Session 1 Abiding in the Vine (Jn. 15:1-6)

  “Let me drink from the river of Your pleasures as I delight in Your beauty.” (Ps. 36:8; 37:4)

Turn with me in your Bibles to **John 15**. We’re starting our several week series on **John 15**, and I will be doing this week and the next week, and then Mike will be back, next Saturday I think it is, so you guys will be hearing him the next three weeks.

**John 15**. Well, let’s pray again. Father, thank You for Your Word. Lord, **Psalm 119:18**, Father, I ask You, Lord, that You would open up the Scriptures. Father, that You would open up our eyes, Father, to see glorious things, Father, concerning Your heart. Father, I ask You, Lord, that You would unlock **John 15**, Lord, in a new way. Father, that we would experience Your presence, that we would come to know You, Father in greater ways through this passage. Lord, that we would see, Father, the wealth of Your beauty through these passages. Father, that You would cause Your Son, the Morning Star, Father, to rise brightly in our hearts. Father, I ask You for the light of the Holy Spirit, Lord, that You would illumine our minds with the light of the Holy Spirit to understand You. In Jesus name, Amen.

1. the love of God and the realm of fire

Ok, well **John 15**. Let’s go to Paragraph I. Just want to give a just a kind of a brief overview about **John 13-17**, and then we’ll take just a few moments and talk about the Divine Community of single action, a term that Robert Kysar, I’ll mention him again in just a few moments that he uses in his book The Maverick Gospel about the gospel of **John**, and then we’ll just take some time and talk about how Jesus, the Vine, the Father, the Vinedresser relates to the nation of Israel. And then lastly, we’ll talk about the subject specifically about abiding in the Vine. I’m bringing in the Israel piece because when we started looking at **John 13-17**, we talked about understanding **John 13-17** even through an end-time, or an eschatological lens. **John 15** has personal, deep personal implications in terms of how it affects our personal life. It’s got deep corporate implications in terms of how it affects the Body of Christ. And then there are eschatological components I believe related to **John** **15**, and so, when we’re talking about Israel, I just want to introduce you to some thoughts to you from Bible verses so that you can go study this out at a different time.

You know, also in **Matthew 24**, we’re not going to go there, but in **Matthew 24**, one of the things that Jesus tells the disciples, **Matthew** **24:6**, He tells them that they will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but He tells them, don’t be troubled by this, and I believe that it’s literally two days later, the upper room discourse, **John** **13**, Jesus washes the feet of His disciples, and then in **John 14**, He tells them again, “Do not be troubled,” but He actually expounds on what it means to not be troubled, and how not to be troubled by sharing with the disciples the access that they will have to the presence of God. And so, **John 13-17**, now, I really believe, is something that are a series of chapters that the Lord really is going to unlock as the years unfold to equip the heart of the Body of Christ to stay steady in the midst of the shakings that are unfolding in our day.

* 1. The primary theme that Jesus speaks to His disciples about in ***John 13-17*** is the subject of God’s love and glory. Jesus’ main objective is to lead us into the revelation of God’s divine love and the experience of the glory that He possessed with His Father before the foundations of the earth. Our destiny is to be swallowed up into the eternal fellowship of the Godhead forever.

9God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Cor. 1:9)

 4…and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. (1 Jn. 1:4)

22“And the ﻿glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one…” (Jn. 17:22)

Paragraph A. The primary theme Jesus speaks to His disciples in **John 13-17**, is the subject of the love of God. Again, there is so much to be said about these five chapters. They so happen to be my favorite portion of Scripture, **John 13-17**. And the example that I’ve used before is that of, you know, when one flies over the ocean, the ocean has different shades of blue, and the darker the shade gets, what it means is that there is greater depths there, you know, so it starts kind of light, and then it gets darker and darker, and I believe that **John 13-17** is like the really dark part of the Bible, so to speak. I mean, there is so much to be found there about the nature of God, the character of God, the power of God, the purpose of God, the plan of His heart, His desire for His people, it’s actually quite amazing, these five chapters.

But the primary subject there is the subject of God’s love and God’s glory. And Jesus’ main objective in these chapters is to lead us into the revelation of God’s divine love and for the Church to experience the glory that Jesus possessed with His Father from before the foundation of the earth. It talks about our destiny, **John 17**. And what we see there is that our destiny, the way I like to say it is to be caught up. To be swallowed up, is to be wrapped up, so to speak, in the eternal fellowship of the Godhead forever.

There is a Divine family dynamic there between the Father and His Son, and the Holy Spirit. Just think about this, that from everlasting, from before the foundation of the earth, before anything existed, there was this holy, divine fellowship. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, deeply committed to each other in love, and somewhere in that dynamic, the Godhead, they looked at each other and said, “Let’s make human beings. And let’s bring them into this relationship that We have with one another.” That is one of the most surprising things that Jesus is highlighting here in **John 13-17**. That we have been invited, as believers, into, how can I say it, into the inner circle of inner circles, fellowship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Not only that, is to experience the exact same enjoyment that the Father has towards the Son, that we can experience it the exact same enjoyment, from our hearts to God, and the craziest thing is that we can experience the exact same enjoyment we experience towards God, God towards us, we can experience it towards one another. It’s absolutely amazing.

**I Corinthians 1:9**, Paul says God is faithful, by Whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son. And when Paul is talking about the fellowship of the Son, He’s talking about the Trinity. He’s talking about that Divine Community, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. As love in the culture and in the world continues to grow cold, Jesus talked in **Matthew** **24:9**. He said that the love of many will grow cold. The understanding of this Divine family, the Trinity, as our model to imitate and to engage, and to see them as the source that equips our heart with love will become incredibly important.

