

Secure Connections

Key Verse: *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”*
—John 15:5

Selected Scripture:
John 15:1-17

WE ARE ALL BORN TO BE IN relationship with someone, and we need those significant others to be productive. These others may be our natural parents, grandparents or others. Depending on the situation, any one of the aforementioned will have a great impact as a role model to us.

Among the very instructive and deeply significant illustrations used by Jesus during his earthly ministry, we have the beautiful presentation of the Christian's possibilities drawn from the vine and its branches. As used by our Lord, it embraces the closest relationship—the Father as husbandman, our Lord as the vine, and ourselves as the branches—all absorbed in the same great objective—the production of fruitage. This illustration is particularly used to emphasize the fruit-bearing expected of the branches. To this end, the husbandman watches over their union with the vine, taking care to prune away all unfruitful branches, and giving still more special attention to such as are fulfilling his purpose in bringing forth increasing measures of fruit. “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”—John 15:2

In our spiritual lives, John says that being connected

to Jesus is essential if we are to be productive in our lives. He uses the example of a vineyard to illustrate how this connection must be made in order that we might become fruitful. Our Lord is the vine, and all the individuals that are united to him are the branches. Each Christian is a branch from the moment of consecration, and becomes a participator of the root. Just as we do not expect a fruit tree to be instantly fruitful, we also should not expect Christians to instantly bear all the fruits of the Spirit.

Each branch shows evidence of life because of its connection to that vine, and, as a result, becomes strong, eventually bearing fruit. A branch without a connection to the vine is of no value, just as we are spiritually valueless without a connection to our Lord.

Each spring a branch shows its progress by sending out tendrils, followed by leaves, and then flowers. Finally fruit, which at first is very small and requires time, will develop. So it is with the Christian. Progress is achieved systematically, and in due time. The sap which produces the fruit can only be obtained by continued union with the vine and its root of promise. If separated, all hopes wither, just as a branch withers when cut off from the vine. This sap is the Divine power which operates through our Lord Jesus, through the Word of Truth, through the followers of Jesus, and can operate in the weakest member of the body of Christ as well as in the strongest.

All fruit trees are subject to the pruning that must take place each year, and so must each Christian gladly and meekly submit to all the pruning that the great Husbandman has in his wisdom seen best to permit in their lives. Each should very carefully look for the leadings of Divine providence in his or her life, and realize that only as they are coworkers together with God can they accomplish anything. Most importantly, we must accept our Lord as the one and only role model in our lives. These thoughts are wonderfully expressed by Solomon, "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."—Prov. 3:6 ■