

Growing the Vine

Rev. J.E. Rose

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:1-5)



Stage 1 Discipleship: Spiritual Conversion

- All Christians begin at this stage
- Abide in the vine – “abide” literally describes “live in”
- Natural vs. spiritual life – “you must be born again” (John 3)
- Life in the Spirit – “without me you can do nothing” and the Three-in-one God (John 12-17)
- Discipleship Priority: insist on evidences of conversion

Stage 2 Discipleship: Spiritual Correction

- Many get stuck in this stage because of besetting sin patterns (Hebrews 12:1)
- Lift up the vine - “airo” literally means “lift up.” Supported by John’s use elsewhere.
 - “Airo” your bed and walk (John 5:8)
 - Jews “airo” stones to hurl at Jesus (8:59)
 - Jesus “airo” his eyes to heaven (11:41)
- Natural vs. spiritual fruit – personality vs. godliness
- The fruit of the Spirit– “I warn you...” Galatians 5:19-24
- Discipleship Priority: necessity of corrective discipline in discipleship

Stage 3 Discipleship: Spiritual Calling

- Few Christians get to this stage, growing reliance on “professionals” to do the work
- Prune the vine – “kathairo” (purges) – death to self and the role of narcissistic shame
- Natural vs. spiritual ability – self-reliant talent vs. power in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9)
- The gifts of the Spirit – 1 Corinthians 12:1-4 PNEUMATIKOS (origin) CHARISMATA (function)
- Discipleship Priorities: Redefining “calling” in ministry – not profession but supernatural strength evident in suffering and weakness. This is when genuine “spiritual gifts” are evident.

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