

## Lesson 5 – Stay Connected: Lessons from John 15

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### Introduction

It is a very well known and well-read passage of the Bible, and certainly the most significant on the theme of spiritual fruitfulness: John 15:1-17, in which are recorded some of the words of Jesus to his disciples the night before his crucifixion. They are part of what some have called his 'farewell discourse.' One of the clear teachings he wanted them to understand before his death, and in preparation for him leaving them, was the importance of abiding, remaining, or staying connected to him. He is clear that his followers are meant to be fruitful and that we can only be fruitful if we stay dependent on him and connected to him. The vine and the vineyard had been a key image in the Jewish Scriptures, an image of the nation of Israel, often used to challenge them on their lack of fruitfulness (see other Bible readings below). But in John 15, Jesus reveals that he is the true vine and that the only hope that we have of bearing fruit that glorifies the Father is to stay connected to the Son.

### Key Passage

*'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.'*

*'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 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.'*

*'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. 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. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: love each other.'*

**Other Bible Readings:** Psalm 80:7-9; Isaiah 5:3-5; Matthew 20:1-16; Mark 12:1-11

## Questions for Reflection and Application

1. What do you think Jesus means by being cut off, pruned and cleaned? What do you think we can learn from this?
2. What do you think it actually means to abide, or remain, in Jesus and what does it look like in practice? What might it look like in everyday life?
3. What do you think he means by the promise in verse 7?
4. How do the themes of 1) the new commandment of love, and 2) being his friends rather than servants, relate to the theme of being fruitful?
5. Are there any other lessons we learn from this Bible passage?

## Further Reading

Use [Bible Gateway](#) to look at this passage in lots of different versions and think about how they each bring out something new and fresh from the words.