

The Gospel of John

Believe and Live!

Lesson 16

John 15:1–27

The Vine and the Branches

Jesus had turned His steps toward the cross, knowing that He only had a few hours remaining in which to introduce some important truths to His disciples. They had left the Upper Room and begun walking toward the Garden of Gethsemane. The path went around the outer walls of old Jerusalem, across the Tyropoeon Valley, up through the Kidron Valley and by the many vineyards along the outskirts of the city.

As Jesus so often did in His earthly ministry, He would take full advantage of whatever was at hand to illustrate particular truths. Beneath the full Passover moon that illuminated the vineyards, Jesus began to deliver a vitally important address that has become known as “The Vine and the Branches.”

At a glance ~ **Read John 15:1–17.**

As you glance at these verses for the first time, notice there is a difference between *fruitless* and *fruitful* branches for the Lord. Please note your initial findings below.

The imagery of the vine that Jesus uses in this passage was one that every Jew would easily understand. Take a look at a few Old Testament passages that speak of Israel as the vine. Summarize each one in the space provided.

Psalm 80:8–10: _____

Isaiah 5:1–2, 7: _____

In John 15, Jesus teaches that the vineyard belongs to the Father and Jesus is the vine and His followers are the branches.

1. If God is the Master Gardener, who does Jesus say that He is? v. 1

2. According to verse 2, what does the Father do with the branches that have never borne true fruit?
 - a. What does He do with the branches that do bear fruit? Why?

The goal of pruning is to direct as much water and nutrients through the branches to the fruit to produce the best quality fruit possible. One fruitless branch had already been removed—Judas Iscariot. Jesus wanted to highlight in verse 3, the importance that the remaining disciples did not need to be cut off or to be pruned *to be clean* (NIV) because they had already been cleansed by Jesus' word to them. Now He will deal with the prerequisite for a fruitful life on the part of all believers.

3. What does Jesus state is primary for maintaining this fruitful life? v. 4 Why is this essential?

4. What great truths does Jesus relate in verse 5?

5. What happens to the branch—the person—who does not abide in Him? v. 6
 - a. What beautiful promise is there for the branches who do abide in Him? v. 7

6. When a person bears much fruit what is the two-fold result that takes place? v.8

Take a closer look ~ John 15:5

(Memorize and meditate on the memory verse each time you open your lesson.)

“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.”

What does this verse reveal to you about Jesus? (Think carefully about what this means.) What does it tell you about your relationship with Him?

In focus ~ (Key words) **Abide; Fruit**

The sovereignty of God depicted in His work is one of the great revelations of this chapter. Look up these words using the resources you have on hand (Bible translations, dictionary, concordance) and write a definition.

Abide: _____

Fruit: _____

The kind of fruit God desires to produce in us is true Christ-like character. How is it manifested in believers' lives? See Galatians 5:22–23. Are these becoming more evident in your life? Please explain.

God's role in fruit bearing is to prune and produce; our part is to abide or remain in Jesus. He promises to live in us to make this possible as we continue to draw closer to Him. We do this by staying in His Word, talking with Him daily, worshiping Him, and obeying His commands. In other words, our part is to build good spiritual habits that allow Him to become evident. Remember that as you go through the pruning process, though it is painful, it produces quality, godly fruit!

Love and Joy Complete

Outlook ~ Read John 15:9–17 for review.

Christ-like love is the answer to the difficult situations we face in life. Instead of looking for love in all the wrong places, our lives should be marked by His love and, if it is, then we have everything we need to respond properly in our relationships and circumstances. In the next few verses Jesus tells us how.

1. What kind of love does Jesus say He has for you? vv. 9–10
 - a. What is the key to abiding in His love? What does this mean to you personally?

2. Why is Jesus teaching His followers such important truths? v. 11

3. What is the Lord's greatest commandment for His followers? vv. 12–13 Why?
 - a. What qualifies you to be a friend of Jesus? v. 14

 - b. Because you're His friend, what has He made available to you? v. 15

The kind of love God offers us is *Agape' love*—the unconditional love which seeks to love others without expecting or asking anything in return. It loves even those who are unlovely and who desire to do us harm. God's agape' love seeks out the very best for the one being loved. When we come to realize that God loved us enough to send His Son to die for us, we in turn can love others to Christ. When they see His love in us, they want to know Jesus! This is why He has commanded that we love one another (v. 17).

Selah ~

Jesus declares that *you are chosen!* Imagine all that this means for you. Because of this wonderful, indescribable truth, what makes your joy complete? v. 16

The World's Rejection

Outlook ~ Read John 15:18–27.

Here in chapter 15, Jesus has clearly laid out the secret of a successful and fruitful Christian life: “Abide in Me, and I in you” (v.4). He also teaches that when the world becomes hostile and hateful toward us, our primary weapon and strategy is Christ-like love. We will face the same hostility Jesus faced and in the remaining verses, He prepares us to deal with hatred.

1. What should every believer expect? vv. 18–19
 - a. What is the reason for this antagonism?
 - b. What guarantee does Jesus make to every believer? v. 20
 - c. What would He have you to remember? v. 20

Hate—the absolute opposite of love—is what we can expect from the world. We will be treated in this way because of Jesus’ name and because hateful individuals do not know the One whom God sent (v. 21).

2. In addition to the preaching of the gospel (v. 22), what else did Jesus do that brought about conviction? vv. 24–25

The ultimate end of such hatred Jesus declares in verse 23: “*He who hates Me hates My Father also.*” All of this happened in fulfillment of the word: “*They hated Me without a cause*” (v. 25).

Verses 26–27 are the transition into chapter 16 of John. Jesus will comfort His disciples with the revelation of the Holy Spirit’s purpose and the truth that Jesus Christ has overcome the world!

3. What do you learn about the Holy Spirit in verses 26–27?

Selah ~

- a. What do you learn here about the difference the Holy Spirit makes in *your* life?

- b. How does this assurance make *you* feel about God’s plan for *you*?

More like Jesus ~

Are *you* becoming more like Jesus? Absolutely! Every time you open the Word and spend time getting to know Him more intimately, you partake in the life-long process of drawing near—going deeper—bearing fruit—becoming more like Him. As you close your lesson today, determine to put into practice what you’ve learned by noting it below.

- Recite your memory verse _____

- Reflect on a lesson you received _____

- Respond with prayer and praise to God _____

Notes