



A MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY WITH MARRICUS D. ELLIS

Week: January 7, 2026 Lesson Text: John 15:1-7 Series: “ROOTED”

“We Are One”

A Relationship with Christ Breeds a Fruitful Life

Central truth: As Jesus prepares for the cross, he reassures his disciples and urges them to remain connected to him. This study focuses on living a fruitful Christian life, highlighting that only through a close relationship with Jesus can one know God, bear spiritual fruit, and bring glory to God.

I. Why this Study?

A. Objective:

1. To explore how and why Jesus calls His disciples to abide in Him.
2. To understand the necessary union between Christ and the Church.
3. To learn how to abide in Christ so that we can bear fruit for Christ.

B. Relevance:

1. In a world filled with independent success, Jesus reminds us that success in the kingdom comes from dependency upon Him.
2. Many believers forget that Jesus didn't just come for salvation but also for transformation, to help us become more like Him.
3. This passage reminds us that productivity in the kingdom doesn't come from our own efforts, but from a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus.

II. Context of John 15:1-11

A. The Background of Jesus' Vine Discourse:

1. After Jesus predicts His betrayal, He tells the disciples “Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘where I am going, you cannot come.’ (Jn.13:33)
2. Peter doesn’t understand why Jesus is leaving or where He is going, so Peter ask the question “Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later.” (Jn.13:36)
3. Because the disciples are confused and distressed, in chapter 14 Jesus encourages them by saying “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. (Jn.14:1-2)
4. Afterward, Jesus makes a bold declaration of who He is and where He’s going, Jesus says “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (Jn.14:6)
5. Jesus then declares His oneness with the Father by saying “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him and have seen Him.” (Jn.14:7)
6. Philip asked the Lord to “show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” (Jn.14:8)
7. Jesus responds and says “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.” (Jn.14:10)
8. Jesus promises to send another Helper that will be with the disciples forever and abide in them. (Jn.14:16-21)
9. Jesus promises that He and the Father will make their abode with those that love Jesus and keeps His word. (Jn.14:22-25)
10. As Jesus prepares to depart, He leaves His peace with the disciples (Jn.14:26-31)
11. Jesus gives His vine discourse to teach the disciples that fruitful production comes from a personal and intimate relationship with the true vine. (Jn.15:1-11)

B. Historical Insight:

1. The children of Israel were considered God’s vine/vineyard, but they never produced fruit. They didn’t fulfill God’s ultimate purpose for planting them. (Psa.80:8-19; Isa.5:1-7)
2. Vineyards were pervasive in the mediterranean world. Small farmers, Galileans, etc. had vines along their fig and olive trees. For the best quality of production vines had to be pruned/cut to reach their full potential.
3. Jesus’ connection to the Father gives Him authority and credibility to be the link that connects everyone else to God (Jn.15:1)

4. This passage is a reminder that life is not found within the branches (disciples) rather it's found in our connection to the vine (Jesus).

C. Key Takeaway:

1. Living a fruitful life in the kingdom doesn't come from our earthly success, our roles in the church or society, but it comes from a personal and intimate relationship with Jesus. A *faithful* life leads to a *fruitful* life.

III. How to Live a Fruitful Life

A. Remain in the Vine

1. Key Verses: “**Abide** in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear **fruit** of itself unless it **abides** in the vine, so neither can you unless you **abide** in Me. “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.” (Jn.15:4-5)
2. Key Lessons:
 - a) Jesus calls the disciples to abide in Him.
 - b) Abiding is not casual, but it's serious and committed.
 - c) His desire for their union is to produce fruit and to glorify God.
 - d) It is not what you *do* for Jesus that produces fruit, rather it's time you spend *with* Jesus that produces fruit.
 - e) Don't become so laser focused *doing* for Jesus that you forget to *be* with Jesus.
 - f) Myth: Movement + productivity= fruit
 - g) Truth: Abiding + obedience= fruit
 - h) One of Satan's best tactics to hinder children of God is using “busyness” as an appearance for bearing fruit. Being busy with everything else prevents us from being fruitful with Christ.
 - i) We *gain* when we *remain*!