* 1. As love in the culture and the world continues to grow cold, *understanding* the Trinity as our **model** and *intimately engaging* withthe Divine Community, the *everlasting burning*, as our **source** will equip the heart of the Church in the fullness of the love of God in times of great pressure.
	2. In John 13-17, Jesus envisions, calls, and equips the Church to engage with God in order to walk fully in five components of the love of God He wants to us to experience and express.
		1. ***God’s love for God*** (Jn. 13:3; 14:31; 15:9, 12; 17:23-24, 26)
		2. ***God’s love for us*** (Jn. 13:1, 23, 34-35; 14:21, 23; 15:9, 12; 16:27; 17:23)
		3. ***God’s love in us towards Him*** (Jn. 14:15, 21, 24, 28; 15:12, 17; 16:27; 17:26)
		4. ***God’s love in us towards another*** (Jn. 13:34-35; 15:12, 17)
		5. ***God’s love in us for hostile world through the apostolic witness*** (13:35; 14:12; 15:18-27; 16:8-9)

Paragraph C. In **John 13-17**, Jesus envisions, calls, and equips the Church to engage with God in order to walk, in what I like to call the five components of love. Now, there might be more components, but I have found five components of love in **John 13-17**. And so again, Jesus is equipping the Church to understand these realms of love. The first one is to know and to discover and to encounter God’s love for God. God’s love for God. It says in **John 15:9** that as the Father has loved me, Jesus says, so I have loved You, abide in My love. And so, the love that He calls us to, that He invites us to have a vision for, and to experience, is the exact same intensity, quality of love that the Father has for the Son. One of the things that I’ve just so appreciated about this course, and many of you have already heard this is just the simplicity of how we can talk to the Lord about these subject matters by thanking Him, and asking Him to show us more.

And so, we simply say, Father, thank You for loving Your Son. Show me more. And I am convinced that by the Holy Spirit, He wants to show us more. He actually wants, not just intellectually, but by the experience in our hearts, and in our spirits, He wants to bring us into the encounter of the love that He has for His Son. Because when we understand how He loves His Son, we understand how the Son loves us, according to **John 15:9**.

The second component, is the dimension of God’s love for us. Which is, I mentioned just a few seconds ago, that God’s love for us is like God’s love for God. The third component is God’s love in us towards Him. And so, it’s God’s love for God, God’s love towards us, but then, also, the quality and the intensity of God’s love in us back towards God. In **John 17:26**, He says, “I have declared to them Your name, that the love,” Jesus says, “that the love with which You have loved Me might be in them.” And so not only do we experience God’s love for God, we also experience God’s love for us that is of the same intensity, quality, zeal, enjoyment, and delight as the love that God has for God. But not only that, **John 17:26** says that the destiny of the Church is that the people of God will love God with the same intensity that God loves God.

Fourth component of love is that is God’s love in us towards one another. God’s love in us towards one another. So, work with me here for a second. So, **John 13:34**, Jesus says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

And you go, “Ok, well, how then did you love us?”

He goes, “Then, well, go skip right over to **John 15:9**. As the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you, dot, dot, dot, so love one another.” And so, we’re talking about something that is entirely impossible in the natural. We don’t have the strength, or the capacity for it, which actually is what brings us into **John 15**, which we’ll look at in just a moment, where Jesus says, apart from Me you can do nothing, referring to these dimensions of love. We cannot grow in these dimensions of love by our own fervor, our own strength, we can crank up the music, we can hop down the aisles, we can shake, rattle and roll, all that stuff. None of that will equip us to meet the standard, and to experience love in this dimension except that we are actively engaging with Jesus in conversation, which is what He calls abiding.

The fifth component of love is God’s love in us for a hostile world through the apostolic witness. Another thing about **John 13-17** is that Jesus, on three occasions, tells us the purpose of His instruction. The purpose of His instruction. **John 15:11**, He says, “These things I’ve told you that you may have joy.” And so, understanding and diving into and interacting with the Lord with regards to the content of **John 13-17** is one of the primary ways for us to enter into the experience of joy in the heart.

Secondly, **John 16:1**, He says, “These things I’ve told you that you would not stumble.” In other words, engaging with these truths, they actually equip our hearts from being stuck in offense. Notice I said from being stuck in offense, I didn’t say it would equip our heart from being offended. Okay, all right. Excuse me as I take a drink of water here.

You know, Jesus says in **Luke** **17**, He says that offenses must come. He prophesied this, and so, I actually expect every day to get offended, in some way, form, or shape. Most believers try to spend their lives to not get offended. Just give up on that already. In other words, but engage in the real assignment, and that is to not stay offended, but to actually engage in the grace of extending, be very quick to extend forgiveness.

A lot of people don’t talk about forgiveness until they’re completely wrapped up in bitterness, and there actually is a place in the grace of God, where on a regular basis, we just exercise the grace of extending forgiveness towards one another. At any rate, Jesus says I’ve told you these things that you would not stumble. And then, thirdly, in **John 16:33**, Jesus said, “These things I have told you that you may have peace.”

* 1. God’s love for the world through the apostolic witness is expressed by the ***fellowship*** of sufferings. Peter wanted to lay down his life; however, Jesus told him that when it comes to accessing the Godhead only Jesus’ blood could accomplish this. Yet, He prophesied to Peter that he would follow Jesus’ path of suffering later. The end-time Church will enter the fellowship of suffering to reach a hostile world and call them to into the Divine Community.

20Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. (Jn. 15:20)

14If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. (1 Pet. 4:14)

1. the divine community of single action
	1. Robert Kysar in his book, ***John, the Maverick Gospel***, refers to the Trinity as the Divine Community of single action. This refers to the truth that the Triune God, who is One, dwells in community, and that, though each Person in the Godhead has their distinct roles, they are singular in their action and execution of the divine plan. In John 13-17, Jesus instructs in how to walk in deep intimacy with the Trinity as our model, source, reward, as well as our destiny.

20At that day you will know that ﻿I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. (Jn. 14:20)

21“… as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us…” (Jn. 17:21)

34“… love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” (Jn. 13:34)

9“As the Father ﻿loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.” (Jn. 15:9)

Let’s go to page two. The Divine community of single action. Paragraph A. Robert Kysar, in his book, John: the Maverick Gospel, I actually came across this book because of our beloved Wes Adams. Years ago, I was doing this study in John, and I said, “Do you have a book you would recommend?”

