



# Secrets of the Vine

Secret #1  
"No Fruit" to "Fruit" • PART 1

SUNDAY MORNING • 14 JANUARY 2007

## Introduction

John 15:1-6

I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 'Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. "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. "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.

### I. THE PASSAGE "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away."

**A** "Every branch in Me" is a believer in JESUS.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17

**B** "Does not bear fruit" means not bearing fruit AT THIS TIME.

"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit [Lit: "not bearing fruit"] (present active participle) He takes away." John 15:2a

The idea here is not just a one-time failure to seize upon an opportunity to produce fruit, but a continuing absence of fruit bearing. The time the action takes place is linked to the leading verb ["takes away"]. Therefore, the time of taking away and the not bearing fruit will end at the same time. The quicker we respond to the "taking away" act of God and begin bearing fruit, the quicker the "taking away" will end.

Greek scholar, J. Gresham Machen suggests adding "while" to the participle to better express its meaning.

"Every branch in Me *while* not bearing fruit, He takes away"

**C** "He takes away" is God's parallel response to no FRUIT BEARING.

"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit (present active) He takes away (present active)." John 15:2a

## II. THE PITFALLS:

**Pitfall Question #1:** What hinders me from bearing fruit?

**A** Your fruitfulness is hindered if you choose to SIN.

What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. Romans 6:21a, 22

**B** Your fruitfulness is hindered if you focus on riches and this WORLD.

"Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity." Lk. 8:14

**C** Your fruitfulness is hindered if you give into APATHY.

I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be **careful** to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men. Titus 3:8

**Pitfall Question #2:** Does God do anything to you when you are not bearing fruit?

**A** The Misconception:  
God does not intervene when you are not bearing fruit. God won't do anything when I am not bearing fruit, "there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ."

**B** The Truth:  
God intervenes regularly to stimulate you to bear fruit again. This intervention is not condemnation, or punishment in terms of "paying for" or "making up for" your sin, but, involves CORRECTIVE measures to bring you back to fruitfulness for your good and His glory.

**Discipline Principle #1**

God gets involved with believers to make fruitlessness their ongoing CHOICE.

**A** "Take away" (Greek: *airo*) does not mean "cut off" but "LIFT UP".

He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." Matthew 9:6b

... they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Matthew 14:20

**B** "Lift Up" in the vineyard means to CLEAN off and tie back UP.

**C** "Lift Up" for believers means God continually seeks REPENTANCE from sin and RESTORATION to fellowship and fruitfulness as long as there is no fruit bearing.

<b>Discipline Principle #2</b>	God intervenes in the life of the "no fruit branch" with <b><u>DISCIPLINE</u></b> .
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**A** God disciplines every single member of His **FAMILY**.

If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Hebrews 12:8 (NIV)

**B** God disciplines as a kind and loving Heavenly **FATHER**.

. . . we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? Heb. 12:9 (NKJV)

**C** God disciplines when we need it, for our holiness and **GOOD**.

Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. Hebrews 12:10

<b>Discipline Principle #3</b>	God disciplines progressively through three <b><u>STAGES</u></b> .
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"My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives." Hebrews 12:5b-6

**Stage #1:** God's discipline is first **VERBAL** through His Spirit and His Word beginning with teaching and if necessary, **REBUKE**.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, "that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup (1 Cor. 11:28 NIV) . . . For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. (1 Cor. 11:31 KJV).

**Stage #2:** God's discipline is more **PHYSICAL** and **EMOTIONAL** in severity.

For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick . . . 1 Cor. 11:29-30 NAS

**Stage #3:** God's discipline becomes very severe even to the point of **DEATH**.

That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died. 1 Cor. 11:30 NLT

## CONCLUSION & APPLICATION:

- No one grows to maturity in Christ & optimal fruitfulness without the painful times of discipline. God, help me to **RECOGNIZE** & **RESPOND** to your discipline.
- Discipline will be less painful if we **ACTIVELY PURSUE** becoming like Christ. God, help me to listen to you voice so I don't need discipline.
- If we are going to respond properly to God's discipline, we must be more committed to being like Christ than being comfortable, free from pain, persecution, and self sacrifice. God, when discipline is needed help me to respond in **REPENTANCE** and never resist in rebellion.



### FAMILY LIFE GROUP

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think of a time in your life when God intervened to stimulate you to bear fruit again. What did this show you about God's love and concern for you?
2. Review again what it means for God to take away every branch that does not bear fruit. What encouragement does this provide for you in those periods of your life when you are not productive spiritually?
3. What is God's purpose for discipline? How does that affect how He disciplines us?
4. How does the fear of God's discipline motivate you to become more productive? What place does the love of the Father have in that motivation?
5. Read Hebrews 12:10-13. God's correction is always for our best good, that we may share in His holiness! Discuss the far-reaching results of that correction, according to the writer of Hebrews in verses 12-13.