

# Dr. Dave Turner, John, Session 17, Farewell Discourse 3: Abiding in Christ and Witnessing to the World – John 15:1-16:15 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Turner, John, Session 17, John 15:1-16:15, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. David Turner's lecture, the seventeenth session on the **Gospel of John**, specifically examines the **Farewell Discourse** found in **John 15:1-16:15**. Turner explores **Jesus's teachings on abiding in him** as the true vine, emphasizing the necessity of **bearing fruit through love and obedience**. He connects this to the **Old Testament imagery of the vineyard** and **Israel's failure to produce good fruit**. Furthermore, Turner addresses the **inevitability of the world's hatred towards Jesus's followers** and the crucial role of the **Holy Spirit in empowering their witness and convicting the world**.

**2. 12 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of  
Dr. Turner, John, Session 17 – Double click icon to play in  
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]  
Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament →  
Gospels → John).**



**Turner\_John\_Session  
17.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Turner, John, Session 17, John 15:1-16:15

#### Briefing Document: Dr. David Turner on John 15:1-16:15 - Abiding in Christ and Witnessing to the World

**Overview:** This document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. David Turner in his session on John 15:1-16:15, part of Jesus' Farewell Discourse. The session focuses on the analogy of the vine and branches, the importance of abiding in Christ, the necessity of bearing fruit, the reality of opposition from the world, and the role of the Holy Spirit in empowering believers for witness.

#### Main Themes and Important Ideas:

##### 1. The Analogy of the True Vine (John 15:1-8):

- Jesus introduces himself as "the true vine," contrasting with the historical failures of Israel as God's vineyard in the Old Testament. Turner emphasizes, "He seems to be saying that I am the true Israel. I personify all the virtues and all the fruit-bearing that should have been produced by Israel originally."
- God the Father is depicted as the "farmer" who tends the vine.
- Disciples are the "branches," inherently dependent on the vine (Jesus) for life and fruitfulness. "A branch is of no value whatsoever unless it's connected to the vine."
- The purpose of the branches is to bear fruit. The Father prunes fruitful branches to yield more fruit and cuts off and burns unfruitful ones. This highlights the responsibility of believers.

##### 2. Abiding in Christ (John 15:4-10):

- Abiding is presented as a continuous state of remaining in relationship with Jesus. Turner notes that Jesus "requires them then to remain with him."
- Verses 9-17 explain what it means to abide, primarily through the lens of love and obedience. "So, you find the emphasis in 15:9-17 about abiding in love and about bearing fruit by loving, and loving and obeying together are ways in which we bear fruit for God."

- Abiding is not a passive waiting but an active dependence on Christ. "We are going to be bearing fruit as we are active in dependence upon Christ. Not independent of him, but in dependence on him."
- Turner cautions against turning abiding into a mere checklist, emphasizing the organic connection between the believer and Christ, akin to the vine and branches.

### **3. The Necessity of Bearing Fruit (John 15:2, 4, 5, 8):**

- Bearing fruit is the expected outcome of abiding in Christ.
- Turner discusses the nature of this "fruit," suggesting it encompasses both evangelistic outreach (making new converts) and Christ-like character (the fruit of the Spirit). "He was speaking of everything that we would do as a Christian, not simply one or the other."
- He argues against limiting the definition of fruit, stating that "anything of good that comes out of us as followers of Christ can only come to the extent that we're dependent upon him and his work within us, then anything that's produced from that has to be called fruit."

### **4. The World's Hatred and Persecution (John 15:18-25):**

- Jesus warns his disciples that they will face hatred from the world because the world hated him first. "He says, don't be surprised if the world hates you because it hates me as well, and it's not that they have anything personally against you, they don't like my message, and if you stand up for me, then you'll receive the same sort of treatment that I received."
- This opposition underscores the importance of abiding in Christ for strength and perseverance.

