



**Remain 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. 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.**

*John 15:4-5*

### **Fruitful in Jesus**

Jane thought that her status as a good Christian was determined by how well she could follow God's commandments. Day after day, she tried her best to follow them. But day after day, she found herself giving into temptations to do what God said she shouldn't. She gossiped. She disrespected her parents, because she thought they didn't understand her. She gave into peer pressure, because she didn't want anyone to think less of her. It bothered her so much that she began to wonder, "How can I call myself a Christian if I can't even follow what God tells me?"

Maybe you think this way too. It's easy to think that being a Christian simply means to do what God tells us to do. We find our identity in what we do and how well we do it.

That's not where Jesus tells us to find our identity. In John 15, he tells us that being a Christian is more than just following a set of rules. He said, "A branch cannot bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine... I am the Vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him is the one who bears much fruit, because without me you can do nothing." If you cut a branch off a strawberry plant, you can't expect that branch to have strawberries on it in the middle of summer. That branch must be connected to vine or the trunk to grow, bloom, and bear fruit.

To bear fruit in your life, you must be connected to Jesus, your Savior. Apart from him you can do nothing. He came to earth for you. He lived the perfect life you cannot live. He died on the cross to take away all your sin. He rose again to give you heaven. He saved you to live with him eternally! All of it is a gift freely given out of his love for you. When God connects you to Jesus through faith and brings you to realize that he did all of that for you, it changes you. The good works God wants from you will happen, not because of your effort, but because God has changed you.

Branches bear fruit because that's what branches do when they are connected to the vine. You are a branch that bears fruit because you are connected to Jesus. Through that close connection with him, you are not alone to produce good fruit in your life! Stay connected to God in his Word and in the Lord's Supper. You have his promise: God will make you fruitful in Jesus.

**Prayer: Dear Jesus, you are the vine and I am a branch. Keep me connected to you through faith. As you promise, make me bear fruit and to do the things that you want me to do. Amen.**