with the fruits of our labor on earth. (BORROW [The Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament PAGE 820](#)). (BOLDING ADDED)

R. Hensel - In John the expression καρπον φerein (bear fruit) is used especially in Jn. 15:2ff., where Jesus' disciples' close fellowship with the Lord is seen as the secret of the power to bear fruit. His death is the soil out of which rich fruit grows (Jn. 12:24); his death on the cross brings about redemption for men. As the vine (i.e. here the tree of life), he sends through his branches that life-giving power which is the prerequisite and means of faith. Man can indeed accomplish moral and technical achievements by his

natural gifts. But the “fruit of the gospel” (Luther)—that which God expects from man—can grow only from the soil of obedience, which essentially consists in recognition of the bond between creator and creature, established by the death of Christ. He no longer needs to consider his own achievements. Freed from the anxiety of failure, he is capable of the highest endeavour (“more fruit”, Jn. 15:2, 5, 8). Because the source of his capacity to bear fruit lies outside himself, the yield is certain. It counts and abides for eternal life (Jn. 4:36; 15:16). (See THE [full discussion of karpos NIDNTT page 720](#))

*A true branch, united with the vine,
will always bear fruit.*

--Warren Wiersbe

Warren Wiersbe on **fruit** - The word *results* is often heard in conversations among Christian workers, but this is not actually a Bible concept. A machine can produce *results*, and so can a robot, but it takes a living organism to produce *fruit*. It takes time and cultivation to produce fruit; a good crop does not come overnight. We must remember that the branches do not eat the fruit: others do. We are not producing fruit to please ourselves but to serve others. We should be the kind of people who “feed” others by our words and our works. “The lips of the righteous feed many” (Pr 10:21)....Many of these things could be counterfeited by the flesh, but the deception would eventually be detected, for real spiritual fruit has in it the seeds for more fruit. Man-made results are dead and cannot reproduce themselves, but Spirit-produced fruit will go on reproducing from one life to another. There will be fruit—more fruit—much fruit. A true branch, united with the vine, will always bear fruit. Not every branch bears a bumper crop, just as not every field has a bumper harvest (Matt. 13:8, 23), but there is always fruit where there is life.

Scripture catalogs 3 general kinds of **spiritual fruit**...(See more on fruit below)

1) **Spiritual attitudes** that characterize a Spirit-led believer - Galatians 5:22-23, Hebrews 12:11 Every believer manifests all the aspects of this fruit to some degree, although often one or several traits will be predominant. This spiritual attitude fruit precedes spiritual action fruit described below. If the spiritual attitudes are present, the fruit of good deeds will invariably follow.

2) **Spiritual actions** - Romans 6:22, Philippians 4:16; 4:17; Hebrews 13:5 In Colossians Paul describes believers filled with or controlled by the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding and thereby walking worthy of the Lord, pleasing him and **bearing fruit** in every good work. (Col 1:10₊)

3) **New converts** - Romans 16:5 ("Epaenetus...first convert [[aparche](#)] = the first fruit); 1Co 16:15 ("Stephanas...first fruits" [[aparche](#)] of Achaia")

*To sum it up, fruit is
Christlike character,
Christlike conduct,
and Christlike converts*

Steven Cole says that **FRUIT** "in this context it primarily refers to whatever the life of Christ produces in and through the believer who lives in close fellowship with Him. That includes **obedience** to Christ's commandments, especially the command to love one another (John 15:10, 12). This extends to all **godly behavior** (Matt. 7:20; Rom. 6:21), such as **repentance** (Matt. 3:7) and **conduct** that is pleasing to the Lord (Eph. 5:9–10). It encompasses experiencing Jesus' **peace and joy** (John 14:27; 15:11). Since love, joy, and peace are the first three fruits of the Spirit, we can extend the list to include the other fruits (Gal. 5:22–23): “patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” It also refers to **seeing people come to Christ** through your witness (John 4:36) and seeing them **grow in Christ through your influence** (Ro 1:13). To sum it up, fruit is Christlike character, Christlike conduct, and Christlike converts." Obviously, it takes time for fruit to grow. So don't despair if you don't see all of these qualities fully developed in your life yet. But if you are a Christian, you should see growth or progress in these things. You should be in the habit of obeying Christ. You should see the fruit of the Spirit increasing in your conduct. You should be hungering and thirsting after righteousness with increasing intensity. You should be looking for opportunities to tell others about the Savior. If you're not seeing these fruits growing in your life, you need to figure out why not. Growth in Christlike fruit should be the normal experience of every Christian. Also, the fruit that we produce will vary in amount and in kind according to our spiritual gifts. In the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:3–8), the good soil representing true believers bore fruit, but it varied: some bore a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. The soil that didn't bear any fruit represents those who did not truly believe in Christ.

*If you profess to be a Christian,
but you aren't bearing fruit,
you need to examine yourself
and make some course corrections before it's too late.*

Also, we're all given different spiritual gifts and so our fruit will vary in kind. Determining your spiritual gift helps you to know where

you should concentrate your efforts in serving the Lord. Those gifted in service will bear fruit that is different than those with speaking gifts. Both are vital. But we all should exercise our gifts to glorify God (1 Pet. 4:10–11). So the overall point is both clear and important: God saved you to bear fruit for Jesus Christ. If you profess to be a Christian, but you aren't bearing fruit, you need to examine yourself and make some course corrections before it's too late. ([Fulfilling Your Purpose in Life John 15:1-6](#))

[Charles Smith](#) in his excellent 20 page article [THE UNFRUITFUL BRANCHES IN JOHN 15](#) arrives at the following conclusion regarding the unfruitful branches in John 15

general thoughts on John 15 - The text of John 15 has been one of the historical battlegrounds of doctrinal interpretation. Perhaps only the passage in Hebrews 6 has been the scene of more battles between the [Calvinistic](#) and [Arminian](#) schools of interpretation concerning the matter of eternal security. Not only has this text provided the field for many battles between these two schools of theology, but there have also been a great many skirmishes ~~ the two camps upon this same battlefield. Particularly among [Calvinists](#) there has been disagreement as to the interpretation of this passage.....[Arminians](#) have generally understood the unfruitful branches as representative of true believers who, because they become unfruitful, lose their salvation and consequently are ultimately cast into the fires of hell. [Calvinists](#) have been divided as to the identification of these branches. Some have taught that they represent true believers. Most have taught that they represent unbelievers who profess to be believers. Still others have taught that two kinds of unfruitful branches are discussed: professing Christians, and true Christians who do not produce the fruits of Christianity. (Article - [THE UNFRUITFUL BRANCHES IN JOHN 15 - Page 3-22](#))

INTERPRETATION OF "IN ME" BY 37 OTHER CHRISTIAN WRITERS: Here is a list compiled by **James Rosscup** of well-known writers who have commentaries on the Gospel of John and who interpret the "IN ME" as indicating a PROFESSOR and NOT a POSSESSOR of Christ (or union with Christ). Rosscup writes "It is essentially in this way that the first part of verse two is explained by Barclay, Barnes, Barrett, Bernard, Calvin, Dods, Erdman, Godet, Grosheide, Hendriksen, Hengstenberg, Hunter, Hutcheson, Jacobus, Lampe, Lange, Macgregor, Maclaren, H. A. W. Meyer, F. B. Meyer, Morgan, Morris, Andrew Murray, Milligan, Plummer, Reith, Ryle, Spurgeon, Stott, Tenney, Tholuck, B. Weiss, and many of the better-known dispensational writers. Among the latter group are Keith L. Brooks, A. C. Gaebelain, F. W. Grant, Ironside, Kelly, Strombeck, and Vine. **Of course, a count of heads of such an imposing number does not in itself prove the view. Yet it is a sobering fact that so many of the most thoroughly capable scholars and expositors from a wide range of theological convictions interpret the phrase in this sense.** This in itself should beget within a person a spirit of willingness to rethink the matter with an open mind and a teachable heart. They may be right after all!

Harry A Ironside - Question 22 – John 15:1-6

John 15:1-6 is the next passage questioned. "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

*There are a great many believers who bear very little fruit for God,
but all bear some fruit for Him....*

What is the test that proves whether he is really in the vine?

The test is if he bears fruit.

This chapter is not discussing the question of eternal life but of fruit bearing. There are a great many believers who bear very little fruit for God, but all bear some fruit for Him. There are many people in the vine (and the vine speaks of profession here on earth) who bear no fruit for Him and will eventually be cut out altogether when Jesus comes. There will be no place with Him because there is **no union** with Him. There are no natural branches in the living vine. **We are grafted in by faith.** I do not know much about grafting, but I do know that it is one thing to put a graft in, and it is another thing for a graft to strike. It is one thing for a person to be outwardly linked with Him and quite another for that person to have life in Christ. What is the test that proves whether he is really in the vine? The test is if he bears fruit. All who have life bear some fruit for God. **If there is no fruit, you can be sure there is no life, no real union with Christ.**

(From his article entitled [The Eternal Security of the Believer](#)) (Bolding added)

A C Gaebelein -

The evidence of being a true believer, a true branch in the vine, is fruit bearing. Those who claim to be Christians, also to be branches in the vine, and bear no fruit prove thereby that their profession is a false profession. These professing Christians, by saying that they are branches also in the vine, cannot abide in Christ, bear no fruit, and will be treated as dead branches. (from "The Question Box")

*There are thousands upon thousands of such branches,
dead and unfruitful in the professing church...*

Whenever a person takes upon himself the profession of a Christian, he claims by that outward profession to take the place, the position, the privileges and responsibility of a believer in Christ. He is in his profession a follower of Christ, a separated one and also a branch in the vine. But while his profession in church membership indicates all this, in reality this person is only nominally a follower of Christ, only nominally a branch in the vine, only nominally identified with Christ. He has not the reality of it, he does not possess what he has taken upon himself in profession, for he was never born again. As a result there is no fruit, because there is no life. ... That there are thousands upon thousands of such branches, dead and unfruitful in the professing church, does not need any demonstration. It is only too evident. Such will be taken away in judgment. But the real branches are purged (or cleansed) by the Father, to bring forth more fruit. The evidence of being a living branch in the vine is the fruitage. (See Gaebelein's commentary which has many fine spiritual insights into the truths of this Gospel. [Gospel of John - pdf - see page 296](#))

John MacArthur has an excellent summary of spiritual fruit - A popular misconception equates fruit with outward success. By that common standard, external religion, superficial righteousness, having a large church, a popular ministry, or a successful program are considered fruitful. But the Bible nowhere equates fruit with superficial, external behavior or results, which deceivers and hypocrites, as well as non-Christian cults and religions can duplicate. Instead, Scripture defines fruit in terms of spiritual qualities. "The fruit of the Spirit," Paul reminded the Galatians, "is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22–23). Those Christlike traits mark those through whom His life flows.

Praise offered to God is also fruit. The writer of Hebrews exhorts his readers, "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name" (Heb. 13:15; cf. Isa. 57:19; Hos. 14:2).

The Bible also identifies sacrificial love in meeting the needs of others as fruit. Referring to the monetary gift he was collecting for the needy believers at Jerusalem, Paul wrote to the Romans, "Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain" (Rom. 15:28). Acknowledging the Philippians' financial support of his ministry, Paul told them, "Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account" (Phil. 4:17 NKJV). Supporting others who are in need is a tangible expression of love, which is one of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

Fruit may also be defined as holy, righteous, God-honoring behavior in general. Such conduct is "fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matt. 3:8); the fruit produced by the good soil (Matt. 13:23) of a transformed life; the "fruit of the Light [that] consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Eph. 5:9); the "fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1:11); the "peaceful fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:11). Paul prayed that the Colossians would be continually "bearing fruit in every good work" (Col. 1:10), because Christians were "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Finally, the Bible defines fruit as converts to the gospel—not the artificial fruit of superficial "believers," but genuine disciples who abide in the true vine. Referring to the Samaritans who were coming out to Him from the village of Sychar, many of whom would believe savingly in Him (John 4:39, 41), Jesus said, "Already he who reaps is receiving wages and is gathering fruit for life eternal; so that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together" (v. 36). He declared of His sacrificial death, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). Paul expressed his desire to the Christians in Rome to win converts in the imperial capital: "I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles" (Rom. 1:13). At the close of his letter, Paul greeted "Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ" (16:5 NKJV). In 1 Corinthians 16:15 the apostle referred to "the household of Stephanas," as "the first fruits of Achaia," while in Colossians 1:6 he rejoiced that "in all the world also it [the gospel; v. 5] is constantly bearing fruit and increasing." John wrote of the 144,000 evangelists, who will be redeemed during the tribulation, "These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb" (Rev. 14:4).

I agree with the conclusion in this excellent note from the NET Bible -[NET NOTE](#) - The Greek verb *airo* can mean "lift up" as well as "take away," and it is sometimes argued that here it is a reference to the gardener "lifting up" (i.e., propping up) a weak

branch so that it bears fruit again. In Johannine usage the word occurs in the sense of "lift up" in 8:59 and 5:8–12, but in the sense of "remove" it is found in Jn 11:39, 11:48, 16:22, and Jn 17:15. In context (**theological presuppositions aside for the moment**) the meaning "**remove**" does seem more natural and less forced (particularly in light of Jn 15:6, where worthless branches are described as being "thrown out" - an image that seems incompatible with restoration).

One option, therefore, would be to understand the branches which are taken away (Jn 15:2) and thrown out (Jn 15:6) as believers who forfeit their salvation because of unfruitfulness. However, many see this interpretation as encountering problems with the Johannine teaching on the security of the believer, especially John 10:28–29. (Related: [Eternal security - is it biblical?](#))

This leaves two basic ways of understanding Jesus' statements about removal of branches in Jn 15:2 and Jn 15:6:

(1) These statements may refer to an unfaithful (disobedient) Christian, who is judged at the judgment seat of Christ "through fire" (cf. 1 Cor 3:11–15). In this case the "removal" of Jn 15:2 may refer (in an extreme case) to the physical death of a disobedient Christian.

(2) These statements may refer to someone who was never a genuine believer in the first place (e.g., Judas and the Jews who withdrew after Jesus' difficult teaching in 6:66), in which case Jn 15:6 refers to eternal judgment.

In either instance it is clear that Jn 15:6 refers to the fires of judgment (cf. OT imagery in Ps 80:16 and Ezek 15:1–8).

But view (1) requires us to understand this in terms of the judgment of believers at the judgment seat of Christ. This concept does not appear in the Fourth Gospel because from the perspective of the author the believer does not come under judgment; note especially Jn 3:18, 5:24, 5:29. The first reference (Jn 3:18) is especially important because it occurs in the context of Jn 3:16–21, the section which is key to the framework of the entire Fourth Gospel and which is repeatedly alluded to throughout.

A similar image to this one is used by John the Baptist in Matt 3:10, "And the ax is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." Since this is addressed to the Pharisees and Sadducees who were coming to John for baptism, it almost certainly represents a call to initial repentance. More importantly, however, the imagery of being cast into the fire constitutes a reference to eternal judgment, a use of imagery which is much nearer to the Johannine imagery in Jn 15:6 than the Pauline concept of the judgment seat of Christ (a judgment for believers) mentioned above.

The use of the Greek verb *meno* in Jn 15:6 also supports view (2). When used of the relationship between Jesus and the disciple and/or Jesus and the Father, it emphasizes the permanence of the relationship (John 6:56, 8:31, 8:35, 14:10). The prototypical branch who has not remained is Judas, who departed in Jn 13:30. He did not bear fruit, and is now in the realm of darkness, a mere tool of Satan. His eternal destiny, being cast into the fire of eternal judgment, is still to come (**ED: BECAUSE HE IS NOW IN "HADES" AWAITING HIS FINAL DISPOSITION AT THE GREAT WHITE THRONE - Rev 20:11-15+**).

It seems most likely, therefore, that the **branches who do not bear fruit and are taken away and burned are false believers**, those who profess to belong to Jesus but who in reality do not belong to him. In the Gospel of John, the primary example of this category is Judas. In 1 John 2:18–19+ the "**antichrists**" fall into the same category; they too may be thought of as branches that did not bear fruit. They departed from the ranks of the Christians because they never did really belong, and their departure shows that they did not belong.

Fruit (2590) **karpos** is used in its literal sense to refer to fruit, produce or offspring, which describes that which is produced by the inherent energy of a living organism. **Karpos** is what something naturally produces. Figuratively, **karpos** is used of the consequence of physical, mental, or spiritual action. In the NT the figurative (metaphorical) uses predominate and this is particularly true in the Gospels, where human actions and words are viewed as **fruit** growing out of a person's essential being or character. **Karpos** refers to that which originates or comes from something producing an effect or result (benefit, advantage, profit, utility). See also [English word fruit](#).

W. E Vine has an excellent summary of **karpos** explaining that...

Karpos frequently in the New Testament in its **natural sense** of that which is produced by the inherent energy of a living organism, Matthew 13:8, and also, in a **derived sense**, of the result, in the spiritual and moral sphere, of the energy of the Holy Spirit operating in those who through faith are brought into living union with Christ, John 15:4-5.

Fruit is thus the outward expression of power working inwardly, and so in itself beyond observation, the character of the fruit giving evidence of the character of the power that produces it, Matthew 7:16 (note). As lust manifests itself in works, the restless and disorderly activities of the flesh, or principle of evil, in man, so

the Spirit manifests His presence in His **peaceable** Hebrews 12:11 ([note](#)), and orderly fruit.

In this connection **fruit** presents an advance upon “works.” “Works” gives prominence to the notion of activity; **fruit** directs attention to the power that works within.

Fruit is also used by the apostle Paul of the converts resulting from his ministry, Philippians 1:22([note](#)); and of the manifestation of the character of Christ in the lives of believers in consequence of his ministry of the Word among them, Romans 1:13 ([note](#)); and of the care of the believers for the poor, for this is the fruit, or outward expression, of love, attesting its reality, Romans 15:28 ([note](#)); and of the care of laborers in the gospel, for this is the fruit, or outward expression, of thankfulness to God for spiritual blessings enjoyed, attesting its reality, Philippians 4:17 ([note](#)).

The singular form, **fruit**, is used here perhaps to suggest the unity and harmony of the character of the Lord Jesus which is to be reproduced in the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit, in contrast with the discordant and often mutually antagonistic “works of the flesh.” In Christ actually, and in the Christian potentially, the fruit of the Spirit is harmonious, the various elements being mutually consistent, and each encouraging and enhancing the rest in happy coordination and cooperation in that “new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth,” Ephesians 4:24 ([note](#)).

The verb “fruit-bearing,” **karpophoreo**, is found in the New Testament in both the natural, Mark 4:28, and the spiritual sense, Matthew 13:23; Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15. The two states of men, the regenerate and the unregenerate, are contrasted in Romans 7:4, 7:5 ([note](#)); in the former “the passions of sins,” i.e., sinful impulses, see at v. 24, below, bore fruit unto death, that is these activities arose out of a state of alienation from God; in the latter the power of the indwelling Spirit, who unites the soul with the risen Lord, bears fruit unto God; so also Colossians 1:10 ([note](#)). Colossians 1:6 ([note](#)) corresponds with Philippians 1:22 ([note](#)), mentioned above. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Larry Richards summarizes the Biblical concept of **spiritual fruit** writing that "**Fruitfulness** is a consistent concept in the OT and the NT. The **fruit** God seeks in human beings is expressed in righteous and loving acts that bring peace and harmony to the individual and to society. But that **fruit** is foreign to sinful human nature. Energized by sinful passions, fallen humanity acts in ways that harm and bring dissension. God's solution is found in a personal relationship with Jesus and in the supernatural working of God's Spirit within the believer. As we live in intimate, obedient relationship with Jesus, God's Spirit energizes us as we produce the peaceable **fruits** of a righteousness that can come only from the Lord. (BORROW [Richards, L O: Expository Dictionary of Bible Words PAGE 298](#))

Karpos - 66x/56v - **benefit(2), crop(5), crops(2), descendants*(1), fruit(43), fruitful(1), fruits(4), grain(1), harvest(1), proceeds(1), produce(4), profit(1)**. Matt. 3:8; Matt. 3:10; Matt. 7:16; Matt. 7:17; Matt. 7:18; Matt. 7:19; Matt. 7:20; Matt. 12:33; Matt. 13:8; Matt. 13:26; Matt. 21:19; Matt. 21:34; Matt. 21:41; Matt. 21:43; Mk. 4:7; Mk. 4:8; Mk. 4:29; Mk. 11:14; Mk. 12:2; Lk. 1:42; Lk. 3:8; Lk. 3:9; Lk. 6:43; Lk. 6:44; Lk. 8:8; Lk. 12:17; Lk. 13:6; Lk. 13:7; Lk. 13:9; Lk. 20:10; Jn. 4:36; Jn. 12:24; Jn. 15:2; Jn. 15:4; Jn. 15:5; Jn. 15:8; Jn. 15:16; Acts 2:30; Rom. 1:13; Rom. 6:21; Rom. 6:22; Rom. 15:28; 1 Co. 9:7; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9; Phil. 1:11; Phil. 1:22; Phil. 4:17; 2 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 12:11; Heb. 13:15; Jas. 3:17; Jas. 3:18; Jas. 5:7; Jas. 5:18; Rev. 22:2

Branch ([2814](#)) **klema** from **klao** = to break means that which is broken off from a plant - a branch or shoot, especially of grapevines. This noun denotes a more or less tender, flexible branch, as of a vine.

Classical Greek - Klēma is fairly common in Greek literature and usually refers to a flexible branch or vine, usually a young twig which is broken off to be replanted (Behm, “klēma,” Kittel, 3:757). It is used of a switch or cane carried by Roman centurions and also of a navel cord. One papyrus record speaks of it in connection with the operation of a vineyard (cf. Moulton-Milligan).

Septuagint Usage - In the Septuagint it occurs more than 10 times for 6 Hebrew words, frequently referring to a literal “branch” of a tree or vine (cf. Numbers 13:24) and occasionally as a symbol for Israel (cf. Nahum 2:2).

New Testament Usage - In the New Testament klēma occurs only in John 15:2,4-6 as Jesus compared His disciples to branches, and himself to the vine (ampelos [286]) which supports the branches. Unless the branches bear fruit, they are pruned and destroyed. “So it is essential for the disciples, if they are to fulfill the task which is laid upon them, that they should abide in fellowship with Jesus” (Behm, *ibid.*). The fruit produced by complete dependence on Jesus is love, obedience, and prayer (Embry, “Tree,” Colin Brown, 3:869). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Takes away ([142](#)) **airo** literally means to lift up something ([Mt 17:27](#)) and to carry it (Lxx - [Ge 44:1](#), [Ex 25:28](#) = the Ark). In the first Septuagint use of **airo** in [Ge 35:2](#) Jacob told his household “**Put away** (airo) the foreign gods.” Jesus used **airo** figuratively when He declared “Take (aorist imperative) My yoke” ([Mt 11:29-note](#)) and again when he said “Take (aorist imperative) up (your) cross.” ([Mk](#)

8:34) Figuratively in this passage **airo** speaks of the taking away of sins. John used this same verb (**airo**) in John 1:29 writing "The next day (John the Baptist) saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God Who **takes away** (**airo**) the sin of the world!"

To take up, to lift up, to raise (Jn 8:59, Acts 27:3, Rev 10:5, "lift up My hand" = Dt 32:40, Isa 49:22); figuratively to raise one's eyes (Jn 11:41, Ps 121:1, 123:1), one's voice (cry out, sing - Lk 17:13, Acts 4:24, Jdg 21:2, 1Sa 11:4). "Keep (hold) us in suspense" (Jn 10:24)

Gingrich —1. raise, lift, take up, pick up Mt 16:24; Lk 17:13; Jn 8:59; keep in suspense Jn 10:24; weigh (anchors) Ac 27:13; take or carry along Mt 16:24; 27:32; cry out loudly Lk 17:13. The transition to mng. 2 may be seen in Jn 1:29, where it means both take up and remove.—2. take or carry away, remove Lk 6:29; Jn 2:16; 19:38. Do away with, kill J 19:15 (s. a=ron); sweep away Mt 24:39; conquer, take over J 11:48; expel 1 Cor 5:2; cut off J 15:2. Supply ti something Mt 9:16. [arsis] [pg 5]

Friberg's summary of **airo** - (1) literally, as lifting up something take up, pick, raise (Mt 17:27; Rev 10.5); absolutely, of a ship weigh anchor, depart (Acts 27.13); hyperbolically, of a mountain arise (Mt 21.21); idiomatically literally raise one's eyes, i.e. look up (Jn 11.41); literally take up the cross, i.e. be prepared to suffer to the point of death (Mt 16.24); literally lift up someone's soul, i.e. keep someone in suspense without being able to come to a conclusion (Jn 10.24); (2) as lifting up and carrying something away remove, carry off, take away (Jn 11.39); idiomatically = literally take from, i.e. cause to no longer experience (Mt 21.43); (3) of removing by force; (a) do away with, kill, execute (Jn 19.15); (b) sweep away as with a flood (Mt 24.39); (c) destroy, do away with (Jn 11.48); (d) as a religious technical term, of the effect of Christ's paying the complete penalty for sin remove, take away (Jn 1.29)

James Rosscup on airo - In the lexicons, the verb often has the thought of removal. There are vivid examples in the New Testament and in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint). A man takes away another's cloak (Luke 6:29); a stronger man overpowers a strong man and takes his weapons from him (Luke 11:22); a member of a local church is removed or excommunicated for immorality (1 Cor. 5:2); a man is taken away in death (Matt. 24:39; John 19:15); the devil takes away the Word of God sown in a person's life (Luke 8:12, 18); our "certificate of debt consisting of decrees" is taken away by Christ (Col. 2:14 Nassp) who is the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29); members of the bodies belonging to Christ are taken away from one sphere — sanctification — and devoted to sinful use in another sphere — immorality with a harlot (1 Cor. 6:15); Jacob told his household to put away other gods (Gen. 35:2); the Lord denounces the wicked, who take away the rights of those who are in the right (Isa. 5:23); the dominion of Christ in His Kingdom shall not be taken away (Dan. 7:14); saved persons are not generally taken out of this world by God but left here to serve Him (John 17:15). There are many other examples. Liddell and Scott also point out an extrabiblical source in which the word is used of clearing away dinner. *

Prunes (2507) (**kathairo** from **katharos** - pure, clean, without stain or spot. It means to make clean; of a vine clear, prune by removing superfluous wood. The idea is to make clean by taking away an undesirable part. It indicates removing that which is unclean or of no use. It gives us English cathartic. Related to **katharizo**. It occurs in some ceremonial contexts in antiquity.

Kathairo - 2x - John 15:2, Hebrews 10:2 - reference is made to worshipers who had been "purged" of their sins under the Mosaic law.

There are 2 uses in the Septuagint- 2Sa. 4:6; Isa. 28:27

Wayne Grudem comments on John 15:1-2

Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit."

This passage creates a difficulty for the Free Grace position because it shows that if someone's life is unfruitful, that person will be taken away from Christ, who is the true vine. To avoid this difficulty, Free Grace supporters argue that "takes away" should instead be translated "he lifts up" (another possible meaning of the Greek verb **airo**), so that the branches may get more sunlight and become fruitful. They say the verse means, "Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he lifts up." For support, they refer to sources that say that grapevines were supported on wooden poles or trellises in the ancient world.

However, when I consulted the Bible dictionaries and other reference works on ancient viticulture (raising vines) that Bing and [Dillow](#) cited, though there was evidence that grapevines were sometimes supported on wooden posts or frames (which no one

denies), **there was no evidence given by any source showing that unfruitful vines or branches were “lifted up” so that they would bear more fruit. No Free Grace publication that I could find produced any evidence from the ancient world that said that unfruitful vines or branches were “lifted up.” This means that the unusual Free Grace interpretation of this passage is a purely speculative argument with no supporting evidence.**

Moreover, this position does not fit the wording of the verse. **The only kind of branch that the Father does anything to “that it may bear more fruit” is the branch “that does bear fruit.”** Even if we try the meaning “lifts up” in the verse, the verse does not say, “Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he lifts up that it may bear more fruit,” nor does it say, “that they [plural, meaning both kinds of branches] may bear more fruit.” It says only that the fruitful branch is pruned “that it may bear more fruit.”

The most extensive description that I found of ancient agricultural methods with regard to grapevines is the discussion in Natural History by Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79, very close to the time of Jesus’s earthly ministry). He includes some instructions that are relevant for understanding John 15, for they show that unfruitful vines are to be cut off and burned:

If a vine is making poor growth, make a bonfire of its shoots and plow in the ashes therefrom.

If a meager vine has not got suitable branches, it is a very good plan to cut it back to the ground and get it to put out new branches.

... pruning away only the decayed parts of the vine and those beginning to wither, and leaving the rest to bear grapes relieved of superfluous weight.

Pliny thus says the opposite of what Free Grace supporters argue. Far from being “lifted up,” he says unfruitful branches were cut off and unfruitful vines were burned up in a “bonfire.” (See ["Free Grace" Theology: 5 Ways It Diminishes the Gospe](#))

QUESTION - [What is free grace? What is Free Grace Theology?](#)

ANSWER - Free Grace Theology is essentially a view of [soteriology](#) grown from more traditional Baptist roots. It was systematized by theologians such as Dr.’s [Charles Ryrie](#) and [Zane Hodges](#) in the 1980s, mainly as a response to Lordship Theology or [Lordship Salvation](#), which has its roots in [Reformed theology](#). Today, Free Grace is still going strong, supported by Charles Bing, Joseph Dillow, and the Grace Evangelical Society. (ED: SEE RELATED ARTICLE - [The Teachings of Zane Hodges, Joseph Dillow, Robert Wilkin](#))

The basic teaching of Free Grace Theology is that responding to the “call to believe” in Jesus Christ through faith alone is all that is necessary to receive eternal life. This basic, simple belief brings assurance of “entering” the [kingdom of God](#). Then, if a person further responds to the “call to follow” Jesus, **he becomes a disciple** and undergoes [sanctification](#) (ED: See [What is the difference between a Christian and a disciple?](#) - **Excerpt:** “*Biblically speaking, a Christian is a disciple of Christ...A true Christian (and not one in name only) will have to be a disciple of Christ as well*). The follower of Christ has the opportunity to “inherit” the kingdom of God, which includes receiving particular rewards based on works accomplished for God on earth.

Free Grace theologians point to a number of passages to validate their distinction between having saving faith and following Christ, mainly from the Gospel of John and the [Pauline Epistles](#). For instance, Jesus’ explanation to the woman at the well of how to receive salvation—that she simply ask Him for it (John 4:10)—is compared to Jesus’ words to the disciples a few minutes later—that they must “do the will of him who sent me” (John 4:34).

Other verses in John’s Gospel mention the act of belief as the sole requirement for salvation, including John 3:16 and John 5:24. And John 6:47 says, “The one who believes has eternal life.” The fact that works lead to rewards in heaven may be seen in passages such as Matthew 5:1–15; 1 Corinthians 3:11–15; and Hebrews 10:32–36, particularly verse 36, which reads, “For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.”

Many Reformed theologians are appalled by the assertions of Free Grace theologians accusing them of [easy believism](#) or even [antinomianism](#). Antinomianism is the heretical belief that a Christian is under no law whatsoever, whether biblical or moral, and thus may do whatever he pleases. The fact of the matter is that Free Grace Theology can make it easier to arrive at antinomianism. However, Free Grace teaching is not [antinomian](#) per se. Free Grace theologians consider their position more biblical than Lordship Salvation, which they consider to be a works-based theology. According to Free Grace theologians, Lordship Salvation holds that saving faith includes inherently the “act” of accomplishing radical internal change leading to good works.

This leads to the Free Grace emphasis on assurance of salvation, again based on the basic promises in John’s Gospel, that belief is all that is necessary for salvation. To the Free Grace theologian, this is a simple, cut-and-dried issue—if you believe, you are saved. For the Lordship Salvation camp, assurance of salvation comes through the observation of change in the professing believer, i.e., that he is accomplishing good works. Each camp views the other as possibly leading to heresy.

QUESTION - [What does it mean to abide in Christ? | GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - To “abide” is to live, continue, or remain; so, to abide in Christ is to live in Him or remain in Him. When a person is saved, he or she is described as being “in Christ” (Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17), held secure in a permanent relationship (John 10:28–29). Therefore, abiding in Christ is not a special level of Christian experience, rather, it is the position of all true believers. The difference between those abiding in Christ and those not abiding in Christ is the difference between the saved and the unsaved.

Abiding in Christ is taught in 1 John 2:5–6, where it is synonymous with “knowing” Christ (verses 2 and 3). Later in the same chapter, John equates “remaining” in the Father and the Son with having the promise of eternal life (verses 24 and 25). Biblically, “abiding in,” “remaining in,” and “knowing” Christ are references to the same thing: salvation.

The phrase *abiding in Christ* pictures an intimate, close relationship, and not just a superficial acquaintance. In John 15:4–7, Jesus tells His disciples that drawing life from Him is essential, using the picture of branches united to a vine: “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. 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. 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. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” Without that vital [union with Christ](#) that salvation provides, there can be no life and no productivity. Elsewhere, the Bible likens our relationship with Christ to that of a body with a head (Colossians 1:18)—another essential union.

Some people take the warning of John 15:6 (branches that do not abide in the vine are thrown away and burned) to mean that Christians are always in danger of losing their salvation. In other words, they say it’s possible to be saved but not “abide,” in which case we would be cast away. But this could only be true if “abiding” were separate from salvation, referring to a state of intimacy with Christ we must strive to attain post-salvation. The Bible is clear that salvation comes by grace and is maintained by grace (Galatians 3:2–3). Also, if a branch could somehow fall away from the vine, resulting in the loss of salvation, then other, very clear passages of Scripture would be contradicted (see John 10:27–30).

It is best to interpret the [True Vine](#) metaphor this way: Jesus is the True Vine, obviously. The branches who “abide” in Him are the truly saved—they have a real and vital connection to the Savior. The withered branches who do not “abide” in Him are the unsaved pretenders who feigned an attachment to the Vine but drew no life from Him. In the end, the pretenders will be seen for what they were: hangers-on who had no authentic attachment to Jesus. For a while, both Peter and Judas seemed identical in their walk with Christ. But Peter was attached to the Vine; Judas was not.

John restates the withered-branch principle this way: “They [people now opposed to Christ] went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us” (1 John 2:19).

One of the proofs of salvation is perseverance, or sustained abiding in Christ. The saved will continue in their walk with Christ (see Revelation 2:26). That is, they will “abide” or remain in Him. God will complete His work in them (Philippians 1:6), and they will bring forth much fruit to the glory of God (John 15:5). Those who fall away, turn their backs on Christ, or fail to abide simply show their lack of saving faith. Abiding is not what saves us, but it is one of the signs of salvation.

Proofs of abiding in Christ (i.e., proofs that one is truly saved and not just pretending) include obedience to Christ’s commands (John 15:10; 1 John 3:24); following Jesus’ example (1 John 2:6); living free from habitual sin (1 John 3:6); and the awareness of a divine presence within one’s life (1 John 4:13).

- [What does “abide in him” mean in 1 John 3:6?](#)

QUESTION - [Does the vine and branches passage in John 15 mean salvation can be lost?](#)

ANSWER - In John 15 Jesus uses the relationship of branches to the vine to illustrate our relationship to Him: “I am the [true vine](#), and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. . . . If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned” (verses 1–2, 6).

Many take the verses about the fruitless branches being taken away and burned as a proof-text that salvation can be lost. The teaching is that a person who was at one time in Christ might later cease to “abide in Christ” and become good for nothing; that

person is then cut off and burned up. Now, if the parable of the vine and the branches were the only passage that addressed the issue of [eternal security](#), then we might have good reason to fear that salvation could be lost. However, this is not the only passage in Scripture that addresses security and assurance, nor is it the only passage in John where these issues are addressed.

There are several passages in John where the security of the believer is clearly assured (John 3:16–17; 6:35–40; 10:27–29). This is an issue that we find throughout the Bible. There are passages that speak of the [security](#) of the believer in very explicit terms and others that would make one wonder if salvation cannot be lost after all. It is always best to interpret more obscure passages in light of clearer passages. Since John 15 is in the form of an allegory, it is best to let the clearer passages inform our understanding.

The background of Jesus' words in John 15 is most likely the Old Testament imagery where Israel is called a vine or vineyard—although one that did not produce the expected fruit (see Isaiah 5:1–7) (**ED: THERE MAY BE SOME TRUTH IN THIS BUT THERE IS NOTHING IN THE CONTEXT WHICH ALLOWS ONE TO DEFINITELY MAKE THIS ASSOCIATION SO BE AN Acts 17:11+BEREAN**). Jesus replaces Israel with Himself as the “true vine.” Unlike Israel, Jesus will not fail to produce fruit in all the branches that are connected to Him. The point of Jesus' metaphor is that He will succeed where Israel failed. (**ED: BUT AGAIN HE DOES NOT REALLY MAKE THAT ASSOCIATION.**) The disciples simply need to be connected to Him. According to John 15, it is unthinkable that any branch who is connected to Christ will fail to produce fruit. Yet, according to the illustration, some branches “in Him” will not produce fruit and be taken away. There seems to be a contradiction within the illustration itself that would warn us not to press the details too far.

The apparent problem is the same with all of the other passages in Scripture that warn Christians about falling away. If a true Christian cannot lose salvation, why warn about falling away? The best explanation is that these warnings are directed toward professing Christians who *appear*, at least outwardly, to be connected to the Vine. They are branches in the vicinity of the Vine, but there is a disconnect. Judas Iscariot is a good example of a false professor. The parable of the seed and the soils (Matthew 13) presents young plants that seem to start out well but then wither away. The book of Hebrews, with its many [warning passages](#), seems to be directed at those who have made an initial positive response to Jesus but are considering turning back. They are like the children of Israel who left in the exodus with Moses but then refused to enter the Promised Land (Hebrews 3:16–19). They started out on the journey but didn't complete it.

...the genuine believer attached to the True Vine will bear fruit

Based on outward appearances at any given moment, it may be difficult to tell genuine believers (connected in vital unity with the True Vine) from those who have merely attached themselves to some of the trappings of Christianity. However, time will tell the difference, because the genuine believer attached to the True Vine will bear fruit. A false professor appears to be attached but does not bear fruit, and it's the lack of fruit that shows a branch is not receiving the fruit-bearing energy that comes from attachment to the Vine. Regardless of how attached this branch may appear to be on the surface, it is lacking the one absolute evidence of attachment—**fruit!** That “branch” should not console himself with false notions that he is attached, because his lack of fruit bears condemning evidence against him. In this case, the branch was never really attached in the first place. The metaphor (or allegory) of the vine and the branches can only be pressed so far.

QUESTION - [What did Jesus mean when He said, “I am the True Vine”?](#)

ANSWER - “I am the True Vine” (John 15:1) is the last of seven “[I am](#)” declarations of Jesus recorded only in John's Gospel. These “I am” proclamations point to His unique divine identity and purpose. Jesus said, “I am the True Vine” to closest friends gathered around Him. It was only a short time before Judas would betray Him; in fact, Judas had already left to do his infamous deed (John 13:30). Jesus was preparing the eleven men left for His pending crucifixion, His resurrection, and His subsequent departure for heaven. He had just told them that He would be leaving them (John 14:2). Knowing how disturbed they would feel, He gave them this lovely metaphor of the True Vine as one of His encouragements.

Jesus wanted His friends, not only those eleven, but those of all time, to know that He was not going to desert them, even though they would no longer enjoy His physical presence. His living energy—His spiritual reality—would continue to nourish and sustain them just as the roots and trunk of a grape vine produce the energy that nourishes and sustains its branches while they develop their fruit. Jesus wanted us to know that, even though we cannot see Him, we are as closely connected to Him as the branches of a vine are connected to its stem. Our desire to know and love Him and the energy to serve Him will keep flowing into and through us as long as we “abide” in Him.

Jesus went on to remove any misunderstanding about what He meant (John 15:4). He said that no branch can even live, let alone produce leaves and fruit, by itself. Cut off from the trunk, a branch is dead. Just as a vine's branches rely on being connected to the trunk from which they receive their energy to bear fruit, Jesus' disciples depend on being connected to Him for their spiritual life and the ability to serve Him effectively. The fruit we produce is that of the Holy Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23). Our source of life and spiritual fruit is not in ourselves; it is outside us,

in Christ Jesus. We can live, live rightly, and serve Him effectively only if we are rightly connected to Him in a faith/love relationship.

Then Jesus underscored His point even more strongly by saying, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). This illustration of the vine and branches is no thoughtless generality or careless simile. It is absolute, stark reality. No believer can achieve anything of spiritual value independently of Christ Jesus. He also reminds us that there are some who are "in" Him who bear no fruit. But these are not, as some would suppose, true branches that just happen to be fruitless. All true branches bear fruit. Just as we know a healthy, living tree by the good fruit it produces, so do we recognize fruitless branches as having no connection to the True Vine. This is why Jesus tells us, "By their fruit you will know them" (Matthew 7:16–20). Those who do not produce good fruit are cut away and burned. The reference here is to apostates, those who profess to know Christ but whose relationship to Him is insincere. He neither called them nor elected them nor saved them nor sustains them. Eventually, the fruitless branches are identified as not belonging to the Vine and are removed for the sake of truth and the benefit of the other branches. So, we depend on Jesus for everything, starting with our very life—"For in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28)—and including our reconciliation with God through Him (Romans 5:10). No one can serve God effectively until he is connected with Jesus Christ by faith. Jesus is our only connection with the God who gave life and who produces in us a fruitful life of righteousness and service.

[The Purpose Of Pain](#)

Every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. —John 15:2

Today's Scripture : John 15:1-14

When Alexander Whyte (1837-1921), the great Scottish preacher, was a boy, he badly injured his arm in a threshing machine. Instead of going to a hospital for almost certain amputation, he was treated at home by a neighbor. When the boy complained of his suffering, she simply said to him, "I like the pain. I like the pain." She knew it was the first step to recovery.

Years later when people complained that Whyte's sermons were too critically soul-searching, he would reply, "I like the pain. I like the pain." He believed that conviction of sin was needed for their spiritual healing.

Pain may be discipline from God for disobedience to His Word. But sometimes when we suffer pain, we wrongly interpret God's purpose in it. While prayerfully examining our lives to detect disobedience, we ought to consider another possible reason for our affliction. Pain may be God's pruning of our already fruitful lives to make us more spiritually productive (Jn. 15:2). The Lord desires that we bear "much fruit" so that we will glorify Him (v.8).

If you're going through a painful time, God's purpose may be to make you more spiritually fruitful. By: Vernon Grounds (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

God has a purpose in our heartaches,
The Savior always knows what's best;
We learn so many precious lessons
In each sorrow, trial, and test.
—Jarvis

Problems are opportunities for progress.

C H Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook - John 15:2

THIS is a precious promise to one who lives for fruitfulness. At first it seems to wear a sharp aspect. Must the fruitful bough be pruned? Must the knife cut even the best and most useful? No doubt it is so, for very much of our Lord's purging work is done by means of afflictions of one kind or another. It is not the evil but the good who have the promise of tribulation in this life. But, then, the end makes more than full amends for the painful nature of the means. If we may bring forth more fruit for our Lord, we will not mind the pruning and the loss of leafage.

Still, purging is sometimes wrought by the Word apart from trial, and this takes away whatever appeared rough in the flavour of the promise. We shall by the Word be made more gracious and more useful. The Lord, who has made us, in a measure, fruit-bearing, will operate upon us till we reach a far higher degree of fertility. Is not this a great joy? Truly there is more comfort in a promise of fruitfulness than if we had been warranted riches, or health, or honour. Lord Jesus, speedily fulfil thy gracious word to me, and cause me to abound in fruit to thy praise!

[The Need Of Pruning](#)

Every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. — John 15:2

Today's Scripture : John 15:1-14

I have several grapevines in my garden, and each year I cut out loads of long, spindly vines. Unless I remove these, they will take all the strength that should go into the fruit. No vine can be fully fruitful without pruning.

Jesus said that His Father prunes His children. The richest, the fullest, the most fruitful lives are those that have been strengthened through the painful process of tribulation. We have no right to believe that God will use us until He has cut away whatever hinders our growth. What we see as tragedies may be only blessings in disguise, and the very opportunities through which God chooses to exhibit His love and grace.

Are you, my friend, being pruned today? Has the dearest in life been torn from you? Have all your dreams faded? Remember that if you could see the purpose of these problems from the standpoint of God's wisdom and of eternity, if you could interpret these trials in their relationship to life's blessings, you would be able to dry your tears and praise the Lord for them all.

God will not withhold any good thing "from those who walk uprightly" (Ps. 84:11). Even in your painful situation, you can trust Him to do what is best. By: M.R. DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Because our Father's heart is grieved
Each time we go astray,
He lifts His chastening hand in love
To guide us in His way.
—DJD

Christ, the Gardener, cuts away the dead wood to make us fruitful.

Pruned to Thrive

Every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. John 15:2

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 15:1-12

As I watched a bumblebee land lightly on the Russian sage, I marveled at the bush's lush branches exploding with color. Its brilliant blue blossoms attracted eyes and bees alike. Yet only last fall, I'd wondered if it would ever blossom again. When my wife's parents trimmed the periwinkle plant down to a stub, I'd assumed they'd decided to get rid of it. But now I was witnessing the radiant result of pruning that had seemed brutal to me.

The surprising beauty that results from harsh cuts may be one of the reasons Jesus chose pruning imagery to describe God's work among believers. In John 15, He says, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. . . . Every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful" (vv. 1-2).

Jesus' words remind us that in the good times and bad, God is always working in us toward spiritual renewal and fruitfulness (v. 5). During "pruning" seasons of suffering or emotional barrenness, we may wonder if we'll ever thrive again. But Christ encourages us to continue to stick close to Him: "No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me" (v. 4).

As we continually draw spiritual nourishment from Jesus, the resulting beauty and fruitfulness in our lives (v. 8) will show the world God's goodness. By: Adam R. Holz (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

How have you seen God use struggle in your life to produce growth and fruitfulness? How do you think time gives us the perspective to see God's hand at work in our lives?

Father, help me to trust You during difficult seasons in my life, knowing that You're at work to bring beauty and change.

For help in strengthening your faith, read [Going the Distance Practices to Strengthen Your Faith](#)

ILLUSTRATION OF PRUNING - The goldsmith - It is said that as a goldsmith heats the gold to a liquid state, that all the impurities, the dross, comes to the surface, where he can skim them off. A goldsmith knows he has the impurities gone when he can look at the gold and see his own reflection. God is our goldsmith, refining us, looking for His reflection.

When God puts His own people into the furnace,

He keeps His eye on the clock
and His hand on the thermostat.

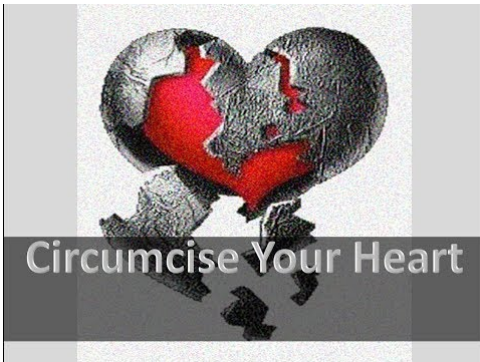
John 15:3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

- John 13:10 17:17 Eph 5:26 1Pe 1:22
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Ephesians 5:26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed ([katharizo](#) related to [kathairo](#) - prune) her by the washing of water with the word,

1 Peter 1:22-23+ Since you have in **obedience to the truth** purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for (TERM OF EXPLANATION - EXPLAINING HOW THEIR SOULS HAD BEEN "PURIFIED") you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through **the living and enduring word of God**. (PETER EXPLAINS HOW HE HAD BEEN WASHED CLEAN, BORN AGAIN).



DISCIPLES ARE CLEANSSED BY THE CUTTING OF THE WORD

You are already clean ([katharos](#)) **because of the word** ([logos](#)) **which I have spoken to you** - **Already** (ede) is first word in Greek for emphasis and would give the disciples confidence that their position in the Vine was secure! What does **clean** mean? Earlier in the Upper Room discourse Jesus had declared to Peter who was resistant to having his feet washed by Jesus "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely **clean**; and you are **clean** ([katharos](#)), but not all of you." (Jn 13:10+) With that statement Jesus declared the 11 disciples as true (regenerate, justified by faith) branches, but excluded one "branch," Judas Iscariot, who would be taken away (as described in Jn 15:1). Judas was clearly a professing unbeliever. The point here stands that the branch without fruit represents a person who has only a nominal relationship with Christ, and Judas in the context is an example.

The instrument of cleansing for the 11 disciples was the Word of God, "living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb 4:12+). And what did that spoken Word accomplish? In Colossians Paul explains what transpired when they were cut with the Word, writing that their heart was "circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ....when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions (AKA THEY WERE MADE "**CLEAN**")." (Col 2:11,13+) (See [Circumcision of the Heart](#)) **Unclean** branches (with the exception of the "Judas branch") were cut (circumcised) and made **clean** by the holy Word and Holy Spirit, which is what has transpired in every true branch of Jesus!

Spurgeon - The Word is often the knife with which the great Husbandman prunes the vine; and, brothers and sisters, if we were more willing to feel the edge of the Word, and to let it cut away even something that may be very dear to us, we should not need so much pruning by affliction. It is because that first knife does not always produce the desired result that another sharp tool is used by which we are effectually pruned....That is the great purger. Affliction is used, but it is rather the handle of the knife than the knife itself....While Christ was with his disciples he kept his vine continually pruned by the word which he spoke. That word cut off the non-fruit-bearing-branches, for we read that after that saying there were some that went back, and walked no more with him, for they said, "This is a hard saying; who can bear it?" ([Expositions in John](#))

[James Rosscup](#) makes an excellent point that "The principle of interpretation is this: Christ's differentiation in the clear passage (Jn 13:10,11+) provides a background that defines His contrast when a little later He uses the same terms in a verse that is not as clear (ED: [katharos](#) IN BOTH). Judas is not cleansed ([katharos](#)), but the eleven are; the branch with no fruit is not said to be clean ([katharos](#)), but the eleven disciples are.

NET NOTE - The phrase you are clean already occurs elsewhere in the Gospel of John only at the washing of the disciples' feet in Jn 13:10, where Jesus had used it of the disciples being cleansed from sin. This further confirms the proposed understanding of John 15:2 and John 15:6 (ED: AS REFERRING TO UNBELIEVERS) since Judas was specifically excluded from this statement (**but not all of you**).

Clean (innocent, pure) ([2513](#)) [katharos](#) literally describes that which is free of dirt and thus **clean**. It describes that which is free from admixture or adulteration and thus is **pure**. Figuratively as in Jn 13:10, 15:3 [katharos](#) is used spiritually of one who is free of moral guilt, free from wrongdoing. From a biblical standpoint the concept of cleansing is deeply rooted in both the Old and the New Testaments.

Katharos - 26x/22v - clean(12), clear(3), innocent(1), pure(10). Matt. 5:8; Matt. 23:26; Matt. 27:59; Lk. 11:41; Jn. 13:10; Jn. 13:11; Jn. 15:3; Acts 18:6; Acts 20:26; Rom. 14:20; 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 Tim. 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:22; Tit. 1:15; Heb. 10:22; Jas. 1:27; Rev. 15:6; Rev. 19:8; Rev. 19:14; Rev. 21:18; Rev. 21:2

ILLUSTRATION ON PRUNING GRAPES - I'm (Steven Cole) not much of a gardener and apparently neither is Bruce Wilkinson. In his book, *Secrets of the Vine* ([Multnomah Publishers], pp. 55–57 - [BORROW THIS BOOK](#)), he tells about moving to the country one spring. The fence that he shared with his neighbor had a large grape vine on it and he and his family were looking forward to enjoying some nice grapes that fall. But a few days moving in, he noticed the neighbor out there hacking away at the vine with some large shears. He was worried that his neighbor was going to kill the vine! Trying to be diplomatic, he walked over and asked the neighbor, "You don't like grapes, I guess?" "Love grapes," he replied. Bruce tried to express his hopes that they could share some of the grapes, but his confusion and disappointment over what the neighbor was doing was obvious. After observing that he was a city boy and surmising that he didn't know much about grapes, the neighbor explained, "Well, son, we can either grow ourselves a lot of beautiful leaves filling up this whole fence line. Or we can have the biggest, juiciest, sweetest grapes you and your family have ever seen. We just can't have both." He knew that to bear good fruit, that vine had to be pruned. And you can't bear fruit for the Lord unless the heavenly Gardener prunes your life. Pruning isn't very pleasant when it happens, but it yields a bigger, better crop of fruit in the long run. The fact is, when we come into the Christian life, we all bring a lot of the flesh and the world with us. God is gracious not to hack it all away at once, or we'd bleed to death! But if you want to be like Christ, it's got to go. If that sounds unpleasant, keep in mind that His aim is that His joy would be in us and our joy would be made full (John 15:11). But you've got to submit to the pruning process, trusting that the Father knows what He's doing. ([Fulfilling Your Purpose in Life John 15:1-6](#))

John 15:1-7 **Pour it In!** -

The Word of God has cleansing power. One of the surest ways to live a victorious Christian life is to bathe ourselves daily in the purifying principles of the Bible—by reading it, studying it, and obeying it.

A woman in a pagan area of the world became a believer and began attending Bible classes taught by the missionary who had led her to Christ. The teacher soon became discouraged because the new convert seemed to forget everything she was taught. One day the missionary remarked impatiently to the young Christian, "Sometimes I wonder what's the use trying to teach you anything. You forget it all anyway. You remind me of a strainer. Everything I pour into your mind runs right through." The student quickly responded, "I may not recall everything, but just as water passes through a strainer and makes it clean, what you have taught me from the Bible helps make me clean. I need that. That's why I keep coming back." The forgetful new Christian may not have retained all of the missionary's instruction, but as the truths of the Bible "poured through" her mind, she felt its cleansing effect.

It's important for us to be in God's Word every day—but even more important for the Word to be in us, where its purifying power can do its most effective work. —R W DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

**If we pour over God's Word,
His cleansing power will pour through us.**

ILLUSTRATION - In Hampton Court near London, there is a grapevine under glass; it is about 250 years old and has but one root which is at least two feet thick. Some of the branches are 200 feet long. Because of skillful cutting and pruning, the vine produces several tons of grapes each year. See [The Great Vine](#) (See [youtube video](#))

Inside Out

You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. — John 15:3

Today's Scripture : John 15:1-8

During an international publishing conference, a young Frenchman described his experience at a book-signing event. A woman picked up one of his books, browsed through it, and exclaimed, "At last, a story that's clean!" He replied gently, "I write clean because I think clean. It's not an effort." What he expressed in print came from within, where Christ had altered the very core of his life.

John 15 records Jesus' lesson to His disciples about abiding in Him as the only means to a fruitful life. In the midst of His imagery of the vine and the branches, Jesus said: "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you" (v.3). Bible scholar W. E. Vine says that the Greek word for clean means "free from impure admixture, without blemish, spotless."

A pure heart is the work of Christ, and only in His power can we remain clean. We often fail, but "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to . . . cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Renewal is an inside job.

Jesus has made us clean through His sacrifice and His Word. Our speech and actions that strike others as being fresh and pure flow from inside out as we abide in Christ. By: David C. McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Admitting that we're guilty,
Acknowledging our sin,
Then trusting in Christ's sacrifice
Will make us clean within.
—Sper

Confession to God brings cleansing from God.

John 15:4 "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.

- **Abide:** John 6:68,69 8:31 Song 8:5 Lu 8:15 Ac 11:23 14:22 Ga 2:20 Col 1:23 Col 2:6 1Th 3:5 Heb 10:39 1Jn 2:6,24-28 2Jn 1:9 Jude 1:20,21
- I: John 6:56 14:20 17:23 Ro 8:9,10 2Co 13:5 Eph 3:17 Col 1:27
- As: Isa 27:10,11 Eze 15:2-5 Ho 14:8 2Co 12:8-10 Ga 2:20 Php 1:11
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE COMMAND TO DISCIPLES ABIDE IN THE VINE

Abide (meno) in Me, and I in you - To say it another way "Live in such a manner that you are at home in Me and that I am at home in you." (Read the short classic tract [My Heart, Christ's Home](#)) Jesus command to abide is in the [aorist imperative](#) which calls for our need to [depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) and stay. We are in an unbreakable union and that cannot be severed. However what can be broken by our unconfessed sin is our ongoing fellowship and communion with Christ. Unconfessed sin will also short circuit the supernatural supply of power from the Holy Spirit (cf Eph 4:30+, 1Th 5:19+) which in turn will negatively impact our bearing of spiritual fruit.

THOUGHT - And remember that abiding in Christ should be our daily delight reflecting a lifelong intimate relationship with Him. If you are married, you understand this dynamic for after 50 years (I've been married 55 years) you are closer to each other than on the honeymoon! "There will be times when you feel closer and times when you feel more distant. But the key is to keep coming back to Him and to keep working on your relationship with Him. You can't put it on autopilot." (Cole)

[When we walk with the Lord, In the light of His Word](#)

What a glory He sheds on our way

While we do His good will, He **ABIDES** with us still

And with all who will trust and obey.

I don't know how close you are to Jesus,
but I know this, that you are as close as you want to be.

*Fruitfulness for Christ
depends on fellowship with Christ.*

Brian Bill on **Abide (meno) in Me** - This is a call to vigilance. We must stay closely connected to Christ at all times. To "abide" means, "to stay," "to dwell or remain," or "to settle in for the long term." Jesus is saying something like this: "Live in such a manner that you are at home in Me and that I am at home in you.".....John 15:8: "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." This is not a suggestion but an imperative. When we settle in with the Savior we will demonstrate abundant fruitfulness and bring glory to God. Conversely, if we do not remain in fellowship with Christ, our baskets will be barren and we'll bomb out spiritually

MacArthur has an interesting thought on the command to **abide** - The Lord's command "Abide in Me" (v. 4) is primarily a plea to false disciples of Christ to repent and express true faith in Him. It also serves to encourage genuine believers to abide in Him in the fullest, deepest, most complete sense. He is the vine, the Father the vinedresser, the abiding branches illustrate the eleven and all other true disciples, and the non-abiding branches picture Judas and all other false disciples like him. One last time before His death, Jesus warned against following the pattern of Judas. He challenged all who claim to believe in Him to demonstrate the genuineness of their faith by enduring faith in Him. (See [The MacArthur Commentary](#))

*Faithfulness is God's requirement;
fruitfulness is His reward.*

James Rosscup has an entire book on abiding [in Christ](#) and he sums up the concept of abiding in three ways - "**Abiding** involves a person's relating himself to Christ the Vine, to His Person and His purpose; rejecting attitudes, words, actions, or interests which Christ's Word reveals He cannot share; and receiving the quality-essence of Christ's imparted life for authentic fulfillment." (BORROW [Abiding in Christ PAGE 116](#))

Spurgeon - "Do not merely find a temporary shelter in me, as a ship runs into harbour in stormy weather, and then comes out again when the gale is over; but cast anchor in me, as the vessel does when it reaches its desired haven. Be not as branches that are tied on, and so can be taken off, but be livingly joined to me. 'Abide in me.'" You must bear fruit, or else be cast away; but you cannot bear any fruit except by real union and constant communion with Jesus Christ your Lord.....Give good heed to that sweet word, beloved brethren, "Abide in me." Do not seem to get into Christ, and then depart from him. Add constancy to all your other graces.....It is not a transient faith, it is not saying, "I was converted so many years ago;" but it is a living faith, an abiding faith, a constant vital union with Christ that marks the true heir of heaven.....Dear friends, beware of a Christless Christianity. Beware of trying to be Christians without living daily upon Christ. The branch may just as well try to bear fruit apart from the vine as for you to hope to maintain the reality of Christian life without continual fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.....There is the great canon of the Christian life. Hold fast to Christ. Not only live with him, but live in him. "Abide in me." And on! let Jesus not be merely your companion now and then, on holy occasions, but let him abide in you; make your heart a temple; let him find his sweetest rest his home in you. ([Expositions in John](#))

Steven Cole warns that "abiding is not an effortless, passive matter, as it sometimes is taught: "Just as the branch effortlessly lets the life of the vine flow through it, so you are to do nothing." (ED: SOUNDS A LITTLE LIKE THE UNBIBLICAL PHRASE "LET GOD, LET GO!") I've heard it said, "If you're striving, you're not abiding." (ED: ONE WRITER CALLS IT "EFFORTLESS RESTING" WHICH ALSO SOUNDS A BIT LIKE "LET GO, LET GOD!") That kind of teaching is out of balance. The Bible talks about **the need to strive** against sin (Heb. 12:4). Paul said that he labored and strived for Christ, but added that he did so "according to His power, which mightily works within me" (Col. 1:29) (SEE MY DISCUSSION OF THE [Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)). He pictured the Christian life as a battle, a fight, and an athletic contest (Eph. 6:10-12, 1 Cor. 9:26-27; 2 Tim. 4:7).

