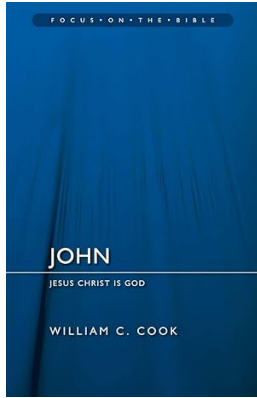


John 15 - Talking Points

This year, we will be memorizing John 15. You can [view the text in the ESV translation here](#). These talking points will hopefully help in discussing the verses at home with your students.



I highly recommend this commentary on John by William Cook. Many of the explanations below are paraphrases from this commentary. ([Buy on Amazon](#))

I hope this resource enriches your family's study of John 15 this year.

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General Overview

- The book of John is the Apostle John's account of the life and ministry of Jesus.
 - The emphasis of John's Gospel is showing that Jesus is God.
 - *John 20: 30-31 "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name."*
 - John is a book that is both rich in content for both discipleship and evangelism.
- John 15
 - Jesus is speaking to his disciples before he goes to the Garden of Gethsemane and is arrested. There are two main themes in this chapter.
 - Abiding in Christ (John 15:1-17)
 - The World's hate for the followers of Christ (John 15:18-27)

Year-Long Points

1. To abide in Jesus means to have a personal relationship with Him.

2. A true relationship with Christ should be evident by the fruit of that relationship.
 3. The world hated and rejected Jesus and we should not be surprised when his followers experience the same.
 4. The world is guilty when they reject God.
 5. The Christian is not alone when the world rejects them as the Holy Spirit is promised to be sent as the Helper.
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Verse-by-Verse Breakdown and Talking Points

John 15:1-2

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every 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.”

- Jesus stating “I am” calls back to the name God gives in response to Moses when he asks God who he should tell the Israelites is sending him to rescue them from Egypt in Exodus 3:13-14
 - The “I am” statement is Jesus referring to Himself as God.
- In the Old testament, Israel, the people of God, are often referred to using vine imagery. (psalm 80 and Isaiah 5:1-7 are great examples)
 - Israel is the vine that God chose and planted, but did not bear fruit. Instead it rebelled and bore wild and rebellious fruit.
 - Jesus declaring himself as the “true vine” is him stating that he is going to succeed where the vine of Israel has failed.
- “Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away.”
 - This is indicating that there are those who claim to follow Christ but do not actually abide in Christ as shown by the lack of fruit in their lives.
 - Seeing that Judas will betray Jesus later that night this is a very timely statement for Jesus to make to his disciples. One who claimed to be a follower was never truly a follower as evidenced by his actions.
- “Every Branch that does bear fruit, he prunes that it may bear more fruit.”
 - God the Father is described as the vinedresser. Here we see that just as a vine must be cleaned of the broken and diseased parts to flourish the true

follower of Christ also will experience cleansing that will bring about more fruitfulness

■ Examples

- Addressing sin in our lives
- Giving up time in order to serve
- Being willing to be uncomfortable to follow God

Additional verses for further study

- Jeremiah 2:21; 1 Corinthians 3:9; Romans 11:17; Matthew 15:13

Follow up Questions to consider

- How does Jesus succeed where Israel failed?
 - Jesus did not give into temptation, he did not waiver from his task and he bears fruit of righteousness where Israel bore fruit of wickedness.
 - Is it difficult when someone states they are a Christian but their actions (fruit) does not reflect this?
 - What areas of your life do you see a need for God to continue pruning? (What areas do you want to grow in?)
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John 15:3

“Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.”

- “Already you are clean.”
 - Already means that the work is being accomplished or has been accomplished.
 - This points to the fact that the disciples and later Christians are not responsible for the work to become clean but Jesus (God) does that work on our behalf.
 - Clean takes on both the context of getting rid of that which is dirty and also being made right before God as in the cleansing ceremonies for the people in the Levitical law.
 - This also ties into the pruning in verse 2
- “Because of the word that I have spoken to you.”
 - The word that Jesus has spoken is the teaching about Himself and the kingdom of God.

- This teaching and the acceptance of it is what has shown them to be clean
- Previously in John 13 when Jesus washes the disciples feet he states that one of them is not clean, indicating Judas who was to betray Jesus because he would not accept the plan and teaching of Jesus.

Additional verses for further study

- John 13:10 (Jesus washing the disciples feet), John 17:17, Ephesians 5:26

Follow up Questions to consider

- What makes someone clean before God?
 - The work of Christ on the cross on our behalf
 - If God has accomplished the work for Christians to be clean do Christians need to address sin in our lives?
 - (yes we do out of obedience to God and to bear fruit)
 - Pick a time this week to spend in prayer thanking God for his provision and that we do not have to try and make ourselves clean of our own ability but he has already done the work.
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John 15:4

“Abide 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.”