And he said, “Yep, Robert Kysar, Maverick Gospel.”

 So, Robert Kysar, he refers to the Trinity as, in this book, as the Divine Community of single action. What this does, this refers to the truth that the triune God, who is one, dwells in community. Again, that the Triune God, Who is one, three persons, one God, lives and dwells in community. And that each person in the Godhead has their distinct roles, yet they are singular in their action towards executing the plan of redemption. And so, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, three persons, one God, in community, three distinct persons with three different roles, working together in single action towards executing God’s eternal plan. Have fun meditating on that. The Divine Community of single action. I remember when I first read it, and I had what I call a mufasa moment.

In **John 13-17**, what Jesus is doing, He instructs us how to walk in deep intimacy with the Trinity as our model, our source, our reward, as well as our destiny. To be swallowed up in the Trinitarian fellowship forever. Let’s look at a couple of verses there in **John 14:20**. He says, “At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and You in me, and I in you.” And when we look at each one of these phrases, we begin to realize that we are in union with the Father, and with the Son, and it happens by the Holy Spirit. Jesus is in the Father, we are in Jesus, and then Jesus is in us. Spiritual union. **John 17:21**. As the Father, as You, Father, are in Me, I in You, that they may be one in Us. Here, that union again, the fellowship of the Son.

* 1. ***John 13-17***, the Upper Room Discourse, is deeply connected together. Jesus’ time in the Upper Room, ***John 13-14,*** and His continued instruction in chapters ***15-17*** are connected.

Paragraph B. **John 13-17**, the upper room is commonly known as the Upper Room Discourse, and each of these chapters, **John 13**, **14**, **15**, **16**, **17**, they’re all very deeply connected together. In fact, there are several phrases that are mentioned in one chapter that show up one or two chapters later, showing the connection in the discourse. The reason I’m saying this is because it’s called the whole thing is called the Upper Room Discourse, but technically the Upper Room Discourse, or the Upper Room discussion happened in **John 13** and **14**, actually **John 14**, they leave the Upper Room, the conversation continues in **15**, **16** and **17**. And so, the five chapters together are commonly known as the Upper Room Discourse. And so, **John 13-14** actually happens physically in the Upper Room, but then **John 15-17** is a continuation of that conversation.

* 1. ***John 17***, as Jesus’ priestly prayer, prophesies the glorious destiny of the church fully in the embrace of the Divine Family dynamic as belonging to God, fully loving Him, deeply committed to one another in unified love, and a faith witness of the gospel of Jesus to the earth. ***John 13*** shows us what is required, which is to love in the same manner as Christ loved us.

Now, Paragraph C. **John 17** is Jesus’ Priestly prayer and He prophecies the destiny of the Church. In **John 17** is Jesus’ High Priestly prayer, but it is not only His prayer, because how many of you know that Jesus will have His prayers answered? It is also therefore, also a prophecy about where the Church is going. If we want to get a vision for what is in the heart of God for where it is He is going to take the Church before He returns, **John 17** is one of the clearest passages where the Lord just lays out line upon line, in particular, **John 17:20-26**, where He, line upon line, lays out for us what the future of the Church is. It gives us a vision. We can look at the way things are right now, and go, you know what, they’re looking a little funny, but we know where this is going because of **John 17**, in particular, **John 17:20-26**.

And so, Jesus’ prayer, and thus a prophecy about the future of the Church, and here is what the future of the Church looks like. Number one, that we would be fully in the embrace of the Divine family dynamic. We would be fully in the embrace and experiencing the fact that we belong to the Father and the Son. Fully loving Him and deeply committed to Him. Number one. Number two, we begin to experience the fullness of love towards God as seen in **John 17:26**. And so, we are in the embrace of the Father, secure, confident in love, knowing that we belong to Him, **Romans 8:39**, persuaded that nothing can separate us from the love of the Father, number one.

Number two, fully given over in love towards God. Thirdly, deeply committed to one another in love. Unity in the Body of Christ. Unity across the various streams. Unity across the various cultures, especially in the context of society growing continually more hostile when it comes to cultural issues and different ethnic groups. The Scripture makes it very clear.

And then fifth, we see that the Church will be that faithful witness, living in such a way that the earth will know that the Father has sent His Son as it says in **John 17:23**. So **John** **17** prophecies the destiny, the future of the Church. I want to encourage you, and particularly the young people. If you go, “Okay, where is this thing going, what is this whole thing about?” **John 17**, there’s many, many more passages, but **John 17** is just one, two, three, four, five, I mean, line upon line, in particular, **John 17:20-26**, where we see, because Jesus asked for it.

Jesus, right before He goes to the cross, **John 17:1**, He says, “Father glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You,” referring to Him going to the cross. In other words, He’s saying, “Father, I’m going to go to the cross, I’m going to die, I’m going to lay down my life, but as I lay down My life, I have a request. The Father, I imagine, go, what is that request? **John 17:20-26**, I’m asking for this. I’m dying for this. I’m shedding My blood for this.” And we have the assurance, beloved, that that will be the future and the destiny of the Church.

Well, **John 13**, back to the beginning of the Upper Room Discourse. What it does, it shows us what is required insofar as the manner of love that we must walk in to enter into the destiny of **John** **17**. **John 17** gives us the destiny. **John 13** gives us what is required. When Jesus washes the feet of His disciples, there’s a lot that is going on there, but one of the main things that He is doing in the washing of the feet of His disciples, He is setting the stage, and He’s prophesying what He later on plainly declares to them in **John 13:34-34**, which is this new commandment I give to you that you love one another as I have loved you.

And as you’ve heard me say before, it would have been a whole lot easier if Jesus had just simply said this, love one another. It’s the as I have loved you that gives me great consternation. Because the love is the requirement, but the as I have loved you is the standard. It’s the standard of love that He’s after. It is the quality of love that He’s after. Every is talking love, love, love, love these days, everyone is talking community, community, community these days, and the Lord goes, “Well I’m talking love and community too, but it’s not the way that you guys are talking about it. I’m into a whole different standard. The thing that I’m requiring is supernatural, and it requires the manifestation of My grace upon the human heart in order to be able to walk into it.” And so, **John 13** gives us the requirement. **John 17** gives us the destiny.

