

“...every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. John 15:2b.

Every disciple is joined to Christ for the purpose of bearing fruit. We saw from the last lesson there might be difficulties but the difficulties are managed by the Husbandman, our Heavenly Father. As I remember my early “childhood” as a child of God I can remember the anxiety I experienced over the issue of bearing fruit. It was as though I wasn’t *doing enough*. That was precisely the point of my difficulty. Babies do very little from the beginning. Have you noticed the pride that a child displays over doing a new thing? We tend towards the same type of pride and in our hurry to do more - we can run into great difficulty in our hurry to grow up. **The problem with growing up in a hurry is that the emphasis is more on performance than it is maturity.** Jesus did not intend that of His children. Notice Jesus’ comments when Peter proudly announced his undying allegiance to Christ.

[31] **“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: [32] But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. [33] And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. [34] And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.”** (Luke 22:32 - 34).

Jesus knew that the disciples would be offended - ensnared because of Him. Yet He still loved them and planned to meet them after His resurrection. The disciples certainly did not show the fruit of the Spirit of when they ran and hid, fearing persecution. Peter made this proud boast of allegiance to Christ as a mere baby. He knew not that he needed the intercessory prayer of his High Priest, Jesus. So we need to grow - we need to remain attached to the True Vine, Christ. We need to submit ourselves to the husbandry of our Heavenly Father. We need His intercessory prayers.

Towns has an excellent outline regarding the fruit of the Vine.

<i>The Fruit of the Believer</i>	<i>Evidenced In</i>
1. <i>The fruit of the Spirit</i> (Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:9)	<i>Character</i>
2. <i>The fruit unto Holiness</i> (Rom. 6:22)	<i>Conduct</i>
3. <i>The fruit of Righteousness</i> (Heb. 12:11)	<i>Contentment</i>
4. <i>The fruit of the Lips</i> (Heb. 13:15)	<i>Conversation</i>
5. <i>The Fruit of our Hands</i> (Prov. 31:16; 1 Cor 3:10, 14)	<i>Concrete Service for God</i>
6. <i>The fruit of the righteous</i> (Prov. 11:30; Rom 1:13)	<i>Converts</i>
7. <i>The Fruit of the womb</i> (implied in Rom. 7:4)	<i>Children (spiritual)</i>

[3] Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."

The word clean in this verse is the same word in the original for "prune" in verse 2 (*kathairei*). Young's Literal Translation treats verse 2 this way: **"...and every one bearing fruit, He doth cleanse by pruning it, that it may bear more fruit;"** This compares well with verse 3 where He comforts His disciples with the words that they were clean through the word that He has spoken to them *even though they were pretty much clueless at that point and would falter in their faith after Jesus was arrested. We need to return to the picture of the vineyard at this point to put this together. I like the way Young translates verse 2 because it gives light to what is going on. The pruning (cleansing), taking away (lifting up) and now, again, cleansing it describes the work of the biblical times vine-dresser. He did not have the chemicals or the modern equipment that we have today. The process of training the vine branches away from the ground was a way to both nourish them and to remove the dirt and insects.*¹ Now we have the direct word of the Lord that we and the disciples are clean through His word. Towns points out that the present, active, indicative of "clean" indicates that it is a continuous process - this cleansing. Paul speaks of the Bride of Christ being presented without spot or blemish: Eph 5:26, 27 **That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, [27] That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish..** Note that the cleansing involves the washing of water by the word - of God. This is the sanctifying process of our daily intake of God's Word and application of it to our lives - including the confession of sin as the Holy Spirit ministers to us.

[7] If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. [8] This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

We must remain in Christ. This is the vital connection that allows for fruit, for growth - for spiritual life itself. Note the close relationship with our fellowship with Christ, our daily intake of His word, our prayer life with the resultant bearing of "much fruit." There just is no shortcut to this blessed condition of bringing glory to our Heavenly Father. This takes a lifetime of diligent study, of confession of sin, of daily prayer - it all blends together in our being a disciple of Christ. It's a continuous process - a lifestyle. The blessed "walk" with the Lord. "Showing" in our

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¹ In fact, washing insect off plants is recommended by some experts today.

text could almost be translated as “proof positive that you are my disciples.” The idea here is that the fruit is the evidence of a true disciple of Christ. His testimony may be required from time to time, but his *living, indeed remaining* in Christ is the ultimate proof of discipleship. The original, *ginomai* means to become. Used elsewhere, it is a statement of being, of existence. For example when the LXX translators wanted to translate Genesis 1 “Let there *be...*” etc., they used a form of this word. Disciples are to pray that God’s will *be done* in earth as it is in heaven - our word. So this “showing” ourselves to be His disciples is a statement of reality - a proof that we *are* His disciples - more through the fruit than through testimony.

The Fellowship of the Vineyard, with Relation with God - 15:9 - 11.

[9] **"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. [10] If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. [11] I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."**

Verse 9, intimacy. We now come to a most thrilling portion of this section. Let’s not just skip along to the next section. “As” sets up a direct comparison of the love between Jesus and God the Father and Jesus and His disciples . This relationship was developed in detail in an earlier lesson.² This love between the Son and the Father was described by John as Jesus being in the bosom of the father.³ The conclusion is this: that Jesus loves His disciples in the same way as He loves the Father and the Father loves Him. A few passages come to mind: in chapter 13:33 He calls the disciples “**little children**” - a term of endearment not one to derided their immaturity (thought that was true), in this chapter vs’ 13, 14, 15 He calls the disciples His “**friends**”, in 20:17 He tells Mary to tell His “**brothers**” that He was to ascend to His Father. In Hebrews 2:13 - 15 this relationship is put in the family context where we are not only called children but are called of the same flesh and blood - that is, Jesus became flesh and blood so that He could share in our human condition. The thought here was that not only was He to be our Savior but that He would partake (*koinoneo* - to share, fellowship) in our flesh and blood so that He could commune with us as in a family member and as our High Priest.

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Verse 10, obedience. There is just no way a disciple of Christ can fulfil this part of

² See [The Person of Jesus Christ](#). The paragraph on His intimacy with the Father

³ John 1:18 - Only begotten and in the bosom of the Father depicts a loving, intimate relationship between a father and his favorite son.

Jesus' "formula" for discipleship without our fulfilling the two 3rd class conditional clauses in this section - If (it's up to you) remain in me - verse 7 - a condition of communion - not a condition of salvation (that's assumed), If you obey my commands - verse 10 - (it's up to you) etc.. Here where we receive the challenge for discipleship. It really is up to you and me to proactively *choose* to enter into daily Bible study. It really is up to you and me to pray daily for His guidance and to ask for forgiveness for our personal sins. It is up to you and me to choose to apply God's word - not to pick and choose within our comfort zone what we will apply in our lives.

Verse 11, comparison of intimacy and resultant joy. But there is more to this thought of intimacy. Just as He obeyed His Father⁴ the same is expected of us - again the same comparison is set up "just as." This intimate relationship results in joy (*charis*) - not a silly perpetual grin or some sort of "happy, happy, happy" display, but a deep-seated contentment that results in a Christlike demeanor. This joy will be complete (*pleroo*) - completely filling our attitude - displacing dissatisfaction and bitterness that might come out difficult circumstances. Note that this condition is one of union with Christ and His union with us. Without Him we can do nothing (verse 5).

⁴ Heb 5:8, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;"