



That You May
HAVE LIFE

A STUDY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

women's
BIBLE STUDY



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LESSON *Twelve*

The True Vine



Using images from a vineyard, in John 15 Jesus explained to His disciples that a relationship with Him is the only way to a fruitful life. Jesus is the true vine to all who follow Him. There was an obstacle though: the world was sure to hate them for their belief. Yet again, Jesus reminded them that they would not be alone, the Holy Spirit was sure to come and help.

VINEYARD

The vineyard is an image used in the Old Testament to describe the people of Israel: Psalm 80:8-16; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 2:21; Ezekiel 15:1-8, 17:1-21, 19:10-14; Hosea 10:1-2. Often these passages speak to Israel's unfruitfulness. Now, Jesus Himself claims He is the vine, the only One who can produce good fruit.⁶⁰

LIFELESS

"A vine-branch is lifeless and useless unless it remains attached to the vine. The living sap from the stock flowing into it enables it to produce grapes; otherwise it is fruitless."⁶¹

"I AM"

John 15:1 and 5 are Jesus' last "I am" statements in the book of John. Turn to the back of the curriculum to memorize this verse.

REMAIN

NIV and CSB Bible translations use the word "remain" in place of "abide."

ROLES

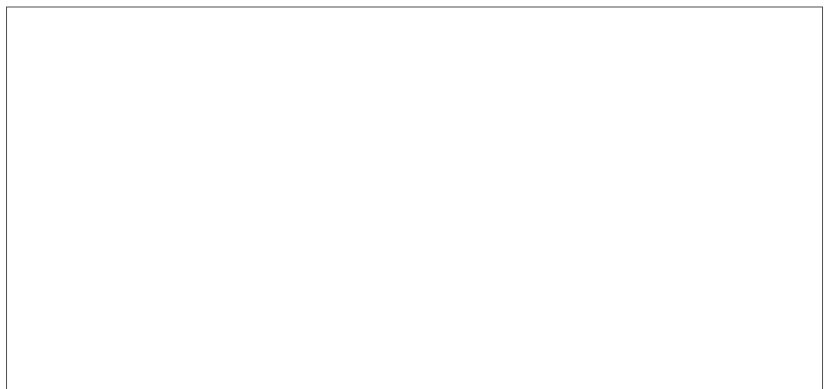
Stop for a moment to consider your role in abiding versus God's role.

Read John 15:1-16:4a before answering the following questions.

1. According to John 15, what are some characteristics of a meaningful relationship with Jesus? What does it look like for a follower of Jesus to cultivate these qualities?

Read John 15:1-8.

2. Look online for an example of a vine with fruit and sketch it below. Then, next to each element of your drawing, write what you learn about the vine, branch, and fruit from John 15:1-8.



3. Read the definition of abide in the Appendix. Now, explain what it means to abide in Jesus. How is abiding in Jesus different than taking part in spiritual or religious activities? (For help, read Isaiah 29:13.)

4. What do you observe in this section about bearing fruit?

Though there are many opinions as to what Jesus was referring to in this case when He said “fruit,” throughout Scripture it is evident that fruit in the life of a believer can include:

- *Fruit of the Holy Spirit, including love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-25)*
- *New Christ followers (Matthew 13:1-23)*
- *Obedience to Jesus (1 John 2:3-6)*
- *Love for others (Matthew 22:37-39, John 13:35)*

What “fruit” do you see in your own life?

5. Read John 15:5 below and underline what stands out to you.

“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.”

Consider if you actually believe you can do nothing apart from Jesus.

Where in your life this week have you been operating in your own strength? How might your life look different if you consistently operated from the truth that you can do nothing apart from God?

“The problem with striving is that it often looks “spiritual” from the outside. The truth is that all too often we get busy doing things for Jesus rather than being with him....The beauty of abiding is in the fact that we get to come, as we are, and simply be with Jesus. God wants to take the withered, weary branches that we are and nourish us, making us strong in him.”

– Casey Grott⁶⁴

PRUNE

To prune means to “rid,” “cut off,” or “remove.”⁶²

THROWN AWAY?

From the context, verse 6 is speaking about unbelievers, not claiming that believers can lose their salvation.

PRAYER

“If God’s people truly abide in Jesus, they will desire what he desires and will pray according to his words, and those prayers will be pleasing to him.”⁶³

LIFE WITH GOD

For more verses on a life lived by the strength and grace of God alone, read Psalm 46:10, Colossians 1:29, Galatians 2:20, and Philippians 4:13.