### **5. The Role of the Holy Spirit (John 15:26-16:15):**

- The Holy Spirit is presented as the "Helper" who will testify about Jesus. Importantly, Jesus states, "the Spirit will testify about me and you also will testify," suggesting a partnership in witness with the Spirit taking the lead.
- The Spirit will empower the disciples to deal with the opposition and enable a more effective testimony.
- Turner emphasizes that even during times of persecution, the Holy Spirit will continue to work, convicting the world and guiding believers into truth. "We can

be confident that the Holy Spirit will be convicting the world... the Spirit will guide us into all the truth even during the times of persecution."

#### **6. Interpretation of the Unfruitful Branches (John 15:6):**

- Turner acknowledges the significant debate surrounding the identity of the unfruitful branches that are cut off and burnt.
- He considers the possibility of this referring to those who were outwardly connected to Jesus but never truly genuine, potentially like Judas.
- He touches on different theological perspectives (Calvinism and Arminianism) regarding genuine believers falling away. While personally holding a Calvinistic view, he stresses the importance of the "doctrine of perseverance," arguing that true Christians will demonstrate their faith through their lives.
- He critiques a view of "eternal security without any responsibility for perseverance," labeling it "antinomianism" and suggesting it is not a historic teaching of the church.
- Turner emphasizes the pastoral concern for those who claim to be Christians but show no spiritual fruit, arguing against "coddling" them and instead urging them to seriously examine their relationship with Jesus. "This imagery does not permit us to do any such thing [telling people 'once saved, always saved, no matter what']."

#### **7. The Linkage of Love and Obedience:**

- Turner highlights John's theology emphasizing the inseparable connection between love for God and obedience to his commands. "It's fruitless to talk about love for God apart from obedience and obedience apart from love."
- Quoting John 15:10, "If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love," Turner underscores that obedience is the practical expression of abiding in God's love, mirroring Jesus' own relationship with the Father.

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Turner's session on John 15:1-16:15 provides a comprehensive overview of Jesus' teaching on abiding in him. He emphasizes the vital dependence of believers on Christ as the true vine for spiritual life and fruitfulness. The session highlights the active nature of abiding, expressed through love and obedience, and prepares believers for the reality of worldly opposition, assuring them of the empowering presence and work of the Holy Spirit. Turner also delves into the challenging interpretation of the unfruitful branches, urging a serious consideration of genuine faith and the necessity of bearing fruit. Ultimately, the passage underscores the believer's identity as a dependent branch, reliant on God's care and the life received from Jesus through the Spirit to fulfill its purpose.

## 4. Study Guide: Turner, John, Session 17, John 15:1-16:15

### Study Guide: John 15:1-16:15 - Abiding in Christ and Witnessing to the World

#### Key Themes:

- The "True Vine" Allegory: Understanding Jesus as the source of life and fruitfulness for believers (the branches).
- Abiding in Christ: Exploring the meaning and practical implications of remaining connected to Jesus.
- Fruit Bearing: Identifying the various forms of fruit expected of believers, including Christ-like character and evangelistic witness.
- The Command to Love: Examining the connection between abiding in Christ, obedience to his commands, and loving one another.
- The World's Hatred and Persecution: Understanding why believers face opposition and how to respond.
- The Role of the Holy Spirit: Recognizing the Spirit's work in testifying about Jesus, empowering believers to witness, and guiding them through opposition.
- Old Testament Context: Appreciating the significance of the vineyard imagery in the Hebrew Bible and how Jesus fulfills it.

#### Quiz:

1. According to Dr. Turner, what is the primary responsibility of Jesus' followers as introduced in John 15? How does the analogy of the vine and branches illustrate this?
2. Dr. Turner suggests that the emphasis in John 15:9-17 shifts slightly from the vine and branches allegory. What is the primary focus of this section, and how does it relate to the preceding imagery?
3. Why does Jesus tell his disciples not to be surprised by the world's hatred, as discussed in the latter part of John 15? What is the relationship between the world's treatment of Jesus and its treatment of his followers?
4. According to John 15:26-27, what roles do the Holy Spirit and the disciples play in bearing witness to Jesus? What nuance does Dr. Turner highlight regarding the priority of their testimonies?

5. Dr. Turner explains Jesus' statement "I am the true vine" by referencing the Old Testament. How was Israel portrayed as a vine in the Hebrew Bible, and why does Jesus use the adjective "true"?
6. What are some examples from the Old Testament, mentioned by Dr. Turner, where the vineyard imagery is used? How do these examples illustrate both God's blessing and judgment?
7. Dr. Turner discusses the interpretation of the "unfruitful branches" in John 15. What are some different perspectives on who these branches might represent, and what theological considerations are involved in this discussion?
8. What does Dr. Turner say about the nature of the "fruit" that Jesus expects his followers to bear in John 15? Should it be understood narrowly or broadly?
9. According to Dr. Turner, how can believers practically "abide" or "remain" in Christ? Is it primarily a matter of adhering to a checklist of behaviors, or something else?
10. How does Dr. Turner connect the concept of "abiding in Christ" with the command to love and obey Jesus' teachings, particularly referencing John 15:10?

**Quiz Answer Key:**

1. The primary responsibility is termed as remaining or abiding in Christ. The vine and branches analogy illustrates this by showing that just as branches depend on the vine for life and the ability to bear fruit, disciples must remain connected to Jesus to be fruitful.
2. The primary focus of John 15:9-17 is the new commandment to love one another. It reiterates and contextualizes this command using the imagery of abiding and bearing fruit, suggesting that loving and obeying are ways to bear fruit for God while remaining in Jesus' love.
3. Jesus says not to be surprised because the world hated him first. If the world rejected and hated Jesus' message, then those who stand up for him and his message will likely receive similar treatment.
4. The Holy Spirit will testify about Jesus, and the disciples will also testify. Dr. Turner suggests we should consider that the Holy Spirit's witness has priority, and believers come alongside to help the Spirit in this work.

5. In the Old Testament, Israel is often described as God's vine, representing his blessing and covenantal love. Jesus uses "true" to suggest that Israel often failed to produce the intended fruit, and he, as the true vine, embodies the fruitfulness God desired for his people.
6. Examples include Isaiah 5, where the vineyard yields bad fruit despite God's care, symbolizing Israel's failure. Vineyard imagery is also used to depict both God's judgment (famine, lack of wine) and blessing (bumper crops, new wine upon repentance).
7. Some interpretations include those who superficially associate with Jesus, those who genuinely believed but fell away (apostasy), and those who never truly had the internal work of the Holy Spirit. Theological considerations include the doctrines of perseverance and eternal security.
8. Dr. Turner believes the "fruit" should be understood broadly, encompassing everything that believers do as Christians, including both evangelistic fruit (new converts) and the fruit of the Spirit (Christ-like character). He argues it's a mistake to limit it to just one.
9. Abiding in Christ is more than a checklist; it's an organic connection and dependence, like the branches on a vine. It involves recognizing daily our need for Christ and actively depending on him, which manifests practically through obedience to his teachings.
10. Dr. Turner highlights that love and obedience are intrinsically linked. Abiding in Jesus' love is contingent upon keeping his commands, just as Jesus remained in the Father's love by keeping his Father's commands. Love for God is demonstrated through obedience to his Word.



## Essay Format Questions:

1. Discuss the significance of the "I am the true vine" statement in John 15:1 in light of the Old Testament's use of vineyard imagery. How does Jesus' claim redefine the concept of God's people and their fruitfulness?
2. Explore the multifaceted nature of "fruit bearing" as presented in John 15 and discussed by Dr. Turner. What are the different kinds of fruit expected of believers, and how do they relate to the concept of abiding in Christ?
3. Analyze the relationship between love, obedience, and abiding in Christ according to John 15:9-17 and Dr. Turner's interpretation. How does this passage challenge common cultural understandings of love and faith?
4. Examine the reasons why Jesus tells his followers to expect hatred and persecution from the world in John 15:18-25. How does the promise of the Holy Spirit as the "Helper" in the subsequent verses provide encouragement and support in the face of such opposition?
5. Discuss the interpretive challenges surrounding the "unfruitful branches" in John 15:6, considering the various theological perspectives presented by Dr. Turner. What are the implications of different interpretations for understanding salvation, perseverance, and the nature of Christian community?

## Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Abiding:** Remaining in relationship with Jesus Christ, dependent on him for life and fruitfulness.
- **Allegory:** An extended analogy or metaphor where details within the figurative language correspond to deeper spiritual meanings.
- **Apostasy:** The abandonment or rejection of one's faith or religious beliefs.
- **Fruit (Biblical):** The results or outcomes of a believer's connection with Christ, including Christ-like character (fruit of the Spirit) and evangelistic impact (new converts).
- **Perseverance (of the Saints):** A theological doctrine that those whom God has called into salvation will by his grace persevere to the end.
- **Sanctification:** The ongoing process by which believers become more like Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- **Testimony:** Witnessing to or sharing one's faith and experience with Jesus Christ.
- **True Vine:** Jesus Christ, presented in John 15 as the genuine source of spiritual life and fruitfulness, in contrast to the often unfruitful "vine" of Israel in the Old Testament.
- **Vineyard (Biblical):** A common metaphor in the Bible representing God's people (Israel in the Old Testament, and potentially the church in the New Testament), their relationship with God, and their expected fruitfulness.
- **Witness (of the Holy Spirit):** The Holy Spirit's role in confirming the truth about Jesus Christ and empowering believers to share that truth.

## 5. FAQs on Turner, John, Session 17, John 15:1-16:15, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions on John 15:1-16:15

#### 1. What is the central analogy Jesus uses in John 15:1-8, and what do the different elements represent?

In John 15:1-8, Jesus uses the analogy of a vine and its branches. In this allegory, Jesus declares, "I am the true vine," identifying himself as the source of spiritual life and nourishment. His Father is the "vinedresser" or farmer, who cultivates the vine to ensure fruitfulness. The disciples, and by extension all believers, are the "branches" that draw life and sustenance from the vine. The fruit that the branches are expected to bear represents the actions, character, and impact of a life lived in connection with Christ. The vinedresser prunes the branches that bear fruit so they will bear even more, while branches that do not bear fruit are cut off and thrown away to be burned. This illustrates the necessity of abiding in Christ to produce spiritual fruit and the consequences of failing to do so.

#### 2. According to this passage, what does it mean for believers to "abide" or "remain" in Christ, and why is it crucial?

Abiding in Christ, as described in John 15:4-10, is not merely a passive state but an active and ongoing dependence on Jesus. It involves maintaining a close, vital connection with him, similar to how a branch stays connected to the vine to receive life. Practically, abiding is expressed through obedience to Jesus' commands, particularly the command to love one another as he has loved us (John 15:12). It also implies a continuous reliance on the Holy Spirit, who facilitates this connection and empowers believers to live according to God's will. Abiding is crucial because, as Jesus states in John 15:5, "apart from me you can do nothing." Without this connection, believers cannot bear spiritual fruit or effectively live out their faith.

#### 3. What is the "fruit" that Jesus expects his followers to produce, according to John 15, and is it limited to one specific type of action or characteristic?

The "fruit" that Jesus speaks of in John 15 is multifaceted and not limited to a single definition. While the Bible sometimes uses the term "fruit" to refer to new converts or evangelistic outreach, and at other times to Christ-like character (the fruit of the Spirit), in this context, it seems to encompass both. Essentially, any good that flows from a believer's life is a result of their connection to Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

within them. This includes evangelistic efforts, acts of service, and the development of virtues like love, joy, peace, and patience. Therefore, fruit-bearing is a holistic expression of a life transformed by and lived in dependence on Christ.

