

Challenging Chapters of the Bible

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John 14:23-24

- **23 Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. 24 Anyone who doesn’t love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me.**

Obedience and Salvation

- **1st John 2:3** And we can be sure that we know him if we obey his commandments. **4** If someone claims, “I know God,” but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. **5** But those who obey God’s word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him.
- **We are not saved by obedience, but this scripture is clear that to say you are a Christian and not obey Him makes you a liar.**

Obedience and Salvation

- So how far do we take this? Is any disobedience proof that I am not saved?
- Is that what is meant?
- The Greek word for 'Keep' or 'Obey' in 1st John 2:3 is 'tereo' – it means to guard with your eye.
- Christians gain assurance of salvation by striving to align our behaviors with the commandments of God.

John 14:25-26

- 25 I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. 26 But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.**

The Holy Spirit our Teacher

- **John 16:13** When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.
- **He is our Teacher – He is the one that illuminates the scriptures as we read them – this is why an uneducated believer is better equipped to understand truth than an unsaved Harvard graduate.**

John 15 – Fruit Bearing

- **15 “I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. 3 You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. 5 “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. 7 But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.**

Bearing Fruit

- **I think it would be a mistake to try to apply what Jesus says in John 15 about bearing fruit to all things salvation.**
- **Need I say this? No one is saved by works, nor are we kept by our works, or lack thereof.**
- **Matt 7:16 You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act**

Bearing Fruit

- **You can be identified by your fruit – or lack thereof.**
- **You can gain assurance of salvation by your fruit – or lack thereof.**
- **We are saved and kept “by grace through faith”, AND we are created for good works (fruit), but beware of conflating the two.**

Bearing Fruit

- This is a hard one “He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit” and one about which there is much disagreement.
- Since I don’t think this is about salvation, I conclude this to be a stern warning about laziness as a Christian.
- Or perhaps it’s a test for those who claim to be saved, but are not.

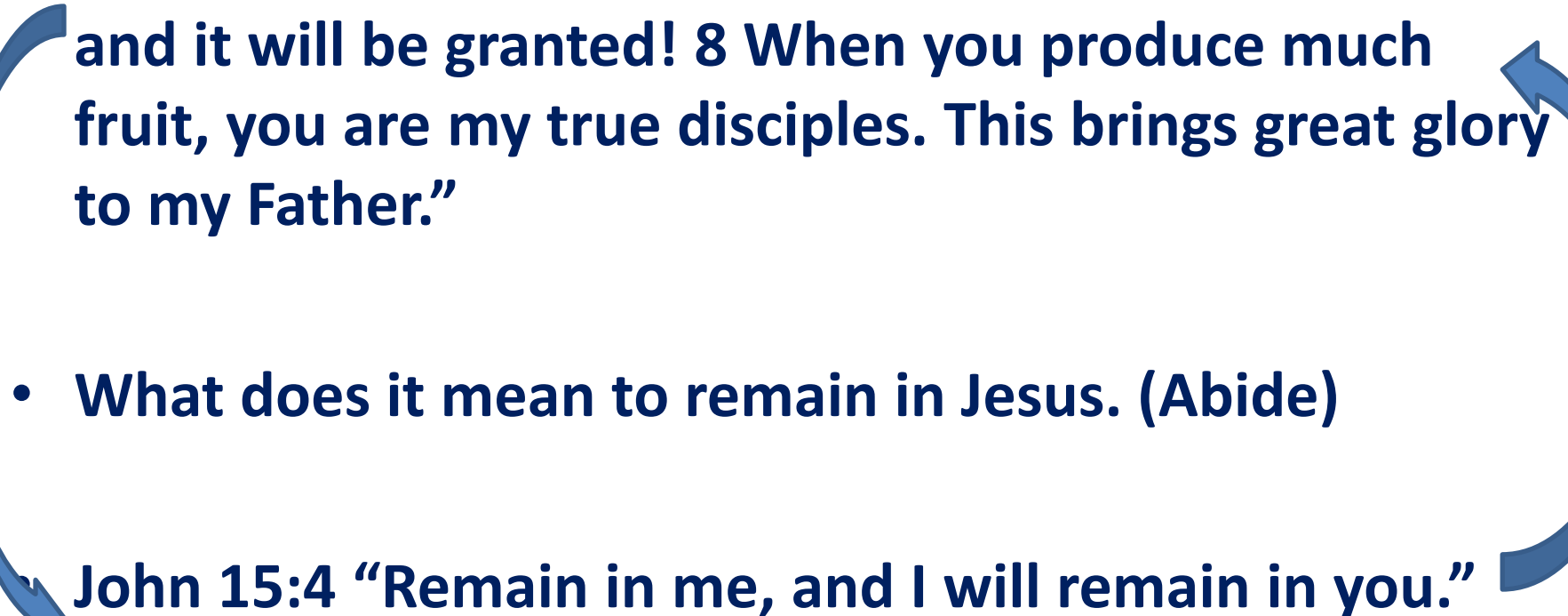
Bearing Fruit

- **And then we have this – “and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more.”**
- **So if I read this correctly, no one escapes the discomfort that comes with being a Christian because God is far more concerned about our ‘forever’ than He is our ‘today’.**
- **Said another way – God seems unconcerned with our comfort and very concerned with our character.**

Bearing Fruit

- **“4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.”**
- **Phil 4:13 For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.**
- **John 15:5 b “For apart from me you can do nothing.”**

Bearing Fruit

- **John 15:7** “But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.”
 - **What does it mean to remain in Jesus. (Abide)**
 - **John 15:4** “Remain in me, and I will remain in you.”
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Bearing Fruit

- I will make this brief and simple – we remain (abide) in Jesus through His word.
- When we remain (abide) in Christ we produce fruit.
- Ps 1:1 Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers. 2 But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night. 3 They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.

Fruit & Prayer

- **And one of the high privileges of remaining in Christ is answered prayer –**
- **John 15:7 “But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!”**
- **This sounds very much like John 14:13 You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. 14 Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!**

When God Does Not Answer

- We may not be praying according to God's will; 1 John 5:14, "If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."
- Or it could be we have cherished sin that we will not let go from our lives; Psalm 66:18, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear."
- It could be that we have man-centered and not God-centered motives; James 4:3, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures."

When God Does Not Answer

- Or it may be that we do not believe that God will do it; Mark 11:24, "All things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you."
- Or it could be that God wants you to persevere, and is testing your obedience to his command in Luke 18:1, "At all times [you] ought to pray and not to lose heart."
- Or it might be that God is, in fact, doing far more every time you pray than you can imagine and is daily putting in place a part of the mosaic that will in good time be the full answer to your prayer (as in Daniel 10:2,12).

What Does 'Fruit' Look Like?

Questions