



# CAPITOL COMMISSION

## A Clinic for Fruitfulness (John 15:1-15)

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**This week, our teaching comes from Jim Young, President of Capitol Commission. Welcome Jim!**

**The Westminster Catechism states that the “chief end of man” is to “glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever” (cf. Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 6:20; Rev 4:11). That being the case, we need to understand how to glorify God. Jesus gives one of the ways to do that in John 15:8.**

*John 15:8—This is to My Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples.*

Jesus and the disciples have just had their last meal together! In a few hours Jesus will be crucified. He is facing the longest night of His life. Jesus wants His disciples to understand what will be key to their living fruitful lives. The vineyard will be the perfect setting for Jesus to explain the most important relationship Christians must maintain in order to fulfill their purpose of glorifying God. This metaphor of the vine, its branches, and the bearing of fruit will be critical to the disciples understanding how both their relationship with God and their fruitfulness for Him would be realized.

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**FRUIT THAT BRINGS GLORY TO GOD IS THE FRUIT OF INFLUENCE FOR CHRIST. FOR EXAMPLE: IF WE ARE CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATING THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (GAL 5:22, 23): LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS AND SELF-CONTROL. OUR WALK WILL MATCH OUR TALK AND OUR WITNESS WILL BE ATTRACTIVE - LIKE GOOD FRUIT.**

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Imagine that we are walking together with Jesus. He points to a nearby grapevine. Jesus uses this illustration to focus on four requirements necessary for fruit bearing: This “fruit” brings glory to God.

### **REMAIN IN ME (JOHN 15:1-8)**

*John 15:1-2—I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.*

Jesus reserves His teaching for only these closest friends. Later, He explains why He is telling them these things: *“I’ve told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete” (cf. John 15:11)*. The disciples are filled with many fearful unknowns. However, Jesus promises them complete joy. Jesus, being the true vine, indicates that He is the One responsible for any fruit that they bear. Charles Swindoll, Christian pastor, author, educator and international radio preacher, notes that God is pictured here as a busy, active, faithful gardener working in His vineyard – an image already well-established in the Old Testament. Sadly, His vine – Israel – failed to produce the good fruit He had cultivated it for (cf. Isaiah 5:1-4).<sup>1</sup> Jesus undoubtedly had this passage in mind when he referred to Himself being “the true vine” who fulfilled “what God intended for Israel.”<sup>2</sup>

Jesus mentions that the branch which is cut off is a “branch” that was in Him, meaning a true Christian. The Greek verb *airo*, for “cuts off,” or “takes away,” means physical death (cf. 1 Cor 11:30) or it means “lifts up” (cf. John 8:59). I feel that this is God encouraging fruitless Christians by bringing light into their lives so that they might begin to bear fruit. The vinedresser props up the low branches so that their exposure to light and air will cause them to bear fruit.

A Christian who is bearing fruit, just like the fruit bearing branch, may need “pruning.” The fruit then may be increased.

*John 15:3—You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.*

The disciples were spiritually clean. Fruit bearing should result!

*John 15:4-5—Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”*

The word “remain” or “abide” can be translated into eight English words in our New Testament: abide, continue, remain, tarry, be present, endure, stand, and dwell. We abide as we rest, are nourished, encouraged, and experience overall enjoyment. The evident thought here is that we are to live in Christ with much joy. It is in that abiding or remaining that we are strengthened for fruitfulness. Nothing of eternal value can be produced in a life that is not abiding in Christ.

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### **BIBLE STUDIES**

LEADERS/LEGISLATORS: WEDNESDAYS 7-7:50 AM – CAPITOL-ROOM 142 SOUTH  
STAFF & GUESTS: WEDNESDAYS 12:05- 12:55 PM CAPITOL-ROOM 171/172 WEST (SPEAKERS CONFERENCE ROOM)

## A Clinic for Fruitfulness (John 15:1-15)

Charles Swindoll uses the term “plastic fruit” in reference to what you produce in your life that is not an outgrowth of a vital relationship with Christ. It appears “real” from a distance but has no eternal reward.<sup>3</sup>

*John 15:6—If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.*

Some debate the meaning of the above verse. Looking at the context, it seems clear that Jesus is speaking of true Christians. The focus is not on salvation but about their remaining in Him and bearing fruit. Note that He does not say that He is the one who “throws them away”. Backslidden Christians are scoffed at in public and their testimonies lose power. Their influence for Christ is negative.

King David was a true believer, but his Lord was blasphemed by enemies because of David’s sinful behavior. David repented and his reputation was restored. However, the consequences of his sin caused havoc in his family and tarnished God’s reputation. See 1 Chronicles and 2 Samuel.

Moral failure of a Christian public figure is familiar to many of us. They may repent and return to following the Lord. However, sin destroys much of the fruit they were producing.

*John 15:7-8—If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

Abiding Christians bear much fruit to the Father’s glory!

### OBEY MY COMMANDS (JOHN 15:9-11)

*John 15:9-10—As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 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.*

Requirement **one** for bearing fruit is “remaining in Christ.” Requirement number **two** is to “obey His commands.” Jesus clearly teaches that our love for Him must be demonstrated (cf. John 14:21). The above verse speaks of the magnitude and wonder of His love for us – He loves us just as the Father has loved Him. Only a fool would not remain in this kind of love. How little we must care for others if we do not tell them of this love (cf. 1 John 4:11-14).

*John 15:11—I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.*

Jesus teaches that we might experience complete joy. The New Living Bible translates this as a joy that is overflowing. This joy results from knowing that we will be with Jesus in eternity.

### LOVE EACH OTHER (JOHN 15:12-14)

*John 15:12-14—My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.*

Requirement number **three** for bearing fruit is a demonstrated love for others. This most likely will require sacrifice but hopefully not the loss of our life. Are you thinking of how you are sacrificing for family and friends? We demonstrate our friendship with Jesus in obedience to what He commands. We may have special friends and some in high places. However, there can be no higher privilege than to be considered a friend of Jesus. Are you His friend?

### KNOW THE LORD’S TEACHING (JOHN 15:15)

*John 15:15—I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.*

The **fourth** requirement for bearing fruit is that we know the Lord’s teaching (cf. Psalm 119:125). A servant may know some things about his master, but not intimate things. Only a chosen few have unrestricted access to the Governor in Kansas. Jesus’ intimate friends have access to everything the Father makes known to the Son. In His family there are no hidden agendas. Thank Him today for welcoming you into His family, and begin living your life as royalty to God’s glory.

Is your life a positive influence for Christ? If not, perhaps you need to participate in this free clinic by practicing the four requirements Jesus has commanded. Ask another believer to hold you accountable for doing so.

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Following Christ, A Bible Study of John 15-21*, (Insight For Living, Anaheim, CA, 2000), p.4

2. Edwin A. Blum, “John,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (New Testament edition, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Colorado Springs, CO: chariot Victor publishing, 1983), p.325

3. Swindoll, p.6