

## **REMAINING IN THE TRUE VINE (PART 2)**

### **Discipleship: a key characteristic of abiding in Jesus**

**John 15 Verse 8** reads:

*‘My Father is glorified and honored by this, when you bear much fruit, and prove yourselves to be My [true] disciples.’*

God the Father is glorified and honored when we bear much fruit and also when we prove ourselves to be his disciples.

The word disciple means learner, pupil or student.

A disciple is a follower of Christ, someone who learns from Christ how to live like Him.

In other words, when Jesus was here on earth He did and spoke only what He saw and heard his heavenly Father do and say. In the same way, as a follower of Christ, as his student, as his disciple, I will do what I see Jesus do and say what I hear Him tell me to say. I have already been created in His likeness, now I choose to also live like Him.

### **A Disciple is one who serves others**

We all want to be served, very few of us ever want to do the serving.

We often find certain activities to be beneath us even when we are not necessarily overtly outspoken about the way we feel. In our hearts we feel that serving someone else makes us somehow weak or less than or beneath those we serve. What we do not always realise is that if we want to lead others we have to know how to serve.

### **John 13:5 Amplified Bible (AMP)**

#### **Jesus Washes the Disciples’ Feet**

<sup>5</sup> Then He poured water into the basin and began washing the disciples’ feet and wiping them with the towel which was tied around His waist.

<sup>8</sup> Peter said to Him, “You will never wash my feet!” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with Me [we can have nothing to do with each other].”

Unless as believers we are prepared to serve one another we can never claim to have any part in one another and in Him. It is service to each other that shows that we are in this together, that we are one, united, a family, part of each other and part of Christ.

### **Mark 10:45 Amplified Bible (AMP)**

<sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

Jesus makes it clear that He did not to earth so that He could be treated like royalty, but rather he came to be of service to us.

### **John 13:14-15 Amplified Bible (AMP)**

<sup>14</sup> So if I, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet as well. <sup>15</sup> For I gave you [this as] an example, so that you should do [in turn] as I did to you.

Jesus is the Lord and the Teacher, we are the pupils and students, we must serve one another with the same attitude as Jesus served his followers.

### **A Disciple is one who treats all with goodness**

### **Galatians 6:10 Amplified Bible (AMP)**

<sup>10</sup> So then, *while we [as individual believers] have the opportunity*, **let us do good to all** people [not only being helpful, but also doing that which promotes their spiritual well-being], **and especially [be a blessing] to those of the household of faith** (born-again believers).

The scripture entreats us to do good while we have the opportunity meaning the opportunity will not always be there to do good. Another scripture says, he who knows the good he ought to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Our good doing is not limited to a select group of people. The scripture says we should do good to all people. I like that the amplified goes on to expand on the nature of the good that we do, that we should not stop at rendering assistance and being helpful but promote people's spiritual well-being.

The scripture goes on to emphasise the importance of putting family first. It says: especially be a blessing to those of the household of the faith. Although we do good to all, we take special care to take care of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

### **A Disciple is one who loves the way Christ loves**

#### **John 13:34 Amplified Bible (AMP)**

<sup>34</sup> I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another. **Just as I have loved you**, so you too are to love one another.

There are different words in the Greek for the word love, but the one that I am interested in is the word Agape

Agape or selfless love is love extended to all people whether family members or distant strangers. (While we were still sinners (distant strangers) Christ died for us (demonstrated Agape love toward us)

C.S. Lewis referred to it as "gift love" the highest form of Christian love.

Agape love is selfless, sacrificial, unconditional immeasurable love that is able to cover a multitude of sin.

If you still are not sure what type of love this Agape love is, let us turn to 1 Cor. 13:4-8.

## **1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Amplified Bible (AMP)**

<sup>4</sup> Love endures with patience *and* serenity, love is kind *and* thoughtful, and is not jealous *or* envious; love does not brag and is not proud *or* arrogant. <sup>5</sup> It is not rude; it is not self-seeking, it is not provoked [nor overly sensitive and easily angered]; it does not take into account a

wrong *endured*. <sup>6</sup> It does not rejoice at injustice, but rejoices with the truth [when right and truth prevail]. <sup>7</sup> Love bears all things [regardless of what comes], believes all things [looking for the best in each one], hopes all things [remaining steadfast during difficult times], endures all things [without weakening].

<sup>8</sup> Love never fails [it never fades nor ends]. But as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for the gift of special knowledge, it will pass away.

It is this love that Jesus demonstrated to the disciples and that He wanted them to emulate that identifies us as disciples of Jesus.

### **John 13:35 Amplified Bible (AMP)**

<sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you have love *and* unselfish concern for one another.”

### **1 John 3:23 Amplified Bible (AMP)**

<sup>23</sup> This is His commandment, that we believe [with personal faith and confident trust] in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and [that we unselfishly] love *and* seek the best for one another, just as He commanded us.

To be a disciple of Jesus means to serve like him. It means to serve, primarily, by looking after your brothers and sisters in Christ. Being disciples of Jesus means being servants who love one another unconditionally. Being disciples who make disciples of others is a key part of being connected to the True Vine.

### **ADVANTAGES OF REMAINING IN THE VINE**

- *(I am the true Vine, and My Father is the vinedresser)* Being connected to the vine means we are always connected to the Father.
- Imagine being able to connect to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords any time of day or night without being worried about it being an inconvenient time for him or him being unavailable or too busy or you not being enough of a priority.
- *(My words remain in you [that is, if we are vitally united and My message lives in your heart])* Connecting to the Vine means keeping things more than just surface level, it means intimacy with Jesus. His

words become alive and live and dwell within our hearts which means they form a belief that He is who he says He is and He can and will do what He says He will do.

- *(He [repeatedly] prunes, so that it will bear more fruit)* Being connected to the vine means being in line for continuous pruning, and continuous correction, the advantage of which is producing more abundant and higher quality fruit.
- We who were once dead in our trespasses and sins are now made Alive in Christ. I want to be alive in Christ, because life in Him is eternal and full of Joy unconfined. Life in Jesus Christ is full of peace that surpasses all human understanding.
- We who were once shackled by sin and in bondage and in condemnation, are now free and free indeed without any condemnation. There is freedom in being able to ask for anything you want and for it to be given to you. Slaves do not get to receive whatever they ask for, it is a sign of freedom, of the liberty by which we have been set free. (Ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you)
- A Promise of reciprocity of faithfulness (remain in me and I will remain in you). The truth is that even when we sometimes waiver, and we often do, because he extends grace to us, even when we stray off track, even then he faithfully calls out to us to come back home where love is waiting for us.
- (They gather such branches and throw them into the fire, and they are burned) We escape hell and eternal damnation by staying connected to the vine.
- We become vessels of glory and honor to the Father (My Father is glorified *and* honored by this, when you bear much fruit, and prove yourselves to be My [true] disciples.)
- We get to serve one another, demonstrate goodness and kindness to all, especially our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.
- We get to love one another selflessly and unconditionally because we are able to give of what we ourselves have experienced first-hand through the love our saviour has shown to us.