

Growing Grapes
and Cultivating Christians

John 15:1-9

John 15:1-9

- “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, 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, 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, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. 9 As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.”

One Symbol For The Nation Of Israel Was A Vine

- Psalm 80:8-11 - “You have brought a vine out of Egypt; You have cast out the nations, and planted it. 9 You prepared room for it, And caused it to take deep root, And it filled the land. 10 The hills were covered with its shadow, And the mighty cedars with its boughs. 11 She sent out her boughs to the Sea, And her branches to the River.”
- Jer. 2:21 - “Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me Into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?”

One Symbol For The Nation Of Israel Was A Vine

- Isa. 5:1-4 - “Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard On a very fruitful hill. 2 He dug it up and cleared out its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, And also made a winepress in it; So He expected it to bring forth good grapes, But it brought forth wild grapes. 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. 4 What more could have been done to My vineyard That I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, Did it bring forth wild grapes?”

It's About Relationships

- John 15:2 - "in Me"
 - No one can be a branch in the Lord's Vine unless there is a vital connection to Him.
 - No one can bear fruit for the glory of the Lord unless they are attached to the Vine.

It's About Relationships

- How does one get to be in Jesus?
 - Rom. 10:9-10 - “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
 - Gal. 3:26-27 - “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

It's About Relationships

- There are plenty of people in religions and in churches. There are many moral people, but that does not mean they are in Jesus
 - Matt. 7:21-23 - “Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

It's About Reproduction

- A grape vine has a singular purpose: bearing fruit. But the vine itself does not bear the fruit; fruit bearing takes place on the branches.
 - Mark 10:45 - “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”
 - Mark 16:15-16 - “And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

It's About Reproduction

- Notice that there is a progression in fruit bearing: “no fruit,” to “bears fruit,” to “more fruit,” to “much fruit.”
 - John 15:2, 8 - “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit... 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

It's About Reproduction

- There are three kinds of fruit we bear:
- Sanctification: we become more like Him
 - Rom. 6:22 - “But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.”
 - Phil. 1:11 - “Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”



It's About Reproduction

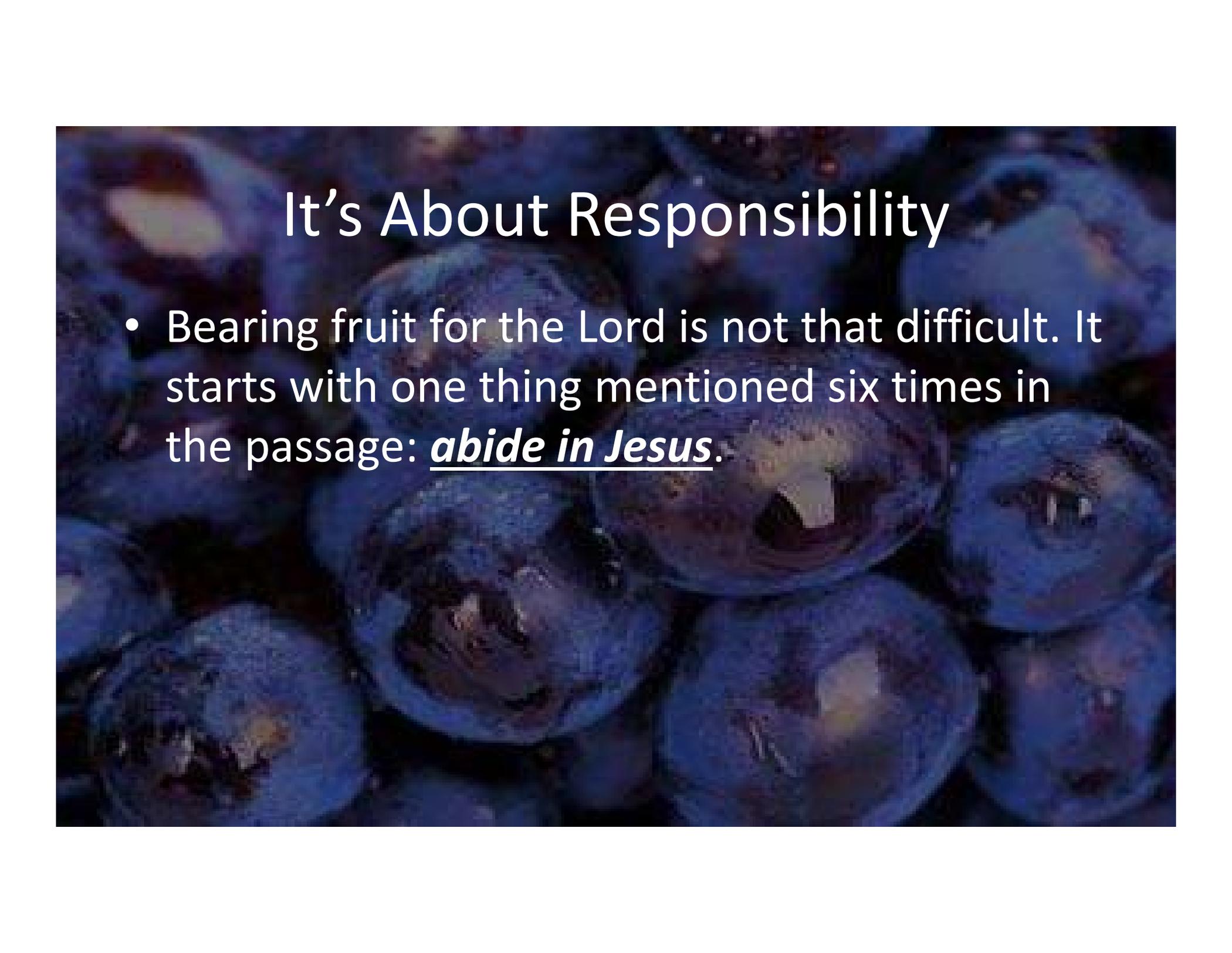
- There are three kinds of fruit we bear:
- Spirituality: we behave more like Him
 - Gal. 5:22-23 - “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