* 1. In ***John 14***,Jesus teaches His disciples how, by His death on the cross, we will have full access to the Father’s presence through spiritual union. It is through spiritual union the grace of the Father and His power is released in our hearts to fulfill what is required. ***John 15*** is Jesus instructing His disciples that it is essential to actively engage (abide) in the relationship in order to bear fruit (Jn. 13:34-35; 14:12; 14:27; 15:4, 11-12, 27; 16:1, 33; 17:20-26). ***John 16*** highlights how the church is to function as a witness of God’s love to a hostile world.

Paragraph D. But in **John 14**, what we see there is **John 14-16**, really what we see, in short, is God’s commitment to help us to get to **John 17**. **John 13** is the requirement, **John 14-16**, He’s really showing forth, and if I was going to put a simple sentence to it, His commitment to help us, and to empower us, and to equip us to get to **John 17**. **John 14-16** is the Father’s commitment to His Son to give His Son what He asks for in **John 17**, in particular **verses 20-26**. And so, **John 13**, the requirement and the standard, **John 17**, the destiny, **John 14**, **15**, **16**, He says, “You know what? I’m going to help you. I am going to help you get there.” But each chapter, **14**, **15**, **16**, is just loaded with insight and implications. One of the things we find in **John 14** is Jesus shows His disciples how by His death on the cross, we will have full access to the Father’s presence.

After the death on the cross, His death on the cross, we have full access to the Father. And you may ask yourself, well what kind of access? What does full access mean? Well full access to the Father means we have the same access to the Father as the Son has to the Father. I mean, it’s absolutely remarkable that the level of commitment and intimacy that’s available to us as believers is, it sounds outrageous, but it’s true it says it right there. It says that the same level of commitment, and intimacy that you and I can walk in as Jesus did. So, **John 14**, God shows us the access that we have to His presence through the finished work of the cross.

**John 15**, Jesus, He instructs His disciples that it is absolutely imperative, it is of paramount importance, that we engage, that we actually respond to the access we have to the Father. **John 14** is to give us confidence that we have access to the Father. Confidence that we are in union with the Father. That as He is in the Father, the Father is Him, and He is in us, there’s this divine union that takes place by the Holy Spirit through the born-again experience.

**John 15**. Jesus now takes it the next step. He says, “Now that you know that you have access to the Godhead, now that you have access to the Father, now let Me tell you, I cannot stress the importance,” these are kind of my words, but, “I cannot stress the importance of the necessity of actively engaging with Me in conversation.”

And again, by conversation, I don’t think it means this unbroken dialogue that never stops, but where we are regularly engaging in simple phrases of talking to the Lord, asking Him for help, and asking Him to show us more. Show us more through the Scripture, show us more in terms of the experience upon the heart, show us more as we fellowship with one another. He wants to help us.

Then in **chapter 16** it highlights how the Holy Spirit is going to empower the church to be a witness in a hostile world. How to be a witness in a hostile world. And in **John 17**, Jesus goes, “Y’all are going to need lots of prayer, so here we go.”

* 1. The Trinity is seen in each chapter of this discourse, yet each Person is more prominent than another in each chapter. Each Person has a specific role in bringing the church into her destiny. John 14 shows the role of the ***Father***, John 15, the role of the ***Son***, and John 16, the role of the ***Spirit***.

Paragraph E. The Trinity is seen in each chapter of this discourse. In every chapter, **John 13**, **14**, **15**, **16**, **17**, we see the Trinity highlighted, yet, each Person of the Trinity is more prominent than another in each chapter, so for instance, the role of the Father is really, really highlighted in **John** **14**. **John** **14** really highlights the role of the Father. **John 15** really highlights the role of the Son, and then **John 16** highlights the role of the Spirit.

And, again, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are mentioned all throughout these five chapters, but in terms of emphasis, the Father is emphasized in terms of His role and function in **14**, in **15**, the role and function of the Son, and then in **16**, the role and function of the Holy Spirit.

* 1. John 15 focuses on abiding as the key to a victorious and vibrant Christian life. There are several elements applicable to the fruitfulness we are to bear, however, in context, the premier fruit we are to bear is love as the ultimate inward and outward manifestation of God’s supernatural work in our heart. Jesus links the bearing of fruit (15:1, 4-5, 8) to the keeping of His command (15:10-12) which He states is ‘to love another’ (15:17). Jesus called His people to love one another as He loves us (13:34; 15:12-13; 17:21). This includes loving our adversaries (15:17-18). The John 13:34 requirement to love is only possible through interaction with Jesus.

34A new commandment (15:17)… you love one another; as I have loved you,… 35By this all will know that you are My disciples, ….” Jn 13:34-35

8“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; ﻿so you will be My disciples … 17These things I command you, that you love one another (Jn. 15:8, 17)

Paragraph F. **John 15** focuses on the subject of abiding, or remaining, or we can say, dwelling, or we can say interacting. We can say talking. Dialoguing. But it’s an active engagement with God, and **John 15** focuses on abiding as the key to a victorious and a vibrant Christian life. A victorious and a vibrant Christian life. What do I mean by victorious? Where we are empowered to overcome compromise in our lives, vibrant, where the life of Christ, the love of Christ, the fruit of the Spirit grow in our lives, and victorious, as well, in terms of impact, that whatever sphere of impact that the Lord has apportioned for us, that we would actually be fruitful in that particular context.

Continuing in Paragraph F, there are several elements that are applicable to the fruitfulness that we are to bear, and so there’s various passages throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament that give us a broader sense of what is means to bear fruit. However, I’d like to highlight that, in the context of **John 15**, I mean, just the straight read context of **John 15**, I believe that the premier fruit that we are to bear is the fruit of the love, especially forgiving love. That the primary fruit that we are to bear is love, and I believe, especially forgiving love, and I’ll get to that in just a second. We are to bear love as the ultimate inward and outward manifestation of God’s supernatural work in our hearts.

