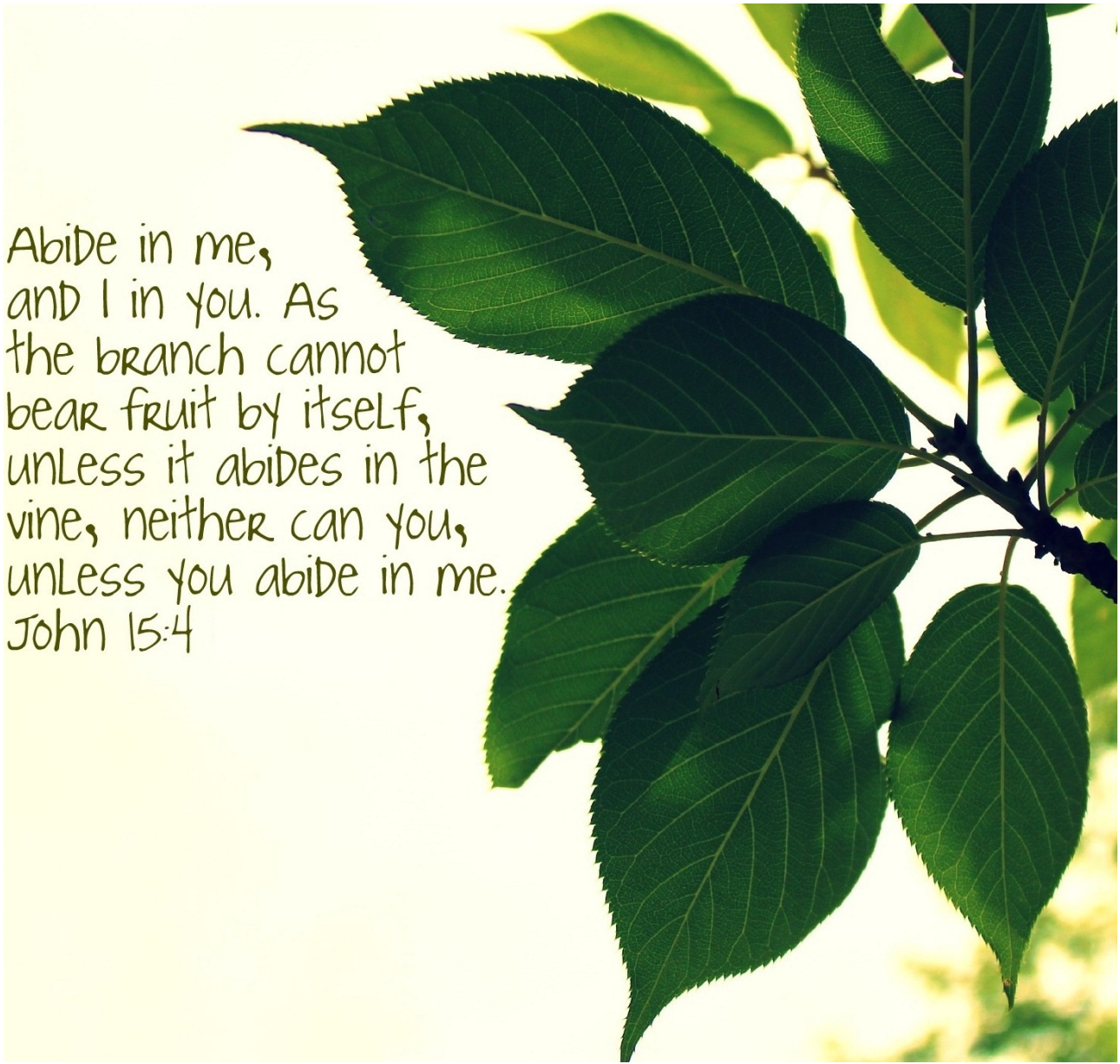




Abide in me,
and I in you. As
the branch cannot
bear fruit by itself,
unless it abides in the
vine, neither can you,
unless you abide in me.
John 15:4

Abide in The Vine

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"Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."

