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Purpose / John 15:1–17

John 15:1-17 Bible Study Questions

V1-2: Jesus said that if the branch does not bear fruit, it will be taken away. What does that mean?

In any church, there will always be a mix of genuine and fake believers. This situation is inevitable until the Lord comes and distinguishes between the two. Spotting false believers is tricky—they often act like true believers, attending church, joining in fellowship, and worshiping the Lord. However, their issue is not a lack of knowledge but a lack of a genuine relationship with the Lord, leading to a lack of fruitfulness (we'll discuss what this fruit is later). The consequence of their insincerity is that the Lord won't recognize them as His disciples (Matt 7:22). They'll be cut off from the vine, missing out on heaven, with hell awaiting them. It's a serious reality we must pay attention to!

On the flip side, genuine believers are supported by God, who ensures their growth and fruitfulness. In essence, God is continually transforming us. Though the process may be challenging at times, it always brings lasting benefits! Trust in God, and you'll experience His blessings.

v3-6: How has the branch been cleaned? Through what? What is the difference between "abiding in Jesus, abiding in My word" and "knowing the word"?

True disciples are purified by embracing the gospel message of Jesus Christ. They believe in His words and His ability to cleanse their sins. It's important to note that when Jesus spoke these words to His apostles (right after the Last Supper, on their way to the garden before His arrest), Judas was not present—he had betrayed Jesus and left.

Judas, although seemingly a follower of Jesus, heard His teachings, walked with Him, and spoke with Him, only knew the words. He didn't truly follow or believe in what Jesus said. This serves as a warning for us. Some of us may come from Christian

families, exposed to the gospel from a young age, but it's possible that we never truly embrace Jesus Christ. We might 'know His word' but fail to believe and live by it. Growing up in a Christian family doesn't guarantee God's blessings unless we genuinely abide in Jesus and His word.

V7 "ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. " How do you understand this phrase? Should we pray anything we desire?

Our prayers aren't like making a wish list for God; we can certainly pray for what we genuinely desire, and there's nothing wrong with that. However, the real purpose of prayer is not just about getting what we want but about aligning ourselves with God's will. It's crucial to understand that this phrase is closely tied to the concept of 'bearing fruit.' The promise is that if we pray for anything related to 'bearing more fruit,' God will surely answer our prayers! Making our life fruitful should be our top priority, and we should make it a daily focus in our prayers.

V8: What is the purpose of bearing fruit? What is the fruit? And how does it prove that we are His disciples?

The key to understanding this is found in Verse 8: the purpose of bearing fruit is to glorify God. The fruit here represents your transformed, holy life, leaving behind your old sinful ways. You might wonder, why does bearing fruit bring glory to God? Here's the answer:

Ephesians 2:10 LSB

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

God finds satisfaction in His creation, and the most beautiful masterpiece is our new, holy life. Let God receive all the glory from our transformed lives!

Conversely, if there's no such fruit in us, it implies we are not His disciple. When God works in us, we undergo a continuous transformation, gradually displaying more fruit in our lives. It's essential to note that bearing fruit is the primary evidence of being His disciple— not baptism, not participating in Christian activities, not prayer, but specifically bearing fruit!

v8-11 How could we have the joy of Jesus? How could we abide in His love?

Observing the Lord's commandments is crucial for bearing fruit in a holy life. It requires diligent effort and a willingness to strive for it, not relying on personal strength but on His power. After acknowledging your sinfulness and following Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit will transform your desires. You'll develop a genuine eagerness to obey His commands, even though you may stumble along the way. Yet, His abundant mercy and grace are there for you. His grace will sustain you, and His truth will guide you.

Your love for Christ becomes the driving force for you to obey His commandments. As a result, the joy of Jesus will dwell within you—a joy distinct from worldly happiness, arising from the satisfaction of your soul rather than the gratification of your flesh. This joy is beyond verbal expression; only those who experience it firsthand can truly understand.

