

The Vine and the Branches

John 15:1-11

I. **God has two great desires for your life:**

❖ **An intimate-love relationship with His Son Jesus**

- 11 times Jesus uses the word abide – Carries the idea of making Jesus your home, union with Him, remaining in Him. 1 Cor. 5:17
- We abide in Jesus & Jesus abides in us.

❖ **A life of ever-increasing, everlasting fruitfulness**

- 7 times Jesus speaks of fruit: Spiritual fruit is the eternal work God does in and through you that brings: a) you growth, b) others good and c) God glory.
- Every- increasing – God is at working at the vinedresser, pruning our lives to make us more fruitful
- Everlasting – v. 16, fruit that remains, abides
- God is glorified by bearing much spiritual fruit

Part 1

II. **An intimate-love relationship with Jesus is essential to a life of ever-increasing, ever-lasting fruitfulness.**

1. **Apart from Jesus, spiritual fruit cannot develop through your life.**

*“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit”, says the Lord of hosts.
Zechariah 4:6*

“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13

2. **By abiding in Jesus, spiritual fruit will develop through your life.**

3. **The quality of your relationship with Jesus will determine the quantity of your spiritual fruit.**

So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.”

Matthew 7:18-19

According to my judgment the most important point to be attended to is this: above all things see to it that your souls are happy in the Lord. Other things may press upon you, the Lord's work may even have urgent claims upon your attention, but I deliberately repeat, it is of supreme and paramount importance that you should seek above all things to have yours souls truly happy in God Himself! Day by day seek to make this the most important business of your life.

George Mueller, 19th Century Pastor and founder of orphanages in Bristol, England

- So may debate the importance of pursuing intimacy with Jesus daily. They may think that they do not deal with things daily that are of eternal significance so as long as I'm saved, what does it matter. Not true: Are you a dad? Are you a mom? Your influence on your child is eternally significant! Do you have relationships with unbelievers? Your relationship with them is eternally significant! Do you realize no matter what your occupation is, if you work at it with integrity and excellence that brings glory to God and glory to God is eternally significant.
- The quality of your relationship with Jesus is of utter importance because every day of your life has the opportunity to be eternally significant!

How do I abide in Christ – strengthen my relationship with Him?

1. Spend time reading the Bible daily and meditate on it throughout the day.
2. Spend time praying with God daily and be in a spirit of prayer continually.
3. Make your relationship with Jesus the priority of your life.
4. Obey God in what He has said through His word and in how he specifically directs your life through His Spirit.
5. Love others sacrificially.
6. Make sure you have a relationship with Jesus: Have you been saved? Does Christ abide in your heart?

An intimate-love relationship with Jesus that overflows into a life of ever-increasing, ever-lasting fruitfulness is not to be the exception among Christians; it is to be the norm!

Part 2

III. *A life of ever-increasing, ever-lasting fruitfulness is evidence of an intimate love relationship with Jesus.*

What is Spiritual Fruit?

- Spiritual fruit is the eternal work God does in and through you that brings: a) you growth, b) others good and c) God glory.
- Spiritual fruit may develop quickly or over time, it may be obvious or subtle, but believers will have spiritual fruit in their lives.
- Examples:
 - a. Love for Jesus (v. 9)
 - b. Love for His Word and prayer (v. 7, 16)
 - c. The Joy of Jesus (v. 11)
 - d. Love for others (12)
 - e. Sacrificial Spirit (13)
 - f. The Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23)
 - g. Good works (Col. 1:10)
 - h. Praise to God (Hebrews 13:5)
 - i. Leading others to Jesus (John 4:36-41)

The Progression of Fruitfulness

1. There are those who bear no fruit.

- Some Christians will go through their entire lives making little impact for the cause of Christ. Though they will go to heaven, but they will accomplish nothing of lasting impact. (1 Cor. 3:13-15)
- Some people, like Judas, having the outer appearance of being a Christian but have never saved and do not have a genuine relationship with Christ. Unless, they sincerely trust in Jesus before the die, they will spend eternity separated from God in hell. That is probably who Jesus is referring to. (Matthew 7:19-23)
- God takes them away, throws them into fire

2. There are those who bear fruit.

- A little bit of fruit is normal for a baby Christian should be Not for those who have been a Christian for some length of time.
- God prunes them so they will bear fruit
 - Pruning may be painful at times, but God has the expert vinedresser knows what He is doing and always has the goal of greater fruitfulness.
 - What sort of things (activities, habits, thoughts, emotions, sin, etc.) does God need to prune out of your life to make you more fruitful for Him?

3. There are those who bear much fruit.

- God is glorified by them.
- They prove themselves to be genuine followers of Jesus.
- They experience a powerful prayer life.
- The joy of Jesus overflows from their heart.
- They love sacrificially like Jesus.

Application:

- A life of ever-increasing, everlasting fruitfulness that gives evidence to an intimate-love relationship with Jesus is not to be the exception; it is to be the norm!
- Which chair are you sitting in this morning?