



# *Harvest*

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WOMEN'S DISCIPLESHIP COMMUNITY  
NOVEMBER 2021



SHORELINE.CHURCH

# The Workers Are Few

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A harvest does not happen spontaneously. It begins with a farmer and a plan. The farmer does not hope his crop will grow and stand back to let the seeds fend for themselves. He does not drop the seeds mindlessly and trust they will find their way. A good farmer, one with intentions of harvest, stays with his seeds from before they are even planted until completion.

Throughout the Old Testament, we see imagery of God as the Gardener. He planted His vine, Israel, in prepared soil, tended to her roots, defended her from those who would wish to pluck her from her rightful place, and gave her time to flourish and be fruitful. God did all Israel needed Him to do to be fruitful and yet they chose to go against His plan. Slowly the vine withered and they lost their connection with their Vinedresser. They were left with no fruit, no harvest, no community with their God.

Centuries later God planted a new shoot, a perfect and obedient vine, His one and only son, Jesus. But we as humans are prone to wander into disobedience. We were given the great blessing of free will, but have a track record of using that free will to forsake our Creator and go our own way. But Jesus made a way for each of us to be forgiven and restored to Him - if only we accept the invitation He so graciously extends to each of us. We are independent branches that must choose to graft ourselves to Jesus by way of faith in Him. As long as we, the branches, stay connected to Him, we will produce fruit, be cared for by the most tender and loving Gardener, and will have a front-row view of a bountiful and eternal harvest.

This month we are diving into John 15 to learn about the fruit that is produced from the harvest of abiding in Jesus. If we follow in His words the promise is that we will bear fruit. And not just of the adequate variety but fruit worthy of the King's table.

## SPOTIFY PLAYLIST

Search our profile,  
ShorelineMonterey or the name of  
the playlist: "November 2021  
Women's Discipleship Community."

*Spotify's search bar is case-sensitive.  
Be sure to include proper  
capitalization and spacing!*

## PRAYER WALL

Post a prayer request and join us in  
praying for the women in our  
Women's Discipleship Community.  
This page will be private to just our  
group!

[www.shoreline.church/prayer-wall](http://www.shoreline.church/prayer-wall)

# The True Vine

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*I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.*  
John 15:1

The Old Testament depicts Israel as a vine planted intentionally by God. We have an abundance of references to this and of God's care and tenderness towards His vineyard. Look up the following passages in your Bible describing Israel as a vine.

**Hosea 10:1** - In your Bible, underline who is described as a "vine" in this verse.

**Psalms 80:8-11** - Note the verb used in verse eight. God got in the dirt. When His people cannot be fruitful where they are He will get dirty and get them where they can flourish.

**Jeremiah 2:21** - You better believe that when God was creating the line that would carry forth the Messiah to the world, it would begin from the best of seed. However, we can see from the end of the verse that even when God gives His best we will still fight against Him and wander away.

**Isaiah 27:2-6** - In your Bible, underline the type of care that God gives to His vineyard and notice how God's care is consistent and never-ending.

The vine of Israel was not perfect, it was flawed and at times seemed unusable. However, when we open our Bibles to Matthew 1 and read the genealogy of Jesus, we see that their vine, as tangled and messy as it could be, produced a Messiah that would fill the world with His redemptive love.

**John 15:1** - In your Bible or at the top of this page, underline who is described as the "True Vine."

When Jesus speaks that He is the True Vine, His disciples would have understood the reference to Israel. The words of the Old Testament passages describing Israel this way were imprinted on their hearts and minds; the words would have been as recognizable to them as the words of the famous tune, "Amazing Grace" are to us. In shocking contrast to Israel, Jesus is the True Vine that will never result in a fruitless harvest. Israel's vine deviated away from God time and time again. They put their hope and faith in themselves, their earthly government, and false gods made by human hands. Today, thousands of years removed from the Israelites in the desert, we are still drawn to the same waywardness. Jesus invites us to put our faith, hope, and trust in Him, and nothing else. He assures us that when we do, we will never be disappointed, but completely satisfied.

