

God's Fruit-Bearing Branches, Part 1

John 15.1-11

Jesus is preparing His disciples for after He is gone. They must continue to believe in Him, obey His teachings, and love Him, and the Father will send the Spirit. The purpose for all this: For them to bear fruit. He is the vine, they are branches. God, the vinedresser, makes it all happen!

- The focus is on fruit: What God is producing...

Getting the big picture: 'What' are we?

What is God's role? What is Jesus' role?

What is 'fruit'? What do we produce?

- What does God do for the branches?
 - For branches that aren't bearing fruit...

Who are these 'branches'?

What does God do for them?

- For branches that are bearing fruit

When we feel the knife of God...



The Vinedresser, the Vine, and the Branches

1. Jesus' instruction to His disciples in John 15.1-11 is the subject of poems and songs. It at once both encourages us and challenges us in our Christian lives. Read through the verses a couple of times, then grab a cup of coffee and meditate on what Jesus said. How does the description of God's role, Jesus' role, and your role together affect the way you view the importance of your life for Christ?
2. In v1, Jesus says He is the vine, and His Father is the vinedresser. While the Father and the Son (Jesus) are both eternal God (Trinity), during His time on earth Jesus submitted Himself completely to His Father. To better understand this amazing truth, see John 4.34; 5.19-23, 26-27, 30, 36-37; 6.38, 57; 7.16-18, 28-29; 8.16-19, 28-29, 54; 10.17-18, 36-38; 11.41-42; 12.27-28, 49-50; 14.10, 31; 17.4. Do our lives reflect the kind of submission to God the Son demonstrated?
3. Who is Jesus referring to when He talks about 'branches' that don't bear fruit (2a)? Some say that those who don't bear fruit lose their salvation, or show they were never saved at all. Does this fit with the context? Who is Jesus talking to? What does He say of them in v3? What might cause 'branches' to fail to bear fruit? Can you think of a time in your Christian life when this was true of you? Is it now?
4. Most Bible translations say that God "takes away" or "removes" (a few even read "cuts off") those 'branches' that do not bear fruit (v2). The Greek verb here is *αἶρω* (*airō*), and the primary meaning is "lift up, take up, pick up, lift from the ground." This is one of those times when bad theology resulted in bad translations! What does God, the 'vinedresser,' do to believers (branches) who are not bearing fruit? Have you ever experienced God's loving 'lifting up' in your life when you were feeling down, and not 'producing any fruit'?
5. Another way God deals with "branches" is by "pruning" them. This denotes God sovereignly working in our lives, when we are bearing fruit, to enable us to produce *more* fruit! This 'cutting' doesn't seem pleasant at first, but in the long run results in us doing more for God. Have you experienced God's 'pruning' in your life?