Read verse 14 again. Do you feel something unusual? Would you say the same thing as Jesus did to your friends? Why did Jesus say so?

Normally, people don't expect the same level of obedience from their friends, and it's usually not reasonable to demand that. However, Jesus is different. His aim wasn't to teach us about making friends. If someone insists, 'You can only be my friend if you do what I say,' that's considered arrogant, as we are all equal before the Lord. But Jesus isn't equal to us. Despite He became flesh among us, He is the Lord, our Creator.

It's a great mercy that we can serve Him as His slaves, but it's even more astonishing that Jesus extends the incredible offer of friendship to us. What a privilege!

Moreover, Jesus has deep love for His friends. He instructs us to love one another just as He loves us, demonstrated by His sacrifice on the cross. As both His slaves and friends, we have the responsibility of obeying His commandments. Jesus didn't teach us here how to earn His friendship but expressed the key characteristic of His friends: obedience to His commands. So, are you both His slave and friend?"

v16 If you understand that you are chosen by God, then how does this impact your life, your path, your mind?

It's crucial to recognize that God chose us to be His people; we didn't choose Him

voluntarily because we lack the ability to do so. The key point is that God redeemed us at a great cost—His son's life. In our modern context, grasping this concept might be challenging. In ancient Rome, a slave couldn't redeem themselves; only someone else could redeem them. When a new master redeemed a slave, the slave would then belong to the new master.

Here we are, no longer slaves to sin but slaves to God. Being a slave isn't always negative! The fate of a slave depends greatly on their master. Many slaves willingly chose not to be free because of a merciful master. Some even inherited their master's possessions after the master's death without any successors. As slaves of God, we have a single purpose—to serve our Lord. This merciful Master not only treats us as friends but also adopts us as His sons. As a result, we will inherit His kingdom! How blessed we are!

So, regardless of our goals, paths, or thoughts, we are obligated to serve the Lord. We exist, live, and breathe for His glory alone! As we navigate our future, we should always ask ourselves, "Is this the will of my Master? Will this please Him?" His truth, found in the Holy Bible, will guide us. Based on godly principles, He will personally guide us in life. The purer our hearts are toward God, the clearer His path for us becomes.

Practical Questions:

In what respects do you expect to honor your God in adult life, and how? (Consider family, church, and occupation.)

In adult life, I believe there are three main areas where you can honor God: family, church, and your job.

Firstly, let's talk about family, including marriage. Don't think it's too early to consider marriage. It's like preparing for a test – just as you'd study for a school test, start learning about marriage early. If you don't, you will surely fail. A godly family is a strong witness for the Lord. People see your true life in your marriage, so first be a godly person yourself. Train yourself to obey God's command, and this will reflect in your marriage. If you become a husband, love your wife as Christ loves the church; He sacrificed himself for the church. If you become a wife, being subject to your husband as the church to the Lord (Ephesians 5:22-31). Avoid letting worldly perspectives influence your marriage. May the Lord receive all the glory from your marriage and family!

Next is the church. Serving the church is not optional—it's a duty. Some may say they're too busy, but I'd reply, 'Make time!' Set serving the church as a priority, and you'll find time. God has given gifts to every believer for building up the body of

Christ. Don't be the fat on the body; be the muscle! Rise up and serve your brothers and sisters to glorify the Lord.

Lastly, your job is your mission field. Focus not just on career success but on working genuinely and wisely for the Lord and your employer. If you're an employer, treat your employees according to biblical teachings—be merciful and wise. While aiming for excellence, you don't have to be outstanding in your career. Pursue excellence in your work, be responsible and honest. If the Lord grants you promotion, praise God; if not, don't chase after it. You may have vast job experience; it is fine. You do not have to stick to one job, as long as your motive is not to satisfy worldly desires. You might encounter various people at work, some may be evil(it happens), but don't repay evil for evil. Use such situations as opportunities to learn endurance from the Lord. If you have friends at work, share the gospel and invite them to church. May you bear fruit for Him and give all glory to Him!"