

God’s Fruit-Bearing Branches, Part 2

John 15.1-11

Jesus uses a vine and branches to illustrate how His followers will bear fruit for God, the vinedresser. God ‘lifts up’ unfruitful branches so they will produce fruit. And branches that *are* bearing fruit? Jesus says God ‘prunes’ them. Who are these ‘branches,’ and what is ‘pruning’?

- Fruit-bearing branches: Who are these ‘branches’?
- What is the experience of “pruning” like?  
*Why we like the idea of pruning*  
  
*Why we don’t like pruning (what it feels like)*  
Confounding, cruel, and counterproductive
- Ways that God prunes us  
*The knife of His Word* (Jn 15.3; 17.17; 2 Tim. 3.16; Heb. 4.12)  
  
*The knife of suffering* (2 Cor. 12.7-10; Heb. 2.10; 5.8; 12.5-11; Ps. 119.67, 71)  
  
*The knife of persecution* (2 Cor. 4.7-11; 1 Pet. 2.18-20; 3.8-9; 4.12-16)  
  
*The knife of financial hardship* (Mark 12.41-44; Phil. 4.11-13; Heb. 10.32-34)



*The Vinedresser, the Vine, and the Branches*

1. In John 15.2, Jesus first said God “lifts up” unfruitful branches. As a vinedresser, His desire is that those branches will begin to bear fruit. Then Jesus continues on this theme: Just as God wants unfruitful branches to begin bearing fruit, He also wants fruitful branches to bear more fruit! He achieves this by ‘pruning’ them. What do you think ‘pruning’ refers to in a Christian’s life?
2. The Greek word translated “prunes” is καθαίρω (kathairō), which literally means “to make clean.” It describes cleaning by sweeping, and in the vineyard context, to cleaning by pruning – removing the superfluous wood. Thinking spiritually, how does God’s ‘cleansing’ in your life enable you to bear more fruit?
3. In v3, Jesus says the disciples “are already *clean* because of the word which I have spoken to you.” The Greek word for “clean” here is the adjective from the verb translated “prune” in v2 (καθαρός, *katharos* = “clean, pure” – *catharsis*, a medical term for cleansing the body of harmful or unwanted substances, comes from this). In other words, the disciples have already been ‘pruned’ (cleaned) by Jesus’ words! What have they already produced for God, and how is God ‘pruning’ them through Jesus’ words to enable them to bear more fruit?
4. How would you characterize ‘pruning’ in a fruitful Christian’s life? Do you think this ‘cutting’ would seem pleasant? Take some time to reflect on God’s ‘pruning’ in your life. List some instances you now recognize God was “pruning” you to bear more fruit, and thank Him for His loving hand in your life.

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