Now, Jesus, in **John 15**, in **John 15:1-8**, He emphasizes the necessity of bearing fruit. He says, “I want you to bear fruit. By this you are My disciples.” He goes, “I want you to bear fruit, by this My Father is glorified.” In other words, by this my Father is put on display, and people grow to understand who He is and what He is about as you bear fruit.

But then in **John 15:10-12**, He brings, I believe, some definition of what He means by bearing fruit, and He calls it obedience, keeping His commandments. So, **John 15:1-8**, He says, “I want you to bear fruit.”

We go, “Okay, I like the analogy, but break this down a little bit more.”

He goes, “Oh, I want you to keep my commandments,” in **John 15:10-12**.

You kinda go, “Okay, we’re getting a little bit closer. Can you be a little bit more specific?”

Yeah. **John 15:17**. Love one another.

I believe that’s the primary fruit that He’s talking about in this particular context. Again, there are many, many more implications and applications, and looking at other passages that talk about the fruit of God, for instance, **Galatians 5:22** when it talks about the fruit of the spirit, **Colossians 1:11** it talks about that we would be fruitful in every work of righteousness, talking about ministry impact in a lot of the ways, but in its immediate context, Jesus say, “I want you to bear fruit.”

You kinda go, “Okay, what do You mean by fruit?”

He goes, “Well, I want you to keep My commandment.”

You kinda go, “Okay, can You break that down a little bit more?”

He goes, “Yeah, I want you to love one another.”

And so, Jesus says, later on in **John 15**, He says, “I want you to abide in Me that you would bear much fruit, because if your don’t abide, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

In other words, this commandment to love one another is absolutely and entirely impossible. You can have a social club. You can have a hangout. You can have a cool little chill and put community on the banner. You can do all that. He goes, “That’s not what I’m after.” He says, “I’m after something completely different. I’m after a loving of one another at that same level of commitment that the Father has towards Me and I have towards the Father and that commitment that we have shown towards you. That’s the level of love that you need to have for one another.”

And you’re kind of like, “Agh.”

Then, secondly, remember that Jesus introduced this new commandment of loving one another in **John 13**. **John 13:34-35**, Jesus says, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another, if you love each other in this way.” What way? “Loving one another in the exact same way that I loved you.”

You kind of go, “Okay, great.”

The problem is that in **John 13**, Jesus prophesied this manner of love by a prophetic act, and this prophetic act was He was washing the feet of His disciples. Are you still with me? The problem is, the Holy Spirit, who is the most genius author ever, says, that, out of the twelve, I want to specifically highlight two. Peter and Judas. In other words, Jesus washed the feet of Peter and Judas. He washed the feet of one who denied him and another one who betrayed Him, and He says, “Love one another in that way.”

It’s a love that loves in the face of rejection, and it’s a love that loves in the face of betrayal. Great sermon, just does not live that good, and that’s why I call it forgiving love. Love one another in this manner. There’s many components to the love. There’s the joy, the delight, the engagement, the interaction and whatnot, but He’s talking about, fundamentally, a tenderizing by the grace of God where we love in the face of rejection and in the face of betrayal. Forgiving love.

I’m getting a little bit ahead of myself, but I just done talked myself into misery, so, and I like for you to keep me company.

So, Jesus comes on the scene and He says, “Look, I want you to bear fruit.”

You go, “Great. What kind of fruit.?”

He goes, “The one that is the obeying of My commandments.”

You go, “Okay, what is the commandment.”

“Love one another. Just like I told you in **John 13**. That’s the fruit I want you to bear.”

Go back to the beginning of **John 15**, Jesus says, “You know what? The person who bears fruit, guess what? I will prune you so you can bear more fruit.”

So if the fruit is forgiving love, if you are in such a mood of growing in the fruit of forgiving love, guess what? He goes, “Man, you know, you’re doing so well. I will help give you more opportunities to do just that.”

You see, the fruit can’t be a large ministry. In the Western world, we can have a large ministry that is not dependent on abiding at all. How many of you know it takes supernatural strength to have a forgiving heart? That’s what we’re talking about. Again, there’s many, many more applications. I don’t want to limit it to that. But I think within its immediate context, **John 13**, **14**, **15**, it has to be about forgiving love as the primary expression. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you love one another in that way. It’s supernatural.

1. THE TRUE VINE, the vinedresser, and israel
	1. John 15:1 is the last of the seven “I Am” statements found in John’s gospel. These statements are Jesus’ self-revelation that connected the essence of His interaction with the redeemed with His divinity (Ex. 3:14). See ***Jn. 6:35, 41, 48, 51; 8:12, 9, 5; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5***.

Page 3. The true vine, the vinedresser, and Israel. In **John 15:1**, it’s the last of the seven “I am” statements. I don’t have time to get into it, but **John**, of all the gospels, is the most unique. 80% of the information found in the gospel of **John** is unique to the gospel of **John**. There are seven signs, seven very specific miracles that happen in the gospel of **John**, and there are seven “I am” statements in **John**’s gospel, and these “I am” statements they are statements of Jesus’ self-revelation, connected to the essence of His interaction with His people, connected to His divinity, and so when He’s saying, “I am,” it is connected to **Exodus 3:14**, where the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush and said, “I am that I am.”

And **John 15:1** where Jesus says, “I am the true vine,” it is the last of these seven statements. And you the see the references there that you can look up on your own time where you can find these seven “I am” statements.

* 1. Jesus identified Himself as the ***True Vine***,speaking of Him being the source of life to which we, the branches, are connected, without which connection we are unable to produce fruit. Jesus, as the vine, is the source of life and the sustaining power of fruitful Christian living. There are personal, corporate, as well as eschatological implications to the revelation of Jesus “the Vine.”