11. Why does the world hate Jesus? Why might the world hate His followers, both then and now?
12. Following Jesus could lead to persecution and rejection from the world, yet it is the only way to true life (John 14:6). How do you think this made the disciples feel? When have you faced persecution or rejection because you were following Jesus? Why is the abundant life Jesus promises worth this kind of treatment?

“[Abiding] is not a matter of feeling—it is not a question of growth or strength in the Christian life—it is the simple question whether the will at the present moment desires and consents to recognize the place you have in your Lord, and to accept it.”

— Andrew Murray ⁶⁸

Read Eman’s story on page 119 about the abundant life God offers.

PERSECUTION

The Spirit “comes to assist men caught up in the thick of battle, and tried beyond their strength. Jesus makes it quite plain that the way before His followers is a hard and difficult way.”⁶⁷

THE COST

“Following Jesus costs something (Luke 9:57-62; 14:25-33) and may cost life itself. Yet not following Jesus means one is siding with a lost and hateful world.”⁶⁹

REFLECT

Pause and reflect on John 13-15. Consider what Jesus was trying to teach His disciples about humility, dependence, and love. These were necessary lessons before Jesus left earth.

BIG IDEA

What is your biggest takeaway from this week's lesson?

Review: Jesus' Seven I Am Statements

I am the _____ of _____. (John 6:35, 48)

I am the _____ of the _____. (John 8:12)

I am the _____ of the _____. (John 10:7)

I am the _____. (John 10:11, 14)

I am the _____ and the _____. (John 11:25)

I am the _____, the _____, and the _____. (John 14:6)

I am the _____. (John 15:1, 5)

Testimony

I was a devoted Muslim for 30 years, praying, fasting and reciting the Quran. But there was always something missing. I never had a relationship with God, and I always felt like a slave with no purpose. Yet, all my life I felt that Jesus was calling my name.

For years, I never had the courage to open the door and let Jesus into my life. As a Muslim, accepting Jesus Christ as my Savior could get me killed by my parents or family members. What was worse is that my killer would be celebrated and not convicted. It would be an “honor crime.”

John 15:20 says, “If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”

But God had a plan for my life. He put me where I could be safe to know Him. Seven years ago, my family moved to America. For the first time, I felt the freedom to let God in. I began attending church and asking questions. I got a Bible and started reading it. I was invited to a Bible study with a wonderful group of godly women. There, I felt safe and declared my faith to them, that Jesus Christ is my Savior, and I am a believer and follower of Him.

I immediately felt the presence of the Holy Spirit and His work in my heart. Internally, I was changing, but externally, I continued to face the dangers of my faith in Jesus. I hid my faith in Christ from my husband and anyone outside my circle of trust, even going as far as using a different name so I would remain safe. When I decided to get baptized, I was too afraid to do it at the church, but an amazing woman from the church opened her home for me to secretly be baptized in her pool.

After almost a year of becoming a believer in Jesus, I told my husband. What surprised me was that he had actually already noticed the change in me. He saw my Bible, noticed I had stopped practicing Islam, and saw my lack of participation in Muslim celebrations. He also noticed my friends had changed. As expected, he was angry and even threatened to tell my family. But he also thought it might just be a phase or a new lifestyle. As time passed, my faith grew

stronger, and he realized it wasn't a temporary change. By God's grace and goodness, rather than getting me killed, my husband was accepting of my faith.

After telling my husband, I found greater courage and decided to tell my dad. He was disappointed and upset, but quickly accepted me and my decision. He tried to help my brother understand my choice, but my brother would not accept me as a Christian. He made it very clear that he would not have an ex-Muslim and Christian as a sister. He threatened that if my children and I ever return home as Christian believers, he would kill us.

My dad made me promise I would not share my faith with any more family members or on social media and begged me to be very cautious. Due to multiple threats, continual hate, and constant danger my family faced, I applied for religious asylum to avoid having to go home and face persecution. This is very hard for my young children to understand.

John 15:18 says, “If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first.” (NLT)

I have come to understand that fear is not from the Lord. “[F]or God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and self-discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:7, NLT) I have decided to follow Jesus and that I will not tolerate fear any longer. I now genuinely jump into any opportunity where I can share my story, tell the world about Jesus, and spread His good news of salvation. There were times when I used to pause for a second and think before doing that, but not anymore. Jesus has saved me, and His Holy Spirit is in me.

Philippians 1:21 “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

- Eman

Notes