1 Corinthians 2:13

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The Disciples' Relation to Jesus

John 15:1-11¹

¹ "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of (lit. from) itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you unless you abide in Me. 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. 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. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 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. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full."

¹ All Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible* unless otherwise noted.

The Disciples' Relation to One Another

John 15:12-17

¹² “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. ¹⁷ This I command you, that you love one another.”

The Disciples' Relation to the World

John 15:18-27

¹⁸ “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ²¹ But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ He who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. ²⁵ But *they have done this* to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, ‘THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.’ ²⁶ “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, ²⁷ and you *will* testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”

The Context

It's enlightening to look at this passage of Scripture in its context. John 15:1-11, puts forth the disciple's relation to Jesus: We are to abide in the Vine. Immediately following in verses 12-17, John gives the disciples' relation to one another: We are to love one another as Jesus loved His friends. And following that, in verses 18-25, John gives the disciples' relation to the world: The world will hate and persecute you as it hated and persecuted Jesus. In verse 5 Jesus made a very clear and simple point: **"Apart from Me you can do nothing."** There is much to learn about "abiding in the Vine" but we can begin by making this clear and simple deduction: **Without abiding in Him, we will not be able to love one another as He commanded, nor be able to stand faithful against the hatred and persecution of the world.**

If we look at the slightly larger context of this passage, I think it will serve to be even more enlightening. I am referring to the chapters before and after John 15. In John 13, we have the proceedings of "The Last Supper (Passover)".² Then in John 14, which is taking place while they are still in the upper room, we find His important conversation with His disciples about the role of the Holy Spirit. At the end of chapter 14, Jesus says: **"Get up, let us go from here."**³ So at this point they would be walking towards the Garden of Gethsemane, where He will be betrayed, arrested, and then

² Interestingly, in the three Synoptic Gospels, the story goes from the Last Supper (Passover) directly to Jesus' Betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane. Only in John's Gospel, do we find Jesus' last and important conversations with His disciples before His arrest and crucifixion.

³ V. 31

crucified. Seeing these connections in the context of Jesus' last conversations with His disciples are key to understanding **"Abiding in the Vine"**.

In John 15, we have the passage concerning **"Abiding in the Vine"**, which ends with Jesus speaking of the tribulation His disciples would experience in the world. In the last two verses of the chapter, Jesus speaks again of the Holy Spirit being given. G. Campbell Morgan offers that the parable of the "The Vine", which begins in chapter 15, actually carries its discourse over into the first 16 verses of chapter 16. I agree. Chapter 16 is definitely connected in thought with chapter 15 in a way which is important for us to grasp. The 16th chapter opens with these words: **"These things I have spoken to you that you may be kept from stumbling"**; and then He continues on about the tribulation His disciples would experience in the world. Jesus then once more returns to speaking about the necessity of the Holy Spirit being given to them in His absence – again, a key connection to **"Abiding in the Vine"**. He then alludes to His Ascension; and finishes chapter 16 with another reference to the tribulation His disciples would experience in the world. Chapter 17 is what is known as "The High Priestly Prayer" in which Jesus prays for His disciples that they would be **"kept from the Evil One"**, since they are in (but not of) the world which hates them.⁴ Finally, in chapter 18, we see Jesus and His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane⁵, where Jesus is betrayed, arrested and soon to be

⁴ John 17:14-15

⁵ V. 1

crucified. He had made sure to make clear to His disciples that they could expect the same kind of tribulation in their lives in this world.

What emerges from looking at this context helps us understand WHY Jesus was speaking about **“Abiding in the Vine”**; and gives us a key to what it means to **“Abide in the Vine”**. Jesus had clearly forecasted that His disciples would experience tribulation in their lives in this world. In the midst of this tribulation, we are to endure⁶ by **“Abiding in the Vine”**. And because Jesus has ascended, the Partner⁷ in our “abiding” is the Holy Spirit. Earlier in John’s gospel, Jesus had told the Samaritan woman at the well that “(The Father) is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”⁸ Now Jesus is saying that when He is ascended, abiding in Him must be “in spirit” also. This is a spiritual relationship which is made possible only through the Holy Spirit.

