




Gracestoration
Update
"Restoring People in God's Grace and Making Disciples"

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Jesus, The True Vine—
The Christian's Functional Life Source

God the Father in His Sovereignty has provided a way for all of humanity to be in relationship with Him. This is accomplished through the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross on our behalf. Wonderful!!! How awesome it is that we sinners can be in relationship with our Creator.

Andrew Murray in *Abide in Christ* points out that if this wonderful salvation is where we stop, we are missing out on the incredible relationship that is our destiny and God's design for all believers. He writes, "While trusting in their Savior for pardon and help, and seeking to some extent to obey Him, they have hardly realized to what closeness of union, to what intimacy of fellowship, to what wondrous oneness of life and interest, He invited when He said, "Abide in Me'."

Jesus in John 15 pictures this abiding in Him to a grapevine. He tells us that He is the vine, we are the branches, and God the Father is the vinedresser. This metaphor describes the intimate relationship God designed between God the Father, Jesus Christ and Christians here on earth. The relationship of the vine and a branch is a very intimate one. The branch bears (holds/supports) the fruit, but neither the branch nor the fruit would exist if it were not attached to the vine.

Jesus, the True Vine says to the Christian (branch), "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (Jn. 15:4-5).

A grape branch is designed to be attached to or abide in the vine for support and nourishment. The grapevine is the **functional life source** of the

branch, which in the process of time produces the luscious fruit.

Jesus states the need for the Christian to abide in Him. "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing" (vs. 5).

When God created man it was His design and purpose for mankind to be in relationship with Him as his/her **functional life source**. This was demonstrated in the beginning as God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden -- a perfect environment where all of their needs were met. God walked with both of them, daily demonstrating His creative desire for mutual relationship.

Since Adam and Eve's sin and expulsion from the Garden, God has sought to restore His creative design for relationship with mankind. Jesus' incarnation, death and resurrection paid the perfect price for sin reconciling us back to God. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them..." (2 Cor. 5:19).

Jesus also came to dwell within the believer to complete God's original design for relationship by becoming the Christian's **functional life source**.

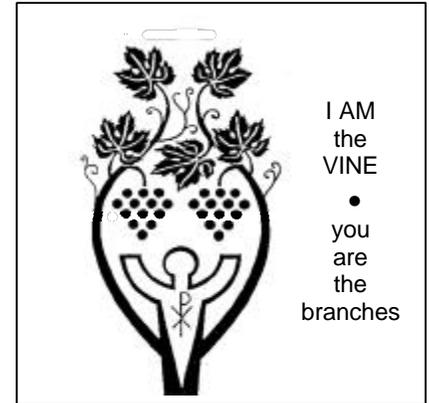
"If Christ, the heavenly Vine, has taken the believer as a branch, then He has pledged himself, in the very nature of things, to supply sap and spirit and nourishment to make it bring forth fruit." (Andrew Murray in *The True Vine*.)

Jesus Christ is our **functional life source** for everything that we need for daily life, work and service.

"No branch has any life in itself, only the Vine does. A branch must draw life from the Vine, for without Him nothing will ultimately satisfy." (Wayne Jacobsen, *In My Father's Vineyard*.)

In order to enjoy God's design for the abiding relationship with Christ, the

Christian needs to recognize that being separated from Jesus is like a fruitless, withering branch separated from the **functional life source** of the vine.



Once having realized God's provision of abiding and nourishment, the believer may entrust his/her life to Jesus Christ actively drawing on His **functional life source**. **Jesus' Life** in the Christian is designed to be actively dynamic, not passively static. The believer needs only to abide (actively resting) in Him.

Jesus Christ is responsible for fruitfulness as well as life itself. The believer (branch) is fruitful, not as a result of him/herself, but as a result of abiding in Jesus, the True Vine. ★

Our New Web Site

We now have a new working web site www.shepherdinggrace.org. The site contains helpful information about CUPbearers, Gracestoration and our Shepherding Grace ministry. The available **Resources** section is still under construction, but soon you will be able to order our discipling materials via the site.

Please check out the site and tell us what you think of it in the **Feedback** section. We would like to hear from you.