- “Abide in me, and I in you.”
 - To abide in Christ is to have a personal relationship with Him. This is further shown in that Christ states, “and I in you” indicating that the relationship is both ways and not simply a person coming before an impersonal god.
- “As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.”
 - A plant does not grow or bear fruit unless it is rooted well and obtains the nutrients it needs. It is the same for people. People will not truly flourish and be fruitful with God honoring works apart from a relationship with Jesus.
 - This is very applicable especially in a Christian school. It can be easy to assume that every student and every parent is a Christian, but this is not the case. Sometimes people are attracted to the fruit they see from a

relationship with Christ and then do not understand why they have a hard time replicating those fruits in their own lives. The personal relationship with Christ is necessary for those fruits to happen, not simply proximity to those who have a relationship with Christ.

Additional verses for further study

- 1 John 2:4-6 (obedience to God comes from abiding in Christ), Colossians 1:21-23 (it is Christ who reconciles us with God and the only way to this reconciliation is the truth of the Gospel)

Follow up Questions to consider

- Is your relationship with Christ your own or do you only do Christian things because you are around Christians?
 - What fruits (actions or attitudes) have you seen in your life as a result of abiding in Christ?
 - What are things that we try to turn to for nourishment and rest that we should be turning to Christ for? (social media, video games, relationships?)
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John 15:5

“I 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.”

- “I am the vine and you are the branches.”
 - Jesus continues with the vine imagery and reminds us that he is who we are attached to and not the other way around.
- “Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”
 - This verse continues from verse 4 and doubles down on that only in Christ do we bear godly fruit.
 - Any efforts that we make apart from God are fruitless and pointless.

Additional verses for further study

- Romans 6:15-16 (abiding in Christ means sins are forgiven not to sin more but to walk freely in obedience to God); Colossians 1:3-8 (it is good to celebrate the Gospel bearing fruit through fellow Christians)

Follow up Questions to consider

- Are there areas in your life where you are trying to be fruitful apart from Christ? (work, school, sports)
 - Look for the fruit in a Christian's life and encourage them in what you see. Christians should encourage one another especially within in our local churches.
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John 15:6

“If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.”

- “If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers.”
 - The rejection of Christ has consequences. It is not simply a lack of good works, but it is a withering of the person. Sin is a destructive force that separates us from God and degrades us causing what should have abundant life to wither and die.
- “And the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.”
 - Fire is commonly associated with divine judgment in both the Bible and Jewish culture. The result of rejecting Christ is facing the judgment of God without a mediator. Something that no one can stand against.
 - This also speaks to the purpose of man. Man is meant to glorify God. Someone who has rejected God is not serving their purpose and like a dead vine is unable to fulfill the purpose of bearing fruit.

Additional verses for further study

- Ezekiel 15:1-8 (here we see the imagery of vine and fire used to describe God's judgment upon faithless Israel)
- Matthew 13:36-43 (Jesus speaks to this again through the parable of the weeds)

Follow up Questions to consider

- In what ways is sin destructive to a person?
- Does hearing verses like this create an urgency to share the Gospel with those who are not Christians?

John 15:7

“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”

- “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you.”
 - This first part is an important context that if ignored can lead to dangerous and wrong teachings.
 - Abiding is a relationship with Christ but it is also a transformation of our desires to align with God’s desires.
 - This is referring to when our desires are the same as God’s desires
 - “Ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”
 - When we ask God for things aligned with his will and his desires he will gladly answer our prayers.
 - The bad interpretation of this leads to things like the prosperity Gospel which states if you follow God you will be rich and get promotions and never get sick. This is **NOT** what this passage is stating.
 - A good example of prayer according to God’s desire would be something like, “God please give me wisdom to see the opportunities you give me to share the Gospel.”

Additional verses for further study

- John 14:13-14 (asking for things in Jesus name)
 - This means asking for things in line with the character and nature of Jesus not simply asking for whatever we want and putting Jesus at the end in an attempt to make our prayers more “successful.”

Follow up Questions to consider

- Are the majority of our prayers based around wants or needs?
- How do you know if what you are praying for lines up with the will and desires of God?
 - Compare it to what God reveals about Himself in Scripture
- Is the goal of the Christian life to be rich or to be faithful to God?
 - This does not mean that rich people are not faithful to God but it does mean that worldly wealth is not the end goal for the Christian.

John 15:8

“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

- “By this my Father is glorified.”
 - The “this” is referring back to verse 7 and asking God for things according to his will.
 - God is glorified when his people act according to his will and desire.
- “That you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”
 - The Christian walking in obedience and bearing fruit is a proof they belong to God.

