



HG192 *The I AM Sayings Of Jesus*  
**I AM The True Vine**

John 15:1-8

Home Group Study Notes

26 January 2020 - Iain Every



PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN  
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION  
**BEFORE THE MEETING!**

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group  
with you, along with any previous notes and other  
resources which might be helpful for your discussions.*



**Welcome** (10 mins)  
*Ice Breaker*

Have you ever tried to grow a vegetable garden? Were you successful?



**Looking Upwards** (10 mins)  
*Worship*

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



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### **The True Self**

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all lived as our True Selves? You know, the person we are meant to be. The one God created with all God's best intentions.

When we are being our True Selves we are grateful and glad. We are able to receive and celebrate all of life's blessings and we feel enriched.

When we are being our True Selves we are integrated, whole, the same person on the inside and out. Our secret, private selves are no different to our public selves. We have the courage to tell the truth even when it hurts without disguising or denying our weaknesses. We are transparent and have integrity.

Sounds nice, doesn't it... maybe even liberating. But that's not all.

When we are our True Selves we can see what is really going on in and around us. We can spot healthy and destructive patterns. We can join the dots. We can tell the difference between things. We become discerning and wise.

When we are being our True Selves we are not out of control. We may get angry but we don't lose our temper. We may get sad, but we don't tip into despair. We don't give into bad impulses and we are not slaves to unhealthy desires or addictions. We are reliable and responsible.

When we are being our True Selves we are living from the inside out. That is, we know what we believe, we know our vision, values and principles and we are living in accordance with them. We are uncompromised, uncomplicated, and free to love and serve with passion.

We contribute good things to the world and help others feel freer, better and more themselves. We become wonderful friends, husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and members of society. *(I have used "Shame and Grace" by Lewis B. Smedes to describe the True self as above)*

Is being our True Self just a pipe dream? Or, is this an invitation?

### **Authentic Jesus**

This passage starts with Jesus telling us that he is the TRUE VINE (v.1). He's the real deal. He is authentic. Jesus is reliable. He is who he says he is.

The thing with Jesus is, it's never always about him. He continually points away from himself to his Father, to the Spirit, to us. In this passage Jesus is first revealing his authenticity; then he is telling us that we are connected to him, and finally saying that it is through *us* that his authenticity bears fruit. Don't forget that fruit is a natural product, it automatically comes when the plant is healthy.

Do you want to see the fruit of Jesus' authenticity in your life?

### **Maximum Yield**

Verse two reveals with utter clarity that the Father desires and works towards our fruitfulness. The original Greek can mean one of two things: either that the Father, acting as farmer, prunes the vines or that he stakes them; lifting them from the ground so that the improved air and sunlight ripens the grapes. Our Father wants to maximise the yield of the vines. If we listen when he speaks to us, we can be cleansed, rid of all that would hold us back and tie us in knots and set free to be fruitful (v.3).

*"Search me. O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-4)*

### **Service and Fruitfulness Comes Out of Intimacy and Union**

Sometimes in life we need to re-build our lives from the ground up. What is that ground? I believe it is verses four and five: We are in seamless union with Jesus. We are connected to God. That's a fact. God has made us and invites us into intimacy. Think about it: Vine... branches... you can't get any closer than that.

We are connected to God in such a way that we can take everything we need for a fruitful life from him.

At times it's hard to believe we are up to it. Can we really live a life of real integrity, authenticity, joy, freedom and love? I have spent some time believing that I am not enough, and believe me, it's a self-fulfilling prophecy. The more I didn't think I had what it takes, the more it became true. However, if we can hold the tiniest amount of trust that God is enough, then this passage is showing us the truth that this means that we are enough.

If God is enough, then we are enough. We can live well and serve God wholeheartedly out of our intimate connection with him. Fruit will come – it naturally does when we are joined to the authentic vine.

“Jesus is the radiant and flawless expression of the person of God. He makes the glorious intent of God visible and mirrors the character and every attribute of God in human form”. (Francois du Toit)

Our being joined with Christ means that we too can be a radiant expression of who God is and make his character visible.

If I was to try and sum up this passage for you, yes I mean you, whoever you are and wherever you are reading or hearing this, I would say that God desires to find a true expression of God's self in you.

Are you going to allow that to happen?

**Emmanuel Church Text for 2020**

*“The Lord Your God is with you. He is mighty to save.  
He will take great delight in you. He will quiet you with  
His love. He will rejoice over you with singing.”*

Zephaniah 3:17



## **Looking Upwards** (40 mins)

### *Bible Study*

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

**1.** Jesus is the “authentic”. What kind of attributes does this make you think of?

**2.** Read the description of the True Self. Are there any attributes that you would particularly like to have at the moment?

**3.** What can we do to help us believe that we are intimately connected to God?

**4.** How does it feel to think about God working to maximise your fruitfulness?

**5.** Sit with God in quiet for a moment.

a) Ask God to reveal to you where you are fruitful.

b) Ask God to reveal to you something that can be removed to improve your fruitfulness.

(Share as appropriate)

**6.** God desires to have His fullest expression in you. The Fruit of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. Which one do you want to see more of tomorrow?



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



## **Looking Inwards** (15 mins) *Caring For Each Other*

*Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!')* for:

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?



## **Looking Outwards** (15 mins) *Concern For Others*

*Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:*

Thanksgiving?

Prayer?

Encouragement?

Support in any way?

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*Part of The Billericay & Little Burstead Team Ministry*