

THE Way



Jesus-centred, *Spirit-led*
hope revealed



**DISCIPLESHIP
BIBLE STUDY GUIDE**

*In this series, we will explore what it means to walk in **The Way** of Jesus. This week we are focusing on **discipleship**. We will look closely at John 15:1-12, where Jesus uses the picture of a vine to describe how we can be connected to and transformed by him.*



Share

What do you think of when you hear the word 'disciple'?

What do you think it means to follow Jesus in everyday life?

Who has helped you grow in your faith?

What did they do that helped?



Pray

Before we read today's Scripture, let's pray together.

*Pray that the Holy Spirit would speak
to us through God's Word.*



Read

Read John 15:1-12. You might like to read it in a couple of different translations.

¹ “I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener.

² He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more.

³ You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you.

⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

⁵ “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

⁶ Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned.

⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!

⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

⁹ “I have loved you even as the Father

has loved me. Remain in my love.

¹⁰ When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

¹¹ I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!

¹² This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you."

(New Living Translation)

¹ Jesus said to his disciples: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.

² He cuts away every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit. But he trims clean every branch that does produce fruit, so that it will produce even more fruit.

³ You are already clean because of what I have said to you.

⁴ Stay joined to me, and I will stay joined to you. Just as a branch cannot produce fruit unless it stays joined to the vine, you cannot produce fruit unless you stay joined to me.

⁵ I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you stay joined to me, and I stay joined to you, then you will produce lots of fruit. But you cannot do anything without me.

⁶ If you don't stay joined to me, you will be thrown away. You will be like dry branches that are gathered up and burned in a fire.

⁷ Stay joined to me and let my teachings become part of you. Then you can pray for whatever you want, and your prayer will be answered.

⁸ When you become fruitful disciples of mine, my Father will be honored.

⁹ I have loved you, just as my Father has loved me. So remain faithful to my love for you.

¹⁰ If you obey me, I will keep loving you, just as my Father keeps loving me, because I have obeyed him.

¹¹ I have told you this to make you as completely happy as I am.

¹² Now I tell you to love each other, as I have loved you.”

(Contemporary English Version)



- In today's passage, Jesus tells his disciples what it will look like to stay connected to him after he is gone. He begins with the words, "I am the true grapevine." When you picture a grapevine, what comes to mind?
- The grapevine was a familiar symbol in ancient Israel. The disciples were accustomed to thinking of Israel as the 'vine' – to follow God they had to be connected to Israel. Now Jesus tells them if they want to know God they must be connected to him.

What does the picture of the grapevine and branches tell you about following Jesus?

- Jesus says his Father is the Gardener (Verse 1). In Verse 2 we see that the Father "cuts away" the branches that don't produce fruit. Does anyone know what happens to a tree or plant when it is pruned (cut back/away)?
- Have you ever felt like God was 'pruning' something in your life? What was that like for you? How did it help you grow?
- The great Bible teacher John Stott once said, "The serious Christian prays to be pruned."¹ What do you think this means? Why do you think he would say this?
- The phrase "cuts away" can also be understood as "lifts up". God doesn't just prune back what's unhealthy, at times he stretches and raises the branches, lifting them toward the light so they can thrive and bear more fruit. Have you ever sensed God stretching you – not to harm you, but to help you grow?

- Read Verse 3 again. What are some ways that God prunes, purifies and grows us?
- Being connected to Jesus, as a branch to a vine, represents complete dependence on him. Jesus is not an added extra – he’s our life source. How do we know when we are living in connection with Jesus?
- In the passage, the word ‘abide’ occurs 11 times. Sometimes it is translated as ‘remain in’ or ‘cling to’. Why do you think Jesus repeats this word so many times?
- Verse 5 talks about producing “fruit”. What do you think “fruit” looks like in our lives? Can you give some real-life examples?
- Sometimes we try to work in our own strength to do things for God. We get busy trying to “produce fruit” through our own efforts. Have you ever done this? What draws us to try and do it ourselves? What does Verse 5 teach us about this?
- Verse 6 says, “Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers” (NLT). Has there been a time when you lived without Jesus? What is different about your life now that you are staying close to him?
- Verse 7 talks about asking for anything in prayer. How does staying close to Jesus help shape what we pray for?

- Verse 8 says producing fruit shows we are Jesus' disciples. Have you ever known someone was a Christian before they told you? What fruit did they show? What kind of fruit would you like to grow more of?
- Have a look at Verses 9 and 10. How do you think obeying Jesus relates to staying in his love?
- In Verse 12 Jesus tells us to love others in the same way he has loved us. What would that kind of love look like in your school, family or community?



Pray

In pairs, share one way you would like to grow as a disciple. Pray for each other.

Pray to close.

