



Webinar – Module Two
Spiritual Formation – Abide

John 15

Vineyard

- Israel's prominent symbol
- In the time of Jesus a great golden vine hung over the entrance to the Jerusalem temple. Josephus describes it: "The gate opening into the building was, as I say, completely overlaid with gold, as was the whole wall around it. It had, moreover, above it those golden vines, from which depended grape-clusters as tall as a man." (Jewish War v.210-212)

Jesus is the true Vine

- "Genuine" or the "real" Vine
- Connected to the Father – extension of His own Son
- Life flows from Vine to branches – God cares for the branch with all the love which He has for His Son flows through the Vine to the branches (Good News – deeply loved)

Premise: Jesus was intimately connected to the Spirit, *"the Son can do nothing by himself"* (John 5:19) as Jesus ushered in the Kingdom of God inviting us to change our allegiance to that of being connected just as intimately with God. After our justification, it would take a life-time of formation:

Spiritual Formation is a Spirit-driven process through which we open our hearts to a deeper connection with God. The effects of which is an ever-increasing capacity to live a spiritual life in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself.

The Father as the Vine Keeper

- Cares for the vine, tends it, and watches for the fruit
- Plants it, prunes it, and will receive glory from it
 - Branches that are filled with their own independent will and contradictory purposes that impair their natural purpose, it is His task to clip, water, prune, and love those branches until they fulfill His purpose in bringing glory to God.
- ***What is the sole "glory" of the vine and branches?***
 - Not the leaf, the color, the strength, or the width—but the fruit is the glory of the vine
 - Fruit is the evidence that we are abiding (connected to)
 - *Ye shall know them by their fruits Matt. 7:16*
 - Fruitful – the branch that is in Christ has all that is necessary to become fruitful
 - Father will purge or cleanse the branches that do bear fruit

- A vine that is well-tended grows so fast that it must be pruned to conserve its energy to bear fruit and not just grow and produce non-fruit-bearing branches
- Unfruitful – the supernatural power is dormant and the branch is left with a deadness that will be cut off
 - Father will purge or cleanse the branches that do bear fruit
- All summer long the knife is used to keep the fruit growing and to prevent wasted energy.
 - If the branch were allowed to grow unchecked, many of the blossoms would never fruit. They would form tendrils instead of clusters; the vine keeper cuts the excess branch to allow the sap to fill the clusters and produce fruit.
 - **How does God prune us?**
 - His words as the knife to cleanse and purge believer’s lives. Studying the teachings of Jesus guides us to know what should be cut from our lives.
 - Circumstances
 - Authentic Community of people who bring grace and truth
 - **What is pruned?**
 - Deep-seated anger
 - Convictions
 - Mean-spirited speech
 - Dishonesties and thievery
 - Objects that bind our affections
 - Goal of pruning – remaining branches become more dependent on Him, and live more to the honor of God and humbly bring forth more fruit

Abide in me, and I in you.

- *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me John 15:4*
- The branch has no other responsibility except to receive from the vine through the roots and sap all of its nourishment.
- Μενο – “to stay, stand fast, stay where you are, not stir, or to remain as before.” **How do we remain/abide?**
 - Dwell with Jesus
 - To be continually operative in Jesus; in His influence and energy
 - To be rooted and knit to Him by the Holy Spirit
 - Thayer quotes Ruckert, “Something has established itself permanently within my soul, and always exerts its power in me.”
 - Abide has the idea of permanence of position, holding and maintaining unbroken communion and fellowship with Jesus.
 - Dependence upon...
 - Jesus modeled dependence...
 - Andrew Murray says, “If I am something, then God is not everything; but when I become nothing, God can become all, and the everlasting God in Christ can reveal Himself fully.”
 - **What happens to as we abide?**

- Affirms our **validation**
- Affirms our **reality (Kingdom)**

Signs of the Spirit's slow, deep work of transformation in our life:

- ✓ **Greater levels of brokenness: less and less judgmental**
- ✓ **Greater appreciation for mystery: only know "in part"**
- ✓ **Great ability to wait for God: letting go of self-will**
- ✓ **Greater detachment: in the world and less attachment to the things of it**

Learning from Jesus to "abide"

Spiritual Disciplines – the skills and techniques by which we begin to see the image of God in our heart. Disciplines are about aligning our beliefs, emotions, and actions; to be an integrated person.

- *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed (Mark 1:35).*
- *He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone Matt. 14:23*
- *He departed again into a mountain himself alone John 6:15*

FRUIT

God's purpose in abiding in us is that we produce fruit.

- *Every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful v2*
- *No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me v4*
- *If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing v5*
- *This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples v8*
- *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit —fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other v16-17*
 - *Galatians 5:22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*
 - *Ephesians 3:18-19 – And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge —that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

Intentionally creating rhythms to "abide"

- Arrange our lives around remaining connected

Romans 14:17 – Kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy