

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

New Testament Lesson #181

Jesus and the disciples have now left the upper room (John 14:31) and have begun heading towards the Garden of Gethsemane on the slopes of the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26). Jesus is preparing his disciples for the time he was going to be absent from them. He gave them comforting words in John 14, and now Jesus turns his attention to teaching his disciples about bearing fruit.

To help them understand this point, Jesus draws upon an example from nature. Jesus tells them that “I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener” (John 15:1). Since his Father is the gardener, he has the responsibility to prune or clean the plants. This means that the branches that are not producing fruit are to be cut off from the plant.

What did this mean as it relates to his disciples? Jesus goes on to tell them that “I am the vine; you are the branches” (v. 5). He says, “Remain in me, and I will 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” (v. 4).

Jesus knows that once he is gone, the disciples will need help to continue living in faith. The key to their success is dependent upon living according to what Jesus had taught them. If they do that, if they abide in his teachings (words), then they will produce fruit. This means they will accomplish many things for their Heavenly Father and bring glory to Him. Jesus said: “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples” (vv. 7-8).

One of the key items they needed to remember was that they needed to love one another. This was an important commandment Jesus had given them. He says, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command” (vv. 12-14).

Jesus considered them his friends. What a comforting thing to hear Jesus say. He didn’t look at his disciples as servants, because he had taught them everything he had learned from his Father. Now, Jesus has “chose you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last” (v. 16). The disciples were going to have to continue on without Jesus, laboring in the things of God. If they loved one another, and obeyed Jesus commands, then they would accomplish great things on behalf of God.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Psalm 80:8-11 describes God’s work with the nation of Israel. He brought them out of Egypt and planted them as a vine that He nourished. It grew and filled the land of Israel. See also Isaiah 5:1-7.
- Jeremiah 2:21 says how God had planted the nation of Israel as a very good vine, of the choicest stock. However, they did not remain in the things that God had taught them. They did not obey the commands of God, and as a result, God was going to have to prune them and cleanse the vine He had planted.
- When Jesus described the greatest love someone can have is to “lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13), he was referring to his upcoming death. It was a death that was freely given for the benefit of his disciples and all that would believe in his name.

ANSWER KEY:

4, 6, 7, 10, 13

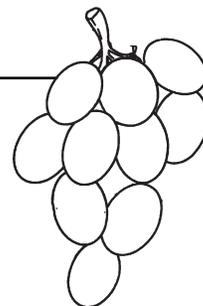
“Apart from me you can do nothing.”

Love each other as I have loved you.

Jesus is the Vine, you are the branches.

Place a checkmark (✓) by each number that describes a fruitful Christian.
Find the sum of the remaining numbers. Your answer should be 40.

- | | | |
|--|---|-----------|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Cleansed by God's Word | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Loving others | _____ |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Bearing much fruit | 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Cut off or pruned away | _____ |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Remaining in Christ the Vine | 11. <input type="checkbox"/> Glorifying God | _____ |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Bearing no fruit | 12. <input type="checkbox"/> Effectively praying | _____ |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Behaving like a disciple | 13. <input type="checkbox"/> Thrown into the fire | _____ |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Doing nothing successfully | 14. <input type="checkbox"/> Remaining in Christ's love | + _____ |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Withering up | 15. <input type="checkbox"/> Experiencing joy in Christ | 40 |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Obeying Christ's commands | | |



To find what Jesus told His disciples, fill each blank with the letter on the chart that matches the word that is given.

	ar	at	ad	all
b	A	C	D	E
c	F	G	H	I
f	M	N	O	P
m	R	T	U	Y

“A _____
bar fall bar mar mat car mar fad far far ball mall fad mad
_____”
bat bar fat bad fad fat fad mat cad call fat cat

Find Jesus' commandment to His disciples. Starting at the arrow, travel to adjoining boxes – either directly above, below or diagonally. Letters may be used more than one time.



