

Membership in the Sisterhood: the vine & the branches

John 15:1-11 (ESV)

1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

The basic point Jesus is making is quickly discerned: Just as a branch needs to be connected to the vine in order to bear fruit, so we need to remain in vital connection to Jesus in order for our lives to be what they ought to be. Answer the following without using Christian vocabulary.

1. Describe what it means to abide or not abide in Jesus (vs 1-4).
 - a) on a daily basis
 - b) over the long-term course of your life
 - c) during trials
 - d) during high points and easy times
2. How do believers bear fruit — practically and theologically? (vs 5-8) Does verse 7 promise too much? Why or why not?
3. Explain the kind of love discussed in vs 9-11. What's the difference between abiding in Jesus and abiding in love?
4. Why does Jesus conclude with vs 11: *that your joy may be full*?

Reflect

Compare with Psalm 1.