

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." John 15:4-5 KJV



The life giving sap must flow to the branch from the vine or the branch dies. The fruit is the glory of the plant, not the branch. It is not the branch that entices the hungry, but the fruit. The branch's purpose is to produce and display the fruit. *"The fruit (singular) of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."* These are the many manifestations, or attributes of the Spirit's fruit in our lives as believers. There are the many attributes of *"the fruit of the Spirit,"* like there are many attributes we could use to describe fruit. We could speak of beauty, shape, color, taste, texture, and so forth. If we give the Holy Spirit full control by obedience through faith to God's Word, the *"fruit of the Spirit"* will show forth abundantly in our life and our prayers will be answered. If we choke or quench the Spirit through doubt and disobedience, we will stunt our growth, and produce little or no fruit. We will be pruned by the Father until we bear acceptable fruit. In other words, God will remove all that prevents our fruit bearing from our lives. Fruit bearing is our purpose for being. Jesus said, *"I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you. And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."* God is only glorified with our lives if we bear fruit. Anything that hinders the branch from bearing fruit is removed by the husbandman. *"Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the Author AND Finisher of our faith."* My Granny was a proficient gardener. She had the proverbial "green thumb." I watched one day as she pruned the tomato vines, and asked her why she did it. Her answer has profound application. "I'm getting rid of the sap-suckers," she replied. She was pruning away the unnecessary, dead, or dying growth. They were "sucking" the sap, but not producing. What unnecessary part of self is hindering our faith and obedience?

We all must shun the many kinds,
Of evils that demand our time.
If we would bear the fruit Divine,
For we are naught without the Vine. ~CGP

The only sure way to rid ourselves of the myriad of things that hinder our fruit bearing is to completely surrender our thoughts to pondering the Word of God. Complete obedience is complete surrender. If you truly desire the power of God in your life, you must completely obey. Quit clutching at the shards of self, and surrender all to Jesus. How many "sap-suckers" are hindering you?

*"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."
Romans 13:14 KJV*