The Vine And The Branches (John 15:1-8)

*A picture of our relationship with God*

I. ***Jn 15: 1-8 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He [***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+15&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-26702a)***]takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4Abide 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. 5“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. 6If 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. 7If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”***

A. The parable of the vine and branches illustrates the truth that Christianity is primarily a relationship between God and man. It is not primarily about doctrine, religion, or theology. C\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ity is a relationship, not a R\_\_\_\_\_\_ion. .

B. The three Persons of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are all seen in this parable. The vine is Jesus (Jn 15:1,5), the sap is the Holy Spirit (***Rom. 8:10 “The Spirit is life”***), and the vinedresser is the Father. (Jn. 15:1)

II. What is the goal of being connected to the vine? The goal is fruit. (Jn 15:2, 5)

A. Fruit is developed in three stages: fruit (v. 2), more fruit (v. 2), and much fruit (v. 5)

B. Bearing fruit is a command, not an option. The alternative to bearing fruit is not bearing fruit, and Jesus gives a clear and serious warning for those who don’t bear fruit. (Jn. 15:6)

III. What is the fruit that believers have been called to produce?

A. ***The fruit of character*** -- The character God requires of us can be summed in one word: LOVE.

***Jn 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Even as I have loved you, love one another.***

***Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control;***

B. ***The fruit of other believers brought to God through our lives***  -- From Creation, God has ordained that seeds would be contained in the fruit of a tree. (ie... Apple seeds from an apple) So, the fruit of our life has the seeds in it capable of producing another tree like us. For example, as we stay connected to the vine, we help others come to Christ, or to become disciples, or to become worshippers, or to become prayer warriors! Souls are ***“won”*** back from the kingdom of darkness! (Prov. 11:30)

 ***Gen 1:12 The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their   kind, and trees bearing fruit [***[***q***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+1&version=NASB#fen-NASB-12q)***]with seed in them, after their kind.***

***Prov 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.***

IV. How Does Fruit Come? Fruit comes by abiding in the vine. (Jn 15:5)

A. We don’t have to think in terms of a lot of effort to produce fruit. It’s not a matter of a lot of religious activity or some church program, we have to focus on our personal relationship with Jesus.

B. Two ways to “abide”, according to John 15.

a. By holding fast the Word of God

**Jn. 15:7 *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.***

***Jn 14:23 If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.***

 b. By obeying God’s commands

***Jn. 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.***

V. Discussion Group. Get into groups of 3-5 people. If you prefer, you do not have to speak.

1. Christianity is a relationship not a religion. Share about when Christianity became a relationship between you and God.

2. Where do you see spiritual fruit being produced in your life? In what area or areas would you like to see spiritual fruit increase?

3. What are some practical ways you personally “abide in the vine”? (ie... How do you hold fast the Word of God? ) (What commands of Jesus are a challenge for you to obey?)

4. Pray for each other to be more fruitful: growing in character (the fruit of the Spirit), and growing in being more effective bringing other believers to God.