Now when Jesus speaks of “abiding”, the Greek word used is *meno*,⁹ meaning *to stay, to continue, to dwell, to endure, to stand in a given place or state, or relationship*.

Two things can happen in the midst of the hatred and persecution of the world: disciples of Christ can be strengthened and “abide” in their faith in Christ, or they can be weakened and turn away from their faith in Christ, which is called “apostasy”.

⁶ 1 Corinthians 4:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:45; 2 Timothy 2:2; Hebrews 11:25, 12:7; James 5:11; 1 Peter 2:20.

⁷ The Paraclete, Counselor", "Helper", "Encourager", "Advocate", or "Comforter".

⁸ John 4:24

⁹ Strong’s # 3306

If we look deeper into the nature of this “tribulation”, we will understand more about the nature of “abiding”. The source of this hatred and persecution is the Evil One. This tribulation takes place in our lives here in this world. The world hates and persecutes Christ and those who are truly disciples of Christ.¹⁰ But God uses it for His purposes – that is, to test and strengthen His disciples’ faith and “abiding” in Him. This is “the bottom line”: **We either learn to “Abide in the Vine” or we will be numbered among those who turn away from faith in Christ.**

Verse 2: “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away.”

Verse 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.”

Jesus said this about “every branch in Me”¹¹, in other words, the “branches” are those who are in Christ – believers. Different interpretations arise as to whether this is referring to a loss of a believer’s salvation or referring to a loss of fruit-bearing opportunity in the believer’s life. And so, we naturally run into the age-old controversy as to whether or not a believer can lose his salvation. Firstly, I think it best to change the question to whether or not one who “belongs to Christ” – that is, can one who has received the Spirit of Christ¹² lose his salvation? Since even demons believe,¹³ One can “believe” without having received the Spirit of Christ.

¹⁰ John 15:18-20

¹¹ John 15:2

¹² Cf. Romans 8:9

¹³ James 2:19

Secondly, rather than ask the question, “Can I lose my salvation?”, I think it better to ask the question, “Do I have salvation to begin with?” Listen to what the apostle John wrote about the issue of “belonging to Christ”: **“They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.”**¹⁴ In other words, those who are truly disciples of Jesus, in the end, **“abide in Christ”**, and do not turn away from their faith in Christ.

Jesus said these two things: Those who are truly His disciples **“abide in His word”**,¹⁵ and those who are truly His disciples **“bear much fruit that remains”**.¹⁶ Not that we become His disciples by producing much fruit, but rather, the proof that we are truly His disciples is that we bear much fruit. Those who are truly His disciples, in the end, **“abide in Christ”**, don’t turn away from their faith in Christ, bear much fruit, and don’t “lose their salvation”. Rather than worrying about whether or not we are truly saved, and whether or not we can lose that salvation, doesn’t it make more sense to just make sure we are **“abiding in Christ”**?

Again, John 15:6 says: **“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.”** Firstly, notice who does the “gathering”, the “casting into the fire” and the “burning”: It is not the Lord – it is “they”. Who are “they”? It is “the evil One” and those “lying in his power in this world”.¹⁷

¹⁴ 1 John 2:19

¹⁵ John 8:31

¹⁶ John 15:8 & 16

¹⁷ 1 John 5:19

But God uses this for His purposes – and that is to test and strengthen His disciples' faith and “abiding” in Him.

The apostle Paul also warned of tribulation – a testing by fire - and the possibility of “gathering, casting into the fire, and burning” if we do not abide – if we do not remain standing - upon the Foundation of Christ. In his letter to the church in Corinth, he wrote:

“¹⁰According to the grace of God, which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. ¹¹For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”¹⁸

Now we are mixing metaphors here, but you can see that God will test by the fires of tribulation what is being built - the fruit we think we are bearing: If it is not being built upon the Foundation of Christ – if it is not growing out from the Vine, it will be burned up. In this way, the Holy Spirit sanctifies – prunes and cleanses - the Church so that it bears more fruit which glorifies God.