It's About Reproduction

- There are three kinds of fruit we bear:
- Souls: we are busy like Him
 - Rom. 1:13 - “Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.”
 - Col. 1:10 - “That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God”

It's About Reproduction

- The fruit we bear says much about our soul's condition
 - Matt. 7:16-20 - “You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”
 - Matt. 12:33 - “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.”



It's About Responsibility

- Bearing fruit for the Lord is not that difficult. It starts with one thing mentioned six times in the passage: *abide in Jesus*.

It's About Responsibility

- How does a person abide in Jesus? Pray, study His word, meditate on Him, His nature, and His will, worship and praise Him, a complete surrender of our will and life to Him
 - Rom. 12:1-2 - “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

It's About Responsibility

- Second, take the initiative and find uses and purposes for yourself, and then give it your all
 - Titus 3:8 - “This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.”
 - Col. 3:17 - “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...”
 - Ecc. 9:10 - “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might...”

It's About Responsibility

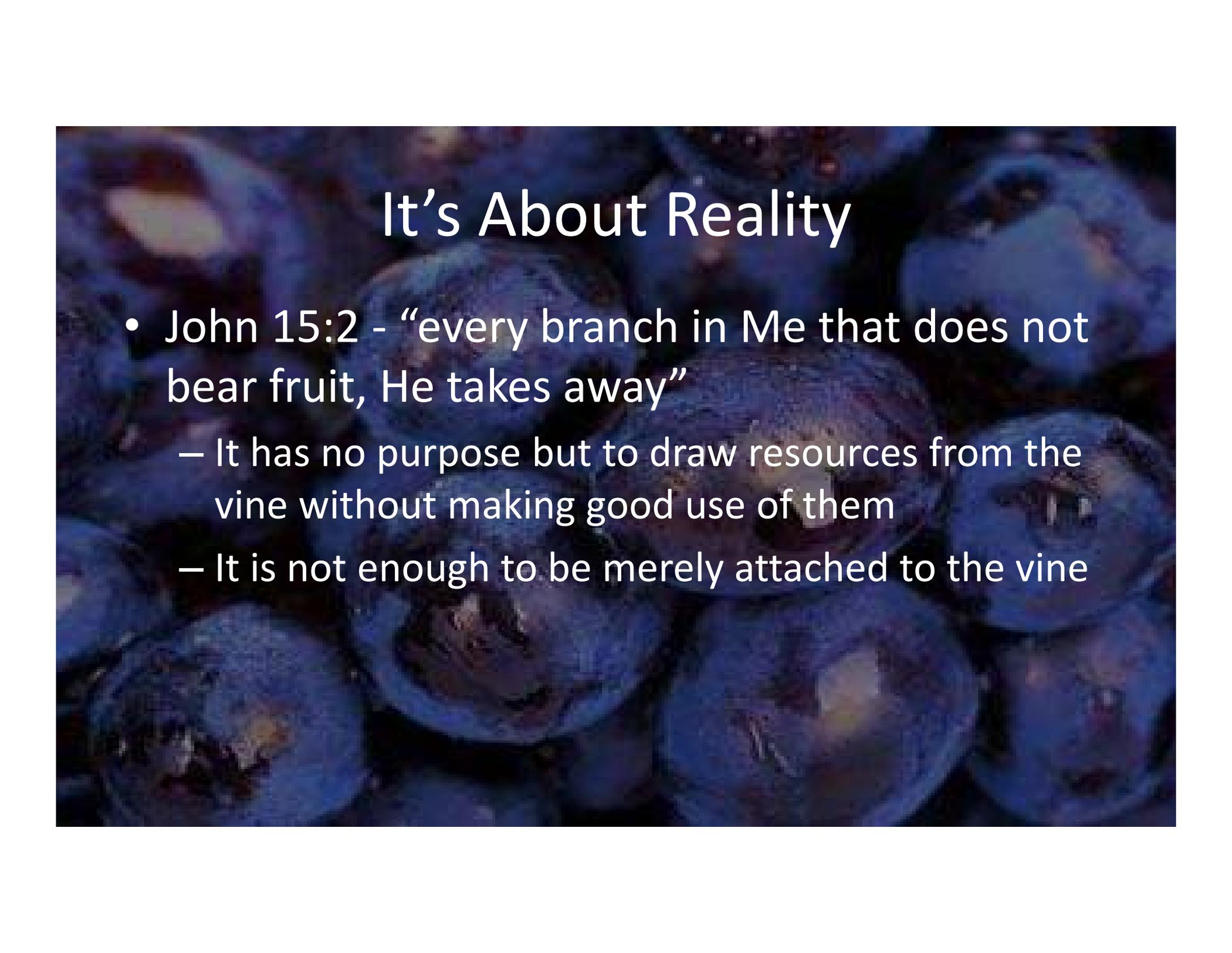
- Third, ask yourself: “What will glorify my God and Savior?”
 - 1Cor. 10:31 - “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
 - John 15:8 - “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

It's About Responsibility

- Fourth, trust God for the amount He will harvest
 - 1Cor. 3:6 - “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.”
 - 1Cor. 15:10 - “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”
 - 2Cor. 3:5 - “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God”

It's About Reality

- Not all branches bear fruit at the same level of productivity. God measures the fruit based on His determination of each branch's capacity.
- The branches do not measure themselves against other branches, either to exalt or abase themselves
 - 2Cor. 10:12 - "For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."



It's About Reality

- John 15:2 - “every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away”
 - It has no purpose but to draw resources from the vine without making good use of them
 - It is not enough to be merely attached to the vine

