



**Living a powerful life
A study on John 15-17**

Dr. Wynand de Wet (aka Pastor Wayne)

One Plus God Ministries
Missions Minded, Every Day, Everywhere.
2890 Harding Hwy E. Unit G Marion, OH 43302
P 740.251.7184 **W** www.oneplusgod.org **E** info@oneplusgod.org

The Gospel of John: Lesson plan

- Lesson 1 — Apr 15 — Jesus' ministry is so...unique! (John 1-3)
- Lesson 2 — Apr 22 — A deep-deep understanding about faith! (John 4-7)
- Lesson 3 — Apr 29 — Jesus IS God! (John 8:1-12:11)
- Lesson 4 — May 6 — Serving like this is unheard of! (John 12:12-14:31)
- Lesson 5 — May 13 — Living a powerful life (John 15-17)
- Lesson 6 — May 20 — The tomb is empty! (John 18-21)

John 15:1-17, Want a powerful life? Then stay in the Vine!

Chapter 15 starts with the 7th and final of the “I am” sayings, “I am the true vine” (see further 6:35, 48, 51; 8:12; 10:7, 9; 10:11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5). Being the “true” vine, Jesus can actually produce genuine fruit that the Gardener (God) is truly looking for. “True” (actual/the one and only/genuine) is of course also a repeating theme in the Gospel of John (4:23, “true worshipers”; 6:32, “true bread; 15:1, “true vine”, and 17:3, “the true God”).

The Gardener takes good care of the vineyard. He doesn’t allow branches that don’t bear any fruit...they need to be cut out (v. 2a). The other branches get pruned so that they can bear “even more fruit” (v. 2b). As God’s children we are like these branches that get pruned, and the pruner is actually Jesus’ Message, the Gospel...His Word(s). This metaphor also shows how close we’re supposed to stay to Jesus—nothing should separate us from Jesus: We have to stay close to Jesus, as branches growing out of a vine (v. 4a). As it is impossible for a branch separated from the vine to bear fruit, it will be impossible for us to bear fruit unless we remain connected to Jesus (v. 4b)!

Separation from Jesus means that we can accomplish absolutely nothing (v. 5), and this will lead to a meaningless ending just as when one burns the dead, “thrown away” branches (v. 6). However, staying connected to Jesus leads to a life where we can ask what we need to bear much fruit, and our Father will give it to us (v. 7). This fruit actually shows that Christ is working in our lives, and therefore it also brings glory to God (v. 8).

Remaining in Jesus, also means to remain in His love and His commands (vv. 9-10). All of these are connected...one cannot exist or grow without the other. One leads to the other, and one happens because of the other. So, no wonder that this brings about a “complete joy” (v. 11), the same deep joy that is in Jesus, a joy that can never run out, no matter what. It makes sense that it is a “complete joy”, because it follows a complete love, a love greater than any other love, a love that we have to share as Jesus did (vv. 12-13).

Knowing/Being with Jesus in such an incredibly IN-timate way, brings Jesus to give us this indescribably news: We are His FRIENDS (v. 14), not His servants (v. 15a) who don’t know what the master is up to (v. 15b). No, Jesus made everything known to us that we need to know (v. 15c). He had chosen us to bear much fruit, “fruit that will last”, and we have a 24/7 helpline directly to God to get it done (v. 16), and we’ll get it done well when we keep loving each other (v. 17)!

This resembles indeed a powerful life...as long as we stay IN the Vine!

John 15:18-16:4, A powerful life leads to powerful kickback!

The devil hates such powerful lives of God’s children. Such a life will surely endure some heavy pushback! So, we should not be surprised if the world hates us (v. 18a). In fact, let’s remember when it happens that it hated Jesus first (v. 18b)! If we would be just like the world, it would have no problem with us (v. 19a), but as God’s children we’re much different as we’ve been chosen to stand on the side of Jesus (v. 19b). And because we’re on the side of Jesus, we will experience the same hatred as Jesus had to bear (vv. 20-21). The world has no excuse though, because Jesus came to explain all it needs to know (vv. 22 and 24a), therefore all it can do is to hate Jesus, and thus also hates His Father (vv. 23, 24b-25).

Jesus knows how difficult things will get when we live a powerful life for Him, so He doesn’t leave us alone. He sends to us the Holy Spirit from the Father to help us, to remind us of the Truth (v. 26), and to continue to testify about the Truth (v. 27).

We can certainly not say we didn’t know when difficult times come our way, so we have no reason to “go astray” (16:1). Even when we get persecuted (16:2a), and even when those persecuting us think they are serving God by doing so (16:2b), we should not be surprised (16:4). This is simply happening, because sadly so many still don’t know Jesus and the Father (16:3).

John 16:5-33, Powered by the Holy Spirit

We don't need to be overcome with sadness that Jesus is returning to His Father (v. 5), because He will give us the Holy Spirit who will continue to power our lives (vv. 6-7)! The Holy Spirit will do at least these three things:

First, the Spirit will lead the world to face their sin, and to realize that you cannot escape it and the judgement that comes with it if you do not believe in Jesus (vv. 8-9).

