

# Useful and Fruitful

Not long before being betrayed in Gethsemane and crucified in Golgotha, Jesus prepared His disciples for His departure (John 14-16). He describes His relationship with them in a powerful way (John 15:1-11). He is the true Vine, the Father is the Vinedresser, and disciples are the branches.

As branches, we are responsible for being useful and fruitful (John 15:2, 4-5, 8, 16). Peter says that is what we will become if we grow properly in the Lord (2 Peter 1:5-8).

## Why is this important?

- Branches are supposed to bear fruit.
  - Grapevines are not like roses and daisies. You don't grow them to enjoy their beauty or smell. You grow them because you want them to produce grapes!
  - The same is true of disciples. Branches attached to the Vine that don't produce fruits are useless and fruitless. They are failing to do what they are supposed to do!
- Branches that don't bear fruit can expect something.
  - The Vinedresser will take them away (John 15:2a, 6).
  - They will die and be spiritually burned up!
  - Jesus' teaching here exposes the error of "once saved, always saved" doctrine.
- Fruit is evidence of discipleship.
  - It is not enough to claim to be a follower of Jesus.
  - The claim must be backed up with produce (John 15:8).

## How do we bear fruit?

- We must abide in the vine (John 15:4-10).
  - We must maintain a relationship with Jesus.
  - We must abide in His word (John 15:3, 7).
  - We must constantly talk to God through prayer (John 15:7).
  - We must resist anything that threatens to sever our relationship with the Lord.
- We must live a life of imitation. That is what spiritual growth will help accomplish (2 Peter 1:5-8; 1 Corinthians 11:1).
- We must produce the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). When the revealed teachings of the Spirit truly influence us, we exhibit godly produce in our daily lives.
- We must engage in good works (Titus 3:1, 8, 13). This includes encouraging the weak, visiting the sick, evangelizing, praying for others, helping the poor, and living a righteous life (John 15:10; Colossians 1:9-10).

## What will happen if we bear fruit?

- We will be pruned by God (John 15:2). God may prune us through suffering (James 1:2-4). The pruning process will equip us to bear more fruit.
- We will stay connected to Vine (John 15:5)
- We will bring glory to God (John 15:8a).
- We will prove to be authentic disciples of Christ (John 15:8b).

## Conclusion:

Are you currently bearing fruit for the Lord? What does the Lord see when He examines your branch?

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