

Jesus. So, fruit production is the evidence that we are disciples, it's not the requirement for us to become disciples.

What else does John 8:31 tell us is evidence that we are followers of Jesus?

John 8:31 NLT - 31 Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings."

Discuss with your group how you feel about this statement "We don't need to do what Jesus taught to be His disciples, instead we need to be His disciples to be empowered to do what He taught."

When you remain close to Jesus you know the mission, ministry, and heart of the king. He invites us to join Him in His mission, and to be His disciples. If we choose to follow Him, we will have abundant life, for there is no other source for life apart from Him.

WRAP-UP

How do we remain in Jesus? We develop a pattern of practice, or "rule of life". You have many practices, that help you engage and develop a relationship with Jesus. Through prayer, study, community, and other practices you keep the flame of faith burning brightly. Don't become discouraged or complacent, fan the flame of your faith by developing the habits that draw you closer to Jesus and deepen your walk with Him.

MEMORY VERSE

*"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."
- John 15:5 NLT*

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

Challenge- Sign up for our Rule of Life workshops starting Oct 6 at 6pm. If you have family, bring everyone, we have something for all.

Sign Up at <https://www.newlifepismo.com/rule-of-life>

"I Believe... So Now What?" **Made For More #6**

INTRODUCTION

If living fully alive is our goal, we need to focus in on how we make that a reality in our daily lives. It doesn't just happen, nor is it something we earn, but how do we do our part while allowing Jesus to do His and shape us into His image? The key is found in John 15:5. He is the vine, and we are the branches, and it is only through remaining connected to Jesus that our lives can be abundant and fruitful.

Ice Breaker

Do you have any fruit growing in your garden? How well does it produce?

Key Passage

John 15:5-8 NLT - 5 "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. 7 But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father."

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Vine and Branch – A Mutual Relationship

When Jesus taught, He used examples that His hearers could relate to. One example He used to explain our relationship to Him was that of a vine. A common vine in Israel would be the grapevine. No doubt those who heard Jesus had seen productive grapevines flourish and unproductive ones destroyed. They understood the importance of a

branch remaining connected to a strong and healthy vine. Jesus pointed out this relationship was a two-way arrangement. The branch remains connected to the vine (our responsibility) and the vine remains connected to the branch (Jesus' responsibility).

As our "vine" Jesus supplies our source of life, just as the vine provides support, water, and nutrients to the branches. What do you receive from Jesus that gives you life? As the "branches" we need to be firmly connected to our vine. A weak branch can be easily snapped off the vine. What are some ways you maintain a firm connection to Jesus in your daily life?

Unfortunately, some of us draw from other sources rather than Jesus, the true vine. To maintain a strong connection to Him, we may need to disconnect from competing sources we've drifted into dependence on.

What types of things might we draw from for our source of life that compete with Jesus?

Colossians 1:10 NLT - 10 Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.

Colossians 1:10 is a picture of what happens when we maintain that firm connection to Jesus. Which of these do you most strongly want to see increase in your life (all are desirable, but which one tugs at your heart?)

- *Honoring and pleasing the Lord*
- *Producing every kind of good fruit*
- *Growing as you know God better*

Let this be a goal that motivates you to make changes in your daily practices to help you get there.

2. What is Fruit?

We have a way to judge whether or not we are remaining firmly connected to Jesus. We can be fruit inspectors. If we are producing good fruit, then we know we are abiding in the vine. Now what exactly is the fruit we are looking for?

Galatians 5:22-23 NLT - 22 But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

As we allow the Holy Spirit to do His work in our lives, we will find this kind of fruit produced. This fruit is not created for private piety. You know you can't be kind without someone to be kind to. So, we most readily recognize this fruit expressed in Christian community.

Share with your group the individuals you know who exemplify each quality. (e.g. who do you know to be especially loving, or who is always patient?)

These qualities don't increase because we try harder. They increase as we abide closer to the vine. In fact, the first fruit listed is love, which overflows from the abounding love we have received from God. Draw closer to God and His love, and you will have an abundance of love for others.

John 15:6 NLT - 6 Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned.

What happens if we fail to do our part of abiding in Jesus and submitting to Him, if we would rather do things our own way?

This statement, that we are useless apart from Jesus, is not meant to shame us, it is a statement of fact. We simply don't have the ability to produce anything good or useful apart from Jesus. That may wound our pride, but it should also drive us back to the one source of life we need.

3. True Disciples

John 15:8 NLT - 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

When you read John 15:8 you might think it is a call to work harder to produce more fruit so that you can be a true disciple. But that is not what we conclude from reading the seven verses that precede it. We've seen that producing fruit comes from staying closely connected to