## REFLECT

Have you ever felt that you could not be used because you were too broken? Reflect on the truth that even though Israel was far from perfect, God still cared for them and used them as a way to bring His promise to the whole world.

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# The Necessity of Pruning

*He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.*

John 15:2

There are two types of branches. One that bears fruit and one that does not; the branches that do not bear fruit are drastically cut off so that they will not drain the strength of the whole. These branches are characterized by being good for nothing, as their wood is too soft for any purpose (John 15:5). This wood was not accepted at the Jewish Temple for altar fires, so the only thing that could be done with it was to burn and destroy it (John 15:6). The fruitful branches, in contrast, cannot produce the crop of which it is capable without severe pruning. Jesus and his disciples knew this. Nothing is more painful to the branch than pruning and nothing is more irresponsible for the vinedresser than avoiding it. Lack of pruning will subject the vine to overcrowding or "overcropping" which will slowly deteriorate the crop over time until it has withered and died away. With the fruitless branches pruned back, the plant can flourish even more gloriously, producing twice as much as it would have with the fruitless branches sucking its life and sustenance.

**Read Galatians 5:22-25.** When God does the gracious and loving act of pruning us and guiding us back to Him, our lives begin to produce fruit that reflects more of Him. In the space below, write the nine Fruit of the Spirit listed in this passage.

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## REFLECT

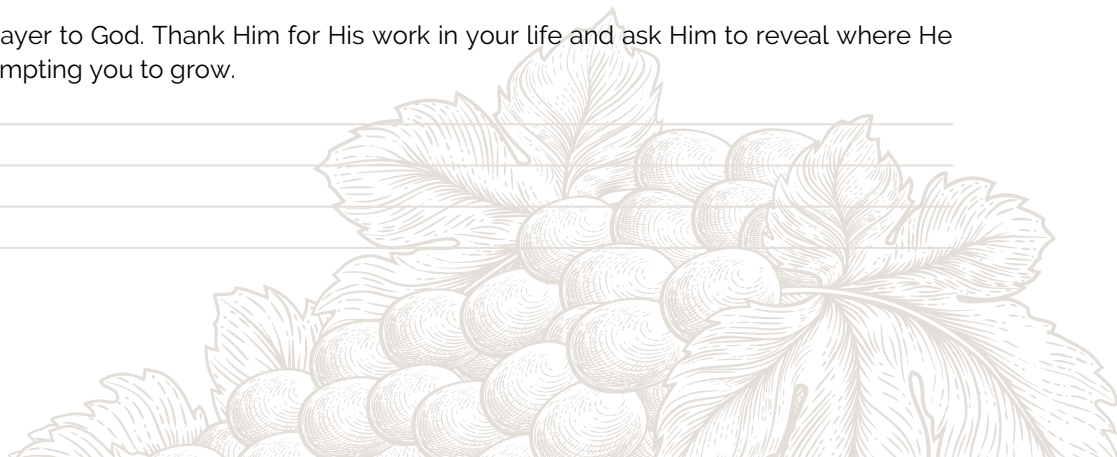
Reflect on the major areas of your life - marriage and family, local church, neighborhood, job or calling, hobbies, and social life. Where might God be pruning you and growing you to reflect more of His character? What areas of your life do you see an abundance of the Fruit of the Spirit? What areas of your life might you need to ask God to continue to do His work of pruning?

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## PRAY

In the space below, write a prayer to God. Thank Him for His work in your life and ask Him to reveal where He might be pruning you and prompting you to grow.

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# Made Clean In Christ

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*You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you*  
John 15:3

If you have ever tried to cover up your own sin, you know that it is never successful. No matter how much good we do, it is still there, just lingering. Even during the Old Testament times of animal sacrifice, the blood of the animal never took the sin away (Hebrews 10:4) - it was just a covering; a placeholder for the One who would remove the sin as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). We can work our entire lives to make ourselves worthy of God's salvation, sacrificing all we have for redemption. But in the end, it will not bring the end that He desires for us.

