

DiVINE LIFE

(John 15:1-11)

1. **REMEMBERING** Think about the issues of Identity (who you are), Purpose (why you are here), and Destiny (what you can become). At this point in your life, where would you rank them in terms of your certainty and clarity? (“I have the greatest clarity about...and the least about...”)
2. **REFLECTING** If you could have one question answered in one of these three areas, what would it be?
3. **DISCOVERING** Read [John 15:1-11](#) aloud and answer the questions.

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ²He 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. ³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

⁹“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

- Which aspects of this rich metaphor address each of these issues?
- What is the most profound message this passage communicates?
- What are consequences of remaining connected to the vine listed?
- Read the quote. Does it speak to anything you wrestle with?

Martin Buber wrote that if you stand in front of a tree and watch it incessantly to see how it grows and to see how much it has grown, you will see nothing at all. But tend to it at all times, prune the runners, and keep the vermin from it, and—all in good time—it will come into its growth. It is the same with man: all that is necessary is for him to overcome his obstacles, and he will thrive and grow. But it is not right to examine him every hour to see how much has been added to his growth. (Gordon MacDonald, *A Resilient Life*)

4. **CONNECTING** Which principles of remaining connected, being pruned, or bearing fruit in this passage speak to you most powerfully?
5. **RESPONDING:** How will you act on this new insight in the coming week and with whom might you share it?

If my life is fruitless, it doesn’t matter who praises me, and if my life is fruitful, it doesn’t matter who criticizes me.

- John Bunyan, Puritan preacher and author