[Scofield Study Bible](#) says "To abide in Christ is, on the one hand, to have no known sin unjudged and unconfessed, no interest into which He is not brought, no life which He cannot share. On the other hand, the abiding one takes all burdens to Him, and draws all wisdom, life, and strength from Him. It is not unceasing consciousness of these things, and of Him, but that nothing is allowed in the life which separates from Him." ([Fulfilling Your Purpose in Life John 15:1-6](#))

Warren Wiersbe agrees with Pastor Cole regarding the error of taking a "passive" approach to abiding in Christ - This abiding relationship is natural to the branch and the vine, but **it must be cultivated** in the Christian life. **It is not automatic.** (ED: IT IS NOT "LET GOD, LET GO," BUT MORE LIKE "LET GOD AND LET'S GO") Abiding in Christ demands worship, meditation on God's Word, prayer, sacrifice, and service—but what a joyful experience it is! Once you have begun to cultivate this deeper communion with Christ, you have no desire to return to the shallow life of the careless Christian. (Bolding added)

*Our union with Christ is
a **living union**, so we may bear fruit;
a **loving union**, so that we may enjoy Him; and
a **lasting union**, so that we need not be afraid.*
-- Warren Wiersbe

As the branch (klema) (ou = absolutely) **cannot** (**dunamai**) **bear fruit** (**karpos**) **of itself unless it abides** (**meno**) **in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide** (**meno**) **in Me** - This comparison with a fruit bearing branch is a clear and simple prescription on how a believer can bear fruit. Supernatural fruit requires a supernatural union with the Vine, Christ Jesus. Or stated another way, in simple terms, failure to abide negatively impacts our ability to bear supernatural fruit. It does not impact our unbreakable covenant union with Christ.

David Guzik - Fruit bearing is impossible without abiding; but it is inevitable with abiding. The quality and quantity of the fruit may differ, but the presence of fruit will be inevitable.

NET NOTE on **The branch cannot bear fruit by itself** unless it remains connected to the vine, from which its life and sustenance flows. As far as the disciples were concerned, they would produce no fruit from themselves if they did not remain in their relationship to Jesus, because the eternal life which a disciple must possess in order to bear fruit originates with Jesus; He is the source of all life and productivity for the disciple.

Abide (continue, endure, remain, stay) (**3306**) **meno** in simple terms means to remain in the same place or position over a period of time. It means to reside, stay, live, lodge, tarry or dwell. Menō describes something that remains where it is, continues in a fixed state, or endures. **Meno** can mean "to take up permanent residence" or "to make yourself at home." **Meno** is the root of the Greek noun mone which means mansion or habitation (Jn 14:2, 23). More than one half of the uses of **meno** are by John in his Gospel and letters. **Meno** is used to describe the Holy Spirit coming on Jesus and remaining (Jn 1:32-33). **Meno** is used figuratively to describe the wrath of God abiding (continually = present tense) on all who do not believe in Jesus as their Savior (Jn 3:36). Most of the uses in Acts and in the Synoptic Gospels (and several times in John - Jn 1:38-39, 2:12, et al) refer to physically continuing in a place and/or lodging there. When **meno** is used of one staying or dwelling with another physically, it often still has an ethical sense in that it implies fellowship, intimacy, communion as discussed more fully in the following paragraph.

In many of the uses of **meno** the translation as to stay, to remain, to abide, etc, implies more than just position (i.e., more than them just physically staying, remaining or abiding somewhere), but when used of persons staying, remaining or abiding, **meno** often includes the ideas of fellowship, friendship, communion, companionship and harmony. For example, read Mt. 10:11, Mt. 26:38, Lk 1:56, 19:5, Jn 1:39-40, et al, where the idea is not only physical presence but relational interaction. In short, **meno** used in this sense speaks of an at-homeness with someone. Most of us would not invite someone to remain in our home if we were out of fellowship with them! And so you can see that **meno** can convey the idea of making someone feel at home -- think of this sense in uses in which Jesus abides in us (Jn 15:5). Do we "make Him feel at home?" Do we say, do or watch things in our home He is in that might make Him uncomfortable or "uneasy?" I am very convicted by my own question!

Wuest - Abide is one of John's favorite words. The Greek word is **menō**. Its classical usage will throw light upon the way it is used in the NT. It meant "to stay, stand fast, abide, to stay at home, stay where one is, not stir, to remain as one was, to remain as before." In the NT, **meno** means "to sojourn, to tarry, to dwell at one's own house, to tarry as a guest, to lodge, to maintain unbroken fellowship with one, to adhere to his party, to be constantly present to help one, to put forth constant influence upon one." "In the mystic phraseology of John, God is said to **menō in Christ**, i.e., to dwell as it were in Him, to be continually operative in Him by His divine influence and energy (Jn 14:10); Christians are said to **menō** in God, to be rooted as it were in Him, knit to Him by the Spirit they have received from Him (1Jn 2:6, 24, 27, 3:6); hence one is said to **menō** in Christ or in God, and conversely, Christ or God is said to **menō** in one (Jn 6:56, 15:4)." Thayer quotes Ruckert in the use of **menō** in the words "Something has established itself permanently within my soul, and always exerts its power in me. The word **meno** therefore has the ideas of "permanence of position, occupying a place as one's dwelling place, holding and maintaining unbroken communion and fellowship with another." (See John's uses below). The words "abide, dwell, tarry, continue, be present," are the various translations in the AV Study these places where the word occurs, and obtain a comprehensive view of its usage. In John 15, the abiding of the Christian in Christ refers to his maintaining unbroken fellowship with Him. He makes his spiritual home in Christ. There is nothing between himself and his Saviour, no sin unjudged and not put away. He depends upon Him for spiritual life and vigor as the branch is dependent upon the vine. The abiding of Christ (**Ed**: And the Spirit of Christ = Ro 8:9) in the Christian is His permanent residence in Him and His supplying that Christian with the necessary spiritual energy to produce fruit in his life through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. ([Word Studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

MacArthur - Meno is used in a theological sense to refer to the truth that resides in believers (1John 2:14, 24-27; cf. John 5:38 where Jesus upbraids the unbelieving Jews for not having the Word **abiding** in them), to true believers **abiding** in the Word (John 8:31) and thus not being in spiritual darkness (John 12:46), to the Spirit abiding in believers (John 14:17; cf. 1 John 4:12, 15, 16) and, most significant, to believers abiding **in Christ** (John 6:56; 14:10; 15:4-7, 9-10; 1 John 2:6, 10, 28; 3:6, 24; 4:13). The truth of the Word, which abides in believers forever, gives them “the mind of Christ” (1Cor. 2:16). (SEE [1-3 John MacArthur New Testament Commentary - Page 219](#))

NET Bible Note on **abide** (meno) "The Greek word (menō) translated resides indicates a close, intimate (and permanent) relationship between the believer and God. It is very important to note that for the author of the Gospel of John and the Johannine Epistles every genuine Christian has this type of relationship with God, and the person who does not have this type of relationship (cf. 2 John 9) is not a believer at all (in spite of what he or she may claim).

Meno in Gospel of John and John's Letters - Jn. 1:32; Jn. 1:33; Jn. 1:38; Jn. 1:39; Jn. 2:12; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:40; Jn. 5:38; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:56; Jn. 7:9; Jn. 8:31; Jn. 8:35; Jn. 9:41; Jn. 10:40; Jn. 11:6; Jn. 11:54; Jn. 12:24; Jn. 12:34; Jn. 12:46; Jn. 14:10; Jn. 14:17; Jn. 14:25; Jn. 15:4; Jn. 15:5; Jn. 15:6; Jn. 15:7; Jn. 15:9; Jn. 15:10; Jn. 15:16; Jn. 19:31; Jn. 21:22; Jn. 21:23; 1 Jn. 2:6; 1 Jn. 2:10; 1 Jn. 2:14; 1 Jn. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:19; 1 Jn. 2:24; 1 Jn. 2:27; 1 Jn. 2:28; 1 Jn. 3:6; 1 Jn. 3:9; 1 Jn. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 3:17; 1 Jn. 3:24; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:13; 1 Jn. 4:15; 1 Jn. 4:16; 2 Jn. 1:2; 2 Jn. 1:9;

Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels (BORROW) IVP Series - This is the first edition, not the second edition published in 2013. This is worth checking out. Here is a sample on the entry for **ABIDING**...

As a common translation of the Greek verb menein, “to abide” has rich theological associations in the Fourth Gospel where 40 of the 112 NT occurrences of the verb occur (it appears another 26 times in the Epistles of John). It is used to communicate the enduring character of Christ*, and more importantly, when used with the preposition “in” and a personal object, it points to the relationship of mutual indwelling of the Father, the Son (see Son of God) and the believer.

1. Abiding As a Quality of Character

In the Greek OT menein, when used in a theological sense, most commonly speaks of the abiding character of God*. In contrast to the transitory nature of all things human, God remains, he endures, he is immutable. In the NT period this was considered to be a trait of the Messiah also, as evidenced by the crowds in John’s Gospel who say, “We have heard from the Law* that the Christ abides forever” (Jn 12:34). And John would have us know that Jesus is the Son who abides forever (Jn 8:35), who gives food that abides unto eternal life (Jn 6:27), and who enables one to produce fruit that abides (Jn 15:16).

In addition, in the first use of the verb in the Gospel, the Evangelist relates that John the Baptist (see John the Baptist) saw the Holy Spirit (see Holy Spirit) coming down from heaven* as a dove and remaining (emeinen) on Jesus (Jn 1:32). This was no momentary experience of the Spirit, perhaps like that of the judges or prophets*, but an enduring reality in Jesus’ life.

2. Abiding in Relationship

Of greater interest is the use in John’s Gospel of the phrase “to abide in” with a personal object to express the relationship of Jesus to the Father and both to believers. The priority must be given to Jesus’ mutual indwelling with the Father: “Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you are not from myself, but the Father who abides in me does his work” (Jn 14:10). This is a dynamic relationship which energizes the ministry of Jesus. Out of this personal union come his words and his works which manifest the character of God. “Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may learn and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father” (Jn 10:37–38 NIV).

The Son obeys the Father and imitates the Father (Jn 5:19–20; 14:31), but the Father imparts his life to the Son (“I live because of the Father,” Jn 6:57; also Jn 5:26), and together they share this common life and are united in love (Jn 3:35; 5:20; 14:31; 15:10; 17:21–23). This relationship between the Father and the Son becomes the model and source of the relationship between Jesus and his disciples*.

Jesus called men and women into this relationship of mutual indwelling using the most graphic imagery: “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him” (Jn 6:56). Just as the Father has loved Jesus, so Jesus has loved his disciples, and they are to abide in his love (Jn 15:9). Just as Jesus has remained in his Father’s love by obeying his commands (see Commandment), so the disciples are to abide in Jesus’ love by obeying his commands (Jn 15:10). And as they abide in him, Jesus will convey his life to them,

even as a vine* gives life to its branches (Jn 15:4–6). His life will manifest itself in their lives as they bear fruit, even as his works were the work of his Father. Apart from him the disciples can do nothing, just as Jesus could do nothing apart from the Father (Jn 5:19, 30).

Jesus mediates to his disciples the relationship he enjoys with his heavenly Father. “Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me” (Jn 6:57 NIV). The one who loves Jesus will be loved by the Father, and together the Father and the Son will make their abode (monē—a cognate of menein) with him (Jn 14:23). “I have given them the glory* that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me” (Jn 17:22–23). This is the perfect unity that results from the mutual indwelling of the Father, the Son and the believers.

“Abiding in Christ” assumes the most intimate union possible. The identification of Jesus with the true vine (Jn 15:1), a symbol of Israel* (cf. Hos 10:1; Jer 2:21; Ps 80:9–12, 15–16; Is 5:7), in which the disciples are to abide, suggests a corporate dimension to his person that has important christological implications.

This union with Christ, however, must not be confused with ideas of the Hellenistic mystery cults (see Hellenism), some of which taught a loss of individuality or a pantheistic absorption of the believer into the being of the divine. The teaching of the Fourth Gospel maintains throughout a moral dimension that assumes individual responsibility. It is a relationship that always begins with the divine initiative, but which calls for a human response: “Abide in me ... abide in my word ... abide in my love” (Jn 15:4, 7, 9).

F B Meyer - Abide in me, and I in you.

Abiding in Christ does not mean that you must always be thinking about Christ. You are in a house, abiding in its enclosure or beneath its shelter, though you are not always thinking about the house itself. But you always know when you leave it. A man may not be always thinking of his sweet home circle; but he and they may nevertheless be abiding in each other's love. And he knows instantly when any of them is in danger of passing out of the warm tropic of love into the arctic region of separation. So we may not always be sensible of the revealed presence of Jesus; we may be occupied with many things of necessary duty—but as soon as the heart is disengaged it will become aware that He has been standing near all the while; and there will be a bright flash of recognition, and a repetition of the Psalmist's cry, “Thou art near, O Lord.” Ah! life of bliss, lived under the thought of His presence; as dwellers in Alpine valleys live beneath the solemn splendor of some grand snowcapped range of mountains!

The indwelling is reciprocal. He is in us, and we are in Him. He is in us as the source of our being; we are in Him as filled with His fullness. He is in us all-communicative; we are in Him all-receptive. He is in us as the sunlight in the else darkened chamber; we are in Him as the cold green log cast into the flaming furnace, glows through and through with ruddy and transforming heat. He is in us as the sap in the veins of the tree; we are in Him as the branches.

Abide in Me, and I in you.

The unity between the Lord and his members is beautifully set forth in this exquisite parable; which was perhaps suggested by the swaying of a vine in the evening air, as they essayed to go from the upper room towards Gethsemane. In certain conservatories the pliant branches are trained along roof or wall for vast distances; yet one life pervades the whole plant, from the rugged root to the furthest twig and leaf and cluster. Thus there is one holy life pervading all who have belonged, or shall belong, to Jesus. They live because He lives. His life is theirs.

We are in Christ by grace; but we need to realize and accentuate the union by meditation and prayer. Waiting more absolutely for his impulses in intercession and action. Being silent for Him to speak Drawing on Him by the constant appeal of faith which becomes as natural as breathing. Looking away to Him for his commendation. Seeking only his verdict on what may have been said and done So closely joined to Him, that He may produce in and through us whatever fruit He will for the refreshment of men and the glory of God.

We are in Christ for ever, so far as our standing is concerned; but we may be “taken away,” so far as our opportunities of ministry are concerned. How many of us have failed to be what He desired, so that He has had to bestow elsewhere the luxury of ministering to Him!

We are in Christ, not because we hold Him, but because He holds us; therefore we must expect the Fathers pruning. Yet do not dread the knife. It is his Word, wielded by a Father's hand; and if we will yield to the golden pruning-knife of the Word, we shall escape the iron one of sorrow.

W. Hay Aitken - From moment to moment, and from hour to hour, the inner nature of man is to be continuously sustained with the life of God. Only as I am constantly receiving His fullness into my emptiness am I really living in the true, full, deep sense of the

word, that life of eternity, which is my privilege now, and will be my glory hereafter.

Robert Morgan - [BORROW From this Verse](#) - The Exchanged Life

Hudson Taylor opened the interior of China to the gospel as no missionary had done before, but the effort brought him to the brink of collapse. A letter from fellow missionary John McCarthy turned the tide. The secret to inner victory, said McCarthy, is "... **abiding, not striving nor struggling; looking off to Him, trusting Him for present power.**"

Taylor read those words in a little mission station at Chin-kiang on an autumn Saturday in 1869, and ... as I read, I saw it all. I looked to Jesus; and when I saw, oh how the joy flowed.

John 15 took center stage in his life as he realized the joy of abiding in Christ. He later wrote: As to work, mine was never so plentiful or so difficult; but the weight and strain are now gone. The last month has been perhaps the happiest in my life; and I long to tell you a little of what the Lord has done for my soul.

As I read [McCarthy's letter], I looked to Jesus and saw that He had said, "I will never leave you." Ah, there is rest. For has He not promised to abide with me? As I thought of the Vine and the branches, what light the blessed Spirit poured into my soul!

Later Hudson found a little booklet by Harriet Beecher Stowe that so articulated his experience that he sent it to all his missionaries. Mrs. Stowe wrote:

How does the branch bear fruit? Not by incessant effort for sunshine or air; not by vain struggles. It simply abides in the vine in undisturbed union, and blossoms and fruit appear as of spontaneous growth. How, then, shall a Christian bear fruit? By efforts and struggles? No. There must be a full concentration of the thoughts and affections on Christ; a complete surrender to Him; a constant looking to Him for grace.

(ED: ONE CAVEAT WHILE CLEARLY ABIDING IN NOT STRUGGLING, IT IS NOT "LET GO, LET GOD," BUT MORE LIKE "LET GOD, LET'S GO." IN OTHER WORDS WE ARE TO ABIDE IN JESUS, BUT HE DOES NOT MAKE US PASSIVE. STATED ANOTHER WAY, OUR FOCUS MUST BE ON *BEING*, THEN *DOING*, NOT THE CONVERSE!)

"Abide in Me," said Jesus, "and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself ... neither can you unless you abide in Me."

[Bearing Grapes](#)

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.
— John 15:4

Today's Scripture : John 15:1-8

As I read a modern paraphrase of John 15:1-8, I began to reconsider my concept of what it means to be a fruitful Christian. Jesus said, "I am the Real Vine and my Father is the Farmer. He cuts off every branch of Me that doesn't bear grapes. And every branch that is grape-bearing He prunes back so it will bear even more" (The Message by Eugene Peterson).

*Fruitfulness is not primarily a matter of what I accomplish.
It's the result of my being in close fellowship with Him.*

Grapes—they're the result of the life of the vine flowing through the branches. So often I have viewed fruitfulness in the Christian life as activities such as teaching Sunday school or leading a Bible study. These acts of service are good and worthwhile, but Jesus said that being fruitful is allowing His life to flow through me: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (v.4). No one can bear "grapes" without being connected to Christ, the Vine. Fruitfulness is not primarily a matter of what I accomplish. It's the result of my being in close fellowship with Him.

Whenever you wonder if you're being a "fruitful" Christian, ask yourself, "Am I like Jesus? Is His life flowing through me in the ordinary activities and relationships of each day? Do the 'grapes' of my life point others to the Vine?" By: David C. McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Closer let me cling, my Savior—
You're the all-sufficient Vine;
You alone can make me fruitful,
Blessed source of strength divine.

—Bosch

Fruitfulness for Christ depends on fellowship with Christ.

[In the Vine](#)

No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. John 15:4

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 15:1–8

One spring after a particularly dreary winter during which she helped a family member through a long illness, Emma found encouragement each time she walked past a cherry tree near her home in Cambridge, England. Bursting out at the top of the pink blossoms grew blossoms of white. A clever gardener had grafted into the tree a branch of white flowers. When Emma passed the unusual tree, she thought of Jesus's words about being the Vine and His followers the branches (John 15:1–8).

By calling Himself the Vine, Jesus was speaking of an image familiar to the Israelites in the Old Testament, for there the vine symbolized God's people (Psalm 80:8–9; Hosea 10:1). Jesus extended this symbolism to Himself, saying He was the Vine and that His followers were grafted into Him as branches. And as they remained in Him, receiving His nourishment and strength, they would bear fruit (John 15:5).

As Emma supported her family member, she needed the reminder that she was connected to Jesus. Seeing the white flowers among the pink ones gave her a visual prompt of the truth that as she remained in the Vine, she gained nourishment through Him.

When we who believe in Jesus embrace the idea of being as close to Him as a branch is to a vine, our faith is strengthened and enriched. By: Amy Boucher Pye (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

How are you receiving spiritual nourishment from Jesus? What will help you remain in the Vine?

Jesus, thank You for helping me to remain in You. May I find the peace, hope, and strength I need today.

[Honoring God](#)

[Jesus said,] "If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. John 15:5

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 15:1-5

The church service was still in progress, and we had some visitors there that morning. The speaker was only halfway through his sermon when I noticed one of our visitors walking out. I was curious and concerned, so I walked out to talk with her.

"You're leaving so soon," I said, approaching her. "Is there a problem I can help with?" She was frank and forthright. "Yes," she said, "my problem is that sermon! I don't accept what the preacher is saying." He had said that no matter what we accomplish in life, the credit and praise belong to God. "At least," the woman moaned, "I deserve some credit for my achievements!"

I explained to her what the pastor meant. People do deserve recognition and appreciation for what they do. Yet even our gifts and talents are from God, so He gets the glory. Even Jesus, the Son of God, said, "The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing" (John 5:19). He told His followers, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (15:5).

We acknowledge the Lord as the one who helps us to accomplish everything. By: Lawrence Darmani (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, let me not forget to acknowledge You for all that You do for me and enable me to do.

God's children do His will for His glory.

[Cut-Flower Christians](#)

Without Me you can do nothing. — John 15:5

Today's Scripture : John 15:1-8

Almost every woman likes to receive a bouquet of cut flowers. After admiring and smelling them, she wastes no time getting them into water. Even though fresh and beautiful when she gets them, their days are numbered. Because they've been severed from their

life-source, they will soon wither and die. One day she will have to throw them away.

Author Lloyd Ogilvie sees in this a picture of the Christian whose spiritual vitality has faded and shriveled. Such a person has become a “cut-flower Christian.” This is similar to the illustration Jesus used in describing the vine and the branches. Just as a branch can’t bear fruit by itself, He explained, we can’t bear spiritual fruit unless we abide in Him, the true vine (Jn. 15:4).

If a branch could speak, it wouldn’t apologize for its need to depend on the vine for bearing fruit. It would say instead, “For this I was made!” Jesus likewise knew we were made for dependence on Him, our life-source—no apology needed! In fact, such dependence is the only way to avoid becoming a “cut-flower Christian.”

Let’s embrace His declaration, “Without Me you can do nothing.” He is really saying, “With Me you can do everything I appoint for you, including bearing much fruit!” By: Joanie Yoder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, break me, then cleanse me and fill me,
And keep me abiding in Thee
That fellowship may be unbroken
And Thy name be hallowed in me.
—Anon.

***Fellowship with Christ
is the secret of fruitfulness.***

C H Spurgeon - "Abide in me."— John 15:4 - Morning and Evening

Communion with Christ is a certain cure for every ill. Whether it be the wormwood of woe, or the cloying surfeit of earthly delight, close fellowship with the Lord Jesus will take bitterness from the one, and satiety from the other. Live near to Jesus, Christian, and it is a matter of secondary importance whether thou livest on the mountain of honour or in the valley of humiliation. Living near to Jesus, thou art covered with the wings of God, and underneath thee are the everlasting arms. Let nothing keep thee from that hallowed intercourse, which is the choice privilege of a soul wedded to THE WELL-BELOVED. Be not content with an interview now and then, but seek always to retain his company, for only in his presence hast thou either comfort or safety. Jesus should not be unto us a friend who calls upon us now and then, but one with whom we walk evermore. Thou hast a difficult road before thee: see, O traveller to heaven, that thou go not without thy guide. Thou hast to pass through the fiery furnace; enter it not unless, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, thou hast the Son of God to be thy companion. Thou hast to storm the Jericho of thine own corruptions: attempt not the warfare until, like Joshua, thou hast seen the Captain of the Lord's host, with his sword drawn in his hand. Thou art to meet the Esau of thy many temptations: meet him not until at Jabbok's brook thou hast laid hold upon the angel, and prevailed. In every case, in every condition, thou wilt need Jesus; but most of all, when the iron gates of death shall open to thee. Keep thou close to thy soul's Husband, lean thy head upon his bosom, ask to be refreshed with the spiced wine of his pomegranate, and thou shalt be found of him at the last, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Seeing thou hast lived with him, and lived in him here, thou shalt abide with him for ever.

C H Spurgeon - "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself." — John 15:4 (READ THIS DEVOTIONAL IS YOU ARE SEEING LITTLE FRUIT!)

***Be most in those engagements
which you have experimentally proved
to draw you nearest to Christ,
because it is from him that all your fruits proceed.***

How did you begin to bear fruit? It was when you came to Jesus and cast yourselves on his great atonement, and rested on his finished righteousness. Ah! what fruit you had then! Do you remember those early days? Then indeed the vine flourished, the tender grape appeared, the pomegranates budded forth, and the beds of spices gave forth their smell. Have you declined since then? If you have, we charge you to remember that time of love, and repent, and do thy first works. (Rev 2:4) Be most in those engagements which you have experimentally proved to draw you nearest to Christ, because it is from him that all your fruits proceed. (**ED**: NOTICE WHAT HE DOES NOT SAY -- YOU NEED TO GO AND BEAR FRUIT. NO! YOU GO TO THE VINE AND HE WILL BEAR FRUIT.) Any holy exercise which will bring you to him will help you to bear fruit. The sun is, no doubt, a great worker in fruit-creating among the trees of the orchard: and Jesus is still more so among the trees of his garden of grace.

When have you been the most fruitless? Has not it been when you have lived farthest from the Lord Jesus Christ, when you have slackened in prayer, when you have departed from the simplicity of your faith, when

your graces have engrossed your attention instead of your Lord, when you have said, "My mountain standeth firm, I shall never be moved"; and have forgotten where your strength dwells—has not it been then that your fruit has ceased?

Some of us have been taught that we have nothing out of Christ, by terrible abasements of heart before the Lord; and when we have seen the utter barrenness and death of all creature power, we have cried in anguish, "From him all my fruit must be found, for no fruit can ever come from me." We are taught, by past experience, that the more simply we depend upon the grace of God in Christ, and wait upon the Holy Spirit, the more we shall bring forth fruit unto God. Oh! to trust Jesus for fruit as well as for life.

[More Than Information](#)

Abide in Me, and I in you. — John 15:4

Today's Scripture : John 15:1-13

How is behavior altered? In his book *The Social Animal*, David Brooks notes that some experts have said people just need to be taught the long-term risks of bad behavior. For example, he writes: "Smoking can lead to cancer. Adultery destroys families, and lying destroys trust. The assumption was that once you reminded people of the foolishness of their behavior, they would be motivated to stop. Both reason and will are obviously important in making moral decisions and exercising self-control. But neither of these character models has proven very effective." In other words, information alone is not powerful enough to transform behavior.

As Jesus' followers, we want to grow and change spiritually. More than two millennia ago, Jesus told His disciples how that can happen. He said, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (John 15:4). Jesus is the Vine and we, His followers, are the branches. If we're honest, we know we're utterly helpless and spiritually ineffective apart from Him.

Jesus transforms us spiritually and reproduces His life in us—as we abide in Him. By: Marvin Williams (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, take my life and make it wholly Thine;
Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine.
Take all my will, my passion, self, and pride;
I now surrender, Lord—in me **abide**.
—Orr

A change in behavior begins with Jesus changing our heart.

[More Than Information](#)

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A change in behavior begins with Jesus changing our heart.

Oswald Chambers - Get a move on

In the Matter of Determination. Abide in Me. John 15:4.

The Spirit of Jesus is put into me by the Atonement, then I have to construct with patience the way of thinking that is exactly in accordance with my Lord. God will not make me think like Jesus, I have to do it myself; I have to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. "Abide in Me"—in intellectual matters, in money matters, in every one of the matters that make human life what it is. It is not a bandbox life.

Am I preventing God from doing things in my circumstances because I say it will hinder my communion with Him? That is an impertinence. It does not matter what my circumstances are, I can be as sure of abiding in Jesus in them as in a prayer meeting. I have not to change and arrange my circumstances myself. With Our Lord the inner abiding was unsullied; He was at home with God wherever His body was placed. He never chose His own circumstances, but was meek towards His Father's dispensations for Him. Think of the amazing leisure of Our Lord's Life! We keep God at excitement point, there is none of the serenity of the life hid with Christ in God about us.

Think of the things that take you out of abiding in Christ—"Yes, Lord, just a minute, I have got this to do; Yes, I will abide when once this is finished; when this week is over, it will be all right, I will abide then." Get a move on; begin to abide now. In the initial stages it is a continual effort until it becomes so much the law of life that you abide in Him unconsciously. Determine to abide in Jesus wherever you are placed.

Bearing Grapes

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.
—John 15:4

Today's Scripture : John 15:1-8

As I read a modern paraphrase of John 15:1-8, I began to reconsider my concept of what it means to be a fruitful Christian. Jesus said, "I am the Real Vine and my Father is the Farmer. He cuts off every branch of Me that doesn't bear grapes. And every branch that is grape-bearing He prunes back so it will bear even more" (The Message by Eugene Peterson).

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Closer let me cling, my Savior—
You're the all-sufficient Vine;
You alone can make me fruitful,
Blessed source of strength divine.
—Bosch

Fruitfulness for Christ depends on fellowship with Christ.

BOB UTLEY'S SPECIAL TOPIC: "ABIDING" IN JOHN'S WRITINGS

John's Gospel describes a special relationship between God the Father and Jesus the Son. It is a mutual intimacy based on Jesus' subjection and equality. Throughout John's Gospel Jesus speaks what He hears the Father saying, does what He sees the Father doing. Jesus does not act on His own, but on the will of the Father (i.e., John 5:19,30; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10,24).

This intimate fellowship and servanthood sets the pattern for the relationship between Jesus and His followers. This intimate association was not the absorption of the individual (as in eastern mysticism), but an ethical, moral lifestyle of emulation (cf. John

13:15; 1 Pet. 2:21; 1 John 3:16). Fellowship was

1. cognitive (the worldview of the gospel as the Word of God)
2. relational (Jesus was God's promised Messiah to be trusted in and leaned on)
3. ethical (His character reproduced in godly believers)

Jesus is the ideal man, the true Israelite, the standard of humanity. He reveals what Adam should have, and could have been (humanly speaking). Jesus is the ultimate "image of God." He restores the fallen divine image in mankind (cf. Gen. 1:26-27) by

1. full, unique, and ultimate revelation of God (cf. John 1:18; 14:7-10; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:1-2)
2. dying on our behalf (substitutionary atonement, cf. Mark 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21)
3. providing humans an example to follow (cf. John 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:21; 1 John 1:7; 3:16)

The term "abiding" (*menō*) reflects the goal of Christlikeness (cf. Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 1:4; 4:13; 1 Thess. 3:13; 4:3; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 2:4; 1 Pet. 1:15), which demonstrates the restoration of the image of God lost in the the Fall (cf. Genesis 3). This reunion of God and His ultimate creation, mankind, for the purpose of fellowship is the Apostle Paul's "in Christ" and the Apostle John's "abide in Me" (i.e., the main text is John 15).

The key text on "abiding" is John 15, which is part of the upper room message (i.e., John 13-17) to Jesus' disciples the night of the Last Supper. It must be noted that this context is a warning, as well as a comforting promise. The branches that do not bear fruit (i.e., the sign of a true faith relationship with Jesus) are cut off and burned. Even the branches that bear fruit are pruned so as to produce more fruit. Fruit bearing is crucial imagery of a saved person (cf. Matt. 7:13-23; 13:1-23)! No fruit; no root!

Notice John's usage:

1. Abiding between the Father and Son
 1. the Father in the Son (John 10:38; 14:10,11; 17:21,23)
 2. the Son in the Father (John 10:38; 14:10,11; 17:21)
2. Abiding between Deity and the believer
 1. the Father in the believer (John 14:20,23; 1 John 3:24; 4:12-13,15)
 2. the believer in the Father (John 14:20,23; 17:21; 1 John 2:24,27; 4:13,16)
 3. the Son in the believer (John 6:56; 14:20,23; 15:4,5; 17:23)
 4. the believer in the Son (John 6:56; 14:20,23; 15:4,5,7; 1 John 2:6,24,27,28)
3. Other abiding elements (positive)
 1. the word of God
 - (1) negatively (John 5:38; 8:37; 1 John 1:10; 2 John 9)
 - (2) positively (John 8:31; 15:2; 1 John 2:14,24; 2 John 9)
 2. the love of God (John 15:9-10; 17:26; 1 John 3:17; 4:16)
 3. the Spirit of God
 - (1) on the Son (John 1:32)
 - (2) in the believer (John 14:17)
 4. obedience is abiding (John 14:15-21,23-24; 15:10; Luke 6:46; 1 John 3:24)
 5. love is abiding in light (1 John 2:10)
 6. doing the will of God is abiding (1 John 2:17)
 7. anointing abides (1 John 2:27)
 8. truth abides (2 John 2)
 9. the Son abides (John 8:35; 12:34)
4. Other abiding elements (negative)
 1. the wrath of God abides (John 3:36)
 2. abide in darkness (John 12:46)
 3. thrown away. . . burned (not abiding, John 15:6)
 4. sinning (not abiding, 1 John 3:6)
 5. not loving (not abiding, 1 John 3:14)
 6. not a murderer (not eternal life abiding, 1 John 3:15)
 7. he who does not live abides in death (1 John 3:14)

Related Resources:

- [What Does It Mean To Abide?](#)
- [Things Involved in Abiding](#) - 20 pages on what it means to abide - James Rosscup - recommended reading (If it is unavailable try this trick - perform a search on the page number. It begins on page [106](#) (search that without quotes) and then do the same for the rest of the pages through page 126 and you should be able to read this important section on abiding).

John 15:5 "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.

- **vine:** Ro 12:5 1Co 10:16 12:12,27 1Pe 2:4
- **same:** John 12:24 Pr 11:30 Ho 4:8 Lu 13:6-9 Ro 6:22 7:4 2Co 9:10 Ga 5:22 Eph 5:9 Php 1:11 4:13,17 Col 1:6,10 Jas 1:17 2Pe 1:2-18 3:18
- **apart:** Ac 4:12
- **can:** John 5:19 9:33 2Co 13:8 Php 4:13
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE NECESSITY OF ABIDING FOR EFFECTIVE FRUIT BEARING

I am (ego [eimi](#) - present tense - continually) **the true** ([alethinos](#)) **vine** ([ampelos](#)), **you are the branches** ([klema](#)) - This is a "horticultural" description of every true disciple of Christ. He is the Vine and we are in Him, secure eternally.

He who abides ([meno](#) - present tense - continually) **in Me and I in him, he** (present tense - continually) **bears much fruit** ([karpos](#)) - Clearly continual abiding in the Vine is mandatory if one is to continually produce supernatural fruit. In Jn 15:4 Jesus gave the command to **abide** in Him and this passage explains why that is necessary if we would be fruitful branches. And as Jesus affirms in John 15:16 we are promised lasting fruit if we abide (John 15:16).

Bob Deffinbaugh - His "abiding" in us is not exactly the same as our "abiding" in Him. By abiding in Him, we draw life and strength, and thus we bear fruit. As He abides in us, He imparts His life, truth, and strength to us. Thus, Christ is manifested both *to* us and *through* us. He does not draw His strength from us, but imparts it to us. Our abiding is that of dependence; His abiding is the gracious manifestation of His presence and power in and through us..... I would suggest that we render the term [meno](#) "make one's home" or "make one's abode." To "abide" in Christ as the True Vine is to "make our home" in Him, just as He also "makes His abode" in us. If we wish to stress the "remain" aspect of the term, we might translate [meno](#) "to make our permanent home."..... Let's simplify this definition, and say that Jesus is instructing us to make Him our "home" as He makes His "home" in us. Think about what "home" means to us:

- **Home** is where your heart is; it is where you want to be (especially during holidays).
- **Home** is the place to which you return, the place to which you are eager to get back to (e.g., when you've been on vacation).
- **Home** is where you feel comfortable, and can really be yourself.
- **Home** is a place of safety and security.
- **Home** is where you bring your friends when you wish to have fellowship with them.
- **Home** is our base of operations; it is at the center of what we do.
- **Home** is where you find your strength for life; it is where you eat and sleep.
- **Home** is where the people and the things we love the most are found.
- (ED: Read the classic [My Heart, Christ's Home](#))

*"You in me and I in you," are, in my estimation,
the most profound truth ever revealed on this planet.*

-- Ray Stedman

Ray Stedman says that here Jesus reveals "the fundamental secret of Christian living, out of which everything else flows. These seven words of Jesus, **"You in me and I in you,"** are, in my estimation, the most profound truth ever revealed on this planet. Discovering their meaning is the business of the Christian life. Like Einstein's formula, $E = mc^2$, this simple statement is a description of unbelievable power.....When we begin to put into practice the concept "You in me and I in you," the first person who is changed is ourselves. We grow more Christlike. We display the "fruit of the Spirit." We become more gentle, more gracious, more loving, more easy to live with, more able to cope, more panic-proof. We begin to handle life the way we were intended to do. That is what it means to become Christlike." ([Loving amidst Hate](#))

[Ray Stedman](#) on **abides in Me** - This is an extremely helpful passage! Notice that our Lord divides it into two sections. There is an activity which is to be done, and a passivity which is to be acknowledged -- an active voice and a passive voice. We are to abide in him (that is active, something we do), and we are to let him abide in us (that is passive, something we allow him to do). Both these relationships are absolutely essential, not one as opposed to the other but both together. When our Lord says "Abide in me," he is talking about the will, about the choices, the decisions we make. We must decide to do things which expose ourselves to him and keep ourselves in contact with him. This is what it means to abide in him. We have been placed into Christ by the Holy Spirit. Now we must choose to maintain that relationship by the decisions we make, i.e., decisions to expose ourselves to his Word in order to learn about him, and to relate to him in prayer wherein we converse with him, and to relate to other believers in body-life experiences, i.e., bearing one another's burdens and confessing our faults and sharing in fellowship with one another, wherein we learn about and see Christ in one another. All of this is designed to relate to him -- "**Abide in me.**" If we do that we are fulfilling this active, necessary decision of the will to obey his Word, to do what he says, and to stay in touch with him. This is what Bible study and prayer are all about. They are not mere mechanical practices which every Christian ought to do in order to stay "in" with the crowd, or to maintain his "membership card," or to get "brownie points" with God! No, they are means by which we know him. If you open your Bible and begin to read it without the conscious expectation that it is going to tell you something about him, you will read in vain. If you try to pray as though it were some exercise in which you chalk off fifteen minutes' worth, mechanically going through a list like the turning of a prayer wheel, it is a valueless experience. But if you pray because you are talking with One whom you love and want to know more of, sharing with him out of the fullness of your heart, then prayer becomes a beautiful and marvelous experience. One of the delights of life is to spend time in that kind of prayer.

[Ray Stedman](#) then addresses the crucial significance of Jesus abiding in us - "Let me abide in you." What is that? Well, that has to do with empowerment, enablement. You see, you can make choices but you cannot fulfill them (**ED: IN RELIANCE ON YOUR NATURAL STRENGTH**). And though you are responsible to make the decisions and make the choices, you are not responsible for the power to carry them out. There you are to depend on Him, to let Him abide in you. You are to rest upon His ability to see you through, **to work it out** (**ED: COMPARE OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO WORK OUT OUR SALVATION IN Php 2:12+ WITH GOD'S POWER ENABLING US TO ACTUALLY FULFILL OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO WORK OUT OUR SALVATION IN Php 2:13NLT+**). As you venture out on that basis, you expect Him to support you and to carry you through. Both of these are absolutely essential, and our Lord develops this fact. He says, first, "As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me." That is, "If you do not abide in me, you will be fruitless." Making decisions and then trying to do the whole thing yourself, as though the whole responsibility rests upon you, is going to produce a fruitless Christian life -- intense activity, but no results. On the other hand, he says, "He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." That is, it will be fruitlessness again. If you try to make all the choices and carry all the responsibility yourself, you will lead a fruitless life. On the other hand, if you let him take all the responsibility and you make no choices at all, if you depend on him to do everything including making the choices, you will also have a fruitless life. "Without me you can do nothing." **Both of these are necessary in the Christian experience.** We must make choices, we must determine to expose ourselves to him, we must seek his face in the Word and in prayer and in fellowship with others. And then we must rest on him, count on him to see us through, to supply that enabling power which makes us able to love and forgive and rejoice and give thanks, even when everything is going wrong. When we do, we are abiding in him and letting him abide in us. Without both of those, fruitlessness is the result. You see, you can do many things without depending on Christ. He does not mean that without him you remain just an immobile blob. You can operate your business without Christ. You can make it run well. You can raise your family without Christ. You can even pastor a church without Christ. But if you try, you find that there will be no fruit, no Christlikeness, no manifestation of that beautiful character which arrests the attention of others. Instead there will be a shabby sham, a phony imitation of the real thing, which will drive people away from Christ and will produce nothing but a dull, mechanical religiosity which is piousness without God.

For apart (choris) from Me you can (dunamai) do (ou = absolutely) **nothing - For** (term of explanation) explains that when we are doing Christian work but doing it in our own energy and not relying on the supernatural sap from Christ the Vine, we are not able to accomplish anything of eternal value. **Can do nothing** is a strong double negative (not *ou me* but *ou + oudeis*) meaning absolutely nothing! Period!

Paul has an excellent parallel thought in 2 Corinthians 3:5-6+ writing - "Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider ANYTHING (CF "NOTHING" IN Jn 15:5) as coming from ourselves, but **our adequacy is from God** (CF "ABIDE IN ME") Who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills (NO GRAPES HARVESTED) , but the Spirit (THE "SAP" NOURISHING THE BRANCHES) gives life (BUMPER CROP OF GRAPES)."

[The Reformation Study Bible](#).- **If anyone does not abide in me.** Those that do not remain show that **they never had a saving relationship with Christ.** Their destiny is described with the language of damnation (cf. Mt. 3:12; 25:41; Jude 7; Rev. 20:14).

[A T Robertson](#) - There is nothing for a broken off branch to do but wither and die.

Faithfulness is our obligation;

Brian Bill on **much fruit** - God has always had "*grape expectations*" for His followers (ED: OF COURSE A PLAY ON CHARLES DICKENS "[GREAT EXPECTATIONS](#)"). He is so sold on fruitfulness that He breaks out into a sad song in Isaiah 5:1-4. Instead of producing sweet grapes, His people had offered only sour substitutes.....God's desire has always been for His people to be fruitful. This goes all the way back to Genesis 1:28 when He said, "Be fruitful and increase in number." In fact, a Christian who does not produce fruit is a contradiction in terms. According to John 15:16, we have been chosen to bear fruit "that will last." We just sang about that a few minutes ago: "Like a tree planted by the water we will never run dry. Its time for us to more than just survive, we were made to thrive.".....If you have the courage to take a look at your life and can't find any fruit, you need to figure out why that is. Perhaps you're not saved or maybe you need to repent of some sin in your life. The Christian life is a supernatural life and none of us can live it apart from a dogged dependence on Christ. We can do nothing apart from Him. All our attempts to produce Christian character will be fruitless and frustrating apart from cultivating a close relationship with the Vine. Have you been drifting spiritually? Are you neglecting the spiritual disciplines? A branch disengaged from the vine will dry up and decay. It's time to strengthen your attachment to Him. James 4:8 says, "Come near to God and he will come near to you..." Here's the encouraging thing. Our job is not to produce fruit, but to bear fruit. Faithfulness is our obligation; fruitfulness is God's concern. It's not a matter of me trying to get some fruit to flourish; my job is to trust and obey and abide, and He will grow His fruit in me and through me. My responsibility is to stay as close connected to the vine as I can. When I am faithful, I will be fruitful. The result of spiritual fruitfulness is that God will be glorified, we will grow and we will go with the gospel so that others will come to Christ. ([Brian Bill](#))

Spurgeon - Not merely will you do very little, but **you can do nothing at all if you are severed from Christ**. You are absolutely and entirely dependent upon Christ both for your life and for your fruit-bearing. Do we not wish to have it so, beloved? It is the incipient principle of apostasy when a man wishes to be independent of Christ in any degree, when he says, "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me that I may have something in hand, some spending money of my own." No; you must, from day to day, from hour to hour, and even from moment to moment, derive life, light, love, everything that is good, from Christ. What a blessing that it is so!.....You know how the branch is in the vine, it is a component part of the vine; but do not forget that the vine is also in the branch,- that the sap, which is the very life of the vine, flows into every living branch. So we are in Christ, and Christ is in us, and he says to us, as the marginal reading has it, "Severed from me, ye can do nothing." What! not even a little, Lord? Can we not do something good, something acceptable apart from thee? No; "Without me, ye can do nothing." ([Expositions in John](#))

Spurgeon - This double abiding gives a double harvest. Christ in me, and I in Christ — I must be fruitful. Oh! beloved, look well to this. I am afraid we get at a distance from Christ. **There is more danger of this in old professors than there is in young beginners**. The young beginner is warm of heart. The very novelty of the thing keeps him near his Master, but oh! take care of slackening; you that have been long pilgrims, take care of slackening. **It is so easy to grow cold in this cold world, and it is so hard to maintain the holy spiritual fervent, without which there is no spiritual health.** ([Expositions in John](#))

David Guzik - Real fruitfulness is only determined over an extended period of time. "Genuine conversion is not measured by the hasty decision but by long-range fruitfulness." (Erdman) This principle is displayed in the Parable of the Soils (Matthew 13+).

*Closer yet I'd cling, my Savior,
You're the all-sufficient Vine;
You alone can make me fruitful,
Blessed source of strength divine.*

—Bosch

NET NOTE - Many interpret the imagery of fruit here and in Jn 15:2, 4 in terms of good deeds or character qualities, relating it to passages elsewhere in the NT like Matt 3:8 and Mt 7:20, Rom 6:22, Gal 5:22, etc. This is not necessarily inaccurate, but one must remember that for John, to have life at all is to bear fruit, while one who does not bear fruit shows that he does not have the life (once again, conduct is the clue to paternity, as in John 8:41; compare also 1 John 4:20).

Oswald Chambers - Fruit bearing is always mentioned as the manifestation of an intimate union with Jesus Christ (John 15:1-4). When once we get intimate with Jesus we are never lonely, we never need sympathy, we can pour out all the time without being pathetic. The saint who is intimate with Jesus will never leave impressions of himself, but only the impression that Jesus is having unhindered way, because the last abyss of his nature has been satisfied by Him. The only impression left by such a life is that of the strong calm sanity that Our Lord gives to those who are intimate with Him.

Warren Wiersbe - A branch is good for only one thing—bearing fruit. It may be weak in itself, but it has a living relationship with the vine and can be productive. To abide in Christ means to be in communion with Him so that our lives please Him. We know that we are abiding when the Father prunes us, cutting away the good so that we can produce the best. We glorify God with fruit, more fruit, much fruit. Abiding depends on obeying, and obeying depends on loving. Love and joy go together and make it easy for us to obey His will. We should love Him, love His will, and love one another. Note the "fruit of the Spirit": love (v. 10), joy (v. 11), and peace (Jn

14:27; Gal. 5:22). Depend on the Spirit's power and you will be a fruitful, faithful Christian (vv. 26–27). (BORROW [With the Word](#) page 700)

*Lord, I would be soil in which You can plant
Your Word with its promise of fruit;
I want to be open to You every day,
So what You have planted takes root.*
—Hess

ILLUSTRATION - As the playwright George Bernard Shaw was nearing the end of his life, a reporter asked him a question: "If you could live your life over and be anybody you've known, or any person from history, who would you be?" Shaw thought for a moment and then replied, "I would choose to be the man George Bernard Shaw could have been, but never was." Be the man or woman God has created you to be. He has formed you for fruitfulness. Prepare for some precise pruning. Deal with discipline. And resolutely remain in Christ. If you do, you'll have more fruit than you can handle. - [Brian Bill](#)

THOUGHT - DEAR DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST PERHAPS YOUR LIFE HAS NOT BEEN AS FRUITFUL AS YOU WOULD HAVE WISHED. THAT IS WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE AS THEY SAY, BUT THE FUTURE OF FRUITFULNESS IS AS BRIGHT AS YOU WILL ALLOW IT BE. WILL YOU LAY ASIDE THE OLD AND PUT ON THE NEW? WILL YOU BY THE SPIRIT (Ro 8:13) KILL THAT SIN THAT HAS BEEN INFECTING YOUR VINEYARD? WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO HONESTLY WHOLEHEARTEDLY SING THE FOLLOWING WORDS TO YOUR FATHER, THE GREAT VINEDRESSER? IF SO I AM CONVINCED THAT YOU WILL END YOUR DAYS IN A BLAZE OF GLORY, GLORIFYING THE FATHER AND STORING UP FOR YOURSELF IN HEAVEN A BOUNTIFUL HARVEST OF FRUIT THAT WILL LAST FOR ALL ETERNITY! TODAY IS THE DAY! SET YOUR MIND ON THE THINGS ABOVE AND NOT ON THE THINGS OF THIS EARTH, FOR THE WORLD IS PASSING AWAY AND EVEN ITS LUSTS, BUT SPIRIT WROUGHT, GOD GLORIFYING FRUIT WILL ENDURE FOREVER AND EVER (Jn 15:16). AMEN.

[Take my life and let it be](#)

by Frances Ridley Havergal (1874)

[Watch the story behind this great hymn of consecration](#)

Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in endless praise,
let them flow in endless praise.

Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee,
swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice and let me sing
always, only, for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee,
filled with messages from thee.

Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
every power as thou shalt choose,
every power as thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne,
it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour

at thy feet its treasure store.

Take myself, and I will be

ever, only, all for thee,

ever, only, all for thee.

The Christian life really isn't hard to live—it's impossible! In fact, only one person in history has actually lived it perfectly Jesus Christ.

The situation isn't hopeless for us, however. When Jesus returned to His Father in heaven, He sent His Holy Spirit to help us live in a supernatural way (John 14:15-17). Just as the Spirit gives us new life in Christ, so also He enables us to live the Christian life as we walk in close fellowship with Jesus (John 15:4-5).

A church bulletin captured this reality in the following prayer: "So far today, Lord, I've done all right. I haven't gossiped; I haven't lost my temper; I haven't been greedy, grumpy, nasty selfish, or overindulgent. I'm very thankful for that. But in a few moments, Lord, I'm going to get out of bed. And from then on, I'm going to need a lot of help." —HWR

WHAT JESUS ACCOMPLISHED FOR US,
THE SPIRIT WORKS OUT IN US.

Abide in the Vine - Henry Blackaby

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5

If Jesus were making this point today, he might talk in terms of electricity. Even the most powerful electrical tool is useless unless it is plugged into an electrical outlet. Without power, the tool is of no use to anyone. Jesus' point that we can do nothing without being "plugged in" to him seems so obvious we might wonder why he even mentions it.

God wants Christians to do two things: grow in our personal relationship with him and spread his good news to others. As ridiculous as it seems, we often try to do both of these things in our own strength. We get too busy to spend time with God, and prayer seems to slow us down, so we try to have a relationship with him through other ways. We go to church, spend time with Christians, and talk about Jesus as if we know him. We assume that since we are Christians, we must know Christ. We might even try to convince a friend to become a Christian. But we never seem to experience victory in our lives, and we don't understand why God does so little through us. Our lives lack power. We are so busy trying to do things for God that we have no time to spend with God.

Jesus' message is straightforward. Just as an electric tool is useless without electricity, so the Christian life is impossible without the presence and guidance of Christ. Jesus says, "Abide in me." Don't try to live the Christian life without Christ; it can't be done. (BORROW [The Experience page 358](#))

The Vine - Henry Blackaby

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5

Are you seeking to do great things for God? Or would you rather God did great things through you? There's a world of difference in the two. The first is dependent upon your strength and your ability, which are both limited. The second is based on the inexhaustible strength and ability of God.

Jesus says we need to take a lesson from a branch. A branch doesn't worry about producing fruit. It simply stays attached to the vine. It is through the vine that all the nutrients flow from the roots to the branches. When a branch is receiving everything the vine has to give, the fruit comes naturally and effortlessly. The key to the Christian life is not how hard we try to be spiritual but how closely we stay connected to Christ. We don't need to worry so much about what we are doing. Our focus should be on staying close to Christ.

If you find that living the Christian life is wearing you out, you could be trying to live it in your own strength—doing things for Christ rather than enjoying a relationship with him. When you enjoy a close relationship with Christ, he is able to produce all kinds of good things in your life. Focus on strengthening your relationship with the vine and the fruit will follow naturally. Remember, apart from the vine, the branch is only a decoration. (BORROW [The Experience page 358](#))

QUESTION - [What is the key to bearing fruit as a Christian?](#) | [GotQuestions.org](#) [WATCH VIDEO](#)

ANSWER - In the natural world, fruit is the result of a healthy plant producing what it was designed to produce (Genesis 1:11–12). In the Bible, the word *fruit* is often used to describe a person's outward actions that result from the condition of the heart.

Good fruit is that which is produced by the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23 gives us a starting place: the [fruit of His Spirit](#) is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The more we allow the Holy Spirit free rein in our lives, the more this fruit is evident (Galatians 5:16, 25). Jesus told His followers, "I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last" (John 15:16). Righteous fruit has eternal benefit.

Jesus told us clearly what we must do to bear good fruit. He said, "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. 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" (John 15:4–5). A branch must stay firmly attached to the trunk to stay alive. As disciples of Christ, we must stay firmly connected to Him to remain spiritually productive. A branch draws strength, nourishment, protection, and energy from the vine. If it is broken off, it quickly dies and becomes unfruitful. When we neglect our spiritual life, ignore the Word of God, skimp on prayer, and withhold areas of our lives from the scrutiny of the Holy Spirit, we are like a branch broken off the vine. Our lives become fruitless. We need daily surrender, daily communication, and daily—sometimes hourly—repentance and connection with the Holy Spirit in order to "walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). Staying intimately connected to the [True Vine](#) is the only way to "bear fruit in old age" (Psalm 92:14), to "run and not grow weary" (Isaiah 40:31), and to not "grow weary in well-doing" (Galatians 6:9).

One counterfeit to bearing good fruit is pretense. We can become experts at the routines, the lingo, and "acting Christian," while experiencing no real power and bearing no eternal fruit. Our hearts remain self-centered, angry, and joyless even while we go through the motions of serving God. We can easily slip into the sin of the Pharisees of Jesus' day in judging ourselves by how we think we appear to others and neglecting that secret place of the heart where all good fruit germinates. When we love, desire, pursue, and fear the same things that the rest of the world does, we are not abiding in Christ, even though our lives may be filled with church-related activity. And, often, we don't realize that we are living fruitless lives (1 John 2:15–17).

Our works will be tested by fire. Using a different metaphor than fruit, 1 Corinthians 3:12–15 says, "If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames."

God is the judge of even our thoughts and motivations. All will be brought to the light when we stand before Him (Hebrews 4:12–13). A poor widow in a one-room hut can bear as much fruit as a televangelist leading giant crusades if she is surrendered to God in everything and using all He has given her for His glory. As fruit is unique to each tree, our fruit is unique to us. God knows what He has entrusted to each of us and what He expects us to do with it (Luke 12:48). Our responsibility before God is to be "faithful with little" so that He can trust us with much (Matthew 25:21).

- [What is the fruit of righteousness in Philippians 1:11? | GotQuestions](#)

John MacArthur- We had a peach tree in our backyard, and one year it went wild with fruit. We had enough peaches to feed the whole neighborhood! Another year, we could find only one tiny, shriveled peach. Some Christians can be like that, exhibiting little evidence of belonging to God—but God wants us to grow and produce much fruit for His glory. The fruit you bear is the manifestation of your character, and the only way people will know that you are a child of God. He wants to present Himself to the world through what He produces in you, so His character is at stake in your fruit. He wants you to be fruitful far above what the world or the flesh can produce. (BORROW [Truth for Today](#))

[Holy Fruit](#)

If these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. — 2 Peter 1:8

Today's Scripture : 2 Peter 1:1-8

Billy Graham told about the conversion of H. C. Morrison, the founder of Asbury Theological Seminary. He said that Morrison, a farm worker at the time, was plowing in a field one day when he saw an old Methodist preacher coming by on his horse.

Morrison knew the elderly gentleman to be a gracious, godly man. As he watched the old saint go by, a great sense of conviction of

sin came over Morrison and he dropped to his knees. There between the furrows in his field, alone, he gave his life to God.

When he concluded the story, Billy Graham earnestly prayed, "Oh, God, make me a holy man."

Augustine said, "Do you wish to be great? Then begin by being." True and lasting greatness stems from what we are. Though we may seem to be doing nothing at all, we can be doing everything worthwhile if our lives are being styled by God's grace. Even if we are set aside through old age, sickness, or seclusion, we can still be productive. Are you bedridden or house-bound? Your holy life can still bear fruit.

This can happen only as we stay in close relationship with Jesus (John 15:1-11). Only then will we have the fruit that "remains" (v.16). By: David H. Roper (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

I lived so that all whom I met could see
His Holy Spirit shining through me;
O friend, is this what our hearts can say
As we sit and think at the close of day?
—Nicholson

The most powerful testimony is a holy life.

TORREY'S TOPIC - FRUIT -

Fruits

The produce of corn, &c. Deu. 22:9.

Psa. 107:37.

The produce of trees. Gen. 1:29. Ecc. 2:5.

CALLED THE

Fruit of the ground. Gen. 4:3. Jer. 7:20.

Fruit of the earth. Isa. 4:2.

Increase of the land. Psa. 85:12.

Given by God. Acts 14:17.

Preserved to us by God. Mal. 3:11.

REQUIRE

A fruitful land. Psa. 107:34.

Rain from heaven. Psa. 104:13. Jas. 5:18.

Influence of the sun and moon. Deu. 33:14.

Produced in their due seasons. Mat. 21:41.

First of, devoted to God. Deu. 26:2.

DIVIDED INTO

Hasty or precocious. Isa. 28:4.

Summer fruits. 2 Sam. 16:1.

New and old. So. of Sol. 7:13.

Goodly. Jer. 11:16.

Pleasant. So. of Sol. 4:16.

Precious. Deu. 33:14.

Evil or bad. Mat. 7:17.

To be waited for with patience. Jas. 5:7.

Often sent as presents. Gen. 43:11.

OFTEN DESTROYED

In God's anger. Jer. 7:20.

By blight. Joel 1:12.

By locusts, &c. Deu. 28:38, 39. Joel 1:4.

By enemies. Eze. 25:4.

By drought. Hag. 1:10.

ILLUSTRATIVE

Of effects of repentance. Mat. 3:8.

Of works of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22, 23. Eph. 5:9.

Of doctrines of Christ. So. of Sol. 2:3.
Of good works. Mat. 7:17, 18. Phi. 4:17.
Of a holy conversation. Pro. 12:14. Pro. 18:20.
Of praise. Heb. 13:15.
Of the example, &c. of the godly. Pro. 11:30.
Of effects of industry. Pro. 31:16, 31.
Of the reward of saints. Isa. 3:10.
Of the reward of the wicked. Jer. 17:9, 10.
Of converts to the church. Psa. 72:16. Jno. 4:36.
(Bad,) of the conduct and conversation of evil men. Mat. 7:17. Mat. 12:33.

FRUIT, FRUITFULNESS - [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery - page 1070](#) - click for full article on fruit as this excerpt deals only with fruit as a metaphor.

Metaphoric Extensions. The consequences of an action are frequently described as its fruit (Jer 17:10). Creation is the fruit of God's work (Ps 104:13). In later Judaism, especially, the righteous person was described as bearing good fruit (Prov 31:31; Is 3:10), while the unrighteous person would bear bad fruit (Prov 1:31; Jer 6:19; 21:14; Hos 10:13; Mic 7:13). The tongue is capable of bearing both good and evil fruit (Prov 12:14; 18:20). Heresy leads to unfruitfulness (Jude 12). Conversely, prayer and worship are described metaphorically as the fruit of the lips (e.g., Prov 12:14; 13:2; 18:20; Is 57:18; Heb 13:15).

