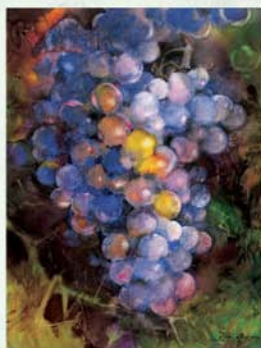


SECRETS  
*of*  
THE VINE

🍇 BIBLE STUDY 🍇



BRUCE  
WILKINSON

S E C R E T S  
*of*  
T H E V I N E  
🍷 B I B L E S T U D Y 🍷

| *For Personal or Group Use* |

BRUCE WILKINSON  
*with* DAVID KOPP



Multnomah Books

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## Introduction

# THE PICTURE OF TRUE ABUNDANCE

If you were to choose one picture to show what God wants from your life, what would it be? A truckload of success? A houseful of happiness? A mountain of hard work for Him?

If you've read *Secrets of the Vine*, you know that on the night before He died, Jesus gave His disciples a remarkable word picture. He wanted to show them what they had been chosen to accomplish. And even more, He wanted them to see and remember what their actively and intimately involved God would do to help bring it into being.

Jesus chose a dramatic moment—the night before His crucifixion. After their last meal together, Jesus led His friends through Jerusalem's darkened streets, outside the city walls, toward Gethsemane, where betrayal and arrest awaited Him. On the way, they walked through an ancient vineyard. Here, I believe, Jesus paused.

### LEANING CLOSE TO LISTEN

His disciples gathered expectantly in the circle of torchlight. What would their Lord tell them now, on the night before His death? They leaned forward to hear. Then Jesus began a most surprising conversation.

"I AM THE TRUE VINE, AND MY FATHER IS THE VINEDRESSER. EVERY BRANCH IN ME THAT DOES NOT BEAR FRUIT HE TAKES AWAY; AND EVERY BRANCH THAT BEARS FRUIT HE PRUNES, THAT IT MAY BEAR MORE FRUIT. I AM THE VINE, YOU ARE THE BRANCHES. HE WHO ABIDES IN ME, AND I IN HIM, BEARS MUCH FRUIT.... BY THIS MY FATHER IS GLORIFIED, THAT YOU BEAR MUCH FRUIT." (JOHN 15:1-2, 5, 8)

Imagine with me how these words must have sounded to Jesus' friends. Instead of talking about how they could defeat the Romans, Jesus talked to them about a grapevine and its branches. Instead of unveiling an escape plan, Jesus spoke resolutely about bearing fruit—a lot of it. Instead of saying good-bye, Jesus made it clear that an ongoing, vital relationship with Him would not only be possible, but would also be the key to breaking through to the highest yield possible.

His thoughts were on fruit, more fruit...*much* fruit. My friend, that's what this Bible study is about, too—and that is the picture God sees for your life!

#### A DIFFERENT KIND OF BIBLE STUDY

The four-week Bible study you're holding invites you to go deeply into God's Word to see how Jesus' teaching on fruitfulness, found in John 15, is supported and explained by the whole of Scripture. Besides being biblically based and felt-needs oriented, the study has several key distinctives:

*It's topical.* We focus on the biblical ways to seek and experience greater spiritual fruitfulness so that we can do God's work in the world. You won't find, for example, a book study or an in-depth approach to theology or doctrine.

*It's conversation friendly.* Some questions are information based. Some are intended simply to provoke a helpful discussion.

*It's designed for individual or group use.*

*It's question driven.* Sometimes called the Socratic method, this teaching method pulls you from topic to topic through a sequence of key questions.

*It incorporates several learning approaches.* You'll find inductive studies, fill-in-the-blanks, personal inventories, character profiles, Bible exposition, activity-based assignments, and inspiring quotes.

*It offers optional study plans.* The study presents more learning opportunities than a class can complete in an hour. Select the material that will work best for you. Some groups will want to extend this four-part study to an eight- or twelve-week course.

*It's all about life change.* The whole purpose of studying God's Word is to be changed in our character and our behavior so that we please God more, become more like Christ, and serve Him more every day.

#### BIBLE VERSION

The study, as well as the book it is based on, has been prepared using the New King James Version of the Bible. Using that version privately or in class will ensure convenience and clarity, but it is not required.

## BREAK THROUGH TO THE FRUITFUL LIFE

If you're like most Christians, you may be shocked to learn how actively God pursues fruitfulness in your life. In fact, most Christians are unaware of what God is up to in their lives and therefore remain in the dark about how they can cooperate with Him for results.

But I promise you that by the time you complete the *Secrets of the Vine Bible Study*, you'll know exactly where you are in your spiritual life and what you can do today to break through to the next level of fruitfulness for God.

### HELPING YOU GET AROUND

You'll see three icons used throughout the study to help you use the material more quickly.



