

“FRUITFULNESS THROUGH FELLOWSHIP”

John 15:1-8 Lesson #6

Two parts to the Upper Room Discourse:

	Chapter 14	Chapters 15-16
Setting	In the Upper Room	On the way to garden
Sections	Jesus comforts	Jesus teaches
	Jesus tells the disciples what He will do for them	Jesus teaches the disciples what they are to do for Him

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser (cultivator).” 15:1

Reasons to use the vine as an illustration:

1. They were probably walking through a vineyard in Kidron Valley
2. Vine has only 1 purpose -- bear fruit. Other trees for shade, firewood, lumber.
3. OT – Israel is called a “false vine” -- imperfectly represented God to world -- Hos. 10:1-2

NAU **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. ² Their heart is faithless; Now they must bear their guilt. The LORD will break down their altars *And* destroy their *sacred* pillars.

NT – JC is the true vine – Perfect Representation of God to the world.

Identity of the branches: Believers “in Christ,” placed in union with Christ by the bap. of the HS.

NAU **John 15:5a** “I am the vine, you are the branches.” Chrstns repr. G to wrld by bearing fruit.

Identity of the fruit:

Anything produced by God through the Christian for God’s glory. Obedient life.

- 1) Christlike character – “fruit” of HS plus other Christlike traits
- 2) Christian ministry – especially witnessing; use of spiritual gifting

How can we be fruitful for Jesus Christ?

1 FRUITFULNESS IS PROMOTED BY THE MINISTRY OF THE FATHER, 15:2-3

- A. The Father lifts up the **fruitless** branch, 15:2b.

"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away;"

Watch out for NIV **John 15:2** “He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit,”

Word Study: airo

(1) literally, as lifting up something *take up, pick, raise* (MT 17.27; RV 10.5); absolutely, of a ship *weigh anchor, depart* (AC 27.13); hyperbolically, of a mountain *arise* (MT 21.21); idiomatically *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); *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 *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)

The action here is to encourage fruitbearing in a branch too low to the ground.

B. The Father cleanses the **feeble** branch by the Word, 15:2c-3.

and every *branch* that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

Word Study: “prunes” kathairo

1. to cause something to become clean, *make clean*
2. to remove superfluous growth from a plant, *clear, prune* of a vine

Ways to “cleanse” or “prune”:

1. Spray it to wash off insects, moss, other parasites.
2. Trim off “sucker shoots” that robs the vine of nutrients & collects debris.

Father cleans and prunes by means of His Word. The word cleanses our lives.

That’s what Father does for us. What is our responsibility ?

2 FRUITFULNESS IS PRODUCED THROUGH ABIDING IN JESUS CHRIST, 15:4-6

^{NAU} **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.

^{NIV} **John 15:4** Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

□ To “abide” in Christ is to be: in perfect, vital communion with Jesus.

Of the 118 passages in which meno occurs in the NT, 67 are found in the Johannine writings. The word means: “remain, continue in, endure, keep on, stay.” Here, constancy of fellowship with Jesus.

This is NOT saying that we must abide before He will continue in our lives.

1. Abiding is not necessary for salvation. (4 reasons:)
 - a. It’s possible to be “in Christ” & not bear fruit.
 - b. Jesus talking to disciples.
 - c. Jesus’ disciples are “already clean” (v.3).
 - d. Being “in Christ” is not the same as “abiding in Christ.”
 - 1) Being “in Christ” – union with Christ. Pos. as result of bap. of HS
 - 2) “abiding in Christ” – communion with Christ. Depends on me.

Abiding is a command.

2. Abiding is imperative to be fruitful.

a. How to abide in Christ:

Actively -- Choose to maintain a close intimate relationship by obeying.

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

Passively -- Let JC abide in you. We do not have power to produce fruit! We must rest and trust Him to produce the fruit.

b. Hindrances to effective, fruitful lives:

- 1) Disease – sin. Compromising in sm. ways – porno; cheating on taxes; lying to someone to look better;
- 2) Running to leaf – happens when energy for fruit produces only leaves.
- 3) Aging -- older believers sometimes leave their first love (Rv. 2)
- 4) Allowing weeds and other things to grow and crowd out. Cf. Mk. 4:18-19

NAU **Mark 4:18** "And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word,¹⁹ but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."

Not possible to bear fruit without abiding in JC, yet some branches do not bear fruit. Contradiction? NO! Only difference is the "abiding."

□ Abiding in Christ makes all the difference:

1. Abiding results in fruitfulness, 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."

Note progression: (v.2) bear "fruit," "more fruit;" Here -- (vv.5-8) "much fruit"

When Jesus says "apart from Me you can do nothing" He's not referring to a person's inability to do something, or even to do good. It is the inability of believer to produce anything that brings glory to God.

2. Not abiding results in uselessness, 15:6

NAU **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.

2 PARTS TO THIS VERSE, 15:6:

#1 – action of God toward one who does not abide in JC. The person who persists in sin becomes useless to the Father so He “throws him away” (puts him on the shelf), (and eventually) takes him home to glory.

#2 – action of any cultivator toward useless branches. “Them” = branches, not people. Not destruction of Christians to hell fire.

3 FRUITFULNESS IS PROVEN THROUGH THE RESULTS OF ABIDING, 15:7-8

Result #1 – Prayers are answered, 15:7

NAU **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."

Result #2 – The Father is glorified, 15:8a

NAU **John 15:8** "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit."

Result #3 – Discipleship is proven, 15:8b.

"and so prove to be My disciples."

SUMMARY:

Remain on (abide in Jesus) the “Love Cycle”
Trust Him (abide; rest in Him) to enable you to obey.



Next Week: John 15:9-17 “Christlike Love”