

Abiding In Christ

John 15:1-6

The Key Players:

Vine—Jesus Vinedresser—Father Branches—Believers

The Key Words/Pictures:

Fruit Takes Away vs. Prunes Abide Ask

Disciples Love Friends Chose If Joy

Thoughts About Those Who Are Abiding in Christ:

1. _____ when you have been _____
2. _____ when you recognize your utter _____
3. _____ when you are _____ by the Master Gardener

Questions About Those Who Are Not Abiding in Christ:

1. Who does this refer to?
 - a. _____ believers who have lost their salvation
 - b. _____ believers who are not genuinely saved
 - c. _____ believers who no longer show any fruit
2. How does a person get to this point?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

Matthew Henry Commentary

The unfruitful are taken away. And even fruitful branches need pruning; for the best have notions and passions that require to be taken away. In order to fruitfulness, we must abide in Christ, must have union with him by faith. It is the great concern of all Christ's disciples, constantly to keep up dependence upon Christ, and communion with him. True Christians find by experience, that any interruption in the exercise of their faith, causes holy affections to decline, their corruptions to revive, and their comforts to droop. Those who abide not in Christ, though they may flourish for awhile in outward profession, yet come to nothing. The fire is the fittest place for withered branches; they are good for nothing else. Let us seek to live more simply on the fulness of Christ, and to grow more fruitful in every good word and work, so may our joy in Him and in his salvation be full.

The Teachers Commentary

In any living vine the function of a branch is to bear fruit. But it cannot fulfill its purpose unless it remains in intimate connection with the vine. Without that intimate "remaining in Me" relationship, it will never accomplish what it was designed for. How empty will the life of a Christian who fails to remain in Jesus be? As empty as that of a branch torn from the vine; it has no potential for fruit bearing. Its only use would be to serve as fuel to provide momentary warmth; then it must disintegrate into ash.

The warning is clear. We cannot become what we are intended to be without having a close relationship with Jesus, with our love for Him expressed in obedience to Him. How tragic if you or I, branches now, fail to experience the joy that comes as we fulfill our potential for bearing fruit. How tragic if, after life is over, we can point to nothing but ashes.

The promise. But this paragraph is not meant to depress us. It's meant to excite us and to give us joy. *Because we are branches, we can draw life from Jesus the Vine!* What we cannot do by ourselves, Jesus can accomplish in us! The fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control—all these are possible now. As we live in Him, we will become fruitful. As we remain in Jesus, we will become the kind of people who can make the new community a reality here on earth.