When Jesus spoke the words of John 15:3, "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you," He is declaring himself to have power that is completely unheard-of and foreign to the disciples. The high priests in the temple could have determined someone's sin status, but they had no power to make someone clean!

In ancient Judaism, striving for cleanliness was in every area of life. There were laws on how to wash hands and when, how to wash the body and when, how to wash and prepare food, who you can and cannot touch...the list goes on and on. The process of becoming "clean" after a time of impurity varied, but most included an act of washing oneself, giving a sacrifice or offering, or simply waiting a period of time. In these precious words that Jesus speaks to His disciples, He is declaring that they are made clean, not by their own doing, but by their presence with Him and their attention to His words and His direction.

Open your Bible and read **Romans 5:8**. Rewrite the words of this verse in the box below.

Jesus did not come to die for a clean world. He did not die for the righteous, but for the sinner, the dirty, the depraved, the lost, the weary. He does not want us to try to cover it up or make it go away. He wants us to bring it to Him and for Him to make us clean.

## REFLECT

How does Jesus' promise that you are cleansed by His words change the way you approach Him?

# Abide In Him

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*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.*

John 15:4

While the NIV translation uses the word "remain" other translations use the word "abide." "Remain" or "abide" is the verb form of the words "dwelling place." Jesus is using figurative language to explain where God's presence now dwells. He furthers His point in **John 14:23**, *Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.* In radical contrast to the presence of God residing only in the holiest of places in the Temple, Jesus now teaches that God makes His dwelling place in those who love and obey Him. Each believer will be indwelt by God continually as an individual temple for His presence.

Verse 4 emphasizes that, just as a branch cannot bear fruit unless it is attached to the vine, so too the disciples could not bear fruit unless they remain attached to Jesus. It would have been easy for the disciples to understand their relationship to Him in terms of loyalty and association with a popular teacher of His day. Following a respected Jewish rabbi brought a certain level of social status and honor. But if Jesus intended for the disciples to understand abiding to simply mean loyalty, utter dependence would not be required. Jesus meant for the disciples to understand abiding as beyond loyalty and pride of association with Him, but an unyielding dependence on Him alone. Today, we too can find ourselves wanting to live the Christian life simply because of the way it looks on the outside. The draw of being seen as a "good person" can be attractive without demanding too much effort on our part. However, the Christian life is not about being a "good person," but rather, abiding in Jesus.

## REFLECT

There are two perfect pictures of abiding found in the Old Testament - **Psalms 1** and **Jeremiah 17**. It seems as though the disciples had these pictures in mind:

*Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither - whatever they do prospers.*

Psalms 1:1-3

*But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.*

Jeremiah 17:7-8

## RESPOND

In the space below, reflect on the difference between living a Christian life for how it looks on the outside, versus abiding in Jesus like a tree planted by streams of water as depicted in the passages above.



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# Preparing the Table

*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. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.*

John 15:5-6

## REVIEW

Read and review Jesus' words in verses 5 and 6 above. Write the verse in your own words in a journal or in the margins of your Bible.

One of the most rewarding parts of a harvest is being able to share it with others! A large portion of abiding in Christ is experiencing the joy the community of fellow believers. We can not share God's blessings in our lives if we only set a place for one at our harvest table. This month, take the challenge to break bread with someone new. Whether that's hosting a dinner or sharing tea with someone, find fellowship with others. Be intentional about the space you prepare for them. Pay attention to the environment you are inviting them into - is it warm and inviting? Does it have the feeling that you prepared and prepped for their arrival? Something as simple as lighting a candle or set the table you will sit at shows the other person you expected and prepared for their arrival.

As we prepare to host others in our spaces, consider how our Heavenly Father is preparing a place for us as we eagerly await His return. **Read John 14:2-4** and reflect on Jesus' words in these verses.

## PRACTICE

As you prepare to host people around your table, try this easy DIY fall napkin ring! Perfect for your Thanksgiving table or any cozy fall dinner at home.



