

WELLNESS / WHOLENESS: Introduction



WELLNESS

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

(Deuteronomy 6:5)

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

(Matthew 22:37)

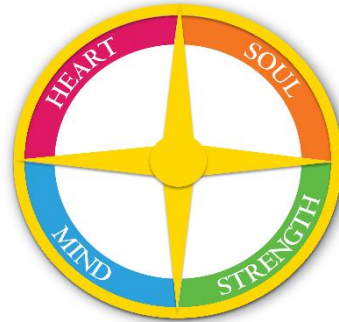
Wellness is about pursuing health in specific areas. Wellness centers on bringing balance through routines, habits and mind/heart/soul/strengthening practices.

WHOLENESS

For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete -

Colossians 2:9-10

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. - John 10:10



Wholeness represents the broader state of how these parts interact to create a complete and integrated person, fully realized through connection with God.

Things to notice about the Wholeness Wheel:

- **God-Centered (The Center):** The hub of the wheel represents the God within, symbolizing a life connected to God. By inviting God into the deepest part of ourselves, we allow His presence to transform us from the inside out. *(think of how you center yourself)*
- **God All Around (The Rim):** While God is in the center, the entire wheel is encircled by an all-encompassing God who holds all the dimensions of our lives together. God provides the sustaining spirit we need to be whole, both individually and with others. *(think of multiple wheels connected together into one)*
- **Dimensions of Well-Being (the Quadrants):** The four quadrants represent the emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical aspects of our lives, acknowledging that health in one area impacts the whole person -- as well as our relationship with God. *(think of different aspects in your life that you experience within each of the quadrants)*

I am the True Vine (John 15:1-11)

¹ I am the **true vine**, and My Father is the **vinedresser**. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ "I am the vine, **you are the branches**. He who abides in Me, and I in him, **bears much fruit**; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ 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. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. ⁹ As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹ "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that **your joy may be full**.

The True Vine: God Within Us (the center of the wheel)

- God is not a distant observer but is "knowably present" and actively involved in our lives.
- Jesus is the one **true vine**. He is our immediate source of nourishment and life. Just as sap flows from the vine to the branch, the life of Christ flows through us. We are naturally rooted and live as extensions of God in our daily existence.
- Abiding is an active, intentional dwelling where we draw our identity and strength directly from Him.

The Vinedresser: God Around Us (the entire circle)

- God the Father is the **Vinedresser** (a person who prunes, trains, and cultivates vines). He is the ultimate authority who owns, tends, and judges the vineyard, a majestic presence beyond human understanding.
- Pruning (i.e., cleaning) is an act of divine sovereignty. God's commitment to our fruitfulness often overrides our immediate comfort; He trims away what is dead or distracting so we can reach our full potential.

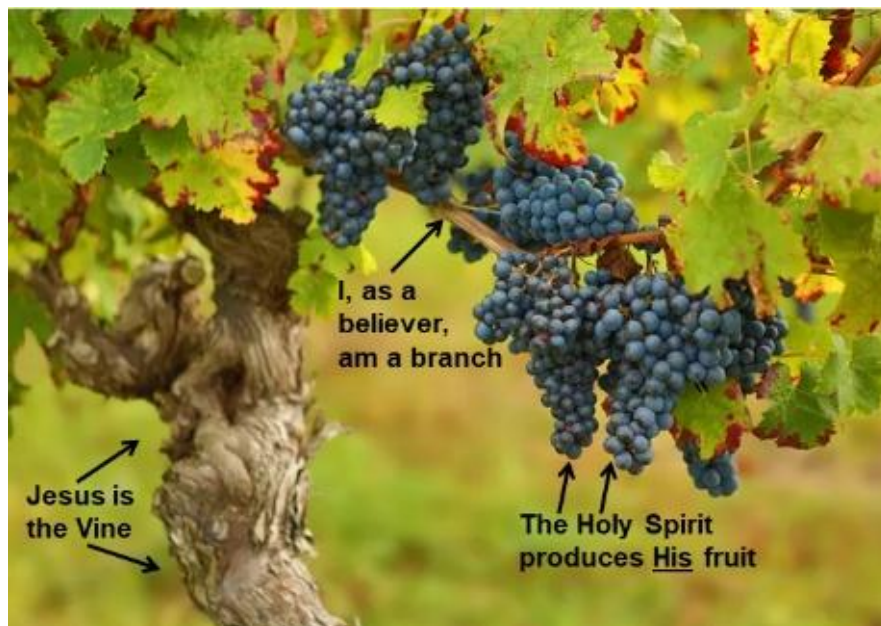
The Branches: Community of Faith (our circle connected to other circles)

- We are not isolated branches; we are part of a single organism. We are many branches on a single vine. Our connection to God is inherently linked to our relationship with one another - in community.
- The "fruit" we bear is not just personal holiness but includes loving one another - "*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*" (John 15:12).

- Branches share an integrated vascular system - disease or stress in one branch can impact the whole vine. Our health as individual branches directly impacts the health of the entire vine (the Church).

The Results: Spiritual Fruit (Wellness/Wholeness)

- A branch doesn't try to grow a grape. It doesn't strain or stress. It simply **abides**.
- Jesus and the Holy Spirit provide the life-giving nutrients the branch cannot generate on its own. Their power flows through us to create fruit.
- The results are **spiritual fruit**. These include the nine character traits of Galatians 5:22-23: Love, Joy, Peace, Forbearance, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control. (See Handout #1)



WRAP UP

- Reflect on the concepts of **Wholeness** and **Wellness** and how they connect to the story of the Vine.
- **Wholeness** means the branches abide in Christ - i.e. draw sustenance from the vine.
- **Wellness** is taking care of ourselves (and our community - i.e., other branches) to keep us and the entire vine healthy and fruitful.
- We need to stay healthy and connected to God - and help other branches stay healthy and connected to God - for the overall health/goodness/fruitfulness of the vine.
- The rest of this series will be focus on different aspects of wellness to help us keep our branch - and the branches of others - strong and healthy.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE (3-5 things to try out this week)

The "Red Light" Breath Prayer

- Whenever you find yourself waiting—at a red light, in a grocery line, or for a kettle to boil—don't reach for your phone. Instead, take one deep breath.
- As you inhale, say internally: *"You are within me."* As you exhale, say: *"You are around me."*
- Try this to help move you from feeling stuck to feeling held in His presence.

Seek the Horizontal Connection

- Sometime this week, reach out to someone you know just to have a conversation.
- As they speak, remind yourself: *"The same Spirit in me is in them. We are both abiding together in the same vine."*
- The goal is to experience God not as a distant figure, but as the connective tissue that bonds us and sustains us together.

Abide-A-While

- Instead of a "To-Do" list, try a **"To-Abide"** list.
- Reflect on which fruit is currently missing from your branch and where are places in your life you might consider trying less and abiding more. (For example, instead of trying harder to be 'kinder,' how can you spend more time 'abiding' in Jesus this week to let Him grow that kindness in you?)