Bearing fruit is an archetype for righteous living in OT wisdom literature. Psalm 1:3 sounds the keynote, describing the godly person as "a tree planted by streams of water, that yields its fruit in its season" (RSV; cf. Jer 17:7–8). In the NT, Matthew, especially, draws upon such imagery from the wisdom tradition. John the Baptist urges the fruit of repentance and warns that unfruitful trees will be cut down and burnt (Mt 3:8–10). Jesus himself confirms this judgment and points out that false prophets can be identified in the same way as trees are identified, by their fruit (Mt 7:15–20; cf. 12:33). Seed that has been sown on good ground is extremely fruitful (Mt 13:23). Ultimately the kingdom belongs to those who produce its fruit (Mt 21:43). James draws upon the same wisdom tradition (Jas 3:17).

Paul uses the metaphor of a fruitful harvest to describe the outcome of his own ministry (Rom 1:13). For Paul continuance in life promises further fruitful labor (Phil 1:22). The gospel, like righteousness, bears fruit (Col 1:6, 10). In terms of behavior Paul echoes the language of the wisdom writings, writing of the "fruit of the light" and the "unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph 5:8ff). In Hebrews discipline "yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Heb 12:11 RSV).

Literal fruitfulness is, of course, dependent on an adequate sources of water. Thus water becomes a potent metaphor for the Spirit (Ezek 47:1–12; Jn 7:37–39).

In Galatians 5:22–23 Paul employs the image of the "fruit of the Spirit" to describe the workings of God's Spirit in contrast to the "works of the flesh" (Gal 5:17–21). Here Paul draws an intended contrast between the naturally growing fruit of God's Spirit and the sin that is the outcome of humanity's actions independent of God. Thorns and thistles enter the scene following the spoiling of the Garden of Eden through sin (Gen 3:17–19). They represent the encroachment of untamed nature. They can be the result of idleness (Prov 24:30–31) or the judgment on a city (Is 34:13). In either case, creation is out of control. The nature miracles of Jesus give some idea of what might have been had sin not intervened (e.g., Mk 4:35–41; 6:30–44; Jn 2:1–11; cf. Heb 2:8–9). Metaphorically speaking, unfruitfulness strangles spiritual life and vigor (e.g. Mk 4:7, 18–19). Isaiah describes Israel as unable to bear the fruit expected of her (Is 5:2, 4). The unfruitful fig tree, representing Israel, is cursed by Jesus (Mk 11:12–14, 20–25; Mt 21:18–22). The unwholesome consequences of idolatry and injustice are referred to a "wormwood," a notoriously bitter and poisonous fruit (Deut 29:18; Amos 5:7; 6:12), which can spread throughout the whole community of Israel.

See also ABUNDANCE; FIG, FIG TREE; FIRST; FOOD; GARDEN; GRAPES; HARVEST; TREE, TREES; TREE OF LIFE; VINE, VINEYARD.

James Smith - BRANCHES, DISCIPLES, FRIENDS JOHN 15

These are not empty titles, the Lord Himself is the Author of each of them, but they are each conditioned with something else. The first with abiding, the second with fruit bearing, the third with obedience. These three names are suggestive of three different experiences.

I. As Branches, we Receive. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches" (v. 5). This process and privilege of receiving of the fullness that is in Christ cannot begin until we as branches have been broken off the old fruitless Adam-stock, and grafted into Him who is the second Adam, the True Vine. The precious sap of this Vine (Spirit) will never minister to the pride of the old selfish sinful life. But

having been planted into Christ, we now live by faith that is in Him. The branch cannot live apart from the vine, no more can ye. To live apart from Christ is to be dead while we live. "Because I live ye shall live also" (John 14:19), if ye abide in Me. The life of the branch, then, is a life of continual appropriation. The call of the vine to the branch is to take, take, take. "Let him that is athirst, take." "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." This receiving of the sap by the branch was to manifest itself in fruitfulness. To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with the fruit of the Spirit, as it is possible to grow apples of different quality on the same stock, so, by the same Spirit there may be different manifestation, according to the character of the branch. While our union with Christ is the death of our sinful life, it is not the death of our individuality. In every Christian life the whole fruit of the Spirit should be found (Gal. 5:22, 23), but, as a rule, in the lives of Christians, some one or two aspects of this fruit are often found prominent, this may be partly due to the nature of the recipient. Still, "the wind bloweth where it listeth."

II. As Disciples, we Follow. "So shall ye be My disciples" (v. 8). In continuing the metaphor of the vine and branches here, the idea is, that the branch truly follows the vine, when it abides in it, and when by the power imparted to it, it faithfully carries out the purpose for which the vine had been given. So, by an adherence to the mind and will of our Lord, and by the bringing forth of much of the fruit of the Spirit, we are declaring ourselves to be walking in His footsteps. "If ye continue in My Word, then are you My disciples indeed" (John 8:31). This discipleship implies a readiness to sit at His feet, like Mary, and to learn of Him who is the Great Teacher come from God. It implies also a willingness to believe every word He says. How can His words abide in us if they are not received by faith (v. 7). How can we follow His example if we do not live and walk by faith in the Word of God as He did. Another mark of discipleship is love one to another (John 13:35).

III. As Friends, we Commune. "Ye are My friends ... I have called you friends (not patients), for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you" (vv. 14, 15). A friend comes closer to the heart than a servant, "A servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth." It is a very sacred and humbling privilege to walk among men as the friends of Jesus Christ. As His friends, living in communion with Him, we become—

1. Sharers of His SECRETS. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him" (Psa. 25:14). It was of him who was "the friend of God" that God said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" The deep heart purposes of the Son of God are revealed to those who live in fellowship with Him. In the light of His presence they see light clearly. They walk among the gloomy shadows of a sinful world, with the secrets of life, peace, and eternal glory in their souls.

2. Sharers of His SYMPATHIES. As a devoted wife becomes a partaker of her husband's likes and dislikes, so does the friend of Jesus, through close contact with Him, become imbued with His thoughts and feelings. They love all that He loves and hate all that He hates. They are in real heart sympathy with Him in His desire to honour the Father, and at the same time to love, and seek to save, the sinful sons of men.

3. Sharers of His SUFFERINGS. "The world hated Me ... because ye are not of the world ... therefore the world hateth you" (vv. 18, 19). Christ suffered because of His unlikeness to the world. His true friends will fare little better. Christ suffered in His daily life because of His sympathy with God His Father, and His separation from the sins and false conception of His age. The more we become like Him the more shall we feel the power of those forces in the world which were opposed to Him.

4. Sharers of His CONSOLATIONS. "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ" (2 Cor. 1:5). To be made a partaker of His sufferings, is to become an heir of His consolations. Such consolations are neither few nor small, good measure, pressed down and running over. What the Father was to the Son, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter is to us an ever present, all sufficient compensation for all the sorrows and sufferings incurred through our sympathy with Christ, and service for Him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him, that is consolation indeed.

C D Foss - Without me ye can do nothing.

There are two kinds of magnets, steel magnets and soft iron magnets. The steel magnet receives its magnetism from the loadstone, and has it permanently; it can get along very well alone in a small way; it can pick up needles and do many other little things to amuse children. There is another kind of magnet which is made of soft iron, with a coil of copper wire round it. When the battery is all ready and the cups are filled with the mercury, and the connection is made with the wires, this magnet is twenty times as strong as the steel magnet. Break the circuit, and its power is all gone instantly. We are soft iron magnets; our whole power must come from the Lord Jesus Christ; but faith makes the connection, and while it holds we are safe.

Good Question

I am the vine, you are the branches. . . . Without Me you can do nothing. — John 15:5

Several years have passed since the publication of my book *Finding the God-Dependent Life*. It's the story of how I learned to depend on God through the gradual breakdown of my self-sufficiency. My inadequacies forced me to depend on Him. In time, it became clear that the same principles that helped me in a crisis could surely help me all the time. So God-dependence became my chosen way of life. The result was greater wholeness and fruitfulness.

A churchgoer who read my book commented to a friend, "If you ask me, Joanie Yoder depends on God too much!" To help me explain the God-dependent life, I've turned that comment into a question: Is it possible to depend on God too much?

Let's answer that question by asking another: Is it possible for a branch to depend too much on the vine? Catherine Marshall wrote, "The point is not that the branches will do better when they are attached to the vine. Unless attached, the branches must wither and die." Jesus taught that unless the branches (you and I) abide in the vine (remain dependent on Him), it's impossible for us to bear His fruit.

Is it possible to depend on God too much? Not if we are to be fruitful branches. What kind of branch are you? By: Joanie Yoder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

I could not do without Thee,
I cannot stand alone,
I have no strength or goodness,
No wisdom of my own.
—Havergal

Fruitfulness for Christ depends on fellowship with Christ.

As I approach the ripe old age of 80, one of my favorite verses has become [Psalm 92:14](#).

*"They will still yield fruit in old age;
They shall be full of sap and very green".*

Here is a devotional related to this psalm...

[Fruitful to the End](#) - Although Lenore Dunlop was ninety-four years young, her mind was sharp, her smile was bright, and her contagious love for Jesus was felt by many. It wasn't uncommon to find her in the company of the youth of our church; her presence and participation were sources of joy and encouragement. Lenore's life was so vibrant that her death caught us off guard. Like a powerful runner, she sprinted across life's finish line. Her energy and zeal were such that, just days before her death, she completed a sixteen-week course that focused on taking the message of Jesus to the peoples of the world.

*When we see in our lives the budding and blossoming fruit
of loving, sharing, helping, and leading others to Christ, we should rejoice.*

The fruitful, God-honoring life of Lenore illustrates what's seen in Psalm 92:12–15. This psalm describes the budding, blossoming, and fruit-bearing of those whose lives are rooted in a right relationship with God (Ps 92:12–13). The two trees pictured were valued for their fruit and wood, respectively; with these the psalmist captures a sense of vitality, prosperity, and usefulness. When we see in our lives the budding and blossoming fruit of loving, sharing, helping, and leading others to Christ, we should rejoice.

Even for those who may be labeled "senior" or "seasoned," it's never too late to take root and bear fruit. Lenore's life was deeply rooted in God through Jesus and testifies to this and to God's goodness (Ps 92:15). Ours can too. By: Arthur Jackson (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

How does your life reflect the fruit found in a growing relationship with Jesus? What can you add or eliminate to help you grow?

Father, give me the strength to bear fruit that clearly demonstrates that my life is rooted in the life of Jesus,
Your Son.

This devotional thought reminds me of the T-shirt that was seen on a radiant white-haired lady with the words

"I'm not 80. I'm 18 with 62 years experience!"

[Fruit Juice](#)

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit. John 15:5

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 15:5–8

A thrift-store bargain, the lamp seemed perfect for my home office—the right color, size, and price. Back at home, however, when I plugged in the cord, nothing happened. No light. No power. No juice.

No problem, my husband assured me. “I can fix that. Easy.” As he took the lamp apart, he saw the trouble immediately. The plug wasn’t connected to anything. Without wiring to a source of power, the “perfect” pretty lamp was useless.

The same is true for us. Jesus told His disciples, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.” But then he added this reminder: “Apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

This teaching was given in a grape-growing region, so His disciples readily understood it. Grapevines are hardy plants, and their branches tolerate vigorous pruning. Cut off from their life source, however, the branches are worthless deadwood. So it is with us.

As we remain in Jesus and let His words dwell in us, we’re wired to our life source—Christ Himself. “This is to my Father’s glory,” said Jesus, “that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples” (v. 8). Such a fruitful outcome needs daily nourishment, however. Freely, God provides it through the Scriptures and His love. So plug in and let the juice flow! By: Patricia Raybon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

What does it mean for you to remain in Jesus? How has He equipped you to bear fruit for Him?

All-powerful God, empower me to remain in You and allow Your loving Word to yield good fruit in me.

Dependence Day

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. — John 15:5

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 15:1-13

In the US, the Fourth of July is a national holiday when outdoor grills are heated up; beaches are packed; and cities and towns have parades and fireworks displays, picnics, and patriotic celebrations. All of this is in remembrance of July 4, 1776, when the 13 American colonies declared their independence.

Independence appeals to all ages. It means “freedom from the control, influence, support, and aid of others.” So it’s not surprising that teenagers talk about gaining their independence. Many adults have the goal of being “independently wealthy.” And senior citizens want to maintain their independence. Whether anyone is ever truly independent is a discussion for another time and place—but it sounds good.

Craving political or personal independence is one thing; daring to pursue spiritual independence is problematic. What we need instead is a recognition and acceptance of our deep spiritual dependence. Jesus said, “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” (John 15:5).

Far from being self-reliant, we are totally and eternally dependent on the One who died to set us free. Every day is our “dependence day.” By: Bill Crowder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

I need Thee every hour, most gracious Lord;
No tender voice like Thine can peace afford.
I need Thee, O I need Thee; every hour I need Thee!
O bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee.
—Hawks/Lowry

Our greatest strength comes from dependence on our strong God.

C H Spurgeon - Self-sufficiency slain (Full sermon [Self-Sufficiency Slain](#))

“Without me ye can do nothing.” John 15:5

You are not capable of performing the lowest act of the divine life, except as you receive strength from God the Holy Spirit. And surely, my brethren, it is generally in these little things that we find out most of all our weakness. Peter can walk the waves of the sea, but he cannot bear the derision of a little maid. Job can endure the loss of all things, but the upbraiding words of his false

friends, though they be but words, and break no bones—make him speak far more bitterly than all the sore boils which were in his very skin. Jonah said he did well to be angry, even unto death, about a gourd. Have you not often heard that mighty men who have outlived hundreds of battles have been slain at last by the most trivial accident? And has it not been so with professed Christians? They stood uprightly in the midst of the greatest trials; they have outlived the most arduous struggles, and yet in an evil hour, trusting to themselves, their foot has slipped under some slight temptation, or because of some small difficulty. John Newton says: “The grace of God is as necessary to create a right temper in Christians on the breaking of a china plate as on the death of an only son.” These little leaks need the most careful stopping. The plague of flies is no more easy to be stayed than that of the destroying angel. In little as well as in great things the just must live by faith. In trifles as well as in nobler exercises the believer should be conscious of his own inability,—should never say of any act, “Now I am strong enough to perform this; I need not go to God in prayer about this; this is so little a thing.”

Adolphe Monod - Too much taken up with our work, we may forget our Master; it is possible to have the hand full, and the heart empty. Taken up with our Master we cannot forget our work; if the heart is filled with His love, how can the hands not be active in His service?

F B Meyer - Apart from Him we can do nothing. Whilst we are abiding in Him nothing is impossible. The one purpose of our life should therefore be to remain in living and intense union with Christ, guarding against everything that would break it, employing every means of cementing and enlarging it. And just in proportion as we do so, we shall find His strength flowing into us for every possible emergency. We may not feel its presence; but we shall find it present whenever we begin to draw on it. There is no temptation which we cannot master; no privation which we cannot patiently bear; no difficulty with which we cannot cope; no work which we cannot perform; no confession or testimony which we cannot make, if only our souls are living in healthy union with Jesus Christ; for as our day or hour, so shall our strength be.

C H Spurgeon - Without Christ—nothing (full sermon [Without Christ-Nothing](#))

‘Without me ye can do nothing.’ John 15:5

‘Without me ye can do nothing.’ As I listened to the song within these words I began to laugh: I wonder if you will laugh too. It was to myself I laughed, like Abraham of old. I thought of those who are going to destroy the orthodox doctrine from off the face of the earth. How they boast of the decline and death of old-fashioned evangelism. I have read once or twice that I am the last of the Puritans; the race is all dying out. To this I object: I am willing to be esteemed last in merit, but not last as ending the race. There are many others who are steadfast in the faith. They say our old theology is decaying, and that nobody believes it. It is all a lie; but wise men say so, and therefore we are bound to consider ourselves obsolete and extinct. We are, in their esteem, as much out of date as antediluvians would be could they walk down our streets. Yes, they are going to quench our coal and blot us out from Israel. Newspapers and reviews and the general intelligence of the age all join to dance upon our graves. Put on your nightcaps, you good people of the evangelical order, and go home to bed and sleep the sleep of the righteous, for the end of you is come. Thus say the Philistines, but the armies of the Lord think not so. The adversaries exult exceedingly, but Christ is not with them. They know very little about him, they do not work in his spirit, nor cry him up, nor extol the gospel of his precious blood, and so I believe that when they have done their little best it will come to nothing. ‘Without me ye can do nothing’; if this is true of apostles, much more of opposers! If his friends can do nothing without him, I am sure his foes can do nothing against him.

[We Need Jesus' Help](#)

Apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:5

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 15:1–8

The day finally came—the day I realized my father wasn't indestructible. As a boy, I knew his strength and determination. But in my early adult years, he injured his back, and I realized that my father was mortal after all. I stayed with my parents to help my dad to the bathroom, assisting him in dressing, even guiding a glass of water to his mouth—it was humbling to him. He made some initial attempts to accomplish small tasks, but admitted, “I can't do anything without your help.” He eventually recovered to his strong self, but that experience taught both of us an important lesson. We need each other.

And while we need each other, we need Jesus even more. In John 15, the imagery of the vine and the branches continues to be one we cling to. Yet one of the other phrases, while comforting, can also strike at our self-reliance. The thought that can easily creep into our minds is, I don't need help. Jesus is clear—“apart from me you can do nothing” (v. 5). Christ is talking about bearing fruit, like “love, joy, peace” (Galatians 5:22), those core features of a disciple. To bear fruit is the life Jesus calls us to, and our total reliance on Him yields a fruitful life, a life lived to the Father's glory (John 15:8). By: John Blase (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily](#))

[Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

The prayer “I can do nothing apart from You” is simple and powerful. What situations are you facing today that need prayer? How can you rest assured that God is with you and loves you?

Father, I can do nothing apart from You.

James Smith - WITHOUT ME JOHN 15:5

WITHOUT Christ a man is—

- In danger, like a lost sheep, Luke 15:4–6
 - As black as an Ethiopian, Jer. 13:23
 - As wretched as a forsaken infant, Ezek. 16:5–8
 - As loathsome as a leper, Mark 1:40
 - As powerless for good as a corrupt tree, Matt. 7:18
 - As poor as a bankrupt, Matt. 18:24–27
 - As hopeless as a severed branch, John 15:5
-

[Learning From Leandra](#)

He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. — John 15:5

Today's Scripture : John 15:1-8

Leandra is 3 years old. She has bright brown eyes and a very good mind. One day I was babysitting her, and she was watching her brother Max play games on my computer. Suddenly she announced that she was going to get a snack. “I do it myself!” she said emphatically.

“I’ll help you,” I said, and began to follow her. She repeated firmly, “I do it myself!” I watched her walk down the stairs. She turned, saw me, and said, “You stay upstairs, Grandpa. Keep an eye on Max.” I tried not to laugh. At the bottom of the stairs she turned back, put one hand on her hip, and said, “I mean it, Grandpa!” I backed out of sight and roared with laughter. Later I checked on her. She had opened the refrigerator, found some packaged pudding, and gotten “her” spoon, but she needed me to open the container for her.

I thought later that there’s a lot of that spirit of independence in me. I too want to “do it myself” when it comes to growing and serving as a believer in Jesus Christ. Yet I need to realize that even though I may think I don’t need His help, I really do. Without it, I am unable to produce the kind of spiritual fruit Jesus talked about in John 15.

We must remember the words of our Lord, who said, “Without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). By: David C. Egner (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Without Him I could do nothing,
Without Him I'd surely fail;
Without Him I would be drifting
Like a ship without a sail.
—LeFevre
(c) 1963 The LeFevres

You can depend on the Lord. Can the Lord depend on you?

John 15:6 “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.

- he: Job 15:30 Ps 80:15 Isa 14:19 27:10 Eze 15:3-7 17:9 19:12-14 Mt 3:10 7:19 Mt 13:41 27:5 Heb 6:7,8 10:27 2Pe 2:20 1Jn 2:19 Jude 1:12,13 Rev 20:15 21:8
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Matthew 13:41-42+ "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,42 and **will throw them into the furnace of fire**; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 13:49-50+ "So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, 50 and **will throw them into the furnace of fire**; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 21:18-19 (JESUS CURSED THE UNFRUITFUL TREE) Now in the morning, when He was returning to the city, He became hungry. 19 Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He *said to it, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you." And at once the fig tree withered.

THE TRAGIC FATE OF FAILURE TO ABIDE IN CHRIST

If anyone does not abide ([meno](#)) in Me - IF is a third class condition, indicating potential action (to not abide). This is not a reference to believing branches in John 15:5, because our union to Christ is inseparable. The covenant with Christ is unbreakable. The eternal life He gives is just that eternal. Furthermore believers would not fit the following description. In short, Jesus is describing unbelievers as those who do not abide in Him and thus have no "lifeline," no vital connection with His supernatural life.

He is thrown away ([ballo](#)) as a branch (klema) and dries up ([xeraino](#)) - Literally cast outside (of the vineyard). **He** refers to the one who does not abide in the Vine and parallels the one who bears no fruit in John 15:2. This is a description of a dead, useless branch that withers away because it has no access to nourishing sap.

It is notable that vine branches were useless for domestic purposes (firewood) because they burned too fast and too hot.

[Ray Stedman](#) on **anyone** who does not abide in Jesus - Here is the case our Lord mentioned earlier when he said, of one aspect of the Father's work, "every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away." (Jn 15:2) Here is the process in which the branch is cut off, and then it withers -- grows dry and dull and dead. **And many a churchgoer is in that state. They may have been members of churches for years, but there is no life evident at all.** Eventually these branches are to be gathered and burned. I believe this is a reference to other such Scripture passages which say that the angels will be sent out to gather out all which offends in God's kingdom and cast it into the eternal fire where it will be burned. (ED: Mt 13:41-42+, Mt 13:49-50+) Judas was a paramount example of this (ED: THUS HIS NAME "**SON OF PERDITION** [[apoleia](#)]" Jn 17:12+). (Bolding added)

It is useless if it is fruitless

Spurgeon - There is a sad future in store for tares, according to another parable; but, somehow, there is a much sadder lot reserved for those that were, in some sense, branches of the vine,— those who made a **profession of faith** in Christ, though they were never vitally united to Him; those who for a while did run well, yet were hindered (Gal 5:7+). What was it that hindered them that they should not obey the truth? Oh, it is sad indeed that any should have had any sort of connection with that divine stem, and yet should be cast into the fire!That is all that can be done with fruitless vine-branches. You cannot make anything of them. Other trees yield timber, and are useful for various purposes; but, with the vine, it is as the prophet Ezekiel says, "Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work?" It is useless if it is fruitless; and so is it with us, if we do not bear fruit unto God, we are of no service to him whatsoever.....And oh! how many come to this end! They did seem to be all that the fruit-bearing branches are, but they were never saved souls, for saved souls always bring forth fruits of righteousness. Their salvation is proved by their fruitfulness. But these appeared to be all that the others were, and after a while they were discovered, and cast into the fire and burned. ([Expositions in John](#))

Merrill Tenney - An absolutely fruitless life is prima facie evidence that one is not a believer. Jesus left no place among his followers for fruitless disciples. The aorist verbs translated "is thrown away" and "withers" refer to accomplished action in the past. They are used here to emphasize the immediacy and finality of action. (BORROW [The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition](#) PAGE 350)

And they gather ([sunago](#)) them, and cast ([ballo](#)) them into the fire ([pur](#)) and they are burned ([kaio](#)) - **Gather ([sunago](#))** is the root of the word for *synagogue*, which in Jesus' day was filled with nothing but dead wood! The **they** here are those who are analogous to the son of perdition, for like Judas, they will end up in the eternal fires of hell. **Burned ([kaio](#))** is used in Rev 21:8+ to describe "the [lake that burns with fire \(\[pur\]\(#\)\)](#) and brimstone, which is the second death" and this would be compatible with where the fruitless

branches will burn eternally.

Edwin Blum comments that "These words have been interpreted in at least three ways: (1) the "burned" branches are Christians who have lost their salvation. (But this contradicts many passages, e.g., Jn 3:16, 36 [ED: ETERNAL LIFE INDICATES IT IS LIFE THAT LASTS FOR ETERNITY!]; Jn 5:24; Jn 10:28–29; Ro. 8:1.) (2) the "burned" branches represent Christians who will lose rewards but not salvation at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:15). (But Jesus spoke here of dead branches; such a branch "is thrown away and withers." [ED: HE IS NOT TALKING ABOUT THEIR FRUIT BEING BURNED UP BUT THE BRANCHES THEMSELVES BEING BURNED UP!]) (3) the "burned" branches refer to professing Christians who, like Judas, are not genuinely saved and therefore are judged. Like a dead branch, a person without Christ is spiritually dead and therefore will be punished in eternal fire (cf. Matt. 25:46) Judas was with Jesus; he seemed like a "branch." But he did not have God's life in him; therefore he departed; his destiny was like that of a dead branch. (See [Bible Knowledge Commentary - Page 325](#)).

Eugene Merrill - Two aspects are noted: the removal of dead wood and the trimming of live wood so that its potential for fruit bearing will be improved. The verb translated "cut off" (*aireo*) means literally "to lift up" or "to take away"; the second, "trims clean" (*kathaireo*), a compound of the first, means "to cleanse" or "to purify." Here the translation "cut off" and "trim" is accurate, though it represents a special application of a more general term. Pruning is necessary for any vine. Dead wood is worse than fruitlessness, for dead wood can harbor disease and decay. An untrimmed vine will develop long rambling branches that produce little fruit because most of the strength of the vine is given to growing wood. The vine-grower is concerned that the vine be healthy and productive. The caring process is a picture of the divine dealing with human life. **God removes the dead wood from his church and disciplines the life of the believer so that it is directed into fruitful activity.** (BORROW [Expositor's Bible Commentary page 350](#))

John Phillips on take away - As far as the Lord's immediate disciples were concerned, a vivid illustration of that was before them in the case of the apostate Judas. He had been cut off. There are many who have a false profession of faith. The evidence lies in whether or not these professing branches bear fruit.

W Hall Harris - The imagery is almost certainly that of **eschatological judgment**, and recalls some of the OT vine imagery which involves divine rejection and judgment of disobedient Israel (Ezek 15:4-6, 19:12).

NET NOTE - Such branches are gathered up and thrown into the fire. The author does not tell who it is who does the gathering and throwing into the fire. Although some claim that realized eschatology is so prevalent in the Fourth Gospel that no references to final eschatology appear at all, the fate of these branches seems to point to the opposite. The imagery is almost certainly that of eschatological judgment, and recalls some of the OT vine imagery which involves divine rejection and judgment of disobedient Israel (Ezek 15:4–6, 19:12).

Dries up (Withers) ([3583](#) [xeraino](#) from **xeros** = dry) means to become dry, to dry up and figuratively to become stiff (Mk 9:18). Of plants that wither (Jas 1:11). In the passive voice means to be dried up (Mt 13:6; 21:19, 20; Mk 4:6; 11:20, 21; Lk 8:6; Jn 15:6; 1 Pe 1:24). Of fluids dried up (Mk 5:29; Rev. 16:12; Sept.: Ge 8:7; 1 Ki 17:7; Isa. 19:5). Of the body or its members, to wither (Mk 3:1, 3; 9:18; Sept.: 1 Ki 13:4; Pr. 17:22). In the sense of to be dry, ripe (Rev. 14:15; Sept.: Jer. 12:4; Hos. 9:16).

Gilbrant - Twelve times it speaks of water or plants drying up, and once of the drying up of the issue of blood in the woman Jesus healed (Mark 5:29). The remaining uses are metaphorical for paralysis (Mark 3:1,3) or the "drying up" of the usefulness of the body (cf. Mark 9:18). (Ibid)

Friberg's summary of **xeraino** - (1) literally dry out, parch, cause to wither (Jas 1.11); passive become dry, dry up (Rev 16.12); of the flow of blood stop (Mk 5.29); of plants wither, dry up (Mt 13.6); of grain that has finished growing ripe; metaphorically, of conditions for judgment ready (Rev 14.15); (2) figuratively and passive, of a damaged human body; of the whole body stiffen (up), become rigid (Mk 9.18); of a limb shrivel, wither, become useless (Mk 3.1).

Fire ([4442](#) **pur**) refers to literal fire (Mt 13:40; 17:15; Mk 9:22; Lk 17:29; Acts 2:3; Acts 7:30; Acts 28:5; 1 Cor 3:15; Jas 5:3; Heb 12:18; 2 Pet 3:7; Rev 1:14; 4:5; 8:7; 17:16; 19:20. Pur is used figuratively of God inflicting punishment (Heb 12:29), of disunion (Lk 12:49), of the tongue that kindles strife and discord (James 3:5-6), of trials (1 Pe 1:7, Rev 3:18), at Pentecost (Acts 2:3 = "tongues as of fire"), of burning up useless works (1 Cor 3:10-15), as a description of doing something with great difficulty in Jude 1:23 ("snatching them out of the fire"). Fire in the context of judgment, the eternal fire, the place of punishment (Mt. 13:42, 50; Mt. 5:22; 18:9; Mk 9:4 Mt. 18:8; 25:41; Jude 1:7 Rev. 14:10); the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20; Rev 20:10, 14, 15; Rev 21:8).

Gilbrant - The Greeks used **pur** extensively in both literal and figurative ways. It can refer to fire, burning, or lightning, but it can also denote violence, anarchy, or the fury of battle. In Greek philosophy fire was one of the four or five basic elements of life; some regarded fire as the source of everything. Stoic thought contained the idea that the present world would one day perish in a giant conflagration. Almost 500 instances of **pur** can be found in the Septuagint (Lxx); of these about 350 translate the Hebrew

term 'ēsh. The Old Testament understands fire to be both a cleansing, purifying agent and an agent of destruction. God demonstrated His pleasure with fire upon the altar (Genesis 15:17; Lev 9:23f.; Judges 6:21; 1 Kings 18:38; 1 Chr 21:26; 2 Chronicles 7:1). But fire also demonstrated God's displeasure and was a sign of His wrath and judgment (Genesis 19:24; Exodus 9:24; Leviticus 10:2; Numbers 11:1; 16:35; 2 Kings 1:10; Amos 1:4,7). In addition, the Lord God is described as a "consuming fire, even a jealous God" (Dt 4:24; 9:3; Isa 33:14). The **New Testament** reads pur on almost 75 occasions. In addition to the literal sense of the term, there are many other usages. Positively, pur describes the fire of the Spirit that John the Baptist said Jesus would bring to the earth (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; cf. Acts 2:3). Fire, furthermore, depicts trials and adversities that cleanse and purify the believer's faith (1 Peter 1:7). Elsewhere, however, fire denotes the turmoil caused by an uncontrolled, evil tongue (James 3:5,6). Paul spoke of "burning" in the sense of passion's force (1 Corinthians 7:9). **God's judgment is often symbolized by fire.** Fire will be the standard of **testing for everyone's deeds in life** (1 Corinthians 3:13-15). If his works stand the test he will receive a reward, but if they are consumed by the fire the reward is lost, although he is "saved, but only as through fire" (RSV). Fire, moreover, describes **God's judgment upon the ungodly at the end of the age** Christ will be "revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God" (2 Th 1:7-9). Jesus referred to **hell as a place of fire, of unquenchable flame** (Mt 5:22; 13:42,50; 18:8,9; 25:41; Mk 9:43,48; Lk 3:17). No less horrible is the idea of being eternally lost in the **lake of fire** (Rev 14:9-11; 19:20; 20:14,15; 21:8). God's two witnesses in the last days call fire down to consume their opponents (Rev 11:5). The false prophet causes fire to fall from heaven (Rev 13:13), and fire consumes Babylon the Great (Rev 17:16; 18:8). God reveals His glory in fire. The glorified Son of Man is shown having eyes like the flame of a fire and feet like burnished brass (Rev 1:14,15). Seven lamps of fire burn in front of the heavenly throne (Rev 4:5), and the sea of glass is mingled with fire (Rev 15:2). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

Burned (2545) **kaio** means to kindle or burn. It is used in an active sense and a passive sense - Active = light something, have or keep something burning or lit. Mt 5:15; Lk 12:35; Jn 5:35; Heb 12:18; Rev 8:8, 10; 21:8. Fig. Lk 24:32 Passive sense =. be burned Jn 15:6; 1 Cor 13:3.

Friberg on kaio - (1) active - light something, kindle, ignite (Mt 5.15); (2) passive be lit, burn (Jn 15.6); figuratively, of fervent emotion burn, have strong feelings (Lk 24.32); (3) of consuming by fire burn (up); passive be burned; 1Co 13.3 is understood as either martyrdom or voluntary burning of oneself. (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

John 15:7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

- **my**: John 8:37 De 6:6 Job 23:12 Ps 119:11 Pr 4:4 Jer 15:16 Col 3:16 1Jn 2:14,27 2Jn 1:1,2
- **ask**: John 15:16 14:13 16:23 Job 22:26 Ps 37:4 Pr 10:24 Isa 58:8 Ga 4:2 5:16 1Jn 3:22 1Jn 5:14
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A PROMISE FOR PRODUCTIVE PRAYER

If you abide (meno) in Me, and My words (rhema) abide (meno) in you - IF is a third class condition, indicating potential action (to abide). **My words** refers to all that Jesus taught, and realistically to all the OT, for it all pointed to Him (Lk 24:27, 44), and all the NT! Note Jesus switches imagery from Himself abiding in the disciples to His words abiding in the disciples. His **words abide in us** when we obey His words, His commands. They would also abide in us when we imbibe them (see Jn 8:31 below)

*if you want to grow closer to Jesus Christ,
spend much time in His word,
asking the Holy Spirit to reveal more of Christ to you.*
-- Steven Cole

In John 8:31+ we see the corollary thought where abiding is evidence that one is truly a disciple of Jesus "Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you **abide (meno) in My word**, then you are truly ([alethos](#) - "the real deal") disciples of Mine." This abiding would also explain how His word would abide in us as His disciples. In other words, for His **words** to abide in us, we need to abide in His **words**. Does that make sense? If you say you are a disciple and you are NEVER in His **words**, that might be a warning sign that you are not truly one of His disciples.

*The key is to keep coming back to Him
and to keep working on your relationship with Him*

Steven Cole - Dr. James Rosscup wrote an entire book, [Abiding in Christ](#) (BORROW). He notes ([pp. 106–126](#)) that it includes both the concept of time and that of quality. The time factor means that this isn't a quick fix to solve all your problems. It isn't a

remedy to pull off the shelf when things aren't going well, only to be put back on the shelf once life is back on track. Abiding in Christ is a lifelong relationship with Him. You're in it for the long haul. The quality factor means that the relationship grows more intimate over the years. Just as marriage is a lifelong relationship where both partners should grow closer to one another over the years, so it should be with Christ. But as those who have been married for very long know, growing closer isn't automatic. It requires purposefully spending time together. You have to keep working through issues that come up. If you don't work at it, it's easy to drift apart. The same is true of abiding in Christ. There will be times when you feel closer and times when you feel more distant. But the key is to keep coming back to Him and to keep working on your relationship with Him. You can't put it on autopilot. ([Growing Closer to Christ John 15:7-11](#))

Ask (aiteo) whatever you wish (thelo), and it will be done for you - Ask (thelo) is an active decision of the will, a conscious willing and denotes a more active resolution. **Ask (thelo)** is in the [aorist imperative](#) which calls for dependence on [the Holy Spirit to obey](#) (and this would also help assure we are "praying in the Spirit"). Obviously, Jesus is not giving His disciples [carte blanche](#) to ask anything they wanted. His point is that when the disciple is abiding in His Word, they will **ask** in accord with the will of Jesus in Whom they abide (see especially 1Jn 5:14-15 below). Sadly, the false teachers who espouse ["name it claim it" teaching](#) (cf [Joel Osteen](#)) misuse passages like this to dupe their listeners into thinking God is like a divine genie in a bottle! Do not be deceived beloved, for tragically thousands are completely deceived!

Love God, and do as you please.

-- Augustine

Does Augustine's quote bother you? It will if you focus on the second clause! But the first clause is the key that opens the door. When you love God, you will learn to love what He loves and to ask for what pleases Him.

[Ray Stedman](#) adds "Prayers are answered, growing out of that relationship of an obedient and a dependent heart -- leaving the process and timing to God. You cannot tell him when to answer your prayers. You cannot tell him how to answer your prayers. But he will answer your prayers when they grow out of this relationship."

Whatever you wish is sadly grossly perverted by some prosperity teachers to the point one asked God that he wanted a [hundred million dollars](#)" to which he said God responded with "Done!"

John's letter gives us "caveats" regarding our asking which will assure that what we ask will be done...

1 John 3:22 and whatever we ask ([aiteo](#)) we receive from Him, because (WHY?) we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight. (WE ARE OBEDIENT AND PLEASE GOD).

1 John 5:14-15+ This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask ([aiteo](#)) anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask ([aiteo](#)), we know that we have the requests which we have asked ([aiteo](#)) from Him. (BECAUSE WE ASK ACCORDING TO HIS WORD WHICH REFLECTS HIS WILL)

[Bob Utley](#) correctly warns us that "This phrase has been badly proof-texted (i.e., pulled out of its context). Be careful to seek the teaching of all Scripture and do not emphasize isolated texts."

Here is the secret of prevailing prayer.

God will not hear our words if we disregard His words.

- Spurgeon

Spurgeon - Do not take that verse as a promise of unlimited answers to prayer, for it is nothing of the kind. Remember the "if" that qualifies it.....Do not think that all men can pray alike effectually, for it is not so. There are some whom God will hear, and some whom God will not hear. And there are some even of his own children, whom he will hear in things absolutely vital and essential, to whom he never gave [carte blanche](#) after this fashion: "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." No, if you will not hear God's words, he will not hear yours; and if his words do not abide in you, your words shall not have power with him. They may be directed to heaven, but the Lord will not listen to them so as to have regard unto them. Oh, it needs very tender walking for one who would be mighty in prayer! You shall find that those who have had their will at the throne of grace are men who have done God's will in other places; it must be so. The greatest favourite at court will have a double portion of the jealousy of his monarch, and he must be specially careful that he orders his steps aright, or else the king will not continue to favor him as he was wont to do. There is a sacred discipline in Christ's house, a part of which consists in this, that, as our obedience to our God declines, so will our power in prayer decrease at the same time.....a man who is truly in Christ, as the branch is in the vine, and who is feeding upon Christ's words, will be so influenced by the Holy Spirit that he will not ask anything which is contrary to the mind of God. Consequently, his prayers, though in one sense unrestricted, are really restricted by the tenderness of his conscience, and the sensitiveness of his spirit to the influence of the mind of God. ([Expositions in John](#))

Spurgeon - My very words. You must treasure up Christ's teaching; you must obey his precepts. If ye do this, "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." In this chapter we are taught once or twice that the power of prayer depends very much upon the closeness of our communion with Christ, and the completeness of our obedience to him. We are saved by faith in the Redeemer, but the joy of salvation, the very dignity and glory of it, will only come to those men who jealously watch themselves, and zealously obey their Lord and Master. ([Expositions in John](#))

NET NOTE - Once again Jesus promises the disciples ask whatever you want, and it will be done for you. This recalls John 14:13,14+, where the disciples were promised that if they asked anything in Jesus' Name it would be done for them. The two thoughts are really quite similar, since here it is conditioned on the disciples' remaining in Jesus and His words remaining in them. The first phrase (**If you abide in Me**) relates to the genuineness of their relationship with Jesus. The second phrase (**My words abide in you**) relates to their obedience. When both of these qualifications are met, the disciples would in fact be asking in Jesus' name and therefore according to his will.

John Calvin - Believers often feel that they are starved and very far from that rich fatness which is necessary for yielding abundant fruit. For this reason, Scripture tells us that, whatever those who are in Christ may need, there is a remedy provided for their poverty as soon as they ask it from God. This is a very useful admonition, for the Lord often suffers us to hunger to train us to be earnest in prayer. But if we fly to him, we shall never lack what we ask for; rather, out of his inexhaustible abundance, he will supply us with everything that we need (1 Cor. 1:5).

In saying "If my words abide in you," Christ means that we must take root in him by faith; for as soon as we depart from the doctrine of the gospel, we seek Christ separately from himself. When he promises that he will grant whatever we wish, he does not give us permission to form wishes according to our own fancy. God would do what was ill fitted to promote our welfare if he were so indulgent and so ready to yield to us, for we know well that men often indulge in foolish and extravagant desires. But here he limits the wishes of his people to the rule of praying in a right manner, and that rule is subject to the good pleasure of God in all our affections. This is confirmed by the context in which the words stand; for he means that his people will or desire not riches, or honor, or anything of that nature, which the flesh foolishly desires, but the vital sap of the Holy Spirit, which enables them to bear fruit. ([John 15:7-11](#))

Steven Cole offers the following thoughts when we abide in His Word and pray according to His word (will) and yet it seems like God does not hear or respond accordingly...

First, the tension we experience stems from the fact that we can know God's will of desire, but we can't know His will of decree. While God desires the sanctification of all believers (1 Thess. 4:3), He also permits sin and can even use our sins for ultimate good. Jesus prayed for Peter, not that he wouldn't fall, but that his recovery from that fall would be used to strengthen others (Luke 22:31-32). We should pray that God would further His kingdom purposes, but we also need to submit to the fact that we don't know His will of decree in any situation.

Second, Jesus' promise to do whatever we ask does not negate the many Scriptures that exhort us to wait on the Lord. Jesus doesn't say when He will do it. Paul's longing and prayer for his fellow Jews was for their salvation (Rom. 10:1), but he never saw that prayer answered.

Third, God often accomplishes His purposes in ways that seem backwards to us. We pray for the gospel to spread, so God sends persecution. We pray for power, so God makes us weak (2 Cor. 12:9).

Fourth, we do not understand all that God is doing, so we may go to our graves not knowing why He seemingly didn't answer our prayers. We only see a tiny fraction of what God is accomplishing in His eternal purpose. Somehow, though, He uses our prayers in that process, even when we don't know how to pray as we should (Rom. 8:26). ([Growing Closer to Christ John 15:7-11](#))

C H Spurgeon - The secret of power in prayer (Full sermon [The Secret of Power in Prayer](#))

'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' John 15:7

*Power in prayer is very much the gauge of our spiritual condition;
and when that is secured to us in a high degree,
we are favoured as to all other matters*

Suppose a man of God is in prayer, and he thinks that such and such a thing is desirable, yet he remembers that he is nothing but a babe in the presence of his all-wise Father, and so he bows his will, and asks as a favour to be taught what to will. Though God bids

him ask what he wills, he shrinks and cries, 'My Lord, here is a request which I am not quite clear about. As far as I can judge, it is a desirable thing, and I will it; but, Lord, I am not fit to judge for myself, and therefore I pray thee, give not as I will, but as thou wilt.' Do you not see that, when we are in such a condition as this, our real will is God's will? Deep down in our hearts we will only that which the Lord himself wills; and what is this but to ask what we will, and it be done unto us? It becomes safe for God to say to the sanctified soul, 'ask what thou wilt, and it shall be done unto thee.' The heavenly instincts of that man lead him right; the grace that is within his soul thrusts down all covetous lustings and foul desires, and his will is the actual shadow of God's will. The spiritual life is master in him, and so his aspirations are holy, heavenly, Godlike. He has been made a partaker of the divine nature; and as a son is like his father, so now in desire and will he is one with his God. As the echo answers to the voice, so does the renewed heart echo the mind of the Lord. Our desires are reflected beams of the divine will: you shall ask what you will, and it shall be even so.

Your Prayer Life - Bob Gass - [BORROW Fresh Word for Today](#) PAGE 280 (See [Page 217 for another allusion to John 15:7](#))

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. (John 15:7)

Jesus gives us a simple plan for building a prayer life. First, He says, "Abide in Me." Center your life around Him! John leaned his head on Jesus' breast—but Peter followed afar off. How close do you want to be? It's up to you!

Next, He says, "Let my words abide in you." Soak yourself in the Scriptures! Learn to pray the Word! If you do, your prayer life will be transformed. Some mornings I "personalize" Psalm 34: "I will bless You Lord at all times, Your praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in You, Lord." Or when I have a need, I pray, "Lord, You are my Shepherd, therefore I shall not want" (Psalms 23:1). When you pray the Word, your Father is pleased, your faith is activated, and your enemy will flee from you as he did from Jesus. Go ahead—try it!

Next, before you look up—look in! David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me" (Psalms 66:18). Achan's secret sin had to be dealt with before Israel could go forward into the Promised Land. (See Joshua 7.) So does yours! The moment you're conscious of sin, confess it, and when you have, be confident He has forgiven you, and move on rejoicing! (See 1 John 1:9.)

USE THIS SIMPLE PLAN TO BUILD A PRAYER LIFE!

Jon Courson - [BORROW A Day's Journey](#) PAGE 88-

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you. John 15:7

The word 'abide' means to 'be at home in.' The Psalmist didn't say 'Thy word have I hid in my mind' or even 'in my memory.' He said, 'Thy word have I hid in mine heart...' (Psalm 119:11, emphasis mine).

Paul echoed him when he prayed in Ephesians 3:17, 'that Christ may dwell in your hearts...' [Emphasis mine.]

Why does the Lord want Himself and His Word to abide in our hearts and not just in our heads? Because, affected by data, discussions, and information, the mind is incredibly fickle. I can change my mind 100 times in a single day concerning a single issue. So can you. But not so the heart.

Think back to your dating days and you know how this works. If someone dumped you, even though you knew in your head that you were glad to be free of him or her, you would still find yourself feeling for him or caring about her. Why? Because the heart holds on. That's why the Lord wants His Word to dwell there.

How does this happen?

For me the most practical way knowledge moves from the head to the heart is through meditation and contemplation. Spending time in the Word—in morning and evening devotions, in corporate study, in times when I'm waiting in line or waiting at a stoplight—allows it to sink in and permeate my inner man, to be at home in my life, to abide in my heart.

Jon Courson - [BORROW A Day's Journey](#) PAGE 89-

...Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. John 15:7

Our culture has lost the meaning of what real love is. Consequently, husbands and wives are saying, 'I don't have feelings for him or her anymore, so I'm leaving.' But feelings aren't the issue. Love is not an emotion or a feeling. It's a decision. It's an action.

'My commandment,' Jesus said, 'is that you make the decision to love.'

Fighting the flu and not thinking very clearly as I was at my desk preparing for tonight's study, I decided to take five minutes to rake

some leaves and get some fresh air. No sooner had I walked out the door than a sister walked by, pushing her granddaughter in a stroller. 'Do you have a minute, Jon?' she said.

'Well yeah, a minute is just about what I've got,' I answered. But as soon as I spoke those words, I was convicted of an attitude that was amiss, so I walked over and began to converse with her. What she shared with me blessed my heart so deeply that I went back into my study totally refreshed. So too, you will come across people today who might initially seem to be an interruption in the raking of your leaves. But if you say, 'Wait a minute. Here's an opportunity for me to love,' you know what will happen? As you make that decision, there will be a change in your emotions. The Lord will meet you in that place. I guarantee it.

C H Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook -

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."—John 15:7.

NOTE well, that we must hear Jesus speak if we expect him to hear us speak. If we have no ear for Christ, he will have no ear for us. In proportion as we hear we shall be heard.

Moreover, what is heard must remain, must live in us, and must abide in our character as a force and a power. We must receive the truths which Jesus taught, the precepts which he issued, and the movements of his Spirit within us; or we shall have no power at the mercy-seat.

Suppose our Lord's words to be received, and to abide in us, what a boundless field of privilege is opened up to us! We are to have our will in prayer, because we have already surrendered our will to the Lord's command. Thus are Elijahs trained to handle the keys of heaven, and lock or loose the clouds. One such man is worth a thousand common Christians. Do we humbly desire to be intercessors for the church and the world, and like Luther to be able to have what we will of the Lord? Then we must bow our ear to the voice of the Well-beloved, and treasure up his words, and carefully obey them. He had need "hearken diligently" who would pray effectually.

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."—John 15:7.

OF necessity we must be in Christ to live unto him, and we must abide in him to be able to claim the largesse of this promise from him. To abide in Jesus is never to quit him for another love, or another object, but to remain in living, loving, conscious, willing union with him. The branch is not only ever near the stem, but ever receiving life and fruitfulness from it. All true believers abide in Christ in a sense; but there is a higher meaning, and this we must know before we can gain unlimited power at the throne. "Ask what ye will" is for Enochs who walk with God, for Johns who lie in the Lord's bosom, for those whose union with Christ leads to constant communion.

The heart must remain in love, the mind must be rooted in faith, the hope must be cemented to the Word, the whole man must be joined unto the Lord, or else it would be dangerous to trust us with power in prayer. The *carte blanche* can only be given to one whose very life is, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." O you who break your fellowship, what power you lose! If you would be mighty in your pleadings, the Lord himself must abide in you, and you in him.

A MAN purchased a lottery ticket that would pay him \$100,000 if it turned out to be the lucky one. He asked my friend, a pastor, to pray that his number would be picked so he could give one-tenth of his winnings to the Lord. My friend hesitated, then said, "All right, but first let me ask you this: Are you willing to give God the same percentage of your present weekly income?" The fellow looked surprised and dismayed. "B-b-but I need that to live on," he stammered.

This man's seemingly spiritual request was merely a cover-up for selfishness, and God doesn't honor such prayers.

Scripture verses like Matthew 21:22, "whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive," are not sweepstakes promises that cater to our selfish nature, nor are they tickets to wealth and success.

While the Bible contains many statements about God's willingness to hear and answer our prayers, John 15:7 defines the condition: We must live in fellowship with Christ and cherish His words in our hearts.

The more we study God's Word, know the mind of Christ, and desire His will, the more we'll pray with right motives—and the more answers to prayer we'll see.

Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. —John 14:13

Today's Scripture : John 15:7-14

Five-year-old Randy wanted a toy stagecoach for Christmas. While shopping with Mom, he found just the one he wanted. It was about 6" long and had cool wheels and dark brown plastic horses pulling it. "Mommy, I want this one. Pleeeeease!" he begged. As young children sometimes do, he threw a tantrum, insisting that he get that stagecoach for Christmas. Mom said, "We'll see," and took him home.

Randy was sure he'd get what he asked for. Christmas morning came, and he opened the package confidently. Sure enough, it was the stagecoach he had begged for. He was so pleased. But then his older brother said, "You really did a dumb thing to insist on getting that coach. Mom bought you a much bigger one, but when you begged for that little one, she exchanged it!" Suddenly the small stagecoach didn't seem so appealing.

Sometimes we're like that with God. We pray about a specific need and tell Him how He ought to answer. We beg and plead—and God may even give us exactly what we ask for. But He may have had something better in mind.

Phillips Brooks once said, "Pray the largest prayers. You cannot think a prayer so large that God, in answering it, will not wish you had made it larger." By: Anne Cetas (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Do not presume to know what's best
When you begin to pray;
But say to God, "Your will be done,"
Then trust His perfect way.
—Sper

Large asking results in large receiving.

John 15:8 "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

- **is glorified:** Ps 92:12-15 Isa 60:21 61:3 Hag 1:8 Mt 5:16 1Co 6:20 10:31 2Co 9:10-15 Php 1:11 Tit 2:5,10 1Pe 2:12 4:11
- **so prove:** John 8:31, Jn 13:35 Mt 5:44 Lu 6:35
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

John 8:31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;

John 13:35 "By this **all men will know that you are My disciples**, if you have love for one another."

Luke 6:43-44 "For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. 44 "For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush.

MUCH FRUIT GLORIFIES THE FATHER

My Father ([pater](#)) is glorified ([doxazo](#)) by this, that ([hina](#)) you (present tense - continually) bear much fruit ([karpos](#)), and so prove to be My disciples ([mathetes](#) - learners) - Note the progression of fruit in John 15 - no fruit, fruit, more fruit (all Jn 15:2) and finally **much fruit** (Jn 15:5, 7). How do disciples glorify the Father? Remember that the idea of glorify is to give a proper opinion of, so when disciples glorify the Father, they show a proper picture of Him to the lost world. And so in Mt 5:16+ Jesus commanded those who would be His disciples to "**Let** your light **shine** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) before men in such a way that they may see your [good works](#) (IN OTHER WORDS SUCH A WAY THAT THE WORKS DO NOT DRAW ATTENTION TO US BUT TO GOD), and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Here Jesus tells us how to let our light shine -- by bearing much fruit ([good works](#)). And just as with the [good works](#) Jesus described in the Sermon on the Mount, the "**much fruit**" we bear should not draw attention to us but always point others (lost and found) to God the Father.

THOUGHT - What genre of works/fruit would be most likely expected to accomplish this God glorifying end? Clearly, those works/fruit which are supernatural, the works/fruit which God by His Spirit performs (bears) through us in such a way that there is no natural explanation for those works/fruit! Dear disciple doesn't your heart yearn to continually carry out those types of [good works](#)?

Proof of discipleship is fruit bearing

Merrill Tenney - Just as Jesus glorified God by his life, so the disciples would glorify God by theirs. (BORROW [Expositor's Bible Commentary PAGE 350](#))

Another way to look at this passage is to ask what is the proof that one is truly a disciple? Jesus is saying that bearing fruit is the external evidence that one is a disciple.

THOUGHT - I am reminded of an old nursery rhyme "Mary, Mary, quite contrary, How does your garden grow?" This begs the question how does your garden grow dear disciple of Christ? Are you growing in Christlikeness? If you are, then you will likely be seeing growth in fruit (fruit...more fruit...much fruit)!

It is not activity which glorifies God; it is character...

Ray Stedman adds that "God is glorified when his people manifest fruit, i.e., Christlikeness. You do not even have to do a thing to manifest that. You can be flat on your back in bed, sick, but manifesting a Christ-like spirit, and you are glorifying God by that experience. It is not activity which glorifies God; it is character, it is what you are, and the way you react to a situation."

Bob Utley - The lives (fruit) of believers reveal who they are! The VERB TENSE is not as important as the reality of a changed and effective life of love, obedience, and service. These are marks of a true believer! We are not saved by our love, obedience, service (cf. Eph. 2:8,9), but they are the evidence that we are believers (cf. Eph. 2:10).

W Hall Harris explains that "the two actions are really one and the same: **bearing fruit** and **being Jesus' disciple** are not two different actions, but a single action. The first is the outward sign or proof of the second—in bearing fruit the disciples show themselves to be disciples indeed (cf. Jn 15:5)." (**COMMENT** - THIS BEGS THE QUESTION, DEAR READER, ARE YOU BEARING FRUIT? NO FRUIT COULD SIGNIFY NO ROOT, WHICH IN TURN SIGNIFIES NO LIFE!)

Steven Cole on bearing fruit that glorifies God - To bear fruit that glorifies God, it's important to keep two things in mind:**First**, check your motives. Why do you want to bear fruit? It's easy to fall into the trap of serving the Lord so that others will say nice things to you and about you. If you feel hurt when people don't give you enough praise, it probably indicates that you were not serving for God's glory, but for your own glory. Or, if you want to build an impressive ministry so that others will say, "What a great man of God!" your motives are wrong, because you're seeking your own glory, not God's glory. **Second**, check your source of power. If you're serving the Lord in your own strength and just asking Him for a little help now and then, you're not serving in His power. (**ED**: THAT'S WHY I LIKE THE NAME OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AS "THE ENABLER" [SUPERNATURAL ENABLER] RATHER THAN "THE HELPER," BECAUSE HELPER SUGGESTS I JUST NEED A LITTLE PUSH TO BEAR THIS FRUIT! WRONG!) Serving in His power doesn't mean that you don't work hard, but rather that you work hard as you rely on God's power. Paul put it (Col. 1:29+), "For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me." (**ED**: cf 1Co 15:10+) If you feel burned out, chances are you were serving in your power, not in God's power. ([Growing Closer to Christ John 15:7-11](#)) (See my discussion of the "[Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)")

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

-- [Westminster Short Catechism](#)

D L Moody - The root can only show its strength and glory in the branches. Fruitful branches bend low.

W. B. JENNINGS. JOHN 15:8. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.

"Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit," said Jesus. What a possibility, what an inspiration, that we can enhance the glory of "our Father"! Our hearts leap at the thought. How can this be done? By bearing "leaves,"—a profession of love for Him? No. By bearing some fruit? No. "That ye bear much fruit." In the abundance of the yield is the joy, the glory, of the husbandman. We should therefore aim to be extraordinary, "hundredfold" Christians, satisfied with none but the largest yield. Our lives should be packed with good deeds. Then at harvest-time we can say "Father, I have glorified thee on the earth." This fruitfulness depends on the condition of the heart to receive the seed, the way in which we hear the Word. Combining the three versions of the parable of the sower, we find that the characteristics of a good hearer are,—he understandeth the Word, he receiveth it, he keepeth it.

Apprehension of the Word, faith in the Word, obedience to the Word,—these three are indispensable to fruitfulness. “Take heed, therefore, how ye hear.” Meditate, believe, obey, “that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Norman Geisler - [WHEN CULTISTS ASK](#)

JOHN 15:8—Is soul-winning a necessary sign of fruit-bearing, as the authoritarian discipleship movement claims?

MISINTERPRETATION: “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples” (John 15:8 NASB). In the Boston Church of Christ movement, people are accused of being unfruitful unless they personally bring others to Christ.

CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION: This verse says nothing about winning souls. That may be included in fruit-bearing, but it is not stated as the evidence of fruit-bearing here or anywhere else in the Bible. There are many gifts in the body (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4). Evangelism is only one of them, and only some people have it (Eph. 4:11). Likewise, “fruit” is far broader than evangelism. According to Galatians 5:22–23, “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” In fact, spiritual fruit is anything that brings glory to God (cf. 1 Cor. 10:31).

[Bearing Fruit](#)

By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit. — John 15:8

Today's Scripture : John 15:1-8

Jesus didn't ask you or me to evangelize the world all by ourselves. We can't. But He did ask us to bear much fruit (Jn. 15:8). One way is to lead someone to Christ. If we bring even one person to the Lord, and that one brings one, and so on, there is great potential for multiplying just as a planted seed reproduces.

A few years ago, the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago had a fascinating display. It showed a checkerboard with 1 grain of wheat on the first square, 2 on the second, 4 on the third, then 8, 16, 32, 64, and so on until they could no longer fit the seeds on the square. Then it asked the question, “At this rate of doubling each successive square, how much would you have on the checkerboard by the 64th square?”

You could punch a button at the bottom of the display to find out. The answer? “Nine sextillion—enough grain to cover the entire subcontinent of India 50 feet deep.” Incredible!

If each of us leads just one person to Christ each year, and each of those persons leads one to Christ each year, the harvest would soon be enormous. It's happening in some parts of the world.

Isn't it time we started sharing the gospel and bearing fruit? By: David C. Egener (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

I want to be a fruitful Christian,
Winning precious souls for Thee;
Telling them of how my Savior
Gave His life to set them free.
—Ozbun

A fruitful harvest requires a faithful witness.

WHY WE WITNESS

By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. JOHN 15:8

Most people probably think we should be saved for reasons other than to glorify God. Many Christians will usually give the following as the reasons they witness:

- To keep people out of hell. They want them to avoid eternal punishment.
- To manifest God's love.
- To obey Christ's command. In Matthew 28:18–20 and Acts 1:8, Jesus tells us to evangelize.

Those are all valid, biblical reasons for evangelism, but the main reason we should preach the gospel is for the glory of God. (BORROW [Truth for Today](#))

A Life That Glorifies God - Henry Blackaby

"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." John 15:8

You may be a brand-new Christian, or perhaps you've known Jesus for years. Regardless, it should be obvious to others that you belong to Jesus. Jesus said that when people look at you, they should see evidence of God at work. What kind of evidence? Jesus called it fruit. When you put others first instead of yourself, that's fruit. When you get rid of an ungodly habit and seek to live a pure life, that's fruit. When you refuse to gossip but choose instead to build up others, that's fruit. When you control your temper, even when others are losing theirs, that's fruit. When you forgive someone who hurt you, that's fruit. The types of fruit are endless.

