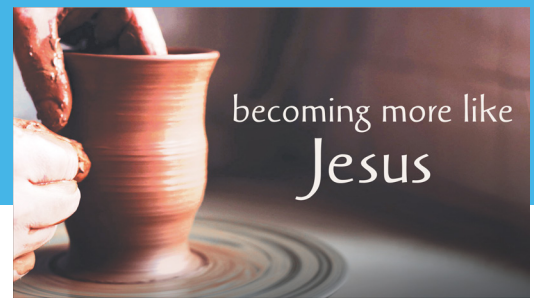


Discussion Questions

November 2, 2025



Becoming More Like Jesus: A Life of Abiding - John 15:1-10

This week's message explored Jesus' words in John 15, where He declares, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser." Many of us long for the fruit of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, and more - but often try to produce them by sheer willpower. The result is exhaustion and frustration, like a severed branch trying to tape fruit onto itself. Jesus instead calls us to abide - to remain deeply connected to Him, the true source of life. God the Father, the vinedresser, lovingly lifts us when we've fallen into the dirt and prunes us when we're bearing fruit so that we can bear even more. The secret to a fruitful life is not striving harder, but abiding deeper - living a "with-God" life of active rest and continual dependence.

1. Read John 15:1-9 together as a group. Ask someone to read it aloud, and invite the group to listen for any words or phrases that stand out to them.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 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. If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love." (ESV)

2. The Problem of Striving

- The sermon used the illustration of a severed branch with fake, taped-on fruit ("arts and crafts") to describe the life of striving. In what areas of your life are you most tempted to "tape on fake fruit" - to perform, "white-knuckle" it, or put on a show of patience, joy, or peace when it's not real?

- Why do you think our default response is so often to "try harder" rather than to "abide deeper"?

3. The Vinedresser's Job (God the Father)

- The sermon explained the Greek for "takes away" (airo) can also mean "to lift up," like a vinedresser lifting a branch out of the dirt. How does this impact your understanding of God to see His response to your sin or failure not as rejection, but as a desire to "lift you up" and clean you off?

- Pruning isn't punishment for sin; it's cutting away even "good" things on a fruitful branch to make way for better fruit. Share an example of how God has "pruned" you. How can we learn to trust the Vinedresser's "shears" when the cutting hurts?

4. The Branch's Job (The Disciples)

- What is the role of Scripture, "the Word" in abiding?
- The sermon described abiding as a paradox: "active rest." It's active (a choice, a command to "remain") and passive (a branch simply receives life from the vine). What "active" choices help you to abide, or "practice the presence of God," during the week?
- What does the "restful" part look like in your daily life? How can you practice "conscious dependence" on Jesus in the middle of a busy workday or a stressful family situation?
- In verse 5, Jesus makes the absolute statement: "Apart from me you can do nothing." Do you honestly believe this? How does your daily schedule or prayer life reflect (or not reflect) this belief?

5. The Result of Abiding

- According to verse 8, our fruit glorifies the Father. How does it free you from the pressure to perform when you realize your fruitfulness is not for your glory, but to show the world how good the Vinedresser is?
- Verse 7 says, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish..." Why is this not a "blank check"? How does abiding change what we want and how we pray?

6. In John 15:9, Jesus says, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love."

- Discuss the significance of what Jesus says about His love for us.
- We often treat "abiding" as a difficult chore we must perform for God. In what ways does it change your perspective when you see it as a command to simply receive and rest in a love that is already flowing to you? What is one practical way you can stop working for His approval this week and simply rest in His love?

John 15:1,4-5 (ESV)

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser... Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 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.

**John 15:1 (ESV)**

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

Psalm 80:8–9 (ESV)

You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land.

Jeremiah 2:21 (NLT)

I was the one who planted you, choosing a vine of the purest stock - the very best. How did you grow into this corrupt wild vine?

- **The True Vine: Jesus**
- **The Vinedresser: God the Father**
- **The Branches: The disciples.**

John 15:2 (ESV)

*Every branch in me that does not bear fruit **he takes away**, and every branch that does bear fruit **he prunes**, that it may bear more fruit.*

John 15:3 (ESV)

Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you

John 15:4 (ESV)

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.

Abide - ménō

to remain, to stay, to dwell, or to make your home in

Abiding is the active, moment-by-moment choice to remain in a state of conscious dependence.

John 15:5 (ESV)

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.

John 15:7 (ESV)

If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

John 15:9 (ESV)

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.

The FRUIT is the LIFE of Jesus [the vine] reproduced in Us [the branches].

John 15:8 (ESV)

By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples