

Fruit Bearer #3

Pray: Ask the Lord to teach you to be fruitful.

Read: John 15:1-16

When Jesus spoke about vineyards, the people of Judea knew what he was talking about. It was an industry that had developed throughout the country for centuries. It was crucial because it was a cash crop as opposed to grain, which was raised purely for consumption.

The vines were a very rugged crop and yet yielded very delicate fruit which required being treated with kid gloves. A young vine was not permitted to bear fruit for the first three years. It was drastically pruned in December and January to preserve its energy. The branches that did not bear fruit were cut out to further conserve the energy of the plant. If this constant cutting back were not done, the result would be a crop that was not up to its full potential.

1. This passage uses the analogy of a vine, branches, and fruit to depict the spiritual life of believers. Identify each part of the analogy listed below.

- a) The True Vine (vv. 1 and 5) is?
- b) The Vinedresser (vv. 1-2) is?
- c) The Branches (v. 5) are?
- d) That which glorifies the Father (v. 8) is....?
- e) That which proves you're a disciple of Christ (v. 8) is....?

When a grapevine grows it first sends out shoots, some of which have flowers on them which become grapes. About the time the grapes are beginning to ripen, the vine will suddenly have a spurt of growth. New branches spring out of the vine. To the casual observer it looks full of health and vigour. But the vine grower isn't interested in lush growth; he's interested in luscious grapes. One of the jobs of the vine grower is to go along and prune those branches that don't have any fruit on them. In a good year, grape growers will even go along and cut off some bunches of grapes so that those left grow even better.

2. Jesus indicates in verse 4 that the branch is dependent upon the vine for its power to produce fruit. How does He relate that to the believer?

3. What does verse 5 teach about fruit bearing?

4. If the branches were human lives what sort of pain would be associated with pruning? What tools would be used? (*Thought Question*)

5. Jesus repeats *abide in me, love and bear fruit*, how are these words related? What is the *"fruit that should remain"*? (*Thought Question*)

The word "abide" means to remain or stay around. The "remaining" is evidence that salvation has already taken place and not vice versa. The fruit and evidence of salvation is continuance in service to Him and His teaching. The abiding believer is the "real" believer.

6. Specifically how would you rate yourself on laying down your life (v.13) for your friends?

7. Why did Jesus choose us to be His disciples (v.16), and what did He appoint us to do?

Pray for each other, that you may all produce fruit in and through your lives.