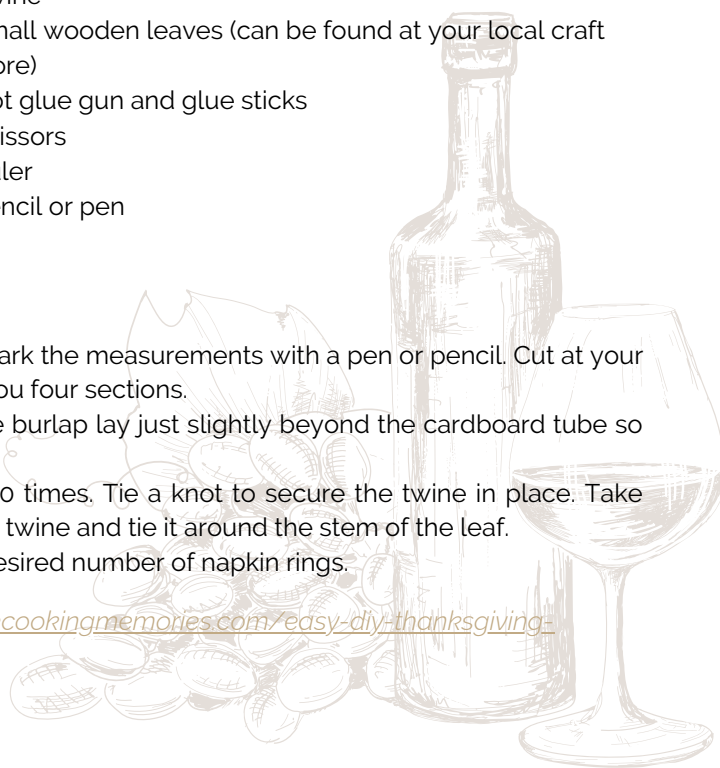
### Supplies:

- 1 cardboard paper towel tube
- 3" burlap ribbon (can be found at Dollar Tree)
- Twine
- Small wooden leaves (can be found at your local craft store)
- Hot glue gun and glue sticks
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Pencil or pen

### Directions:

1. Measure your paper roll into 2.75" increments and mark the measurements with a pen or pencil. Cut at your markings - your one paper towel tube should give you four sections.
2. Wrap burlap around the paper tube twice. Place the burlap lay just slightly beyond the cardboard tube so it will not show. Secure burlap in place with hot glue.
3. Wrap twine around each piece of burlap about 6-10 times. Tie a knot to secure the twine in place. Take one of your wood leaves and place the leaf onto the twine and tie it around the stem of the leaf.
4. Continue repeating these steps until you have the desired number of napkin rings.

For more directions and helpful pictures, visit [www.homecookingmemories.com/easy-diy-thanksgiving-napkin-rings-tutorial](http://www.homecookingmemories.com/easy-diy-thanksgiving-napkin-rings-tutorial).





# His Will Be Done

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*If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*

John 15:7

To those who abide in Jesus, He gives the privilege of making requests and for those requests to be answered. This promise is repeated throughout the Gospels (John 14:13-15, John 15:16, John 16:23, Matthew 7:7-8, Matthew 18:19, and Mark 11:24). These promises were not a formula for successful prayer, but instead, a continuation of Jesus' teaching on how to pray. In **Matthew 6**, Jesus outlines for the disciples the way to pray as He does. Not that they would repeat His exact words, but that they position their hearts to long for God's kingdom to come and for His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. The more we abide in Jesus, the more His desires become our own. We find that our prayers become less centered around our selfish desires, and more on God's desires for the world. We begin to set ourselves aside and learn to become more like Him.

*This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."*

Matthew 6:9-13

## REFLECT

Read Jesus' instructions above on how to pray. What does it mean to you to pray that His kingdom come and that His will be done? How does this change your thinking about what Jesus means by "ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you" found in John 15:7?

