

*“If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.” John 15:7*

## **Relevant Studies—“24!” (Hours Before the Cross)**

### **Lesson Six—Remain in the Vine**

John chapters 13 through 17 are known as the Upper Room Discourse, however, as we begin Chapter 15, it appears that Jesus and His disciples have left the upper room and are walking toward the Garden of Gethsemane. (If you read John 18:1, you will see why there is disagreement about this.) Jesus uses a vine analogy to illustrate a point that seems to indicate He was referencing the vineyard they probably walked by. They would have skirted around the Temple wall before going down into the Kidron Valley, across the brook, and then up the slope of the Mount of Olives to the Garden.

One of Stan’s favorite things to do when we go to Israel is a night tour where we stop just below the Eastern Wall after dark. We can see exactly where Jesus and His disciples would have walked as they made their way through the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives and the Garden. It is beautiful and very moving to ponder the events just prior to Jesus’ arrest.

### **Day One—The True Vine, The Gardener, and the Branches**

1. Read John 15, concentrating on verses one and two. As Jesus walked through the vineyards that surrounded the temple, He pointed to a vine (that He possibly picked) to illustrate what He meant when He had just said, *“I am in the Father, and you are in Me and I am in you.”* (John 14:20). Picture Him now showing them a vine, and saying, *“I am the True Vine and My Father is the Gardener.”*
  - a. Can you relate what Jesus said in John 14:20 to the part(s) of the grapevine Jesus would have been referring to when He said He was the True Vine?
  - b. Read Romans 12:4-5. Here is another way to look at Jesus’ analogy: What is Paul saying about the body of Christ? What parallels to Jesus’ vine illustration do you see?

2. What is the purpose of the Vine? Why does it need to be pruned (the word “pruned” may also mean cleaned)?

**What is the fruit we are to bear? This fruit is not talking about evangelism and winning people to Christ, although it usually results in this. What would this fruit be? Galatians 5:22-23 tells us *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.* The works that result are because we are producing this kind of fruit in our lives. In other words, evangelism and being a witness are a natural result of the fruit of the Spirit.**

3. Notice that Jesus talked about four kinds of branches in verses 15:2, 3, and 5. What are they?

## Day Two—The Lifter of My Head

**John 15:2 begins, *“He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit...”* What did Jesus mean? In Greek “cuts off” is the translation of the word *airo* which means “to raise up from the ground; to lift upward.” Branches will not produce in dirt. They need to be cleansed and lifted up on stakes in order to receive the light from the sun. We Christians find ourselves sometimes needing to be lifted up because we have managed to be down (in the dirt). God has a way of lifting us up so we will be fruitful in our lives. *“Every branch that does bear fruit He prunes [cleanses] so that it will be even more fruitful.”* “Cleanses” is a more accurate word than “prunes” simply because we need to be cleansed daily in order to continue to grow and produce fruit. Another word for this could be “sanctified.”**

1. Before you had read the box above, what did you think verse 2a meant? Were you troubled by it?
2. When we think of pruning, we think of pain, and this is often accurate. Pruning is painful and sometimes our cleansing truly is a pruning process. When you prune a rose bush, or any perennial plant what must you do, and how does that illustrate our being lifted up, pruned, and/or cleansed by our Father?

3. Explain what David is saying in Psalm 3:1-3.
  
4. Read Job 10:15. Job was in utter despair at this point in his life. What does the Lord do for us when we are in this condition (John 15:2)?
  
5. Share a time in your life when you felt you were not going to make it until God lifted you up from your situation or pain.

### **Days Three and Four—Apart from Christ We Can Do Nothing**

1. Read John 15:5-8. What did Jesus mean when He said, “*remain in Me*” or (in the New King James Version “*abide in Me*”)? Use the following Scriptures as a guide to help you understand what it means to “remain” or “abide” in Jesus—keep in mind what you’ve already studied: Jesus is the vine, and we are the branches.
  - a. 1 John 4:13-15
  
  - b. John 1:12
  
  - c. 1 John 3:24
  
  - d. 1 John 2:24
  
  - e. John 15:12

2. For each of the phrases below from John 15:5-6, comment on its relevance to our lives:
  - a. *“If a person remains in Me and I in [her], she will bear much fruit.”*
  - b. *“Apart from Me you can do nothing.”*
  - c. *“If anyone does not remain in Me she/he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers.”*
  - d. *“Such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.”*
  - e. Read 1 Corinthians 3:12-15. There is a difference between this person Paul described, and the person (branch) Jesus described in John 15:6. Can you explain what it is?

### **Day Five—True Disciples of Christ**

1. Read John 15:7-8. (Review what you studied in John 14:12-14 regarding asking in Jesus’ Name.)
  - a. Jesus added something to what He initially shared with the disciples in the upper room in John 14—what is it, and what does this mean?
  - b. What proof will a person have that he/she is a disciple of Christ (John 15:7-8)? What does this mean?

2. The fruit in John 15 has been likened to grapes on a grapevine. Here are some facts about the grape (and grape vine). Think about these—what parallels to the life of a Christian and the Church do you see for each fact below?
  - a. Grapes are the largest fruit crop produced in the world.
  - b. The quality of the grape is only as good as the rooted stock. The best grapes come from the healthy productive stock.
  - c. Grapes can be reproduced and adapt in new climates but require attentive care (water, fertilizer, and pruning).
  - d. New plants are pruned from three to five years to “train” them before they actually produce much fruit.
  - e. A healthy vine can yield as much as eighty pounds of grapes in a single season.
  - f. Disease can spread from dead branches that have not been pruned.
  
4. What has made the most impact on you from our study of what Jesus said John 15:1-8? What changes will you make in order to see good fruit produced in your life?