JOHN 15

The True Vine

abiding in Christ, loving one another, and standing in a world that hates Him

> *"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."*
> JOHN 15:5

A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where we are in John

1. John 13–17 is the Upper Room Discourse — the last teaching Jesus gave the Eleven on the night He was betrayed.

2. That emblem runs deep in the Old Testament.

3. This is the seventh and last of the “I AM” sayings with a predicate in John: the bread of life (6:35), the light of the world (8:12), the door (10:7, 9), the good shepherd (10:11, 14), the…

The True Vine

The Vinedresser prunes, the branches abide, and apart from Him — nothing

JOHN 15:2

"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

DAVID GUZIK

Israel's vine disappointed; abiding is a choice; fruitless branches were never truly abiding.

R.C. SPROUL

Branch removal is not pruning; pruning cleanses; fruit tracks abiding — and the perseverance question.

C.H. SPURGEON

Constant union or nothing; affliction is the handle of the knife — pruning, not cutting off.

MATTHEW HENRY

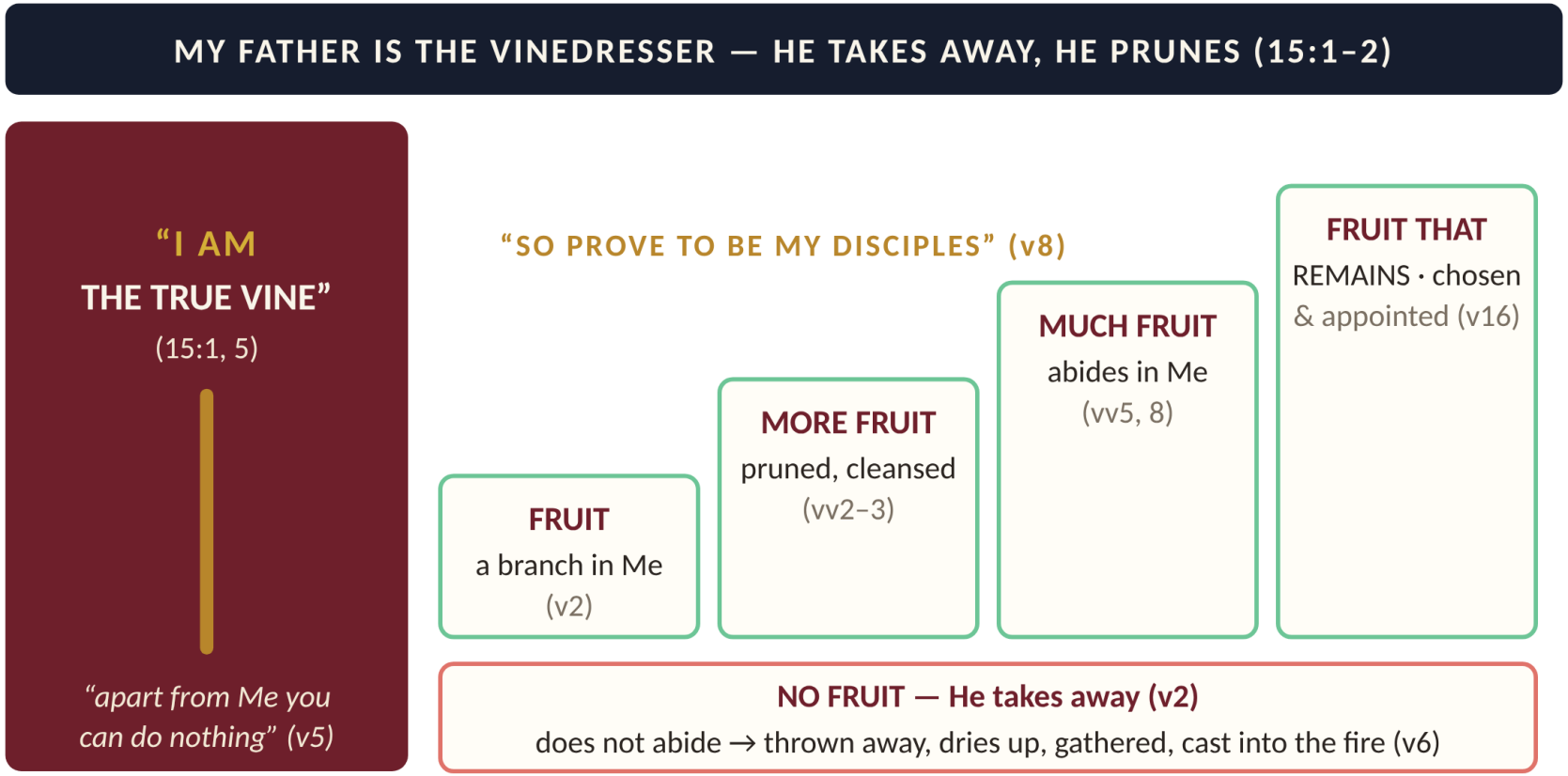
Unfruitful professors are unfaithful professors; even fruitful branches need pruning.