**4. Jesus mentions that the world will hate his followers (John 15:18-25). Why does this hatred occur, and how should believers respond to it?**

The hatred of the world towards Jesus' followers, as explained in John 15:18-25, is a consequence of the world's prior hatred for Jesus himself. This hatred is not typically due to personal offenses committed by believers but rather a rejection of Jesus' message and identity. Because believers are associated with Christ and proclaim his truth, they will likely face similar opposition. Jesus tells his followers not to be surprised by this hatred. Their response should be to continue abiding in Christ, remaining faithful to his teachings, and loving one another, even in the face of persecution. They can also find strength and encouragement in the knowledge that the Holy Spirit will testify about Jesus and empower them to do the same (John 15:26-27).

**5. What role does the Holy Spirit play in the lives of Jesus' followers, particularly in the context of abiding in Christ and facing opposition (John 15:26-16:15)?**

The Holy Spirit plays a vital and multifaceted role in the lives of Jesus' followers. According to John 15:26-16:15, the Spirit will testify about Jesus, confirming his identity and teachings. He will also empower believers to testify, giving them the ability and courage to share their faith even amidst opposition. Furthermore, the Spirit will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11), highlighting the truth of Jesus' claims. For the disciples, who lacked the complete New Testament scriptures, the Spirit would also serve as a reminder of Jesus' words and guide them into all truth (John 14:26, 16:13). In essence, the Holy Spirit is the ongoing presence of God with believers, enabling them to abide in Christ, bear fruit, and effectively witness to the world despite its hostility.

**6. How does the imagery of the "true vine" in John 15:1 relate to the Old Testament concept of Israel as God's vineyard, as discussed in the lecture?**

The imagery of Jesus as the "true vine" in John 15:1 directly contrasts with the Old Testament portrayal of Israel as God's vineyard, particularly in passages like Isaiah 5. In the Old Testament, Israel is depicted as a vineyard lovingly planted and cared for by God, yet it often failed to produce the expected good fruit, resulting in judgment. By declaring himself the "true vine," Jesus suggests that he embodies the faithfulness and fruitfulness that Israel as a nation often lacked. He becomes the means through which God's original

purpose for his people – to bear fruit and be a blessing to the world – will be fulfilled. Believers, as branches connected to this true vine, participate in this fulfillment.

**7. The lecture touches on the complex issue of the unfruitful branches in John 15:6. What are some different interpretations of these branches, and what is the speaker's perspective?**

The interpretation of the unfruitful branches that are cut off and burned in John 15:6 is a subject of debate. Some believe these branches represent genuine Christians who can lose their salvation through apostasy and face eternal punishment. Others, particularly those with a Calvinistic perspective, argue that genuine believers, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, will persevere in faith, and therefore these unfruitful branches may represent those who made a superficial profession of faith but were never truly connected to Christ. The speaker acknowledges both viewpoints, noting that there are indeed people who were once actively involved in the church but have turned away. However, the speaker also emphasizes the importance of perseverance in the faith and cautions against a view of "once saved, always saved" that removes any sense of responsibility for bearing fruit and maintaining a genuine relationship with Christ. The speaker suggests that the imagery calls believers to serious self-examination regarding the authenticity and fruitfulness of their faith.

**8. How does the Farewell Discourse in John 15:1-16:15 link the concepts of love and obedience in the life of a believer, and why are both essential?**

The Farewell Discourse in John 15:1-16:15 strongly emphasizes the inseparable link between love and obedience. Jesus states in John 15:10, "If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love." This indicates that obedience to Jesus' commands is not merely an external requirement but a tangible expression of love and a means of abiding in his love. Conversely, genuine love for God will naturally lead to a desire to obey his will. The speaker highlights that it is fruitless to claim to love God while disregarding his commandments, just as it is insufficient to focus solely on obedience without the motivation of love. Both love and obedience are essential for a fruitful relationship with Christ and for fulfilling his command to love one another (John 15:12). They are intertwined aspects of a life that is truly abiding in the "true vine."