

MAIN POINT: A born again, new creation life can only exist and be fruitful by being joined to Christ like a branch of a grape vine is living on the root and trunk of the grape vine.

• 15:1 VINE. Jesus uses another visual picture to help those who become Christians succeed in their spiritual walk. The natural man says, "I can do it." Jesus says, "No, you really can't." *"I am the true _____."* Your life must grow on me. "My _____ is the _____." Your existence is not an accident He planted you on this garden planet.

• **15:1** I AM the VINE. This is the last of 7 self-designations made by the Lord in John. "I AM-- The Light Of The World---The Bread Of Life---The Door Of The Sheep -- The Good Shepherd-- The Resurrection and The Life. • I AM is the translation of YAHWEH (Jehovah), which God told Moses was His name. (*Exodus 3:14*). "I AM He who was, who is, and who is to come." Before him there was nothing. Because of him there is something. I AM implies that he is the source of existence and life. Only in union with the "I AM" are all things possible. Salvation depends on acknowledging that Jesus is the I AM. Those who knew Him were knowing the Father because He was in the Father and the Father was in Him.

• 15:2 CUTS OFF. "My Father is the _____. He _____ every branch that doesn't _____ fruit."

• CUT OFF and ACCOUNTABILITY. The earth belongs to another. We belong to another...to Father Creator. People who insist on deluding themselves that life is all about them have in a sense already cut themselves off from God. It is a reoccurring warning in the Scripture. John the Baptist preached, *"Even now the ax of God's judgment is poised, ready to sever your roots. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire."* *...Prove by the way you live that you have really turned from your sins and turned to God."* Matthew 3:8-10 We are created in the image of God with a "response - ability." "So our aim is to please him always, whether we are here in this body or away from this body. For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this body." 2 Corinthians 5:9,10

• CUT OFF and MERCY. It is perhaps true that most people feel cut off from God. That is not the Father's will. "God our savior wants everyone to be saved." I Timothy 2:4 In fact, He is holding back the second coming of Christ because *"He does not want anyone to perish, so He is giving more time for everyone to repent."* 2 Peter 3:9 Jesus tells a parable about a fig tree that did not produce any fruit and the owner

told the gardener to cut it down. *"It's taking up space we use for something else. 'The gardener answers, "Give it one more chance. Leave it another year, and I'll give it special attention and plenty of fertilizer. If we get figs next year, fine. If not, you can cut it down."* Luke 13:6-9

• 15:2-4 PRUNE. On the other hand, the Father _____ the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. Jesus said that the pruning was accomplished by them hearing and responding to his _____. They were the good soil. They were the faithful disciples who lived out what He taught them.

15:2 PRUNE. The Greek word is AIRO. It is best translated here as "take up" or "lift up." The word is used of the disciples "taking up" the baskets of food left over from feeding the 5,000. *MT 14:20..Of Simon "taking up" the Lord's cross... Matthew 27:32 ...Of Jesus "taking up and taking away" our sin as the Lamb of God. John 1:29* The practice in vineyards with healthy branches that fall down on the ground is to wash them and lift them up on the trellis so that they may bear fruit. Bruce Wilkenson in Secrets of the Vine says the Lord is referring to disciplining His disciples...so that *"there will be a quiet harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way."* Hebrews 12:5-11

15:3-6 REMAIN. Human kind did not cause themselves to come into existence. We are not the root of life. God is. We are _____. Branches to stay alive need to _____ -- stay connected – with the rooted _____. A branch cannot _____ fruit if it is _____ from the Vine. We cannot live a fruitful and Christ-like life _____ from Jesus. Those who remain in Jesus will produce

fruit. People who are joined to Jesus but may have lesser giftings will have a much greater good impact on life than those who do not grow on Jesus. The naked truth is that apart from Jesus we cannot be _____. In fact, we can do _____ that is of real value without doing it under the Master's direction and empowering. In truth, anyone who _____ from Christ, though their life might have one time been focused on Him and served with Him is _____ away like a _____ branch and _____ and is gathering into a pile and _____.

15:4 REMAIN. Abide. Dwell. Live in. Intimate union. Fellowship. Shared life. Walk. The opposite of abide is "to live separate from." A branch cut off from a tree will stay green and even leaf out temporarily...but because it has no roots to absorb moisture and nutrients from the soil, it withers and dies. *Acts 17:28* Adam and Eve did not drop dead immediately when they ate of the Tree of Knowledge but they did die.

• 15:5 NOTHING. Billy Graham once said that probably 90% of the things Christian people and their churches do is done without the Holy Spirit. Their accomplishments are called

"dead works." Nothing is really changed. In fact, people that are part of those churches may actually be part of the world and not of the Kingdom of God. They may be self-deceived and without salvation. The ministry of the church makes no real change in the world for God and good. One time Billy Sunday, a great evangelist of 100 years ago, got the town drunk saved at his revival meeting. Someone came to him the next day and said that the man he got saved was weaving down the street dead drunk. Billy replied, "Yes, it must have been me that saved him, if the Lord had done it he would be set sober and free." Jesus said to the church at Sardis, "*I know the things you do and you have a reputation for being alive-but you are dead.*" Revelation 3:1

15:7-8 ASK. Jesus tells the disciples again that if they are joined to Him—they live out his _____ and are filled with God the Helper/ Counselor, the Holy Spirit, that they can ask _____ request they _____, and it will be granted. They can ask what they like because joined to Christ they like the same things He likes. Jesus says, "My _____ disciples produce _____fruit. This brings great _____to my Father."

• 15:8 GLORY. What the world needs to see is the spotlight shined on God. This will enable those who hunger and thirst to know God, to find him and believe that He is the true and living God, creator, savior, and coming back to resurrect them from the dead and bring them into the new heavens and earth. '*Let your light so shine before men that they may give glory to your Father in heaven.*' Matthew 5:16 Light is a fruitful Christ-like life.

What Does This Scripture Say To You? _____