

Learn from the Vineyard

 **PASSION:** I wish we could all walk through a vineyard with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and learn from them the deeper truths of viticulture and how it applies to spiritual life. Perhaps you've had the opportunity to explore a vineyard with someone who explained more of the nuances and intricacies behind why they do what they do. As we unlock these videos and transfer vineyard principles into the spiritual realm of John 15, I trust that fresh discoveries may emerge. Let your imagination explore the vineyard. Walk through these vineyards with me now and listen to the words of Jesus in John 15.

¹ "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 it so 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, so 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, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:1-5, NASB)

PROBE:



To begin exploring what Jesus meant by "abiding" and "pruning," watch these videos on working in vineyards. Jot down the reasons why certain kinds of pruning are necessary. What observations do you make that open doors into the spiritual context of pruning?

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVyl2oi7ljM>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E-ltkKSxEy8>

Here are some observations and comments: Pruning grapevines takes time, skill, vision, precision, the right equipment, focused attention, planning. Vinedressers are willing to cut off ten years of growth to retrain the vine differently. The close-up of juice flowing from a cut was referred to as a "wound," suggesting that the plant was susceptible to disease. You don't prune dead branches, they just snap off with a bump. You prune healthy, fruit-bearing branches so they will bear even more fruit.

Now compare what you learned about the physical pruning of grapevines with Jesus' invitation to His disciples to be pruned by Father, found in John 15.

- We often look at pruning in a negative light. Pruning is a normal, necessary part of being a branch in the Vine. And pruning hurts! That's why it's also called cutting, cleansing, and wounding. So how does "trust" enter into your framework when you consider the pain of yielding yourself to Father's control of how you are pruned?
- We don't prune ourselves or others. Father prunes us. Look back at a significant, perhaps painful experience of God "removing" something from your life. Did you see greater fruit as the years went by?

PRACTICE:



- Reflect on these pruning lessons from the point of view of Father, the Vinedresser.
- When you get an opportunity, visit a vineyard. Hopefully the owner or overseer will walk with you through the vineyard and explain the growth, life-cycle, and nuances of the vineyard.
- What is God saying to you about abiding more deeply?
- How will you live differently?