Paragraph B. Jesus identified Himself as the true vine, which speaks of Him being the source of life, which we, His branches, are connected to, without which connection we are unable to bear fruit. And Jesus, as the vine, it speaks of Him being the source of life. It speaks of His sustaining power for fruitful Christian living.

As I mentioned earlier, there are personal, corporate, as well as eschatological implications to the understanding of the revelation of Jesus as the vine.

* 1. The understanding of Jesus as ***True Vine*** is not accidental, as it points to His mission as Israel’s Messiah and life source (Ps. 80:8-9; Isa. 5:1-7; 27:2-6; Jer. 2:21; Ez. 15:1-8; 19:10-14; Hos. 10:1). Israel came out of Egypt like a vine (Ps. 80:8-9) and was consistently found unable to obey His commands (Jn. 15:2, 5), thus ending up lifeless, withered and burning with judgment (15:6). Jesus, the True Vine, will increasingly be understood as part of Israel’s messianic hope, as well as the hope for nations to become a global vineyard and garden as God’s glory fills the earth.

Paragraph C. The understanding of Jesus the vine is not accidental. I believe it is very, very intentional. Because the thing that we have to keep before us is that Jesus is talking to these Jewish apostles as the Jewish Messiah. As the one who is the hope of the nation of Israel, who would bring about the fullness of all the covenant promises that God made to His people.

And so, He’s speaking to them as the Messiah, so when Jesus says, “I am the true vine,” I don’t believe it’s an accident, because I believe that it’s actually pointing towards His mission as Israel’s Messiah and life source. According to **Psalm 80:89**, Israel came out of Egypt like a vine, and there are several other passages, and I’ve got them right there in the notes, where the Lord refers to Israel as the vine or the vineyard. The only problem is that they came out of Egypt like a vine, but they were consistently found unable to obey His commands, and thus were found lifeless, withered, and burning with judgment, very much like what the Lord says in **John 15**, where if you don’t bear fruit, you’ll wither, you’ll be lifeless, and you’ll be burned with judgment.

Jesus, the true vine, will, I believe, increasingly be understood as part of Israel’s, this is why I’m bringing this up, I believe that as the years unfold, I believe the Lord is going to give us increased understanding through the Word of how Jesus, as the vine, is connected to Israel’s Messianic hope, as well as the hope for the nations to become this global vineyard, the garden of God’s glory filling the earth.

* 1. Jesus comes to Israel to rescue her as the True Vine and be the true life source that will enable her to faithfully obey (Isa.1:26; Zech. 8:3). He came to deliver her from her false sources. Moses said to his people (Deut. 32:32) that Israel was connected to a different life source, a vine from Sodom.

32“For ﻿their vine is of the vine of Sodom (Isa. 1:7-9) and of the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter. 33Their wine is ﻿the poison of serpents, And the cruel ﻿venom of cobras.” (Deut. 32:32-33)

7Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire … 8So the daughter of Zion is left ﻿as a ﻿booth in a vineyard ... 9Unless the Lord of hosts Had left to us …a remnant, we would have become like ﻿Sodom … like Gomorrah. Isa 1:7-9

8And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. (Rev. 11:8)

Paragraph D. Jesus comes to Israel to rescue her as the true vine. In other words, to be her life source, that when she connects with Him, she will be able to faithfully obey. It says that the prophets call her the faithful city in the future, in **Isaiah 1:16** and **Zechariah 8:3**. Jesus came to deliver her from her false sources. When He comes back, He will deliver her from false sources.

Now, Moses, in **Deuteronomy 32:32**, he says that Israel was connected to a different life source, and he calls it the vine of Sodom. **Deuteronomy 32:32**, it’s right here in the notes, for their vine, referring to Israel, is of the vine of Sodom. I want to say this again. Their value system, their life source, so to speak, their inspiration, their strength are being connected to that system, so to speak, and Jesus comes on the scene and says, “No, I am the true vine.” Connect with that life source and you will bear fruit.

* 1. Jesus told His disciples the Father was the Vinedresser of the Vine. True to His covenant, Israel’s maintenance development and fruitfulness takes place under the Father’s leadership.

2In that day— “Sing about a fruitful vineyard: 3I, the Lord, watch over it; I water it continually. I guard it day and night so that no one may harm it. 4I am not angry. If only there were briers and thorns confronting me!  I would march against them in battle; I would set them all on fire. 5Or else let them come to me for refuge; let them make peace with me, yes, let them make peace with me.” 6In days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit. (Isa. 27:2-6)

Paragraph E. Jesus told His disciples that the Father was the vinedresser of the vine. True to His covenant, Israel’s maintenance, development, and fruitfulness takes place under the Father’s leadership. And so, there’s the vine, there’s the branches, but there also is the vinedresser. God is, the Father is actively involved in seeing that the Jewish people will enter into the fullness of their destiny.

Let’s look at, there in the notes, that verse I’ve got there. **Isaiah 27**, I just want you to look at **verse 6**, I love this. He says that in the days to come Jacob will take root, and Israel will bud and blossom and fill all the world with fruit. Why? Because she’ll be connected to the vine and bear much fruit.

* 1. When Jesus returns in the next ages during His reign on the earth (Heb. 2:5), He will undo the curse and cause earth’s return to the blessing of the garden of Eden (Heb. 4:6–9b). The “curse” of sin may be lifted progressively rather than instantly.

1The wilderness and the wasteland … the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;  . . . the glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon. (Isa. 35:1-2)

1. ﻿abiding in the vine
	1. John 15 is one of the more critical passages in scripture. It is one of the clearest teachings on the subject of interacting with God and why it is imperative. In many ways, it is Jesus expounding more in-depth His self-revelation as “I am the Life”. As the Vine, Jesus is the life source.

