Jesus, the True Vine

John 15:1-11

**From Believers Bible Commentary and eSword**

**John 15:2** "EveryG3956 branchG2814 in Me that does not bearG5342 fruitG2590, He **takesG142** awayG142; and everyG3956 *branch* that bearsG5342 fruitG2590, He prunesG2508 it soG2443 that it may bearG5342 moreG4183 fruitG2590.

**G142** αἴρω airō *ah'ee-ro*

A primary verb; to *lift*; by implication to *take* *up* or *away*; figuratively to *raise* (the voice), *keep* *in* *suspense* (the mind); specifically to *sail* away (that is, *weigh* *anchor*); by Hebraism (compare [H5375]) to *expiate* sin: - away with, bear (up), carry, lift up, loose, make to doubt, put away, remove, take (away, up).

**John 15:1** In the OT, the nation of Israel was depicted as a vine planted by Jehovah. But the nation proved unfaithful and unfruitful, so the Lord Jesus now presented *Himself* as **the true vine**, the perfect fulfillment of all the other types and shadows. God the **Father is the vinedresser**.

**John 15:2** Opinions differ as to what is meant by **the branch in** Him **that does not bear fruit**. Some think that this is a false professor. He pretends to be a Christian but has never really been united to Christ by faith. Others think it is a true Christian who loses his salvation because of his failure to bear fruit. This is *clearly impossible* because it contradicts so many other passages which teach that the believer has an *eternal* salvation. Others think that it is a true Christian who becomes a backslider. He gets away from the Lord and becomes interested in the things of this world. He fails to manifest the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Exactly what the Lord does to the unfruitful branch depends on how the Greek verb *airo* is translated. It can mean **“takes away”** as in the King James tradition (also translated that way in John\_1:29). Then it would refer to the discipline of physical death (1Co\_11:30). However, the same word may mean “lifts up” (as in John\_8:59). Then it would be the *positive ministry* of encouraging the fruitless branch by making it easier to get light and air, and hopefully, to bear fruit.

The **branch that bears fruit** is the Christian who is growing more like the Lord Jesus. Even such vines need to be pruned or cleansed. Just as a real vine must be cleaned from insects, mildew, and fungus, so a Christian must be cleansed from worldly things that cling to him.

**John 15:3** The cleansing agent is **the word** of the Lord. The disciples had originally been cleansed by **the word** at the time of their conversion. Just as the Savior had been talking to them, His Word had had a purifying effect on their lives. Thus, this verse may refer to justification *and* sanctification.

**John 15:4** To **abide** means to stay where you are. The Christian has been placed in Christ; that is his position. In daily walk, he should stay in intimate fellowship with the Lord. A **branch** abides in a vine by drawing all its life and nourishment from the vine. So we abide in Christ by spending time in prayer, reading and obeying His Word, fellowshipping with His people, and being continually conscious of our union with Him. As we thus maintain constant contact with Him, we are conscious of His abiding in us and supplying us with spiritual strength and resources. **The branch** can only **bear fruit** as **it abides in the vine**. The only way believers can bear the fruit of a Christ-like character is by living in touch with Christ moment by moment.

**John 15:5** Christ Himself is **the vine**; believers are vine **branches**. It is not a question of the branch living its life for the Vine, but simply of letting the life of the Vine flow out through the branches. Sometimes we pray, “Lord, help me to live my life for You.” It would be better to pray, “Lord Jesus, live out Your life through me.” **Without** Christ, we **can do nothing**. A vine branch has one great purpose—to bear fruit. It is useless for making furniture or for building homes. It does not even make good firewood. But it *is* good for fruit bearing—as long as it abides in the vine.

**John 15:6** Verse 6 has caused much difference of opinion. Some believe that the person described is a believer who falls into sin and is subsequently lost. Such an interpretation is in direct contradiction to the many verses of Scripture which teach that no true child of God *will ever perish*. Others believe that this person is a professor—one who pretends to be a Christian but who was never born again. Judas is often used as an illustration.

We believe that this person is a true believer because it is with true Christians that this section is concerned. The subject is not salvation but abiding and *fruitbearing*. But through carelessness and prayerlessness this believer gets out of touch with the Lord. As a result, he commits some sin, and his testimony is ruined. Through failure to abide in Christ, he is thrown **out as a branch**—not by Christ, but by other people. The branches are gathered and thrown **into the fire, and they are burned**. It is not God who does it, but people. What does this mean? It means that people scoff at this backslidden Christian. They drag his name in the mud. They throw his testimony as a Christian into the fire. This is well illustrated in the life of David. He was a true believer, but he became careless toward the Lord and committed the sins of adultery and murder. He caused the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. Even today, atheists ridicule the name of David (and of David's God). They cast him, as it were, into the fire.

[Note: My belief is the person described above (John 15:6) is carnal, having not entered the standing grace gate, and therefore, at the judgment seat, his works will be burned up by fire and he will be cast into the outer darkness to remain there during the millennium, the 1,000 years before entering eternity.]

**John 15:7** Abiding is the secret of a successful prayer life. The closer we get to the Lord, the more we will learn to think His thoughts after Him. The more we get to know Him through His Word, the more we will understand His will. The more our will agrees with His, the more we can be sure of having our prayers answered.

**John 15:8** As the children of God exhibit the likeness of Christ to the world, the **Father is glorified**. People are forced to confess that He must be a great God when He can transform such wicked sinners into such godly saints. Notice the progression in this chapter: fruit (v. 2), more fruit (v. 2), **much fruit** (v. 8).

**“So you will be My disciples.”** This means that we *prove to be* His **disciples** when we abide in Him. Others can then see that we are true disciples, that we resemble our Lord.

**John 15:9** The love which the Savior has for us is the same as the love of **the Father** for the Son. Our hearts are made to bow in worship when we read such words. It is the same in quality and degree. It is “a vast, wide, deep, unmeasurable love, that passeth knowledge, and can never be fully comprehended by man.” It is “a deep where all our thoughts are drowned.” **“Abide in My love,”** said our Lord. This means we should continue to realize His love and to enjoy it in our lives.

**John 15:10** The first part of verse 10 tells us how we can abide in His love; it is by keeping His **commandments**. “There is no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.” The second half of the verse sets before us our Perfect Example. The Lord Jesus **kept** His **Father's commandments**. Everything He did was in obedience to the will of God. He remained in the constant enjoyment of the Father's **love**. Nothing ever came in to mar that sweet sense of loving fellowship.

**John 15:11** Jesus found His own deep **joy** in communion with God His Father. He wanted His disciples to have that joy that comes from dependence upon Him. He wanted *His* **joy** to be theirs. Man's idea of joy is to be as happy as he can by leaving God out of his life. The Lord taught that real joy comes by taking God into one's life as much as possible. **“That your joy may be full,”** or “fulfilled.” Their joy would be fulfilled in abiding in Christ and in keeping His commandments. Many have used John 15 to teach doubts concerning the security of the believer. They have used the earlier verses to show that a sheep of Christ might eventually perish. But the Lord's purpose was not “that your doubts may be full,” but **that your joy may be full**.

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