God doesn't expect you to produce all this fruit on your own. In fact, Jesus said you're not capable, apart from him, of living a life that glorifies God. He wants to live through you, as a way to show others that he is alive and powerful. In fact, the only way Christ will not produce fruit in your life is if you resist what he is trying to do. If, on the other hand, you cooperate with all Christ is doing in your life, you will see amazing things taking place in your life.

Think back to when you first became a Christian. Are you the same person you were then, or have you allowed God to produce fruit in your life as a testimony to his greatness? (BORROW [The Experience page 358](#))

ANDREW MURRAY - Like Christ: In Glorifying The Father.

"Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, *that Thy Son also may glorify Thee*. I have glorified Thee on the earth."—John 17:1, 4.

"Herein is *my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*"—John 15:8.

The glory of an object is, that in its sort its intrinsic worth and excellence answers perfectly to all that is expected of it. That excellence or perfection may be so hidden or unknown, that the object has no glory to those who behold it. To *glorify* is to remove every hindrance, and so to reveal the full worth and perfection of the object, that its glory is seen and acknowledged by all. (THIS IS ONLY A SHORT EXCERPT - [CLICK HERE FOR FULL DEVOTIONAL BY ANDREW MURRAY](#))

You Can Do Something

By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit. — John 15:8

Today's Scripture : John 15:1-8

John Warr, an 18th-century apprentice shoemaker, was determined to be a faithful witness for Christ. Another apprentice was hired, and John repeatedly talked to him about spiritual things. That new worker, however, didn't want to be bothered. Then one day he was caught exchanging a counterfeit shilling for a good one. In his guilty humiliation he asked John for help and prayer. Through the faithful witness of John Warr, that man put his faith in Christ and developed into a committed disciple.

The young apprentice was William Carey, who later became a remarkably fruitful missionary to India. Carey's life and ministry had a tremendous influence on the cause of worldwide gospel outreach in modern times.

Jesus said in John 15:8, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit." This could be discouraging to Christians who can't preach, sing, teach, or go to the mission field. They might see themselves as stuck in a situation that makes fruitful service impossible.

If that's how you feel, then take courage from the example of John Warr. His impact on a co-worker brought glory to God and untold blessing to multitudes of people around the world. By: Vernon Grounds (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

You do not have to cross the seas,
Nor foreign lands explore,
To share God's Word with needy souls—
You'll find them at your door.
—Anon.

Witness for Christ with your life as well as your lips.

1. The term "disciples" is used in John's Gospel to denote those **true believers and followers** who do God's will and reflect His character. John does not use the term "church" (*ekklesia*; [CHURCH](#)) even one time, therefore, "disciples" become the way he denotes Christian fellowship and gatherings. Discipleship is the daily life of the new age lived out in the old age. This is why the early church is called "the Way" in Acts (Acts 9:2, Acts 19:9, 23, Acts 24:14, 22). It is supremely characterized by love, light, obedience, service, and perseverance ([SPECIAL TOPIC: PERSEVERANCE](#))! By these others know them as Jesus' disciples.

2. Believers are commanded to abide in (**ED: ACTUALLY THE ONLY DEFINITIVE COMMAND IN GREEK IN JOHN 15 IS Jn 15:4, cp Jn 15:12, 17**)
 1. prayer (John 15:7; 14:14)
 2. obedience (John 15:10,14,17; 14:15,21,23,24)
 3. joy (John 15:11)
 4. love (John 15:12; 14:21,23,24)

These are all evidences of a personal relationship with God.

3. "Characteristics of Disciples" are spelled out in John 17:6-19
 1. They are elect
 2. They are obedient
 3. They know God and Christ
 4. They accept truth
 5. They are prayed for by Jesus
 6. They stay in the world
 7. They are kept by His power
 8. They are one as the Father and Jesus are one
 9. They have His joy
 10. They are not of this world
 11. They are consecrated by truth
 12. They are sent as He was sent
 13. They are loved as the Father loved Jesus

4. Warnings about discipleship
 1. must be priority – Matt. 8:19-22; Luke 9:57-62
 2. cost everything – Matt. 10:37-38; 16:24-26; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-26
 3. count the cost of discipleship first – Luke 14:25-33
 4. discipleship involves divine discipline – Heb. 12:5-11

John 15:9 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.

- **the Father:** John 15:13 17:23,26 Eph 3:18 Rev 1:5
- **abide:** John 15:11 1Jn 2:28 Jude 1:20
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

1 John 4:16+ We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who **abides** ([meno](#) in present tense) in love **abides** ([meno](#) in present tense) in God, and God **abides** ([meno](#) in present tense) in him.

Ephesians 3:16-19+ (PAUL PRAYS THAT THE SAINTS AT EPHESUS WOULD GRASP THE LOVE OF JESUS FOR US!) that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 (NOTE THE PARADOX THAT PAUL PRAYS FOR THE SAINTS TO KNOW THE UNKNOWABLE! CHEW ON THAT A FEW MINUTES!) and **to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge**, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (**COMMENT** - SADLY THIS WAS THE VERY CHURCH THAT A FEW DECADES LATER JESUS HIMSELF HAD TO SAY "But I have this against you, that you have left your first love." Rev 2:4+!)

WHAT IS JESUS' LOVE COMPARED TO?

Just as the Father ([pater](#)) **has loved** ([agapao](#)) **Me, I have also loved** ([agapao](#)) **you** - How much does the **Father** love the Son? That's essentially a rhetorical question, for His love is infinite, incomprehensible and eternal. What is the character (quality and quantity) of Jesus' love for us? That's also rhetorical and should evoke at least an "Oh my!" but even better a joyous, grateful "Hallelujah!"

Spurgeon - How wondrously Jesus loves those who are truly, His! As the Father loved Him, so does He love us: that is, without beginning, without measure, without variation, without end. "Continue ye in my love;" that is, live in it, enjoy it, drink it in, be influenced by it....What a glorious word! I scarcely know a text more deep, more full than this. After the same manner as God the Father loves the Son — after that same sort does the Son love us.....Oh, drink this nectar down! It is as when Cleopatra dissolved the pearl into a single draught; for here is the choicest pearl of truth that ever was dissolved into a single verse to be a delicious draught for his people to drink: "As the Father hath loved me," — as surely as the Father hath loved me; and, then, "as"— that is,— in the same manner "as the Father hath loved me," — without beginning, without ending, Without measure, without change, "so have I loved you." ([Expositions in John](#))

Bob Utley - This chain of loving relationships characterizes God's family - (1) the Father loves the Son (2) the Son loves His followers (3) His followers love one another (4) true believers love a lost world (cf. John 3:16; Matt. 28:19-20) (**ED**: NOTE THAT LAST ONE! THE THOUGHT IS "**LOVE** [[present imperative](#)] YOUR ENEMIES!" Mt 5:44+ - TRY THAT ONE IN YOUR OWN STRENGTH. IF YOU CAN LOVE YOUR ENEMY, YOU KNOW YOU ARE FILLED WITH AND WALKING BY THE SPIRIT!)

Abide ([meno](#)) **in** (locative of sphere - in the "atmosphere" of) **My love** ([agape](#)) - Jesus commands us to abide (remain, stay) in His love. He uses the "Nike Commercial Command" ("JUST DO IT!"), the [aorist imperative](#) which calls for [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#). Obeying this command should be the joy of our heart. Who would not want to abide (remain, stay) in the Savior's love? (Rhetorical albeit only believers of course)

Oh The Deep, Deep Love of Jesus!

by Audrey Nicole Assad

Oh-oh the deep, deep love of Jesus
Vast unmeasured, boundless, free
Rolling as a mighty ocean
In its fullness over me

Underneath me, all around me
Is the current of His love
Leading onward, leading homeward to
Thy glorious rest above

Oh-oh the deep, deep love of Jesus
'Tis a heav'n of heav'ns to me
And it lifts me up to glory
For it lifts me up to Thee

Oh-oh the deep, deep love of Jesus
Spread His praise from shore to shore
How He loveth, ever loveth
Changeth never, nevermore

Love ([26](#)) **agape** is unconditional, sacrificial love and Biblically refers to a love that God is (1Jn 4:8,16), that God shows (Jn 3:16, 1Jn 4:9) and that God enables in His children (fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22+).

It is not surprising that Greek literature throws little light on its distinctive NT meaning. Biblical **agape love** is the love of choice, the love of serving with humility, the highest kind of love, the noblest kind of devotion, the love of the will (intentional, a conscious choice) and not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship. **Agape** is not based on pleasant emotions or good feelings that might result from a physical attraction or a familial bond. **Agape** chooses as an act of self-sacrifice to serve the recipient. From all of the descriptions of **agape** love, it is clear that true **agape** love is a sure mark of salvation.

John MacArthur explains that "**Agape love** is the greatest virtue of the Christian life. Yet that type of love was rare in pagan Greek literature. That's because the traits agape portrays—unselfishness, self-giving, willful devotion, concern for the welfare of others—were mostly disdained in ancient Greek culture as signs of weakness. However, the New Testament declares agape to be the character trait around which all others revolve. The apostle John writes, "God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1John 4:16)". (SEE [The Power of Integrity: Building a Life Without Compromise - Page 133](#)) (Bolding added)

Agape love does not depend on the world's criteria for love, such as attractiveness, emotions, or sentimentality. Believers can easily fall into the trap of blindly following the world's demand that a lover **feel** positive toward the beloved. This is not **agape** love, but is a love based on impulse. **Impulsive love** characterizes the spouse who announces to the other spouse that they are planning to divorce their mate. Why? They reason "I can't help it. I fell in love with another person!" Christians must understand that this type of impulsive love is completely contrary to God's **decisive love**, which is decisive because He is in control and has a purpose in mind. There are many reasons a proper understanding of the truth of God's word (and of the world's lie) is critical and one of the foremost is Jesus' declaration that "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** (agape) for one another." (John 13:35).

Bob Utley - This Greek term for love (**agape**) was not used much in Classical or Koine Greek literature until the church began to use it in a specialized sense. It began to be used as a description of YHWH's character: selfless, sacrificial, loyal, active love. Love is an action, not an emotion (cf. John 3:16). The NT term **agape** is theologically analogous to OT term **hesed**, which means covenant love and loyalty. (See [SPECIAL TOPIC: LOVE \(agapē\)](#))

AGAPE in John's writings - Jn. 5:42; Jn. 13:35; Jn. 15:9; Jn. 15:10; Jn. 15:13; Jn. 17:26; 1 Jn. 2:5; 1 Jn. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:1; 1 Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 3:17; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:9; 1 Jn. 4:10; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:16; 1 Jn. 4:17; 1 Jn. 4:18; 1 Jn. 5:3; 2 Jn. 1:3; 2 Jn. 1:6; 3 Jn. 1:6; Rev. 2:4; Rev. 2:19

C H Spurgeon - "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." — John 15:9

*His love to us is a stream
whose source is hidden in eternity*

As the Father loves the Son, in the same manner Jesus loves his people. What is that divine method? He loved him without beginning, and thus Jesus loves his members. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." You can trace the beginning of human affection; you can easily find the beginning of your love to Christ, but his love to us is a stream whose source is hidden in eternity. God the Father loves Jesus without any change. Christian, take this for your comfort, that there is no change in Jesus Christ's love to those who rest in him. Yesterday you were on Tabor's top, and you said, "He loves me:" today you are in the valley of humiliation, but he loves you still the same. On the hill Mizar, and among the Hermons, you heard his voice, which spake so sweetly with the turtle-notes of love; and now on the sea, or even in the sea, when all his waves and billows go over you, his heart is faithful to his ancient choice. The Father loves the Son without any end, and thus does the Son love his people. Saint, thou needest not fear the loosing of the silver cord, for his love for thee will never cease. Rest confident that even down to the grave Christ will go with you, and that up again from it he will be your guide to the celestial hills.

Moreover, the Father loves the Son without any measure, and the same immeasurable love the Son bestows upon his chosen ones. The whole heart of Christ is dedicated to his people. He "loved us and gave himself for us." His is a love which passeth knowledge. (Eph 3:19) Ah! we have indeed an immutable Saviour, a precious Saviour, one who loves without measure, without change, without beginning, and without end, even as the Father loves him! There is much food here for those who know how to digest it. May the Holy Ghost lead us into its marrow and fatness!

Dogged Devotion

In Your presence is fullness of joy. — Psalm 16:11

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-17

Maggie doesn't care much for television. She would rather look out a window than stare at a small screen. Reading doesn't thrill her either. She has been known to "chew" on books, but only in the strictly literal sense. Nevertheless, when Jay and I read or watch TV, Maggie participates. Even though she doesn't enjoy what we're doing, she enjoys being with us. Maggie is our very devoted dog. More than anything (well, just about anything) Maggie wants to be with us.

The word dogged means "determined and persistent." These words describe Maggie. They should also describe us. When we are devoted to God, we want to be with Him even when He's doing something that makes no sense to us. We may ask, "Why, Lord?"

when He seems angry (Ps. 88:14) or when He seems to be napping (44:23), or when the wicked prosper (Jer. 12:1). But when we remain devoted to God despite our questions, we find fullness of joy in His presence (Ps. 16:11).

Jesus knew that we would have questions. To prepare us for them, He urged us to abide in His love (John 15:9-10). Even when God's ways are inexplicable, His love is reliable. So we remain doggedly devoted to Him. By: Julie Ackerman Link (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Never should our love be just a word,
A passing phase, a brief emotion;
But love that honors Christ our Lord
Responds to Him with deep devotion.
—Hess

We find joy when we learn to abide in Jesus' love.

[Jesus Loves You](#)

As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. —John 15:9

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-17

The substitute teacher was overwhelmed. She was helping to care for a small group of children at a school that specializes in students with severe disabilities. As she sat with a little boy who seemed extremely agitated, she leaned over to him and whispered in his ear, "Jesus loves you." Immediately the boy's agitation calmed, and he began to laugh and make happy sounds.

Have you ever thought about the significance of the words "Jesus loves you"? Can anything be more simple, yet more profound?

Consider what it means to have the Creator of all things know your name. Think of the comfort in knowing that the Great Physician has your best interests at heart. Ponder the security of knowing that the Good Shepherd is watching over you. Contemplate what it means that the Savior cared enough to die for you.

Ponder too what Paul said. He asked, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:35). The answer: Nothing in all creation "shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (v.39).

What does it mean to have Someone like that love you? It means life and peace and hope and joy.

Jesus loves you. What else do you need? By: Dave Branon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

C H Spurgeon - Love at its utmost (Full sermon [Love at Its Utmost](#))

'As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.' John 15:9

Meditate upon the love of Christ to you. It is a love ancient and venerable, tried and proved. He loved you when you were not; he loved you when you were, but were not what you should be. He has loved you into spiritual being; he has loved you so as to keep you in that being. He loved you so as to suffer and die, and he loves you so as to permit you 'to suffer for his sake'. He has loved you so well as to bear with your ill manners, your shortcomings, your transgressions, your coldness, your backsliding, your lack of prayer, your hardness of heart, your little love to your brethren and all the other sins of which I will not now accuse you, for it is a time of love. He has loved you right on without pausing or slackening. Some of you have known his love these twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years, yes, some of you even more than that. It is no new thing with us to sing, 'Jesus loves me.' All this while he has never failed us once, nor done us an ill turn. The kindest husband that ever lived may sometimes be faulty, but this husband of our souls overflows with divine affection every day and all the day. We could not find fault or flaw in his love, if we were to try. Doubtless, in the future we shall have to make continued trial of his love, but we are sure it will endure every test. We may have rough ways to traverse, but he will tread them with us and we shall lean upon our Beloved. We may be very sick and faint, but he has borne our sicknesses and will sympathize with us. He has said, and we believe it, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' His promise is 'Certainly I will be with thee' and 'even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you'. The longer we live the more abundant evidence shall we receive of that love of Christ, which at this moment is assuredly ours.

A W Tozer - WE WERE OUTCASTS TOO

As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you. John 15:9

We confess, do we not, that we have a Christian responsibility to believe God's Word and to obey God's Truth?

Then we should accept the fact that it is our task to practice the Christian virtues in the power of the Holy Spirit as we await the coming of Him who will come.

The great spiritual needs around us should drive us back to the Gospel records of the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus. When evil men crucified Jesus, killed Him, they had no power to change Him. They could not alter the Person or the personality of the Son of God. Putting Him on the cross did not drain away any of His divine affection for a lost race.

The best thing we know about our Lord and Savior is that He loves the sinner. He has always loved the outcast—and for that we should be glad, for we too were once outcasts! We are descended from that first man and woman who failed God and disobeyed. They were cast out of the garden, and God set in place a flaming sword to keep them from returning! (BORROW [Mornings With Tozer PAGE 61](#))

Andrew Murray LIKE CHRIST: Abiding in the Love of God. John 15:9-10

BRIEF EXCERPT - Our blessed Lord not only said, "Abide in me," but also, "Abide in my love." Of the abiding in Him, the principal part is the entering into and dwelling and being rooted in that wonderful love with which He loves us and gives Himself to us. "Love seeketh not its own;" it always goes out of itself to live and be at one with the beloved; it ever opens itself and stretches its arms wide to receive and hold fast the object of its desire: Christ's love longs to possess us. The abiding, in Christ is an intensely personal relationship, the losing ourselves in the fellowship of an Infinite Love, finding, our life in the experience of being loved by Him, being nowhere at home but in His love. ([CLICK FOR FULL DEVOTIONAL](#))

JESUS LOVES EVEN ME (BORROW [AMAZING GRACE - KENNETH OSBECK - PAGE 58](#)) ([PLAY THE VOCAL OF THIS HYMN](#))

Words and Music by Philip P. Bliss, 1838–1876

As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. (John 15:9)

The wonder of Jesus' deep love for each of us has been expressed in this text in beautiful but childlike language by the noted musician of early gospel music, Philip P. Bliss. After attending a service where the hymn "O How I Love Jesus" was sung repeatedly, Bliss thought, "Have I not been singing enough about my poor love for Jesus and shall I not rather sing of His great love for me?" Soon he completed both the words and music of one of the all-time favorite children's hymn, which is widely sung and enjoyed by adults as well.

Philip Bliss was the dynamic and very talented song writer and associate of evangelists D. L. Moody and Major Daniel W. Whittle. Bliss' commanding height and impressive personality made his singing and song leading outstanding features in any evangelistic service. His gift for writing gospel hymns was also exceptional. Still widely used today are such other Bliss favorites as: "Wonderful Words of Life," "It Is Well With My Soul," "Hold the Fort," "Hallelujah, What a Savior," and "Almost Persuaded." One of his music colleagues, George C. Stebbins, stated:

There has been no writer of verse since his time who has shown such a grasp of the fundamental truths of the gospel, or such a gift for putting them into a poetic and singable form.

The third stanza of this simple but very appealing hymn is especially meaningful when we realize that Philip Bliss died suddenly at the age of 38 in a tragic train accident. His many stirring hymns, however, have lived on. They all focus clearly on important biblical truths, but none is more moving than the reminder in this text that Jesus loves even me.

[\(PLAY THE VOCAL OF THIS HYMN\)](#)

I am so glad that our Father in heav'n tells of His love in the Book He has giv'n; wonderful things in the Bible I see—this is the dearest that Jesus loves me.

Tho I forget Him and wander away, still He doth love me wherever I stray; back to His dear loving arms would I flee when I remember that Jesus loves me.

O if there's only one song I can sing when in His beauty I see the great King, this shall my song in eternity be: "O what a wonder that Jesus loves me!"

Chorus: I am so glad that Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me; I am so glad that Jesus loves me, Jesus loves even me.

For Today: Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 4:9–12

Take time to thank your Lord once more

for His great love for you personally,
a love that cannot be comprehended
but can only be gratefully accepted by faith. Sing as you go—

John 15:10 “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.

- **keep:** John 14:15,21 1Co 7:19 1Th 4:1 2Pe 2:21 1Jn 2:5 3:21-24 5:3 Rev 22:14
- **even:** John 4:34 8:29 12:49 14:31 17:4 Isa 42:1-4 Mt 3:15-17 Heb 7:26 Heb 10:5-10 1Jn 2:1,2
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

HOW TO ABIDE IN THE LOVE OF JESUS

If you keep (tereo) My commandments (entole) you will abide (meno) in My love (agape) - This is a third class conditional statement which describes potential action. What is Jesus clearly stating? He is saying in essence that obedience is evidence of true discipleship (cf. Jn 8:31; Jn 14:15-21, 23-24; Lk 6:46). He is also saying that to grow closer to Christ, obey His commandments. You are not abiding in His love, if you are disobeying!

[Trust and obey](#)
[for there's no other way](#)
[to be happy in Jesus](#)
[than to trust and obey.](#)

Just as (term of comparison) I have kept (tereo - perfect tense ~ perfectly kept) My Father’s (pater) commandments (entole) and abide (meno) in His love (agape) - What was Jesus' example for His disciples to imitate? His perfect obedience to His Father's commandments. Notice He links love with obedience (again - cf Jn 14:15). This would seem to imply that He (and we by imitating Jesus) would or should be motivated to keep/obey the Father's commandments because of our [agape](#) love (recalling that love is not just a mindset but is accompanied by action, in this case, obedience to God).

Spurgeon - “You shall live in the realization of my love if you live in obedience to me.” [Expositions in John](#))

Ray Stedman explains it this way - All of us have learned, one way or another, that love demands a response if it is to grow. If you love somebody, and reach out toward them, you can go only so far unless they respond to that love. If they respond just a little, then your love can reach out further, can deepen and grow. But if they remain unresponsive over the weeks and months and years, love finally is limited to that initial step of reaching out to them. But where love is responded to, it grows deeper and richer and truer, and eventually becomes a glorious experience. **If you are not feeling the depth of love you would like to experience, one of the reasons may be that you are not responding to the love which is already reaching out to you.** That is why the New Testament says: Open your hearts, widen your hearts, be responsive -- love back (**ED: AND IN CONTEXT THIS LOVE IS NOT EMOTIONAL AS MUCH AS VOLITIONAL, MAKING DAILY CHOICES TO OBEY HIS COMMANDMENTS, AND EVEN THAT OBEDIENCE IS MOTIVATED BY LOVE, NOT LEGALISM!**). **When you do that, then love grows into this deepening, quickening experience.**

H Harris Hall - In verse 10 Jesus goes on to explain what he means by remaining in his love: it is indicated by obedience to his commands. Obedience and love are inseparably linked and are mutually dependent upon one another. A similar idea may be seen in 1 John 4:20 (“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen”), when we realize that loving one’s brother involves obeying the command to “love one another” (John 13:34, 15:12, 17). Thus 1Jn 4:20 is really addressing an attempt to separate obedience to God’s commands and love for God, much as Jesus is talking about keeping his commandments and remaining in his love being interrelated here.

Bob Utley - As Jesus relates to the Father, believers are to relate to Him. There is a unity between Father and Son that is meant to be reproduced among believers (cf. John 14:23; 17).

[SPECIAL TOPIC: "COMMANDMENT" IN JOHN'S WRITINGS](#)

1. Once used of the Mosaic Law, John 8:5
2. Commandments from the Father to Jesus

1. control over His own redemptive sacrifice, John 10:18; 14:31
 2. the Father sent Jesus and gave Him what to say, John 12:49-50
 3. the world would know Jesus' love for the Father by His obedience, John 14:31
 4. Jesus obeyed the Father's command and abided in His love, John 15:10
3. Commandments from Jesus to believers
 1. abide in His love, John 14:15; 15:10 (see [SPECIAL TOPIC: "Abiding" in John's Writings](#))
 2. love one another, even as He loved them, John 13:34-35; 15:12,17; 1 John 2:7-8; 3:11,23; 4:21; 2 John 5 (see [SPECIAL TOPIC: Love \[agapē\]](#))
 3. keep His commandment, John 14:15; 15:10,14; 1 John 2:3,4; 3:22,24; 5:1-3; 2 John 6 (see [SPECIAL TOPIC: Keep](#))
 4. Commandments from the Father to believers
 1. believe in Jesus, 1 John 3:23 (cf. John 6:29; see [SPECIAL TOPIC: Faith, Believe, or Trust](#))
 2. love one another, 2 John 3:23 (i.e., the major theme of 1 John)

C H Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook -

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love."—John 15:10.

THESE things cannot be parted—abiding in obedience, and abiding in the love of Jesus. A life under the rule of Christ can alone prove that we are the objects of our Lord's delight. We must keep our Lord's command if we would bask in his love. If we live in sin we cannot live in the love of Christ. Without the holiness which pleases God, we cannot please Jesus. He who cares nothing for holiness knows nothing of the love of Jesus.

Conscious enjoyment of our Lord's love is a delicate thing. It is far more sensitive to sin and holiness than mercury is to cold and heat. When we are tender of heart, and careful in thought, lip, and life to honour our Lord Jesus, then we receive tokens of his love without number. If we desire to perpetuate such bliss we must perpetuate holiness. The Lord Jesus will not hide his face from us unless we hide our face from him. Sin makes the cloud which darkens our Sun: if we will be watchfully obedient and completely consecrated, we may walk in the light, as God is in the light, and have as sure an abiding in the love of Jesus as Jesus has in the love of the Father. Here is a sweet promise with a solemn "if." Lord, let me have this "if" in my hand; for as a key it opens this casket.

The Will of God - Bob Gass - [BORROW Fresh Word for Today](#) PAGE 122

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love. John 15:10, NASB

Gladys Aylward ([WHO WAS SHE?](#)) was just a simple woman who did what she believed God called her to do. A movie, The Inn of the Sixth Happiness, was produced showing what was accomplished through her. In 1920, she sailed to China, where she opened a home for orphaned children who'd been left to starve or wander the streets until the government placed them in warehouses. She'd read the words, "If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs" (Isaiah 58:10–11, NIV).

When the Japanese invaded China, Gladys was forced to flee, and she ended up on the island of Formosa with over 100 children to care for. In the face of extreme difficulty and danger, she devoted her life, becoming a mother to each of them. Years later, when she was honored, she explained her amazing work like this: "I did not choose this. I was led into it by God. I'm not really more interested in children than I am in other people. But God gave me to understand that this is what He wanted me to do—so I did it!"

**HAVE YOU DISCOVERED YET
WHAT GOD HAS CALLED YOU TO DO?
ARE YOU DOING IT?**

**ONLY ONE LIFE
T'WILL SOON PASS
ONLY WHAT'S DONE FOR (IN) CHRIST
WILL LAST!**

HE KEEPS ME SINGING (BORROW [AMAZING GRACE - KENNETH OSBECK - PAGE 200](#)) (FEELING DOWN TODAY? PLAY [HE KEEPS ME SINGING](#) - AND CLAP AND TAP ALONG AS YOU SING!)

Words and Music by Luther B. Bridgers, 1884–1948

If you obey My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have obeyed My Father's commands and

remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. (John 15:10–11)

*Joy is the flag which is flown
from the castle of the heart
when the King is in residence there.*

—Unknown

Joy should be one of the chief characteristics of our Christian faith. In the New Testament the word *chara* is used 53 times to mean “joy.” Only a joyful exuberant Christian is a worthy representative of the transforming power of Christ’s gospel. But what is spiritual joy? It is much more than mere laughter or even happiness. It is a life that is at rest in the Lord, regardless of life’s circumstances. Such a life cannot help but have a strong impact on nonbelievers. If there were more singing Christians, there would be more Christians.

Often our finest and most effective songs are sung during the midnight experiences of life. It is easy to sing when all is well. But to sing when all is dark requires the indwelling presence of Christ. Luther Bridgers, a Methodist pastor and evangelist from Georgia, is believed to have written both words and music for this joyful hymn in 1910, following the death of his wife and three sons in a fire at the home of his wife’s parents while he was away conducting revival meetings in Kentucky.

(FEELING DOWN TODAY? PLAY [HE KEEPS ME SINGING](#) - AND CLAP AND TAP ALONG AS YOU SING!)

There’s within my heart a melody—Jesus whispers sweet and low, “Fear not, I am with thee—peace, be still,” in all of life’s ebb and flow.

All my life was wrecked by sin and strife. Discord filled my heart with pain; Jesus swept across the broken strings, stirred the slumb’ring chords again.

Feasting on the riches of His grace, resting ’neath His shelt’ring wing, always looking on His smiling face—That is why I shout and sing.

Tho sometimes He leads thru waters deep, trials fall across the way, tho sometimes the path seem rough and steep, see His foot-prints all the way.

Soon He’s coming back to welcome me far beyond the starry sky; I shall wing my flight to worlds unknown; I shall reign with Him on high.

Chorus:

*Jesus, Jesus, Jesus—Sweetest name I know,
fills my ev’ry longing, keeps me singing as I go.*

For Today: Psalm 40:3; Proverbs 29:6; Isaiah 12:3, 5; 52:9; Acts 16:25; Ephesians 5:19

Determine to live with a singing spirit;

be a truly “praising Christian.”

Carry this musical testimony with you as a help, knowing that—

*Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God,
that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.*

(**FRUIT** - Heb 13:15+)

ILLUSTRATION OF ABIDING WHEN IT IS NOT EASY TO ABIDE - It’s relatively easy to obey the Lord when things are going well. But the test of obedience is when He takes you through difficult trials. At such times, you may not understand why these trials are happening, but like Abraham walking to Mount Moriah to sacrifice Isaac, you have to trust Him and obey.

Elisabeth Elliot lost her first husband, Jim Elliot, to Auca Indian spears. She lost her second husband, Addison Leitch, to cancer. In an address to the Urbana Missions Conference (December, 1976), she told of being in Wales and watching a shepherd and his dog. The dog would herd the sheep up a ramp and into a tank of antiseptic where they had to be bathed. The sheep struggled to climb out, but the dog would snarl and snap in their faces to force them back in. Just as they were about to come up out of the tank, the shepherd used a wooden implement to grab the rams by the horns, fling them back into the tank, and hold them under the antiseptic again for a few seconds.

Mrs. Elliot asked the shepherd’s wife if the sheep understood what was happening. She replied, “They haven’t got a clue.” Mrs. Elliot then said, “I’ve had some experiences in my life that have made me feel very sympathetic to those poor rams—I couldn’t figure out any reason for the treatment I was getting from the Shepherd I trusted. And He didn’t give a hint of explanation.” But, she pointed out, we still must trust our Shepherd and obey Him, knowing that He has our best interests at heart. It’s through obedience in times of suffering that we grow closer to our Savior, who suffered and died for us. ([Growing Closer to Christ John 15:7-11](#))

JOHN 14:15 READ: John 15:9—17

I HEARD some interesting comments at a conference about factors that motivate publishers to monitor the content of their magazines. Publishers are restrained by the following: (1) the fear of libel suits; (2) the tastes of their readers (who will stop buying the magazine if the content becomes too offensive); and (3) the publishers' code of ethics.

About the same time, I heard a criminologist speak about the restraints in society that cause people to behave correctly: fear of going to jail, family morals, peer pressure, and fear of revenge. Whether in the publishing world or in society as a whole, certain influences keep us from immoral or destructive behavior. This led me to wonder, What keeps Christians from breaking the moral law of God?

Some of the factors mentioned above are certainly valid, but they are not the best reasons. According to God, love for Him ought to be our primary motive for living moral lives. Whom we love, we want to please, and what pleases God and benefits all that He has created is obedience to Him. And because God is holy, He has the right to give commands and to call us into account.—D C Egnor (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

I notice, Lord, that You did not say "Keep My commandments and I will love You." You said, "Keep My commandments if you love Me." This seems to imply that those who don't love You cannot gain Your favor by obeying laws. Let this be a reminder to me that my motives are at least as important to You as my actions.

LOVING HIM

“ABIDE IN MY LOVE . . . THAT MY JOY MAY BE IN YOU.”—John 15:10–11 NASB

Ever been in love? If so, you know what it means to be preoccupied. I met Martie in the fall of our freshman year at college. It didn't take long for me to know that my heart had become hopelessly lost to her. When summer came, she went home to Cleveland, and I went on the road for two and a half months with a team of musicians representing our college.

We had a great summer. Exciting experiences, interesting places to travel, and chances to meet all kinds of people filled our days. But no matter how new and exciting the trip, my mind kept returning to Martie. I hoped there would be a letter from her at the next church, that she would be home when I called. I wondered where she was, what she was doing, and what we'd be doing if we were together. And I was looking forward to the day we'd be together again.

It's like that for those of us who are developing an ever-deepening relationship with Jesus. Though busy in our daily routines, we find that He increasingly becomes the backdrop to all of life. We love to hear from Him in His Word, where we find out more about Him and more about what He wants us to know. We thrill to new discoveries about Him and His ways, and we listen carefully to His direction for our lives. We increasingly enjoy times of prayer, as we speak with Him and sense His communion with us. And we find ourselves longing for the day we will see Him.

Loving Jesus is not an escape from life, nor is it a brief encounter on some monastic retreat. It's the joy of staying in touch and the pleasure of knowing that, regardless of what a day may bring, the best day is still to come.

It's great to be alive . . . it's even better to be alive and in love with Him!

What preoccupies your heart? When was the last time Jesus had the privilege?

(SEE Joseph Stowell's [Strength for the Journey: Day By Day With Jesus - Page 228](#))

[Stay In The Sunshine](#)

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love. —John 15:10

Today's Scripture : John 15:5-17

In his book *The Best Is Yet To Be*, Henry Durbanville told the story of a little girl in London who won a prize at a flower show. Her entry was grown in an old cracked teapot and had been placed in the attic window of a rundown tenement house. When someone asked how she managed to raise such a lovely flower in such an unlikely environment, she said she moved it around so it would always be in the sunlight.

Durbanville then reminded his readers of Jesus' words, "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love" (John 15:9). We learn from this that we too must keep ourselves continually in the warmth of Christ's love.

We abide in Christ's love when we show love to others. Jesus made this clear when He said, "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love . . . This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (vv.10,12-13).

We feel the warmth of Christ's love when we obey His commandment to love and serve others. That's the way to stay in the sunshine. By: Richard DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

For Further Study

What are some ways Jesus showed love?
(Mt. 8:14-17; 15:32-39; 19:13-15; 27:33-35)

How can we show Christ's love to others?
(Mt. 28:19-20; Gal. 5:13; 6:1-2; Col. 3:13)

Our love for God is seen in our love for others.

LOVING THOSE YOU'D RATHER NOT

"IF YOU OBEY MY COMMANDS, YOU WILL REMAIN IN MY LOVE."—John 15:10

Lucy reproved Linus after he had said that it was his life goal to be a doctor by retorting, "Linus, you can't be a doctor. You hate mankind!" To which Linus replied, "Oh no, I love mankind. It's people I can't stand." Most of us have spent a considerable amount of time around "mankind" and have noticed that people are often a major problem. Which makes Christ's command to "love your neighbor as yourself" a serious challenge (Matthew 22:39).

Challenging because our "neighbors" may not be worth loving.

So what is the reason we should love people? First, let's consider what are definitely not reasons for loving people. It is not because people deserve it. They usually don't. It's not because people are easy to love. Our wounds and scars assure us that is not the case. It's not because they will always love us back, they probably won't. Rather, Scripture teaches us that the true motivation for loving people is our love for God. Which means that people are not the reason we love people. Loving them is just another way we tell God how much we love Him!

In Matthew 22:37–39, the first and second commandments are inseparable: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Jesus said that He knows we love Him if we do the things He commands (John 15:10). Which means that He knows we love Him by the way we treat others—all of them. Of course, our response to that is usually, "Lord, you don't know the people I know. I'll double-tithe, but please don't ask me to start loving these people!"

But God still says, "If you really love Me, reach out and love people." And, since He is always worthy of our love, we are free to consistently help, forgive, serve, pray for, and minister to everyone who comes across the path of our lives. Not necessarily because they deserve it, but because He does. What a liberating thought!

Whom could you love today for Christ's sake?

John 15:11 "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

- **My joy may be in you:** Isa 53:11 62:4 Jer 32:41 33:9 Zep 3:17 Lu 15:5,9,23,32 1Jn 1:4
- **your joy may be made full:** John 16:24,33 17:13 Ro 15:13 2Co 1:24 Eph 5:18 Php 1:25 1Th 5:16 1Pe 1:8 2Jn 1:12
- **[What Is "Fullness of Joy" and Do I Have It?](#)** - John Piper interview
- **[John 15 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

John 16:24 (HAVE YOU EVER PRAYED AND ASKED GOD TO GIVE YOU JOY?) "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that (term of purpose) your joy may be made full.

John 17:13 "But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that [hina](#) - term of purpose) **they may have My joy made full** in themselves.

1 John 1:4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

Romans 5:3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;

James 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

1 Peter 4:13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, **keep on rejoicing**, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

Hebrews 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems **not to be joyful, but sorrowful**; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF JESUS SPEAKING THESE THINGS?

These things - Whenever you encounter this phrase, discipline yourself to pause and ponder the phrase, asking "What **things**?" This will always force you to review the preceding context and review is always a good thing. In dialoguing with the text, you are in effect communicating with the Spirit Who inspired the text and you are also learning to meditate on the text. Meditation is a discipline that will yield great benefits (See Psalm 1:1-3+ and Joshua 1:8+). And remember there is nothing mystical about meditation (in contrast to the false religions which teach mystical meditation which can even open oneself up to the demonic world!). In answer to the question "What **things**?" we see that Jesus is referring to **things** he has just spoken (in context) so observe those **things** in the previous section. You could also ask "What is the purpose of **these things**?" and you will quickly see there are two answers. The key phrase of course is "so that" which is another "hinge word" that helps you open the door (so to speak) to the meaning of a text. So that usually expresses either a result or a purpose, and both would be apropos in this passage. So what's the purpose/result of "these things" Jesus had spoken?

I have spoken ([laleo](#) perfect tense = spoken in past and enduring impact) **to you so that** ([hina](#) - term of purpose) **My joy** ([chara](#)) **may be in you, and that your joy** ([chara](#)) **may be made full** ([pleroo](#) in divine passive = from God) - Note two purposes of what Jesus had spoken in the previous section. The first is that we could have the **joy** of Jesus in us which is nothing short of amazing. **My joy** is what He experienced, a joy which is supernatural, a feeling of inner happiness that is independent of what "happens," independent of whatever circumstances we encounter.

*Joy is the flag which flies over the castle of the heart
when the King is in residence*

Ray Stedman - I love the saying, "Joy is the flag which flies over the castle of the heart when the King is in residence." That is what joy is -- this sense of our unity with Jesus, the sense of his power, his adequacy, his ability to handle the problems which are thrust upon us. Let all that be present in the heart, and the face will light up with joy! That is what Jesus is talking about. "Abide in me, and I in you," and you will be fruitful -- without realizing it -- manifesting the characteristics of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit, the quality of life which is like Jesus. When that happens, there will come these additional benefits: answered prayer, a glorifying of the Father through the demonstration of discipleship, a deepening of the experience of love, and joy made full. What a wonderful relationship our Lord taught us here by this lesson of the vine!

Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken

Fading is the world's best pleasure,

All its boasted pomp and show;

Solid joys and lasting treasure

None but Zion's children know.

--John Newton

Merrill Tenney - Obedience marks the cause of their fruitfulness; joy is its result..... Joy logically follows when the disciples realize that the life of Christ in them is bringing fruit—something they could never produce in their own strength. (BORROW [Expositor's Bible Commentary PAGE 350](#))

Spurgeon - For, when Christ is not pleased with us, we are not likely to have joy in ourselves, Oh, that we may so live as to please Christ!...Christ would have his people happy; happy, however, with a holy joy, which is not, therefore, a dim and second-rate joy. It is the very joy of Christ, God's people are to enjoy. ([Expositions in John](#))

Think of Jesus joy in Hebrews 12:2 "Who for the **joy** ([chara](#)) set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." His anticipation of future joy made His afflictions bearable. Secondly, the purpose of His words spoken is that our joy might even overflow! The same verb [pleroo](#) is used in Paul's command for believers to be filled with the Spirit, Who causes us to bear the fruit "of love, joy ([chara](#)) , peace...." (Gal 5:22+). In the early church we read that "the disciples were continually filled ([pleroo](#)) with joy ([chara](#)) and with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 13:52+). And in one of the first churches Paul planted in Europe we read that these early disciples "became imitators of us (PAUL, TIMOTHY, SILAS) and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy ([chara](#)) of the Holy Spirit." (1Th 1:6+) Notice their joy was independent of their circumstances.

THOUGHT - I wonder how many of us as Jesus' disciples are regularly, really experiencing the full joy ([chara](#)) of Jesus in our innermost being? If not, why not? Could it be that we are letting the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and/or the [devil](#) steal our joy? Just thinking! (See "[Joy Robbers](#)") **Donald Campbell** wrote that describes "a deep and abiding inner rejoicing which was promised to those who abide in Christ (Jn 15:11). It does not depend on circumstances because it rests in God's sovereign control of all things."

It's notable that in John's Gospel, "**joy**" has only been used once in John 3:29 by John the Baptist. But as Jesus draws closer to the Cross, He uses it seven times (Jn 15:11 -2x, Jn 16:20, 21, 22, 24; Jn 17:13)

Bob Utley - Joy is another evidence of true discipleship (cf. John 15:11 [twice]; Jn 16:20,21,22,24; 17:13). In this world there are pain and crises; in Christ there is joy, full joy, His joy. The NIDOTTE, vol. 1, p. 741, has a good comment about how "joy" and "full" are used together in John's writings.

"In John and the Johannine letters there is a frequent connection between → joy (*chara*) as a subject and the verb *plēroō* in the pass., to be filled. This joy is the joy of Jesus (Jn. 15:11; 17:13) which he brings through his coming (Jn 3:29), his words (Jn 15:11; 17:13), and his return (Jn 16:22) to his disciples (Jn 15:11; 17:13). It replaces the sorrow that fills their hearts (Jn 16:16, 20). Thus Christ's joy becomes their joy (Jn 15:11; 16:24; cf. 1Jn. 1:4). This joy characterizes the life of the disciples in their walk with Jesus; it becomes complete (Jn. 3:29; 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; 1 Jn. 1:4; 2 Jn. 12). The passive underlies the fact that it is God who completes this joy."

Lowell Johnson - If we fail to abide, we will lose our joy. Ron Dunn tells of speaking at a Valentine Banquet. The pastor had told him that there was a couple in the church that was causing problems. As they sat at the table, a man was telling jokes before he was to speak. They were stale jokes, but everyone was laughing and having a good time except one couple. Ron leaned over to the pastor and said, "I can point out the couple that's causing you problems." When he pointed them out the pastor said, "How did you know?"

Gotquestions ([full note below](#)) - Jesus does not withhold joy from us; rather, He shares His joy in proportion to our participation in His obedience. By surrendering our wills to God's will, we can know the fullness of joy. We can partake in the same joy that Jesus had when He sacrificed His life for ours. Hence, joy is not a fleeting emotion but an enduring quality that overpowers the clenches of adversity. This is what Jesus meant when He said, "That your joy may be full."

Steven Cole - John 15:11: "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full." If I were to ask, "What word pops into your mind when I say, 'obedience'?" what would you say? Duty? Drudgery? Rules? No fun? What about, "joy"? What about "fullness of joy"? Jesus associates obedience with our experiencing full joy in Him (John 15:10–11). If you don't associate obedience and fullness of joy, maybe you need to change your thinking! ([Growing Closer to Christ John 15:7-11](#))

G. H. C. MACGREGOR. Full joy does not exclude sorrow, but it is a joy so deep that no sorrow can get below it.

Bob Deffinbaugh describes how the **JOY** of a believer is different...

1. **First and foremost, our joy is really His joy** (John 15:11; 17:13). As we abide in Him and He in us, we experience great joy from those things that bring Him joy, as we would also be grieved by what grieves Him.⁵⁶
2. **Second, the disciples had a very special joy**. As they were greatly grieved at the death of their Master, their joy at seeing Him alive, raised from the dead, can hardly be described (see John 16:22; 20:20; 21:7).
3. **Third, joy is the fruit of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 13:42; Romans 14:17; Galatians 5:22; 1 Thessalonians 1:6).
4. **Fourth, we have joy when we become born-again Christians by faith in Jesus Christ** (Acts 8:5-8; Romans 15:13).
5. **Fifth, we rejoice when others come to faith in Christ, as well as when they grow in their faith** (Acts 11:23; 15:13; 2 Corinthians 7:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; 3:9; Philemon 1:7; Hebrews 13:17; 1 John 1:4).
6. **Sixth, we have joy in taking part in the plans and purposes of a sovereign God, even when this brings about our own suffering** (Acts 4:23-31).
7. **Seventh, we find joy in doing that which brings the Father's approval** (Hebrews 12:2).

8. ***Eighth, we have joy in sacrificial service*** (2 Corinthians 8:2).
9. ***Ninth, we have joy in being with other saints and enjoying their fellowship***(Philippians 1:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 2 Timothy 1:4; 2 John 1:12).
10. ***Tenth, we have joy when we ask God for what He desires and for what we need, and in seeing Him answer our prayers*** (John 16:24).

[Deffinbaugh](#) goes on to discuss what it means practically to **abide in Christ** and then discusses what **hinders abiding** writing...

As I have sought to teach this text over the past two weeks, I have emphasized my own appraisal that Christians today are not abiding because they are working so hard to “achieve” for Christ, rather than to “**abide**” in Christ. We have become preoccupied with programs and activities. We are spending more and more time at church and “in ministry,” but less and less time “with our Lord.” We see Him as the “Giver,” but not the “Gift.” We are intent upon obtaining the “power” that He gives, but we are not as intent on knowing the “person” of God in Christ. Of all the time which you are spending “for Christ,” how much time is spent in the pursuit of Christ? I do not ask this as one who is successful in this area, but as one who sees how badly I have failed here. And my guess is that you are struggling in this same matter.

The words “effective” and “successful” are often found in print in a Christian bookstore. And so it is that we continue to read those books which tell us how to be an “effective” leader or husband or parent. We grab up any book that promises us a successful marriage. I do not think in this day and age (and in this culture) that we are doing a great deal of abiding, but only seeking to achieve. It is my opinion that Christians are doing more and more, but abiding less and less. Perhaps it is time for us to have fewer programs, fewer nights at the church, fewer meetings, with the expressed purpose of giving ourselves to abiding in Christ.

(Deffinbaugh then refers to Lk 10:38-42+ where **Mary** gives us a perfect picture of what it means to abide and asks...) What was “**the best part**” that **Mary** chose and that **Martha** neglected? Was it not simply “**abiding**” in **Christ**, sitting at His feet, enjoying Him? Are we not so much more like Martha than Mary? I would simply ask you to take the time to sit down and assess the quality of your abiding, and if your abiding is lacking, to purpose before God to do something about it. We are not commanded to produce fruit, for this is what our Lord does in and through us. We are commanded to “**abide in Christ**,” and thus it would behoove us to have a plan and a process by which we seek to obey His command to abide in Him. After all, isn’t this what we should really want to do anyway? Should we not desire to delight in Him, even as He has chosen to delight in us? May God use this text to stimulate us to actively seek to enhance the quality of our abiding in Him, to His glory, and for our eternal good.

THOUGHT - To add to Bob Deffinbaugh’s convicting analysis of much of modern day Christianity (perhaps better termed “Churchianity”) it seems that more emphasis needs to be placed on BEING rather than DOING. I would submit that if we turn the “horse” back in front of the cart so to speak, we would begin to experience the DOING (THE FRUIT) come forth spontaneously. After all Jesus did not command the disciples to PRODUCE FRUIT, but to ABIDE IN HIM.

Joy (5479) **chara** (and rejoice) is a feeling of great pleasure, of inner gladness, or of delight. **Joy** is an emotion evoked by a sense of well-being. It is a deep feeling of happiness and contentment. **Joy** in the NT is virtually always used to signify a feeling of “happiness” that is based on spiritual realities (independent of what “happens”). **Joy** is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful behavior. **Joy** is not necessarily an experience that comes from favorable circumstances, but is God’s gift from His Spirit to believers. **Joy** is a part of God’s very essence and as discussed below His Spirit manifests this supernatural joy in His children (Galatians 5:22+, Acts 13:52, 1 Th 1:6-note). In sum, **Joy** is the deep-down sense of well-being that abides in the heart of the person who is filled with the Spirit and knows all is well between himself and the Lord. There is a chorus from an old spiritual song that is apropos...

Happiness happens

But joy abides

ILLUSTRATION - A conference at a certain church in Omaha. People were given helium-filled balloons and told to release them at some point in the service when they felt like expressing the joy in their hearts. This church wasn’t normally free to express themselves w/an “Hallelujah or a Praise the Lord.” All through the service balloons ascended, but when it was over 1/3 of the balloons were unreleased. Let your balloon go!

Alfred Plummer (commenting on 1 Jn 1:4) writes that **joy** is “that serene happiness, which is the result of conscious union with God and good men, of conscious possession of eternal life...and which raises us above pain and sorrow and remorse.”

Donald Campbell writes that **chara** describes "a deep and abiding inner rejoicing which was promised to those who abide in Christ ([Jn 15:11](#)). It does not depend on circumstances because it rests in God's sovereign control of all things."

Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote that when we give a definition for **joy** "we do not go to a dictionary; we go to the New Testament instead. This is something quite peculiar which cannot be explained; **it is a quality which belongs to the Christian life in its essence**, so that in our definition of **joy** we must be very careful that it conforms to what we see in our Lord. The world has never seen anyone who knew **joy** as our Lord knew it, and yet He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." So our definition of **joy** must somehow correspond to that... **Joy** is something very deep and profound, something that affects the whole and entire personality. In other words it comes to this -There is only one thing that can give true joy and that is contemplation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He satisfies my mind; He satisfies my emotions; He satisfies my every desire. He and His great salvation include the whole personality and nothing less, and in Him I am complete. Joy, in other words, is the response and the reaction of the soul to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. ([Life in Christ Studies in 1 John by Martyn Lloyd-Jones](#))

CHARA IN JOHN'S WRITINGS - Jn. 3:29; Jn. 15:11; Jn. 16:20; Jn. 16:21; Jn. 16:22; Jn. 16:24; Jn. 17:13; 1 Jn. 1:4; 2 Jn. 1:12; 3 Jn. 1:4

How can we as believers "maximize our joy?"

- Repentance brings joy (Lk 15:7, 10).
- The hope (absolute assurance) of future glory brings joy (1 Pe 4:13).
- The Lord's Word brings joy (John 15:11).
- Prayer brings joy (John 16:24, Ro 15:13)
- The presence and fellowship of believers brings joy (1 Jn 1:3-4).
- Converts bring joy (Lk 15:5; Php 4:1; 1 Th. 2:19-20)
- Hearing that those you have discipled are walking in the truth brings joy (3 Jn 4).
- Giving brings joy (2 Co 8:2; cp Heb 10:34).
- Fellowship with Father and Son brings joy - **we need to "keep short accounts" by confessing our sins so that this fellowship is not adversely affected** (1 Jn 1:3, 4, 1 Jn 1:9)

JESUS, THOU JOY OF LOVING HEARTS (BORROW [AMAZING GRACE - KENNETH OSBECK - PAGE 42](#))

(PLAY [Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts](#))

Attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux, 1091–1153

Translated by Ray Palmer, 1808–1887

I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. (John 15:11)

This song is another of the fine hymn texts that originated during the Middle Ages. It is thought to have been written by a monk—one of the most prominent religious leaders of his day. An important part of the medieval church was the role of the monks and their monasteries. Since these churchmen were among the few who could read and write, their institutions became powerful influences in shaping the religious and cultural development of Western civilization.

As a young man, Bernard became abbot of the monastery of Clairvaux, France. His influence was soon felt throughout Europe. It is said that he commanded kings, emperors, and prelates—and they obeyed him. In 1146 he was commissioned by the pope to lead a second preaching crusade against the Moslems. Because of his eloquence and strong preaching, great crowds followed him. One of the conditions for those joining the Crusade was a personal conversion experience. It is recorded that multitudes of vicious men were dramatically changed through Bernard's preaching. They carried a cross unashamedly as a symbol of their commitment to Christ and this crusade.

Bernard wrote a number of books, chiefly on such subjects as church government, monasticism and other church-related topics. It is generally agreed that he wrote a long 192-line poem titled "Dulcis Jesus Memorial" ("Joyful Rhythm on the Name of Jesus"). In 1858 Ray Palmer, an American Congregational preacher, translated from the Latin a portion of this medieval poem attributed to Bernard for the hymn "Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts." This hymn text aptly describes the preciousness of Christ in each believer's life.

(PLAY [Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts](#))

Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts, Thou fount of life, Thou light of men, from the best bliss that earth imparts, we turn unfilled to Thee again.

Thy truth unchanged hath ever stood; Thou savest those that on Thee call; to them that seek Thee, Thou art good; to them that find

Thee, all in all.

Our restless spirits yearn for Thee, where'er our changeful lot is cast; glad when Thy gracious smile we see, blest when our faith can hold Thee fast.

O Jesus, ever with us stay; make all our moments calm and bright; chase the dark night of sin away; shed o'er the world Thy holy light.

For Today: John 6:35; Ephesians 2:14–18; Colossians 1:13, 14; 1 Peter 1:8

Live with the awareness that even with the “best bliss that earth imparts,”

without an intimate awareness of Christ, life will be empty.

Make His presence the goal of your activities.

Heart Of Joy

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. —John 15:11

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 15:1-11

While waiting in the gate area of Singapore's Changi Airport to board my flight, I noticed a young family—mom, dad, and son. The area was crowded, and they were looking for a place to sit. Suddenly, the little boy began loudly singing “Joy to the World.” He was about 6 years old, so I was pretty impressed that he knew all the words.

What captured my attention even more was the look on the boy's face—his beaming smile matched the words he was singing as he proclaimed to everyone at the gate the joy of the Christ who has come.

This joy is not limited to exuberant children nor should it be confined to the Christmas season. The overflowing joy of knowing Christ's presence in our lives was one of the themes of Jesus' final teaching with His disciples the night before He died on the cross. He told them of His extravagant love for them—that He loved them as the Father loved Him (John 15:9). After sharing what this eternal relationship looks like, Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full” (v.11).

What a promise! Through Jesus Christ our hearts can be filled with joy—real joy! By: Bill Crowder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, You have chosen me and redeemed me, crowned me with love and compassion. I can do nothing less than overflow with joy at Your great love for me, for those I love, and for the world.

In every season of life we can know joy in Christ.

Self-Pity Or Rejoicing?

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! —Philippians 4:4

Today's Scripture : Philippians 4:1-8

Temperament seems to be something that each of us is born with. Some of us have upbeat dispositions, while others play the music of life in a minor key. Yet how we respond to life's trials also affects our overall disposition.

For example, Fanny Crosby lost her sight when she was only 6 weeks old. She lived into her nineties, composing thousands of beloved hymns. On her 92nd birthday she cheerfully said, “If in all the world you can find a happier person than I am, do bring him to me. I should like to shake his hand.”

What enabled Fanny Crosby to experience such joy in the face of what many would term a “tragedy”? At an early age she chose to “rejoice in the Lord always” (Philippians 4:4). In fact, Fanny carried out a resolution she made when she was only 8 years old: “How many blessings I enjoy that other people don't. To weep and sigh because I'm blind, I cannot and I won't.”

Let's remember that “the joy of the Lord is [our] strength” (Nehemiah 8:10). Let's also take comfort in the teachings of Jesus, who in John 15:11 said, “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.” When faced with the choice of self-pity or rejoicing, let's respond with rejoicing. By: Vernon Grounds

Be this the purpose of my soul,

My solemn, my determined choice:

To yield to God's supreme control,

And in my every trial rejoice.

—Anon.

Rather than complain about the thorns on roses,
be thankful for roses among the thorns.

Pleasure Versus Joy

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. —John 15:11

Today's Scripture : John 15:7-11

The world offers “passing pleasures” (Hebrews 11:25), but the Lord Jesus offers to give us full and lasting joy (John 15:11). Pleasure is dependent on circumstances, but joy is inward and is not disturbed by one's environment.

Pleasure is always changing, but joy is constant! Worldly delights are often followed by depression. True joy is grounded in Jesus Christ, who is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

To keep experiencing pleasure, we must run from one stimulus to another, for it refuses to be permanently grasped. Joy is just the opposite. It is a gift we receive from God.

Pleasure is built on self-seeking, but joy is based on self-sacrifice. The more we pursue self-gratification, the more empty we feel. If a pint of pleasure gives momentary happiness today, a gallon of excitement and thrills is necessary for the same effect tomorrow. Joy, however, is based on the sacrificial giving of ourselves. As we learn what it means to focus on the needs of others, we find greater fulfillment in God Himself, who meets our every need.

Only when you seek the things of Christ can you find abiding joy. By: Henry G. Bosch (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

There is joy beyond all measure

In abiding in the Lord;

It is promised most abundant

And enduring in His Word.

—McQuat

For joy that will last, always put Christ first.

David Jeremiah - OUR GIGANTIC SECRET

JOHN 15:11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

The Bible shows that joy is present in all of the major events of the Christian life. There is joy in salvation, in baptism, when we read the Word of God, and in prayer. In fact, Christian joy is so unique that the Bible teaches us that it comes even at times of discouragement. Even when we are dying.

Joy is the gigantic secret of the Christian

G. K. Chesterton has written that “joy is the gigantic secret of the Christian.” I believe he's right. This kind of joy is not known anywhere else in the world except in the life of a person who knows Jesus Christ in a personal way.

Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:11). The center of joy for the Christian is Christ. The joy is Christ's joy. It is simply the life of the Lord Jesus Christ being lived out in an individual. Christian joy is letting Christ live His life out through you so that what He is, you become. There are other kinds of joy found in other places in the world, but there is no place where you can find Christian joy except in Christ. (BORROW [Sanctuary PAGE 237](#))

Bring the Joy Back! By Dr. David Jeremiah (BORROW [Nelson's annual preacher's sourcebook PAGE 178](#))

Scripture: John 15:11 and Galatians 5:22–23, especially verse 22 The fruit of the Spirit is ... joy.

The Center of Joy

for the Christian Is Christ.

Introduction: I don't know if you've noticed, but folks aren't smiling much these days. Jesus wants us to smile, to exhibit joy. He said,

“These things I have spoken unto you that My joy may remain in you and that your joy may be full” (John 15:11). I’ve been reading the Bible this week with joy in mind, and everywhere I turn I find it. Joy is the atmosphere in which Christians live. We rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4); we “rejoice evermore” (1 Thess. 5:16). As someone put it, “Joy is the gigantic secret of the Christian.”

1. The Source of Joy in Your Life (John 15:11).

A. **The Center of Joy for the Christian Is Christ.** “My joy,” He says, “... in you.” Christian joy is Christ’s joy in us.

B. **The Characteristic of Joy.** Jesus wants our joy to be full. Peter called it “joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pet. 1:8). It’s not an incomplete, imperfect, almost-type of joy. It is fully orbed and rich.

C. **The Continuity of Joy.** “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you.” Have you noticed how easily earthly joy can leave? Nothing seems stable in the world, does it? But the joy of Christ is a continual, never-ending, absolutely constant joy when we follow the principles of Scripture. This joy even survives the difficult times in life. It isn’t intermittent or hinged on happenings but on a person (John 16:22; James 1:2; and Acts 16:25). That’s why Nehemiah 8:10 says, “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” I was a hospital chaplain while in seminary, and I found it quite easy to determine whether people were saved when I walked into the family room. Oh, there were tears and sorrow, but there was a kind of deep abiding stability in the lives of people who knew Jesus Christ. At that moment you wouldn’t call it the joy of the Lord, but that’s what the Bible calls it.

2. **The Secret of Joy in Your Life.** You say, “Pastor, I am a Christian, but why don’t I have the joy of the Lord?” Well, I can’t answer that question for all of you, but let me go through some basic things we need if we’re going to have the joy of the Lord.

A. **Surrender Your Life to Christ.** The secret of joy begins when you surrender yourself to Him. David prayed, “Restore to me the joy of my salvation” (Ps. 51:12; also see Ps. 35:9; Acts 8:8, 39).

