

*"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes [**lifts up**] every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he **prunes** to make it bear more fruit. (John 15:1-2 NRSV)*

Most Bible versions mistranslate this word in the Greek for remove. The original word literally means to lift up, not remove or take away. Jesus was using the analogy of a grapevine branch found laying on the ground in the mud. While laying in the mud a branch cannot bear fruit, but if it is rescued and propped up off the ground it can restore its capacity to begin bearing fruit again.

*But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)*

This is how God relates to followers of Jesus who fail to bear the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. If they are connected to the vine stalk but are not producing genuine fruit in their lives, it is likely because they are too much involved in the thinking of this world, too immersed in the dirt around them, too obsessed with focusing on the negative and in need of having their imagination lifted up out of the darkness and redirected to the Light of this world.

*Again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "**I am the light** of the world. He who **follows me** will not walk in the darkness, but will **have the light of life**." (John 8:12)*

*I must **work the works of him who sent me**, while it is day. The night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, **I am the light** of the world. (John 9:4-5)*

*This is the message which we have heard from him and announce to you, that **God is light**, and in him is no darkness at all. (1 John 1:5)*

***You are the light** of the world. A city located on a hill can't be hidden. (Matthew 5:14)*

*Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is **liberty**. But we all, with unveiled face **beholding as in a mirror the glory** of the Lord, are **transformed** into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)*

*Jesus therefore said to them, "Yet a little while **the light is with you**. **Walk while you have the light**, that darkness doesn't overtake you. He who walks in the darkness doesn't know where he is going. While you have the light, **believe in the light**, that **you may become children of light**." (John 12:35-36)*

This is truly how God deals with followers who are not bearing fruit. But what about those who are?

*Every branch that bears fruit he **prunes** to make it **bear more fruit**.*

What is involved in pruning? What needs to be pruned?

Random thoughts leading to rabbit trail strings of thoughts, feelings, assumptions resulting in distraction, confusion and doubt.

Every discussion has many tendrils with potential to move in a divergent direction from the main focus.

Keep in mind that the fruit God is looking to find on the branches is never something the branch produces itself but is a result of both remaining connected to the vine stalk as well as cooperating with the work of the Vinedresser's work in their lives. Fruit does not make a vine; the vine promotes fruit production by giving life and nourishment to the branches.

Remain in me, and I in you. As the branch can't bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you, unless you remain in me. I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

*In this is my **Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; and so you will be my disciples.** (John 15:4-5, 8)*