

Marks of a True Follower of Jesus

John 15:1-8

If you are truly a follower of Jesus, you will soon learn that there are qualities or characteristics that would identify you as one. There are things you do and choose not to do that would show others whether you are a disciple of Jesus or not. ***It's very easy to identify followers of Jesus in the New Testament time.***

They are the *ones who strive to work on their relationship with Jesus*. They are the ones who show Jesus they love him by keeping his commands. They show the world they are truly followers of Jesus in their loving each other. Scripture tells us that followers of Jesus are those who are devoted to the teaching of God's word; committed to being in fellowship or connection with other believers and devoted to prayer. **(Acts 2:42)**

IN John 15 Jesus gives us another illustration through the metaphor of the vine and the branches.

John 15:1-8

True followers of Jesus remain in him (Abide in him). Jesus is the vine, his followers are the branches. **Fruit-bearing branches that are pruned by God the Gardener.** Fruitless branches are cut down and burned; they are those who are not true followers of Jesus.

Jesus calls his people to remain in him (v.4) **"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."** **Why should you abide in Jesus?**

Followers of Jesus are to produce fruit. (this fruit comes as a result of being attached to the vine. V.4) A branch cannot bear fruit by itself. Jesus said that apart from him we can do nothing. It's only by being attached to Jesus that we can produce fruit.

V.5 I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ESV

Those who don't remain in Jesus can't produce fruit. They are is thrown away to be burned (v.2 God cuts off fruitless branches. V.6)

True followers of Jesus abide in him and his word (v.7) God uses his word to prune us, so we can produce more fruit. (v.2-3)

John 8:31-32 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, **"If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."**

John 15:7 Jesus gives a promise to those who remain in him and his word. He said ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. What is the condition for God to give you whatever you ask in Jesus' name? To remain in him and his word.

Why should God answer our prayers if we are detached from him and his words?

True followers of Jesus bear fruit. It's one of those marks of a true follower. **(v.8)** God is exalted or glorified by the fruit produced by Christ's followers.

This concept of producing fruit is well known in Scripture. The good soil produced a crop in the parable of the soil. **Matt.13:23**

Matt.7:13-19 Jesus' warning about false prophet. There are good fruit and bad fruit. Here every tree that bears bad fruit is cut down (v.19) The idea the a tree is recognized by its fruit.

Matt.3:8// Luke 3:8 John the Baptist challenged the people to bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

True Christians bear fruit. Here are example of the fruit we are talking about. Paul calls this living by the Spirit when we produce this fruit. **Gal.5:22 Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.** When the world displays hate, followers of Jesus show love. When others display despair and hostility, Christ's followers display peace, patience, kindness. When others display evil, you show goodness. You repay evil with good. When others are unfaithful, you show faithfulness; you display gentleness and self-control in dealing with others. These are the fruit followers of Jesus are to produce.

A little boy went over to a pastor's house, where the pastor was doing some carpentry in his garage. The boy simply stood there and watched him for quite a long time. The preacher wondered why this boy was watching him and was finally so curious that he stopped and said, "Son, are you trying to pick up some pointers on how to build something?"

The little boy replied, "No. I am just waiting to hear what a preacher says when he hits his thumb with a hammer.

People will see the type of fruit you are producing; it will either be bad or good. In order to produce good fruit we must remain attached to Jesus and his teachings found in his word. Bearing good fruit is really not complicated; it is the natural progression or movement of anyone who remains in Jesus and his word because only those who remain in him produce fruit and bring glory to God by doing so.