

Home Group notes for the week following Sunday 3rd May 2015

APART FROM ME, YOU CAN DO NOTHING

As We Gather

Grape vines grew prolifically in Canaan and were the national symbol of Israel. Grapes symbolised Israel's fruitfulness in doing God's work on earth and in the Old Testament Scriptures were used mostly in the context of degeneration [Isaiah 5:1-7].

Jesus used the religious heritage of the Jews in His teachings as He knew this would resonate with those who heard Him [Matthew 21:33-38].

Reading Scripture JOHN 15 : 1 - 8

Thinking together

In the Passover meal wine symbolised God's goodness to His people [Psalm 80:8-19], and when Jesus referred to Himself as the 'true vine' (genuine / original vine), He was indicating that only through belief in Him and an intimate living fellowship with Him – the Vine of God – is it possible for anyone to live in union and communion (a right relationship) with God

What does a 'right relationship' with God entail? Discuss
[see also John 4:23-24 John 6:53-58 John 12:1-8]

How does a right relationship with God bring glory to Him? Discuss
[see also Romans 1:16-17 John 4:34-38 Proverbs 10:21
Galatians 5:22-23 and Hebrews 13:15-16]

As branches on the vine, followers of Christ have the privilege of sharing Christ's life, and the responsibility of bearing fruit (John 15:4-5)

What does it mean to remain in Christ / share Christ's life? Discuss
[see also 1 John 4:15 John 1:12 1 John 3:24]

Grape vines need a great deal of cultivation / care if they are to produce a harvest of good quality – clean soil, feeding, and careful and drastic pruning.

Pruning us used to cut out dead wood, but also to cut back living wood so that the quality of the crop is not jeopardised.

Christian 'cultivation' entails worship, meditation, prayer, sacrifice and service

Are you receiving the nourishment and life offered by Christ? (John 15:7) Discuss
[see also Psalm 22:25-31 Psalm 78:5-7 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 & 27-28
Ephesians 4:22-24]

How does God 'prune' His children? Discuss
[see also John 3:10 Hebrews 12:1-11]

In Closing

Christ followers are branches of the vine of heaven (God's Vine), depending on Christ for nourishment / sustenance (John 15:8).

Unbelievers are branches of the vine of the earth, depending on the world for sustenance and satisfaction [Revelation 14:14-20]

PRAYER

God of love, you sent your Son into the world that we might remain in Him.
Graft us into His risen life and prune us so that we may bear the fruit of love
for you and one another. Amen