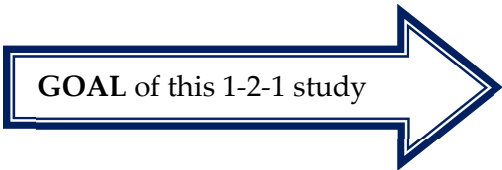


Summary Sheet for John 15v1-17

...to accompany Notes 29



GOAL of this 1-2-1 study

Keep connected to Jesus - by absorbing and acting on his words and particularly loving other believers – and you will live fruitful lives to the glory of God

Context – how does this passage fit in?

Since John 13.31 Jesus has been teaching his disciples about how they should live in light of his death and departure while they wait for his return. Until now, Jesus has been answering his disciples' questions and focussing on how he will provide for them even though they will be separated (13v33). Now in ch15-17 he focuses on preparing them for what it means for them to keep on fulfilling their role as his disciples bringing glory to God in the world in his absence (13v34-35). (An issue that has been running subtly through the Gospel until now - *John 4:35-38; 12.24-26; 13:16, 34-35 & 14:12, 22*)

The first step (15:1-17) is to make sure they stay connected to him – God's means of bearing fruit in the world.

Impact on us

Do we want to live an effective, productive life for God? Jesus wonderfully promises we can if we remain connected to him. This happens as we hold fast firmly to Jesus's words, pray in line with them, and put them into practice - particularly through loving other disciples of Jesus. As we do these, Jesus promises that we will know true joy, have a lasting effect on the world around us, and God will be glorified through us!! Do we realise just how important and wonderful this is? Are we shaping our daily lives around the truths of this passage?

How John writes to make his point

The vine image is brilliant as it was a key metaphor for God's people in the OT and also because it emphasises the close knit, relational connection we must have with Jesus if we are to bear fruit. Jesus is the true vine – the Son of God who loves and serves God perfectly (unlike Israel or anyone else). He is the source of life, relationship to God, and the means of reaching the world. Jesus continues the exclusive claims about his vital role that was a theme of ch14. We as the branches are utterly redundant unless we remain firmly attached to him. He abides in us through his word (v7) and we abide in him through doing his word (v9-17). Jesus is not saying 'bear fruit and you'll be my disciples' but wonderfully 'focus on simply listening to, obeying and praying my word and you will definitely bear fruit – you'll be joyful, loving and will impact the world for God's glory'. V16 helps us see that this fruit isn't insular or contained but rather Jesus has 'appointed' his disciples to 'go' and bear fruit that will 'abide' ie ultimately help bring other people that will also be connected to the vine – *people who will also be obeying, loving, praying, living glorifying lives like Jesus.*

Structure

15:1-2 **Jesus is the true fruit-bearing vine**

15:3-8 **The vine image – consequences of being and not being connected to the vine.** To produce God glorifying fruit, it is essential we remain connected to Jesus. Those who don't will be fruitless and be cut-off. We enter the vine and Jesus remains in us through his word.

15: 9-17 **The vine image explained – what it means to abide and be fruitful.** We remain in Jesus and his love by obeying his words, especially to love other believers. As we do so, we will have joy, pray in line with his will and be his fruit bearing 'friends' in the world (Others will come into the vine through the word).

John's references to the Old Testament and why they matter

- The vine

God's chosen people were often described as a vine (eg Psalm 80:8-19, Isaiah 5:1-7). In each case the people are seen as a fruitless & unfaithful people, & their descriptions are accompanied by warnings of judgment and exclusion from God's kingdom.

However, in Psalm 80:17-18 and Isaiah 27:2-6 the writers look forward to a future day when the vine will be fruitful, & Psalm 80 hints at a future 'son of man' who will be the true Israel. Jesus is true Israel, the fruitful vine, come to enable his disciples to serve God in a way that brings him glory. (see also Isaiah 61.7-11)

Some questions to help guide someone else through ch 15vs1-17

Opener: If you were to ask your friends and colleagues for advice on how to live an effective and productive life, what might they say?

Considering the text1: In vs1-2 what is Jesus a) claiming about himself and b) saying the Father wants in the world?

OT Sharpener: How do Old Testament references to 'the vine' (eg. Psalm 80: 7-19, Isaiah 5:3-7 & Isaiah 27: 6) help sharpen our understanding of what Jesus is claiming for himself and what the Father wants?

Considering the text2: In vs3-6, what does Jesus teach about what needs to happen if we want to be 'fruitful' for God? What promises does he give us (vs3, 5)? What is the warning (v6)?

Considering the text3: How does v7 help us see how Jesus abides in us? What will be the result (v7b&8)?

Considering the text4: What are the various things that 'abiding in Jesus' and being 'fruitful' will involve (vs9-17)?

One to keep chewing on: If Christians want to impact the world for God, what should they focus on according to this passage?

How does Jesus' description of being a disciple compare with our current priorities, plans and behaviour?