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ABIDING IN THE VINE

I like to grow things. I have several philodendron plants that I started from one leaf. As they grow, they become beautiful “vines”, but some parts become dead and “stringy”, and require cutting back. Often, I take the cuttings and start another plant. In the cutting away of the dead stringy parts that always come, new growth comes. It is amazing how the simple act of “cutting back” rejuvenates these little plants. The cut leaves can be replanted, but if they aren’t put into water or soil quickly after the cutting, they eventually will die. It doesn’t happen overnight, but you can be sure they can’t last without either being attached to the original plant, or replanted.

So it is, with us as the disciples of Christ. Jesus tells us in John 15 that He is the true vine, and the Father is the husbandman (farmer). In verse 2 it says, ***“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”*** The word purgeth means to cleanse or prune. Verse 3 says, ***“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”*** The word clean also means the same as purge or prune. Verse 4 says, ***“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”*** The word abide means to dwell, endure, remain, tarry.

The abiding is what gives us strength to grow. The purging is necessary for new growth. So often we dislike the “cutting back” or purging that must go on in our lives. The Word of God is the instrument or scissors used to “cut” us back. We look into the word and it shows us our heart. When we are receptive to the purging by repenting of our sin and cutting away that which is “dead” in our lives, then and only then will new growth come. Is this painful? Yes. Necessary? Yes. We must remain attached to the true vine to be everything that God has called us to be.

The beautiful thing about God and his job as the “husbandman” (farmer) is that he takes care of his “plants” better than any human being could ever take care of them. He looks for those areas of our lives that aren’t producing, and if we allow him, he gently snips them away. If we don’t allow this process, then we become a long stringy branch that sucks the life out of the rest of the vine. We have all seen those kinds of people. They are always wanting more, but they are resistant to change. They deplete when they should be fruitful.

What kind of branch are you? Are you allowing God, through his word to correct you and do cutting back to make you more fruitful, or are you one that resists the cutting back?