B. Pruning is not for punishment— it's for better production and performance.

1. Key verse: “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.” (Jn.15:2)
2. Key Lessons:
 - a) Jesus shows us that God desires fruit from His vine/vineyard.
 - b) God doesn’t care for useless branches (dead wood) who don’t fulfill their purpose of being connected. He disposes them.
 - c) Those that bear fruit, God prunes to bear more fruit.
 - d) Some of the trials, troubles, and tribulations you’ve faced for being a Christian are not always to *harm* you but to *help* you. (Rom.8:16-18; 2 Cor. 4:16-17)
 - e) Pain is often the springboard for purpose. Don’t try to escape it but embrace it. God is working in you to produce more fruit. No pain, No gain! (Heb.12:6-11; 1 Pet.1:6-7)

C. Fruitful *Living* comes from Faithful *Spending*

1. Key verse: “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.” (Jn.15:5)
2. Key Lessons:
 - a) Jesus teaches that fruit is a derivative of abiding in Him.
 - b) Fruitfulness is an infallible mark of true Christianity.
 - c) The depth and ripeness of your fruit come from the depth of your relationship with Jesus: The time you *spend* with Him will determine the life you *live* for Him.
 - d) Don’t forsake investing and spending time with Jesus for a counterfeit option that will not give you the best return on investment. There is no greater ROI than in Jesus.

D. Abiding Shapes Your Prayer Life and Glorifies God

1. Key verses: “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. “My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.” (Jn.15:7-8)
2. Key Lessons:

- a) The more we abide and spend time with Jesus, the more we start to think like Him. Our beliefs, our values, and our goals are all transformed to be like His. (Rom.12:1-2; Col.3:1ff)
- b) Psalm 37:4 “**Delight yourself** in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.”
- c) Our prayer life shifts when our relationship with Jesus shifts.
- d) God answers prayers that are in alignment with His will. One must know His will to prayer the right prayers (Rom.12:3).
- e) God is glorified when we abide because it produces much fruit and demonstrates that we are His disciples.
- f) Central truth: Abiding in Christ leads to a fruitful life that honors and glorifies God!

E. The Role of the Spirit in Abiding

- 1. Key verses: “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He **abides with you and will be in you.** (Jn.14:16-17)
- 2. “Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**” (Acts 2:38)
- 3. “But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (Gal.5:22)
- 4. Key Lessons:
 - a) The Holy Spirit is the key person to help us produce fruit, therefore DO NOT quench the Holy Spirit (1 Thess.5:19).
 - b) Allow the Holy Spirit to have free course in your life. For every fruit that comes from the Holy Spirit makes us ripe and ready to be used by God that we may bring more glory to God.

IV. Prayer Focus

- 1. Pray for a more intimate relationship with Jesus in 2026– not superficial or formal but deep and intimate.
- 2. Ask God to help you remain in Him despite life’s challenges.

3. Pray for less distractions in 2026 and ask God to help you to keep your mind stayed on Him so you can bear much fruit.
4. Prayer for our brothers and sisters in Christ to remain/abide in Christ— not just at the beginning of the year but all year.

V. Key Takeaway

We are connected to the vine for a purpose—to bear fruit and glorify God with our lives. Jesus died not only to offer us salvation but also transformation. Allow Jesus to transform your life by staying connected to Him. Remember “We are One.”

VI. Discussion and Reflection Questions

1. What areas in your life are preventing you from abiding in Christ? Why?
2. How does Jesus’ command to abide demonstrate His love and care for us?
3. What do we learn about Jesus and His disciples in this passage?
4. How can you spend more time with Jesus in 2026?
5. What are some of your daily habits? Write them down and see where you can incorporate spending time with Jesus as a daily habit.
6. How can the church better equip believers to abide and spend time with Jesus in such a fast-paced world?