



**Lesson Title:** The I Am's of John—I Am the True Vine



**Key Concept:** Throughout the Book of John, Jesus used the Old Testament declaration "I Am" to reveal the different facets of his relationship with us. In John 15, Jesus describes himself as the true vine, the source of eternal connection between him and us.



**Scriptures:**

<sup>1</sup>"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup>He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. <sup>3</sup>You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. <sup>4</sup>Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. <sup>5</sup>Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."  
(John 15:1–5 *New Living Translation*)

**Context Scriptures:** John 14–17; Matthew 7:16–20; Acts 17:28; Galatians 5:22–23



**Lesson Thoughts:**

Jesus gives this illustration to his disciples shortly before his crucifixion, as an encouragement to prepare them for the events that are about to take place. He is going to be taken away but promises that he will come back to them (John 14:28). When this "I Am" is viewed in relation to the surrounding chapters, we can understand more of Jesus' purpose in calling himself the true vine. There are many things that people can attach themselves to in life, but the only true eternal source of life is Jesus. All else will eventually fail.

This true vine is tended by a gardener, the Father. Consider what happens in an unattended garden. Weeds grow and plants do not produce as much fruit. Note also the difference between cutting and pruning. In the metaphor of the vine and the branches, the branches that are cut off are unfruitful and have not remained

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in Jesus. They wither and are gathered to be burned (John 15:6). The fruitful branches, on the other hand, are pruned to produce even more fruit.

A recurring theme in John 15 is “remaining in me” and “remaining in my love.” How do we do this? “When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love” (John 15:10). It is essential to remember that apart from Jesus we can do nothing (John 15:5). It is only by his strength and power that anything with eternal significance can be accomplished.

“I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!” (John 15:11). Even in the midst of total chaos, Jesus wants his disciples to be filled with joy. The crucifixion is approaching, and they need reassurance that he is not leaving them. But his disciples, both then and now, can always remain in him, just like branches remain connected to a vine and receive their strength.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) What do you think was Jesus’ purpose in giving this metaphor of the true vine?
- 2) In addition to keeping his commandments, what steps can we take to stay connected to the true vine?
- 3) What is pruning? What reactions do we have to being “pruned?” Is there a “best” reaction, and if so, what is it?
- 4) Have there been times in your life when you did not feel connected to the true vine, but later discovered that the connection was there all along? Share your experiences.

**Next Lesson:** Light of the World

**Notes and Reflections**

- 1) Read John chapters 14–17. Reflect on the significance of chapter 15 and the true vine in relation to the surrounding events.
  
- 2) Read John 15:5 and Matthew 7:16–20. Meditate on the fruit you are producing. Is it bringing glory to God?

**Notes and Reflections, cont.**