

**Introduction:**

- John 15-17 is much like the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5-7; not in content but in intensity of content. John gives us a picture of Jesus in the most intimate of settings and conversations with the 12.
- These three chapters reveal the depth and intensity of conversation that Jesus shared with the twelve before He goes to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray.

**I. Growing Grapes**

- A. In John 15, Jesus starts this section of teaching with a story to illustrate profound truth. There are three parts of this story. The Father, Jesus, and His followers/us. And isn't this those who have been involved all along? From Genesis to Revelation it is about the Father, His Son and His people. The Father has always been about blessing or causing His people to be fruitful in every way. We know:
1. The Father is the vine dresser. It's the vine dressers job to see to the health and productivity of the vineyard. The vinedresser is the caretaker...quality control.
  2. Jesus is the vine. He is the 'stock' or the quality of the vine that will be producing the grapes. He is both root and vine! If the root and vine are healthy the branches will be healthy.
  3. His followers are called the branches. We are the branches that grow forth from the vine and will actually produce the fruit. Fruit is not found on the vine it is found on the branches connected to the vine.
- B. Jesus declares, *I am the True Vine*: true - "It denotes a reality that is firm, solid, binding, and hence true. Strongly suggests integrity. Genuine reality. The root word of 'true' means 'non-concealment' there is nothing hidden. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (p. 37). W.B. Eerdmans. This is who Jesus is! It is a concept found through out the OT.
1. Psalms 80:8-16 *"You brought the vine out of Egypt."*
  2. Isaiah 5:1-7 *"My beloved had a vineyard."*
  3. Vines in the OT had to do with Israel as well as the prophetic announcement of Jesus as a vine. God was looking for the nation of Israel to bear fruit so that the world would know Him. But she often failed. Thus the reason for 'solid stock' to enter the picture.
  4. Jesus' job is to be Truth itself!
- C. What Father does:
1. If it does not bear fruit the branch is cut off the vine. (kinda like, if salt loses its saltiness it is worthless.) That is a 'raw' word!
  2. If it does bear fruit it gets pruned...in order that it becomes more fruitful.
  3. Pruning leads to increase capacity of production of fruit.

## II. Growing Believers

- A. The Father is after fruitfulness in our lives. Increase!
1. He wants fruitfulness in every part of our lives: body, soul and spirit; in relationship to Him.
  2. He wants us to be fruitful in winning souls.
  3. He wants us to be fruitful in good works.
- B. You have been washed. This is the starting point!!! Not the finish line!!!
1. Clean because of the Word! *"Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you."* (John 15:3, ESV)
  2. *"that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,"* (Ephesians 5:26, ESV)
  3. *"he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,"* (Titus 3:5, ESV). Being washed is the only way you can connect with the Vine! Now, Jesus lays out the next powerful truth!
- C. Abide in me. John 15:4
1. This word 'abide' means a. "to stay in a place," figuratively "to remain" b. "to stand against opposition," "to hold out," "to stand fast," c. "to stay still," and d. "to remain," "to endure," "to stay in force." The *moné* brings out the indestructibility of the union. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (p. 582). W.B. Eerdmans.
  2. Abiding and bearing fruit is what gives a man eternal security regarding his washing. *"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me."* (John 15:4, ESV)
    - a) The branch can't bear fruit without remaining in the vine and neither can we as followers if we do not abide in Christ.
    - b) *"You are the branches."* vs 5. He has already said what happens to us. One or the other:
      - (1) you get cut off the vine for not producing
      - (2) you get pruned on the vine to produce even more.
    - c) 9 times in 10 verses Jesus uses the Word 'abide'. Do you think He is making a point?

## III. Importance of Abiding

- A. The Father is glorified as we abide in Christ and prove to be His disciples. *"By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples."* (John 15:8, ESV).
- B. We know we are abiding in Him if we keep His commandments. This is not a behavior

item. Keeping the commandments comes from a heart that love. Because we love we obey! Matthew 22:37-39 - We love God and we love others! These are the first and second great commandments.

- C. We know we are abiding if we abide in His love.
  - 1. Paul - 1 Corinthians 13:4-8
  - 2. Another way we show we are abiding is our love for:
    - a) Prayer - talking with Him
    - b) the Word - listening to Him
    - c) Worship - loving Him with all our heart.
    - d) Serving - bringing freedom and life to others...and as we do Father is glorified.
  - 3. It is all about Jesus! *"We love because he first loved us."* (1 John 4:19, ESV)

**Conclusion:**

- Abide in Christ, that is the sum of the matter.