B. **Submit Yourself Totally to the Spirit of God** (Rom. 14:7; 1 Thess. 1:6). Joy and the Holy Spirit go together. Galatians 5:22 calls joy a fruit of the Spirit. An interesting testimony to this comes from the life of a great teacher of the past named Walter Wilson. In his early days of ministry, Wilson felt fruitless. He was a hard worker, but there was little evidence of God’s working through him. One day a friend asked: “Dr. Wilson, what is the Holy Spirit to you?” Wilson replied, “He’s one of the persons of the Godhead, a teacher, a guide, a third person of the Trinity.” His friend said, “You haven’t answered my question—what is the Holy Spirit to you?” Wilson answered truthfully, “He is nothing to me. I have no contact with Him ... I could get along quite well without Him.” Later Wilson heard Dr. James Gray preaching about the filling of the Holy Spirit. At the end of the service, Wilson returned to his motel, fell on the carpet, and began to pray, offering himself to the control of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Wilson was a changed man from that moment and went on to become one of the most joyful and powerful preachers of his generation.

C. **Study the Word of God.** In 1 John 1:4, we read, “These things we write to you that your joy may be full.” Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you that you ... that your joy may be full” (John 15:11).

D. **Spend Time with God in Prayer.** John 16:24 says, “Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (also see Ps. 16:11).

Conclusion:

I’m sure you’re wondering, “Pastor, can’t you come up with anything more original than receiving Christ, submitting to the Spirit, reading the Bible, and praying?” Well, you know I like to be original but that’s just the bedrock simplicity of what it means to have joy in Christ. It’s not joy without tears or without sorrow. But it is a kind of joy you will never experience any place else until you find Christ in your own life.

QUESTION - [What does “that your joy may be full” mean \(John 15:11\)?](#)

ANSWER - To conclude His metaphor of the [vine](#) and the branches (John 15:1–10), Jesus says to His disciples, “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (verse 11). To understanding the meaning of “your joy may be full,” we first need to review passages from the Old and New Testament.

In the Old Testament, there is a connection between obedience and joy. The Old Testament prophets foresaw a time when joy would permeate the lives of God’s people in remarkable ways. For instance, the prophet Isaiah spoke of a day when God would wipe away tears and offer a feast of rich blessings to His obedient children (Isaiah 25:6–9). On that day, “everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” (Isaiah 35:10; see also Isaiah 61:10).

The prophet Zephaniah also prophesied about a restoration of joy to the faithful remnant of Israel (Zephaniah 3:14–17). Even in the face of adversity, Israel will witness the triumphant entry of a joyous king (Zechariah 9:9; cf. John 12:15). These prophecies reveal a divine promise that obedience to God will result in unparalleled joy.

There is a connection between love, obedience, and joy in John 15. Leading up to Jesus' statement that "your joy may be full" are these words: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love" (John 15:9–10). Obedience should be a loving, heartfelt response to God's will—a response that is marked by joy.

To grasp the significance of John 15:11, we must set our eyes on Jesus, who is the embodiment of joyful, loving obedience. In the face of fierce opposition, Jesus found joy in fulfilling the will of His Father: "Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work'" (John 4:34). The point is that obedience stems from love and is the source of true joy.

We witness the pinnacle of joyful obedience in the Garden of Gethsemane. Facing the impending agony of the cross, Jesus surrendered His will to the Father: "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). This act of willful obedience resulted in His triumph—and ours, through faith in Him—over Satan, sin, and death (1 Corinthians 15:54). The joy that followed His resurrection eclipsed the unimaginable pain of the cross (Hebrews 12:2).

Just as Jesus found great joy in obeying the will of His Father, Christians will also have the same joy in obedience: "These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11). Obedience is not a joyless duty or mundane task. To the contrary, it is the means through which the joy of the Lord becomes our own joy.

Jesus does not withhold joy from us; rather, He shares His joy in proportion to our participation in His obedience. By surrendering our wills to God's will, we can know the fullness of joy. We can partake in the same joy that Jesus had when He sacrificed His life for ours. Hence, joy is not a fleeting emotion but an enduring quality that overpowers the clenches of adversity. This is what Jesus meant when He said, "That your joy may be full."

[Dealing With Joy Robbers](#) - Robert Jeffress

The peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
—Philippians 4:7

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul addressed how to deal with what Warren Wiersbe called "joy robbers."

For example, one thing that can steal our joy is **circumstances**. In Philippians 1, Paul showed how to maintain joy in spite of your circumstances.

In chapter 2, Paul dealt with another joy robber—**people**. Do you have people in your life that just seeing them saps the joy out of you? You know what I'm talking about. What is the key to keeping people from robbing your joy? It's to change your attitude toward them, Paul said. Instead of seeing people as objects to use, see people as objects to serve. He said in Philippians 2:4, "Do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

In chapter 3, Paul dealt with another joy robber—**things**. Having things, or not having things, can rob you of joy. Warren Wiersbe told the story of a wealthy man who was moving into his home. He hauled in a lot of electronic equipment, art, and furniture. His Quaker neighbor, who believed in simplicity, was watching all of this. Finally, after the man had hauled all his stuff in, the Quaker came to him and said, "Friend, if thouest ever in need of anything, let me know and I will show thee how to get along without it." Sometimes we need help in learning how to get along without certain things. And Paul said in Philippians 3:20, the key to that is to remember our citizenship: "Our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

In chapter 4, Paul dealt with perhaps the greatest joy robber of all—**worry**. Have you ever been having a great day when all of a sudden, this alien thought enters your mind from nowhere: "What if?" What if the doctor . . . ? What if my mate . . . ? What if my employer . . . ? What if the stock market . . . ? Suddenly you are paralyzed by fear. That's what worry does. In fact, the word "worry" comes from a word that means "to strangle." Worry has a way of strangling the joy out of life. What is the antidote to worry? Paul said in Philippians 4:6-7, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Are you tired of being the victim of negative circumstances, people, things, or worry? Are you ready to start experiencing the peace and joy that Jesus Christ died to provide you? If so, I encourage you to apply these truths about living above your circumstances.

Oswald Chambers - My joy ... your joy

That My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. John 15:11.

What was the joy that Jesus had? It is an insult to use the word happiness in connection with Jesus Christ. The joy of Jesus was the

absolute self-surrender and self-sacrifice of Himself to His Father, the joy of doing that which the Father sent Him to do. "I delight to do Thy will." Jesus prayed that our joy might go on fulfilling itself until it was the same joy as His. Have I allowed Jesus Christ to introduce His joy to me?

The full flood of my life is not in bodily health, not in external happenings, not in seeing God's work succeed, but in the perfect understanding of God, and in the communion with Him that Jesus Himself had. The first thing that will hinder this joy is the captious irritation of thinking out circumstances. The cares of this world, said Jesus, will choke God's word. Before we know where we are, we are caught up in the shows of things. All that God has done for us is the mere threshold; He wants to get us to the place where we will be His witnesses and proclaim Who Jesus is.

*Be rightly related to God,
find your joy there,
and out of you will flow rivers of living water.*
(John 7:38+)

Be rightly related to God, find your joy there, and out of you will flow rivers of living water. Be a centre for Jesus Christ to pour living water through. Stop being self-conscious, stop being a sanctified prig, and live the life hid with Christ. The life that is rightly related to God is as natural as breathing wherever it goes. The lives that have been of most blessing to you are those who were unconscious of it.

Joy - Henry Blackaby

"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." John 15:11

Whoever thinks Christians don't enjoy life doesn't know what the Christian life is really about! Jesus didn't come to earth to take away your happiness but to fill your life with a joy that overflows! Jesus was not interested in the kind of joy that the world gives. In the world, joy depends on how things are going. If life is going well, then you can be happy. If life is difficult, joy evaporates. Jesus wants you to be filled with his kind of joy. His joy doesn't depend on what is happening around you; it depends on what is going on inside you.

No one could rob Jesus of his joy. They could reject him, beat him, even crucify him, but the certainty that he still belonged to God and would be rejoining his Father in heaven filled him with joy. Christians ought to have more joy than anyone else in the world. We know the living God! We are assured of an eternity with him in heaven!

Jesus isn't satisfied with your living only a mediocre life. He said he came so you could enjoy life to the fullest (John 10:10). So rejoice! Celebrate! Don't let anyone convince you that the Christian life should be dull and somber. You are vitally connected to the Creator of life itself. Focus on him—not on what people around you are doing—and you will have the same joy Jesus had. (BORROW [The Experience](#))

John 15:12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

- John 13:34 Ro 12:10 Eph 5:2 1Th 3:12 4:9 2Th 1:3 1Pe 1:22 3:8 4:8 1Jn 2:7-10 3:11-18,23 4:21
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

John 13:34+ "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

1 John 3:11, 23 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another...23 This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.

JESUS COMMANDS LOVE ONE ANOTHER

This is My commandment ([entole](#)), **that** ([hina](#) - in order that = purpose clause) **you love** ([agapao](#) - present tense - selflessly, sacrificially, keep on loving) **one another** - Jesus repeated this theme often (cf. Jn 13:34; 15:17; 1Jn 3:11,23; 1Jn 4:7-8,11-12,19-21; 2Jn 5). The purpose of Jesus' **commandment** is so that ([hina](#)) they would obey it and would **love** one another, a command He

repeats in John 15:17 for emphasis in light of the coming hatred and persecution of the godless world.

Ray Stedman says "Love is a decision to be kind, gracious, considerate, helpful, firm, or whatever will minister to another's benefit no matter how you feel. That is the love Jesus commands..... It is not merely a law -- "Love one another" -- that is laid upon us, but there is also a motive provided, found in these words, "as I have loved you."....As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you;" (John 15:9RSV). There is the key to love. It is not trying to love someone by determining to feel loving and making yourself act that way. Love comes naturally and flows fully out of a heart that is itself conscious of being loved. When Jesus had difficulty loving these men he didn't simply grit his teeth and try to be nice. He began to reflect on how the Father loved him, how wonderful it was to be approved and loved of God. He strengthened and steadied himself with the fact that the Father cherished him. (**ED: I WOULD ADD THAT WHILE MOTIVATION FOR US TO LOVE LIKE THIS IS IMPORTANT, WE MUST LEARN TO DEPEND ON THE SUPERNATURAL ENABLEMENT OF THE SPIRIT TO LOVE LIKE GOD LOVES. NATURAL MOTIVATION IS NOT ENOUGH. WE NEED SUPERNATURAL EMPOWERMENT!**)

Just as I have loved (agapao) you - This should prompt the question "How has Jesus loved them?" For the answer we need to go to the next verse. The other question is how is it possible for a disciple to love like Jesus loved? There is only one way a disciple can possibly **love** selflessly, sacrificially, continually is by continually relying on the enabling power of the Holy Spirit (cf Eph 5:18+) Who Alone can empower our heart to love with selfless, Savior like love.

NET NOTE - The disciples are to love one another, just as Jesus has loved them. This is the 'new commandment' of John 13:34, and it is repeated in Jn 15:17. The disciples' love for one another is compared to Jesus' love for them. How has Jesus shown his love for the disciples? This was illustrated in Jn 13:1-20 in the washing of the disciples' feet, introduced by the statement in Jn 13:1 that Jesus loved them "to the end." In context this constitutes a reference to Jesus' self-sacrificial death on the cross on their behalf; the love they are to have for one another is so great that it must include a self-sacrificial willingness to die for one another if necessary. This is exactly what Jesus is discussing here, because he introduces the theme of his sacrificial death in the following verse. In John 10:18 and Jn 14:31 Jesus spoke of his death on the cross as a commandment he had received from his Father, which also links the idea of commandment and love as they are linked here. One final note: It is not just the degree or intensity of the disciples' love for one another that Jesus is referring to when he introduces by comparison his own death on the cross (that they must love one another enough to die for one another) but the very means of expressing that love: It is to express itself in self-sacrifice for one another, sacrifice up to the point of death, which is what Jesus himself did on the cross (cf. 1 John 3:16).

Love (25) **agapao** see related study of noun **agape** means to love unconditionally and sacrificially as God Himself loves sinful men (**John 3:16**), the way He loves the Son (John 3:35, 15:9, 17:23, 24). Note that **agapao** is a verb and by its verbal nature calls for action. This quality of love is not an emotion but is an action initiated by a volitional choice. (**SEE 9 page article on AGAPAO in the NIDNTT, PAGE 538**)

SEE 9 page article on AGAPAO in the NIDNTT, PAGE 538

MacArthur writes that **agapao** "expresses the purest, noblest form of love, which is volitionally driven, not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship. (SEE **1 & 2 Thessalonians MacArthur New Testament Commentary**)

Wuest writes that "Agapao speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in an object which causes one to prize it. It springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object. It is a love of esteem and approbation. The quality of this love is determined by the character of the one who loves, and that of the object loved. (**Eerdmans Publishing** - used by permission)

Vine - Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son,¹ John 4:9, 10. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Ro 5:8 (**note**). It was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself, cp. **Deuteronomy 7:7, 8**. Love had its perfect expression among men in the Lord Jesus Christ, 2Co 5:14; Ep 2:4 (**note**); Ep 3:19 (**note**); Ep 5:2 (**note**); Christian love is the fruit of His Spirit in the Christian, Galatians 5:22 (**note**). Christian love has God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments, John 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10; 1Jn 2:5; 5:3; 2Jn 6. Self-will, that is, self-pleasing, is the negation of love to God. (**Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words**)

AGAPAO IN JOHN'S WRITINGS - Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:19; Jn. 3:35; Jn. 8:42; Jn. 10:17; Jn. 11:5; Jn. 12:43; Jn. 13:1; Jn. 13:23; Jn. 13:34; Jn. 14:15; Jn. 14:21; Jn. 14:23; Jn. 14:24; Jn. 14:28; Jn. 14:31; Jn. 15:9; Jn. 15:12; Jn. 15:17; Jn. 17:23; Jn. 17:24; Jn. 17:26; Jn. 19:26; Jn. 21:7; Jn. 21:15; Jn. 21:16; Jn. 21:20; 1 Jn. 2:10; 1 Jn. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:10; 1 Jn. 3:11; 1 Jn. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:18; 1 Jn. 3:23; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:8; 1 Jn. 4:10; 1 Jn. 4:11; 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Jn. 4:19; 1 Jn. 4:20; 1 Jn. 4:21; 1 Jn. 5:1; 1 Jn. 5:2; 2 Jn. 1:1; 2 Jn. 1:5; 3 Jn. 1:1; Rev. 1:5; Rev. 3:9; Rev. 12:11; Rev. 20:9

Robert Morgan - BORROW [FROM THIS VERSE PAGE 278](#)

Christ's Badge

John 15:12

[Hugh Latimer \(WATCH THIS SHORT VIDEO - POWERFUL!\)](#), THEN WATCH [BLOODY MARY'S BURNING OF LATIMER](#) - SEE John 16:2) a founder of English Protestantism, was burned at the stake in 1555, but his voice still rings through his surviving sermons and influence. Here are excerpts from one of his sermons still popular today:

Seeing time is far spent, we will take no more in hand at this time than this one sentence, John 15:12—"This is My commandment, that you love one another ... ," for it will be enough to consider well and to bear away with us. Our Savior Himself spake these words at His last supper. He makes love His badge and would have His servants known by their badge—love alone.

Moses, the great prophet of God, gave many laws, but he gave not the Spirit to fulfill the same laws; but Christ gave this law, and promised unto us, that when we call upon Him, He will give us His Holy Ghost, who shall make us able to fulfill His laws.

Then, using Paul's description of love in 1 Corinthians 13, Latimer went on to describe point by point the qualities of love produced by the Holy Ghost in God's people. Then ending his sermon, he said:

Now let us enter into ourselves, and examine our own hearts. And when we find ourselves to be out of His livery, let us repent and amend our lives, so that we may come again to the favor of God and spend our time in this world to His honor and glory, forgiving our neighbors all such things as they have done against us.

Now to make an end: Mark here who gave this precept of love—Christ our Savior Himself. When and at what time? At His departing, when He should suffer death. Therefore these words ought to be more regarded, seeing He himself spake them at His last departing from us. May God give us grace so to walk here in this world, charitably and friendly one with another, that we may attain the joy which God hath prepared for those that love Him.

Amen.

David Jeremiah - DECIDE TO LOVE

JOHN 15:12 This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Agape love is God's special kind of self-giving. Agape describes a love that comes from and is rooted in God. It is totally selfless love. It delights in giving, even though the loved one may be unkind, unlovely, and unworthy. Agape love continues to give.

Agape determines to do whatever is best for the loved one. It willingly sacrifices itself for another's good. Agape gives when it gets nothing in return. It does not even think of getting something back.

Do you think love is just a feeling? It is not a feeling. Love is a decision. The Bible says God is love. God is not a feeling. The Bible says we are commanded to love. We don't have any option.

Maybe you don't feel like loving. Do it anyway. God commands you to love. Maybe you think you can't love. Then find out whatever it is you are supposed to do when you love somebody and do all those things. Depend upon God to do His part. When we do what we're commanded in obedience to God, we discover that grace begins to develop in our lives. (BORROW [Sanctuary PAGE 240](#))

Andrew Murray - LIKE CHRIST: In His Love.—John 15:12.

BRIEF EXCERPT - EVEN AS: We begin to understand somewhat of the blessedness of that little word. It is not the command of a law which only convinces of sin and impotence; it is a new command under a new covenant, that is established upon better promises. It is the command of Him who asks nothing that He has not provided, and now offers to bestow. It is the assurance that He expects nothing from us, that He does not work in us: EVEN AS I have loved you, and every moment am pouring out that love upon you through the Holy Spirit, EVEN so do ye love one another. The measure, the strength, and the work of your love you will find in my love to you. ([CLICK HERE FOR FULL DEVOTIONAL](#))

James Smith - "I AND YOU." John 15:12–26

In this chapter alone **Christ uses the first personal pronoun with studied emphasis eleven times.** In each case the chief

importance of the words spoken lie in the character of Him who speaks. **In these impressive I's of His there is the thought of—**

I. Grace. "I have loved you" (v. 12).

You who sometime were afar off, but are now made nigh: you who were once in ignorance of Me, and walked according to the course of this world. I have loved you with a love that can only be compared with that love wherewith the Father hath loved Me (v. 9). "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

II. Separation. "I chose you out of the world" (v. 19, R.V.). "

The whole world lieth in wickedness" (1John 5:19). To be chosen of Christ is to be called out of the world into His fellowship and Kingdom. In this fellowship ye shall be partakers of His sufferings, for the world that hated Him will hate you. The Cain-spirit that seeks to slay those more righteous than themselves is ever with us (1 John 3:12). We are chosen out of the world like Noah, that we might be saved from it, and become witnesses against it. By faith, like Abraham, we must go out.

III. Friendship. "I have called you friends" (v. 15).

To be called friends by Him who is God's best Friend is an honour indeed. It was a blessed day for Mordecai when he was declared the friend of the king (Esther 6:11). Servants have kitchen privileges, but friends have parlour opportunities. Anywhere in the Lord's house is an honour and a blessing, but covet earnestly the best gifts. He will call you friend if ye abide in Him.

IV. Teaching. "All things ... I have made known unto you" (v. 15).

He is the great Teacher come from God. As He sought to instil into the minds of His disciples the things that He heard of His Father, so by the Holy Spirit does He still make known the will of the Father, for all things are now delivered unto Him, and the Spirit takes the things which are His and shows them unto us.

V. Responsibility. "I have chosen you ... that ye should bring forth fruit" (v. 16).

Having called His disciples friends, and having instructed them in the things concerning Himself, He expects them to be something else than mere patients in a doctor's hands. The love that has grown into friendship must go on ripening into fruitful service. A fruitless branch never serves the purpose of the vine. A barren Christian profession is a misrepresentation of Christ. "Chosen and ordained to bring forth fruit" (v. 16). If the fruit of the Spirit is not manifest in our lives, we are falsifying both our calling and our ordination.

VI. Brotherly Love. "I command you that ye love one another" (v. 17).

Love is the bond that is to hold His people one to another amidst the hatred and opposition of this world. It is His command, His new commandment which is the sum of the whole law. Have this salt of love in yourselves, and there shall be peace one with another (Mark 9:50). Not to love one another is an act of rebellion against the rule of Christ.

VII. Promise. "I will send you ... the Spirit of truth" (v. 26).

The word Comforter in this verse may be translated "Helper." This promised "Helper" is the "Spirit of truth." This "Spirit of truth the devil-deluded world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, but He shall be in you" (John 14:17). In promising the Spirit, Christ promised every needful thing for life and service. He is the Spirit of truth, of grace, of burning, and of power. What a Helper He is! How fruitless our testimony without Him! "I will send Him unto you." "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

QUESTION - [What did Jesus mean when He said, "Love each other as I have loved you"?](#)

ANSWER - John 15:12 states, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." Jesus spoke these words to His disciples shortly before His crucifixion in a long discourse with different instructions. From verses 9–17, Jesus emphasizes the importance of love, both toward Himself and others. His disciples are to love Him by keeping His commands, and they are also to [love each other](#).

The theme of love holds great significance in Jesus' ministry. While John emphasizes love more than other gospel writers, we can find this theme in the [Synoptic Gospels](#) as well. An example is Matthew 5:43–44, 46: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. . . . If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?"

The prevalence of love in Jesus' teachings is evident to modern readers, even to those who are skeptical. However, we sometimes isolate love from other aspects of God, such as justice and holiness—something Jesus never did. There is no true love without justice, holiness, and righteousness. It would be challenging for anyone to thrive in a country where there is “love” but also a high level of injustice, immorality, and wrongdoing. We would not refer to such a country as “loving.”

Another misconception people have about love is that it always affirms every behavior, even sinful ones. However, as [Timothy Keller](#) once stated, “Love without truth is sentimentality; it supports and affirms us but keeps us in denial about our flaws” (*The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God*, with Kathy Keller, Penguin Books, 2016, p. 40). Truth and love must go hand in hand (Ephesians 4:15).

It is a mistake to attempt to separate love from God's commandments. Steven Furtick once caused controversy when he stated that “God broke the law for love” (“It Works Both Ways,” posted 6/26/15, <http://elevationchurch.org>, accessed 6/27/23). Besides the serious problems this statement presents for God's reputation and for sound theology, the idea that love and God's law are mutually exclusive is biblically false.

Jesus refers to loving God and loving others as the [greatest commandments](#) because “All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:40). “The Law and the Prophets” refers to the Old Testament, which is summarized by love. Jesus also tells His disciples that loving Him means obeying His commandments (John 14:15; 15:10).

In one of his letters, John informs his readers that “we know that we have come to know him [Christ] if we keep his commands” (1 John 2:3). Paul refers to love as “the fulfillment of the law” (Romans 13:10). We cannot claim to love God if we are rebelling against His commandments, and, likewise, we cannot claim to love others if we mistreat them.

Before we can love each other as Christ loved us, we must address how culture defines *love*. The world primarily limits love to feelings, assuming that, as long as we feel good toward God and others, we are demonstrating love. However, biblical love is a character trait produced within us by the Spirit, who transforms both our attitude and actions toward God and people. Biblical love does not disregard feelings, but it surpasses them and sometimes exists *in spite of* feelings.

The Greek word for “love” used in John 15:12 is [agapao](#), which refers to sacrificial love. Jesus portrayed His love through sacrifice, and we are called to do the same. Again, John has insights for us: “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth” (1 John 3:16–18).

NORMAN GEISLER'S ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION ON JOHN 15:12 - Does God's command to “Love one another” support the “open sex” views of the Children of God? - SEE PAGE 152 IN [WHEN CULTISTS ASK](#)

[For Our Friends](#)

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. John 15:12

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 15:5–17

In Emily Bronte's novel *Wuthering Heights*, a cantankerous man who often quotes the Bible to criticize others is memorably described as “the wearisomest self-righteous Pharisee that ever ransacked a Bible to rake [apply] the promises to himself and fling the curses to his neighbours.”

It's a funny line; and it may even bring particular people to mind. But aren't we all a bit like this—prone to condemn others' failures while excusing our own?

In Scripture some people amazingly did the exact opposite; they were willing to give up God's promises for them and even be cursed if it would save others. Consider Moses, who said he'd rather be blotted out of God's book than see the Israelites unforgiven (Exodus 32:32). Or Paul, who said he'd choose to be “cut off from Christ” if it meant his people would find Him (Romans 9:3).

As self-righteous as we naturally are, Scripture highlights those who love others more than themselves.

Because ultimately such love points to Jesus. “Greater love has no one than this,” Jesus taught, than “to lay down one's life for one's friends” (John 15:13). Even before we knew Him, Jesus loved us “to the end” (13:1)—choosing death to give us life.

Now we are invited into the family of God, to love and be loved like this (15:9–12). And as we pour into others Christ's unimaginable love, the world will catch a glimpse of Him. By: Monica La Rose (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please

do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, thank You for showing us what it means to love. Help us to love like You.

When we love Christ, we love others.

[Love of Another Kind](#)

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. John 15:12

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 15:9–17

One of my favorite churches started several years ago as a ministry to ex-prisoners who were transitioning back into society. Now the church flourishes with people from all walks of life. I love that church because it reminds me of what I picture heaven will be like—filled with different kinds of people, all redeemed sinners, all bound together by the love of Jesus.

Sometimes, though, I wonder if church seems more like an exclusive club than a safe haven for forgiven sinners. As people naturally gravitate into groups of “a certain kind” and cluster around those they feel comfortable with, it leaves others feeling marginalized. But that’s not what Jesus had in mind when He told His disciples to “love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12). His church was to be an extension of His love mutually shared with all.

If hurting, rejected people can find loving refuge, comfort, and forgiveness in Jesus, they should expect no less from the church. So let’s exhibit the love of Jesus to everyone we encounter—especially those who are not like us. All around us are people Jesus wants to love through us. What a joy it is when people unite to worship together in love—a slice of heaven we can enjoy here on earth!
By: Joe Stowell (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, remind me today that while I was a sinner You embraced me with Your deep and unconditional love and brought me into the fellowship of Your grace. Lead me to someone I can love as You loved me.

Share Christ's love with another.

The Mucker - John 15:12

In Ernest Gordon’s true account of life in a World War II Japanese prison camp, *Through the Valley of the Kwai*, there is a story that never fails to move me. It is about a man who through giving it all away literally transformed a whole camp of soldiers. The man’s name was Angus McGillivray.

Angus was a Scottish prisoner in one of the camps filled with Americans, Australians, and Britons who had helped build the infamous Bridge over the River Kwai. The camp had become an ugly situation. A dog-eat-dog mentality had set in. Allies would literally steal from each other and cheat each other; men would sleep on their packs and yet have them stolen from under their heads. Survival was everything. The law of the jungle prevailed until the news of Angus McGillivray’s death spread throughout the camp. Rumors spread in the wake of his death. No one could believe big Angus had succumbed. He was strong, one of those whom they had expected to be the last to die. Actually, it wasn’t the fact of his death that shocked the men, but the reason he died. Finally they pieced together the true story.

The Argylls (Scottish soldiers) took their buddy system very seriously. Their buddy was called their “mucker,” and these Argylls believed that it was literally up to each of them to make sure their “mucker” survived. Angus’s mucker, though, was dying, and everyone had given up on him, everyone, of course, but Angus. He had made up his mind that his friend would not die. Someone had stolen his mucker’s blanket. So Angus gave him his own, telling his mucker that he had “just come across an extra one.”

Likewise, every mealtime, Angus would get his rations and take them to his friend, stand over him and force him to eat them, again stating that he was able to get “extra food.” Angus was going to do anything and everything to see that his buddy got what he needed to recover.

But as Angus’s mucker began to recover, Angus collapsed, slumped over, and died. The doctors discovered that he had died of starvation complicated by exhaustion. He had been giving of his own food and shelter. He had given everything he had—even his very life. The ramifications of his acts of love and unselfishness had a startling impact on the compound. “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:12).

As word circulated of the reason for Angus McGillivray’s death, the feel of the camp began to change. Suddenly, men began to focus on their mates, their friends, and humanity of living beyond survival, of giving oneself away. They began to pool their talents—

one was a violin maker, another an orchestra leader, another a cabinet maker, another a professor. Soon the camp had an orchestra full of homemade instruments and a church called the "Church Without Walls" that was so powerful, so compelling, that even the Japanese guards attended. The men began a university, a hospital, and a library system. The place was transformed; an all but smothered love revived, all because one man named Angus gave all he had for his friend. For many of those men this turnaround meant survival. What happened is an awesome illustration of the potential unleashed when one person actually gives it all away. (BORROW [Holy Sweat, Tim Hansel, 1987, Word Books Publisher, pp. 146-147](#))

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

- John 10:11,15 Ro 5:6-8 Eph 5:2 1Jn 4:7-11
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Proverbs 18:24 A man of too many friends comes to ruin, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

SACRIFICE OF LIFE GREATEST LOVE

Greater love (agape) has no one than this, that one lay down his life (psuche) for (huper = on behalf of, for sake of) his friends (philos related to phileo) - Note the interesting play on words - it is His agape love which makes it possible for us to be His "phileo" friend (philos)! How does Jesus describe love here? It is clearly by being willing to die for one's friends (philos). Note the little preposition for (huper) which speaks of Jesus' Vicarious sacrifice, which means He became our substitute, taking our place, dying once and for all on the Cross that we might live eternally. What a friend we have in Jesus. Notice how His substitutionary sacrifice is the purest example of agape (sacrificial, selfless) love!

Is there not a hint of a prophecy in this statement? Laying down His life was clearly what Jesus did when He willingly and lovingly went to Calvary (in that sense His description here had a prophetic nuance to the eleven disciples). By His blood, He made it possible for us to enter into the New Covenant which helps us understand why from a Christocentric perspective the term **FRIEND** is so rich and full of meaning to us as His disciples. In other words, friend (philos) is a covenant term with a much deeper import in Scripture than in our modern culture - See [Covenant The Oneness of Covenant - The Meaning of Friend](#) or [click here for additional notes on friend](#).

A friend is:

a push when you've stopped
a word when you're lonely
a guide when you're searching
a smile when you're sad
a song when you're glad.

Related Resources:

- [What is the concept of the vicarious atonement? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the substitutionary atonement? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Friend (5384) **philos** means loved (loved one), dear, befriended, friendly, kind. **Philos** can mean kindly disposed or devoted (Acts 19:31). **Philos** describes one having special interest in someone else. One who is on intimate terms or in close association with someone else **Philos** can describe a love which is emotional and conditional. **Philos** refers to one who has a liking for, is fond of something or someone.

Christ a Redeemer and Friend

Poor, weak and worthless though I am
I have a rich almighty Friend;
Jesus, the Savior, is His Name;
He freely loves, and without end.

There is an interesting derivative of **philos** used by Paul describing the last days as those in which men will be "**lovers of**

pleasure (philedonos from philos + hedone = pleasure) rather than lovers of God." (2Ti 3:4+)

Aristotle defined a "friend" as "one soul inhabiting two." (cp use in Lxx of Dt 13:7)

Ropes writes that "To be friend of the world is to be on good terms with the persons and forces and things that are at least indifferent toward God, if not openly hostile to him. (Ropes, J. H. A Critical and Exegetical commentary on the Epistle of St. James. 1916)

[The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#) - Jesus gives some of the most complete teaching on the Biblical meaning of philos in John 15, noting first that the greatest manifestation of a friend was to give up one's life for his friend. To be a friend of Jesus is not just a matter of saying but of obeying. Those who have believed in Jesus are now called His friends. Walter Clippinger writes that in [Jn 15:13, 14, 15](#) "Jesus and His disciples illustrate the growth of friendship from that of teacher and disciple, lord and servant, to that of friend and friend"

A friend is one who comes in when the world goes out. A real friend warms you up by his presence, trusts you with his secrets, and remembers you in his prayers. Friendship doubles our joy and divides our grief. There are not many things in life so beautiful as true friendship, and there are not many things more uncommon. He whose hand is clasped in friendship cannot throw mud. A faithful friend is an image of God. A faithful friend is one of life's greatest assets. A friend is one who knows you as you are, understands where you've been, accepts who you've become and still, gently invites you to grow. A friend will joyfully sing with you when you are on the mountaintop, and silently walk beside you through the valley.

A friend is one who makes me do my best. - Oswald Chambers

The dearest friend on earth is a mere shadow compared with Jesus Christ. - Oswald Chambers

Friendship is one of the sweetest joys of life; many spirits might have failed beneath the bitterness of trial if they had not found a friend. - C H Spurgeon

Keep a fair-sized cemetery in your back yard, in which to bury the faults of your friends. - Henry Ward Beecher

[W. Gunther](#) writes that...philos is also in the NT a friend to whom one is under a basic obligation (cf. Lk. 7:6; 11:5 f.; 14:10, 12; 15:6, 9, 29; 23:12; Jn. 11:11; Acts 10:24; 19:31; 27:3). Relatives (syngeneis) and friends are often mentioned alongside each other. But neither in Gk. nor in Jewish tradition can any firm distinction be upheld; and when philoi, friends, are sometimes mentioned, relatives are clearly often to be included. philos is also used, as in Lk. 16:9, for people linked by some inclination or relationship; Jesus here advises people to win friends for themselves by giving away their worldly wealth (— Possessions, art. mamonas). The same point is made when Pilate is threatened in Jn. 19:12 with losing his honorary title of "friend of Caesar" (philos tou kaisaros; Lat. amicus Caesaris). By way of contrast, philos can be used to express God's love for the godless. In Matt. 11:19 and Lk. 7:34 Jesus is called the 'friend of sinners and tax-collectors.' He loves them, though they are enemies, just as God loves the world which hates him. That is also what is meant when Jesus addressed his disciples as "friends" (Lk. 12:4; Jn. 15:14 f.). They come to him as sinners, and become his friends through his sacrificial love. (Jn. 15:13). So now, instead of the love and friendship they enjoyed while belonging to the world (Jas. 4:4), they belong to the new fellowship of the kingdom of God, or the family of: God, in which they are brothers and friends of Jesus and children of the Father (Lk. 21:16; cf. also Jas. 2:23, where — Abraham because of his faith is called a philos theou). Brothers and sisters in faith can therefore be greeted as philoi (3 Jn. 15). For Jn. 3:29 philos tou nymphiou, "friend of the bridegroom", — Marriage, art. nymphé. (SEE ONLINE DISCUSSION IN [New International Dictionary of NT Theology, PAGE 549](#))

[DICTIONARY OF BIBLICAL IMAGERY](#) - FRIEND, FRIENDSHIP - EXCEPT ([CLICK FOR 4 PAGE DISCUSSION](#)) Summary. Friendship entails responsibilities and benefits. The proverb that "a friend loves at all times" (Prov 17:17) expresses both an obligation and a benefit. In a similar vein is the proverb that "there are friends who pretend to be friends, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Prov 18:24 RSV). In the Bible friendship is a mutual improvement activity, honing one for godly use. Biblical friendship is a face-to-face encounter, signifying proximity, intimate revelation and honesty. It is also a bonding of affections and trust, knitting one's very soul to another. In its ultimate reaches, it is union with God.

QUESTION - [Why is there no greater love than to lay down your life \(John 15:13\)?](#)

ANSWER - In John 15:13 Jesus states, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." The statement upholds sacrificial love as the ultimate expression of love. In saying this, Jesus prepares His disciples for His crucifixion and shows them what He meant when He told them to "love each other as I have loved you" (verse 12).

All true love involves some kind of sacrifice, as the lover seeks to benefit the loved one. It stands to reason, then, that the greatest love of all would involve a total laying down of one's life for the loved one. God, who is love, revealed His love for mankind through

sacrifice (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). Sacrifice is paramount in 1 John 4:10: “This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” The sacrificial love of God, also known as [agape love](#), stands as the “greater love” and is how the Source of Love saved us.

Another reason why laying down one’s life is considered the greatest love is its counterintuitive nature. Humans tend to prefer taking rather than giving, so instances of selflessness leave us amazed. When a father dives into raging water to rescue his child, when a woman asks the doctor to prioritize her child, or when a soldier falls on a grenade to save his brothers-in-arms, we’re humbled and awed. In the modern concept of love, the focus often gravitates toward self-satisfaction, and in many circles the idea of sacrifice is considered unnecessary or even repugnant. In contrast to our diluted version of love, agape shines brightly.

For Christians, the expression of this “greater love” isn’t limited to literally laying down our lives. We don’t have to wait for a grandiose moment of sacrifice to love others as Jesus loves us. Our daily lives should be characterized by selflessness and deference, a denying of ourselves for the good of others. Such displays of love should be common in the body of Christ (John 13:35). We are called to follow Christ, which includes showing love in the way He demonstrated.

Other portions of Scripture also reflect the truth of John 15:13. For instance, Philippians 2:3–4 instructs us to “do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” Romans 12:10 urges Christians to “be devoted to one another in love” and to “honor one another above [them]selves.” The Christian lifestyle does not nurture self-aggrandizement but centers on humility and self-denial.

It is worth delving into the word *friend* in John 15:13. Are we only supposed to love our friends? Wouldn’t this contradict other passages like Matthew 5:46–47? In the context of John 15:13, the friendship Jesus refers to is the relationship He had with the disciples. Yet we know that Jesus did not just die for His “friends” alone. Romans 5:6 says, “Christ died for the ungodly.” So, the principle of laying down one’s life extends further than just benefiting friends. We show love even to enemies.

There is no greater love than laying down one’s life for others. Jesus exemplified this love for us, and we are called to walk in the same selfless love.

QUESTION - [What does it mean that Jesus is a friend of sinners? | GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - The fact that Jesus is a friend of sinners means that He is our friend and is waiting for us to acknowledge His presence and availability. God’s love for us is almost beyond imagining. When we consider [Jesus’ Incarnation](#)—His leaving heaven to be born as a helpless human infant in order to grow and experience life among us—we begin to get a glimmer of the depth of that love. When we add to that His sacrificial death on the cross, it is staggering.

To be a “friend of sinners,” Jesus subjected Himself to living in a fallen, depraved world, for we “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Despite our sinful condition, Jesus desires a relationship with us.

The phrase “friend of sinners” comes from parallel passages in the Gospels. “Jesus went on to say, ‘To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other: “We played the pipe for you, / and you did not dance; / we sang a dirge, / and you did not cry.” For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, “He has a demon.” The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, “Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.”’” (Luke 7:31–34; cf. Matthew 11:16–19).

In this passage Jesus is pointing out the level of spiritual immaturity among those who considered themselves the “righteous” and the most “spiritual.” They based their standing on their rigorous following of ritual, law, and external appearance instead of on a true understanding of God’s heart and a relationship with Him. They criticized Jesus for spending time with the outcasts and “socially unacceptable” people, calling Him a “friend of sinners.”

The story of the lost sheep shows the importance of the lost and vulnerable, those who have wandered away from the place of security. To God the lost are so important that He will search for them until they are found and brought back to safety. “Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, ‘This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.’ Then Jesus told them this parable: ‘Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?’” (Luke 15:1–4).

Jesus made it clear that He had “come to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). He was willing to associate with those who were, by the standards of the self-righteous Pharisees, not good enough. But it was those who were open to hearing Christ, and they mattered to God!

Matthew 9:10–13 relates another time when Jesus was ridiculed by the religious leaders for His associations. He answers them by saying, “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (verse 13).

In Luke 4:18, Jesus quotes Isaiah 61:1–2: “The Spirit of the LORD is on me, / because he has anointed me / to preach good news to the poor. / He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners / and recovery of sight for the blind, / to release the oppressed, / to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor.” In order to preach the good news to the poor, the prisoners, the blind, and the oppressed, Jesus had to have some contact with them.

Jesus did not condone sin or participate in the destructive behaviors of the ungodly. Being a “friend of sinners,” Jesus showed that “God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance” (Romans 2:4). Jesus led a perfect, sinless life and had the “authority on earth to forgive sins” (Luke 5:24). Because of that, we have the opportunity to experience a transformed heart and life.

Jesus, our friend, spent time with sinners, not to join their sinful ways but to present them the good news that forgiveness was available. Many sinners were transformed by His words of life—Zacchaeus being a prime example (Luke 19:1–10).

When Jesus’ enemies called Him a “friend of sinners,” they meant it as an insult. To His glory and our eternal benefit, Jesus endured such slights and became “a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24).

Jon Courson - [BORROW A Day's Journey](#) PAGE 90-

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13

An entire nation was revived when John Knox prayed, ‘Lord give me Scotland, or I die.’ But what many people don’t know is what Knox wrote concerning the answer to that prayer. The Lord responded in his heart saying, ‘First die, then I’ll give you Scotland.’ ‘Make this relationship work, or I’m going to die,’ we pray. ‘Die first,’ the Lord says. Lay down your life for your wife, your neighbor, your friend. That is not only the proof of your love, but the pathway to love because love is not some feeling you hope returns, not some kind of elusive mystical emotion. It’s the decision to die to your dreams, your desires, your needs, for your friend, your husband, your neighbor, your kids.

ILLUSTRATION - Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Those words are inscribed on the headstone on the grave of Dawson Trotman, the founder of the Navigators, high on the hillside overlooking Glen Eyrie, in Colorado Springs. Trotman was drowned in a boating accident in a lake in northern New York. He and some young people had been taking a joyride, but the boat had swung too sharply and they had all been thrown into the water. One of the girls could not swim and Dawson knew it. He could have saved himself, but instead he swam to this girl, brought her back to the boat, helped the others lift her up into the boat, but by the time her panic had subsided, and they turned around to help him he was gone. Thus they wrote on his grave, "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

C H Spurgeon - Love’s crowning deed (FULL SERMON - [Love's Crowning Deed](#))

‘Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.’ John 15:13

*Think much of His love
and you will grow strong and vigorous in grace*

The atmosphere around the cross of Christ is bracing to the soul: think much of his love and you will grow strong and vigorous in grace. As dwellers in the low-lying Alpine valleys become weak and full of disease in the close, damp atmosphere, but soon recover health and strength if they climb the hill-side and tarry there, so in this world of selfishness, where the mean spirit of caring only for one’s own self reigns predominant, the saints become weak and diseased, even as worldlings are; but up on the hill-sides, where we learn Christ’s self-denying affection to the sons of men, we are braced to nobler and better lives. If men are to be truly great they must be nurtured beneath the wing of free grace and dying love. The grandeur of the Redeemer’s example calls his disciples to make their own lives sublime, and furnishes them both with motives for so doing and with forces to constrain them thereto. We may well tarry in the region of the love of Christ, because not only is it full of bracing influences, but it has an outlook towards the better shore. Shipwrecked mariners upon a desert island have been known to linger most of the day upon that headland which pushes furthest out into the main ocean, in the hope that, if they cannot catch a glimpse of their own country across the waves, they may possibly discern a sail which has left one of the ports of the well-beloved land; so it is that while we are sitting on the headlands of divine love we look across to heaven and become familiar with the spirits of the just.

*If ever we are to see heaven while tarrying here, it
must surely be from Cape Cross or Mount Fellowship,
from that jutting piece of holy experience which runs away
from the ordinary thoughts of men and approaches the heart of Christ.*

WHAT WONDROUS LOVE IS THIS (BORROW [AMAZING GRACE PAGE 52](#)) (PLAY [WHAT WONDROUS LOVE IS THIS](#) VOCAL BY SELAH)

Anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse. (Deuteronomy 21:23)

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:13)

Not father or mother has loved you as God has, for it was that you might be happy He gave His only Son.
When He bowed His head in the death hour, love solemnized its triumph; the sacrifice there was complete.—
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

This beloved hymn, with its plaintive modal sound, is one of the best known of our authentic American folk hymns. Like all true folk music, the origins of this text and music remain unknown. It is simply the product of devout people who, when reflecting seriously on the sacrificial gift of God's Son, respond spontaneously with amazed adoration for this "wondrous love."

One typical folk hymn characteristic found in these words is the repetition of key phrases such as "O my soul" and "I'll sing on." Since folk music is generally learned aurally without the assistance of the printed page or musical notation, such repetition is necessary. Note also how effectively the curving melodic lines enhance the thought and personal application of the words.

The hymn first appeared in 1835 in a collection titled William Walker's Southern Harmony. These simply stated words with their appealing music have since ministered to people everywhere, extolling the profound truth of Christ's love for each of us. Allow the hymn to move you to awe even now.

(PLAY [WHAT WONDROUS LOVE IS THIS](#) VOCAL BY SELAH)

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What wondrous love is this, O my soul! What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul.

When I was sinking down, sinking down, when I was sinking down, sinking down; when I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown, Christ laid aside His crown for my soul; Christ laid aside His crown for my soul.

To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing; to God and to the Lamb I will sing; to God and to the Lamb who is the great "I Am," while millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing; while millions join the theme, I will sing.

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on, and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be, and through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on, and through eternity I'll sing on.

For Today: Numbers 21:8; Jeremiah 31:3; John 3:14–18; 1 John 3:1; Revelation 1:5, 6

Reflect once again on the wondrous love of Christ in your behalf.

Determine to share your Lord and His wondrous love with another.

Laying Down Your Life - Henry Blackaby

"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." John 15:13

Many people are confused about what true friendship means. These people don't want to spend much time or effort on someone else's behalf, so they stay away from friends who appear needy. Instead, they look for those who'll give lots but won't ask for much in return. They evaluate their friendships according to how much they can get out of them, not how much they can give. Their friends are objects, designed to provide fun and pleasure, but not worth any sacrifices in return. Relationships based on this assumption are not friendships; they are self-serving entanglements where one person uses another or where both parties use each other. The problem comes when one of them has a need or faces a crisis. A genuine friendship will weather the storms that are part of life, but a false friendship will collapse at the first sign of pressure.

Jesus modeled true friendship. True friendship comes at a cost. It costs time, and it costs energy. According to Jesus' standard, a true friend looks for ways to give in a friendship, not ways to get. A true friend doesn't resent it when his friend is in need. A real friend doesn't use her friends to serve her own purposes. Jesus knew what it meant to be a true friend. He left the glory of heaven to take on the weaknesses of a human body—that's what he was willing to do for his friends. He subjected himself to betrayal, torture, and murder. That's how far he was willing to go for his friends. When Jesus said there is no greater way to love your friends than to lay down your life for them, he spoke from experience.

Examine your friendships in light of Jesus' example. Have you been treating your friends as possessions—using them for your benefit? Or do you look for ways to give up your life for them? The way you view your friends will be evident in the way you treat them. (BORROW [The Experience](#))

Oswald Chambers - What do you make of this

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend ... I have called you friends. John 15:13, 15.

Jesus does not ask me to die for Him, but to lay down my life for Him. Peter said—"I will lay down my life for Thy sake," and he meant it; his sense of the heroic was magnificent. It would be a bad thing to be incapable of making such a declaration as Peter made; the sense of our duty is only realized by our sense of the heroic. Has the Lord ever asked you—"Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake?" It is far easier to die than to lay down the life day in and day out with the sense of the high calling. We are not made for brilliant moments, but we have to walk in the light of them in ordinary ways. There was only one brilliant moment in the life of Jesus, and that was on the Mount of Transfiguration; then He emptied Himself the second time of His glory, and came down into the demon-possessed valley. For thirty-three years Jesus laid out His life to do the will of His Father, and, John says, "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." It is contrary to human nature to do it.

If I am a friend of Jesus, I have deliberately and carefully to lay down my life for Him. It is difficult, and thank God it is difficult. Salvation is easy because it cost God so much, but the manifestation of it in my life is difficult. God saves a man and endues him with the Holy Spirit, and then says in effect—"Now work it out, be loyal to Me, whilst the nature of things round about you would make you disloyal." "I have called you friends." Stand loyal to your Friend, and remember that His honour is at stake in your bodily life.

Love Without Borders

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. John 15:13

Today's Scripture & Insight : Luke 22:39-46

During the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900, missionaries trapped in a home in T'ai Yüan Fu decided their only hope for survival rested on running through the crowd that was calling for their deaths. Aided by weapons they held, they escaped the immediate threat. However, Edith Coombs, noticing that two of her injured Chinese students had not escaped, raced back into danger. She rescued one, but stumbled on her return trip for the second student and was killed.

Meanwhile, missionaries in Hsin Chou district had escaped and were hiding in the countryside, accompanied by their Chinese friend Ho Tsuen Kwei. But he was captured while scouting an escape route for his friends in hiding and was martyred for refusing to reveal their location.

In the lives of Edith Coombs and Tsuen Kwei we see a love that rises above cultural or national character. Their sacrifice reminds us of the greater grace and love of our Savior.

As Jesus awaited His arrest and subsequent execution, He prayed earnestly, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me." But He concluded that request with this resolute example of courage, love, and sacrifice: "Yet not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42). His death and resurrection made our eternal lives possible. By: Randy Kilgore (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, may the world see our love for each other—and the deeds that come from it—as a great testimony to the bond of unity we have in You. May they want to know You too.

Only the light of Christ's love can eliminate the darkness of hatred.

True Sacrifice

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. — John 15:13

Today's Scripture : Romans 5:1-11

Eric was one of the good guys. As a police officer, he saw his work as service to his community and was fully committed to serving at all costs. Evidence of this desire was seen on the door of Eric's locker at the police station, where he posted John 15:13.

In that verse, our Lord said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." Those words, however, were not merely noble ideals. They expressed Eric's commitment to his duty as a police officer—a commitment that demanded the ultimate price when he was killed in the line of duty. It was a real-life display of the heart of true sacrifice.

Jesus Christ lived out the powerful words of John 15:13 within hours of stating them. The upper room event where Jesus spoke of

such sacrifice was followed by communion with the Father at Gethsemane, a series of illegal trials, and then crucifixion before a mocking crowd.

As the Son of God, Jesus could have avoided the suffering, torture, and cruelty. He was utterly without sin and did not deserve to die. But love, the fuel that drives true sacrifice, drove Him to the cross. As a result, we can be forgiven if we will accept His sacrifice and resurrection by faith. Have you trusted the One who laid down His life for you? By: Bill Crowder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

'Twas not a martyr's death He died,
The Christ of Calvary;
It was a willing sacrifice
He made for you—for me.
—Adams

Only Jesus, the perfect sacrifice, can declare guilty people perfect.

[A Friend To The End](#)

There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. —Proverbs 18:24

Today's Scripture : Proverbs 18:14-24

Traditionally, medical schools have trained their students to help patients live, while offering little instruction in helping them face death. But that is changing with the addition of courses in end-of-life care. Physicians are now taught that when they have used all their medical expertise without achieving a cure, they should seize the opportunity to stand compassionately beside their dying patients and be a friend.

Death frightens many of us and makes us feel awkward in the presence of a terminally ill person. But our greatest opportunities to help someone in Jesus' name may come during a person's final days on earth.

The Bible speaks of a friendship that knows no limits. "A friend loves at all times," said the wise man (Proverbs 17:17). And "there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Pr 18:24). Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Jesus is both our Great Physician and our Friend, and He promised that He would never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). He calls us to stand with our friends and family in His name as their earthly journey nears its end. That's what a true friend would do. By: David C. McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

A friend is he who always knows
When the cold wind of trouble blows,
Who comes in dark and stormy night
With friendship's glowing lamp alight.
—Mason

A true friend stays true to the end.

[To Have One, Be One](#)

A man who has friends must himself be friendly. —Proverbs 18:24

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-17

All of us need at least one or two close friends. A small boy defined a friend as "someone who knows all about you and likes you just the same." Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "A friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece of nature." Henry Durbanville made this observation about friendship: "A friend is the first person to come in when the whole world goes out."

Solomon wrote in Proverbs 17:17, "A friend loves at all times." We can't improve on that definition. To have someone who remains true to us under all circumstances is one of life's choicest blessings. The support and encouragement that only an intimate friend can offer is sorely needed when the burdens of life weigh heavily upon us. Jesus, of course, is the ultimate friend, for He laid down His life for His friends (John 15:13).

Proverbs 18:24 makes an important point and takes us beyond a description of what it means to be a friend. It says that "a man who

has friends must himself be friendly.” The implication is clear: Friendliness must begin with us. We must take the initiative in developing relationships with others. Let us be to others what we desire for ourselves. When it comes to friends, to have one you must be one! By: Richard DeHaan

I went outside to find a friend
But could not find one there;
I went outside to be a friend,
And friends were everywhere!
—Anon.

Friends are seldom found; they are made. —Wentworth

Heart For Others

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. — John 15:13

Today's Scripture : 2 Corinthians 11:22-30

As the young people set up for a concert in the town square in Montego Bay, Jamaica, the worst problem we anticipated was sunburn.

The chorale from Grand Rapids, Michigan, was in Jamaica to encourage Christians and to spread the gospel through music. They had been looking forward to this outreach event.

Midway through the concert, a woman who didn’t like the message of the music began shouting angrily at the chorale. Apparently, the God-honoring songs were more than she could stand. After several tense minutes, a bystander tried to quiet her. A fight ensued, and we began to fear for the safety of the young people. Finally, she ran away, and the chorale finished the concert.

Later, I said to one of the girls, “Well, we won’t do that again,” indicating that our priority was to protect her and her friends. She responded, “If one person came to know Jesus, it was worthwhile, even if we were in danger.”

What a response! Sounds like Paul, who was willing to suffer so that people would come to know Jesus (2 Cor. 11:22-30). This girl was concerned for people she didn’t even know. That’s true love for Jesus—caring for people while moving personal needs to the background. By: Dave Branon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, let me to live from day to day
In such a self-forgetful way
That even when I kneel to pray
My prayer will be for others.
—Meigs

God’s love in our heart gives us a heart for the lost.

True Love

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. — John 15:13

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 15:9-17

During the rehearsal for my brother’s wedding ceremony, my husband snapped a picture of the bride and groom as they faced each other in front of the pastor. When we looked at the photograph later, we noticed that the camera’s flash had illuminated a metal cross in the background, which appeared as a glowing image above the couple.

The photograph reminded me that marriage is a picture of Christ’s love for the church as shown on the cross. When the Bible instructs husbands to love their wives (Eph. 5:25), God compares that kind of faithful, selfless affection to Christ’s love for His followers. Because Christ sacrificed His life for the sake of love, we are all to love each other (1 John 4:10-11). He died in our place, so that our sin would not keep us separate from God for eternity. He lived out His words to the disciples: “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13).

Many of us suffer from the pain of abandonment, rejection, and betrayal. Despite all of this, through Christ we can understand the sacrificial, compassionate, and enduring nature of true love. Today, remember that you are loved by God. Jesus said so with His life. By: Jennifer Benson Schuldt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional

without their permission.)

[The Measure Of Love](#)

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. — John 15:13

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-17

On October 2, 1954, First Lieutenant James O. Conway was taking off from Boston Logan Airport, flying a plane that carried a load of munitions. When his plane became airborne, he suddenly lost power over Boston's bay. In an instant, Conway faced a brutal choice—eject from the plane and save his own life, or crash the plane into the bay causing his own death.

If he ejected, however, the plane would crash into an East Boston neighborhood filled with homes and families. Amazingly, Conway chose to crash the plane into the bay—giving his life for the lives of others.

In John 15:13, Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." The willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice to protect others shows a heart that cares more about the needs of others than the needs of one's self. Someone once said that "the measure of love is what one is willing to give up for it." God the Father loved so much that He gave up His Son. Christ loved so much that He gave up His life—even taking our sins on Himself and dying in our place.

The measure of God's love for you is great. Have you accepted His love personally? By: Bill Crowder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

When Jesus gave His life for me,
Enduring all the agony
Upon the cross of Calvary,
He showed the love of God.
—Sper

Nothing speaks more clearly of God's love than the cross of Christ.

[Sacrificial Love](#)

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. — John 15:13

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-17

What does it mean to lay down our lives for Christ and for our friends? In John 15, notice Christ's logic as He taught about sacrificial love.

First He said, "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (v.12). Then He described the fullest extent of such love: "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (v.13). Jesus died willingly for us and we should be willing to die for Him and our friends.

Then He added, "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you" (v.14). Jesus didn't say we're His friends only if we die for Him. We are also His friends if we obey Him. In God's eyes, obeying Him as a living sacrifice is the way we lay down our life for Him (Romans 12:1).

Similarly, we may not have to die for our friends, but there are other ways to make sacrifices for them. We can lay down our plans or tight schedules to focus on someone in need. Or we can lay down our possessions to make provision for the poor.

Such sacrifices, though small, can be powerful ways to lay down our lives for our friends—if we sacrifice willingly and in the spirit of Christ's love. By: Joanie Yoder

We say we love humanity,
But it is only true
If we're prepared to sacrifice—
For those God asks us to.
—Sper

The closer you are to God, the bigger your heart for people.

[Like A Lamb](#)

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. — Isaiah 53:7

Today's Scripture: John 15:9-17

In 1602, Italian artist Caravaggio produced a painting called *The Taking of Christ*. This work, an early example of the Baroque style, is compelling. Created in dark hues, it allows the viewer to contemplate Jesus' arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. Two main elements of the scene depicted in the painting demand the observer's attention. The first is Judas as he delivers the traitor's kiss. Immediately, however, the viewer's focus is drawn toward Jesus' hands, which are passively clasped together to show that He offered no resistance to this injustice. Although He possessed the power to create a universe, Christ gave Himself up voluntarily to His captors and to the waiting cross.

Long before this scene took place, Jesus told His listeners that no one could take His life from Him—He would lay it down willingly (John 10:18). This heart of voluntary surrender was prophesied by Isaiah, who wrote, "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth" (Isa. 53:7).

Christ's lamblike self-sacrifice is a grand indicator of His powerful love. "Greater love has no one than this," He explained, "than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13). Think of it. Jesus loved you that much! By: Bill Crowder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Love sent the Savior to die in my stead.

Why should He love me so?

Meekly to Calvary's cross He was led.

Why should He love me so?

—Harkness

The nail-pierced hands of Jesus reveal the love-filled heart of God.

[Who Cares About the Bear!](#) - Two hikers were walking through the woods when they suddenly confronted a giant bear. Immediately, one of the men took off his boots, pulled out a pair of track shoes and began putting them on. "What are you doing?" cried his companion. "We can't outrun that bear, even with jogging shoes." "Who cares about the bear?" the first hiker replied. "All I have to worry about is outrunning you." [Jim Whitehead, quoted by Seymour Rosenberg in Spartanburg, S.C., Herald](#)

[The Transfusion](#) - There was an orphanage near an American Marine Base in Viet Nam. One day the Viet Cong fired mortar shells into the orphanage, killing dozens of children and wounding many more. A boy named Kai had a seriously wounded friend who needed a blood transfusion. Kai's friend had a rare blood type and only Kai's blood matched it. Little Kai had never heard of a blood transfusion but when the American doctors explained it would save his friend's life, little Kai volunteered. As the blood began to flow from Kai to his friend, Kai began to whimper. When the doctors asked if it hurt, he said no. A little later he whimpered again. Again he told the doctors it did not hurt. The doctors asked, "What's wrong, Kai?" With tears coursing down his light brown, dusty cheeks, Kai asked, "When am I to die, sir, when am I to die?" You see, little Kai didn't know that you only give a little blood. He thought you gave it all, and he was willing to do so for his little friend. Source unknown

[A Young Hero](#) - Jean, Nev. - A 13-year-old boy endured flames licking up his back as he passed his two little brothers out a window of their burning home, then managed to escape himself.

"He stood there and handed me them babies out while he was cooking," Jimmy Holsclaw said Saturday of his son, Jimmy. "He never looked up or hesitated a minute, he did just what he was supposed to do."

Jimmy was in critical condition Saturday in a hospital burn unit in nearby Las Vegas, suffering from second and third degree burns over almost half his body and severe smoke inhalation.

His efforts early Friday saved the lives of his 3-year-old and 4-year-old brothers after the boys were trapped in a bedroom of their burning mobile home. - Spokesman-Review, February 12, 1984

[No Greater Love](#)

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. —John 15:13

Today's Scripture : John 15:1-13

Bill and his wife were driving through the Rocky Mountains when a near-miss with a truck caused their car to swerve off the road and plunge into the Colorado River. After scrambling out of their sinking vehicle, they frantically treaded water in the swift current. A truckdriver, who had seen the accident, ran ahead along the shore and threw a rope to them. Bill swam behind his wife and pushed her to where she could grab the rope—and the man pulled her out. Bill, however, was carried downstream and didn't survive. He had given his life for the woman he loved.