ἡ ἄμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή

HĒ AMPELOS HĒ ALĒTHINĒ · "THE TRUE VINE"

Alēthinos is one of John's words: not "true" as opposed to false so much as "genuine, real" as opposed to a copy or a shadow — the true light (1:9), the true bread out of heaven (6:32), and here the…

The vine, the Vinedresser and the branches



Read the steps left to right: fruit, more fruit, much fruit, fruit that remains — every step comes from the Vine, and the only branch that is lost is the one that bears nothing because it does not abide.

Friends, Not Slaves

Abide in My love — keep My commandments, love one another, and know you were chosen

JOHN 15:16

"You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.

DAVID GUZIK

Not mystical — simple obedience; chosen by Him, held by Him.

R.C. SPROUL

His joy, not ours; permanent, not a roller-coaster; a full cup, not a partial one.

C.H. SPURGEON

Friendship needs something from us — obedience; known sin cools it.

MATTHEW HENRY

Loved by Him though most unworthy; Christ's choice comes first.

φίλοι … δοῦλοι

PHILOI … DOULOI · "FRIENDS … SLAVES"

Philos is a friend, one who is loved (from phileō); doulos a slave, owned and under orders.

Three relationships in John 15

TOWARD CHRIST vv1–11 · ABIDE	TOWARD EACH OTHER vv12–17 · LOVE	TOWARD THE WORLD vv18–27 · TESTIFY
THE CALL “Abide in Me, and I in you” (v4)	THE CALL “love one another” (vv12, 17)	THE CALL “you will testify also” (v27)
THE GIFT much fruit, prayer, full joy	THE GIFT friends, not slaves (v15)	THE COST hated, persecuted (vv18–20)
THE WARNING apart from Me — nothing (v5)	THE MEASURE “just as I have loved you”	THE REASON they do not know the Father (v21)

Love among the branches, hatred from the world —
and the Helper, the Spirit of truth, testifying about Christ through both (vv26–27)

The chapter moves outward — from the branch’s union with Christ, to the branches’ love for one another, to their witness in a world that hates them.

Hated Without a Cause

The world hated Christ first — and a slave is not greater than his master

JOHN 15:18

"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.

DAVID GUZIK

The world hated Him first; rejecting Him leaves no excuse; Psalm 69:4.

C.H. SPURGEON

No neutral ground; love Christ, love His members; be hated without a cause.

MATTHEW HENRY

Whom Christ blesses the world curses; enmity to Christ is unreasonable.

μισεῖ … μεμίσηκεν

MISEI … MEMISĒKEN · "HATES … HAS HATED"

Miseō is not mere dislike but settled hostility, rejection.

The Helper Will Testify

The Spirit of truth testifies about Christ — and so will those who have been with Him

JOHN 15:26

"When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,

DAVID GUZIK

The Spirit's witness always matches Jesus; the disciples can't relax and leave it to Him.

R.C. SPROUL

A Helper before the Spirit — Jesus; the Comforter brings strength and boldness.

MATTHEW HENRY

The Spirit pleads Christ's injured cause; He engages our witness, not replaces it.

ὁ παράκλητος

HO PARAKLĒTOS · "THE HELPER"

Literally "one called alongside" (para + kaleō) — an advocate, counselor, helper, the friend who stands with you in court.

What to carry from this chapter

1

Jesus is the vine Israel was meant to be.

Every Old Testament vine passage (Psalm 80; Isaiah 5; Jeremiah 2:21) is a lament over missing fruit.

2

The knife is a mercy.

He “takes away” (airei) the fruitless branch and “prunes” (kathairei) the fruitful one.

3

The pruning knife is the Word.

“You are already clean because of the word” (v. 3).

4

Fruit, more fruit, much fruit, fruit that remains.

The chapter climbs a ladder (vv. 2, 5, 8, 16) — and every rung is reached the same way: by abiding, not by straining.

More to carry

5

Nothing means nothing.

“Apart from Me you can do nothing” (v. 5).

6

Abiding is obedience, not a mood.

“If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love” (v. 10).

7

His joy, made full.

Sproul: “First, the joy that Jesus wants to see in us is His joy,” and He wants us to have “a permanent joy, not a roller-coaster ride of moods.”

8

The One who lays down His life lays us down to bear fruit.

“Lay down” (v. 13) and “appointed” (v. 16) are the same verb, tithēmi.

Talk it through

1. Where am I trying to produce fruit by effort instead of by abiding — and what would “staying close to the Vine” look like this week?

2. What is the Father pruning in my life right now? Am I calling it punishment when it may be preparation for more fruit?

3. Verse 6 is a warning. How do I tell the difference between a pruned branch and a dead one — in myself and in the men I walk with?

4. Jesus says “abide in My love” and “keep My commandments” in the same breath. Which command is He pressing on me right now?

5. What does it change to know that I am His friend, chosen and appointed — not a slave on probation?

CLOSING

John 15 was spoken to frightened men on the last night, and it gave them one thing to do: stay. Stay in the Vine and the fruit will come; stay in His love and you will love one another; stay in His word when the world hates you, and the Helper will testify beside you. The Vinedresser's knife is in loving hands.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the John study page.