20I have been ﻿crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh ﻿I live by faith in the Son of God … (Gal. 2:20)

Alright. Let’s got to page 4. Abiding in the vine. **John 15** is one of the more critical passages of Scripture. This has been a passage that I’ve thoroughly enjoyed over the years, and it was a passage that really helped me go, “Okay, this is the way forward,” insofar as experiencing the life and the love of God. It’s one of the clearest teachings on the subject of interacting with God and why it is imperative. And what I mean by why it is imperative is because, without our interaction with God we cannot bear the fruit that actually brings glory to God.

* 1. Life can be an abstract concept. To possess it means having the ability and capacity to function, change, sustain, and reproduce. Life is experienced physically, but we are also designed to experience it in our spirit and soul as well. However, before Christ we are dead.

4“But God, ﻿who is rich in mercy, because of His ﻿great love with which He loved us, 5﻿even when we were dead in trespasses…” (Eph. 2:4-5)

Paragraph B. Life can be an abstract concept. To have life means to have the ability, the capacity to function, change, sustain, and reproduce. Now, life is sometimes experienced physically, but it’s also experienced spiritually and emotionally, so when we are alive spiritually and emotionally it means that we can change, we can function, we can produce the fruit, so to speak that God desires for us to have. However, before the born-again experience, the Scripture tells us that we were dead. We were dead in our trespasses. In other words, unable to reproduce. Unable to sustain. Unable to change. Now, we might be able to change externally, but again, Jesus told us that we must be born again.

How many of you know that you can have a changed life externally, but inwardly be completely, totally disconnected with God? Jesus told the Pharisees, “Look, I want you to clean the inside of the cup first, so that the outside might be clean as well. The problem with you is that the outside looks really, really good, but on the inside you’re filled with all kinds of extortion and greed and covetousness, all these different things.”

He goes, “No, I want you to clean the inside first that the outside might be clean as well.”

But, beloved, the only way that we can clean the inside of the cup is by the born-again experience number one, and number two, by actively abiding and interacting with the Holy Spirit who lives inside of us.

* 1. The other key component to the growing fruitfulness of a vine is the role of the vinedresser (the Father). The vinedresser is responsible for the pruning, nurturing, and development of the vineyard. The vine (Jesus) provides the life and the vinedresser (Father) prunes.

So, the other key component, paragraph C, to growing in fruitfulness is not only the vine but it’s the role of the vinedresser. So, the Father and the Son are involved. Remember, Robert Kyser, that the Trinity is the Divine Community of single action. The Son as the Vine, the Father as the Vinedresser, both are involved, of course, by the power of the Holy spirit, both are involved in the transformation process of the believer. The vinedresser is responsible for pruning, nurturing, and development of the vineyard. Jesus, the Vine, provides the life, and the Vinedresser is the one who does the pruning.

* 1. Pruning is the process of trimming, cleaning and removing dead elements in order to further facilitate growth, development, and fruitfulness. The Father does the pruning as the Vinedresser. This speaks of His direct, skillful, and intimate involvement in our lives.

Pruning is the process of cleaning, the removing of just excess, things that hinder further growth. That’s what happens in the pruning, that those things are being removed so that we can bear more fruit.

Every believer, beloved, every believer, every single one of us in this room, we are called to live a life of fruitfulness. Every single one of us. And by fruitfulness, tonight, I’m talking about a vibrancy on the inside, where we can experience the lifegiving power of Christ in our hearts. We don’t have to be stuck in bitterness. We don’t have to be stuck in lust. We don’t have to be stuck in fear and jealousies and insecurities or greed. Whatever internal thing. We don’t have to be stuck there. Now, full empathy. I understand that there’s a real battle involved, right? You know, coming out of Egypt was the easy part. It was taking the Promised Land that was the fight, right?

So, there’s a battle involved in that, but we’re talking about the very lifegiving power of God upon our souls, the very same life, according to **Ephesians 1:18-19**, the very same power that raised Christ Jesus from the dead, called the grace of God, is what’s available to us, that we can access if we just simply abide. Every believe is called to live a fruitful life. I don’t say that to make anyone feel bad. I’m saying that to give you hope. That a vibrant life, in terms of the inward life, is your portion in the gospel.

And Jesus is emphatic about the importance of fruitfulness. He says it glorifies God, it shows the world, it shows those around us who He is, and Jesus warns us, however, that the life that is not given to fruitfulness is useless and it’s subject to judgment. And what this does, it inserts urgency in the process of abiding in the Lord.

* 1. Every believer is called to live a life of fruitfulness. Jesus is emphatic about the importance of fruitfulness, as it glorifies God and who He is. Jesus warns that a life not given to fruitfulness is useless and is subject to judgment (15:2, 6). This inserts urgency into the process.

6If anyone does not abide in Me, ﻿he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. (Jn. 15:6)

9… do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work … (Col. 1:9-10)

* 1. The call to abide in the vine and bear fruit is rooted in the confidence of already being clean before the Lord through the cross. The process of abiding does not earn acceptance, but it is because we have been cleansed (**Jn. 13:10; 15:3, 13**), accepted (**Jn. 15:16**), and loved (**Jn. 15.9**).

Let’s have the worship team come up. The call to abide, paragraph F., to abide in the vine and bear fruit, is rooted in the confidence that we are already clean. **John 15:3**, Jesus says, “You are already clean.” In other words, this call to abide is a response to the finished work of the cross. The process of abiding is not to earn acceptance, because, according to **John 15:16**, he goes, “You are already accepted, I already chose you.” So, we’re not doing this to be chosen, He says, “No, I already chose you.” Number one, He goes, **John 15:6**, “I already chose you.” **John 15:3**, “You are clean because of the gospel, so you can have confidence before Me in the relationship. Now what I need you to do is interact with Me.”

Beloved, this is not about earning. This is about responding to the finished work of the cross that we’ve been cleansed by the blood, and it’s responding to the fact that He chose us in the gospel. We are already accepted, **Ephesians 1** says, that we are already accepted in the beloved. So, when we’re talking about abiding, we’re not talking about abide and then I’ll accept you. He goes, “No, I want you to fully throw yourself into this thing because you are clean, and because you are accepted in the gospel.” We don’t abide so that we are loved. We abide because we are loved in **John 15:9**.