To give your life so another person can live is the ultimate proof of love. During the night that Jesus was betrayed, He told His disciples of His intention to give His life in exchange for mankind. He told them: "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:13). And then He set the ultimate example of self-sacrifice by going to the cross.

Have you ever given any thought to the fact that Jesus did that for you—that He died in your place? In so doing, He not only proved His love for you, but He also made it possible for you to be forgiven of your sins and to have an eternal home in heaven. By: Dennis Fisher (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

He who gave Himself to save me,
Now will keep me to the end;
In His care securely resting
On His promise I depend.
—Bosch

Christ's sacrifice was what God desired and our sin required.

[A True Friend](#) - A story is told by a train engineer. He was approaching a trestle and saw two young girls walking over it. They heard the train approaching and tried to run to safety, but one girl's foot caught between the ties. They tried and tried to free it, but it was no use. Finally the one commanded her friend, "Run to safety and save yourself." She did, but immediately turned and ran back to try to release her friend. It seemed hopeless. She again ran to safety, but again returned to her friend. This happened three times, as the train came closer and closer. Finally the train struck the two girls who were locked in an embrace, and together they fell into the river below. - Ken Gangel, Moody Founder's Week, 2/4/83

[The Widower](#) - William Dixon was a widower who had also lost his only son. One day he saw a neighbor's house on fire; although the aged owner was rescued, her grandson was trapped upstairs in the blaze. Dixon didn't hesitate. Climbing an iron pipe on the side of the house, Dixon lowered the boy to safety, badly burning his own hands on the overheated pipe. Shortly after the fire, the boy's grandmother died, leaving him alone. As the town council considered what to do, two men appeared requesting custody of the boy. One was a father who had lost his son and wanted to adopt the orphan as his own. The other was Dixon. The first man gave his reasons for wanting to adopt the boy, then Dixon stood before the council and simply held up his badly scarred hands. When the vote was taken, the boy went to him. Today in the Word, April, 1989, p. 36.

[He Couldn't Swim](#) - One summer morning as Ray Blankenship was preparing his breakfast, he gazed out the window, and saw a small girl being swept along in the rain-flooded drainage ditch beside his Andover, Ohio, home. Blankenship knew that farther downstream, the ditch disappeared with a roar underneath a road and then emptied into the main culvert. Ray dashed out the door and raced along the ditch, trying to get ahead of the foundering child. Then he hurled himself into the deep, churning water.

Blankenship surfaced and was able to grab the child's arm. They tumbled end over end. Within about three feet of the yawning culvert, Ray's free hand felt something—possibly a rock—protruding from one bank. He clung desperately, but the tremendous force of the water tried to tear him and the child away. "If I can just hang on until help comes," he thought. He did better than that. By the time fire-department rescuers arrived, Blankenship had pulled the girl to safety. Both were treated for shock.

On April 12, 1989, Ray Blankenship was awarded the Coast Guard's Silver Lifesaving Medal. The award is fitting, for this selfless person was at even greater risk to himself than most people knew. Ray Blankenship can't swim. -- Paul Harvey, Los Angeles Times Syndicate

John 15:14 "You are My friends if you do what I command you.

- my: John 14:15,28 2Ch 20:7 Song 5:1 Isa 41:8 Mt 12:50 Lu 12:4 Jas 2:23
- if: John 2:5 13:17 14:21 1Jn 5:3
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

HOW TO BE A FRIEND OF JESUS

You are (present tense - continually - play [Friends are Friends Forever](#)) **My friends (philos) if you do what I command (entellomai) you** - Another blessing of obedience. What does our obedience demonstrate? That we are the **friends** of Jesus. Of course, be careful here. What you "**DO**" can be done in the wrong way! What do I mean by that? If you "**DO**" with a flesh driven spirit of legalism ("I don't smoke, I don't chew, I don't go with girls who do") then that is not the type of **DOING** Jesus is speaking about or desires. Jesus desires our **DOING** to be a product of our **LOVING** Him and His Father and in that atmosphere it is not us **DOING** it in our own strength, but His Spirit enabling our **DOING**. Does that make sense? Legalism will blunt the flow of grace in your life as quickly as overt, willful sin!

[What a Friend we have in Jesus,](#)

All our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry

Everything to God in prayer!

—Scriven

Spurgeon - You cannot be his friends if you are disobedient to his commands. An act of disobedience is unfriendliness; ay, and the omission of obedience is unfriendliness to Christ. I wish we would always remember that every sin either of omission or of commission, is an unfriendly act towards our best Friend. ([Expositions in John](#))

Bob Utley on **IF** - This is a **THIRD CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE** which means potential action. It gives the condition for friendship, which is obedience (cf. John 14:15, 23-24; 15:10; Luke 6:46). As Jesus abided in the Father and remained in His love, so too, must His disciples!

NET NOTE This verse really explains John 15:10 in another way. Those who keep Jesus' commandments are called his friends, those friends for whom he lays down his life (v. 13). It is possible to understand this verse as referring to a smaller group within Christianity as a whole, perhaps only the apostles who were present when Jesus spoke these words. Some have supported this by comparing it to the small group of associates and advisers to the Roman Emperor who were called "Friends of the Emperor." Others would see these words as addressed only to those Christians who as disciples were obedient to Jesus. In either case the result would be to create a sort of "inner circle" of Christians who are more privileged than mere "believers" or average Christians. In context, it seems clear that Jesus' words must be addressed **to all true Christians**, not just some narrower category of believers, because Jesus' sacrificial death, which is his act of love toward his friends (v. 13) applies to all Christians equally (cf. John 13:1).

[Friend of Sinners, Lord of Glory](#)

Lowly, mighty, Brother, King!

Musing o'er Thy wondrous story,

Grateful we Thy praises sing:

Friend to help us, cheer us, save us,

In Whom pow'r and pity blend—

Praise we must the grace which gave us

Jesus Christ, the sinners' Friend.

[Friendship With Jesus](#)

You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. — John 15:14

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-17

Joseph Scriven (1820-1886), writer of the much-loved hymn "[What a Friend we have in Jesus,](#)" knew the pain of heartache and loneliness. His bride-to-be drowned the evening before their wedding. Later a second fiancée died, and again his hopes for marriage were dashed. Yet Christ's friendship sustained him.

Anyone can have that same friendship. About 17 years ago, I came to know John, a recovering addict who at the lowest point in his life met Jesus. He sensed that the Lord was asking him, "Do you want a friend forever?" As John wept over his broken condition, he sobbed, "Yes," and Christ came into his life.

Recently John told me that he urgently needs a liver transplant. "You know, John," I said, "cynical people might say, 'Some friend Jesus has turned out to be, considering your condition.'" John replied, "But I'm not saying that." Then he added, "I certainly don't want to leave my family. But however it goes, Jesus remains my friend."

In John 15:14, Jesus said that we are His friends, suggesting that this is a two-way relationship. But He added one important condition: We must walk obediently with Him. Only then can we testify, "Whatever happens, Jesus remains my friend." By: Joanie Yoder

There is no truer friend than Jesus.

Friends of God - Henry Blackaby

"You are my friends if you do what I command." John 15:14

Have you heard people say, "Jesus is my best friend"? Perhaps you've said it yourself. If, by that, you mean Jesus loves you more than anyone else does, that is true. But have you ever asked yourself, "Does God consider me his friend?" Like any relationship, friendship is a two-way street. It's easy for us to count God as one of our friends, but it is quite another thing for God to look upon us as his friend.

You could simply accept all the gifts Christ has for you without ever considering what you could do for him. You could pray to him and regularly ask him for things that would meet your needs. But if you want to express your friendship to him, Jesus tells you how to know if you are a friend to him. If you do what he says, you are holding up your end of the relationship. Those who follow his commands are more than just his disciples; they are his friends. To be a friend to God, you must have a heart like his. You must be like him in spirit. God takes great delight in those who love what he loves. You may protest, "I am Jesus' friend, but I just don't always do what he says!" Jesus said this isn't what his friends do.

Jesus demonstrated his friendship for you on the cross, and he continues to confirm it daily. Ask him today what he wants you to do to show your friendship to him. (BORROW [The Experience](#))

C H Spurgeon - The friends of Jesus (FULL SERMON [The Friends of Jesus](#))

'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' John 15:14

*It is the highest honour in the world
to be called the friend of Christ.*

It is the highest honour in the world to be called the friend of Christ. There is no title surely that excels in dignity that which was worn by Abraham, who 'was called the Friend of God.' Lord Brooke was so delighted with the friendship of Sir Philip Sydney that he ordered to be engraved upon his tomb nothing but this, 'Here lies the friend of Sir Philip Sydney.' There is beauty in such a feeling, but yet it is a small matter compared with being able to say, 'Here lives a friend of Christ.' O wondrous condescension that he should call me 'friend.' If I am indeed a true believer, not only is he my friend, without which I could have no hope here or hereafter, but he has in the abounding of his grace been pleased to regard me as his friend, and write me down in the honoured list of intimates who are permitted to speak familiarly with him, as those do between whom there are no secrets, for their hearts are told out to him while he hides nothing from them, but says, 'If it were not so, I would have told you.' Beloved, in what a light this sets obedience to Christ's commandments. The doctrine of our text transfigures obedience, and makes it the joy and glory of life. How precious it is, for it is a better seal to friendship than the possession of the largest gifts and influence. Christ does not say, 'Ye are my friends, if ye rise to a position of respectability among men, or honour in the church.' No, however poor you may be, and those to whom he spoke these words were very poor, he says, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' Obedience is better than wealth and better than rank. Jesus values his friends, not by what they have, or what they wear, but by what they do.

Interesting background on friend in the ancient world - Article in Themelios - '[I Call You Friends': Jesus as Patron in John 15](#)' by Daniel K. Eng

ABSTRACT - This article proposes that John 15:13–16 draws on the language of Roman patronage, which impacts the understanding of Jesus's sayings regarding friends. We will suggest that φίλος conveys a regent obedient to a royal patron. Thus, the role of Jesus's friend is one of subordination, not equality. After an introduction to patronage, this article makes the case that Jesus portrays himself as the greatest patron. First, John's farewell discourse points to the disciples being subordinates. Second, Jesus makes a contrast between slaves and friends, which is consistent with many patronal relationships. Third, Jesus describes himself as a broker, mediating benefit from the Father. Fourth, inscriptions and provincial coinage contained terms like ΦΙΛΟΚΑΙΣΑΡ (friend of Caesar), referring to regents of the emperor. Patronage best explains the saying, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends (15:13)." Jesus's ultimate sacrifice for subordinates makes his patronage greater than Caesar's. ([FULL ARTICLE](#))

Two-Way Street

“You are my friends if you do what I command.” John 15:14

Ever had a one-way friendship? You know the drill—people who always need a favor but never give anything in return. Every time they come close, you can almost hear that sucking sound as they bring a new set of demands and needs. In these kinds of friendships, there is clearly something missing if you’re looking for the joy of shared friendship.

I’ve often wondered if God ever feels that way about us with our constant barrage of questions, problems, and prayer requests. Of course, He wants us to cast all our cares on Him (1 Peter 5:7), and thankfully He stands ready and willing to help (Hebrews 4:16). But if we aspire to be a friend of God, we need to recognize that true friendship with God is a reciprocal deal.

When Jesus talked about friendship, He told the disciples, “You are my friends if you do what I command” (John 15:14). They probably had a hard time getting past the shock of the first part, “You are my friends . . .” Any good Jew would have known that Abraham and Moses were the only two people in the Old Testament to have been called a “friend” of God. What a distinct privilege! But notice the second part, “if you do what I command.” Jesus made it clear that His true friends would be those who would show their allegiance to Him by doing what He told them to do: “Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

Jesus proved His friendship when He “laid down His life” for us. Now the question is, what will we do for Him? Although we can never out-give Him or come close to repaying Him, every day we have opportunities to display our friendship with Him when we extend kindness to someone, forgive an offender, and show compassion to the poor and the oppressed.

So, welcome to the privilege of being God’s friend—and the privilege of proving it. After all, true friendship goes both ways!

YOUR JOURNEY...

- In what ways has Jesus proved His friendship toward you? Make a list of things that come to mind, and look for other expressions of His friendship as you go through your day.
- Evaluate your friendship with God. Is it a fair-weather friendship with a few perks thrown in? Or do you feel that it is a privilege and a priority? Be honest!
- How can you express your friendship to Jesus? Are there some habits or routines in your life that need to change in order to prioritize this relationship?

Father and Friend

“You are my friends if you do what I command.” John 15:14

A short clip on the evening news recently featured a suburban high school’s attempt to address the spiraling epidemic of teenage drinking. The reporter attended a parents’ forum at the school and then spotlighted reactions from the parents after the session. One mother had it right when she said, “I was reminded that I cannot be my child’s friend right now. I have to be my child’s parent. One day we will be friends, but for now, I’ve got to be the parent.”

Ever since I heard that, her comment has been Velcroed to my brain. Not just in terms of parenting, but in terms of our relationship with God. Quite frankly, most of us would rather think of God as our friend rather than our parent. Thinking of Him as our buddy, or as the one who “has our back,” has a nice ring to it. And there’s nothing wrong with that perspective. He actually welcomes us to a friendship with Him. In John 15:14, He says, “You are my friends if you do what I command.” But it’s more than just friendship; it’s the obedience part as well.

In fact, it’s not until we understand and appreciate the parental authority of God the Father in our lives by heeding His instruction and seeking to align our ways with His, that we will ever understand the true joy of being His friend.

But we need to be careful here. Even our thoughts about God as Father can be a little out of whack. We like the idea of a benevolent Father who supplies our needs, who protects us, and who loves to give us good gifts. And while all those things are true, let’s not forget that it’s the parenting of God that puts protective boundaries in place through His law. It’s the gracious parenthood of God that provides warnings along the way when we choose to turn away from God’s commands. Then, when necessary, it’s His loving discipline that reproves and corrects us—even painfully, if necessary—to draw us back to Him and to His good and perfect will.

Let’s face it, no one really likes discipline. We don’t want to be corrected. It’s not pleasant. But where would we be without it? Most of us, when we look back across the landscape of our lives can see numerous times when discipline was necessary to get us back on the right track. As the writer of Hebrews advised: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when

he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves Endure hardship as discipline” (Hebrews 12:5-7). But here’s the good news: “Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it” (Hebrews 12:11).

Just as parents look forward to the day when the reproof, correction, and discipline of parenting give way to companionship and friendship with their kids, it’s no different with our heavenly Father. Our humble response to His correction and discipline will allow us to enjoy more and more of His friendship. So the question is: When God thinks of you, does He say, “I look forward to the day when I can be her friend, but for now I have to be her parent”—or, have you matured to the point where you are enjoying God as your friend? If I hear Jesus correctly, glad and grateful obedience is the key!

YOUR JOURNEY...

- Do you really understand and order your life around the truth that God is your Father, or are you more enamored with the idea of being His friend?
- According to John 15:14, what would it take for you to be His friend?
- What are we commanded to do in Hebrews 12:7? Is there a “hardship” in your life right now that just might be a measure of divine discipline? Of course, not all hardships fall into this category, but don’t be too quick to rule it out!
- In what ways have you experienced discipline and correction from your heavenly Father? How has it produced a “harvest of righteousness and peace” in your life?

The Marks of Friendship

You are my friends if you do what I command. John 15:14

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 15:9–17

As a little boy growing up in Ghana, I enjoyed holding my father’s hand and walking with him in crowded places. He was both my father and my friend, for holding hands in my culture is a mark of true friendship. Walking along, we would talk about a variety of subjects. Whenever I felt lonely, I found consolation with my father. How I valued our companionship!

The Lord Jesus called His followers friends, and He showed them the marks of His friendship. “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you,” He said (John 15:9), even laying down His life for them (v. 13). He showed them His kingdom business (v. 15). He taught them everything God had given Him (v. 15). And He gave them opportunity to share in His mission (v. 16).

As our Companion for life, Jesus walks with us. He listens to our heartaches and our desires. When we’re lonely and downhearted, our Friend Jesus keeps company with us.

And our companionship with Jesus is tighter when we love each other and obey His commands (vv. 10, 17). As we obey His commands, we will bear “fruit that will last” (v. 16).

Walking through the crowded alleys and dangerous roadways of our troubled world, we can count on the Lord’s companionship. It’s a mark of His friendship. By: Lawrence Darmani (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

What does it mean for you to be a friend of Jesus? How has He revealed His presence to you?

Heavenly Father, our friends will fail us, and we will fail them. But You never fail, and You’ve promised to be with us “to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). Help us show our gratitude by serving You faithfully today.

Seeing Well

You are my friends if you do what I command. John 15:14

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 15:12–17

Raleigh looks like a powerful dog—he is large and muscular and has a thick coat of fur. And he weighs over 100 pounds! Despite his appearance, Raleigh connects well with people. His owner takes him to nursing homes and hospitals to bring people a smile.

Once, a four-year-old girl spotted Raleigh across a room. She wanted to pet him, but was afraid to get close. Eventually, her curiosity overcame her sense of caution and she spent several minutes talking to him and petting him. She discovered that he is a gentle creature, even though he is powerful.

The combination of these qualities reminds me of what we read about Jesus in the New Testament. Jesus was approachable—He

welcomed little children (Matt. 19:13–15). He was kind to an adulterous woman in a desperate situation (John 8:1–11). Compassion motivated Him to teach crowds (Mark 6:34). At the same time, Jesus's power was astounding. Heads turned and jaws dropped as He subdued demons, calmed violent storms, and resurrected dead people! (Mark 1:21–34; 4:35–41; John 11).

The way we see Jesus determines how we relate to Him. If we focus only on His power, we may treat Him with the detached worship we'd give a comic book superhero. Yet, if we overemphasize His kindness, we risk treating Him too casually. The truth is that Jesus is both at once—great enough to deserve our obedience yet humble enough to call us friends. By: Jennifer Benson Schuldt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Jesus, thank You for the privilege of knowing You. I acknowledge Your gentle power. I worship You as the Son of God—full of grace and glory.

What we think of Jesus shows in how we relate with Him.

[Friend Or Foe?](#)

You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. — John 15:14

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-15

Dick Sheppard served as a chaplain in the British army during World War I. One night he was lying in the dense blackness of no man's land when he heard footsteps approaching. Unable to see who it might be, he was tempted to cry out, "Friend or foe?"

Years later, on another dark night back in his homeland, Dick remembered that experience as he gazed up into the sky and wondered about the God of the universe. Again he felt like calling out, "Friend or foe?"

Often in the blackness of some bewildering trial, unable to discern God's purposes, we are tempted to question His goodness. Some even wonder whether there is a God; and if there is, whether He cares for us.

We who believe the Bible know that the almighty, eternal Creator has revealed Himself as a loving Father, and that He infinitely cares for us. And through His Son, He has shown Himself to be a Friend of sinners (Mt. 11:19). When in faith anyone accepts the sin-atonement sacrifice of Jesus, that person receives the promise that he will never be forsaken by God (Heb. 13:5). What a privilege to know in our darkest moment that when we cry out, "Friend or foe?" Jesus answers, "I am your ever-present Friend!" By: Vernon Grounds (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Friendship with Jesus,
Fellowship divine;
O what blessed, sweet communion—
Jesus is a Friend of mine.
—Ludgate

If Christ is your friend, you need not fear.

F B Meyer - Ye are my friends.

*Why do you not make more
of your transcendent privileges?*

Oh! Friends of God, why do you not make more of your transcendent privileges? Why do you not talk to Him about all that wearies and worries you, as freely as Abraham did, telling Him about your Ishmaels, your Lots, and His dealings? Why do you not fall on your faces while God talks with you? Life should be one long talk between God and us. No day should close without our talking over its history with our patient, loving Lord: entering into His confessional; relieving our hearts of half their sorrow, and all their bitterness, in the act of telling Him all. And if only we get low enough, and be still enough, we shall hear His accents sweet and thrilling, soft and low, opening depths which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard; but which He has prepared for those who love and wait for Him.

[Who's In The Front Seat?](#)

You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. — John 15:14

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-17

When riding on a tandem bike, the person in front is in charge. He does the steering and usually sets the pace. The rider in the

second seat helps to pedal.

I heard about a believer in Christ named Chuck who loves tandem biking with his wife or son. He's a dynamic business executive, a man of action and decision.

Although Chuck had grown up in the church, he was holding back from committing certain aspects of his life to the Lord. He always had to be in control. But the consequences of his stubborn pride and self-sufficiency were making his life miserable. His relationships with his business partners, with his family, and with God were breaking down.

One morning, unable to take it any longer, he went on a solitary bike ride to think things through. He was gone so long that his wife began to worry. When he returned, his face was tear-stained but he was smiling. He told his wife, "I put God on the front seat this morning."

Christ's command to us is this: "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you" (Jn. 15:14). Such obedience requires total commitment, holding nothing back from the Lord. It means letting Him take the front seat. By: David C. Egnor (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Prayer

Lord, so often I want to steer my own life. Help me to yield everything to You, to do whatever You command. Enable me to love others as You have loved me. Amen.

Jesus gave His all for me—how can I give Him less?

Friending

You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. — John 15:14

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-17

The social networking Web site Facebook.com was launched in 2004 as a way for college students to connect with each other online. It is now open to people of all ages, and currently (2011) there are an estimated 500 million users. Each user has an individual page with photos and personal details that can be viewed by "friends." To "friend" a person means opening the door to communication and information about who you are, where you go, and what you do. Facebook friendships may be casual or committed, but each one is "by invitation only."

Just before Jesus was crucified, He told His disciples: "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:14-15).

Unselfishness, oneness of purpose, and confident trust are the hallmarks of true friendship, especially in our relationship with the Lord. Christ has taken the initiative by giving His life for us and inviting us to know and follow Him.

Have we responded to the Lord Jesus' invitation of friendship by opening our hearts to Him with nothing held back? By: David C. McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Friendship with Jesus, Fellowship divine;

O what blessed, sweet communion—

Jesus is a Friend of mine.

—Ludgate

Jesus longs to be our Friend.

John 15:15 "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you."

- **I call:** John 15:20 12:26 13:16 20:17 Ga 4:6 Phm 1:16 Jas 1:1 2Pe 1:1 Jude 1:1 Rev 1:1
- **friends:** Jas 2:23
- **all:** John 4:19 17:6-8,26 Ge 18:17-19 2Ki 6:8-12 Ps 25:14 Am 3:7 Mt 13:11 Lu 10:23 Ac 20:27 Ro 16:25,26 1Co 2:9-12 Eph 1:9 3:5 Col 1:26 1Pe 1:11
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE BENEFITS OF BEING A FRIEND OF JESUS

No (ouketi - absolutely no) **longer do I call you slaves** ([doulos](#)), **for the slave** ([doulos](#) in the Roman world) **does not know** ([eido](#)) **what his master** ([kurios](#)) **is doing** - This is an interesting statement by Jesus because on one hand he says He no longer calls His disciples **slaves**, but on the other hand we know that as His disciples we are His slaves. Why are we His **slaves**? Because He has purchased us off from the slave market, where we were slaves to our old master [Sin](#), having redeemed us and having made us His very own possession ([See Scriptures below](#)). He is now our Master (our Lord - [kurios](#)) and we are His loving **slaves**. And yet He does not call us **slaves** as He says here.

So what is Jesus saying? There are those who are **slaves** of sinful men in the fallen world and they were treated as mere [chattel](#), objects that were scorned, used and abused. But not so with **slaves** of Jesus. Yes, we are His **slaves**, but here He says that He will treat us like His **friends**. ([See insight by Barclay below](#)) How do we know? He explains that the slaves in the world do not **know** what their **master is doing**, and uses the verb for **know** ([eido](#)) which describes an internal knowledge which is beyond a shadow of a doubt (ultimately knowledge, a type of knowledge that can only be given from an outside Source, e.g., the Holy Spirit). But as Jesus goes on to explain in the next clause, we as His slave/friend are privileged to **know**, but there He uses a different verb for **know** ([see below](#)).

But (term of contrast) **I have called you friends** ([philos](#)), **for** (term of explanation - what's Jesus explaining?) **all things** (HOW MANY?) **that I have heard** ([akouo](#)) **from My Father** ([pater](#)) **I have made known** ([gnorizo](#)) **to you** - Yes we are Jesus' slaves but one of the blessings of His bringing us into the New Covenant in His blood is that we now are His **friends** by that covenant. In ancient times "friend" was a word related to those entering into a covenant. For more insight into the wonderful concept of **friend** as a feature of being in **covenant** with another person see my notes on **Friend as a Covenant Term**.

Spurgeon - The law made man do this and that, but it communicated very little of the secret counsels of God; but there is a holy familiarity between Christ and his people, a sacred confidence which Christ has manifested towards us in revealing the very heart of God to us, and therefore we are put upon a very high standing, not as servants now, but as friends. O friends of Christ, show yourselves friendly by your entire obedience to his gracious will! ([Expositions in John](#))

See cross references on **heard from My Father** - Jn 3:32; Jn 8:26,40; Jn 12:49; Jn 15:15.

Bask in the blessing of His friendship.

-- Joseph Stowell

It is notable that the verb ([gnorizo](#)) Jesus uses here for what is **made known** to His **friends** is a verb used especially of something unknowable by **natural means** but communicated by **divine initiative** (cf Eph 1:9+). This promise is worth meditating upon as it is an almost incomprehensible blessing that disciples, as **friends** of the King of kings, now have privileged access to **all things** the Father has made known to His Son! I am reminded of Romans 5:2+ which says that we as His disciples "have obtained our **introduction** ([prosagoge](#) = a means of admission into the presence of a person in high position!!!) by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

It is notable that as we walk through John, we observe a progression in intimacy between the Lord and His disciples from slaves (Jn 13:13,16), to friends (Jn 15:15) and finally to brothers (Jn 20:17).

[My Savior, My Almighty Friend](#)

My Savior and Almighty Friend

When I begin to praise

It seems Thy mercies have no end!

I'm overwhelmed by grace.

-- Isaac Watts

THOUGHT - In light of the infinite grace of such a dear Friend, why are we so prone to wander and seek the leeks and garlic of this fallen world?

*Jesus gave us (SLAVES) this intimacy with God,
so that he is no longer a distant stranger but our close friend*

[William Barclay](#) gives us insight into why **disciples**, who are **slaves** of Christ, could paradoxically also be called **friends**. - [Doulos](#), the slave, the servant of God, was no title of shame; it was a title of the highest honour. Moses was the [doulos](#) of God (Deuteronomy 34:5); so was Joshua (Joshua 24:29); so was David (Psalm 89:20) (**ED**: [SEE LIST BELOW](#)). It is a title which Paul counted it an

honour to use (Titus 1:1); and so did James (James 1:1). The greatest men in the past had been proud to be called the *douloi*, the slaves of God. And Jesus says: 'I have something greater for you yet: you are no longer slaves; you are friends.' Christ offers an intimacy with God which not even the greatest men and women knew before He came into the world. The idea of being the **friend of God** also has a background. Abraham was the friend of God (Isaiah 41:8). In Wisdom 7:27, Wisdom is said to make people the friends of God. **But this phrase is lit up by a custom practised at the courts both of the Roman emperors and of kings in the middle east.** At these courts, there was a very select group called the **friends** of the king, or the **friends** of the emperor. At all times, they had access to the king; they even had the right to come to his bedchamber at the beginning of the day. He talked to them before he talked to his generals, his rulers and his statesmen. The **friends** of the king were those who had the closest and the most intimate connection with him. Jesus called us to be his **friends** and the **friends** of God. That is a tremendous offer. It means that no longer do we need to gaze longingly at God from afar; we are not like **slaves who have no right whatsoever to enter into the presence of the master**; we are not like a crowd whose only glimpse of the king is in the passing on some state occasion. Jesus gave us this intimacy with God, so that he is no longer a distant stranger but our close friend.

[Merrill Tenney](#) adds that "The friend is a confidant who shares the knowledge of his superior's purpose and voluntarily adopts it as his own."

Lowell Johnson - It is one thing for me to sing, "What A Friend I Have in Jesus." It is quite another when Jesus says that He has a friend in me. There's a vast difference between the two! -When Jesus calls us His friend, it confers upon us the highest conceivable honor, that such a Lord as He, so infinitely superior to us, should condescend to enter into terms of friendship with us. -There cannot be friendship if it is all on one side. Friendship is a reciprocal thing. The one heart must be as the other heart, or else there is no friendship. -Jesus and I are friends because we have a mutual love for each other. Two friends value each other. Friends not only have a mutual love for one another, but friends must have a harmony of thought. What Jesus loves, we love; What Jesus hates, we hate; What Jesus seeks, we seek; What Jesus shuns, we shun. This is true when there is but one heart in two bodies. Christ's object is His Father's glory. That is to be our object, too. His focus is to seek and to save the lost. That is to be our focus, too. -Jesus loves truth, holiness, righteousness, and harmony. We must love those same things.

[My Jesus I love Thee; I know Thou are Mine;](#)

For Thee all the follies of sin I resign.

Slaves (1401) **doulos**; **doulos** from **deo** = to bind) was an individual bound to another in servitude and conveys the idea of the slave's close, binding ties with his master, belonging to him, obligated to and desiring to do his will and in a permanent relation of servitude. In sum, the will of the **doulos** is consumed in the will of the master. A slave is one who surrendered wholly to another's will and thus devoted to another to the disregard of his own interest. Paul and Timothy were not their own but had been bought with the price of the blood of Christ. They were now the property of our Lord Jesus Christ and were His slaves exclusively. No man can serve two masters (Mt 6:24+). Paul and Timothy had been slaves of Sin (see note on "[the Sin](#)") by their birth into Adam's likeness, but now they are slaves of Christ by their new, second birth. They had no will of their own, no business of their own, no time of their own and were acting for their Master, Christ; dependent upon Him and obedient to Him.

In the Greek culture **doulos** usually referred to the involuntary, permanent service of a slave, but the use in the epistles of Paul and Peter elevates the meaning of **doulos** to the Hebrew sense which describes a servant who willingly commits himself to serve a master he loves and respects (cp Ex 21:5, 6+ Dt 15:12-16+). By Roman times, slavery was so extensive that in the early Christian period one out of every two people was a slave! From at least 3000 BC captives in war were the primary source of slaves.

Doulos speaks of submission to one's master. The **doulos** had no life of his own, no will of his own, no purpose of his own and no plan of his own. All was subject to his master. The slave's every thought, breath, and effort was subject to the will of his master. In sum, the picture of a **bondservant** is one who is absolutely surrendered and totally devoted to his master. What a picture of Paul and Timothy's relation to their Lord! What an example for all believers of every age to emulate!

This word provides an incredible word picture of those who are permanently bound in servitude to the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because He bought them with a price to be His own possession (cf 1Cor 6:20+, Acts 20:28+, Gal 3:13+, Heb 9:12+, 1Pe 1:18+, Re 5:9+, Titus 2:14+, 1Pe 2:9+).

DOULOS IN JOHN'S GOSPEL - Jn. 4:51; Jn. 8:34; Jn. 8:35; Jn. 13:16; Jn. 15:15; Jn. 15:20; Jn. 18:10; Jn. 18:18; Jn. 18:26;

Summary of a doulos...

- Was owned by and totally possessed by his master.
- Existed for his master and no other reason.
- Had no personal rights.

- Was at the master's disposal "24/7".
- Had no will of his own but was completely subservient to the master

Paradoxically a bondservant of the Most High God is one of the most privileged, noblest professions in the world. Little wonder that notable men of God in the have always been called the servants of God. The list of names includes:

- **Moses** (Dt 34:5+ Ps 105:26 Mal 4:4)
- **Joshua** (Josh 24:29+)
- **David** (2Sa 3:18+ Ps 78:70)
- **Paul** (Ro 1:1+; Phil 1:1; Titus 1:1+)
- **Peter** (2Pe 1:1+)
- **James** (James 1:1+)
- **Jude** (Jude 1:1)
- **Prophets** (Amos 3:7; Jer 7:25).
- **Ideally believers** (Acts 2:18+; 1Co 7:22+; Ep 6:6+; Col 4:12+; 2Ti 2:24+).

Made known (1107) (**gnorizo** from **ginosko** = acquire information by whatever means but often with the implication of personal involvement or experience) means to cause information to be known by someone (make known, reveal, point out, explain), communicating things which were before unknown or reasserting things already known (Jn 15:15, Acts 7:13). To make clear. To "certify" (Gal 1:11KJV). As the result of consideration means to know, to possess information about, to know about, to have knowledge of , to be acquainted with (Php 1:22). **Gnorizo** is used especially of something unknowable by natural means but communicated by divine initiative (Eph 1:9). **Zodhiates** - Spoken of a teacher who unfolds divine things, to announce, declare, proclaim (John 15:15; 17:26; Rom. 16:26; Eph. 1:9; 6:19; 2 Pet. 1:16; Sept.: Ezek. 20:11). In the sense of to put in mind of, impress upon, confirm (1 Cor. 12:3; 15:1).

Oswald Chambers - The fruitfulness of friendship

I have called you friends. John 15:15.

We never know the joy of self-sacrifice until we abandon in every particular. Self-surrender is the most difficult thing—"I will if ...!" 'Oh well, I suppose I must devote my life to God.' There is none of the joy of self-sacrifice in that.

As soon as we do abandon, the Holy Ghost gives us an intimation of the joy of Jesus. The final aim of self-sacrifice is laying down our lives for our Friend. When the Holy Ghost comes in, the great desire is to lay down the life for Jesus; the thought of sacrifice never touches us because sacrifice is the love passion of the Holy Ghost.

Our Lord is our example in the life of self-sacrifice—"I delight to do Thy will, O My God." He went on with His sacrifice with exuberant joy. Have I ever yielded in absolute submission to Jesus Christ? If Jesus Christ is not the lodestar, there is no benefit in the sacrifice; but when the sacrifice is made with the eyes on Him, slowly and surely the moulding influence begins to tell.

Beware of letting natural affinities hinder your walk in love. One of the most cruel ways of killing natural love is by disdain built on natural affinities. The affinity of the saint is the Lord Jesus. Love for God is not sentimental; to love as God loves is the most practical thing for the saint.

"I have called you friends." It is a friendship based on the new life created in us, which has no affinity with our old life, but only with the life of God. It is unutterably humble, unsulliedly pure, and absolutely devoted to God.

STREAMS IN THE DESERT - "I have called you friends." (John 15:15)

YEARS ago there was an old German professor whose beautiful life was a marvel to his students. Some of them resolved to know the secret of it; so one of their number hid in the study where the old professor spent his evenings.

It was late when the teacher came in. He was very tired, but he sat down and spent an hour with his Bible. Then he bowed his head in secret prayer; and finally closing the Book of books, he said, "Well, Lord Jesus, we're on the same old terms."

To know Him is life's highest attainment; and at all costs, every Christian should strive to be "on the same old terms with Him."

The reality of Jesus comes as a result of secret prayer, and a personal study of the Bible that is devotional and sympathetic. Christ becomes more real to the one who persists in the cultivation of His presence.

Speak thou to Him for He heareth,
And spirit with spirit will meet!
Nearer is He than breathing,
Nearer than hands and feet.
—Maltbie D. Babcock.

QUESTION - [Why did Jesus say, “I have called you friends” in John 15:15?](#)

ANSWER - In John 15:1–17, Jesus illustrates His relationship with believers: He is the [“true vine,”](#) and we are the “branches.” Christ is the center and source of the Christian life. The key to a healthy and productive relationship with Him is abiding in Jesus because, apart from Him, we can do nothing (verses 4–8). Obedience is another vital element to the vibrant love relationship we share with Him (verses 9–12). That obedience stems not from a sense of obligation or servitude but from a bond of friendship: “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you” (verses 13–15).

Christ’s statement, “I have called you friends,” must have deeply moved the disciples since only Abraham and Moses were called God’s friends in Scripture (Exodus 33:11; 2 Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23). Jesus credits the disciples’ promotion to friendship status to their becoming privy to His insider teachings: “A master doesn’t confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me” (John 15:15, NLT).

Disclosing confidential information has been a feature of close friendships since the beginning of time. God shared His previously undisclosed plans with Abraham (Genesis 18:16–22) and spoke privately with Moses face to face (Exodus 33:11). Now, as friends of Jesus Christ, believers have the extraordinary opportunity to get to know God intimately. He takes us into His confidence (Psalm 145:18; James 4:8; Revelation 3:20). As members of His inner circle, the Lord lets us in on the secret mysteries of God (Ephesians 1:9; Romans 16:25). Jesus makes known to us everything He has learned from the Father. Christians receive unrestricted access to the truth, although we are limited by our ability to comprehend it all (John 16:12).

While Jesus is our Lord and Master, and we are His willing servants (Luke 12:35–36; 1 Corinthians 7:22; Colossians 3:23–24; Ephesians 6:6; 1 Peter 2:16), our relationship with Him takes on a different quality than mere Master and slave. A slave or bondservant was expected to obey his master’s orders without explanation. Because Jesus calls us into a loving alliance, we are privileged to partake of His divine revelation (Hebrews 1:1–2; John 1:18; 14:10; 17:6). With “those who fear him,” the Lord holds nothing back (Isaiah 50:4; Psalm 25:14; John 8:31–32; 14:7).

In Jesus, we have the greatest possible friend. He loves us so much that He was willing to lay down His life on the cross to save us (John 3:16; 5:13; Romans 5:7–8). He is the [“Good Shepherd”](#) who “lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). He is “a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24) and a faithful companion who “will never leave [us] nor forsake [us]” (Joshua 1:5). He loves us “to the very end” (John 13:1), which in the original language means He loves us “to love’s fullest extent and uttermost limit.”

Because Jesus said, “I have called you friends,” we ought to treasure that relationship by drawing near to Him every day, spending time in His Word, learning what He wants to teach us about the Father, obeying His commands, abiding in Him, bearing fruit, and doing “the good things he planned for us long ago” (Ephesians 2:10). We have the privilege and honor of being called His friends only because of His grace in choosing us (John 15:16).

James Smith - ARE WE SERVANTS OR FRIENDS?

“Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth, but I have called you friends” (John 15:15).

There are two classes spoken of here, servants and friends. These may represent two classes of Christians, or two different experiences in the Christian life. Those living in the outer and those in the inner court of communion. From these deeply significant words we may learn—

1. That it is a privilege to be a servant, but a greater privilege to be a friend.

A man’s servants may not always be his friends. We may serve the Lord in a way without being happy in His friendship.

2. That servants are hired, but friends are made by voluntary choice.

It is easy to get servants if the hire is very liberal. Friends are not purchased for money. Are we only serving the Lord for the material or social advantage it brings, or are we connected with Him by our own hearty voluntary choice? Servants or friends?

3. The servant knoweth not his master's secret purposes, but his friends do. (ED: NOT ABSOLUTELY TRUE - BECAUSE A TRUSTED SERVANT WAS OFTEN MORE INTIMATE WITH THE KING THAN EVEN FAMILY MEMBERS!)

It is enough for the mere servant to obey, but the friend has the hidden things revealed to him (1 Cor. 2:10). The hireling cannot receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, just because he is an hireling, and so the hidden wisdom cannot be imparted. The friends are wise in Christ, they have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things (Psa. 25:14).

4. The servant works for wages, the friend serves for love.

The love of Christ constrains those who live in the inner circle of His friendship. Those who serve for wages long for the lengthening of the shadow that they may cease their work. They are always glad when the given task is over. It is not so with the friends. They are found constantly saying, "What may I do for thee now?" They live for His Name's honour and His cause's good. To me to live is Christ.

5. The servant suggests obedience, but the friend fellowship. (ED: OF COURSE THE QUICKEST WAY TO BREAK FELLOWSHIP IS TO DISOBEY!)

The Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" (Gen. 18:17). Abraham was more than a servant, he was the "friend of God." Friends will show themselves friendly. If a man love Me he will keep My words. "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." What are ye? Hired servants or loving friends?

NO, NOT ONE! (BORROW [AMAZING GRACE - KENNETH OSBECK - PAGE 76](#))

[\(PLAY THIS GREAT HYMN NO NOT ONE IF YOU NEED TO GET YOUR HEART REJOICING & YOUR FEET TAPPING TODAY!](#) SATISFACTION GUARANTEED!)

Johnson Oatman, Jr., 1856–1922

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends ... (John 15:15)

He became poor that we might become rich (James 2:5).

He was born that we might be born again (John 1:14).

He became a servant that we might become sons (Galatians 4:6, 7).

He had no home that we might have a home in heaven (Matthew 8:20).

He was made sin that we might be made righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21).

He died that we might live (John 5:24, 25).

This is another of our favorite Sunday school songs that extols, in child-like language, our living Lord. It has a typical gospel song character in that it employs a repetitive phrase—"No, not one"—which allows people of all ages and backgrounds to join heartily together in the praise of Christ. Gospel songs such as this can teach even the youngest child the truth of the pre-eminence of our Lord and His nearness in every situation of our lives.

The author, Johnson Oatman, Jr., was an ordained Methodist minister, but he worked most of his life in the insurance business. He wrote numerous gospel hymn texts including "Higher Ground" and "Count Your Blessings."

The composer, George C. Hugg, was an active lay musician-choir director in various churches in the Philadelphia area. He too was active in writing and publishing Sunday school songs during this time.

In times of stress and loneliness, these simple words with their easily sung tune, that many of us first sang in our earliest Sunday school classes, still minister to us today:

[\(PLAY THIS GREAT HYMN NO NOT ONE](#)

There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus, no, not one! no, not one!

None else could heal all your soul's diseases, no, not one! no, not one!

No friend like Him is so high and holy, no, not one! no, not one!

And yet no friend is so meek and lowly, no, not one! no, not one!

There's not an hour that He is not near us, no, not one! no, not one!
No night so dark but His love can cheer us, no, not one! no, not one!
Did ever saint find this Friend forsake him? no, not one! no, not one!
Or sinner find that He would not take him? no, not one! no, not one!

Was e'er a gift like the Savior given? no, not one! no, not one!
Will He refuse us a home in heaven? no, not one! no, not one!

Refrain:

*Jesus knows all about our struggles;
He will guide till the day is done.
There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus,
no, not one! no, not one!*

For Today: Proverbs 18:24; Matthew 11:29; John 8:12; 2 Corinthians 5:1; Revelation 3:20

***When a difficult situation arises,
let the simple, child-like truth of this music minister to your need.***

A Friend He Couldn't Forget John 15:15

When 17th century clergyman Bishop Beveridge was on his deathbed, he could no longer recognize anyone. The man who had been his associate minister for years visited him and inquired, "Bishop, do you know me?" "No, who are you?" said Beveridge. Another person entered who knew him well and received the same response. Finally, one of them said, "Bishop, do you still know the Lord Jesus Christ?" Hearing those words, he brightened. "Oh yes, I've known Him for forty years. He's my dearest Friend!"

It's not unusual for someone who is ill and dying to lapse into a state where most memories seem to be erased. Yet if the Name of Jesus is mentioned, he may perk up and exclaim, "He's my Savior!" I know of a young girl who lay in coma for many months. The doctors said she would never speak again. Yet just before she died, she whispered the entire 23rd Psalm. She still knew the Good Shepherd!

When Jesus said to His disciples, "You are My friends" (Jn 15:14), He was affirming a relationship that would remain strong even in the last flickering moments of our life! As we cultivate that relationship through obedience, we'll find it to be the greatest friendship in all the world! -- Henry Bosch

Christ is the only Friend you will ever find without fault
-- Is He yours?

[How To Treat A Friend](#)

No longer do I call you servants, . . . but I have called you friends. — John 15:15

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-15

Suppose an old acquaintance stops by unexpectedly at your home during breakfast. You offer to take the day off, but he insists that you keep your regular schedule. So you invite him to go with you to work, and he accepts. How would he feel if you then ignored him completely—didn't converse with him, failed to acknowledge his presence at coffeekbreaks and lunch, and neglected to introduce him to anyone? We would all agree—that's no way to treat a friend!

Jesus told His disciples that they were His friends (Jn. 15:15). And we who know Christ as our personal Savior have the assurance that we too are His friends. Do we, however, treat Him as our Friend?

Evaluate your friendship with the Lord by asking yourself these questions: Do I talk with Jesus in prayer throughout the day? Do I take time to read and meditate on His Word? Do I enjoy fellowship with Him? Am I concerned about what He thinks of my activities? Do I introduce Him to others? Do I ignore Him or respect Him? Can others tell that I have a close relationship with Christ?

Let's make certain that each day we give Jesus Christ the consideration He deserves as our Savior, our Master, and our Friend!
By: Richard DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

[Jesus is all the world to me,](#)

And true to him I'll be;

Oh, how could I this friend deny,
When he's so true to me?
Following him I know I'm right,
He watches o'er me day and night;
Following him by day and night,
He's my friend.

Jesus is all the world to me,
I want no better friend;
I trust him now, I'll trust him when
Life's fleeting days shall end:
Beautiful life with such a friend,
Beautiful life that has no end;
Eternal life, eternal joy,
He's my friend.
—Thompson

Christ's friendship calls for our faithfulness.

An Invitation To Friendship

No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends. — John 15:15

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-17

I grew up in a home with lots of wall plaques. One had a quotation by poet Claude Mermet that stands out in my mind: "Friends are like melons; let me tell you why: To find a good one, you must one hundred try!"

Most of us can identify with that. It's hard to find good friends.

I wonder if God ever feels that way about us? Out of all the people in the Old Testament, only one was ever called His friend. In Isaiah 41:8, God says that He chose Jacob, who was an offspring of "Abraham My friend." Pretty exclusive club! So you can imagine how shocking it was for the disciples to hear Jesus say, "No longer do I call you servants, . . . but I have called you friends" (John 15:15).

Better yet, He is saying that to us as well. So, what does friendship with Jesus look like? It starts with commitment. As He said, "You are My friends if you do whatever I command you" (v.14). Then He added the dynamic of communication. He promised to tell us all that the Father has told Him (v.15). Are you listening? And as His friends we begin to bear fruit (v.16), sharing a commonality with Him by reflecting His glory in our attitudes and actions (2 Cor. 3:18).

Jesus welcomes you to the privilege of friendship with Him! Are you His friend? By: Joe Stowell

What a Friend we have in Jesus,

All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
—Scriven

Welcome to the privilege of friendship with God.

A New Friend

I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. —John 15:15

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-17

While flying from Europe back to the US, I found myself sitting next to a little girl who never stopped talking from the moment she sat down. She told me the history of her family and all about her puppy, who was in the hold of the plane. She pointed excitedly to everything around us, "Look at this! Look at that!" I couldn't help but think that 8 hours of this could make for a very long flight!

We chatted for a while until she suddenly got quiet. She pulled her blanket up around her, so I thought maybe she was going to doze

off. I quickly took advantage of the break and reached for the nearest magazine. But before I could open it, I felt a little elbow in my side. I looked down at her, and she threw out her little hand and said, "Hey, Joe, wanna be friends?"

My heart melted. "Sure," I said, "let's be friends."

In the midst of the turmoil of life, when we think all we want is to be left alone, Jesus extends His nail-scarred hand and invites us to be His friends. He says, "I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15). We have a choice: to keep to ourselves, or to open our heart to a friendship of unlimited love and guidance. By: Joe Stowell (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

What a Friend we have in Jesus,

All our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry

Everything to God in prayer.

—Scriven

Jesus longs to be your Friend.

A Mutual Friend

I have called you friends. — John 15:15

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-17

Imagine being a visitor in a foreign land, showing up unannounced at a gathering of people you have never met and who have never heard of you—and then being allowed to address that group just a few minutes later. That can happen only if something breaks down barriers— something like mutual friends.

It happened when I took a missions team to a church service in Discovery Bay, Jamaica. Before we left the US, my friend Dorant Brown, a Jamaican pastor, recommended a church to attend. So when we arrived at the church, and I mentioned Pastor Brown, we were not only welcomed, but I was also asked to speak briefly and our team was asked to sing.

While sharing Dorant's name was vital, I really don't think it was that mutual friend who got us such a warm welcome. I think it was our shared Friend and Savior Jesus who opened our Jamaican friends' hearts to our visit.

Have you experienced a connection with someone you just met when you tell them you too know Jesus? He's a friend who laid down His life for us (John 15:13), and He makes brothers and sisters of all who believe (1 Peter 2:17).

Jesus. Our Savior. Our mutual Friend. He joins hearts around the world under the banner of His love. By: Dave Branon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Join hands, then, brothers of the faith,

Whate'er your race may be;

Who serves my Father as a son

Is surely kin to me.

—Oxenham

Those who are drawn to Christ are drawn to each other.

Time For Friendship

A friend loves at all times. — Proverbs 17:17

Today's Scripture : John 15:12-17

We really can't make more time. There are only 24 hours in a day, and no matter how frantically we try it's impossible to stretch those 24 into 25. So our problem isn't how to increase time but how wisely to use our daily allotment of those 1,440 minutes as they steadily tick away.

Stop, then, and think about this vital issue. Apart from eating, sleeping, doing necessary tasks, and working at income-earning jobs, how are we spending that precious commodity we call time? Whatever else we're doing, are we giving time to relationships?

Well-known author Les Parrott III points out that few things are more conducive to our well-being than investing time in friendships.

Research shows, he reports, that “ignoring friendship not only diminishes your quality of life but could also be a health hazard.” Parrott says that close friendships can reduce the risk of illness.

If investing time in strengthening our friendships is so essential to our well-being, what about our relationship with Jesus? He said to His disciples, “No longer do I call you servants, . . . but I have called you friends” (John 15:15).

If you have trusted Him as Savior, are you devoting time to deepen your relationship with the best of all friends? By: Vernon Grounds (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Our life can be so very busy
That we have no time for friends;
But we must spend more time with Jesus,
For His friendship never ends.
—Fitzhugh

Time is a friend when you use it to strengthen your friendship with Jesus!

His Friends Know

No longer do I call you servants, . . . but I have called you friends. — John 15:15

Today's Scripture : John 15:13-17

Rene Lacoste, the world's top tennis player in the late 1920s, won seven major singles titles during his career, including multiple victories at Wimbledon, the US Open, and the French Open. His friends called him “Le Crocodile,” an apt term for his tenacious play on the court.

Lacoste accepted the nickname and had a tiny crocodile embroidered on his tennis blazer. When he added it to a line of shirts he designed, the symbol caught on. While thousands of people around the world wore “alligator shirts,” the emblem always had a deeper significance for Lacoste's friends who knew its origin and meaning.

The cross, an emblem of Christianity, holds special meaning for every friend of Christ. Whenever we see a cross, it speaks to us of Christ's tenacious determination to do His Father's will by dying for us on Calvary. What a privilege to know Him and be included in His words to His disciples: “No longer do I call you servants, . . . but I have called you friends” (Jn. 15:15).

I can picture a friend of Lacoste seeing the little alligator on someone's shirt, and saying, “I know the story behind that emblem. Lacoste is my friend.” And I can picture a friend of Jesus seeing a cross and doing the same. By: David C. McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

A friend of Jesus! O what bliss

That one, so vile as I,
Should ever have a friend like this
To lead me to the sky!

Refrain:

*Friendship with Jesus, fellowship divine,
O what blessed, sweet communion,
Jesus is a friend of mine!*

A friend when other friend ships cease,
A friend when others fail,
A friend who gives me joy and peace,
A friend who will prevail.

A friend when sickness lays me low,
A friend when death draws near,
A friend as through the vale I go,
A friend to help and cheer.

A friend when life's short race is o'er,
A friend when earth is past,
A friend to meet on Heaven's shore,

A friend when home at last.
—Joseph C Ludgate (1898)

**Because of the cross of Christ,
we can become friends of Christ.**

[You've Got A Friend](#)

[Jesus said,] "I have called you friends." —John 15:15

Today's Scripture & Insight : Psalm 23

One of the ironic consequences of the sweeping growth of social media is that we often find ourselves more personally isolated. One online article warns: "Those who oppose leading one's life primarily or exclusively online claim that virtual friends are not adequate substitutes for real-world friends, and . . . individuals who substitute virtual friends for physical friends become even lonelier and more depressive than before."

Technology aside, all of us battle with seasons of loneliness, wondering if anyone knows, understands, or cares about the burdens we carry or the struggles we face. But followers of Christ have an assurance that brings comfort to our weary hearts. The comforting presence of the Savior is promised in words that are undeniable, for the psalmist David wrote, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me" (Ps. 23:4).

Whether isolated by our own choices, by the cultural trends that surround us, or by the painful losses of life, all who know Christ can rest in the presence of the Shepherd of our hearts. What a friend we have in Jesus! By: Bill Crowder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

I've found a Friend; O such a Friend!
He loved me ere I knew Him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus He bound me to Him.
—Small

Those who know Jesus as their Friend are never alone.

[Genuine Friends](#)

No longer do I call you servants, . . . but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. —John 15:15

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-17

Experts who track the changing vocabulary of the English language chose **unfriend** as the New Oxford American Dictionary Word of the Year for 2009. They defined it as a verb, "to remove someone as a friend on a social networking Web site," such as Facebook. On that site, friends allow each other to access the personal information on their Facebook pages. They may never meet face to face or even exchange greetings online. In our world of fleeting cyber acquaintances, we are beginning to realize that having a true friend means more now than ever before.

When Jesus called His disciples "friends" (John 15:15), He spoke of a unique relationship involving mutual commitment. He was only hours from laying down His life (v.13), and He asked them to show their friendship by keeping His commands (v.14). Most astonishing, perhaps, is Jesus' statement: "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (v.15).

In a genuine friendship, one's faithfulness can shore up the other's in times of discouragement or fear. That is what Jesus is to us—our always faithful, forever Friend. By: David C. McCasland (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

[Hallelujah! What a Savior!](#)

Hallelujah! What a Friend!
Saving, helping, keeping, loving,
He is with me to the end.
—Chapman

The dearest friend on earth is but a mere shadow compared to Jesus.

[He Calls Me Friend](#)

All things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you . . . that you should go and bear fruit. — John 15:15-16

Today's Scripture : John 15:9-17

Someone has defined friendship as “knowing the heart of another and sharing one’s heart with another.” We share our hearts with those we trust, and trust those who care about us. We confide in our friends because we have confidence that they will use the information to help us, not harm us. They in turn confide in us for the same reason.

We often refer to Jesus as our friend because we know that He wants what is best for us. We confide in Him because we trust Him. But have you ever considered that Jesus confides in His people?

Jesus began calling His disciples friends rather than servants because He had entrusted them with everything He had heard from His Father (John 15:15). Jesus trusted the disciples to use the information for the good of His Father’s kingdom.

Although we know that Jesus is our friend, can we say that we are His friends? Do we listen to Him? Or do we only want Him to listen to us? Do we want to know what’s on His heart? Or do we only want to tell Him what’s on ours? To be a friend of Jesus, we need to listen to what He wants us to know and then use the information to bring others into friendship with Him. By: Julie Ackerman Link (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Sweet thought! We have a Friend above,
Our weary, faltering steps to guide,
Who follows with His eye of love
The precious child for whom He died.
—Anon.

Christ’s friendship calls for our faithfulness.

[What Is A Friend?](#)

No longer do I call you servants, . . . but I have called you friends. — John 15:15

Today's Scripture : John 15:15-27

Socrates once asked a simple old man what he was most thankful for. The man replied, “That being such as I am, I have had the friends I have had.”

Some “friends” are fickle. In the book of Proverbs we read, “Wealth makes many friends, but the poor is separated from his friend” (19:4). A true friend, however, “loves at all times” (17:17) and “sticks closer than a brother” (18:24).

Our English word friend comes from the same root as the word freedom. A genuine friend sets us free to be who and what we are. We can pour out our doubts and talk freely about the wolves howling at the door of our life.

A faithful friend also affirms our worth. Queen Victoria said of William Gladstone, “When I am with him, I feel I am with one of the most important leaders in the world.” But of Benjamin Disraeli she said, “He makes me feel as if I am one of the most important leaders of the world.”

Christians have an inside track on making and being friends because we are part of one family. Haven’t you felt that family tie while talking with a stranger—only to discover that you had Christ in common? And no wonder—He is the truest Friend anyone can have. By: Haddon W. Robinson (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

A friend accepts us as we are
Yet helps us be what we can be;
A friend affirms us when we're weak—
A friend gives strength to set us free.
—DJD

Our best friends draw us closer to Christ.

HE CALLS YOU “FRIEND”

NO LONGER DO I CALL YOU SLAVES . . . ; BUT I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS, FOR ALL THINGS THAT I HAVE HEARD FROM MY FATHER I HAVE MADE KNOWN TO YOU.—John 15:15 NASB

I don't remember much about my mom's decorating, but I do remember the plaque that hung on our dining room wall. It read, "Friends are like melons; let me tell you why: to find a good one, you must one hundred try." Which may explain why I often heard my dad say, "Joe, the greatest treasure in life is trusted friends."

You really can't beat a good friend. Friends care for you regardless. They are there when you need them. They laugh with you and cry with you. They cover your faults and affirm your strengths. They share secrets and keep your confidences. Life is enriched when friends are close.

All of which makes it an amazing thought to hear that Jesus considers us His friends. As He taught His disciples, "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). His death proved not only that He loves us, but that He loves us as a friend.

The thought that God treats me as His friend stuns my needy heart. To think that He "walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own" gets me through a lot of rough water. That He never leaves me and doesn't forsake me secures my anxious soul (Hebrews 13:5–6). That He has experienced every pain and therefore feels my pain comforts me in distress. That He freely supplies abundant grace and mercy in my time of need fills my staggering spirit with fresh resolve (Hebrews 4:14–16).

What a privilege to sing, "There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus. No not one! No not one! None else could heal all our soul's diseases, No not one! no not one! Jesus knows all about our struggles, He will guide till the day is done; there's not a friend like the lowly Jesus. No not one! No not one!"

What a friend we have in Jesus!

Bask in the blessing of His friendship.

(See Joseph Stowell's [Strength for the Journey: Day By Day With Jesus - Page 25](#))

John 15:16 “You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.

- **did not choose Me:** John 15:19 Jn 6:70 Jn 13:18 Lu 6:13 Ac 1:24 9:15 10:41 22:14 Ro 9:11-16,21 1Jn 4:10,19
- **appointed you:** John 20:21-23 21:15-17 Isa 49:1-3 Jer 1:5-7 Mt 28:18,19 Mk 16:15,16 Lu 24:47-49 Ac 1:8 Ro 1:5 15:15,16 1Co 9:16-18 Ga 1:15 Eph 2:10 Col 1:23 1Ti 2:7 2Ti 1:11 2:2 Tit 1:5
- **bear fruit:** John 15:8 Pr 11:30 Isa 27:6 55:10-13 Mic 5:7 Ro 1:13 15:16-19 1Co 3:6,7 Col 1:6 Jas 3:18
- **your fruit would remain:** Ge 18:18 Ps 71:18 78:4-6 145:4 Zec 1:4-6 Ac 20:25-28 Ro 15:4 1Co 10:11 2Ti 3:15-17 Heb 11:4 1Pe 1:14-21 3:2,15
- **whatever you ask of the Father:** John 15:7 14:13,14 16:23,24 Mt 21:22
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

John 6:70 (CHOSEN NOT ALWAYS RELATED TO ELECTION TO SALVATION) Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not **choose** ([eklego/eklegomai](#)) you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?"

Luke 6:13 (CHOSEN NOT ALWAYS RELATED TO ELECTION TO SALVATION) And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and **chose** ([eklego/eklegomai](#)) twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:

John 13:18 (CHOSEN NOT ALWAYS RELATED TO ELECTION TO SALVATION) "I do not speak of all of you. I know the ones I have **chosen** ([eklego/eklegomai](#)); but (EVEN THOUGH HE HAD CHOSEN JUDAS) it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'HE WHO EATS MY BREAD HAS LIFTED UP HIS HEEL AGAINST ME.'

Ephesians 1:4+ just as He **chose** ([eklego/eklegomai](#)) us in Him before the foundation of the world, that (WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF HIM CHOOSING US?) we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love

WHY GOD CHOSE TO

MAKE SINNERS INTO SAINTS

You did not choose ([eklego/eklegomai](#)) **Me but** (term of contrast - to many this is a shocking, upsetting contrast!) **I chose** ([eklego/eklegomai](#)) **you** - While some might say this choosing is for service, one cannot exclude an allusion to the [doctrine of election](#). Sinful men cannot choose to be saved. As Jesus has clearly stated "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him." (Jn 6:44+, cf Jn 6:65+) **But** (term of contrast) introduces the dramatic change of direction regarding choice. A holy God chooses lost men. Lost men do not choose a holy God!

