

Apply

Right now (Come and see):

On his final night with his friends, Jesus shared the very heart of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Just as a branch receives everything it needs from the vine it's attached to, Jesus invites us to be grafted into his vine, that his very life would flow through us like sap through a branch, enabling us to bear the fruit of his love in the world. We can try to live disconnected from God like a branch that's fallen from a tree, but it's in relationship with Jesus that we receive fullest joy and the greatest love. Earlier in John's Gospel, Jesus shared this same invitation: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10). And here Jesus revealed the full extent of his love for us: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

Where do you see yourself in this image? Let's take a few minutes for everyone to share. Are you "remaining" in Jesus, receiving his life and love, and bearing fruit in the world? Are there ways that you've been disconnected from the vine, trying to live a fruitful life with your own limited resources?

Jesus' invitation for all of us is to remain in him, to live as a branch that is grafted on to the vine, to allow his love and life to flow through us as we rely on him and follow his leadership. This is what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Is there anyone who wants to make a decision to follow Jesus right now? If so, would you be up for telling that to Jesus in prayer? We'd love to pray and celebrate that decision with you!

This week (Go and do):

What rhythm of "remaining" in Jesus can you put into practice this week? Could you set aside 20-30 minutes each day for the next week to intentionally rest in Jesus' love and spend time "abiding" in his Word? It doesn't have to be a complicated rhythm. Spending time with Jesus can look a lot like our times together in this Bible study. Read a passage in the Bible, spend some time paying attention to what Jesus might want to say to you through it, and then respond by talking to Jesus about what you're seeing and telling him what you want to do in response.



John 15:1-17 (NIV)

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, as I also 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 you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are 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 done for 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 keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept 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.

¹² "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

Intro

This week's passage in our Following Jesus series takes place at the same meal that we were introduced to last week. Jesus is about to be betrayed and sentenced to death. He is having a final meal with his followers and is using this time to impart essential teaching about what it means to follow him.

Discuss

1. List out the different elements of Jesus' metaphor (vine, branches, fruit, gardener, etc.) What does each element symbolize? Draw pictures if that's helpful to you!
2. What does a branch receive from the vine it's attached to in order to bear fruit?
3. Jesus repeats the word "remain" 11 times in this short passage. This word is often translated as "abide" or "dwell". What do you think it means to "remain" in Jesus as a branch remains on a vine?
4. In our series so far, we've already seen Jesus use the language of fruit two different times: In John 4:36 Jesus compares "gathering fruit" to leading people to eternal life in him. In John 12:24 Jesus uses the image of "bearing fruit" to describe the multiplying effect of the gospel in the world. In this passage Jesus says that "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." How does "bearing fruit" identify us as followers of Jesus?
5. List out all of the things that Jesus says we receive as we "remain" in him.