

DAILY BIBLE STUDY SHEET

As the people of God we should be committed to reading Scripture every day. Here are daily readings and questions to help prompt your meditation. If you do not have a Bible, please contact the church office and we would be honored to provide one. To locate the passages, use the Table of Contents to find the page number of the book. The number before the colon will tell you the chapter to find. The numbers after the colon are the superscript numbers in your Bible indicating the verses to read.

Monday, February 15th – Joel 1:10, 3:9-18; Amos 9:13; Ecclesiastes 9:7; Deut. 28:39, 51;
Lamentations 1:15

We begin our Lenten Journey with Jesus' declaration, "I Am the True Vine." The use of the vine metaphor was not new. It had been used in the Old Testament as both a blessing, when Israel was in covenant with God, and a curse when they broke the covenant as a symbol of judgment and discipline. In Joel, we see it used both ways – an example of the result of discipline and blessing. As you read Amos, what is the judgment incurred? The fruit we see in Ecclesiastes is a blessing. If you read all of chapter 28 of Deuteronomy, you will see blessings and curses. And Jeremiah moans in Lamentations that God has tread on the people like a wine press—a most definite judgment! Now consider what Jesus says about the fruit in John 15. How do you see blessings, curses and judgments which echo the Old Testament? What is different from the Old Testament? Pray for God's wisdom this week so you may bear fruit, not be bare of fruit.

Tuesday, February 16th – John 15:1-4

Today we begin our journey through John 15. Jesus quickly cuts to the point in this passage. If you do not bear fruit you will be cut off from the tree. We will cover what fruit we are to bear on Friday. The fruit must be obvious and God will see it. If God does not see you bearing fruit, what happens? Note in verse 2 that not only do the fruitless branches get cut, but the branches which bear fruit are also cut (pruned). Pruning hurts! It takes away a piece of our life. It brings about or forces change. What else does it do according to this passage? As you go to verse 4, what is the only way to bear fruit? How does this tie in with verse 3? Who is the Word? How do we stay connected to the vine (the Word)? How does trying to do God's work on our own keep us busy, but fruitless? Where is your fruit? Have you had any fruit lately? If not, why not? Where do you think God is trying to prune you? Where do you resist him? How does it feel that you might not get pruned, but instead get cut off, because you bear no fruit? Finally, if you are not bearing fruit, what might that say about your attachment to the true vine, Jesus? Consider today where you are in this process. Are you bearing fruit? Are you being pruned? Are you at risk of being cut off? Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and open your eyes.

Wednesday, February 17th – John 15:5-8

Let's begin today with verse 8. What are the two things that bearing fruit does? Do you think these two things are important? Now go back to verses 5-7 and read them again. What does Jesus say is the only way to accomplish the two things in verse 8? Consider a real plant. When the vine branches begin to turn yellow or brown and fail to produce grapes, do we not cut those branches off? We might even say that those branches are dead. Only when the branches are connected in a healthy way to the main vine trunk can it continue to get what it needs to survive. When we disconnect from him or break the connection, like a branch that is broken, then we will not bear fruit. In fact Jesus says "Apart from me you can do NOTHING!" We may be busy doing a lot of things, but are we bearing fruit? How does being attached to Jesus give us the ability to do what is right? Again consider the grapevine. The branches all branch off the main vine, which is in the center. This means that everything must flow from the center—it must flow from Jesus to bear fruit. Consider what things in you flow from Jesus and what things fail. Perhaps this is where some pruning needs to take place, before the whole life dies and gets cut off. Pray asking for help in this today.

Thursday, February 18th – John 15:9-17

As we read the end of the vine passage, Jesus takes a turn before returning to fruit bearing. The four major things Jesus talks about are: 1) abiding in God's love; 2) obedience to the commandments out of love for God; 3) joy that comes from Jesus, because we did 1 and 2; and finally, 4) being the chosen friends of Jesus who love one another. This is how we stay connected to Jesus the vine. As you read about each of these four things, consider how failing to have just one of these could be the break in our branch that leads to us being fruitless. How are we Jesus' friends (verse 13)? What's the difference between a friend and a servant? What is one of the fruits we should bear, because of these four things (verse 17)? Are you a fruit-bearer in this sense? Spend time in prayer today asking God to show you in your heart where you may need to be more loving to others.

Friday, February 19th – Romans 1:11-16; 6:20-23; 15:25-28; Galatians 5:22-24; Colossians 1:9-10

We finish this week by looking at the various kinds of fruit we are to bear. As you read through these passages, discern what type of fruit God wants you to bear. Which passages describe new personal character? Which passage points to bringing someone to saving grace in Jesus? Which encourages a deeper faith in new believers? Which of these passages points to the fruit of generosity and material care for the needy? Which passage talks of our good works being the fruit of our walking with God? Which one points to the fruit (result or advantage/disadvantage) of sin and of freedom from sin? We see that there are different kinds of fruit for disciples to possess and bear. We are to be those who bring people to the Jesus, care for the needs of others, respond with good works because of the grace we experience in Jesus, and experience personal transformation. Where is there a lack of fruit in your life? Could it be because you are not completely connected to the vine? Spend some quiet time with Jesus, letting him convict your heart of where you need to be better connected. Ask him to fix this for you. Know that Jesus wants to do this for you.

Saturday, February 20th – *To prepare for tomorrow's worship, please read John 10:1-10*