Years ago, I just started dating my wife, and I’m trying to think here. I’d been walking with the Lord for about six or seven years. And I knew from the Scriptures and from the sermons that God loved me, but deep down on the inside I also knew that knowing that God loved me was not all that the gospel had for me, that there was the experiencing of God’s love, and I remember for about seven years, in different ways, asking the Lord saying, “Lord, I want to experience Your love. I know You love Me, but what is happening subjectively in my emotions and My experience is not quite lining up with that.”

And so, it was about a 5, 6, 7 year journey of saying, “Lord, I want to know that love. I want to experience that love.” I’m telling this story because, most believers, if they’re actually going to be honest, have never really fully experienced the love of God. Again, that’s not a condemnation trip, that’s just a reality for many. It sure was for me for the first 7 years of my relationship with the Lord. I knew He loved Me, I had a couple of touches here and there, but this certainty in the experience of His love was something that I was asking for, and so, anyway, I’m hanging out with my wife over at her family’s house one afternoon and all of a sudden I just had this nudge in my heart that says, “Go home.” I’m like, “Okay.” I said, “Hey, I’m leaving.”

“Where are you going?”

“I don’t know. I’ve got to go.”

It’s never happened to me, before or since. I get in my car and I drive over to my house, or where I was staying, I was staying with a family at that time, they had a garage they had fixed up, that’s where I was living, and I walked into my room and, oh dear. Somebody was waiting for me. This most wonderful, delightful, filled with spiritual pleasure that just flooded my soul with confidence and acceptance and love and all this. I said, “Lord, this is amazing. This is awesome. I want more of this. How can I experience more of this?” And I heard, “**Read John 15:10**.” So I’m reading **John 15:10** and it says, “If you keep My commandments you will abide in My love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and I abide in His love.”

And I’m going, “This is awesome.” And I go, woah, woah, wait a minute. I couldn’t keep your commandments to save my life.” And He said, “Read **John 15:5**.” He says, “I am the vine. You are the branches. He who abides in me and I in Him bears much fruit, for without Me, you can do nothing.”

It was as though He said, “You are right. You can’t do it. But you want to abide? You want this to be part of your journey with Me?” And that doesn’t mean it happens everyday. Nothing like that, but where it is still a part of your life?

I go, “Yes.”

He says, “Then abide. Abide with Me. Just talk to Me. Just talk to Me.”

Say thank You, Lord. Show me more. Thank You that You love Your Son. Show Me more. Jesus, thank You that You love Your Father. Show me more. Jesus, thank You that You love me the way Your Father loves You. Show me more. Jesus, thank You that I can love those around me the way that You have loved me as You are loved by the Father. Show me more.

Just simple phrases. This is something that I’ve shared before. Like anybody else, I just get myself into these internal ruts. It’s like, (groans). Charismatics, we call it warfare, but Paul calls it more like being in the flesh. You know, just stuck in a funk and I’m not talking about bass funk. I’m talking about the other kind of funk. Just stuck. And I tell you what. When I grit my teeth to kind of make it through the day, it’s just a long week, but when I simply stop and pause and just out of desperation pick anyone of these phrases, and go, “Father, thank You for loving Your Son. Show me more,” it never ceases to amaze me how, over a little period of time that day, my internal dialogue begins to change. There’s a river that begins to flow on the inside, and I go, “Lord, this is insultingly simple.” He goes, “I know. It’s how I get glorified. It’s not by your strength, it’s not by your ability, it’s not by anything. Just simply abide. Abide in Me.”

Then later on, in **verse 7**, this is powerful, He says, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it will be done for you.” Please ask for more fruit.

Father, thank You, Lord, for who You are. Thank You for Your presence. I just want to invite you to stand. Thank You for sending Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. Thank You for the access we have to Your presence because of the shed blood of Your Son, that we can enter into the holiest of all with confidence because of His blood. Thank You, Lord. Thank You for the free gift of salvation. Thank You that, through the born-again experience, we’ve been made clean. Thank You that, through the born-again experience, we’ve been chosen, and thank You, Father, through the born-again experience, we can experience, Jesus, Your love for us in the same way that the Father loves You. Lord, we say yes to the call to abide, to speak with You. Lord, give us grace. Help us, Father, to bring words to you.

Some of you are probably experiencing a sense of the movement of the Spirit inside of you. It feels like waves or even the spirit of burning. If that’s you, I want to invite you to come to the front. I want to pray for you. The Spirit is touching you. It’s like the waves of the Spirit and it’s like, even the spirit of burning.

Some of you relate to my testimony of several years of the love of God not being a regular part, we know it by faith, we’re not doubting it, but we know deep down inside there’s more insofar as the experiencing of God’s love. If that’s you and you’d like to receive prayer for someone just to stand with you I want to invite you to come to the front as well.

Let’s just take a moment. Just stand before the Lord as Andrew just leads us in worship. Let’s just worship the Lord for a few moments.

Show us Your love, Lord. The experience of Your love. He wants to show us His love. Jesus.

He wants to show us His love.

Let’s have the ministry team come up. Let’s pray for the ones who are standing here.

More of Your presence, Lord. Fire, Lord. Spirit of burning. Jesus, release the spirit of burning. Release the fire of Your love. The affection of Your Father. Release it now, Lord. Jesus, release Your glory. Spirit of glory. Release it, Lord, deep on the inside. Release it, Lord. Spirit of burning. Spirit of glory. The realm of love. We want to abide in Your love, Lord.

We want to know and experience Your love. We want to express Your love, Lord.

* 1. The fruit that Jesus requires isn’t merely a humanistic better version of self or a moral improvement of self, but it is moral quality that comes from a deep inward trinitarian fellowship and formation as They seek to express themselves in us and through us toward one another and the world. What Jesus is after is impossible without a life of abiding in Christ. Abiding is the active engaging and experiencing of the life of Christ through talking to Him.

4Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, …. 5“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much ﻿fruit; for without Me you can do ﻿nothing. (Jn. 15:4-5)