¹⁸ 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

In the same way, the writer to the Hebrews also warned of tribulation – a shaking of all things - and the possibility of “gathering, casting into the fire, and burning” if we do not abide – if we turn away from the word of the Lord:

“²⁵See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. ²⁶And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, “YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN.” ²⁷This expression, “Yet once more,” denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; ²⁹for our God is a consuming fire.”¹⁹

Again, we are mixing metaphors, but you can see that God will allow tribulation that will shake everything in the world, in the Church, and in our personal lives, so that nothing which is man-made will remain - only that which has the life of the Eternal One will remain in the kingdom.

There are a few verses in Paul’s letter to the Christians in Philippi which I think really encapsulate what God is after – in fact, I think they make for an excellent definition of a Christian: **“We are the [true] circumcised people [of God] because we serve God's Spirit and take pride in Christ Jesus. We don't place any confidence in physical things.... These things that I once considered valuable, I now consider worthless for Christ. It's far more than that! I consider everything else worthless because I'm much better off knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. It's because of him that I think**

¹⁹ Hebrews 12:25-29

of everything as worthless. I threw it all away in order to gain Christ.”²⁰
Real Christians – those who are truly disciples of Christ - are simply people who place all their confidence in Christ and not in themselves or other people, places, or things. Because of our fallen nature, this is not natural for us. Often, we lose confidence in people, places, and things only after they disappoint us because God has allowed them to be “burned up” or “shaken down”. But we human beings do not generally change so easily. When God allows people, places, and things to be shaken in our lives, we immediately set out to seeking replacements instead of realizing that we need to place all our confidence in Christ.

As Paul said: **“Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands (even in the day of fire and shaking), having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His.”²¹** This is why we must **“Abide in the Vine”**. So, let’s reflect on what Jesus meant by “abiding” and “bearing fruit”.

²⁰ Philippians 3:3, 7-8 *God’s Word Translation*

²¹ 2 Timothy 2:19

“Fruit”

Firstly, let us understand what is meant by “fruit”, and then keep that in mind as we continue in this passage. John 15:8 reads: **“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit....”** This verse tells us that “fruit” is simply that which glorifies the Father. The apostle Paul spoke of it as, **“the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”**²² Now, it would be convenient to say that this “fruit” is the “fruit of the Spirit” listed in Galatians 5:22-23; and so it is. But we must realize that “fruit” is something that is visible, not invisible. This “fruit of the Spirit” is visible to others, is attributed to the Divine Vinedresser, and therefore is something which glorifies Him. If it is the character of Christ which we see reflected in the “Fruit of the Spirit”, then it is this character made visible through actions. I believe the Lord specified an example - in fact a summary - of what this fruit is that glorifies the Father. This example is given in verses 12-17: **Loving one another as Jesus loved His disciples - by this we “prove to all that we are Christ’s disciples”.**²³

Also: When we conduct ourselves like Jesus did in the midst of tribulation – abiding in the Lord, enduring the hatred and persecution of the world, so that **“our faith overcomes the world”**²⁴ – I believe this too is also fruit that glorifies the Father.

²² Philippians 1:11

²³ John 13:34-35; 15:8

²⁴ 1 John 5:4-5

“Abiding”

When we consider the word “abiding”, we should bear in mind that John 15:1-11 puts forth the disciples’ relation to Jesus – a new relationship in the sense that He would soon be ascended, and they would relate to Him now through the agency of His Holy Spirit. Jesus depicted this relationship as “*The Vine and the Branches*”. This “Vine” is no longer the Man, Jesus of Nazareth, but the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit, through Whom, He would be in them and they would be in Him – he referred to this relationship as being “one”.²⁵ The apostle Paul had this relationship in mind when he wrote to the Galatians: **“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”**²⁶ And in to the Colossians he wrote of: **“... this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”**²⁷

