

John 15 Commentary

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Another Chart from Charles Swindoll

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NOTE THIS PAGE IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

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 5:1-7 Jer 2:21 12:10 Eze 15:2-6 Ho 10:1 Zec 3:8 Mt 21:33 Lu 13:6
- husbandman: Song 7:12 8:11,12 Isa 27:2,3 60:21 61:3 Mt 20:1 Mk 12:1 1Co 3:9

**JESUS IS
THE VINE**

I am the true vine - Obviously Jesus is speaking metaphorically, so this begs the question of why does He use this metaphor? The

following passages will answer that question. And as an aside, if there is a true vine, what is the implication? Obviously that there will be "false" vines.

One striking feature of John are 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.

And My Father is the vinedresser - Note that Jesus is calling God His Father again, in so doing, repeatedly emphasizing His deity.

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

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."

TWO ACTIONS REGARDING EVERY BRANCH

Every branch in Me that (present tense - continually) **does not bear fruit, He** (present tense - continually) **takes away** ([airo](#)) - 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 removed.

And every branch that (present tense - continually) **bears fruit, He** (present tense - continually) **prunes it so that it may** (present tense - continually) **bear more fruit.**

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 3:18, 5:24, 5:29. The first reference (3:18) is especially important because it occurs in the context of 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.

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)

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)

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.”

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 - [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). 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. 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.

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

You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you

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

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

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
- without: or, severed from, Ac 4:12
- can: John 5:19 9:33 2Co 13:8 Php 4:13

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 15:6 “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 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

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

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
- ye shall: 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 5:14

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you

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

- is: 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: John 8:31 13:35 Mt 5:44 Lu 6:35

MUCH FRUIT GLORIFIES THE FATHER

My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples- In Mt 5:16 Jesus said ""Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Here Jesus tells us how to let our light shine -- by bearing much fruit. And just as with the "good works" Jesus described in the Sermon on the Mount, the "much fruit" does not draw attention to us but points others (lost and found) to God the Father.

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
- continue: John 15:11 1Jn 2:28 Jude 1:20

Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love

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.

- ye 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

HOW TO ABIDE IN THE LOVE OF JESUS

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.

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: Isa 53:11 62:4 Jer 32:41 33:9 Zep 3:17 Lu 15:5,9,23,32 1Jn 1:4
- your: 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

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). In answer to your question "What things?" we see that Jesus is referring to things he has spoken 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 to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full

John 15:12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

- John13:34 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

JESUS COMMANDS LOVE ONE ANOTHER

This is My commandment, that you love one another -

just as I have loved you - This should prompt the question "How has Jesus loved them?" For the answer we need to go to the next verse.

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

- John10:11,15 Ro 5:6-8 Eph 5:2 1Jn 4:7-11

Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends - How does Jesus describe love here? It is clearly by being willing to die for one's friends. 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.

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

HOW TO BE A FRIEND OF JESUS

You are My friends if you do what I command you

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

THE BENEFITS OF BEING A FRIEND OF JESUS

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

It is notable that as we walk through John, we observe a progression in intimacy between the Lord and His disciple from servants (Jn 13:13,16), to friends (Jn 15:15) and finally to brothers (Jn 20:17).

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.

- have not: John 15:19 6:70 13:18 Lu 6:13 Ac 1:24 9:15 10:41 22:14 Ro 9:11-16,21 1Jn 4:10,19
- ordained: 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
- bring: 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
- that your: 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
- that whatsoever: John 15:7 14:13,14 16:23,24 Mt 21:22

You did not choose Me but I chose you - Here we see a clear allusion to the doctrine of election. But introduces the dramatic change of direction regarding choice. God chooses, not man.

and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit - Why did Jesus appoint the 12 disciples? Once again we see His emphasis on the importance of bearing fruit. Go and grow (bear) is the thought.

and that your fruit would remain - Remain is in the present tense which means continually remain. So what is Jesus saying about the longevity of spiritual **fruit**? That it would continue with the implication that the fruit would endure throughout eternity!

so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.

John 15:17 “This I command you, that you love one another.

- John15:12 1Pe 2:17 1Jn 3:14-17

THE SAVIOR COMMANDS SELFLESS LOVE

This I command you, that you love 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.

John 15:18 “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.

- John15:23-25 3:20 7:7 1Ki 22:8 Isa 49:7 53:3 Zec 11:8 Mt 5:11 10:22 Mt 24:9 Mk 13:13 Lu 6:22 Heb 12:2 Jas 4:4 1Jn 3:1,3,13

WARNING TO DISCIPLES OF THE WORLD'S HATRED

If the world (present tense - continually) **hates** ([miseo](#)) **you** - **If** introduces a first class conditional statement that is true. 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!"

Can you see a principle that comes from Jesus' warning? Suffering caused by our allegiance to Christ proves we belong to Him rather than to the world.

You know that it has hated ([miseo](#)) **Me before it hated you** - Know is ginosko which speaks of an experiential knowledge. The

world will make it blatantly clear that they hate the disciples. This will be their experience. Note that has hated is in the perfect tense which speaks of enduring, persistent, unabated hatred of Jesus. Indeed, this hatred will persist throughout eternity for those who reject His offer of salvation.

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" (1Jn5:19).

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

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

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.

If you were of the world, the world would love its own

But - Term of contrast. Always pause to ponder asking what's the change of direction?

because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates([miseo](#)) you

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 7:32 8:59 10:31 11:57 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

THE SLAVE-MASTER PRINCIPLE

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.'**

If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you - The hatred of the world of Jesus is manifest by persecution of His followers.

if they kept My word, they will keep yours also - This truth would be encouraging the the disciples.

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

Related Passages:

John 16:3 “These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me.

But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake,

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)?

they do not know the One who sent Me

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

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin

John 15:23 “He who hates Me hates My Father also.

- John 8:40-42 1Jn 2:23 2Jn 1:9

He who hates Me hates My Father also

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: John 6:36 12:45 14:9 Mt 21:32
- hated: Ex 20:5 De 5:9 Ps 81:15 Pr 8:36 Ro 1:30 8:7,8 2Ti 3:4 Jas 4:4

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.

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, All in Gr

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.

But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE

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

ONE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

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 15:27 and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

- ye also: 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
- have: Mk 1:1 Lu 1:2,3 1Jn 1:1,2

and you will testify also - So not just the Spirit will testify of Jesus, but also the prophecy that so would His followers.

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