

a·bide

/ə'baɪd/(verb)

When a new graft is placed in a vine, two things happen. First, the graft shoots its roots and fibers into the stem and the stem grows into the graft. A structural union is formed: a living, connected union. Second, the sap of the vine enters the new structure, using it as a passage to produce shoots, leaves and fruit. It works the same for the believer. When we abide in Christ, it is a union with the Lord that is not a work of human wisdom or human will, but an act of God by His mercy and grace

read: Ephesians 2:1-10

Which portion of this scripture speaks to you most as you consider where you are in your abiding relationship with Christ?

read: John 15:4-8

What part does Jesus seem to invite us to play in this process? _____

What choice do we get to make when it comes to abiding in Him? _____

Jesus makes it clear that branches that do not produce fruit wind up getting cut off. But where there is fruit, God desires to see even more fruit. God longs for and provides for more fruit as a gift of His grace, to provide for the needs of all people, and to bring Him glory.

read: Galatians 5:22-23

What is the spiritual fruit that comes from being connected to God? List below:

Do you see evidence of fruit bearing in your own life? Describe your personal "fruit basket."

What is present? Missing? _____

What is the significance of bearing fruit? Why is it important? _____

What is the connection between abiding and our prayer life? _____

Earlier in the passage, Jesus talks to us about pruning the branches. Pruning is not the removal of weeds or thorns (anything from the *outside* that may hinder growth). It's cutting off the long shoots from the growth of the previous year – proof of the vigor of life. The more vigor, the more pruning that is needed. Why? The branches would consume too much of the "vine juice." Instead, it's saved in the vine for the fruit that is to come, that it may be abundant.

Describe how this process above relates to our life in Christ. Consider not only our sin, but also our good works.

How would you describe your response to the Father's pruning? _____

read: Galatians 5:16-18

If spiritual fruit doesn't come by human effort, how does a believer develop it?

prayer for the week:

*Lord your desire is that I would bear fruit abundantly.
Help me to Abide in you and submit to your pruning process.
Show me what you need to remove so I can be more fruitful.
Amen.*

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