*indicates a key verse, definition, or explanation that you won't want to miss.*



*indicates optional material for further study. Use this icon to help you decide what materials you can leave for later.*



*indicates a group process question that focuses on life experience.*

### RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- ◆ *Secrets of the Vine Audio*, read by the author, can provide busy people with an easy way to learn and review the message of the book.
- ◆ *Secrets of the Vine Devotional* (and accompanying *Journal*) by Bruce Wilkinson. This thirty-one-day devotional follows the same four-week structure as the Bible study.
- ◆ If you are a teenager (or have one in your home), I recommend *Secrets of the Vine for Teens*.
- ◆ For children, see the Tommy Nelson products featured in the back of this book.
- ◆ Visit [www.secretsofthevine.com](http://www.secretsofthevine.com) for recent updates from author and publisher, new product updates, inspiring stories from readers, and other information.
- ◆ Also watch for the *Secrets of the Vine Video Series*, available soon from Walk Thru the Bible Ministries and Multnomah Publishers.

If you haven't read *Secrets of the Vine* yet, I highly recommend that you do so right away. You'll benefit even more from your Bible discoveries if you've personally encountered the life-changing truths of the book this study is based on. I also encourage you to enhance your learning experience each day for the next month by following along in the *Secrets of the Vine Devotional* and *Secrets of the Vine Journal*.

As you move from page to page in the days ahead, remember that God didn't just save you from death; He saved you for a specific and important life. And as you listen closely to Jesus' words, you'll discover exactly what that is. May God bless you *abundantly!*

—Bruce Wilkinson

*Week One*

## FRUITFULNESS

WHAT GOD WANTS FROM  
THE BRANCH OF YOUR LIFE

*“You did not choose Me,  
but I chose you and appointed  
you that you should go  
and bear fruit, and that your  
fruit should remain.”*

JOHN 15:16



### RECOMMENDED READING

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*Secrets of the Vine, Chapters 1–2*  
*Secrets of the Vine Devotional, Week 1*



# GETTING STARTED

What if God chose you for a specific and important mission, but you didn't know what it was?

What if God was at work in your life to help you succeed in your mission, but because you didn't understand His ways, you spent a lot of time and energy sabotaging your own future?

Talk about wasted potential! Unfortunately, too many Christians find themselves in just such a predicament. But there's good news. Jesus gave us a memorable picture of exactly what God expects from our lives, how He is at work *right now* to make it happen, and how we can cooperate to see extraordinary results.

In this Bible study, we're going to explore what Jesus told His best friends in a vineyard the night He was betrayed. His topic was fruitfulness. That may not be a word you've used before to describe your life, but it's a subject that was foremost in Jesus' mind that night.

You see, God didn't just save you *from* judgment and death. He saved you *to* a wonderful and important life. He wants your life to produce a life-harvest for Him today. It's a mission that will make a difference for eternity. And, as you'll discover, your greatest personal fulfillment will come when you reach for it with all your heart.

## THIS WEEK YOU'LL DISCOVER...

- ◆ what God wants you to produce with your life.
- ◆ what the Bible means by "fruitfulness."
- ◆ how important your fruitfulness is to God.
- ◆ how proactive God is in your life today to help you succeed at your mission of fruitfulness.
- ◆ the four different levels of fruitfulness for believers.
- ◆ what you can do to cooperate with God's amazing plan.

# 1. WHAT DO I BELIEVE ABOUT WHAT MY LIFE SHOULD “PRODUCE” FOR GOD?

1. *What have you accomplished in your life so far that might be eternally important from God’s point of view? Why did you pick what you did?*

## MY LIFE HARVEST INVENTORY

2. *The following Life Harvest Inventory will reveal what you believe to be true about what you’re supposed to produce for God. Score yourself using this standard: Strongly disagree. ② Slightly disagree. ③ Unsure. ④ Agree. ⑤ Strongly agree.*

- \_\_\_ Accepting Christ is just the beginning of God’s plans for my life.
- \_\_\_ God wants my life to add up to a *significant* harvest for His kingdom.
- \_\_\_ God wants me to know what He expects from my life and to understand how to cooperate with Him every day.
- \_\_\_ Trying hard to stay busy and productive doesn’t guarantee that I’m pleasing God or that I’m doing what really counts for eternity.
- \_\_\_ God wants me to live up to my potential life harvest so much that He will intervene in my life to help me produce a big crop.

\_\_\_ **YOUR SCORE:** Total the values assigned to the five statements. If you scored...

21–25 **PRIZEWINNING HARVEST.**

*You can expect a bumper crop.*

16–20 **PROMISING CROP.**

*You’re headed for a good showing.*

11–15 **POOR PICKINGS.**

*You’re a little confused about how to get results.*

5–10 **PLUM EMPTY.**

*You need to make a change, and soon!*

## “ ” TALK POINT “ ”

Who do you know that is making a significant difference for God?

What is it about this person’s life that seems so important?

What are some of the traits that you would like to have said about you?