Additional verses for further study

- James 2:14-26 (faith that has no works as a result from that faith is not true faith)
- John 13:35 (Christians love for one another is how people will know they are followers of Christ.)

Follow up Questions to consider

- What are fruit or works that point to someone being a follower of Christ?
- How as a Christian do we grow in doing the works of God and bearing fruit?
 - Being discipled and serving in the local church
 - Spending time learning about God through his Word and prayer
 - Sometimes it is simply forming the habit of serving others

John 15:9

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.”

- “As the Father has loved me so have I loved you.”
 - God’s love is perfect. Here Jesus is stating that his love is perfect for us. Just as God the Father loves perfectly, Jesus, as God the Son loves perfectly as well.
 - This claim to love perfectly is fulfilled in his work on the cross.

- “Abide in my love.”
 - Christ’s love is perfect so abide and rest in it. There is no need for concern of what if Jesus’ love is not pure as we often fear in other relationships. A relationship with Christ is one that is sure and everlasting because His love is sure and without fail.

Additional verses for further study

- John 5:19-29 (Jesus has the authority of God because He is God.)
- Matthew 11:29-30 (A relationship with Jesus provides rest for our souls)

Follow up Questions to consider

- How would you describe perfect love?
 - Why is there rest knowing that God’s love will not fail or change?
-

John 15:10

“If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.”

- “If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love.”
 - “Love and obedience are so intertwined that a believer’s obedience to Christ arises out of a heart filled with the deepest affection for Jesus.” (*John: Jesus Christ is God by William F. Cook pg. 233*)
 - It is our love for Christ that spurs our obedience. So to keep His commandments you must first love Christ.
- “Just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.”
 - Jesus states that he is the example of what it means to follow God’s commandments.
 - Jesus is the perfect example of obedience because of love and affection.

Additional verses for further study

- 1 Corinthians 11:1 (Paul calls upon Christians to imitate him (Paul) as he imitates Christ.
 - This is what Jesus is stating in this passage, keep my commandments as I have kept the commandments of God the Father. (Imitate Jesus)

- Philippians 2:8 (Jesus keeps the commandments of God the Father as seen through obedience even to the point of death on the cross.)

Follow up Questions to consider

- Do you have people in your life who imitate Christ that you look to as examples of how you should live?
 - Do you think people look to you as an example of how to follow Christ?
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John 15:11

“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full.”

- The call to obedience and bearing fruit is not legalistic and with the idea of oppressive cooperation.
- Jesus calls us to obedience because it is what will bring us full joy
- Only those who are in Christ have true joy.
- Obedience to God brings joy, yet often times we believe the lies of sin that obedience to God will only bring about tired suffering.

Additional verses for further study

- 1 John 1:1-4 (complete joy comes from fellowship with God made possible through Jesus Christ)
- Hebrews 3:13 (encourage one another because sin is deceitful)

Follow up Questions to consider

- In what ways is sin enticing and deceitfully promises joy?
 - Why is joy only complete in a relationship with God through Christ?
 - Only when we are in Christ can we fulfill our purpose to image God
 - Only in Christ do we have conviction of sin and not condemnation of sin.
 - This means we can address sin and repent and not have to live in shame.
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John 15:12

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

- The standard for the love of a Christian is the love of Christ.
- Verse 13 will show us this is a sacrificial love.
- This is love that is given and not earned.

Additional verses for further study

- John 13:34-35
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (description of love)

Follow up Questions to consider

- How would you describe Christ's love?
 - How is the world's view of love different from Christ's love?
 - World love is earned vs Christ's love which is given without conditions
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John 15:13

“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

- Christ's love, mentioned in verse 12 is sacrificial love.
- Laying down your life can also be the giving up of your desires and goals in favor of another.
- To the disciples who had argued about who would be greater among them, this would have been a humbling statement that they all ended up living out.

Additional verses for further study

- Matthew 16:24-25 (following Christ requires losing your life for his sake)
- Romans 5:6-8 (Christ died for us while we were still sinners)
- Ephesians 5:2 (Be imitators of God by walking in sacrificial love)

Follow up Questions to consider

- How can you love sacrificially?
 - What is the greatest love you have experienced?
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John 15:14

“You are my friends if you do what I command you.”

- There is a personal and familiar relationship with Christ, not a follower and distant deity.
- As mentioned before obedience comes from abiding in Christ. We are known to be his by our obedience to Christ.

Additional verses for further study

- Luke 12:4-7 (proper fear of the Lord brings about freedom from fear of man)
- Matthew 12:50 (Those who do the will of God are family to Jesus)

Follow up Questions to consider

- What do you look for in a friend?
 - Why is there comfort in knowing that if you are a Christian you are not just a follower but family/friend to Christ?
 - We are not just forgiven sinners but adopted into the family of God. We are chosen and desired, not simply pardoned.
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