

HOW TO HAVE A FRUITFUL PRAYER LIFE: “I AM THE VINE” KNOWING JESUS SERIES

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TEXT: John 15:1 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser (Gardener). 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; *and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, 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 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 shall be done for you. 8 By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so have I 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, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”

INTRO: We are continuing our series on Knowing Jesus. Today we begin to examine the seven *ego eimi* (“I am” in Koine Greek). These are the seven metaphors that Jesus uses to reveal Himself. They are only found in the Gospel of John.

We are going to look at “I am the true vine,” which is seventh, the last of the *ego eimi*. We are not going to go in order. The first is “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35,41,48,51). I will give that message the first Sunday of next month, since that is Communion Sunday. Even this week, I prepared for the message “I am the door,” but I soon realized that this would be the best message to give on Palm Sunday and near Passover because of the visual image of the Israelites placing blood over the lintel and the side of the door, during the evening of the Passover Feast.

So, we are going to ask the Holy Spirit to lead us in this series. Also, I have asked Pastor Jay and Pastor Gavin to do at least one of the “I am” statements in this series.

Last year I spoke on this passage in John 15, as I talked about the season of Divine Discipline. But I want to talk about abiding and bearing fruit as it refers to prayer and how to get your prayers answered. Before we get into the message, let's review what we talked about last week about the Gospel of John.

John was one of the sons of Zebedee. John's father was a fisherman named Zebedee. John also was a fisherman along with James, his older brother. They had a successful fishing business because they had other fishermen working for them (Mark 1:20). Peter, James, and John formed the inner circle of Jesus' apostles (Mark 5:37, 9:2).

John is called "the apostle of love." He refers to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Also, 80 times in his writings John writes about *agape*, God's love. He writes 45 times the word "truth" (*alēthia*) and 100 times the word "believe" (*pisteuō*). To put it all together: If you believe in the truth of the Gospel, you will receive God's love that will transform you!

John is the simplest and yet the most profound Gospel. It is different from the Synoptic Gospels. It doesn't include Jesus' birth, His early life, His baptism, His temptation, His transfiguration, nor any of the parables. It is interesting that 90% of John is not found in the other three Gospels.

John's simple message is that God Himself came to earth as a Human to take the punishment of humanity's sins so that those who believe and follow Jesus will have an abundant life on earth and eternal life after death.

John 15 is a highpoint, not only in John but maybe in the Scriptures, in terms of our relationship with God.

I. JESUS IS THE TRUE VINE, THE FATHER IS THE GARDENER, AND HIS DISCIPLES ARE THE BRANCHES

1. John 15:1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser (Gardener). 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you."

- 1. God the Father prunes us if we are bearing fruit so that we can bear more fruit. I talked about that last year as we are in a season of Divine Discipline. We are still in that season.**
- 2. Hebrews 12:5b "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him; 6 for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines..."** See Proverbs 3:11-12 and Revelation 3:19. "Those

whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore, be zealous and repent” (to the church in Laodicea).

3. The emphasis is on the statement, **Whom the Father loves He disciplines.**
4. **Jesus is the vine, the source of life, and we are the branches, the expression of His life.**
5. Jesus’ main biblical exhortation was to “abide in Me” (v. 5, 9c) so that we may bear fruit that remains forever (v. 16).

II. GOD WANTS US TO ABIDE IN HIM

A. John 15:4 “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. 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 shall be done for you. 8 By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.”

B. THE KEY TO FRUITFULNESS IS ABIDING IN GOD

1. “Abide,” the Greek word *meno*, means to remain in Him. It appears 11 times in John 15:1-11. It is communicating or fellowshiping with God through the Holy Spirit. It is emphasizing our union and oneness with Jesus.

C. What does it mean to abide in Christ? Three things: (1) Talking to God, (2) Listening to His voice, (3) Obeying His Word.

D. TO ABIDE MEANS TO TALK TO THE FATHER

1. **To abide in Him is to talk to Him and listen to Him. We call this prayer.**
2. **Mike Bickle said, “The Christian life is an ongoing dialogue with a real Person. He has much to say, but He allows us to set the pace of the conversation with Him. If we start the conversation, He will continue it as long as we do. When we stop it, He stops it and waits until we begin again.”**
3. God loves it when you are just dialoging with Him for 10-15 seconds as much as spending longer times with Him in prayer.
4. One of the primary ways to abide in Him is talking with Him and listening to Him, which includes letting God speak to you through His Word.

E. TO ABIDE MEANS TO LISTEN TO HIS VOICE



1. In 47 years of walking with God, I have found listening to be the most important part of praying.
2. John 10:37 “My sheep hear My voice...”
3. **Matthew 16:16** Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” **17** And Jesus said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. **18** I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. **19** I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”

F. TO ABIDE MEANS TO OBEY HIS WORD

G. John 14:21 “Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.” (NLT)

1. Obeying His Word (*rhema* and *logos*).
2. **John 15:7** “If you abide in Me, and My words (*rhema*) abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.”
3. Jesus promises to manifest His presence to those who obey Him (John 14:21-24). Only in the context of obedient love does He reveal the deep things of His heart. We must love God on His terms. Obedience is an expression of our love for Him.
4. E.g., My trash collector.

III. GOD LOVES US AND IS COMMITTED TO OUR FRUITFULNESS

A. John 15:5 “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 shall be done for you. **8** By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. **9** As the Father has loved me, so have I 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, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”



1. **John 15:16** “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.”

B. BEARING FRUIT MEANS TWO THINGS:

1. GODLY CHARACTER

2. **Galatians 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

3. ANSWERS TO PRAYERS IN THE CONTEXT OF SERVICE AND MINISTRY TO OTHERS (Romans 6:22, 7:4-5; Galatians 5:22;

Ephesians 5:9; Hebrews 12:11, 13:15; James 3:18) and ministry and service (John 4:36; Romans 1:13; 15:28; Philippians 1:22; Colossians 1:5-6).

Fruitfulness includes possessing love, humility, and purity and then inspiring others to the same.

4. Our transforming union with God has two elements—we abide in Christ, and Christ abides in us. This will revolutionize your life as you abide in Christ and as He abides in you through the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION: ARE YOU CONNECTED TO THE VINE? DO YOU KNOW JESUS AS YOUR LORD AND SAVIOR? YOU HAVE TO PERSONALLY ASK HIM TO COME INTO YOUR LIFE. HE WILL GIVE YOU GRACE TO TRANSFORM YOU.