Second, the Spirit will lead people to realize that righteousness is on the side of Jesus, as He will be at the side of the Father where the world will not be able to see Him (v. 10).

Third, the Spirit will confirm that nobody can stop the final judgement of God. Even the devil himself has already lost, and is finding himself being condemned (v. 11)!

When the Holy Spirit comes He will lead the believers to greater understanding, and keep us all in the path of Truth (vv. 12-13a). He will not simply say all kinds of things that Jesus did not say—He will of course speak and lead in alignment with Jesus, who spoke as the Father wanted Him to speak (v. 13b)! In this way the Spirit will prepare us for what is to come (v. 13c),

and help people to see how important Jesus truly is (v. 14), that Jesus and the Father is one (v. 15).

Jesus then shares with the disciples that between now and the coming of the Holy Spirit a difficult time lies ahead—He will need to leave them for a little while (trials, crucifixion and death), but then He will return with His resurrection (vv. 16-19). During this time the world will rejoice thinking that it had been victorious (v. 20a), but the disciples will rejoice (v. 20b), because Jesus will surely have victory! The disciples must remember, even though they may be scattered during this time (v. 32a), He will never be alone, because His Father is always with Him (v. 32b). In fact, this difficult time will pass as surely as a woman who gives birth is in pain during labor, but soon the joy of a newborn overwhelms all grief and brings great joy (v. 21).

Nobody can rob the joy from the powerful life of believers (v. 22), and just as with Jesus, the Father will never leave His children alone—they will always be able to ask the Father anything, and in the Name of Jesus they will receive it, so that their joy can always stay complete (vv. 23-24). In fact, when Jesus returns, we will realize that we’re now in the same powerful, love-driven relationship with the Father, and we can also speak directly with the Father as Jesus did (vv. 25-30). It will be like this for all of whom Jesus can say, “You believe at last” (v. 31)!

This is great news, that should bring great peace (v. 33a). Therefore children of God, it is time to “Take heart!” (says Jesus!) (v. 33b). Even though we “*will have trouble*” in this world, Jesus has “*overcome the world*” (v. 33c), and we can continue to live a powerful life!

John 17:1-26, A prayerful life leads to a powerful life

Once more we find the reference to Jesus' "time" that has come. It is now abundantly clear that this is referring to His crucifixion, immediately coupled with His resurrection, as this will bring "glory" to Himself and His Father (v. 1). As with the Father, Jesus has the authority to "give eternal life" to all that the Father has put in His path (v. 2), and eternal life means that people become a part of the family of the one, true God, and Jesus Christ whom God had sent to all people (v. 3).

It is in the life of Jesus that people could see how important the Father is, because Jesus did all that God asked Him to do till the very end (v. 4)—they could clearly see the deep connection between the Father and the Son (vv. 6-8). And now the time has come for Jesus to return to His Father, and resume the most important position He occupied since "before the world began" in the presence of God (v. 5).

It is surely touching to hear how Jesus is praying for His disciples, knowing that they cannot go (at least not immediately) to where He is going (vv. 9-11a). Jesus prays for powerful protection from the Father, just as He protected them while He was with them, so that the disciples can work together as one, as Jesus and God worked together as one (vv. 11b-12). The idea is not that the disciples be taken out of the world, that will hate them, but that they be protected "from the evil one" (vv. 13-15).

However, the disciples also don't belong to this world anymore, just as Jesus (v. 16). They have been set apart through Jesus' Message of the Truth (v. 17) to go into this sinful world, so that they can bring Jesus' Message also to others in the world (v. 18) without becoming a part of the world (v. 19)!

Jesus doesn't only pray for His disciples, but also for those that will come to faith because of them...in other words, Jesus also prays for all of us today (v. 20)! The prayer is that believers will stand together as one (v. 21a). That they will be one with one another and together one with God, just as Jesus and the Father are intensely one in purpose, thought, actions...in all (v. 21b). This way the world will see Jesus in them and believe that God had sent Jesus to this world (v. 21c). This unity is so important to Jesus that He even bestows upon the believers the same status as the Father had given Him, so that it may indeed be possible for them to be one as Jesus and the Father are one (v. 22)—such complete and perfect unity will become a showcase for who Jesus is and for God's love (v. 23).

Jesus' prayer is that believers will continue to live such powerful and Spirit filled lives that they will end up one day where He will be at to see and celebrate His glory that He received from the Father's love since "before the creation of the world" (v. 24). Jesus started to make the

Father known in this world, and will continue to so (vv. 25-26a), and if Jesus is in us (v. 26b) how can we not live powerful lives and do the same as Jesus did?!

Want to dig deeper, or just stay connected?

- Email pastor Wayne/Wynand with your questions/remarks at wynand@OnePlusGod.org.
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