



We Are Branches
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P_{review}

According to **John 15:5**, Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. If we abide in Him (remain attached to Him) we will grow fruit. However, without Him we can do nothing.

- How many fruits that grow on vines can you think of? (*encourage responses; some examples: grapes, pumpkins, melons, kiwi, tomatoes, passion fruit, dragon fruit; show slideshow if desired: http://garden.lovetoknow.com/wiki/Slideshow:Which_Fruits_Grow_on_Vines#1*)

P_{raise}

Not all fruit grows on vines, of course. **Psalm 1** compares a blessed man to a fruitful tree. *Read this Psalm aloud together and take a moment to thank God for His blessings.*

P_{arable}

Show a plotted plant. Break off one of the branches.

- Will this branch be able to grow any more _____ (whatever leaves/flowers/fruit the plant produces)? (*no, unless it can be made to grow roots or be grafted into another plant*)
- Why can't a detached branch grow more leaves/flowers/fruit? (*it can't get the nutrients and water it needs, which must go through the roots, up the stem, and into the branches*)

Not only can a branch not produce fruit if it is detached from the plant, but it will also die rather quickly!

P_{resent}

Without Jesus, we are like a detached branch, and our future is bleak. Read **John 15:6** from your Bible.

- A detached branch withers, and then what is it used as? (*firewood*)

To avoid becoming firewood, we must stay attached to Jesus! The next verse tells us how to do this. Read **John 15:7** from your Bible.



- How do we stay attached to Jesus? (*by having His Words remain in us and by asking [praying]*)

To stay attached to Jesus, we must pray—talk to Jesus, ask Him things, and listen to what He says. We must read and study His Word. We must “keep” His commandments, not just hearing the Word but DOING it.

Read **John 15:10-12** from your Bible. Sometimes we think that keeping Jesus’ commandments will become too difficult or burdensome, but in these verses, Jesus associates His commandments with love and joy—the first two fruit of the Spirit.

- What are the nine fruit of the Spirit listed in **Galatians 5:22-23**? (*love, joy, peace, longsuffering [patience], gentleness, goodness, faith [faithfulness], meekness, and temperance [self-control]*)

We can have true love, joy, peace, and the rest of the fruit only when we are attached to Jesus. If we break away from Him and try to manufacture these on our own, any fruit we produce will be counterfeit—like the plastic fruit some people have sitting around in bowls on their dining room tables: it looks good but has no nutritional value.

Pactice

Show this “Branches” visual: <http://www.creative-sunday-school-ideas.com/support-files/Branches-Visual.pdf>

These look like healthy branches that are producing good fruit. However, if a gardener notices that a branch on his vine does not look healthy, or if he would just like it to produce *more* fruit, he might do something potentially painful to the branch. Read **John 15:2** from your Bible.

- What does the gardener do to every branch that DOES NOT grow fruit? (*He takes it away [cuts it off]*)
- What does the gardener do to every branch that DOES grow fruit? (*He purges [prunes or trims] it so it will grow even more fruit*)

Sometimes God has to cut some things out of our lives because He is trying to help us grow more fruit. He might take away some music or books or movies or friends or activities that are interfering with our ability to grow His love, joy, peace, and the rest. It’s important to remember that when He prunes (takes away) these things, He is not punishing us; He is helping to add more growth and more fruit.



Pray

Let's pray right now and ask Jesus to help us stay attached to Him. Let's ask Him to help us keep His commandments, grow more fruit of the Spirit, submit to the pruning times, and respond with even more growth.

Plus

Eat some fruit this week. As you do, remember that fruit is meant to be eaten; it is to give strength and enjoyment to the eater. The fruit of the Spirit that you grow in your life is meant to bless and help others.