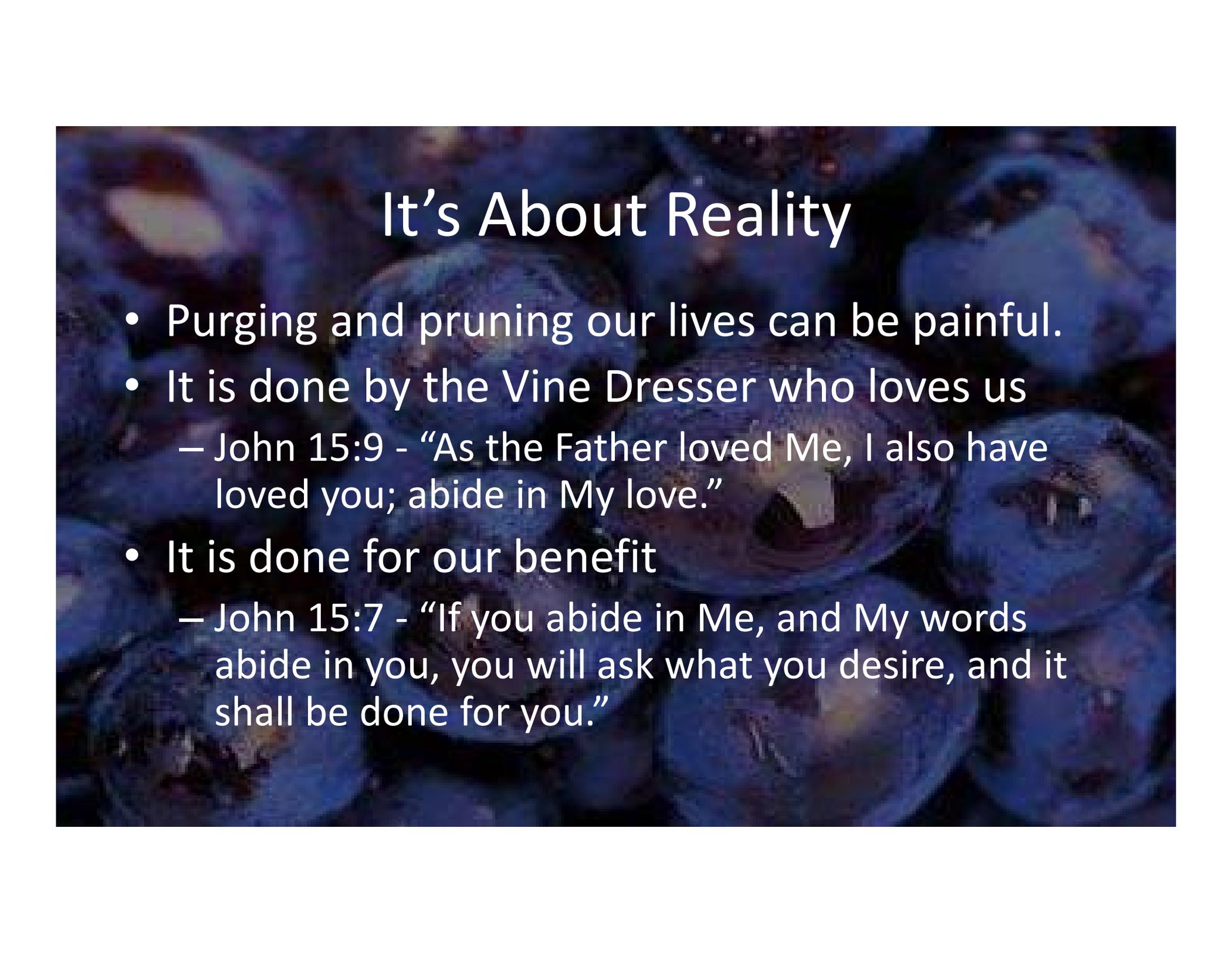
It's About Reality

- John 15:2 - “every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”
- When the Vine Dresser sees a branch that is producing fruit, He removes things from it that sap it vitality and takes up space that could be filled with fruit.
- There are things in our lives that can hamper our work in the Lord.
 - 2Tim. 2:4 - “No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.”



It's About Reality

- This is performed on every branch. No one is excluded
- It will never be enough to just produce fruit; we must prune our lives to produce more fruit



It's About Reality

- Purging and pruning our lives can be painful.
- It is done by the Vine Dresser who loves us
 - John 15:9 - “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.”
- It is done for our benefit
 - John 15:7 - “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”



It's About Reality

- Purging and pruning our lives can be painful.
- It is done to help ensure we remain in the vine
 - John 15:8 - “...that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples”
- It is done to glorify our Great God
 - John 15:8 - “By this My Father is glorified...”