

# Bearing Fruit for Jesus

One sight that has become more common in the Shenandoah Valley is grapevines. Although sparse 50 years ago, vineyards now dot the landscape with their trellised vines, and these should remind Christians of some of Jesus' last words. Just hours before His arrest, He told His followers, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ... If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing" **John 15:1-5 (NIV)**.

Jesus wants us to bear fruit for Him! Fruit is a dominant theme throughout the Bible, found in both the first and last chapters and in many in between. The first command God ever gave involved fruit production, and that theme is emphasized repeatedly.

But what type of lasting fruit does Jesus want? Thankfully, the Scriptures give us numerous examples. In the Upper Room, Jesus mentioned love no less than 30 times, and He commanded His followers to love one another. Love is certainly spirit-fruit that will last. In Galatians 5, Paul adds several other varieties of everlasting fruit, including joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.

While the salvation of souls is another eternal fruit, so too are sanctification, edification, and glorification. Even when our work results in no obvious earthly benefit, if God is glorified, eternal fruit is produced! The Bible also mentions the good fruits of righteousness and good deeds. While our fruit doesn't save us from our sins, fruitfulness should result from our relationship with Jesus, the True Vine.

Just as every grapevine needs four main parts to produce grapes, so we need these same components to produce Jesus' fruit. Grapes draw nutrients up through their roots, and it's necessary for believers to have deep roots in God's Word for our nourishment.

Moving upward, each grapevine has a main trunk that could be compared to spiritual disciplines such as prayer, Scripture reading, and worship. All of these transport the truth of God's Word up to the bearing surface of our lives.

Shoots are what fruit is borne on, and these can compare to our jobs, relationships, and areas of service. Just as grape shoots may be pruned occasionally, our shoots may change to maximize our fruitfulness.

Individual grape leaves are miniature fruit factories taking nutrients from the roots, combining them with sunlight, and through the miracle of photosynthesis, they manufacture sugars that become sweet grapes. For us, the leaves are words and deeds where we take Biblical truths, combine them with the sunlight of God's love, and through His Holy Spirit, produce lasting fruit for Jesus.

The next time you pass a vineyard, may it remind you to bear much fruit for our True Vine, Jesus, and for His Father, the Gardener!

**George Bowers - CBC Exec. Board**

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## **Weekly Prayer Point**

Let us thank God for all the pastors of CBC and ask Him to bless and encourage each one, along with their spouses and families. Please pray for God to raise up more pastors for CBC congregations in need. Ask Him to inspire individuals to enter the ministry and for congregations to be discerning in their calls to ministry. Pray that those whom God calls will respond positively and say yes to Him!

### **Please pray for these congregations and pastors:**

- Kiruri in Burundi Africa and Pastor Bukobero Pierre
- Kiryankonzi-Kibogi in Uganda Africa and Pastor Twagiramunga Christopher
- Knob Creek in Johnson City TN and Pastor John Swonger
- Knobley in New Creek WV and Pastor Chris Edward Leatherman

### **CBC Prayer Committee**