“Abiding” has all to do with faith in the reality of that relationship. It was faith that brought us into that relationship “in Christ”. In other words, it is faith that has made us “a branch in the Vine”.²⁸ And this is the key: **It is faith by which we continue in that relationship in Christ.** In other words, it is by faith that we “abide in the Vine”.²⁹

²⁵ John 17:11, 21-23

²⁶ Galatians 2:20

²⁷ Colossians 1:27

²⁸ Galatians 3:7, 14, 26

²⁹ Galatians 2:16, 20; 3:11, 22; 5:5

Verse 4-5: **“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. 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.”**

“... for apart from Me you can do nothing.” There is “apart” and there is “a part”. Being “apart” is the opposite of “abiding”. “Abiding” is being “a part” of Christ – that is, being connected to Christ. **“Apart from Me you can do nothing”** – not even a little. Producing spiritual fruit only comes from “abiding” in Christ – not from self-effort. Visualize a branch that has been separated from a vine and is lying on the ground alone. We know there is absolutely no possibility of that branch producing ANY fruit. There is absolutely nothing that branch can do to bear fruit – absolutely nothing. We must realize and believe that the same is true with regards to ourselves and Jesus. No matter what we do – Bible study, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayer, praise, ministry - we will never be able to produce any spiritual fruit by our own self-effort. Only “Christ in us” produces fruit. He is the Source of spiritual life. That’s why “bearing fruit” only happens through “abiding in Christ”. None of the activities of the Christian life have life in them apart from Christ. It is He, not the activities, which have the life necessary to produces fruit. So, **“apart from Him we can do nothing”**. But, as the apostle Paul said: **“(We) can do all things through Him Who strengthens (us).”** The Greek word used here³⁰ actually means “empowers” or “enables”. It is He who “empowers” or “enables” by His life to produce fruit through us.

³⁰ Endunamoo, Strong's # 1743

"I am the vine; you are the branches." "I am the vine...." We tend to imagine that Jesus is the main stem, and we are the branches growing out of that main stem. But what He actually said was that he is the Vine – the roots, the main stem, the branches, the leaves, the tendrils, the fruit. As the apostle Paul said: **"He is all in all."**³¹ **"The fullness of the Deity."**³² And we **"are complete in Him."**³³ **"... you are the branches"** – parts of the Vine, members of His Body³⁴, partaking of His divine life and divine nature.³⁵ This is the context in which we are to understand the word "abide". Jesus is in us; we are in Him. We are one. As the members of His Body, we are a part of Him. It doesn't get any closer than that! And it is the agency of the Holy Spirit that makes this relationship possible. There is nothing we can do to make it happen. If you have received the Spirit of Christ, you belong to Him³⁶ – it has already happened – we just need to "abide" – continue to stay in that relationship. Again, **the tribulation of the world's hatred and persecution will either cause us to be weakened and turn away from faith in Christ or cause us to endure and stand in our faith in Christ.**

³¹ Ephesians 1:23

³² Ephesians 3:19; Colossians 1:19, 2:9

³³ Colossians 2:10

³⁴ 1 Corinthians 6:15; Ephesians 5:30

³⁵ 2 Peter 1:4

³⁶ Romans 8:9

“Bearing Fruit”

We’ve discussed the nature of the fruit, and the nature of the “abiding” that is necessary to “bear fruit”. Now, let’s reflect a little on this idea of “bearing fruit”.

Verse 5: **“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit....”**

Verse 8: **“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”**

Verse: 16: **“You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain....”**

The Greek word translated sin is *“harmartia”*, meaning “a missing of the mark”.³⁷ The doctrine of sin is called “harmatology”. The apostle Paul defined sin as: **“falling short of the glory of God.”**³⁸ I’ve come to believe that from God’s perspective, what grieves His heart the most regarding sin, is not only our negative behavior, but more so, the positive things we fail to do because of our fallen state when we are born into this world. Unless we find redemption in Christ, we live a life that **“misses the mark” “falling short of the glory”** God planned and purposed for us. He told Adam and Eve: **“Be fruitful and multiply.”**³⁹ **“Bearing fruit”** is the will of God – it is His plan and purpose for our lives. A fruitless life **“falls short of God’s**

³⁷ Strong’s # 266, *W.E. Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*

³⁸ Romans 3:23

³⁹ Genesis 1:28

glory”⁴⁰ – it fails to fulfill God’s plan and purpose for creating and recreating us.