NET NOTE **You did not choose me, but I chose you** If the disciples are now elevated in status from slaves to friends, they are friends who have been chosen by Jesus, rather than the opposite way round. Again this is true of all Christians, not just the twelve, and the theme that Christians are "chosen" by God appears frequently in other NT texts (e.g., Rom 8:33; Eph 1:4ff.; Col 3:12; and 1 Pet 2:4). Putting this together with the comments on Jn 15:14 one may ask whether the author sees any special significance at all for the twelve. Jesus said in John 6:70 and Jn 13:18 that he chose them, and Jn 15:27 makes clear that Jesus in the immediate context is addressing those who have been with him from the beginning. In the Fourth Gospel the twelve, as the most intimate and most committed followers of Jesus, are presented as the models for all Christians, both in terms of their election and in terms of their mission.

And appointed (commissioned, ordained - cf same idea in Acts 20:28; 1Co 12:28; 2Ti 1:11) **you that** ([hina](#) - purpose of choosing and commissioning) **you would go** (present tense - continually) **and bear** (present tense - continually) **fruit** ([karpos](#)) - Why did Jesus appoint the 11 disciples? Once again we see His emphasis on the importance of bearing fruit, but to bearing He adds going. **Go** and **grow** (bear) is the thought. And both **go** and **bear** are in the present tense calling for this to be the disciple's lifestyle, a lifestyle dependent on the Spirit enabling the going and the bearing.

Notice how this go and grow (bear) commission parallels Jesus' final charge to the disciples in Mt 28:19-20: **"Go** therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **teaching** them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

THOUGHT - Are you going and growing (bearing) fruit, beloved? You need to redeem the short time (Eph 5:16+, Jas 4:14+, Ps 90:12+) you have to share the Gospel and leave the results (fruit bearing) up to the Spirit. But as Romans 10:14-15 asks "How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!" Do you have **beautiful feet** dear doulos of Christ?

NET NOTE The purpose for which the disciples were **appointed** ("commissioned") is to go and bear fruit, fruit that remains. The introduction of the idea of "going" at this point suggests that the fruit is something more than just character qualities in the disciples' own lives, but rather involves fruit in the lives of others, i.e., Christian converts. There is a mission involved (cf. John 4:36). The idea that their fruit is permanent, however, relates back to vv. 7-8, as does the reference to asking the Father in Jesus' name. It appears that as the imagery of the vine and the branches develops, the "fruit" which the branches produce shifts in emphasis from qualities in the disciples' own lives in John 15:2, 4, 5 to the idea of a mission which affects the lives of others in John 15:16. The point of transition would be the reference to fruit in 15:8.

*To be spiritually fruitful,
plant God's Word in your heart.*

and that your fruit ([karpos](#)) **would remain** ([meno](#)) - This is the second promised result of having been chosen and commissioned! Notice that **remain** ([meno](#)) is in the present tense which signifies the fruit **would** continually **remain**. But what does that mean? Does it mean it won't rot or does it mean something else? In other words, what is Jesus saying about the longevity of spiritual **fruit**? He is promising that your supernatural fruit would endure throughout eternity! In other words, Jesus is saying our fruit will accompany us to glory! Hallelujah! Amazing grace!

THOUGHT - Would you like to bear fruit that last forever and ever, amen? You might consider a prayer like this - "O Lord, please enable me to continually abide in the Vine, Christ Jesus, that I might be able by His Spirit to bear fruit for Your glory. In Jesus' Name. Amen"

So that ([hina](#) - term of purpose) **whatever you ask** ([aiteo](#)) **of the Father** ([pater](#)) **in My name** ([onoma](#) - see [note](#)) **He may give to you** - This is not a "genie in a bottle" promise. It is a promise hinged on asking in Jesus' Name. However Jesus' Name added to the end of a prayer is not a magical formula guaranteeing an affirmative reply from God! So what does it mean to ask **in My Name**? One could think of it as asking in Jesus' place. Jesus is not on earth now but He has left us as His slaves and one "job" we are privileged to perform is asking the Father what Jesus Himself would have asked of the Father. And if we are actively, effectively abiding in Him, it is clearly more likely that we would be ask what He would ask of the Father. One way we can test our request is by

asking "Will this request bring glory and honor to our Father?" (Jn 14:13-14+) Another test is "Is my request in accord with the will of God." (1Jn 5:14-15+).

Lowell Johnson on bearing fruit - Many Christians make fruit – bearing more complicated and difficult than it really is. Some have struggled and worked and tried and served and they are discouraged over their lack of fruitfulness and resentful of others who are fruitful. Have you ever seen a fruit tree or a grapevine struggle to produce fruit? **Well, how do you bear fruit?** By abiding. Even though the branch BEARS fruit, it doesn't PRODUCE the fruit. The branches of the vine just abide in the vine, remaining connected to the vine. Permanently. Consistently. Day after week after month after year. They simply rest in their connected position, allowing the sap of the vine to flow freely through them. They exert no effort of their own. The fruit borne on the branch is actually produced by the life-giving sap within. To bear fruit is to abide in Christ and stay connected to Him so completely that the **"Sap of the Holy Spirit"** flows through every part of our being. The **fruit that we bear is actually produced by His Spirit** in you through no conscious effort of your own. **If you and I want to be fruitful, we don't concentrate on fruit bearing, we concentrate on our personal relationship and fellowship with our Lord Jesus.** What is the fruit our Lord wants us to bear?

1. Ro 1:13 – The winning of souls
2. Ro 6:22 – The fruit of holiness
3. Ro 15:26-28 – Financial giving
4. Col 1:10 – Every good work
5. Heb 13:15 – Giving thanks and praise to God with our lips.
6. Gal 5:22-23 – The ultimate and most important fruit is love.

*We cannot bear fruit
without the water of God's Word.*

Choose (1586) **eklego/eklegomai** from **ek** = out, out of, out from + **légo** = select, choose) (see also word study on related word **eklektos**) means literally to select out, single out or choose out of. The idea in **eklego** speaks of the sizable number from which the selection is made. It implies the taking of a smaller number out of a larger. For example, in secular use, Virgil's *Eclogues* (from *eklego*) are short, selected excerpts taken from a larger collection of poems.

ELEGO/EKLEGOMAI - 22x/20v - choose(4), chose(7), chosen(8), made a choice(1), picking(1), select(1).
Mk. 13:20; Lk. 6:13; Lk. 9:35; Lk. 10:42; Lk. 14:7; Jn. 6:70; Jn. 13:18; Jn. 15:16; Jn. 15:19; Acts 1:2; Acts 1:24; Acts 6:5; Acts 13:17; Acts 15:7; Acts 15:22; Acts 15:25; 1 Co. 1:27; 1 Co. 1:28; Eph. 1:4; Jas. 2:5

A H Strong explained it this way - Election and sovereignty are only sources of good. Election is not a decree to destroy, it is a decree to save. When we elect a president, we do not need to hold a second election to determine that the remaining millions shall be non-presidents.

Wuest comments that "The genius of the word has in it the idea of not merely choosing, but that of choosing out from a number. The adjective **eklektos** comes from **eklegomai** and is translated by the words **"chosen"** and **"elect."** The elect are **"the chosen-out ones."** (**Ed:** Cp Greek meaning of the word "church" = **ekklesia** from **ek** = out + **kaleo** = call = "called out ones") Divine election refers therefore to the act of God in which He chooses out certain from among mankind for salvation. **This election does not imply the rejection of the rest**, but is the outcome of the love of God lavished upon those chosen-out. **Cremer** says that "it is unwarranted to give special prominence either to the element of selection from among others, or to that of preference above others. The main import is that of appointment for a certain object or goal." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#)) (Bolding added)

Mal Couch on **chose** - there is no indication of any dislike towards those not chosen. It is not a rejection with disdain. The choice of Levi for the priesthood does not imply anything negative about the other tribes (**ED:** E.g. SEE Dt 18:5+ where same verb **eklegomai** is used and in same tense, voice, and mood as in Eph 1:4+ with God as the subject in both uses!) When speaking of election, the Bible never contrasts it with reprobation. It only ever speaks of the ones who are chosen. It does not speak of those not chosen. ([Galatians & Ephesians](#))

Eklego in Eph 1:4+ means to choose out for oneself, **but not** implying rejection of those not chosen. In the present passage this selection is the act of God by Himself choosing out from among mankind men and women for Himself. The **aurist tense** indicates a completed action by God in the past ("before the foundation of the world"). The **middle voice** is **reflexive** which signifies that God chose us *by Himself* and *for Himself*. In other words it was God's totally independent choice. Only a few translations pick up on this nuance. For example, **Amplified** has "Even as [in His love] He chose us [actually **picked us out for Himself as His own**]" and **Wuest** has "even as He **selected us out for Himself** in Him." The **indicative mood** is the mood of reality. This was an actual occurrence in eternity past.

The real problem is not why He had not chosen some, but why He chose any.

No wonder God is to be praised.

-- Harold Hoehner

Harold Hoehner - In the study of the word “**to choose**” several observations can be made. **First**, in most instances in the OT and NT, as it is here, God is the subject. **Second**, the subject did not choose in a vacuum but in the light of all known options. God chose “us” from the whole human race. **Third**, there is no indication of any dislike towards those not chosen. It is not a rejection with disdain. The choice of Levi for the priesthood does not imply anything negative about the other tribes. Furthermore, nowhere is election contrasted with reprobation. It speaks only of those who are chosen and nothing of those not chosen. **Fourth**, it is in the [middle voice](#), as is in almost every instance, indicating a personal interest in the one chosen. Hence, God chose with great personal interest rather than a random impersonal choice. **Fifth**, the one who is chosen has no legal claim on the one who chooses. In fact, it is clear in Scripture that human beings come short of his glory and do not even seek him (Ro 3:10–11). God did not choose anyone because they were holy and thus had a legal claim to be chosen. On the contrary, all people are sinners and deserve rejection. There was no obligation on God’s part to choose anyone but He freely chose some and this is evidence of His great grace. The point is that if God had not taken the initiative, no one would have His everlasting presence and life. The real problem is not why He had not chosen some, but why He chose any. No wonder God is to be praised....This should comfort the believer, for he chose “us” from among the whole human race. Yet the chosen individuals are united with one another as a new family unit, the church, the body of Christ (2:11–3:13; 4:1–16; cf. Rom 8:29). (SEE [Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#) - **click top result for full page of commentary**)

Related Resources:

- [Unconditional election - is it biblical? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the doctrine of election? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I know if I am one of the elect? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is conditional election? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How are predestination and election connected with foreknowledge?](#)

PRODUCE THEN ASK.

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.—John 15:16, NKJV

God has already given you all that you need to produce, prosper and bear fruit. We produce little but ask for much. Yield fruit before you ask.

In prayer, come with your hands filled with offering to give to the Lord. Cain came with less than his best and displeased God. Making prayer the showcase of your lack never motivates God to give.

Prayer refuses to make lack an excuse for asking. My perspective often tells me I need more. God’s perspective always expects me to produce more. I pray to produce. I produce to invest. I invest or sow in order to see a harvest in God’s kingdom.

Don’t pray for fruit. The fruit is your responsibility. It’s the result of your sowing, tending and harvesting. Ask for the seed that you sow to bring an increase. Man plants and waters but God gives the increase. ([77 Irrefutable Truths of Prayer - Page 67](#))

Andrew Murray - TWENTY-THIRD LESSON “Bear fruit, that the Father may give what ye ask:” or Obedience the Path to Power in Prayer

Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide; THAT WHATSOEVER YE SHALL ASK the Father in my name, He may give it you,—JOHN 15:16.

The fervent effectual prayer of a RIGHTEOUS man availeth much.—JAS. 5:16.

EXCERPT - THE promise of the Father’s giving whatsoever we ask is here once again renewed, in such a connection as to show us to whom it is that such wonderful influence in the council chamber of the Most High is to be granted. “I chose you,” the Master says, “and appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide;” and then He adds, to the end, “that whatsoever ye,” the fruit-bearing ones, “shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you.” This is nothing but the fuller expression of what He had spoken in the words, “If ye abide in me.” He had spoken of the object of this abiding as the bearing “fruit,” “more fruit,” “much fruit:” in this was God to be glorified, and the mark of discipleship seen. No wonder that He now adds, that where the reality of the abiding is seen in fruit abounding and abiding, this would be the qualification for praying so as to obtain what we ask. Entire consecration to the fulfilment of our calling is the condition of effectual prayer, is the key to the

unlimited blessings of Christ's wonderful prayer-promises. ([CLICK FOR FULL DEVOTIONAL](#))

TWENTY-FOURTH LESSON "In my Name;" or, The All-Prevailing Plea

EXCERPT - HITHERTO the disciples had not asked in the Name of Christ, nor had He Himself ever used the expression. The nearest approach is, "met together in my Name." Here in His parting words, He repeats the word unceasingly in connection with those promises of unlimited meaning, "Whatsoever." "Anything," "What ye will," to teach them and us that His Name is our only, but also our all-sufficient plea. The power of prayer and the answer depend on the right use of the Name.

What is a person's name? That word or expression in which the person is called up or represented to us. When I mention or hear a name, it calls up before me the whole man, what I know of him, and also the impression he has made on me. The name of a king includes his honor, his power, his kingdom. His name is the symbol of his power. And so each name of God embodies and represents some part of the glory of the Unseen One. And the Name of Christ is the expression of all He has done and all He is and lives to do as our Mediator. ([CLICK FOR FULL DEVOTIONAL](#))

Robert Morgan - BORROW [FROM THIS VERSE PAGE 280](#)

"Mother, It Is Too Late"

John 15:16

Few missionaries have enjoyed such success as Jonathan and Rosalind Goforth of China. Their ministry swept multitudes into the kingdom and left an army of Christian workers in its wake. Rosalind, however, almost didn't make it to China because of her mother's protests.

I replied quietly, but firmly, "Mother, it is too late; I promised Jonathan Goforth last night to be his wife and go to China!"

Poor Mother! She almost fainted. For six weeks, I stayed with a brother, then came a letter from my sister pleading with me to return, as Mother was sobbing day and night and failing fast.

Reaching home, I was shocked at the change in Mother. She would not speak to me but seemed broken-hearted. My distress was very great. Could it be God's will for me to break my mother's heart? At last one day as I listened to her pacing her bedroom floor, weeping, I could bear the strain no longer and determined to find out God's will. Going down to the parlor where the large family Bible rested on a desk, I stood for a moment crying to the Lord for some word of light. Then I opened the Bible at random, and the first words my eyes lit on were: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit." I knew at once God was speaking His will to me through these words, and in an instant the crushing burden was gone. Running to Mother's room, I begged her to hear what I had to say. Unwillingly she unlocked the door and stood while I told her of my prayer and answer. For a moment she hesitated, then she threw her arms about me, saying, "O my child, I can fight against you, but I dare not fight against God." From that moment till her death, Mother's heart was entirely with me in the life I had chosen.

Jon Courson - [BORROW A Day's Journey](#) PAGE 91-

...That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. John 15:16

If you walked into Costco, made \$100,000 worth of purchases, and then pulled out a check upon which was written at the top 'Jon Courson,' you would be laughed out of the store. But if you walked into that same store with an authorized check from Donald Trump, there would be no problem because the issue isn't how rich you are, but how rich the person is upon whose account you've drawn.

And that's the beautiful thing about prayer. My request isn't based upon how many devotions I've had this week, how many folks I've witnessed to this month, how many hours I've spent in prayer today. No, that's all irrelevant. I draw from the bank of heaven based solely upon the riches of Jesus Christ, who gave me His name to use.

How free your prayer life will be when you understand what it means to use Jesus' name with the Father.

Go to my parents' house on Steeplechase Drive in Moreno Valley, knock on the door and say, 'I'm here. Where's the pool? When's dinner?'

'Pardon me?' they'd say.

Then say you're a close friend of their son Jon, and their response will be, 'Come in! There's the pool; dinner's at 6; and here's a hot

fudge sundae while you're waiting'—all on the basis of your linkage to me.

Approach the Father solely on the basis of your relationship with His Son, and watch prayer become a pleasure and a joy.

Chosen - Henry Blackaby

"You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name." John 15:16

Have you ever been specifically chosen for a special honor or award? Do you remember the thrill of knowing that out of all who could have been selected, you were the one preferred to receive the honor? Often, we hear adopted children tell of the joy they find in knowing they were specially sought out by their adoptive parents.

You may feel that you've not been chosen for anything significant in your life. Well, if you are a Christian, you've been selected to receive the highest honor and blessing possible, you're a child of the King. You are God's child for one reason alone; God chose you. Of all the millions of people who populated the earth—past, present, and future—God noticed you and determined that you should be his. The time came when you realized that God was reaching out to you and you reached back. Now you are his, bought with a price and profoundly valuable to him. As God's chosen child, you have a new purpose—to make a difference in God's kingdom. Jesus referred to this as "bearing fruit that will last." God did not choose you to grant you eternal life and then forget about you. He wants your life to become like Christ's life. He wants you to live forever in an intimate relationship with him, bringing him glory in all that you say and do.

Take time to reflect on the incredible honor that is yours as an adopted child of God. Reflect on whether your life is producing lasting fruit for the glory of the one who has chosen you. (BORROW [The Experience](#))

[A Work In Progress](#)

Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. — 2 Peter 3:18

Today's Scripture & Insight : John 15:9-17

Pablo Casals was considered to be the preeminent cellist of the first half of the 20th century. When he was still playing his cello in the middle of his tenth decade of life, a young reporter asked, "Mr. Casals, you are 95 years old and the greatest cellist that ever lived. Why do you still practice 6 hours a day?"

Mr. Casals answered, "Because I think I'm making progress."

What a great attitude! As believers in Christ, we should never be satisfied to think we have reached some self-proclaimed pinnacle of spiritual success, but rather continue to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). Jesus reminds us in John 15:16 that He chose us to "go and bear fruit." The result of healthy growth is continuing to bear spiritual fruit throughout our lives. Our Lord promises: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit" (v.5).

In a steady and faithful progression to become more and more like the One we love and serve, we can be confident that He who began "a good work" in us will continue it until it is finally finished on the day when He returns (Phil. 1:6). By: Cindy Hess Kasper (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Closer yet I'd cling, my Savior,
You're the all-sufficient Vine;
You alone can make me fruitful,
Blessed source of strength divine.
—Bosch

God's unseen work in our hearts produces fruit in our lives.

[Overflowing Fruit](#)

I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. John 15:16

Today's Scripture & Insight : Galatians 5:16–25

During the spring and summer, I admire the fruit growing in our neighbor's yard. Their cultivated vines climb a shared fence to

produce large bunches of grapes. Branches dotted with purple plums and plump oranges dangle just within our reach.

Although we don't till the soil, plant the seeds, or water and weed the garden, the couple next door shares their bounty with us. They take responsibility for nurturing their crops and allow us to delight in a portion of their harvest.

The produce from the trees and vines on the other side of our fence reminds me of another harvest that benefits me and the people God places in my life. That harvest is the fruit of the Spirit.

Christ-followers are commissioned to claim the benefits of living by the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:16–21). As God's seeds of truth flourish in our hearts, the Spirit produces an increase in our ability to express "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal 5:22–23).

Once we surrender our lives to Jesus, we no longer have to be controlled by our self-centered inclinations (v. 24). Over time, the Holy Spirit can change our thinking, our attitudes, and our actions. As we grow and mature in Christ, we can have the added joy of loving our neighbors by sharing the benefits of His generous harvest. By: Xochitl Dixon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, please cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in our hearts and minds so our neighbors can enjoy Your sweet fragrance in and through our lives.

The fruit of the Spirit changes us
so we can impact the lives of those around us.

John 15:17 This I command you, that you love one another.

- John 15:12 1Pe 2:17 1Jn 3:14-17
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE SAVIOR COMMANDS SELFLESS LOVE

This I command ([entellomai](#)) **you, that you love** (present tense - continually) **one another** - Why would it be so important that the disciples love one another? In order to answer this question, we must read the next verse, which warns the disciples that they will be hated. Their mutual love for one another would strengthen them against the coming hatred from the world. Note that loving **one another** with a sacrificial, unselfish, God-like love is to be the disciple's continual practice. Just try to do this in your own strength beloved! You will fall flat on your face. The only way to live and love like this is by jettisoning self-reliance and learning to rely wholly on the Holy Spirit for His supernatural enabling power!

*Our Lord repeated the command,
for he knew how prone even his disciples would be to disobey it.*
-- C H Spurgeon

Notice the context. Why would Jesus command us to love one another at this point in His discourse? Verse 18 explains why -- because the world will hate us! Brotherly love is encouraging, protecting, assuring. We need each other and especially as we see the world becoming darker and darker (I write in 2024 and America is becoming very, very dark spiritually!)

THOUGHT - This call to brotherly love reminds me of the HBO movie "The Band of Brothers," describing the exploits of soldiers in WWII who needed to rely on each other to survive the incredibly difficult Battle of the Bulge. Beloved, we are in an even greater battle for as Paul says "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph 6:12+) With such an array of invisible demonic hordes coming against us, we need to be a unified spiritual "Band of Brothers" instead of what happens so often in churches - shooting our own wounded!

[It Pays Better](#)

These things I command you, that you love one another. —John 15:17

Today's Scripture : Romans 13:8-10

What kind of lifestyle do you believe in and live? Is it one of focused selfishness, or one of lovingly seeking to meet the needs of others? (Romans 13:8).

One popular and influential novelist of our day espouses a godless philosophy that is totally self-centered. The hero of one of her early novels says, "The word we must never be spoken . . . I see the face of a god, and I raise this god over the earth, . . . who will grant them joy and peace and pride. This god, this one word: I."

What are the results of living entirely for ourselves and not loving our neighbors? Such a lifestyle may bring pride, and according to the author of the quote above, pride is the sum of all the virtues. Yet ruthless self-concern doesn't bring joy, nor does a self-centered lifestyle bring peace. One discerning reviewer made this statement about the selfish novelist: "She seems to be one of the unhappiest persons who ever lived."

God's Word sets forth the precise opposite of such a self-centered philosophy of life. The guiding principle for abundant living is that we love our neighbor as we love ourselves (v.9). What do we experience when we live such a lifestyle? "Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (14:17). A life of love—it definitely pays better! By: Vernon Grounds (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Love is giving for the world's needs,
Love is sharing as the Spirit leads,
Love is caring when the world cries,
Love is compassion with Christlike eyes.
—Brandt

Love is the door through which we pass from selfishness to service.

John 15:18 "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.

- John 15:23-25 Jn 3:20 Jn 7:7 1Ki 22:8 Isa 49:7 53:3 Zec 11:8 Mt 5:10-12 Mt 10:22 Mt 24:9 Mk 13:13 Lu 6:22 Heb 12:2 Jas 4:4 1Jn 3:1,3,13
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Matthew 5:10-12+ "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (WHAT'S HE SAYING HERE? PERSECUTION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS PROVES ONE IS A DISCIPLE HEADED FOR HEAVEN). 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you (NOTE THE QUALIFYING PHRASE) because of Me. 12 **Rejoice and be glad**, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Luke 6:22+ "Blessed are you when men **hate** you, and **ostracize** you, and **insult** you, and **scorn** your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

John 17:14+ "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

1 John 3:13+ **Do not be surprised** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), brethren, if the world hates you.

Romans 8:17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him** so that we may also be glorified with Him.

2 Corinthians 1:5; 7 For just as **the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance** so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. (1:7) and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort.

Philippians 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and **the fellowship of His sufferings**, being conformed to His death;

1 Peter 4:13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. 14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are

blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

WARNING TO DISCIPLES OF THE WORLD'S HATRED

If (SINCE) **the world** ([kosmos](#)) (present tense - continually) **hates** ([miseo](#)) **you** - **If** introduces a first class conditional statement that is true. There are no "if's" regarding the hatred of the world for Jesus followers! It is a fixed hostility. No one wants to be hated and yet here Jesus promises His men that they will be hated (present tense) with continual, [unabated](#) hatred. The **world hates** them in a sense this is a prophetic warning that the world will hate them. Pause for a moment and put yourself in the sandals of the disciples. Imagine what must have gone through their minds when they heard these words! One cannot help but believe that some might have thought "Perhaps I better go back to fishing before this discipleship thing goes too far! I didn't sign up to be hated! That will damage my self-esteem!" Jesus is warning the disciples, because the old saying is true "[Forewarned is forearmed.](#)"

THOUGHT Can you see a principle that evolves from Jesus' warning? Suffering caused by our allegiance to Christ proves we belong to Him rather than to the world. The corollary and critical principle is that if you call yourself a genuine follower of Christ and NEVER experience any of the persecution or hatred your Master received (Jn 15:20), then you need to do a personal inventory to be absolutely certain you abide in Christ and Christ abides in you! Otherwise you might be one of the MANY who will get the shock of their life (actually of their death!) when they cry "Lord, Lord," and Jesus commands them to depart from Him (Mt 7:21,23+) into the eternal darkness and torment of gehenna! Do not be deceived! I was interviewing prospective candidates for membership at my evangelical church and the wife was clearly a genuine believer. But when I asked the husband if he had ever been persecuted for the sake of the Name of Christ, he straightened up and proudly and forcefully stated "Absolutely not!" I am not his judge beloved, but that response and other answers he gave led me to strongly believe he was (at that time) one of the number who would one day in the future cry "Lord, Lord!" I pray he came to see the Light. Amen. (As an aside, soon after this I was removed from the group that interviewed prospective church members!)

You know ([ginosko](#) - present tense - continually know by your experience) **that it has hated** ([miseo](#)) **Me before it hated you** - **Know** is [ginosko](#) which speaks of an experiential knowledge. Some writers take **know** as Jesus giving a command ([present imperative](#)). Disciples will be in good company when (not if) the world hates them. Note that **has hated** is in the **perfect tense** which speaks of enduring, persistent, unabated hatred of Jesus (and His followers). Indeed, this hatred will persist throughout eternity for those who reject His offer of salvation. Imagine this hatred festering and smoldering for all eternity. That alone would be enough to make hell a horrible place!

Why did the **world** hate such a kind, loving, gentle Man? The **world** hated (and still hates) Christ because He "testified of it that the works thereof are evil" (Jn 7:7+), and also because "the whole **world** lies in the power of the evil one" (1Jn 5:19+, 2Co 4:4+) and the devil hates Jesus.

All you have to do is be in a conversation that is a bit "off color" and you are likely to hear our Lord's glorious Name thrown out as a curse word, for the world hates Jesus and the [exclusivism](#) that His beautiful Name stands for (cf Acts 4:12+). Or watch the response when you mention the Name "Jesus Christ" positively in a conversation! The **world** will make it blatantly clear that they hate that Name and they hate those who revere that Name. This will be the experience of every follower of Christ.

Bob Utley - Believers are one in Christ's love and one in Christ's persecution (cf. Ro 8:17; 2Co. 1:5,7; Phil 3:10; 1Pe 4:13). Identification with Christ brings peace, joy, and persecution, even death!

World ([2889](#)) [kosmos](#) related to the verb [kosmeo](#) = to order or adorn, to put in order [Mt 25:7 = "trimmed"], to adorn literally [1Ti 2:9], to adorn figuratively [Titus 2:9+] means essentially something that is well-arranged, that which has order or something arranged harmoniously. **Kosmos** refers to an ordered system or a system where order prevails. As explained below however, **kosmos** as used here in James 4:4 and many places in the NT, takes on a considerably more negative shade of meaning. In this sense **kosmos** is much like the Greek word for **flesh** ([sarx](#)), which can be a neutral word, but which many times in the NT takes on an evil connotation. Kosmos defines the world not as a neutral influence but as an "evil force", the inveterate, incorrigible, intractable, intransigent, irrevocable enemy of God and of every believer. This begs the question "Why would any believer ever desire to befriend or be friends with such a 'ferocious' foe?" **Trench** summarizes the definition of the anti-God world system as "*All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitutes a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale.*"

KOSMOS is a key word in John's writings - Jn. 1:9; Jn. 1:10; Jn. 1:29; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:17; Jn. 3:19; Jn. 4:42;

Jn. 6:14; Jn. 6:33; Jn. 6:51; Jn. 7:4; Jn. 7:7; Jn. 8:12; Jn. 8:23; Jn. 8:26; Jn. 9:5; Jn. 9:39; Jn. 10:36; Jn. 11:9; Jn. 11:27; Jn. 12:19; Jn. 12:25; Jn. 12:31; Jn. 12:46; Jn. 12:47; Jn. 13:1; Jn. 14:17; Jn. 14:19; Jn. 14:22; Jn. 14:27; Jn. 14:30; Jn. 14:31; Jn. 15:18; Jn. 15:19; Jn. 16:8; Jn. 16:11; Jn. 16:20; Jn. 16:21; Jn. 16:28; Jn. 16:33; Jn. 17:5; Jn. 17:6; Jn. 17:9; Jn. 17:11; Jn. 17:13; Jn. 17:14; Jn. 17:15; Jn. 17:16; Jn. 17:18; Jn. 17:21; Jn. 17:23; Jn. 17:24; Jn. 17:25; Jn. 18:20; Jn. 18:36; Jn. 18:37; Jn. 21:25; 1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Jn. 2:15; 1 Jn. 2:16; 1 Jn. 2:17; 1 Jn. 3:1; 1 Jn. 3:13; 1 Jn. 3:17; 1 Jn. 4:1; 1 Jn. 4:3; 1 Jn. 4:4; 1 Jn. 4:5; 1 Jn. 4:9; 1 Jn. 4:14; 1 Jn. 4:17; 1 Jn. 5:4; 1 Jn. 5:5; 1 Jn. 5:19; 2 Jn. 1:7; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 13:8; Rev. 17:8

Kosmos includes the ungodly (unsaved) multitude, the whole mass of men alienated from God and hostile to Him and His Son Jesus Christ (See also [earth dwellers](#), the synonymous term used by John in The Revelation of Jesus Christ - the difference is that these are fixed and not redeemable, thus they are a unique subset in the time of the Revelation.). This meaning describes the system of values, priorities, and beliefs that unbelievers hold that excludes God. (E.g., Just mention the name "Jesus" in a positive sense in a secular setting! You can "feel" the hackles rising up on the back of their necks! Read the following related passages and see if you still want to be "**friends**" with the **world**! - Jn 7:7, 15:18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 17:14, 3:19, 20, Lk 6:26, cp Ro 1:30-note, Ro 8:7, 8-note, 2Ti 3:4-note, 1Jn 3:1-note, 1Jn 4:5, Mt 5:10, 11, 12-note, Mt 10:22, 24:9, Mk 13:13, Lk 6:22). This negative meaning of **kosmos** includes the aggregate of things earthly -- earthly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, etc., which, although empty and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ. (The antidote? Gal 6:14, 1Jn 2:15-note, 1Jn 2:16-note, 1Jn 2:17-note, and remember Mt 16:26, Mk 8:34, 35, 36, Lk 9:23, 24, 25,26) (**See also study** of the related Greek word [aion](#) which is translated age or ages 26x and world or worlds 8x [eg **world** is **aion** in 2Co 4:4; Eph 2:2-note; Ro 12:2-note]).

NIDNTT - SEE PAGE 521 for 6 pages on KOSMO/KOSMEO - The noun kosmos, attested from Homer onwards, denoted originally building and construction (e.g. Homer, Od., 8, 492; Hdt., 3, 2). But more especially it denotes order, both generally (e.g. Homer, //., 2, 214 and often in the phrase kata kosmon, duly, in order) and in a specific sense (e.g. the seating position of the rowers, Od., 13, 76f.; battle array, //., 12, 225; later the regulation of life in human society, the constitution, Plato, Leg., 8, 846d). It also often means ornament and adornment (esp. of women; e.g. Hom. J//., 14, 187; Hes., Works 76; Hdt., 5, 92). In Gk. philosophy (see below, 2) kosmos is the basic term for the world-order, the world-system, the sum total of things preserved by this ordering, the world in the spatial sense, the cosmos, the universe, the earth, and also (in Koine Gk.) the inhabitants of the earth, humanity, the > oikoumené. The verb kosmed, corresponding with the basic meaning of kosmos as order, is used as a technical term, e.g. to marshal an army, to arrange battle formation (Homer, //., 2, 554; Xen. Cyr., 2, 1, 26), and also generally to organize, put in order, and very frequently to adorn (e.g. Hesiod, Works, 72).

The cosmos-concept of Greek philosophy may be seen against the background of the question: How is it possible that, with all the individual things conflicting with one another (heaven and earth; God, men and living beings), the world is not destroyed? The answer was given that they are held together by an all-embracing order (cf. Anaximander, Frag. 9) (**ED: THAT'S PHILOSOPHY WHICH IS ONLY HALF TRUE FOR IT IS CHRIST WHO HOLDS IT ALL TOGETHER!** See Col 1:17+). This world-order is designated by the word kosmos_ which also comes to denote the world in the spatial sense. According to Democritus, man is a microcosm (Frag. 34). This enables him to perceive the order of the world and praises its beauty (Heracl., Frag. 124) and the perfection of its spherical form and circular movement.....

The OT knows of no word for the world corresponding to the Gk. **kosmos**. It calls the universe "heaven and earth", and only in later writings hakkol (lit. the all), the universe (Jer. 10:16; Ps. 103:19; also without the art. (k6/, lit. all), Isa. 44:24; Ps. 8:7). As well as the word, the OT also lacks the Gk. concept of the cosmos. It never regards the world as an independent entity in itself, but always in its relation to God, the Creator (— Creation). It is true that the account of creation in Ge 1-2:4a is interested in cosmology, in that it speaks of the deep and the waters (the primeval flood and primeval darkness), the firmament, the heavenly ocean and the stars. But its statements have the sole intention of witnessing to God as the Lord over everything including chaos. Its objective is clearly the creation of man which stands at the focal point of the statements in Gen. 2:4b — 25. Man's vocation is to recognize his task in the world as accountable to God and to exercise lordship over the creation (1:26, 28; 2:15, 19; cf. Ps. 18). The first account is not concerned (as the second is) to describe an immanent world-order, but rather to express God's lordship over man, the nations of the world and their history.....

In the NT, as in secular Gk. and Hel. Judaism, the noun kosmos denotes the world. The sole exception is 1 Pet. 3:3, where it means adornment. Of the 185 occurrences of the word 78 come in Jn., 24 in the Johannine letters, 47 in the Pauline letters, 14 in the Synoptics and 22 in the rest of the NT writings. This frequent usage

indicates both its theological importance and the area of confrontation. The kosmos-concept demands clarification when the gospel comes into contact with Gk. thought.

Related Resource:

- [An Out-of-this-World Experience A Look at Kosmos in the Johannine Literature](#)
- [See 6 page article on Kosmos in New International Dictionary of NT Theology](#)

Hates (verb) ([3404](#) **miseo** from **misos** = hatred) means to dislike strongly, to have a strong aversion to or to detest, all of these representing expressions of hostility of one person (or group) toward another (Mt 5:43, Lk 6:27, et al). Specifically the hatred can be directed toward God (Lk 1:71). Good hatred in Heb 1:9 (cf use of **miseo** in Lxx of Ps 101:3, Ps 119:104, 113, 128, 163, Ps 139:21-22). The majority of the NT uses of **miseo** convey the literal meaning of animosity towards God, people or particular attitudes. It is notable that except for Lk 1:71, **miseo** is always used by Jesus in the Gospels. The literal meaning of bearing ill will towards another person or persons is found in the majority of texts (e.g., Mt 5:43, 44; 6:24; Lk 1:71; Jn 7: 7; 17:14; Titus 3: 3; 1Jo. 2: 9 ff.; Rev. 17:16). The world's hatred for the people of God is expressed in Lk 1:71; Jn 7: 7; 15:18; 17:14; 1Jo. 3:13. Mt 10:22; 24:9; Mk 13:13; Lk 21:17 describe suffering hatred for the cause of the Gospel.

Miseo - 40x in 36v - hate(13), hated(12), hateful(1), hates(12), hating(2). - Matt. 5:43; Matt. 6:24; Matt. 10:22; Matt. 24:9; Matt. 24:10; Mk. 13:13; Lk. 1:71; Lk. 6:22; Lk. 6:27; Lk. 14:26; Lk. 16:13; Lk. 19:14; Lk. 21:17; Jn. 3:20; Jn. 7:7; Jn. 12:25; Jn. 15:18; Jn. 15:19; Jn. 15:23; Jn. 15:24; Jn. 15:25; Jn. 17:14; Rom. 7:15; Rom. 9:13; Eph. 5:29; Tit. 3:3; Heb. 1:9; 1 Jn. 2:9; 1 Jn. 2:11; 1 Jn. 3:13; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 4:20; Jude 1:23; Rev. 2:6; Rev. 17:16; Rev. 18:2

AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE . . .

“IF THE WORLD HATES YOU, KEEP IN MIND THAT IT HATED ME FIRST.”—John 15:18

You probably are aware that America has turned a dramatic corner. As a culture we are no longer committed to the Judeo-Christian principles that undergirded our law and society from the beginning. Americans have now moved into a neopagan environment where the values that Christians hold to be nonnegotiable are no longer politically correct. In fact, they are culturally unacceptable. Our views on sexuality that promote abstinence until marriage and the importance of heterosexual relationships are often scorned. Our view of the sacredness of life and resistance to abortion as being morally wrong are dramatically out of step. Claiming that there is truth to which we will be held accountable and a clear set of rights and wrongs makes us sound bigoted and intolerant.

In a very real sense, we are becoming more and more of an underclass in our society. Our convictions are at best discounted and at worst mocked by the prevailing philosophies promoted by the media and other significant influences. Our choices are now clearer than ever before. We will either stay the course of righteousness, looking to Jesus as the highest value of our lives, or we will find our hearts silenced and intimidated by the forces of our day. The history of the church is littered with individual Christians and institutions that sought to remain “culturally relevant” and in the process eroded their distinctiveness in Christ.

Maintaining a thoughtful, balanced, and just posture within a pagan culture is a worthy goal, but there comes a time when standing for truth may invite rejection by a culture whose values are dramatically opposed to the values of God's kingdom. Our Lord warned clearly in John 15:18–20 that if this world rejected Him, His followers would suffer the same fate.

Christ needs followers whose hearts are focused on pleasing Him even if it means rejection by friends and associates. This commitment, held in a spirit of compassion and love, is our only hope for becoming lights in the deepening darkness.

In what ways are you intimidated by the changing values of our culture? Are you willing to embrace Christ's values, regardless of the cost?

The Blessings of Living in a Non-Christian World By Rev. Kevin Riggs

SCRIPTURE: Various, especially John 15:18–21

INTRODUCTION: Now, like no other time in our country's history, it is a great time to be a follower of Jesus Christ. With all the bad news in this fallen world, there is good news. Here are five blessings of living in a non-Christian world:

1. Our Lights Brighten (Matt. 5:14–16). Light shines best in total darkness; are you shining yours?
2. Our Hope Becomes Obvious (1 Pet. 3:15). In the context of so much despair in the world, are you ready to tell people about the hope you have in Christ?
3. Our Opportunities Become Limitless (Acts 2:41, 47). The more our culture rejects God, the more they will

need Him. Are you helping people understand that God alone can meet their needs?

4. Our Christ Becomes Authentic (John 3:14; 12:32). As Mother Theresa said, "You will never know Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you've got." Is Jesus all you have?

5. Our Faith Becomes Genuine (Matt. 24:13). As our world becomes darker, phony believers will disappear in the darkness. Are you staying in the light despite the darkness around you?

CONCLUSION: Praise the Lord for His blessings!

John MacArthur - OPPOSITION TO THE WORLD BRINGS HATRED (BORROW [Strength for Today - page 138](#))

"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." John 15:18–19

◇◇◇

Because they are not part of the world's system, Christians should expect it to hate and oppose them.

If you've been a Christian for a while, you doubtless remember how soon you realized that you were no longer in step with the world's culture. You were no longer comfortable with its philosophy. You no longer had the world's desires and yearnings. You no longer felt good about doing some of the things the world takes for granted. In fact, you even felt constrained to speak out against such things and urge unbelievers to turn from their sins and embrace Christ. All that opposition to worldliness, when added up, can and will result in hatred toward us from people in the world.

In John 15, the Greek word translated "world" (kosmos) refers to the world's system of sin, which is devised by Satan and acted out by sinful people. The Devil and his angels sometimes make it even more difficult for us by subtly presenting their "religion" as if it were true. Such deception can lull us into complacency and leave us spiritually weak when persecution comes.

Because of the world's relentless opposition to God's kingdom, it is crucial that we remember Christ's call to stand for Him in our sinful society. The apostle Paul exhorts us to be "children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" (Phil. 2:15).

If we take Scripture seriously and prayerfully spend time in it daily, we will not be caught off guard when our faith is opposed. Instead, we will be heartened by Jesus' words, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matt. 5:14).

◇◇◇

Suggestions for Prayer: Ask the Lord to strengthen you today and to remind you that even though you are not of the world, you are to be a light to it.

For Further Study: Read the account of John the Baptist's death in Mark 6:14–29. How did John suffer before he was killed? ◇ What character differences do you see between John and Herod?

John 15:18-19 First Century Believers

Those first believers turned to Christ with the full understanding that they were espousing an unpopular cause that could cost them everything. Shortly after Pentecost some were jailed, many lost all their earthly goods, a few were slain, hundreds were 'scattered abroad.' They could have escaped all this by the simple expedient of denying their faith and turning back to the world. This they steadfastly refused to do. To make converts, we are tempted to play down the difficulties and play up the peace of mind and worldly success enjoyed by those who accept Christ. We will never be completely honest with our hearers until we tell them the blunt truth that, as members of a race of moral rebels, they are in a serious jam, and one they will not get out of easily. If they refuse to repent and believe on Christ, they will most surely perish. If they do turn to Him, the same enemies that crucified Him will try to crucify them. -- A. W. Tozer, Source unknown

John 15:19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you."

- were of the world: Lu 6:32 1Jn 4:4,5
- because: John 15:16 17:14-16 Eph 1:4-11 2:2-5 Tit 3:3-7 1Pe 2:9-12 4:3 1Jn 3:12 1Jn 5:19,20 Rev 12:9,17 20:7-9

- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Luke 6:22+ "Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man.

Luke 21:17+ and you will be hated by all because of My name.

DISCIPLES HATED BY WORLD AS ALIENS

If - "If" is a second class conditional sentence which means contrary to fact. This should be translated "if you were of the world, *which you are not*, then the world would love you, but it does not."

You were of the world ([kosmos](#)) ("WHICH YOU ARE NOT"), **the world** ([kosmos](#)) **would love** (phileo) **its own - Of the world** is a descriptive definition of a non-believer, one who is still in the kingdom of darkness (Acts 26:18, Col 1:13) and whose father is still the devil (Jn 8:44). And since the father is the devil and the devil hates Jesus, as the saying goes "Like father, like son!" We should never be surprised that the world hates us.

THOUGHT - Believers are those who now "reside as aliens" (1Pe 1:1), veritable "aliens and strangers" (1Pe 2:11) in this God hating world because "our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself." (Php 3:20-21) In other words, disciples are [short timers](#) ("a person, as a soldier, who has a short period of time left to serve on a tour of duty") on this morally decaying planet, continually fixing their hope on the grace to be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus (1Pe 1:13). **HANG ON BELOVED! IT WON'T BE LONG! [Maranatha!](#)**

But - Term of contrast. Always pause to ponder asking what's the change of direction?

Because (term of explanation) **you are not** (absolutely not) **of the world** ([kosmos](#)), **but** (Term of contrast) **I chose** ([eklego/eklegomai](#) - "elected") **you out of the world** ([kosmos](#)), **because of this the world** ([kosmos](#)) **hates** ([miseo](#)) **you** - One positive feature of the fact that the world hates us is that this is a sign to us that we are the real deal (assuming their hatred is not because we are being obnoxious, etc -- that's another matter!)

The seed of the serpent never will love the seed of the woman.

-- C H Spurgeon

C H Spurgeon - Because ye are not of the world ... therefore the world hateth you.

None of you can be the people of God without provoking envy; and the better you are, the more you will be hated. The ripest fruit is most pecked by the birds, and the blossoms that have been longest on the tree, are the most easily blown down by the wind. But fear not; you have naught to do with what man shall say of you. If God loves you, man will hate you; if God honors you, man will dishonor you. But recollect, could ye wear chains of iron for Christ's sake, ye should wear chains of gold in heaven; could ye have rings of burning iron round your waists, ye should have your brow rimmed with gold in glory; for blessed are ye when men shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for Christ's name's sake; for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.

WHOSE APPLAUSE?

"IF YOU BELONGED TO THE WORLD, IT WOULD LOVE YOU AS ITS OWN." —John 15:19

The impact of Satan's system is coming into full bloom in America. In the past, life here was guided by the laws of Moses and the teachings of Christ. Honesty, integrity, character, purity, generosity, chastity, kindness, and hard work prevailed. Adultery, homosexuality, and abortion were unthinkable. For nearly everyone, divorce was not an option. Over the past four decades, the restraints of our national virtues have been declared out of style, and the absolutes of righteousness are no longer welcome in the public arena.

The trouble for kingdom travelers is that, as people of truth, our presence is a source of reproof. The light is less than welcome in a world that loves darkness. As torchbearers we have been marginalized by a world system that is now in control of American culture. The Creator has been drummed out of education as secular theories of humanism and evolution explain the origin and purpose of life. Music, the media, movies, documentaries, and sitcoms paint Christians as incompetent, bigoted, nerdy, and thoughtless.

Those of us who live under kingdom truth are often mocked and avoided by the world at large, and the pressure to conform creates considerable tension for us.

Fewer things are more unsettling than the realization that our righteousness will inevitably cause us to face moments of rejection, discomfort, and in some parts of the world physical pain and even martyrdom. Yet, this is what it means to identify with Christ: "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20 NASB). And in Matthew 16:24 He warned, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (NASB).

Followers need to make up their minds early on as to whose applause they want to hear. Will it be, as Max Lucado says, the "applause of heaven," or will it be the applause of this fallen, soon-to-be-judged world? What will it be for you?

If faithfulness even in the face of rejection or ridicule is your choice, bow your head and ask Jesus for grace to be a cross-bearer when necessary for the worthy name of Christ. (SEE Joseph Stowell's [Strength for the Journey: Day By Day With Jesus - Page 156](#))

The World's Hatred

Because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. —John 15:19

Today's Scripture : John 15:18-16:4

When high school senior Angela Guidry submitted a copy of her valedictory speech to school administrators, the principal demanded that she leave out one part. It was the sentence that read, "To me the most important thing in your life is not whether you have a good education or a good job, but whether or not you have the Lord in your life."

The situation worsened when the school counselor saw the speech. According to a news report, she "engaged in a tirade of criticism" of Angela in the presence of other students and actually grabbed her arm to keep her from walking away. All the while she continued making derogatory and slanderous remarks about Angela's religious beliefs.

Sometimes believers invite hatred and rejection by presenting the truth in an insensitive manner. That was not the case with the Lord Jesus nor with Angela, and it should never be with us. But sometimes we will encounter hostility no matter how tactful we are. When this occurs, we should respond with gentle words and kind deeds, never with vindictive speech or retaliation (Mt. 5:43-44; Rom. 12:17-21). The gracious response of love is always the best antidote for the world's hatred. By: Herbert Vander Lugt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

I want the love that always sweetly bears
Whate'er my Father's hand may choose to send;
I want the love that patiently endures
The wrongs that come from enemy or friend.
—Anon.

If you're sure of God's approval, you need not fear the world's disapproval.

C H Spurgeon - "I have chosen you out of the world."— John 15:19

Here is distinguishing grace and discriminating regard; for some are made the special objects of divine affection. Do not be afraid to dwell upon this high doctrine of election. When your mind is most heavy and depressed, you will find it to be a bottle of richest cordial. Those who doubt the doctrines of grace, or who cast them into the shade, miss the richest clusters of Eshcol; they lose the wines on the lees well refined, the fat things full of marrow. There is no balm in Gilead comparable to it. If the honey in Jonathan's wood when but touched enlightened the eyes, this is honey which will enlighten your heart to love and learn the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Eat, and fear not a surfeit; live upon this choice dainty, and fear not that it will be too delicate a diet. Meat from the King's table will hurt none of his courtiers. Desire to have your mind enlarged, that you may comprehend more and more the eternal, everlasting, discriminating love of God. When you have mounted as high as election, tarry on its sister mount, the covenant of grace. Covenant engagements are the munitions of stupendous rock behind which we lie entrenched; covenant engagements with the surety, Christ Jesus, are the quiet resting-places of trembling spirits.

"His oath, his covenant, his blood,

Support me in the raging flood;
When every earthly prop gives way,

This still is all my strength and stay."

If Jesus undertook to bring me to glory, and if the Father promised that he would give me to the Son to be a part of the infinite reward of the travail of his soul; then, my soul, till God himself shall be unfaithful, till Jesus shall cease to be the truth, thou art safe. When David danced before the ark, he told Michal that election made him do so. Come, my soul, exult before the God of grace and leap for joy of heart.

John 15:20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

- **word:** John 5:16 Jn 7:32 Jn 8:59 Jn 10:31 Jn 11:57 Jn 13:16 Mt 10:24 Lu 2:34 6:40 Ac 4:27-30 7:52-60 1Th 2:15
- **if they kept:** 1Sa 8:7 Isa 53:1-3 Eze 3:7
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

John 5:16+ For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

John 7:32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him.

John 8:59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

John 10:31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.

THE SLAVE-MASTER PRINCIPLE AND PROPHETIC PROMISES

Remember ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.'** - Jesus had only minutes earlier given a similar declaration saying "Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him." (Jn 13:16+). The context in that saying was a call for the disciples (slaves) to love like their master and be willing to wash the other's feet. Now the context shifts to the world's persecution of their Master which foretold of their coming persecution.

NET NOTE In this statement there is the implication that the disciples would carry on the ministry of Jesus after his departure; they would in their preaching and teaching continue to spread the message which Jesus himself had taught while he was with them. And they would meet with the same response, by and large, that he encountered.

Spurgeon - It ought to be quite sufficient for the servant if he is treated as his Lord was; what higher honour than that could he wish to have? ([Exposition of John](#))

If (SINCE) they persecuted (dioko) Me, they will also persecute (dioko) you - The **IF** here and in the next sentence are both first class conditions and thus assume the following statement is true. Persecute pictures pursuit of a wild animal, like English dogs hunting down a fox. This is a prophetic promise, probably not a promise you will find in a book of God's Promises for Believers (I checked a book like this in my library and there were 5 mentions of verses from John 15, but guess which one was not mentioned? Rhetorical! You guessed it - John 15:20.) The hatred of the world of Jesus is manifest by persecution of His followers.

Bob Utley - Persecution is the norm for followers of Christ in a fallen world (Matt. 5:10-12; John 16:1-3; 17:14; Acts 14:22; Rom. 5:3-4; 8:17; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; 6:3-10; 11:23-30; Phil. 1:29; 1 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 3:12; James 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 4:12-16).

if (SINCE) they kept (tereo) My word (logos), they will keep (tereo) yours also - Jesus balances the negative promise with an encouraging prophetic promise. What's He saying here? Who would keep His word? Those who love Him would keep His word (Jn 14:15)? Jesus is describing believers. The implication is that as they disciples went out sowing seeds of the Gospel, some would persecute them, but others would welcome the word and be saved. This group that receives and responds to the **word** of Jesus is testimony to the authenticity of the Gospel as "the power ([dunamis](#) - the Word of the Gospel has intrinsic power to save!!!) of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Ro 1:16+).

John MacArthur - One research group recently estimated that about 100 million people, who call themselves Christians, are under persecution in the world today – about 100 million. Probably a low figure. The persecution by Islam is the most open persecution

against Christians. It started back in the seventh century and is still going on today in at least 41 Muslim countries. But Christians have not just been the object of Muslim hatred; Christians have been, throughout the whole history of the church, the most hated and the most persecuted people in the world, particularly true Christians. But even nominal Christians in name have been persecuted.

Persecute (1377) **dioko** from **dío** = pursue, prosecute, persecute) means to follow or press hard after, literally to pursue as one does a fleeing enemy. It means to chase, harass, vex and pressure and was used for **chasing down criminals**. **Dioko** speaks of an intensity of effort leading to a pursue with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain. To go after with the desire of obtaining or in some contexts the desire to harm. It gives us the picture of going on the track of something like the hounds on the hunt and pursuing after the fox and implying a continuing effort to overtake, reach, or attain the goal.

To persecute - 30/45 NT uses convey the sense of the intention of doing harm. To hunt down like an animal. To run swiftly after something. To in any way whatever, to harass, trouble, molest. To carry out physical persecution, to harass, to abuse, to treat unjustly. (Mt 5:10, 11, 12, Mt 5:44, Mt 10:23, Lk 21:12, Jn 5:16; 15:20; Acts 7:52; 9:4, 5; 22:4,7, 8; 26:14, 15; Ro 12:14; 1Co 4:12; 15:9; 2Co 4:9; Gal 1:13,23; Gal 4:29; Gal 5:11; Php 3:6; 2Ti 3:12; Passive sense - to be maltreated, suffer persecution on account of something -Gal 6:12. Dioko conveys a sense of urgency and a sense of of intensity of purpose.

Related Resources:

- [WHY DO CHRISTIANS SUFFER?](#) - Bob Utley
-

D L Moody - A general was leading his army to battle. His men asked what he would give them. "Hunger, cold, wounds, and death." They were silent for a time, then threw up their hands and said, "We will go."

[Dare To Be Different](#)

"Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also." John 15:20

My dad was a pastor, so I got stuck with the label known to every pastor's kid: PK. But, much to the congregation's disappointment, the title didn't stop me from being my mischievous little self. I have to tell you, I would like to have a \$5 bill for every time somebody came to me and said, "Little Joe, you're the pastor's son. You should be an example." They wanted me to be different, but they didn't understand. I didn't want to be an example! I was only five—I wanted to have fun with my friends and get into all the mischief they got into.

Nobody wants to be different. We want people to like us, and one of the safest ways to do that is to blend in, to be like them. But following Christ has never been about "blending in." Following Him means to be like Him, to respond to life and relate to people the way He did. Inevitably, there are times when doing that makes you different. Granted, it can be risky and uncomfortable to be different. But that's what being a follower of Jesus is all about—bringing the difference of your King to bear on the territory you've been assigned to: your home, your office, and your friendships.

We need to keep in mind that Jesus never promised that following Him would be a cakewalk. In fact, He made it clear that following Him would often create tension in a world that is going in the opposite direction. Just before His death, He spoke candidly to His disciples: "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.

. . . If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also" (John 15:18, 20).

I'll never forget the story of Abdul Rahman, the Afghani who accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior and faced the outrage of Muslim clerics in the courtrooms of Afghanistan. Although his conversion was considered a capital crime and his life was at risk, his faith stood the test. Right now while we are talking about this, thousands of believers in places like China, the Sudan, and Vietnam are making the point that Jesus is more important than personal peace and comfort.

But for those of us who don't live in life-threatening environments, being a fully committed follower brings its own kinds of trouble. It may be the threat of being cut out of the group and losing a promotion when the boss takes you and your colleagues out to dinner and then takes everyone but you to the strip club for an after-dinner drink. Or when your evolution-promoting biology professor scoffs at your stance on creation and gives you a lower grade on your paper. Forgiving a serious offense may have other fellow travelers thinking that you are the "village idiot." Refusing to enter a gossipy conversation and declining opportunities to speak in unloving ways about others may even cost you something with fellow believers. Yup, sad but true!

Today, you will no doubt have opportunities to be different—to go against the flow. Don't be intimidated. Jesus said, "In this world

you will have trouble.” But then He said, “Take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). What an interesting thought: When I stick with Him through thick and thin, I may feel like I’ve lost, but in reality, I ultimately win!

In retrospect, I can now see how my antics as a PK reflected poorly on my Dad. It’s motivating to remember that our non-Jesus attitudes and actions not only leave us on the losing side but also end up reflecting poorly on the One we love so much.

Go ahead today. Make a difference by daring to be different for Jesus!

YOUR JOURNEY...

- Read John 15:18-27. In what ways have you dared to be different for Christ and felt the tension?
- When was the last time you chose to blend in with the crowd rather than follow Christ? Why did you cave to the pressure? What can you do to stand for Jesus the next time you are in that situation? Making a plan for the next opportunity to follow Jesus is important. Be prepared!
- What does it mean personally for you that Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me”? Check out the whole story in Luke 9:21-26. Be specific, honest, and courageous in your answer.
- When was the last time you realized that in this upside-down world, it is followers who are willing to go into the face of adversity for Jesus who are truly blessed? (Don’t miss Matthew 5:10-12!)
- Set aside some time to look at the Voice of the Martyrs Web site: www.persecution.com and pray for those who are facing persecution today. Ask that God would continue to turn Satan’s attacks into victories, and that followers of Jesus around the globe would boldly stand for Him and rise to the challenge of being different for His sake.

John 15:21 “But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me.

- **all:** John 16:3 Ps 69:7 Isa 66:5 Mt 5:11 10:18,22,39 24:9 Lu 6:22 Ac 9:16 1Pe 4:13
- **because:** John 8:19,54 Ac 17:23 28:25-27 Ro 1:28 1Co 2:8 15:34 2Co 4:3-6 2Th 1:8 1Jn 2:3,4
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

John 16:3 “These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me.

THE WORLD - KNOW BUT DO NOT KNOW GOD!

The title may sound like double talk, but read through the comments below and you will understand why this title is apropos.

But - Term of contrast. What is Jesus contrasting in this context? He has just given them an encouraging word at the end of Jn 15:20, but now He reverts back to the reality of future persecution.

All these things they will do to you for My name’s sake - **These things** reiterates the world’s hatred and persecution Jesus had just prophetically promised.

Because - This is a term of explanation which is always a key “hinge word” to query, asking what is the speaker explaining (and what is the explanation)?

Spurgeon - They professed to know God, and some of them even thought that they were rendering acceptable service to God when they rejected his Son, whom he had sent unto them. ([Exposition of John](#))

They do not (ouk - absolutely do not) **know** ([eido](#)) **the One Who sent Me** - Who is **they**? This refers to the unbelieving world who are the persecutors and haters of Jesus, His word and His disciples. **The One Who sent Me** of course refers to God the Father. Jesus is clearly, unequivocally stating that the unbelieving, hostile world absolutely does not **know** the true and living God. The lost world thinks they know God, but Jesus clearly states they absolutely do not know God! This is an amazing declaration by Jesus!

But you are probably objecting “*Now wait a minute. I’m not a believer in Jesus and I know God.*” Jesus is not saying you do not know **about** Him, but is saying you do not truly **know** Him. The former knowing is a general sense that there is a God, but the latter knowing is found only in those with a personal relationship with Jesus.

Why would Jesus be justified in making such a sweeping, condemning statement of every person in the world who does not believe in Him? The answer is simple. The only way to intimately **know** God the Father is to intimately **know** God the Son! Earlier in John’s

Gospel Jesus was answering a Jewish audience (monotheists who claimed to know God) who asked Him "Where is Your Father?" to which He replied "You **know** ([eido](#)) neither Me nor My Father; if you **knew** ([eido](#)) Me, you would **know** ([eido](#)) My Father also." (Jn 8:19+) Notice that Jesus answers the Jews with three uses of [eido](#) and declares dogmatically these Jews do not know God! You can imagine the thoughts racing through their minds at such an accusation!

At this point, you might be saying "So what?" The point is that we get additional insight into Jesus' shocking statement about the Jews (and all unbelievers in the world) by carefully examining the Greek words for **know**. The Greek word for **know** in Jn 15:21 is [eido](#) ([Textus Receptus](#) is not correct - it has [ginosko](#)), the same verb Jesus used three times in John 8:19+. The Greek verb [eido](#) describes an absolute, positive, beyond a shadow of a doubt type of knowledge. Stated another way, [eido](#) describes is a perception, awareness, or understanding which is intuitive and which only the Holy Spirit can give in the realm of spiritual knowledge. The other word for know ([ginosko](#)) is distinguished from [eido](#) in that it generally speaks of knowledge obtained by experience.

