

The ONE We Must Remain In: Jesus Teaches the Secret of Living

John 15:1-17

Jesus reveals the fundamental secret of Christian living in these verses, out of which everything else flows. This concept by Christ – “you in Me and I in you” – is one of the most profound truths ever revealed. Living it out is the whole point of the Christian life. Like Einstein's formula, $E = mc^2$, this simple statement is a description of unbelievable power.

Jesus reveals that the secret of Christian living is fruit-bearing, but how does a Christian bear fruit?

The Analogy of the Vineyard

- Jesus is the Vine.
- The Father is the Vinedresser.
- True Christians are the fruit-bearing branches.

How the Analogy works:

- Jesus as the True Vine: in contrast to the failure of Israel (the original vine) to be God's covenant people.
- The Father does two things:
 - 1) He cuts off every branch that bears no fruit: professing Christians who are not really saved.
 - 2) Every branch that bears fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful: genuine Christians at any level of maturity.
- Jesus reveals two things:
 - 1) All Christians start “clean” with Christ.
 - 2) But the cleaning process goes on through life – we are kept clean through the Word, but at times the Father fast-tracks the cleaning by “pruning”.
- The Christian must do two things to remain in the Vine:
 - 1) The Discipline of obedience, driven by love.
 - o “Remain in me” is the active part. This is something we are expected to do.
 - o But motive is *everything*. Why should we obey in the first place? Because we have learned to respond back in love to a God who never stops loving us, even when we often cannot fathom Him or understand His ways.

o Some of the “most basic disciplines” of the Christian life have a value far beyond what we realize: personal prayer, personal time reflecting on the Bible, sharing your faith, fellowship/worship with other believers, stewardship, among others.

2) A Dependence on Christ, done in faith.

“And I [remain] in you.” The implication is, “Let Me remain in you.” This is passive. It is something we can expect to happen and trust God for.

It takes BOTH to be a fruitful, Christlike Christian. One alone is not enough. This is where many Christians make a mistake. They work at one or the other but not at both.

Remaining in Jesus, the true Vine, produces two outcomes:

1) We bear fruit (v.2), then much fruit (v.5), and fruit that lasts (v.16).

The fruit we bear includes:

- o Answered prayer, v.7.
- o The glorification of God, v. 8.
- o Remaining in the love of Jesus, vv. 9-10.
- o Experiencing the joy of Jesus, v. 11.
- o We bring others to Jesus – “fruit that lasts”, v. 16.

2) We become the friends of Jesus as we do what He commands:

- o Friends aren’t just told what to do. Unlike slaves, they are given insights into the heart of the Master – an affirmation of the special relationship we enjoy.
- o Friends of Jesus are chosen and specially commissioned by Jesus to produce “fruit that lasts”.

Final Thoughts:

Many Christians spend most of their Christian life, deeply discontented either with their spiritual growth, or with their usefulness to God; or both. If this describes you, perhaps you need to reconsider the most basic things, like remaining in Christ, and letting Him remain in you.

As you discover, realize and process how deeply loved you already are by God, may it motivate you to exercise both the necessary disciplines of the Christian life, and the essential dependence on Him in a trusting way. As you do, may you discover the peace (Jn. 14:10), love (Jn. 15:10), and joy (Jn. 15:11) that only Jesus gives. The Christian’s life is the best life there can ever be – now and for eternity.