I think Ephesians 2:10 speaks of this. Hopefully the Amplified Bible will help fully communicate the thought: **“For we are God's [own] handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [taking paths which He prepared ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live].”** This was Paul’s desire for the church in Ephesus. He expressed the same desire for the church in Colossae: **“... that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”**⁴¹

There is something else I think is important to understand when we speak of “bearing fruit”: The idea and image should not be our producing fruit as on an assembly line “in order to make our quota”; but rather Jesus bearing fruit through us. Rather than being concerned with our fruit production, we need to rather occupy ourselves with the life of Christ within us which alone can bear fruit through us. We need to occupy ourselves not with “fruit inspection”, but rather with that life-giving, fruit-bearing relationship with Christ.

⁴⁰ Romans 3:23

⁴¹ Colossians 1:10

“Bearing More Fruit”

Verses 1-3: ¹ “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”

Jesus says that the Divine Gardener prunes the branch so that it will bear more fruit. He then equates “pruning” with “cleaning”, which is exactly what it is. In fact, the Greek word translated “prune” literally means “to cleanse”.⁴² For a season I worked pruning trees in an apple orchard. The nature of the work was to spot the branches that did not have buds or blossoms and slice them off, so that more nutrients would go to the branches that did have the buds and blossoms, which, in time, would become fruit. This helped the tree to “bear more fruit”.

Jesus also identified what did the “cleaning”. With the apple trees, we used a large, sharp knife. The Divine Gardener uses His word – “the sword of the Spirit”.⁴³ There are a number of verses in Scripture which relate to this idea of being pruned by the word of God – one is a few chapters later in John’s gospel where Jesus prays that the Father would sanctify His disciples saying, “Sanctify them in the truth, Your word is truth”⁴⁴; and also in Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians where he writes of Christ and the Church “that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word”.⁴⁵ This concept of how God prunes us with His

⁴² Strong’s # 2508, *kathairoo*

⁴³ Ephesians 6:17

⁴⁴ John 17:17

⁴⁵ Ephesians 5:26

word so that we can bear more fruit warrants a whole teaching in itself, but suffice to say that in our Bible reading and study, and in our listening to the preaching and teaching of the word of God, the Spirit takes His sword to our hearts and **“convinces of sin, righteousness and judgment”**⁴⁶, removing things in our hearts, minds and lives which are contrary to the divine nature and impede the bearing of fruit.

Verse 7: ⁷ **“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”**

When His words abide in us, they do a work of pruning us of that which is contrary to His will; and we can come to the place of saying, as Jesus did, **“Not my will, but Yours be done.”**⁴⁷ When we come to that place in our hearts and lives, our prayer bears more fruit. **“Whatever we wish to ask will be done for us”** because we are praying according to His will. As the apostle John wrote in his epistle:

“¹⁴ This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”⁴⁸

Verses 9-11: 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. ¹¹ “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.”**

To abide in Christ is to abide in His love. To abide in His love is to keep His commandments. He said these things to His disciples knowing

⁴⁶ John 16:8

⁴⁷ Luke 22:42

⁴⁸ 1 John 1:14-15

that shortly He would be taken away – arrested, crucified, and ascended. He specified that He had spoken these things so that His joy would fill us. Just a little later in the same conversation with His disciples, He also specified that He had spoken these things “so that we may be kept from stumbling”⁴⁹ and “so that in Him we would have peace, because in the world we would have tribulation, but to take courage, because He has overcome the world.”⁵⁰

