

True Vine

Seven times in the book of John, Jesus says "I am ...". These statements are not metaphors about Jesus, but rather Jesus stating that He is God. Each statement reveals part of God's character and who He is in us, making it possible for us to say, "I am new."



INTRODUCTION

Jesus is the true vine; the Father is the vine keeper. We are the branches, and we can only grow through a relationship with Jesus. Over time, God will prune the unproductive parts of our lives so that we can produce fruit and glorify Him. To become new, we must connect to the vine.

STARTER QUESTION

How has God pruned areas of your life so that you can produce more fruit?

INTO THE WORD

1. Read John 15:5-15. What comes to mind when you hear the word "abide?" Other translations use the word "remain." Can you think of a few ways that you might abide or remain in the Lord and His Word?
2. In this sermon, we learned that Christ calls His followers to "bear fruit." Read Galatians 5:22-23. What exactly does Jesus mean by "fruit?"
3. Read Matthew 25:35-40. How can you show Christ-like love to others?

APPLICATION

4. What are some ways in which you can abide in Christ through obedience?
5. Is there a specific area of your life that you need to focus on to develop a deeper connection with Christ? Is it easy to include Jesus in some areas and not in others? Or – maybe there are areas in which you routinely include Jesus, but other times it doesn't occur to you to include Him. Think of examples and identify what you could do to be more consistent in developing your connection with Jesus.
6. What does bearing the fruit of the Spirit look like for you in your daily life?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Jesus, who is our true vine. Lord, we want to abide in You, and we ask that You give us the wisdom and courage to obey Your commands even when it is difficult. We pray that You would prune the areas of our lives that do not produce fruit so that we may glorify You. In Christ's name, Amen.

SUGGESTED ANSWER GUIDE

Question 1:

We are commanded to love each other as Jesus has loved us (John 15:12). If we keep Jesus' commands, He says that we will remain in His love, just as He has kept His Father's commands and remains in His love (John 15:10). Another word for keeping the Lord's commands is **obedience**. When we obey the Lord's commands and seek His will, He promises the blessing of bearing much fruit (John 15:5).

Webster definitions:

Abide – to bear patiently (tolerate); to endure without yielding (withstand); to wait for; to accept without objection

Remain – to be a part not destroyed, taken, or used up; to be something yet to be shown, done, or treated; to stay in the same place or with the same person or group; to continue unchanged

Question 2:

In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul explains that the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. A Christ-follower should exhibit these traits as he or she grows in a relationship with Him.

Question 3:

We can show Christ-like love by selflessly tending to the needs of others. Matthew 25:35-36 says, “For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.”

We can treat everyone with the love of Christ, remembering that we are all made in God's image. Matthew 25:40 says, “And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”

Question 4:

We can abide in Christ and show obedience by rejoicing in difficult times, allowing God to prune fruitless parts of our lives, keeping His commands, and continuously submitting to His will.

Question 5:

Our relationship with God grows by reading His Word, praying consistently, seeking fellowship, serving others, and showing love to others.

Question 6:

Bearing the fruit of the Spirit means embodying the qualities of Galatians 5:22-23. In this way, we demonstrate God's love by “walking the walk” of our faith. As His ambassadors, we represent the Lord through our behavior and actions.