



Faithfulness to God

Jorge Acevedo, Pastor

***“I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. 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.*”**

You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. 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. 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.

Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned.

But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.”

John 15:1-8 (NLT)



**Faithfulness precedes
fruitfulness!**



**1. Faithfulness requires
community!**

Directly opposite to this [the approach of the desert mystics] is the gospel of Christ. Solitary religion is not to be found there.

“Holy solitaries” is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than holy adulterers. The gospel of Christ knows no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness.

John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*





APPOINTED PASTORS

**How are you doing at staying
connected in rich, authentic
relationships with other
Christ-followers?**



**2. Faithfulness requires
abiding!**

Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT)

**How are you doing at staying
connected in a rich, authentic
relationship with Jesus?**



3. Faithfulness requires pruning!



Pruning = God's Discipline

Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said, “No, don’t worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers and sisters who testify about their faith in Jesus.

***Worship only God. For the essence of
prophecy is to give a clear
witness for Jesus.”***

Revelation 19:10 (NLT)



Pruning = God's Deliverance

***My life is a witness to vulgar grace—a
grace that amazes as it offends. A
grace that pays the eager beaver who
works all day long the same wages as
the grinning drunk who shows up at
ten till five.***

A grace that hikes up the robe and runs breakneck toward the prodigal reeking of sin and wraps him up and decides to throw a party no ifs, ands, or buts.

***A grace that raises bloodshot eyes to
a dying thief's request—"Please,
remember me"—and assures him,
"You bet!" A grace that is the
pleasure of the Father, fleshed out in
the carpenter Messiah,
Jesus the Christ,***

***who left His Father's side not for
heaven's sake but for our sakes, yours
and mine. This vulgar grace is
indiscriminate compassion. It works
without asking anything of us.
It's not cheap.***

It's free, and as such will always be a banana peel for the orthodox foot and a fairy tale for the grown-up sensibility. Grace is sufficient even though we huff and puff with all our might to try to find something or someone it cannot cover.

***Grace is enough. He is enough.
Jesus is enough.***

**Manning, Brennan and Blase, John;
All Is Grace: A Ragamuffin Memoir**