For example in Ro 1:20-21+ Paul records "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been **clearly seen, being understood** through what has been made, so that (purpose) they are without excuse. For (term of explanation - explaining why they have no excuse) even though they **knew** ([ginosko](#)) - they knew **ABOUT** God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened." In other words, Paul is saying that the CREATION gave clear, indisputable evidence that there was a CREATOR. That is a knowledge **ABOUT** God that the unbelieving world could discern from their experience (note use of [ginosko](#)). Yes, all the world knows **ABOUT** God to some degree because of this [natural revelation](#) in Romans 1, but they do not really **know** ([eido](#)) Him for Who He really is because that type of knowledge is only given by the Holy Spirit and only given to those who truly know God's Son by grace through faith!

[Bob Utley](#) agrees with this explanation of "**they do not know the One who has sent me**" This obviously refers to the Father. It implies that the Jews as well as Gentiles do not know God. "Know" is used in its Semitic (OT) sense of personal relationship (cf. Gen. 4:1; Jer. 1:5). The lost world persecuted believers because (1) they belong to Jesus, who they also persecuted and (2) they do not know God!

John MacArthur - LOVE OF THE TRUTH BRINGS HATRED - (BORROW [STRENGTH FOR TODAY - PAGE 140](#))

"All these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me." John 15:21

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The world, in its general hatred of the truth and ignorance of God, will also hate believers.

The religious leaders of Jesus' time hated Him intensely. If we are committed to following Him wholeheartedly today, we can't expect to avoid persecution and hardship any more than He did. In John 15:20 our Lord tells us what to expect: "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you."

If our perspective is right, however, this expectation should actually make us happy and even provide a certain sense of security. Receiving persecution from the world because we are Christ's representatives means we have an opportunity to experience what Paul called "the fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. 3:10). As one commentator has said, Christian suffering "is the very means God uses to transform us into the image of His Son." Troubles and pains can be great reassurances that we have been united with Christ.

As we saw yesterday, it's no surprise that the world hates us. It despises our general opposition to its system, but aside from that, the world hates believers simply because it doesn't know God.

This basic ignorance of God usually appears in one of two ways. Either it shows up as apathy and religious superstition (Acts 17:22–23) or as more glaring actions and attitudes of moral and spiritual deviation (Romans 1:18–2:2). Whatever the case, people in the world are just doing what is natural for them because of their sin and depravity.

As a Christian, what should your response be? You should not be indifferent or accommodate the serious challenges you'll face from the world. Instead, you ought to, by faith, realistically accept the truth of John 15:21, comfortably rest in the teaching of Philippians 3:10, and confidently seek to minister to the world "because the foolishness of God [the gospel] is wiser than men, and the weakness of God [the cross] is stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1:25).

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Suggestions for Prayer: Ask the Lord to help you begin grasping what it means to partake in "the fellowship of His sufferings."

For Further Study: Read Acts 5:17–42. How is the world's attitude toward the gospel displayed in this passage? ✧ What did the apostles appeal to when faced with severe opposition?

John 15:22 “If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

- they: John 3:18-21 9:41 12:48 19:11 Eze 2:5 33:31-33 Lu 12:46 Ac 17:30 2Co 2:14-16 Heb 6:4-8 Jas 4:17
- cloak: or, excuse, Ro 1:20 2:1 1Pe 2:16
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

If I had not come and spoken to them they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin This is a second class condition which signifies what follows is "contrary to fact." An accurate paraphrase that helps understand this distinction is "*If I had not come back and spoken to them, which I did, then they would not have sin, which they do.*" Jesus is not speaking of sin in general but associates this sin with the fact that He came as the God-Man and He spoke the words from His Father. Their **sin** was the fact that they rejected Jesus and His words. This is the worst sin that anyone can commit, because to reject Jesus leaves eternal punishment as the only alternative! The reason they had no excuse for their sin of rejecting Jesus and His words is simply because He came to them and revealed Himself to them by many words and many miraculous works. There was nothing else He could have done. The conclusion is that they had no excuse.

Spurgeon - Our Lord did not mean that they would have been sinless if he had not come to them, but that his coming, and their rejection of him, had enormously increased and intensified their sinfulness. ([Exposition of John](#))

NET NOTE Jesus now describes the guilt of the world. He came to these people with both words (Jn 15:22) and sign-miracles (Jn 15:24), yet they remained obstinate in their unbelief, and this sin of unbelief was without excuse. Jesus was not saying that if he had not come and spoken to these people they would be sinless; rather he was saying that if he had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of **the sin of rejecting him** and the Father he came to reveal. **Rejecting Jesus is the one ultimate sin for which there can be no forgiveness**, because the one who has committed this sin has at the same time rejected the only cure that exists. Jesus spoke similarly to the Pharisees in Jn 9:41: “If you were blind, you would have no sin (same phrase as here), but now you say ‘We see’ your sin remains.”

C H SPURGEON - Human responsibility (SEE FULL SERMON [Human Responsibility](#))

“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.” John 15:22

The liar, the fornicator, and the drunkard shall have their portion with unbelievers. Hell was made first of all for men who despise Christ, because that is the A1 sin, the cardinal vice, and men are condemned for that. Other iniquities come following after them, but this one goes before them to judgement. Imagine for a moment that time has passed, and that the day of judgement is come. We are all gathered together, both living and dead. The trumpet-blast sounds exceeding loud and long. We are all attentive, expecting something marvellous. The exchange stands still in its business; the shop is deserted by the tradesman; the crowded streets are filled. All men stand still; they feel that the last great business-day is come, and that now they must settle their accounts for ever. A solemn stillness fills the air: no sound is heard. All, all is silent. Presently a great white cloud with solemn state sails through the sky, and then—hark! The twofold clamour of the startled earth. On that cloud there sits one like unto the Son of Man. Every eye looks, and at last there is heard a unanimous shout—“It is he! It is he!” and after that you hear on the one hand, shouts of “Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Welcome, Welcome, Welcome Son of God.” But mixed with that there is a deep bass, composed of the weeping and wailing of the men who have persecuted him, and who have rejected him. Listen! I think I can dissect the sonnet; I think I can hear the words as they come separately, each one of them, tolling like a death knell. What say they? They say, “Rocks hide us, mountains fall upon us, hide us from the face of him that sits upon the throne.”

John 15:23 “He who hates Me hates My Father also.

- John 8:40-42 1Jn 2:23 2Jn 1:9
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

He who hates Me hates My Father ([pater](#)) **also** - Not only do those who do not know Jesus, not know the Father, those who hate Jesus also hate His Father. Once again we see the unity of the Father and Son and Jesus' clear claim of deity based on this

oneness.

Spurgeon - There is a hatred of God in all hatred of the Mediator. Men may say that they love God, and yet despise Christ, but it cannot be so. Christ is so truly God, and so clear a manifestation of God, that, if men knew God, they would certainly hate him if they hate Christ. ([Exposition of John](#))

John 15:24 "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.

- **If:** John 3:2 5:36 7:31 9:32 10:32,37 11:47-50 12:10,37-40 Mt 9:33 11:5 Mt 11:20-24 Mk 2:12 Lu 10:12-16 19:37-40 24:19 Ac 2:22 10:38 Heb 2:3,4
- **but now:** John 6:36 Jn 12:45 Jn 14:9 Mt 21:32
- **hated Me and My Father:** Ex 20:5 De 5:9 Ps 81:15 Pr 8:36 Ro 1:30 8:7,8 2Ti 3:4 Jas 4:4
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

John 12:45+ "He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me.

TO HATE JESUS IS TO HATE HIS FATHER

If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin- NET = "If I had not performed among them the miraculous deeds that no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen the deeds and have hated both me and my Father." The **IF** is a second class condition which indicates Jesus did do the works which no one else did.

But now they have both seen and hated ([miseo](#)) **Me and My Father** ([pater](#)) **as well** - The Jews had seen the incarnate Son of God and His miraculous works but they hated Him. And whoever hates the Son hates the Father Who sent the Son. Both **seen** and **hated** are in the perfect tense which describes the past completed action of the fact that they saw and hated Him and these attitudes continued without resolution. Jesus teaches that to reject Him is to reject His Father.

[Bob Utley](#) explains that this **If**" is another second class condition which means "contrary to fact." It should be translated "*If I had not done the works among them which no one else did (but which I did), then they would not have sin, which they do.*" Light brings responsibility (cf. John 1:5; 8:12; 12:35,46; 1 John 1:5; 2:8,9,11; Matt. 6:23)." And they sinned against a flood of light!

John 15:25 "But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.'

- the: John 10:34 19:36 Lu 24:44 Ro 3:19
- They: Ps 7:4, Ps 35:19 Ps 69:4 Ps 109:3
- without: Mt 10:8 Ro 3:24 2Co 11:7 Ga 2:21 2Th 3:8 Rev 21:6 22:17
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Psalm 35:19 (PSALM OF DAVID) Do not let those who are wrongfully my enemies rejoice over me; Nor let those who **hate me without cause** wink maliciously.

Psalm 69:4 (PSALM OF DAVID) Those who **hate me without a cause** are more than the hairs of my head; Those who would destroy me are powerful, being wrongfully my enemies; What I did not steal, I then have to restore.

HATRED OF JESUS FULFILLS PROPHECY

But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE- The hatred of the Jews for both the Son and the Father was not unexpected. In the foreknowledge of God, the Spirit had inspired the prophecy to

be recorded in Psalm 69:4 and now He inspires John to record the fact that the prophecy had been fulfilled.

Bob Utley comments that "The mystery of the Jewish rejection of Jesus in the face of such obvious revelation was attributed to willful unbelief (cf. Isa. 6:9-13; Jer. 5:21; Rom. 3:9-18)."

NET NOTE - A quotation from Ps 35:19 and Ps 69:4. As a technical term law (no,moj, nomos) is usually restricted to the Pentateuch (the first five books of the OT), but here it must have a broader reference, since the quotation is from Ps 35:19 or Ps 69:4. The latter is the more likely source for the quoted words, since it is cited elsewhere in John's Gospel (2:17 and 19:29, in both instances in contexts associated with Jesus' suffering and death).

C H SPURGEON - Hatred without cause (SEE FULL SERMON [Hatred Without Cause](#))

"They hated me without a cause." John 15:25

Take care, if the world does hate you, that it hates you without a cause. If the world is to oppose you, it is of no use making the world oppose you. This world is bitter enough, without my putting vinegar in it. Some people seem to fancy the world will persecute them; therefore, they put themselves into a fighting posture, as if they invited persecutions. Now, I do not see any good in doing that. Do not try and make other people dislike you. Really, the opposition some people meet with is not for righteousness' sake, but for their own sin's sake, or their own nasty temper's sake. Many a Christian lives in a house—a Christian servant girl perhaps; she says she is persecuted for righteousness' sake. But she is of a bad disposition; she sometimes speaks sharp, and then her mistress reproves her. That is not being persecuted for righteousness' sake. There is another, a merchant in the city, perhaps; he is not looked upon with much esteem. He says he is persecuted for righteousness' sake; whereas, it is because he did not keep a bargain some time ago. Another man says he is persecuted for righteousness' sake; but he goes about assuming authority over everybody, and now and then persons turn round and reproach him. Look to it, Christian people, that if you are persecuted, it is for righteousness' sake; for if you get any persecution yourself you must keep it yourself. The persecutions you bring on yourself for your own sins, Christ has nothing to do with them; they are chastisements on you. They hated Christ without a cause; then fear not to be hated. They hated Christ without a cause; then court not to be hated, and give the world no cause for it.

John 15:26 "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,

- when: John 14:16,17,26 16:7,13,14 Lu 24:49 Ac 2:33
- which: John 8:42 Rev 22:1
- he: John 16:14,15 Ac 2:32,33 5:32 15:8 1Co 1:6 Heb 2:4 1Jn 5:6-10
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

John 14:16+ "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another **Helper** ([parakletos](#)), that He may be with you forever;

John 14:17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

John 14:26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

John 15:26 "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,

John 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

ONE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

When the Helper ([parakletos](#)) **comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father** ([pater](#)) - **The Helper** ([parakletos](#)) is the Holy Spirit. Note the clear evidence of the Trinity in this verse. In this passage Jesus is the One Who sends the Helper, whereas in John 14:16 it is the Father Who sends the Helper.

That is the Spirit of truth (aletheia) Who proceeds from the Father (pater) - The Holy Spirit is the **Spirit of truth** because He is God and God is the essence of truth. The Spirit inspires truth in the Scripture and illuminates truth when the Scripture is read.

Spurgeon - The witness of the Spirit of truth still continues, and Christ's disciples are still privileged to be co-witnesses, even with the Holy Spirit himself; let us take care to avail ourselves of this privilege whenever we can. ([Exposition of John](#))

He will testify (martureo) about Me - The job of the Spirit is not to draw attention to Himself but to give testimony concerning Jesus Christ (cf. John 14:26; 16:13-15; 1 John 5:7).

Helper (Advocate, Comforter) ([3875](#)) **parakletos** from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** = to call) is the noun cognate of the verb **parakaleo (see study)** (cf also **paraklesis**) and literally means one called alongside. **Parakletos** describes one who stands by to help or render aid (especially in a court of law) or one who is summoned to the side of another to help, comfort, encourage, counsel, or intercede for, depending on the need. [Interesting article from Wikipedia on Paraclete](#) International Standard Bible Encyclopedia - [Paraclete](#)

Rod Mattoon - The word "para" means "along side" and "kaleo" means "to call." John was the only one who used this term in the New Testament. The "parakletos" was the one called alongside to assist, help, defend, or intercede on the behalf of another or to give counsel. The advocate counseled, coached, and championed the cause of another in court. He was a helper, supporter, and a witness giving favorable testimony. In Rome, boys of good families replaced their toga with a purple stripe at the age of seventeen and put on a white toga of a man. They were then presented as speakers or advocates in the courts.

The KJV, YLT translate **parakletos** as **Comforter**, the RV retains the word **Comforter**, but the margin gives **Advocate** and **Helper** and notes that the Greek is paraclete. The HCSB and RSV translate it **Counselor**. J. B. Phillips translates it "someone to stand by you." Knox translates it he who is to befriend you. NAS, ESV, Moffatt, Torrey and 20th Century NT all translate it **Helper**. NET, NLT and NAB translate it as **Advocate** (even Jn 14:16). As the **NET Note** below amplifies, none of these Names are perfect.

NET NOTE says **Advocate** "or **Helper**" or **Counselor**"; Grk **Paraclete**," from the Greek word parakletos. Finding an appropriate English translation for parakletos is a very difficult task. No single English word has exactly the same range of meaning as the Greek word. "**Comforter**," used by some of the older English versions, appears to be as old as Wycliffe. But today it suggests a quilt or a sympathetic mourner at a funeral. "**Counselor**" is adequate, but too broad, in contexts like "marriage counselor" or "camp counselor." "**Helper**" or "**Assistant**" could also be used, but could suggest a subordinate rank. "**Advocate**," the word chosen for the NET translation, has more forensic overtones than the Greek word does, although in John 16:5-11 a forensic context is certainly present. Because an "advocate" is someone who "advocates" or supports a position or viewpoint and since this is what the **Paraclete** will do for the preaching of the disciples, it was selected in spite of the drawbacks.

Related Resources:

- [PARACLETE](#) - Bob Utley
- [paráklētos](#) - Gotquestions
- Nice outline on [The Holy Spirit of God in John 14-16 by Danny Akin](#)

Testify (witness) ([3140](#)) **martureo** from **mártus** = witness = one who has information or knowledge of something and can bring to light or confirm something. English = **martyr**) in its most basic sense refers to a legal witness. Thus the verb **martureo** means to be a witness, to testify, to give evidence, to give testimony, to bear record, to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something. The words testified related to fact, not opinion, as in a courtroom setting.

MARTUREO IN JOHN'S WRITINGS - A KEY WORD IN JOHN'S GOSPEL - Jn. 1:7; Jn. 1:8; Jn. 1:15; Jn. 1:32; Jn. 1:34; Jn. 2:25; Jn. 3:11; Jn. 3:26; Jn. 3:28; Jn. 3:32; Jn. 4:39; Jn. 4:44; Jn. 5:31; Jn. 5:32; Jn. 5:33; Jn. 5:36; Jn. 5:37; Jn. 5:39; Jn. 7:7; Jn. 8:13; Jn. 8:14; Jn. 8:18; Jn. 10:25; Jn. 12:17; Jn. 13:21; Jn. 15:26; Jn. 15:27; Jn. 18:23; Jn. 18:37; Jn. 19:35; Jn. 21:24; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 4:14; 1 Jn. 5:6; 1 Jn. 5:7; 1 Jn. 5:9; 1 Jn. 5:10; 3 Jn. 1:3; 3 Jn. 1:6; 3 Jn. 1:12; Rev. 1:2; Rev. 22:16; Rev. 22:18; Rev. 22:20

QUESTION - [Who is the Spirit of truth in John 14:17? | GotQuestions.org](#)

ANSWER - In John 14:17, Jesus says, "Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor

knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you” (ESV). Because the ESV capitalizes *Spirit*, modern readers can easily infer that the spirit in question is the Holy Spirit. To understand why Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the “Spirit of truth,” let us review the context of John 14.

John 14 is part of the [Upper Room Discourse](#) (John 13-17), a collection of teachings delivered by Jesus to His disciples on the night before His crucifixion. In these final moments, the disciples were greatly distressed about the impending departure of their beloved friend, Jesus (John 14:1). For this reason, Jesus took an extended moment to calm their troubled hearts and reassure them that “another Helper” was on the way (John 14:16, ESV).

The Greek term translated as “Helper” (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) is [paráklētos](#). The form of this word is passive and means “one who is called alongside.” At the Son’s request, the Father will send another Helper to encourage and exhort the disciples.

John’s use of the term *another* implies that the disciples already had a helper—the one who would soon depart from the earth. Although the Gospel writers never explicitly refer to Jesus as a *paráklētos*, the term is applied to Him in 1 John 2:1. Thus, in the context of John 14:16, Jesus promises to send His disciples a helper of the same type, and that helper would continue the ministry that Jesus began.

In John 14:17, the identity of the helper is now revealed: He is the Spirit of truth (cf. John 15:26; 16:13). The Spirit of truth is God the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. The Father will send the Spirit to come alongside the disciples. He is called the Spirit of truth because He bears witness to the truth of Jesus Christ (see John 14:6).

In contrast to the work of the Holy Spirit is the work of the devil, a being who does not hold “to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the [father of lies](#)” (John 8:44). Because the unbelieving world remains ensnared by satanic falsehoods, they cannot receive the Spirit of truth (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:14). Tragically, unbelievers prefer to walk by sight and not by faith, failing to understand that sight guarantees nothing.

At the moment of [His baptism](#), Jesus received the Holy Spirit: John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him” (John 1:32, ESV). So, in a sense, the Spirit of truth was already *with* the disciples. Following the departure of Jesus, however, the disciples will know the Spirit more intimately because He would be *in* them (cf. Romans 8:9–11 and Ephesians 1:13–14).

Before the disciples began their ministry, Jesus instructed them to remain in Jerusalem for the promised Holy Spirit: “And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, ‘you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be [baptized with the Holy Spirit](#) not many days from now’” (Acts 1:4–5ESV). Once the Holy Spirit came upon them, they were fully equipped to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ (verse 8).

Believers should be thankful that the Spirit of truth is *with* us, *in* us, and *upon* us. For, without His guidance and light, we could not distinguish truth from error.

John MacArthur - THE SPOTLIGHT STAYS ON CHRIST (BORROW [STRENGTH FOR TODAY PAGE 267](#))

“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me.” John 15:26

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***After He has drawn us to Christ,
the Holy Spirit helps us give Christ the preeminence.***

In the spiritual realm it is important that our attention be kept focused in the right direction—toward the object of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit, through the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, helps us understand what such focus is all about: “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith” (Hebrews 12:1–2).

John 15:26 is one of two references in the Gospel of John in which the Holy Spirit bears witness to Christ (see also John 16:14–15). Commentator Leon Morris tells us, “This bearing of witness was not an end in itself. Behind it was the purpose ‘that all might believe through him.’” It has always been the Spirit’s desire that people recognize Christ’s authority and submit to His will (Phil. 2:9–13). Thus Paul further reminds us that “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3).

We saw yesterday that the power and wisdom of the Spirit are crucial if any individual is to be transformed from spiritual condemnation to spiritual life. After that, it is just as necessary that we rely on the Holy Spirit to keep us focused on Jesus Christ and our ongoing responsibilities of obedience and service to Him. How foolish it is for any of us who profess Christ to then follow Him by looking to our own strength rather than His glory. We forget that the Spirit has given us a clear view of the freedom involved in

following Jesus as Lord: “But whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor. 3:16–17).

What About The Trinity?

When the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, . . . He will testify of Me. —John 15:26

Today's Scripture : John 15:15-27

A pupil asked the noted philosopher Hegel (1770-1831) to explain a passage he had written. Hegel read it and said, “When that was written, there were two who knew its meaning—God and myself. Now, alas! There is but one, and that is God.”

Some people feel that way about the doctrine of the Trinity, noting that the word isn't even in the Bible. This truth, however, is clearly taught in Scripture.

A. H. Strong defined it well: “We do not say that one God is three Gods, nor that one person is three persons, nor that three Gods are one God, but only that there is one God with three distinctions in His being.”

Baffling? Yes! Absurd? No!

The idea of a triune God is biblically sound and makes sense. Here's one way of explaining the logic behind the Trinity: The Bible says that God is love (1 Jn. 4:8). Love always needs an object. If God were an eternal, absolute unity, without the distinction of persons within Himself, eternal love could not exist. But because God is a Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit can express love to one another. Not only that, but we benefit as well because the Son reveals the Father's love and truth to us by the work of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 15:10,26).

Thank God for the Trinity! By: Dennis J. DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

For Further Study

Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19;

John 1:1-18; 14:16-17; 15:15-27; 17:5,24;

Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 9:14.

There's perfect unity in the Trinity.

John 15:27 and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

- **you will testify** John 21:24 Lu 24:48 Ac 1:8,21,22 3:15 4:20,33 10:39-42 13:31 Ac 18:5 23:11 1Pe 5:1,12 2Pe 1:16-18 Rev 1:2,9
- **because you have been with Me:** Mk 1:1 Lu 1:2,3 1Jn 1:1,2
- [John 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES

and you will testify ([martureo](#) in present tense) **also** - So not just the Spirit will **testify** of Jesus, but here Jesus gives the prophetic promise that His followers will also testify about Him..

THOUGHT - This was directed to the first disciples, but it is applicable to every follower of Jesus. Have you testified to others about Jesus? And remember that when you live like Jesus, this will undergird your testimony about Jesus. If your life fails to match what your lips say, don't be surprised if others discount your testimony of Jesus.

because you have been with Me from the beginning - The 11 disciples were first hand witnesses. In the phrase **from the beginning** Jesus is explaining the scope of their testimony, the 3+ years that the disciples had been with Him. Their testimony would be recorded in the Gospel records and in their subsequent proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Bob Utley - This must refer to the inspiration of the authors of the NT (i.e., Apostles and their friends) who were with Jesus during His earthly life (cf. Luke 24:48). (See [WITNESSES TO JESUS](#))

John 15:27 The "Go" in the Gospel? -

The other evening I heard a man on the radio emphatically state that he did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I could sense that he had a real feeling of scorn for those who do. Prominent men in public places have also expressed their con-tempt for "born-againers." This is typical of the general attitude toward orthodox Christians and the truths they confess. Although the worldling may not show personal animosity toward a believer, yet he looks upon him as "narrow" or "bigoted." While he may treat Christians in a rather cordial manner, the fact remains that the worldly man is against us. We can never know when this secret hostility will flame out into violent persecution.

In the face of the world's hatred what are we to do? The answer is: witness! We are not to return "evil for evil," or retort in scorn to their words of contempt. As graciously and as sweetly as God enables us, we are to give to them a message of life. We will be greatly helped if we bear in mind the words of the Lord Jesus: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). The world rejected Jesus Christ. Few homes opened their doors to Him and His small band of followers. The multitude enjoyed the scene as the Roman soldiers mocked Him, spit upon Him, and pressed the crown of thorns upon His head. They cried out for His death, and taunted Him as He hung in agony on the cross. Let us never forget this, for "the servant is not greater than his Lord!"

By God's grace, let us then be patient with men as they some-times mistreat us. Let us be careful too not to bring down violence upon ourselves by antagonizing the world needlessly through words or actions that do not reflect the spirit of our Lord. Faith-fully, graciously, and tactfully let us witness concerning the transforming grace of God which is available through Jesus Christ. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Though the world may scorn and hate us,
And the devil strong oppose,
We must tell the lost of Jesus —
That He died, and for them 'rose!
— Anon.

**Every Christian must witness,
for there is an impelling GO in the Gospel!**

The Unfruitful Branches in John 15 Charles R. Smith

Charles R. Smith - Professor of English Bible and Theology, Miami Bible College

(NOTE: FOR ALL THE FOOTNOTE NUMBERS [SEE DOCUMENTATION AT BOTTOM OF PAGE](#))

Introduction

The text of John 15 has been one of the historical battlegrounds of doctrinal interpretation. Perhaps only the passage in Hebrews 6 has been the scene of more battles between the Calvinistic and Arminian schools of interpretation concerning the matter of eternal security. Not only has this text provided the field for many battles between these two schools of theology, but there have also been a great many skirmishes within the two camps upon this same battlefield. Particularly among Calvinists there has been disagreement as to the interpretation of this passage.

Though there are other important problems in the parable of John 15:1–8, the most significant question concerns the identification of the unfruitful branches mentioned in the parable.

Arminians have generally understood the unfruitful branches as representative of true believers who, because they become unfruitful, lose their salvation and consequently are ultimately cast into the fires of hell.

Calvinists have been divided as to the identification of these branches. Some have taught that they represent true believers. Most have taught that they represent unbelievers who profess to be believers. Still others have taught that two kinds of unfruitful branches are discussed: professing Christians, and true Christians who do not produce the fruits of Christianity.

Though Arminian views will be rebutted briefly, the primary purpose of this study is to investigate the major interpretations of the passage that have been suggested by Calvinists and to determine, by a careful study of the text and its context, wherein these interpretations have departed from the intent of the Speaker. The identification of the unfruitful branches will be the principal

concern.

The Occasion and Background for the Parable

The parable (**ED: D A CARSON CALLS IT [AN EXTENDED METAPHOR](#)**) of John 15:1–8 is part of a very lengthy series of instructions given by our Lord on the last evening before His crucifixion. The scope and significance of the revelations given by Christ on that evening have never been exceeded. On no other single occasion has so much of God's revelation been given to man. Christ knew that His crucifixion was near and every moment was spent in imparting important information to His disciples. Since the time was so short only vital matters were discussed. The fact that the parable under discussion was given during the middle part of that evening's instruction is indicative of its importance.

The evening had begun with the "Last Supper" and the institution of the Christian memorial of Christ's death—the ordinance of the "Lord's Supper." During the supper He had washed the disciples' feet and had taught them that this was a picture of the daily cleansing from sin that is necessary after the original bath of salvation if believers are to have fellowship with Him ("part," John 13:8). Then He had told them that one of their number was actually a pretender, not a real believer, and would that night betray Him. He then proceeded to teach Peter and the others that they had no strength of themselves to be faithful disciples, rather the strength and comfort which they needed was to be supplied only through their relationship with Him. This relationship was soon to assume a new form in that He was leaving, but the Holy Spirit would come as His Representative. With the arrival of the Holy Spirit there was to begin a new and vital relationship (John 14). The parable of John 15:1–8 was given at this point in His instruction, in order to illustrate this new relationship.

After the parable the Lord explains that this relationship, this union of the disciples with their Lord, would mean that they would be persecuted. Only the Holy Spirit's ministry could sustain them in this persecution and enable them to perform the task set before them (John 16). Just before His arrest, He prays earnestly that the unity of believers with Himself and with one another may be fully realized by His disciples (John 17).

There have been numerous suggestions as to the specific occasion for the choice of the figure here employed.

1. Meyer, Trench, and others have suggested that the figure was prompted by the wine that had been used in the Lord's Supper just initiated. This does not seem likely, however, since they were no longer in the upper room (Jn 14:31).
2. Others have suggested that there may have been a vine which hung over or into the window of the upper room. This should be rejected for the same reason as the preceding view was rejected.
3. Jerome thought that the great golden vine which was on the wall of the temple was in view. Many have followed this interpretation. This vine was one of the chief ornaments of the temple. "Many a great man had counted it an honour to give gold to mould a new bunch of grapes, or even a new grape on to that vine."¹ But again, this does not seem to be a likely explanation. During Passover season the temple was kept open at night but because of the huge crowds it seems unlikely that such an intimate discussion would be appropriate, or even possible, in the busy temple area.
4. Some have suggested that a real vine was encountered, either on the side of a city street or more likely, on the walk down to Cedron. While this is, of course, possible, it is not required by the context. This view may be combined with one or both of the following views.
5. Lange and others have taught that this was the time of year for pruning-fires, and that it was very likely that the slopes of the Cedron valley were dotted with the fires which indicated to Jesus and His disciples that the worthless prunings were being burned. The same comments apply with this as with the preceding view.²
6. Others suppose that the figure was used by Jesus because of the usage of the figure of the vine and vineyard in the Old Testament. A mental reflection would thus furnish the occasion for the parable, rather than any external stimulus. As has been suggested, however, it is entirely possible that Jesus had in mind the Old Testament figure and also used some visible object such as a vine or a pruning-fire, as an object lesson.

A careful study of the passage clearly indicates that Jesus did have in mind the familiar Old Testament usage of the vine as a symbol of Israel. This symbol was well-known to all Jews. Everyone knew of the temple-vine already mentioned and they no doubt had been taught from childhood the significance of this symbol. The vine was the recognized emblem of the nation Israel just as the eagle is the recognized emblem of the United States. During the Maccabean period the figure of a vine was stamped on the coins of the Jewish nation.³

The figure of the vine was suggested by numerous Old Testament passages.

Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry (Isa 5:1–7 AV).

Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? (Jer 2:21 AV).

Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine; And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself. It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance (Ps 80:8–16 AV).

And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, What is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work? Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work: how much less shall it be meet yet for any work, when the fire hath devoured it, and it is burned? Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them. And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord GOD (Ezek 15 AV).

Israel is an empty [luxuriant with many leaves but little fruit] vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself...[but not unto God] (Hos 10:1 AV)

Many other Old Testament passages use this figure, but the major thoughts from which Jesus drew and which would have been aroused in the disciples' minds may be found in the passages quoted above. For this reason these passages should be examined in detail, and for this reason they have been quoted in full.

It is clear from the way that Jesus introduced the parable that He had in mind this unproductive Jewish vine. He begins by saying, "I am the vine, the genuine one,"—the one that is all that a vine should be. He is thus placing Himself in sharp contrast to the unproductiveness of Israel. Barclay's comment is noteworthy. "It is a curious fact that the symbol of the vine is never used in the Old Testament apart from the idea of degeneration."⁴

In contrast to that vine, Christ is the true vine that must produce fruit.

With this as background, preparation has been made for an attempt, to identify those who are represented by the unfruitful branches.

An Incorrect Interpretation: The Unfruitful Branches Represent Believers Who Lose Their Salvation

Arminians have consistently argued that those represented by the unfruitful branches are those who were once true believers, who had once been born again, but who subsequently lost their salvation. Because they are lost they are consequently doomed to hell (15:6) as are all whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev 20:15). This means that the Arminians must teach that a true believer's name may be blotted from the book of life—something which the Scriptures clearly state will never happen (Rev 3:5). They must also teach that the Holy Spirit is taken from such a person after a period of indwelling—something which is never intimated in Scripture and is clearly denied by several Scriptural concepts. When Christ promised the Holy Spirit, He said, "I will

come to you” (in the person of the Spirit), He also said, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (John 14:18; Heb 13:5).

Adam Clarke seems to have given one of the clearest presentations of this Arminian interpretation.

As the vinedresser will remove every unfruitful branch from the vine, so will my Father remove every unfruitful member from my mystical body, even those that have been in me by true faith (for only such are branches). But such as have given way to iniquity, and made shipwreck of their faith and of their good conscience, he taketh away.... Our Lord, in the plainest manner, indicates that a person may as truly be united to him as the branch is to the tree that produces it, and yet be afterward cut off and cast into the fire. A branch cannot be cut off from a tree to which it was never united: It is absurd, and contrary to the letter and spirit of the metaphor, to talk of being seemingly in Christ—because this means nothing. If there is only a seeming union, there could only be a seeming excision; but that which is here spoken of is terribly real. 5

This Arminian view is also strongly stated by Sadler.

It is impossible to avoid the inference from this that a branch may abide for a time in Christ, and then be taken away. All attempts to get rid of this conclusion are dishonest and futile....6

It is admitted that this parable contains difficulties, but it is not dishonest to attempt to harmonize its teaching with clear Scriptural statements elsewhere. It is certainly as bad as dishonesty, however, to interpret this passage as contradicting Christ’s clear statement on security only a few chapters earlier.

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand (John 10:28–29, AV).

To build upon a parable, such as this one in John 15, a doctrine that contradicts clear Scriptures elsewhere is certainly a dangerous procedure. It should be remembered that a parable or type is for the purpose of illustrating truth that is being taught. No doctrine, not clearly taught elsewhere, should be deduced from a parable.

A Possible Interpretation: The Unfruitful Branches Represent Believers Who Are Chastened

A number of recent conservative and Calvinistic Bible teachers have taught that the unfruitful branches represent true believers who are chastened because of their failure to produce spiritual fruit. Some have varied this view by teaching that the unfruitful branches in verse 2 are true believers, but the unfruitful branches in verse 6 are only professors. A. W. Pink is one who has suggested this interpretation. This view, however, runs into grammatical difficulties in both verse 2 and verse 6 .

The interpretation of John 15:2 in this manner is built upon a special significance of the word airō.

It cannot be a mere professor who is here in view—taken away unto judgment. Again a difficulty has been needlessly created here by the English rendering of the Greek verb. Airō is frequently translated in the A.V. “lifted up.”. For example: “And they lifted up their voices” (Luke 17:13, so also in Acts 4:24), “And Jesus lifted up his eyes” (John 11:41), “Lifted up his hand” (Rev 10:5) etc. In none of these places could the verb be rendered “taken away.” Therefore, we are satisfied that it would be more accurate and more in accord with the “analogy of faith” to translate, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he lifteth up from trailing on the ground.”7

Since Pink’s suggestion has been accepted by so many, it should be helpful to list the usages of airō. It is used 101 times in the N.T. and in its various forms is translated in the King James Version in the following eleven ways:

TRANSLATION NUMBER OF TIMES SO TRANSLATED

“bear”	3
“bear up”	2
“carry”	1
“lift up”	4
“loose”	1
“put away”	1
“remove”	2
“take”	25
“take away”	25

“take up”	32
“away with”	5

This list should make it obvious that *airō* only indicates a removal of some kind and that the object, purpose, and direction of that removal can be determined only from the context—not just from the word itself. This can be supported by examining any good lexicon.⁸

Since the context must determine what kind of removal is in view, it is certainly not the best method of exegesis to interpret the word in a manner that is contradictory to the context. But that is exactly what has been done by Pink and the others who make *airō* mean “lift up” or “take up” in a good sense. In the context, verse 6 describes the taking away in no uncertain terms as a taking away to judgment.

Dr. L. S. Chafer of Dallas Theological Seminary was one who followed Pink’s interpretation. When he wrote his book *Salvation*, he thus sharply distinguished between the unfruitful branches in verses 2 and 6 .

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away. The reference is evidently to true branches, which is not the case in verse six. From the fact that the Greek word *airō* has the meaning ‘lifting up out of its place,’ ... it would seem probable that the reference is to the last form of chastisement mentioned in 1 Cor 11:30. Such branches are taken home to be with the Lord....⁹

As has been pointed out, this interpretation makes the removal of John 15:2 a loving one involving believers, whereas the removal of verse 6 is understood as referring to the doom of unbelievers. But it should be noted that believers taken to heaven are not removed from the “Vine.” Apparently because there is no contextual support for so sharply distinguishing between the two kinds of removals and thus requiring two kinds of unfruitful branches, Dr. Chafer in his later work, *Systematic Theology*, presented the view that both verses refer to believers. His understanding of verse 2 remained as quoted above, but concerning John 15:6 he wrote as follows:

With the background of what has gone before, approach may be made to John 15:6, in which the truth is declared that if a man abide not in Christ, he will come under the condemning judgment of men. The believer’s testimony to the world becomes as a branch “cast forth” and “withered.” The judgment of the world upon the believer is described in the severest of terms.... If it be asked how in practical experience men burn each other, it will be seen that the language is highly figurative, for men do not in any literal sense burn each other; but they do abhor and repel an inconsistent profession.¹⁰

Dr. Charles Ryrie, also of Dallas Theological Seminary, agrees with Pink and Chafer that the unfruitful branches in John 15:2 refer to believers. He differs from Chafer, however, in that he does not understand *airō* to refer to the taking of a believer to heaven, rather he understands that the believer is encouraged or “lifted up” in this life.¹¹ But again it may be objected that the passage seems to indicate a removal from association with the Vine. This view allows no such removal. Concerning verse 6, it is frequently taught that the being “cast forth and withered” refers to the believer’s loss of testimony, and that the judgment of fire refers to the judgment of the believer’s works as described in 2 Corinthians 3. There is no warrant, however, for interpreting *airō* in a bad sense in John 15:6, while declaring that it is used in a good sense in John 15:2. In fact, as it will be pointed out later, verse 6 requires the burning of the “branch” itself—not its “fruit” (works) or its “leaves” (testimony).

From the above discussion it can be clearly seen that there is no legitimate basis, grammatical or otherwise, for interpreting verse 2 and verse 6 as referring to two different kinds of unfruitful branches. To be consistent and true to the context one must say that both verses refer to the same kind of branches.

Those who try to interpret both verses as referring to non-producing believers, however, run into serious difficulty with verse 6. To use Dr. Chafer’s terminology, they must interpret the verse in a “highly figurative manner.” In fact it would be hard to choose words that would better picture the fate of unbelieving professors than those used in verse 6. More will be said about the interpretation of this verse in a later section of this study.

A Preferable Interpretation: The Unfruitful Branches Represent Unsaved Professors

The Problem of the Phrase “in me.”

(ED: [SEE JAMES ROSSCUP'S ANALYSIS OF "IN ME"](#))

That the unfruitful branches represent unsaved professors, has been the standard interpretation of the great majority of Calvinistic commentators. But neither is this view without its difficulties. The major difficulty with this view is the phrase “in me” in John 15:2.

Those who hold that the unfruitful branches represent Christians base their interpretation largely upon this phrase and allow it to determine their view of the rest of the passage. Most commentators, however, have felt that the rest of the passage is so clear that this one phrase should be carefully weighed in the light of the whole context.

It should be recalled that the baptism of the Holy Spirit whereby a believer is placed into the body of Christ was not explained until Paul wrote about it in 1 Corinthians 12:13. The familiar technical usage of the phrase “in Christ,” as it is found in Paul’s prison epistles, was not until many years later. At the time when Jesus spoke these words no one was “in Christ” in this technical sense because the baptism of the Holy Spirit did not begin until Pentecost. When these words were spoken, to be “in Christ” was no different from being “in the kingdom.” Jesus’ parables about the kingdom being composed of wheat and tares, good and bad, fruitful and unfruitful, are very familiar.

It is true that the word “kingdom” is sometimes used in a more restricted sense of believers only. But there is a “kingdom” during this age which contains unbelievers, and even the millennial kingdom after the first few years, will contain unbelievers. It is also true that those who merely profess to be in right relationship to God will be excluded from entering the millennial kingdom. “But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt 8:12, AV).

Some have suggested that there is a mystical sense in which all humanity may be said to be “in Christ.” In the very first chapter of this book, John says that every man receives life, and therefore light, from Christ (John 1:3–9). As life-giver and Creator there is a sense in which all are in Him and share in His Life.¹² But this is obviously not what Jesus had in mind in John 15. He is not referring to all of humanity but only to those who profess a certain relationship but do not evidence that relationship by their lives. Also, by designating Himself as the “genuine vine,” He has implied the existence of a non-genuine vine (or vines). The “in me” of John 15:2, then, is not a designation for all of humanity.

Concerning the phrase “in me,” John Gill has commented as follows:

There are two sorts of branches in Christ the vine; the one sort are such who have only an historical faith in him.... they are such who only profess to believe in him, as Simon Magus did; are in him by profession only; they submit to outward ordinances, become church members, and so are reckoned to be in Christ, being in a church-state, as the churches of Judea, and Thessalonica, and others, are said, in general, to be in Christ; though it is not to be thought that every person in these churches was truly and savingly in him.¹³

Alexander Maclaren has presented in masterful fashion the view that the unfruitful branches represent unsaved professors.

It seems to me that the very language of the metaphor before us requires us to interpret the fruitless branches as meaning all those who have a mere superficial, external adherence to the True Vine. For according to the whole teaching of the parable, if there be any real union there will be some life, and if there be any life, there will be some fruit, and, therefore, the branch that has no fruit has no life, because it has no real union. And so the application, as I take it, is necessarily to those professing Christians, nominal adherents to Christianity or to Christ’s church, people that come to church and chapel, and if you ask them to put down in the census paper what they are, they will say Christians...but who have no real hold upon Jesus Christ, and no real reception of anything from Him.¹⁴

As Dr. Maclaren has stated, verses 4 and 5, taken alone, would most naturally lead one to conclude that the unfruitful branches represent professing unbelievers. Likewise, it should be conceded by all that the judgment of verse 6 can most naturally be understood as the judgment that lies ahead for professing unbelievers.

But not only do verses 4, 5, and 6 support this identification—verse 3 also supports it. In fact, it can hardly be denied that Jesus’ choice of the word “clean” in verse 3 was intended to remind the disciples of His discussion with them only a little earlier that evening. In His conversation with Peter concerning the washing of his feet, Jesus remarked that the disciples were all “clean” except for one, the son of perdition, who was about to betray him (cf. John 13:10, 21; 6:70–71; and 17:12). With this usage in mind, the disciples would have understood that Jesus, in John 15:3, was telling them again that he knew them to be true believers and not just professors as was Judas. His terminology clearly implies that there are (and will be) others who, like Judas, are mere pretenders. These eleven, however, are true believers. As such He wishes them to realize that their only source of strength was in Him, not in themselves.

Verse 1 also supports the identification of the unfruitful branches as false professors. By introducing Himself as the vine, “the genuine one,” Jesus is clearly contrasting Himself to the well-known unproductive vine—Israel. So He is saying in effect, “I am God’s true vine, the one through whom all of Israel’s promises will be fulfilled, and the One in and through whom Israel, and the rest of redeemed humanity, will at last produce fruit for God. Just as there were those in Israel (the old unproductive vine) who were not really “of Israel, that is, who were not true believers, there were also some who, outwardly at least, appeared to be “of Christ,” but who were not inwardly united with Christ. These were in the “Jesus movement” just as the Sadducees were in the “Jewish

movement.”

Hengstenberg believed that Jesus had in mind, throughout this whole parable, the unbelieving Jews who were to be severed from the “True Vine” because of their unbelief. Concerning the phrase, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit,” he makes the following remarks:

...the Jewish branch is primarily meant; as by the contrasted fruit-bearing branch we are to understand primarily the Apostles, the Christian church having its germ in them. That even the Jews were a branch in Christ the True Vine, is as certain as that, according to chapter 1:11, when He came to the Jews, He came to His own property... But the evidence that Jesus had primarily in view the Jews, when He spoke of the branches not bearing fruit, is found in the fact that the same thought recurs in verse six, where the reference to Ezekiel 15 places the allusion to the Jews beyond doubt.¹⁵

The validity of these statements is obvious and will be supported by an exegesis of the passage, but application should not be limited only to the Jews. Any who merely profess to be in union with God face the consequences stated by Jesus in verses 2 and 6. The Jews, of course, would have been particularly in view at the time when Jesus spoke these words.

The famous Greek exegete, Godet, suggested that the phrase “in me” may refer to the “branch” or to the participle “bearing.” In the latter case the verse would read, “every branch which is not bearing fruit in me He takes away.”¹⁶ The text, however, while it allows this construction, favors the common reading.

With these considerations in mind it is evident that it is not impossible to harmonize the “in me” with the identification of the unfruitful branches as merely professors. The later exegetical sections of this study will further support this identification.

Do All Christians Produce Fruit?

Another problem that has sometimes been urged against this interpretation is that it requires that all true believers will produce fruit. It is objected that the Scriptures clearly teach that it is possible for Christians to be carnal, out of fellowship, and walking in darkness. That such a condition is possible is admitted by all, but this is not the same as saying that such a Christian does not, never has, or never will produce fruit. In fact, it must be insisted, on the basis of Scripture that all who are truly saved do produce fruit.

But what is this fruit? A popular conception, frequently heard in testimonies, is that a Christian’s sole purpose is to win souls and that soul-winning is therefore the fruit bearing for which a Christian is responsible. But of the sixty-six times the word fruit is used in the New Testament, only one verse uses it for soul-winning (John 4:36).¹⁷ The other non-literal usages of the word all refer to spiritual fruit; the fruit of the Spirit, or the fruits of righteousness which are the general result of the Holy Spirit’s work in and through the believer. These “fruits” are primarily attitudes produced in the believer. These attitudes are of course, manifested in the believer’s actions.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith[fulness], meekness, temperance [self-control]: against such there is no law (Gal 5:22–23, AV).

Can a believer conceive of a Christian who has never experienced the love, joy, or peace, that the Holy Spirit produces? If such fruit has never been produced, then it may be affirmed that the Holy Spirit is not resident in such a person.

This present generation of Christians has emphasized the doctrine of carnality while de-emphasizing the doctrine that a true faith must produce fruit. Earlier generations of Christians were more insistent upon this latter point as well as the first. Only a generation ago Dr. Ironside spoke emphatically upon this point.

...when you are born again, you love to follow Jesus, and if you do not, you are not a Christian. Take that home. Examine your own foundations a bit... It makes a tremendous difference what you do. If you do not behave yourself, it shows that you are not a real Christian. I know that a real Christian may fail, but the difference can be seen in Peter and Judas. Peter failed, and failed terribly, but he was genuine, and one look from Jesus sent him out weeping bitterly; his heart was broken to think that he had so dishonored his Lord. But Judas companied with the Lord almost three-and-a-half years, and was a devil all the time; he was a thief, and was seeking his own interest. He was even made the treasurer of the company, and he held the bag, but we read, “He bare away what was put therein” (John 12:6), as this has been literally translated. At last remorse overtook him, not genuine repentance, and what was the result? He went and hanged himself. He was never a child of God. There is a great difference, you see, between a Christian and a false professor.¹⁸

The only proof that a person is a real Christian is the “fruit” produced in his life. “By their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt 7:20). Indeed, this very truth is taught by the parable under consideration. The following comments are appropriate.

...no one can be a branch in Christ, and a living member of His body, who does not bear fruit. Vital union with

Christ not evidenced by life is an impossibility and a blasphemous idea.¹⁹

Can anyone who is engrafted into Christ be without fruit? I answer, many are supposed to be in the vine, according to the opinion of men, who actually have no root in the vine.... By these words He declares that all who have a living root in him are fruit-bearing branches.²⁰

So, one should not consider himself to be a branch of the Vine just because he is a Jew. Rather, is the test a matter of bearing "fruit" (15:2). Indeed many professed to believe in Jesus who really did not (see 2:23–25). These nonfruit-bearing 'branches' the Cultivator would remove.²¹

...by their fruitfulness or unfruitfulness they declare themselves to be true or counterfeit branches, and to be really, or in show only, engrafted in Christ... The true touchstone whereby to discern one sort of branches from another is, not their leaves or profession, but their fruit....²²

Can one be in Christ yet remain fruitless?... This at least is certain, that as the fruitless branch can have no living connection with the vine, no more can the fruitless professing Christian with Christ. Something is as it should not be; though man's eye may not detect the cause, the union is not the same kind of union as that of the fruitful branch or Christian.²³

...so will God take away from his church all professed Christians who give no evidence by their lives that they are truly united to the Lord Jesus....'Every branch that beareth fruit,' that is, all true Christians; for all such bear fruit.²⁴

These quotations represent the consensus of conservative commentators on this subject. They agree that true Life is evidenced by fruit. Where there is no fruit, there is no Life. This is what Jesus said in Matthew 7:15–20 (AV).

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Fruit will be produced if the union with Christ is real. Paul tells believers that they were saved "unto good works" (Eph 2:10). He also states that when believers stand before the Bema, "then shall every man have his praise of God" (1 Cor 4:5).

The objections, then, do not prohibit the identification of the unfruitful branches as merely professors.

In view of his recognition as a godly defender of the faith, Dr. Ironside's endorsement of this view is noteworthy.

There are a great many believers who bear very little fruit for God, but all bear some fruit for Him. There are many people in the Vine (and the Vine speaks of profession here on earth) who bear no fruit for Him, and will eventually be cut off altogether when Jesus comes. There will be no place with Him because there is no union with Him.²⁵

Contextual Support for this View

It has already been mentioned that verse 6 provides perhaps the strongest support for this view. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

It should be noted that the preceding verse used personal pronouns and was addressed directly to the Apostles. It is not insignificant, then, that the Holy Spirit here changes to the indefinite pronoun "anyone" (tis). Jesus knew that the disciples, who were true believers ("clean," v. 3), would not come into the judgment here described.

But what is meant by "abiding" in Him? According to 1 John 4:15, the one who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God "abides" in God. Also according to 1 John 3:24, "he that keepeth his commandments (the chief of which is named in the preceding verse as believing on him) 'abides' in him."

Thus to "abide in Christ" is equivalent to "believe in Christ." The relationship of abiding is initiated by saving faith and is continued by walking in faith.²⁶

Marcus Dodds translates this phrase, "If anyone shall not have abided in me...."²⁷

This would be the equivalent of saying, "If anyone does not produce fruit because he is not vitally united to the vine and consequently is removed (as verse 2 describes) then that one has nothing to look forward to but the same type of judgment that awaits literal branches that have been cut off." John Owen's comment on this phrase is appropriate.

The expression 'if a man abide not in me,' does not imply the termination of a living connection, but that true union and fellowship with Christ was never enjoyed by this worthless branch.²⁸

The "withering" described may well be taken as a graphic picture of what happens to the unbeliever's body during the period between his death and the resurrection of his body in order that it may be cast into hell.

The phrase in the King James text, "men gather them," is incorrect and should be simply, "they gather them." The statement was undoubtedly made without a noun or pronoun as subject so as to include men in the case of the literal branches and angels in the case of the unbelievers represented.

The phrase, "they are burned," is again an incorrect translation. The Greek text uses a present passive singular verb which should be translated simply "it burns," or "it is burning." The present tense is for vividness and allows for a continual burning in hell. The singular verb is in agreement with the singular noun "branch." It is thus the unfruitful branch itself that burns. The view that this branch is a believer and that only his testimony is destroyed during this life does not satisfy the grammar of this verse. Neither is the view that the burning refers to the judgment of the believer's works satisfactory. The change from the plural to the singular specifically rejects both views. The judgment described is the same as that described by Jesus in Matthew 13:49, 50 (AV).

So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

It is interesting to note that in the same chapter Jesus had just described a sowing which had produced two kinds of plants that for a time looked like the real thing, but never produced any fruit and consequently withered and died (Matt 13:20–22). He also describes a sowing which produced tares as well as real wheat. The tares could not outwardly be distinguished from the wheat until the absence of 'fruit' could be noticed at harvest-time. At that time the tares were to be consigned to the fire.

A proper exegesis of verse 6 not only supports the identifying of the unfruitful branches as unsaved professors, but eliminates any view which would make them represent believers. It is admitted that the verse is figurative but to make it apply to believers it must be taken as "highly figurative," as before noted. The following comment by Powell is an example of the treatment which must be given to this verse by those who make it refer to believers: "There is no doctrinal significance in the burning of the branch; this was the natural procedure, with dead wood."²⁹

But if John 15:6 is determinative, the other verses in the parable also support the same conclusion.

In John 15:1, the usage of the adjective "genuine" has already been mentioned as support.

In John 15:2, the expression "he taketh away" offers strong support for this view. As before noted, the basic idea of *airō* involves a removal. If this refers to the removal of unbelievers, then the removal is from any supposed connection with Christ. Unbelievers may be removed from the sphere of profession (as was Judas), by discipline, by persecution, by tribulations, by temptations, or by death.³⁰ Any and all of these removals will result in the judgment of John 15: 6 .

But if these branches be taken as Christians, what can the removal signify? The taking to heaven of sinning believers, as suggested by Chafer, does not remove them from Christ or from profession in Christ. If Jesus wanted to teach the truth that sinning believers may be removed to heaven it does not seem likely that He would have chosen this figure. What happens to dead and removed branches is not good.

Nor is it satisfactory to say that *airō* refers to a "lifting up" or encouragement during this life, as Pink, Powell, and others have stated. Again this is no removal from Christ—the true vine, or from profession in him, and therefore, does not fit the common usage of *airō* or the remainder of the context. Powell's comment indicates the force of these considerations.

This verse as it stands suggests severance from the main vine, the result of cutting or pruning by a husbandman who had lost patience with an unproductive branch. But this is not true.³¹

The meaning of the word, however, and the context, support the contention that a removal is described.

Concerning the "purging" mentioned in John 15:2, Barnes has given a helpful comment.

'He purgeth it,' or rather he prunes it, or cleanseth it by pruning. There is a use of words here—a paranomasia in the original—which cannot be retained in the translation. It may be imperfectly seen by retaining the Greek words. 'Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away (*airei*); every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it (*kathairei*) now ye are clean (*katharoi*)....³²

The "purging," or "pruning," or "cleansing" is something quite different from the "taking away" of the unfruitful branches. As has been noted, all Christians bear some fruit, so when He said "every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit,"

He was referring to a work done with all believers. This is the same truth as that stated in Hebrews 13:8. “But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”

Dr. Tenney has properly noted the distinction between the two actions involved in John 15:2. “In pruning a vine, two principles are generally observed: first, all dead wood must be ruthlessly removed; and second, the live wood must be cut back drastically.”³³

The use of the word “clean” in John 15:3 has already been cited as evidence to support the view being presented. Hutcheson’s comment on this verse is adequate at this point.

In this verse is contained a declaration what sort of branches they were—namely, not fruitless; but “clean” ones, that is, who, by being purged and cleansed from their superfluities, (as is promised, John 15:2), are assured that they are fruitful branches, really and internally engrafted in Christ; and so were they regenerated, justified, and sanctified in part.³⁴

John 15:4 harmonizes with all that has been said. Using John’s definition of “abiding” (1 John 4:15), the thought of the verse may be expressed as follows; “continue believing in me; your belief ensures the vital union with me that is absolutely necessary if fruit is to be borne.” The fact that an imperative is used may indicate that a choice is involved, but this does not mean that one who was a true believer may stop “abiding.” If one should stop “abiding,” then that would indicate that he was not truly a believer in the first place.

To continue in the vine is for a branch the condition of life, and consequently its only law.³⁵

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all together of us (1 John 2:19, AV).

To “abide,” then, is to maintain a vital connection to Him by virtue of believing in Him. This relationship is initiated and continued by faith. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him (Col 2:6).

John 15:5 repeats the theme that union with Him is necessary for fruitfulness. The phrase translated “without me,” is literally, “apart from me”—meaning “not simply without my help, but separated from me.”³⁶ In other words, a branch that is not united to the vine cannot produce fruit. This again supports the view that the unfruitful branches represent unsaved people because believers are not separated from him even when they have sin in their lives.

For true believers the variable factor in John 15:7 is not whether they abide, but whether they allow His Word to abide in them. “If you abide in me (that is, if you are a true believer), and (if you allow) my Words (to) abide in you, whatever you wish you shall ask and it shall come to pass for you. “

The remainder of the passage is of interest to all believers but has little bearing on the question of identifying the unfruitful branches and so will not be discussed.

Conclusion

The conclusion drawn from this study is that our Lord, in His remarks about the unfruitful branches and what happens to them, is referring to unbelievers.

Many reasons for this conclusion have been discussed, the major reasons found in the passage itself may be summarized as follows.

1. John 15:6 seems to demand this conclusion and the rest of the context also favors it.
2. The word *airō*, in John 15:2, best harmonizes with this view since it usually signifies a removal.
3. John 15:4 and John 15:5 seem to teach that a branch truly united to the Vine must produce fruit. Any branch, therefore, which does not produce fruit is a dead branch not vitally united with Him, and will eventually be removed.
4. John 15:3, and also the whole passage, seems to indicate that the example of Judas was in mind. Judas was certainly an unsaved pretender.
5. By the statement, “I am the vine, the genuine one,” Jesus was most certainly drawing the disciples’ attention to the familiar Old Testament figure of the vine. Gill and others have remarked that not only was the nation Israel frequently designated as a vine, but the Targums also refer to Messiah himself as a vine.³⁷

Since the disciples would have thought of the Old Testament imagery it is interesting that several Old Testament passages describe

the burning of unfruitful branches (see particularly Ps 80:15–16). There can be no question but that in these passages the fire refers to the judgment of unbelievers.

There is much merit to Hengstenberg's "dispensational" interpretation of the passage.

...Jesus, in the whole verse [v. 6], has primarily in view the unbelieving Jews, who were as certainly branches in Christ, as they belonged to the people of God: the Jews had originally stood in relation to Christ—He was their divinely-appointed Shepherd, and they His flock; but they did not abide in Him, they violently sundered themselves from Him. A comparison with Ezekiel 15 makes this allusion to the Jews indubitable. There the Jews appear under the image of a degenerate and wild vine, which was fit for nothing in the world but to be burnt....38

It appears certain that Jesus had in mind those unbelieving Jews who pretended to be in right relationship to God (like the Pharisees—even like the high priest), but who were actually not united to the true Vine. The figure is wide enough to insist that He also had in mind those who "believed in his name" (superficially), but in whom He did not believe (Greek text, John 2:23–24). These were professors like Judas, and like much of "Christendom" today.

In Romans 11, Paul gives a similar analogy which describes the removal of branches because of unbelief.

And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive [branch], wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? (Rom 11:17–24 AV).

6. The word "branch" (klēma) used in John 15 is not used elsewhere in the New Testament. It means a "cutting" or a "slip."³⁹ Our Lord may have chosen this word as a designation for branches that are grafted into the vine. Based upon this possibility, Dr. Ironside's comment is very interesting.

There are no natural branches in the living vine. We are grafted in by faith. I do not know much about grafting, but I do know that it is one thing to put a graft in, and it is another thing for a graft to strike. It is one thing for a person to be outwardly linked with Him, and quite another for that person to have life in Christ. What is the test that proves whether he is really in the vine? If he bears fruit. All who have life bear some fruit for God. If there is no fruit, you can be sure there is no life, no real union with Christ.⁴⁰

Such a grafting, then, would be to make a profession of faith in Him—to profess a relationship with God. With this agree the words of Jesus, "every planting which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt 15:13).

The words of another famous Bible teacher of the past generation, Dr. Gaebelien, are an appropriate conclusion.

The branches which bear no fruit, which are taken away and finally perish do not represent true believers at all. Whenever a person takes upon himself the profession of a Christian, he claims by that outward profession to take the place, the position, the privileges and responsibilities of a believer in Christ, a separated one and also a branch in the vine. But while his profession in church membership indicates all this, in reality this person is only nominally a follower of Christ. He has not the reality of it, he does not possess what he has taken upon himself in profession, for he was never born again. As a result there is no fruit, because there is no life.... That there are thousands upon thousands of such branches, dead and unfruitful in the professing church, does not need any demonstration.... It is only too evident.⁴¹

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