U	X	T	I	X
L	O	H	C	S
Y	A	V	E	A
D	E	O	L	R

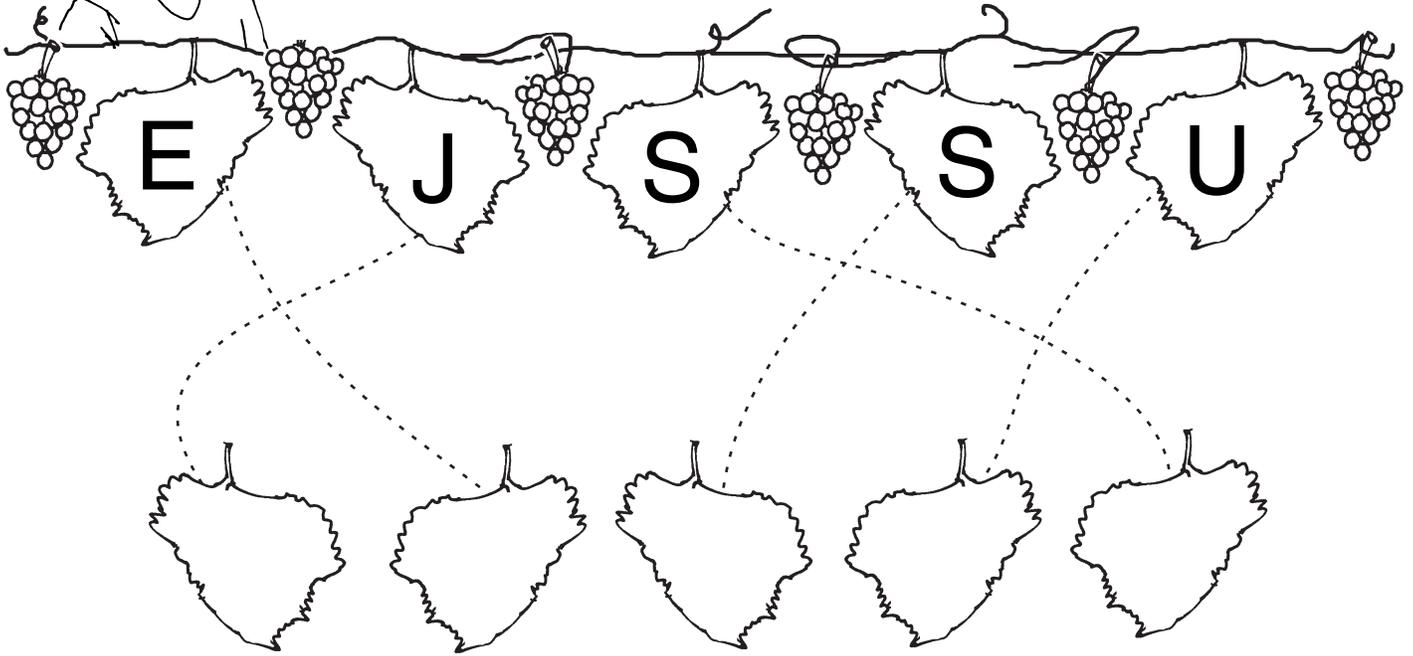
L _____ E _____

Name _____

God is the vinedresser. Jesus is the Vine.

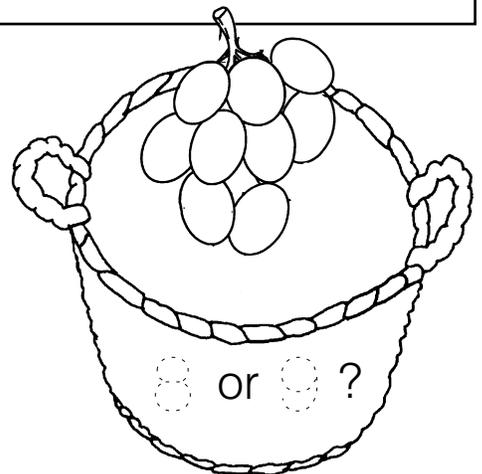
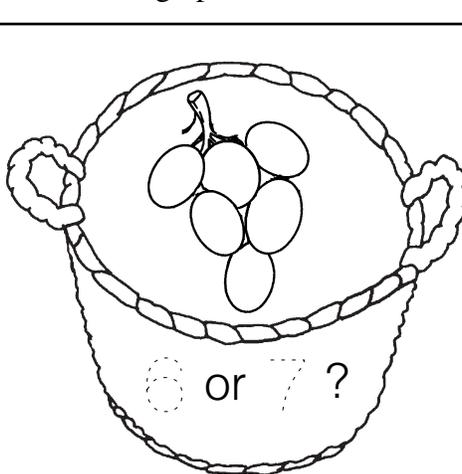
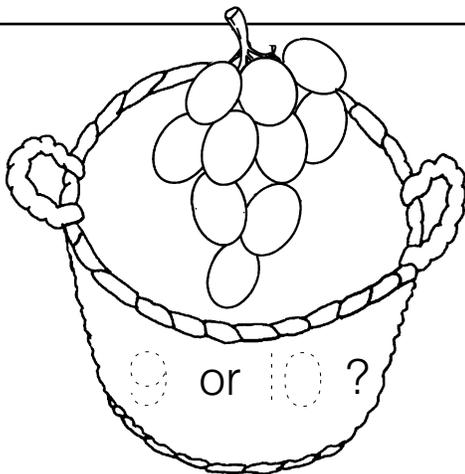


Trace the lines and copy the letters.



We are the branches of the vine. How much fruit will we make?

Count the grapes in each basket.



Name _____