

Believe and Have Life

The Gospel of John

John 15:1–17

Read John 15:1–17.

1. If you were the one creating headings for Bible passages, what would you use for this passage?

2. The vine imagery Jesus uses in John 15 is not new in Scripture. “In the Old Testament the vine is a common symbol for Israel, the covenant people of God.”¹ Although loved by God, the Israelites tragically failed to produce the good fruit God desired (📖* Ps. 80:8-16; Is. 5:1-7; Jer. 2:20-22). In light of this, why do you think Jesus refers to himself as the “true” vine?

3. In this passage, as in the Old Testament, the Father is the gardener. Who do the branches represent?

4. Jesus describes two types of branches.
 - a. What is the difference between them? (v. 2)

 - b. What does the gardener do with the branches that do not bear fruit? (vv. 2, 6)

 - c. What does the gardener do with the branches that do bear fruit? Why? (v. 2)

 - d. What is the purpose of pruning? Have you experienced pruning in your life that has made you “more fruitful” (v. 2)?

5. Jesus uses the word “remain” 11 times in this passage. What benefits do the branches receive from remaining in the vine?
 - v. 1

 - v. 2

 - v. 4

 - v. 5

 - v. 7

 - v. 8

6. Choose one of the benefits from the above list and consider what it might look like in your life.

*The 📖 symbol indicates verses for further study.

¹ D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 513.

7. Jesus exhorts his disciples to remain in his love, just as he remains in the Father's love (v. 10). How do the following verses show how Jesus' relationship with his Father models the disciples' relationship with Jesus?

Compare Jn. 5:19	with Jn. 15:5
Compare Jn. 5:20	with Jn. 15:15
Compare Jn. 15:9	with Jn. 15:12
Compare Jn. 13:1	with Jn. 15:17
Compare Jn. 20:21	with Jn. 15:16

8. What does Jesus say his followers need to do to remain in his love? (v. 10)
9. Understanding the love Jesus has for us and obeying his commands are designed to be inseparable.
- a. Fill in the blanks and compare the following statements.
- If you _____ me, you will _____. (Jn. 14:15)
- If you _____, you will _____. (v. 10)
- b. How do love and obedience nurture and encourage each other?
10. In verse 17, Jesus sums up the commands his disciples must obey into one: Love each other.
- a. How will the disciples know how to do this? (v. 12)
- b. How does Jesus demonstrate what love looks like? (vv. 13, 15)
11. The theme and importance of bearing fruit runs through this entire passage. It would be easy to feel overwhelmed or weighed down with this responsibility. How do we bear fruit? (v. 5)
12. The fruit we bear is not a result of what we do, but of what God produces in us. D.A. Carson puts it this way, "This fruit is nothing less than the outcome of persevering dependence on the vine."² Read through the passage again and identify the fruit that will come from such dependence. (vv. 10a, 11, 13, 17; see also Jn. 14:27)
13. Jesus says being connected to him will result in fruit in our lives. Sometimes it's hard to see. Share together in your group ways you see fruit being produced in one another.

² Ibid, 511.