**BETTER TOGETHER** in 2022

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**The Jesus Way**

**The Way of the Vine**

John 15:1-10



The **one** thing that changes **everything**!

*“****I am the true vine****, and my* ***Father is the vinedresser****.* John 15:1

*I am the vine;* ***you are the branches****. Whoever abides in me and I in him,* ***he it is that bears much fruit****, for* ***apart from me you can do nothing.*** John 15:5

*"As I thought of the Vine and the Branches, what light the blessed Spirit poured direct into my soul…I saw not only that Jesus would never leave me, but that I was a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. The Vine, now I see, is not the root merely, but all-root, stem, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers, fruit; and Jesus is not only that: He is soil and sunshine, air and showers, and ten thousand times more than we have ever dreamed, wished for or needed."* Hudson Taylor

Life in **Jesus** is the **secret** of The Way of the Vine.

**Grape vines have a long lifespan** - the oldest known grapevine is over 400 years old and can be found in Yarra, Slovenia. It still bears fruit. The average grape vine lives 60 to 70 years. The typical growing season for a grape vine is 150 to 180 days, during which time it can produce 25 to 30 pounds of fruit. There are **over 10,000** types of grapes that are grown all over the world.

If you look up **vinedresser**, you will find - Vinedressers are agricultural specialists who **oversee the propagation, planting, pruning and tending of grape vines in a vineyard**. Their goal is to optimize the quality and abundance of grapes used in wine and food products.

Why a "vine" rather than other plants? In the Old Testament the imagery of a grapevine is used to describe Israel. But it does not just designate Israel as a nation. **It describes Israel in its relationship to God.**

***You brought a vine out of Egypt****; you drove out the nations and* ***planted it****. You cleared the ground for it;* ***it took deep root and filled the land****.* Psalm 80:8–9

*Let me sing for my beloved my love song* ***concerning his vineyard****: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones and* ***planted it with choice vines****; he built a watchtower in the midst of it and hewed out a wine vat in it; and* ***he looked for it to yield grapes****, but it yielded wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,* ***judge between me and my vineyard****. What more was there to do for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked for it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?* Isaiah 5:1–4

*And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.* ***I will make it a waste****; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and briers and thorns shall grow up; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.*  Isaiah 5:5-6

*Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate* ***and become a wild vine****?* Jeremiah 2:21

Thus, the Old Testament imagery of Israel as a vine repeatedly focuses on God's care for the nation in light of their failure.

In the late 1800s, French vines were almost lost forever.

Starting around 1860, a tiny yellow aphid called phylloxera (pronounced fi-lok-SUH-ruh) **decimated Europe’s vineyards; it** brought to the continent unknowingly by Victorian-era botanists through American native vines. The pests had free rein on a continent where they never should have set wing. When the damage was done, **vineyards throughout the world would be changed forever.**

By 1878, the invasion had killed 915,000 acres, while another 620,000 acres were dying. That represented more than 25% of France’s vineyard acreage. Phylloxera penetrated northward until 1895, and French wine production decreased by half.

**The key was the root stock.**

Jesus is the **root** **stock** that you and I have been grafted into.

*There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.* Isaiah 11:1

*But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot,* ***were grafted in among the others*** *and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are,* ***remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you****. Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”* Romans 11:17–19

Our pruning leads to greater **fruitfulness.**

*Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and* ***every branch that does bear fruit he prunes****, that it may* ***bear more fruit****. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.* John 15:2-3

Jesus inserts this comment (you are already clean) to clarify the "dead branches" reference: it is not to Christians somehow losing salvation or falling into damnation. **Jesus is explicitly reassuring the disciples that they are not among the dead branches.** As this analogy continues, we see further explanation that bearing spiritual fruit is evidence of a life-giving connection to Christ. It is not a prerequisite for being attached to the True Vine in the first place.

We are fruit **bearers** … not fruit **makers**.

***Count it all joy****, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete,* ***lacking in nothing****.* James 1:2–4

His presence leads to our **Provision.**

*I am the vine;* ***you are the branches****. Whoever* ***abides*** *in me and I in him,* ***he it is that bears much fruit****, for* ***apart from me you can do nothing.*** John 15:5

***Abide in me, and I in you****. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it* ***abides*** *in the vine, neither can you,* ***unless you abide in me****.* John 15:4

Abiding is the key to **fruit** bearing.

**μένω – meno -** Abide or remain – stay, persevere, endure

*But the* ***fruit of the Spirit*** *is* ***love***…. *joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.* Galatians 5:22–23

*Love is* ***patient*** *and* ***kind****; love* ***does not envy or boast****; it is* ***not arrogant******or rude****. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things,* ***endures all things****. Love never ends. …* 1 Corinthians 13:4–8a

So what happens to someone who **is not abiding** in Christ?

***If anyone does not abide in me*** *he is thrown away* ***like a*** *branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.* John 15:6

So what happens to someone who **is abiding** in Christ?

***If you abide in me,*** *and* ***my words abide in you,*** *ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. By this my Father is glorified,* ***that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples****.* John 15:7–8

You will bear **fruit** that glorifies the Father and proves your love for God and others.

The Jesus Way is the way of the **vine**.

*As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you.* ***Abide in my love.*** *If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.* John 15:9–10

It is our **connection** to Christ that leads to a life of **love**.

**What do I need to do?**

I like a good CAB**.**

**Come** to the vine. *This is repentance, faith, confession, believing there is no other way.*

**Abide** in the vine. *This is prioritizing my life in Christ. This is life in the Spirit.*

**Bear** the fruit of the vine. *This is just what happens. I fall more in love with God and have more love to share with the world.*