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Jesus' disciples must deny their own selfish desires and develop a heart that longs for what He longs and pray in such a way that reflects His own. In the Garden of Gethsemane, before Jesus was led to the cross to be crucified, He draws away from His disciples and seeks the Father. Even in His darkest hour, Jesus utters these words found in **Matthew 26:39**, "Not as I will but what you will."

## REFLECT

Dwell on this image of Jesus in the garden surrendering to the Father's will - even when that will involved Him facing a terribly gruesome death on a Roman cross. What is one area of your life that you might need to surrender control so that God's plan and purpose will be accomplished?

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# Disciples of the Vine



*This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*  
John 15:8

As branches, we are responsible for holding fast to the vine, the source of everything we could possibly need. No vinedresser curses a branch on the ground for not bearing fruit, it is simply put aside as waste. The branch gets no glory for the fruit, yet but the branches get to experience the joy on the Harvester's face when the fruit is ready.

**Read 1 Peter 4:11** (in the NIV translation) and fill in the blanks below:

If anyone \_\_\_\_\_, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of \_\_\_\_\_ . If anyone \_\_\_\_\_, they should do so with the \_\_\_\_\_ God provides, so that in \_\_\_\_\_ God may be \_\_\_\_\_ through Jesus Christ. To him be the \_\_\_\_\_ and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

In other translations the word "praised" used in the NIV is translated as "glorified." As Christians we are to strive to glorify God in all things; in every relationship, every act of service, every day of work, every discussion with our spouse, in all things. This seems like a pretty daunting challenge. How are we, imperfect humans, meant to glorify God in all things? The same way we're meant to produce fruit: by abiding in Jesus, living with him and leaning in on Him in all things.

## REFLECT

What comes to mind when you read 1 Peter 4:11? Is there an area of your life that you need to experience growth in order to bring glory to God?

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During the monotony of everyday life it can be a struggle to remember what it means to live like Jesus in every moment. Be encouraged by these words of Jesus:

*'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*

Matthew 22:37-39

These two commands brilliantly encompass all the teachings of scripture. If we love God with everything we will be able to hear His callings and follow Him. If we love others how we love ourselves we will show God's love in pure and real ways. When we follow these two commands we will live our lives in a way that brings glory to God and shows us to be disciples to Him and everyone around us.

# More Resources

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Interested in going deeper? Here are a few resources to help you continue to reflect on what it means to abide in Jesus. The Bible study resources from RightNow Media require an account to access. Set up your free account courtesy of Shoreline Church at [www.shoreline.church/rightnow-media](http://www.shoreline.church/rightnow-media).

## BOOKS, DEVOTIONALS, & COMMENTARIES

*Chasing Vines: Finding Your Way to an Immensely Fruitful Life* by Beth Moore

*Promises for a Fruitful Life* by Beth Moore

*Made to Flourish: Cultivating an Abundant Life* by Beth Moore

*Abiding in Christ: A Classic Devotional Edited for Today's Reader* by Andrew Murray

*The Gospel According to John: The Pillar New Testament Commentary* by D.A. Carson

## BIBLE STUDIES

*Chasing Vines: Finding Your Way to an Immensely Fruitful Life* by Beth Moore on [Lifeway.com](http://Lifeway.com).

*TruthFilled: The Practice of Preaching to Yourself in Every Season* by Ruth Chou Simons on [Lifeway.com](http://Lifeway.com).

*The Power of Knowing God* by Tony Evans on [RightNowMedia.org](http://RightNowMedia.org).

*Rooted in the Word: A Tool for Studying the Bible* by IF:Gathering on [RightNowMedia.org](http://RightNowMedia.org)

## SERMONS & PODCASTS

"[Episode 4: Staying Close to God with Beth Moore](#)" *Made for This Podcast* with Jennie Allen, 2020.

"[Episode 202: Beth Moore](#)" *That Sounds Fun Podcast* with Annie F. Downs, 2020.

"[Abide in Jesus](#)" *Crazy Love Ministries* with Francis Chan, 2014.