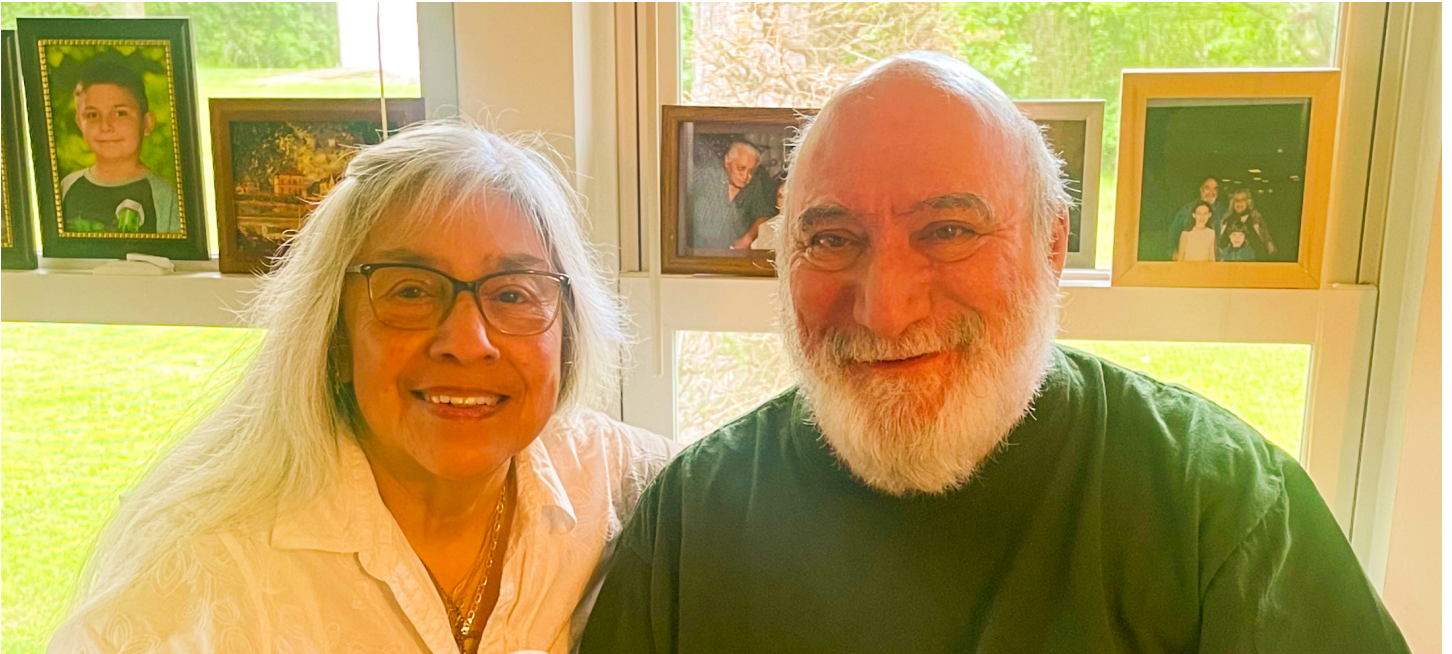
Jesus has a self-denying love for His disciples – a self-dying love for His Church. The apostle Paul recognized this love and prayed that the Church would abide in Christ’s love - be “rooted and grounded in the love”: “¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, ¹⁶that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. ²⁰Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, ²¹to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”⁵¹

⁴⁹ John 16:1

⁵⁰ John 16:33

⁵¹ Ephesians 3:14-21

Bill & Frances Furioso
~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, discipled many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, he can no longer travel, so their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... www.AtChristsTable.org

ACTpublications

"Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words." 1 Corinthians 2:13

A teaching ministry from Bill and Frances Furioso

At Christ's Table

Disciples of the King and His Kingdom eating and drinking of Jesus

THE HEAD

THE CENTER

THE FOUNDATION

of Biblical Christianity

with a view to

REVELATION of Christ

RELATIONSHIP with Christ

REFLECTION of Christ

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<https://www.AtChristsTable.org>

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Academia.edu: <https://independent.academia.edu/WDFurioso>

RECORDED MESSAGES

YouTube: www.YouTube.com/user/BillFurioso

Academia.edu: <https://independent.academia.edu/WDFurioso>

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/user-648428572>

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