

Abiding in Christ

If we receive forgiveness and cleansing and new life from Jesus by trusting in Him at the beginning, we must *continue* to live by His Spirit throughout our Christian life. We should never think we can live by our own strength or abilities. Paul said, **“Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?”** (*Galatians 3 v 3*)

Sometimes Jesus has to purge (cleanse) us or “prune” us. This may mean that we go through times of suffering or testing. But He only wants to make us *more fruitful*. **“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”** (*Hebrews 12 v 11*)

What is Spiritual Fruit?

Paul tells us that **“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”** (*Galatians 5 v 22 + 23*). As you ask Jesus to cleanse you and each day ask His Spirit to fill you, your life will start producing more and more of this beautiful fruit. Fruits of righteousness include having a thankful and singing heart, having a submissive spirit, introducing others to Jesus, giving to God’s work, not wasting time, speaking the Word of God with boldness and seeing answers to prayer.

A Serious Warning

If we do not *abide* in Christ, Jesus warns that we are cast forth as a branch and are withered, gathered and burned. Only those who bear fruit by abiding in Christ are His disciples (verses 6 + 7). The apostle Jude reminds us **“Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered His people out of Egypt but later destroyed those who did not believe.”** (*Jude 5*)

Although we cannot produce fruit ourselves, it is good to look into God’s Word, just as we look into a mirror, to **“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realise that Christ Jesus is in you ...”** (*2 Corinthians 13 v 5*). If we have Jesus’ words in us and obey what He tells us, we shall abide in His love (*John 15 v 10*). If we know that the Spirit of Christ is in us, we do not need to fear because the Holy Spirit is a *guarantee* and an *assurance* that we are His. Remember that *love* is the important test: **“God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God and God in him.”** (*1 John 4 v 16b*). How God loves you! Live in that love.

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BIBLE STUDY on JOHN (NIV) Part 23

THE STORY OF THE VINE



John 15 v 1 - 11

The Vine and the Branches

1 “I am the true vine and My Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in Me and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me.

5 I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much

fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given you. 8 This is to My Father’s glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples.

9 As the Father has loved Me so have I loved you. Now remain in My love. 10 If you obey My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have obeyed My Father’s commands and remain in His love. 11 I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

