

# John 15:1-10

WHERE ARE WE? AT THE END OF CHAPTER 14, JESUS TELLS HIS DISCIPLES TO “RISE AND GO.” BUT NO DIRECTIONS ARE GIVEN, NOR IS ANY INDICATION THAT WE ARE IN A DIFFERENT LOCATION. SOME SCHOLARS SAY THAT JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES ARE STILL IN THE UPPER ROOM. OTHERS SAY THAT THEY ARE WALKING FROM THE UPPER ROOM TO GETHSEMANE. OTHERS SAY THAT THEY ARE AT GETHSEMANE. UP UNTIL THIS POINT, JOHN HAS BEEN VERY CAREFUL TO TELL US WHERE JESUS IS AND WHO SURROUNDS HIM. NOW HE DOES NOT. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? IT WOULD SEEM THAT JOHN WANTS THE READER TO FOCUS ONLY ON THE WORDS OF JESUS; THEY NEED TO CONTEXT OR EXTERNAL POINT OF REFERENCE TO BE UNDERSTOOD.

## 15:1

The relationship between Jesus and the Father is one of almost co-dependence. They work together to produce the same goal: fruit.

## 15:2

The warning has not been given yet of the necessity to bear fruit. Also, keep in mind that Jesus is talking about his work and the work of the Father. (This is the immediate context from John 14.) The Father and Jesus are interested in producing fruit and making existing fruit even more fruitful.

## 15:3

Jesus reassures his disciples that they are fruit that is left on the vine. They have not been “taken away,” but are attached to the vine and will therefore be pruned.

## 15:4

The analogy Jesus uses is simple and powerful. If someone wants to be fruit for the Father, he must remain attached to the vine, that is, Jesus. The branch has as much chance of bearing fruit for the vinedresser apart from the vine as a human being does at earning the approval of the Father apart from a relationship with Christ.

## 15:5

Jesus emphasizes what he said in the previous verse. It’s not a matter of a branch bearing more or less fruit; it is a matter of being able to bear fruit at all. That branch is worthless to the vinedresser who is not attached to the vine. Worthless are the deeds to the Father of a human being who is not connected to Jesus.

But what does it mean: “can do nothing”? Surly non-Christians invent, produce, and develop many helpful and useful things. It does not matter if the bread I buy

is from a Christian or a non-Christian baker; it will have the same effect on me when I eat it. What is it that the one who is not attached to Christ cannot do?

**15:6**

A worthless branch is useless. It takes up space in the garden that a fruit-bearing branch might have. Therefore, it needs to be disposed of. How could a Christian over-interpret this verse? How could a Christian remove the teeth of this verse and lessen its bite on unbelievers?

**15:7**

Are the Father's answers to prayer: yes, no, and wait?  
What does Jesus say is the Father's answer to prayer?

What are the words of Christ that are to abide in us?

**15:8**

It appears that the fruit the branches bear for the Father are rooted in prayer; in asking the Father to do what a Father does. So, then, what is the hallmark of the disciple (or a branch that is attached to the vine)? (Hint: can a branch bear any fruit whose nourishment does not come from the vine?)

**15:9**

How has the Father loved the Son?

**15:10**

Notice how Jesus now compares us to himself. It's as if he is saying: "I have given you things to obey. I know what it is like to be told to do something. The Father has given me things to do as well; difficult things. I know the burden you are under when I tell you to keep my commandments. I will give you the Holy Spirit, I will pray for you, and together we will get it done!"

Does any other religion have an object of worship that has been told what to do?