

# The Vine and the branches

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## INTRODUCTION

John 15:1-8 "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 bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, 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, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

Before beginning a study of these verses it is necessary that we dispose of a false concept concerning them. Because of a misconception many have missed the simple but important teaching of Jesus.

Jesus is not saying "I am the vine and the various denominations are the branches." This is a popular concept. However, this could not be true because there were no denominations at that time. Also, Christ was speaking to individuals and not to denominations.

He simply said, "I am the vine, you (individual disciples) are the branches." Under consideration here are individual disciples of Jesus and their relationship to him.

What then is the primary teaching of these verses?

This is another parable of Jesus. The context will reveal that these were among the final words that Christ spoke to his disciples just before his betrayal and trials. They form part of his farewell address.

This parable teaches that while separated bodily from them there would continue to be a spiritual connection between them and Jesus. This connection is a vital one—each is a part of the other. The disciple is in Christ and Christ is in the disciple. The theme then is the relationship between Christ and his disciples.

For convenience of study we want to divide this lesson into three parts.

- (a) The necessity of this relationship,
- (b) The consequences of this relationship, and
- (c) How to maintain this relationship.

## 1. NECESSITY OF THIS RELATIONSHIP.

A Jesus said, "**I am the true vine.**" Thus he places himself at the very source of all blessings. Without the vine, the branches can do nothing for they depend upon vine for their existence.

A disciple cannot cleanse himself. "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you" (vs. 3).

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One cannot bear fruit separate and apart from Jesus just as a branch cannot bear any fruit by itself. Neither can a disciple bear fruit unless he is abiding in Him. When we do abide in Him we can bear much fruit. Jesus further says, "You can do nothing" outside of Him.

Christians cannot find the spiritual nutrients if we are spiritually separated from the Lord. "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you" (vs. 7).

**B** Jesus says, "My Father is the vinedresser" (vs. 1). This description means more than a vinedresser. It means the owner as well as the one who cares for the vine. Thus, God plays a definite roll in this relationship between us and the Lord.

**C** Every branch must abide in Christ. Those that do not, the Father—the vinedresser takes away. "he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned" (vs. 6).

It is possible for a vine to be connected and yet not bear fruit. Jesus says that when we do not bear fruit, "He (God) takes away" (vs.2). Thus one can fall from grace.

If this is not true then the argument would mean that God will try to cut off the vine a branch which was never in the vine. A good question for all of us is, [what fruit am I bearing?](#)

Jesus says that when the vine bears fruit, the vinedresser "prunes, that it may bear more" (vs. 2). This is true of the faithful Christian. The more we serve God the greater our ability should be. The Lord expects us to bear more fruit as we mature and are in the kingdom longer.

One can of course do the very opposite. We can neglect our talents and loose our ability. The church in Ephesus had declined in their first love. They did not love God with the fervour they had in the beginning and thus was rebuked. According to [Revelation 2:5](#).

**D** Jesus told them they were clean as a result of their relationship to Him. He says however that it was "because of the word which I spoke unto you" (vs. 3). The word then plays a definite part in our relationship to the Lord.

God prunes out of our lives those things which are not Christ-like by teaching us what we ought to be like. This cleansing action involves the Holy Spirit, because it was the Holy Spirit that gave us the word.

**E** In this parable we see that the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are all involved in this special relationship of the vine and branches. If we do not abide in the vine we are then without these three and are hopelessly lost.

## 2. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS RELATIONSHIP.

**A** Jesus said, "He who abides in Me, and I in him, bear much fruit; for without me you can do nothing." In vs. 8 He says, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

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**B** Outside of this relationship one cannot bear fruit to the glory of God. One may be a good moral person but his fruit is not to the glory of God for he has not yet submitted his will to the Father's thus he is not in Christ – he is not a branch attached to The Vine.

**C** There are two results of fruit bearing. **First** God is glorified. Jesus said, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit." Fruit bearing shows to the world what God's plan can and will do for mankind. **Second**, by bearing fruit we maintain our relationship with the Lord.

**D** Jesus further said, "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered." This casting out is a rejection by God. Thus, we see again one can fall from God's grace.

**E** Another good consequence of this relationship is that Jesus said, "Ask what you will." This is a definite blessing the consequences of which is always for good. **1 John 3:22** says, "And whatsoever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."

**F** Everything the vine possesses belongs to the branches. The sap nourishment, even the very life of the vine belongs to the branches. All it receives it give to them. Christ's disciples are "joint heirs" with Him. The writer of **Hebrews** says, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:16, 17).

## 3. HOW DO WE MAINTAIN THIS RELATIONSHIP?

**A** **Verses 9-11** we must continue in his love: "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; continue in My love. 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. These things I have spoken to you that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."

**B** The apostle John must have been impressed with this teaching for later on he wrote in **1 John 2:3-6**: "And by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."

**C** Christ asked nothing of his disciples that he himself was not willing to do. He said in **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."

## CONCLUSION.

What is your relationship to Christ? Are you connected? Are you a Christian?

How is your relationship to Christ? Are you bearing much fruit or not fruit at all?

"You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen 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."