

Looking Unto Jesus

a chronological study of the life of Christ

John 15:1 - 16:4

Lesson 53

In this portion of the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus declared the seventh and last of the I AM statements that He made about Himself – I am the Vine. He also declared Himself to be a friend of His followers and then declared His followers to be His friends. Jesus spoke of *love, abiding*, and obedience, moving into a warning about persecution, and then the coming of *the Helper*. His words are intended to give us *joy* and keep us from stumbling. What a glorious Savior!

John 15:1-16:4

OVERVIEW

1. Read the verses using both your Observation Worksheet (the last page of this homework) and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they are about?
2. Key words help us to better understand the verses. Mark each one in a distinctive way (either with a symbol, highlighting, or some form of boxing, circling, or underlining). As you mark key Characters, remember to mark any personal pronouns. As you mark key words, also mark words pronouns related to them.
Key Characters: *God (Father), Jesus, and Holy Spirit*
Key words: *vine, vinedresser, branch, love(d), joy, abide(s), fruit, world, and hates(hated) / sin / persecute(d) / kills*
3. The contrasting words, *but* and *yet*, occur ten times in this section. Mark the words. Choose one; record what is being contrasted.
4. The term of conclusion, *therefore*, occurs in John 15:19. Mark the word. Record the conclusion and what it is based upon.
5. Scan the text and list some things declared about the relationship with the Father and Son.

APPLICATION: John 15:1-8 The True Vine

1. Using John 15:1,2, record the word that describes each of the following:

Father

Son

mankind

2. What does the Father do to *the branch*:

that does not bear fruit

that bears fruit

- a. Why does He *prune the branch that bears fruit*?

- b. No one enjoys the *pruning* process. What are the benefits of *pruning* a plant?

3. The word translated as *prune* can also be translated as *cleansed*. Speaking to His disciples, Jesus declared in verse 3, *You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you*. This may be a reminder of when Jesus washed the disciples' feet in John 13. As believers, we have been initially cleansed of our sins. But we continually need cleansing. In what ways has the word of God *cleansed* you?

4. Read John 15:4-7 and record what is revealed about *abiding*.

- a. Explain what it means to *abide in Jesus*.

5. John 15:6 is not intended to provoke fear in the true believer. We are connected to Jesus, the vine, the moment we receive Jesus as our Savior. Every Christian will experience some sort of change at that time and every Christian will bear at least some fruit. The lack of any fruit is evidence that the person was never actually connected to Jesus, the Vine. John the Baptist had a similar warning to those trusting in *the fruit* of their own righteousness in Matthew 3:10. What did he say?

6. John 15:7 promises answered prayer to the one who *abides* in Jesus. How does *abiding* affect our asking *what we desire*?

7. Reflect on the words of John 15:8. How does the goal of *glorifying the Father* determine the kind of *fruit* we bear?

John 15:9-16 That His Joy Might Remain

1. Jesus began this section comparing the *Father's love for Him* to *His love for us*. Share a few ways these *loves* are similar.
2. What can we learn about *abiding* in John 15:9-10?
 - a. Explain the relationship of *abiding*, *keeping His commandments*, and *love*.
3. Jesus explained why He exhorts His followers to *abide*, *keep His commandments*, and *love* in verses 11 and 16. What did He say?
 - a. In what ways has adherence to these resulted in *joy* in your life?
4. Reflect on Jesus' words in verse 12. What are some examples of Jesus' *love* for you?
5. According to verse 13, the *greatest* expression of love is the *laying down of one's life for His friends*. At this time in the upper room that night, the disciples might have only known this in theory. But, Jesus was about to commit to this example of love through His suffering and death on the cross. What do you think it was like for the disciples to connect Jesus' words that night with His actions the next day?
6. John 15:14,15 speak of *friends* and *servants*. Summarize what Jesus said.
 - a. Share something you have learned about Jesus *making things known to you* that He didn't before you were His *friend*.

7. In John 15:16, Jesus told His disciples that He had *chosen* them for certain things. These things equally apply to all believers. What has He *chosen* believers to experience?

John 15:18-25 The World's Hatred

1. This section speaks of the contrast of *worldly* (unbelieving) thinking with *true branches*. Scan the verses (adding John 16:1,2) and make a list of *worldly* actions and thinking.
 - a. Notice: *Believers* are known by their love; the *world* is known by their hatred. The love God calls us and equips us to give is *agape* love. This love is a *love* that is a God empowered *love*. It is unconditional; it is loving someone simply because God *loves* them. What are your thoughts about Jesus' command to *love* like this?
2. What are some helpful statements to remember that Jesus made in these verses?
3. Consider the words of John 15:19 ... *you are not of the world, because I chose you out of the world*. Jesus has taken all believers *out of* the grip of *the world*. He *chose* to do that. Rejoice as you record the words of 1 Peter 2:9.
 - a. In what ways can you relate to 1 Peter 4:3?
4. *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin* (John 15:22). Add to these words verse 24. Rejection of Jesus is the greatest of sins. Those who were exposed to the life of Jesus and rejected Him were without excuse. What do you think it will be like for those who had seen Jesus and rejected Him when they stand before Him one day before His throne?
5. John 15:25 is a quote of Psalm 69:4...*they hated Me without a cause*. These words expressed both David's dilemma and were a prophesy of the *hatred* Jesus would experience. Why would someone *hate* someone who was doing good?

John 15:26-16:4 But When the Helper Comes

1. The previous paragraph division spoke of the *world's hatred* towards Jesus and His followers. John 15:26 begins with the contrasting word *but*. Jesus did not leave us to ourselves. Who did Jesus say would *come*?
 - a. What did Jesus declare about Him?
2. John 15:27 is addressed directly to the disciples. Yet, it is not confined to the twelve. Although they had physically been with Jesus *from the beginning*, why can believers today still *bear witness* to His work?
3. In John 15:11 Jesus said, *These things I have spoken to you that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full*. In John 16:1 Jesus shared, *These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble*. Define the word *stumble*.
 - a. Again, in John 16:4 Jesus said, *But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them*. What is the value of remembering something in God's word *when the time comes*?
 - b. Share your thoughts when you consider these three reasons why Jesus was sharing with them.

your joy may be full

you should not be made to stumble

you may remember

Review:

1. What did you learn about:

being a branch

bearing fruit

abiding

love

the role of the Holy Spirit

2. Share something from this lesson that impacted you.

See, I have told you beforehand.

- Matthew 24:25

Observation Worksheet

John 15:1-16:4 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. ⁹ "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. ¹² This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷ These things I command you, that you love one another. ¹⁸ "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ²¹ But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. ²² If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ He who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. ²⁵ But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.' ²⁶ "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

John 16:1-4 "These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. ²They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. ³ And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. ⁴ But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.