

# WEEK 2 DAY 8

## CHRIST THE CENTER THE SECRET OF THE VINE READ JOHN 15:1-8

### John 15:1-8

#### The Vine and the Branches

"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. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also 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.

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This week we are going on a "Spiritual" camping trip. We are going to camp on this ONE passage of Scripture and try to *mine* out as much truth as possible from it. I challenge you to memorize the whole passage!

What is "GOD'S" role and responsibility in the passage?

Write down some ways God's role might be played out in your life.

Who/what is Christ in the illustration?

How are WE supposed to be related to Christ in the illustration?

Write out some practical ways to "remain."

# WEEK 2 DAY 9

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In the illustration, what is the farmer's (husbandman, vineyard-keeper) goal?

What activities does the farmer engage in to see that fruit happens on a branch?

What is the true mark of "discipleship"?

What do you think is "behind" Jesus' statement "this is to my Father's glory that you bear much fruit"?

In families, do you think children grow up achieving more by growing up in a parental environment of "HIGH" expectations or "LOW" expectations?

Why?

# WEEK 2 DAY 10

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### Four Kinds of Fruit

Throughout the Bible, the writers regularly illustrate 4 types of "fruit" borne in the lives of those who abide in Christ and have God as their Father. See if you can identify and categorize the 4 basic classifications of "fruit" from the following seven verses:

**Galatians 5:22-23** "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

**Matthew 5:16** "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

**Colossians 3:12-14** "...clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

**Ephesians 2:10** "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

**Hebrews 13:15** "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that openly profess his name."

**Colossians 1:28-29** "He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me."

**Colossians 2:6-7** "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."

# WEEK 2 DAY 11

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**John 15:1-8**

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### The Secret of Fruit-bearing is...

What role do YOU play in bearing fruit for the glory of the Father? Should your **focus** be to develop a sweet attitude, lead lots of people to a mature faith in Christ, continually offer praise and thanks to God, and regularly do good things for others (review day 9) OR should your focus be on your relationship with Christ, and then as a by-product, let those "fruits" be borne naturally out of your life?

What eventually happens to people who TRY to develop FRUIT without having a relationship with Christ to support it?

**John 15:5** is a conditional verse... "**If** you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." What happens to our fruit when our relationship with Christ is not going well?

Within the passage, can you see ANY other responsibilities I (the branch) have in making sure that fruit is borne in my life?

What is the secret of bearing "much fruit"?

# WEEK 2 DAY 12

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### Our Role in Fruit-bearing — "My words remain in you"

Remaining in Christ becomes the primary focus of the branch. That said, the center-point of a great relationship can be summed up in just one word – COMMUNICATION. The communication we have with Christ flows in two directions – 1) FROM HIM TO US *and* 2) FROM US TO HIM. Today, let's focus on the first concept – how does Christ communicate with us?

What do you think this phrase meant to the disciples the first time they heard it from the lips of Jesus?

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."

How do Christ's words "remain" in me?

Which of the following actions have I taken with Christ's words this week?

- Hear
- Read
- Study
- Memorize
- Meditate

Why do you think the order of **John 15:7** infers that WE should have Christ's words in us FIRST, before we "ask"?

# WEEK 2 DAY 13

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#### Our Role in Fruit-bearing — "ask"

People in *ALL* religions pray. Jesus very clearly instructs us to be filled with His Word first, and then "ask" **Him** to naturally fulfill the new desires put into our hearts as a result of His words (and will) remaining in us. Consider the following statements and respond with True or False:

If we regularly pray to Jesus we obligate Him to answer our prayers. True False

If we regularly pray, God keeps a record of this and counts it toward our good works. True False

If we regularly pray, at some point we will fill up a request bowl in heaven and get a positive answer. True False

If we regularly pray, then and only then will we be protected from evil and earning a good standing before God. True False

Praying is how we score points with God. True False

Pardon me for these absurd statements, but I mention them because they represent the views of RELIGIOUS people who are walking dangerously close to WITCHCRAFT – not relationship! PRAYER is NOT a mechanistic "hocus pocus" say these magic words and certain things will happen in life kind of deal – that is the spirit of witchcraft! TRUE BIBLICAL PRAYER is the NATURAL OUTFLOWING of a heart that has been filled with His desires, words and will. Remember your first "boy/girl" human relationship? What did your phone bill look like???? BOTTOM LINE: If we have a relationship with Christ (abide/remain), and we have intentionally ingested His love letters to us (the Word), we CAN'T HELP BUT PRAY!!! True prayerlessness is not the result of not enough "discipline" so much as it's the result of NOT ENOUGH JESUS!

Write down your conversation with Christ about the concept above:

# WEEK 2 DAY 14

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### "... bear much fruit"

Imagine two sets of parents chatting around the coffee table talking about their young families. Dad number one jumps into a deep subject with his guests... "I tell you what I want for my son and daughter – I want them to underachieve. I'd love to see them excel at laziness. If they could make it through life and have no impact on anyone I would be thrilled!" The mom from the second couple interjects, "I feel the same way; the safest way for our two sons to move through adolescence and into adulthood is to attempt as little as possible. I'd hate for them to discover a cure for cancer or better the lives of the community around them. What a disaster that would be! I certainly don't want them to be fulfilled, just *safe*."

ABSURD!!! What parent would ever say such a thing! Imagine what kind of young adult would be produced from this type of parental atmosphere!?

Now imagine God, who is YOUR heavenly Father – what do you think *His thoughts toward you* are? He (God) tells us! "'For I know the **plans** I have for you,' declares the LORD, '**plans** to prosper you and not to harm you, **plans** to give you **hope** and a **future**'" (**Jeremiah 29:11**). As a "Parent," God *wisely* knows that the more "fruitful" we are, the more joyful we'll be. In addition, He knows that our lives will *snowball* with glorious momentum around Him as we "bear much fruit," because we will be pleasing the very One toward whom our greatest affection is both owed and deserved. If you are online right now, I dare you to watch the following video clip: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LA\\_uwWPE6IQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LA_uwWPE6IQ).

On day 10, you categorized the four types of fruit that can come out of the life of a believer. One of those types was *our witness* – sharing and reproducing our faith into the lives of others. Consider the following verse in light of *why* God wants us to bear much fruit...

**Philemon 1:6** "I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ."

What happens to a believer who shares his/her faith actively?

Conversely, a person who never shares his/her faith might lack...?

Why do you think God wants to bear much fruit through our lives as we remain in Christ? (Does God **need** us to bear fruit for Him?)