

GROUP LEADERS NOTES – STUDY 10

QUESTION 1

- a) The vine was one of the national symbols of Israel.
- b) It is also one of the Biblical symbols for the people of Israel (e.g. **Psalm 80:8; Jeremiah 2:21; Ezekiel 15,17,19**).
- c) They were supposed to be the obedient people of God, but they failed (e.g. **Isaiah 5:1-7**).
- d) Jesus however perfectly kept His Father's commandments. He was the perfect vine, as opposed to the imperfect.

QUESTION 2

- a) **We need to be clear that Jesus is not saying that true Christians can lose their salvation.**
- b) Not all who claim to be God's people actually belong to God.
- c) It is possible to profess to be people of God (as the Jews did) but not be true believers.
- d) Being in a church or serving in a church doesn't in itself make us His.
- e) The Jew was not part of God's people by simply being joined to a nation. They had to be joined to Christ.
- f) Therefore, He declares that He is the vine. There has to be a real grafting into Him by faith.
- g) Verse 6 sets out the consequences of not being in Christ. Such are on the broad path leading to hell.

QUESTION 3

- a) Every year the vines would be pruned in order to allow more growth.
- b) Anything that would sap the energy from the branches or hinder growth would be removed.
- c) Pruning in the spiritual life is painful but leads to increased fruitfulness (**Hebrews 12:11**).
- d) It involves removing things that hinder righteousness. Sometimes it involves suffering and trials (e.g. **James 1:2-4**).
- e) It may also involve being challenged as to sin in our lives, through God's word.

QUESTION 4

- a) Jesus is not saying that His disciples are perfect. But they had been under a process of purifying by His instructions whilst He had been with them.
- b) It is the same idea we encountered back in **13:10**. There is an initial cleansing that comes at the cross as we receive God's word.
- c) Then there is a continuing cleansing which we call sanctification.
- d) Jesus is saying that they are branches on the true vine already. He then goes on to explain what that means in terms of ongoing living.

QUESTION 5

- a) The word 'abide' appears 11 times in this chapter.
- b) It describes something that remains where it is. Here it refers to an unbroken relationship with Jesus.
- c) It includes:
- d) Letting His words remain in us. Being doers of the word rather than just hearers (see **James 1:22**).
- e) It also means depending on Him. We see this in the need of prayer in verse 7.
- f) Delighting in His love

- g) Branches do not bear fruit unless they are attached to the vine. In the same way we depend completely on the Lord for spiritual life and growth.
- h) Fruit on the vine only comes as the branches receive the sap and nourishment from the vine.
- i) Not only are we in Christ but His words are in us and work in our lives.
- j) We want to obey Him.
- k) We can only be effective if we abide in Him. Without Him and His strength, we can do nothing.

QUESTION 6

- a) Fruit is the evidence of life. It shows in behaviour; that which John the Baptist describes in Matthew 3:8 as "*fruit in keeping with repentance*" (see **Ephesians 5:8-10**).
- b) It is Christlikeness. If we look at the fruit of the Spirit (note 'fruit' not 'fruits') in **Galatians 5:22-23** we see a Christ-like character being formed. It is the Spirit's work in us.
- c) Praise is also a fruit (see **Hebrews 13:15**). Paul prayed that the Colossians would "*walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God*" (Colossians 1:10).