

# Vine and Branches #2 'Life in the Vine'

by A.W. Tozer

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*To bear fruit, we must have a vital, living union with Christ and abide in Him.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 22:11-14, John 15:1-7, Galatians 5:22-23, Revelation 3:1

**Topics:** "Abiding in Christ", "Fruitfulness in Faith"

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## Description

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the vital relationship between Jesus as the True Vine and believers as branches, underscoring that branches must bear fruit to demonstrate their connection to Him. He explains that while God is self-sufficient, He desires branches to express His glory and blessings to the world. Tozer warns against being a non-fruit-bearing branch, which signifies a lack of true union with Christ, and he encourages believers to examine their relationship with Him to ensure it is genuine and fruitful. He highlights that true fruit is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life, characterized by love, joy, peace, and other virtues. The sermon calls for authenticity in faith, rejecting artificiality and encouraging a real, living connection with Christ.

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## Transcript

"Life in the Vine"

Sunday, February 5, 1956

By way of emphasis, I would mention the coming of the Kings. Their purpose for being here is to examine missionary candidates. We're hoping to send out 102 missionaries this year, which will run our list of missionaries very considerably over 800, which puts us up among the largest missionary societies in the world. We trust that God will enable us to do this. And these men are coming from the foreign department to meet and examine candidates, that is, give them theological examinations and other such examinations as you're usually given for ordination. And that will be done in the daytime. Mr. McAfee is to sit in on that council that examines. And then in the evening in this auditorium, we will not meet in the old building; there will not be room, but in this room, and it will be not this coming Wednesday. Brother McAfee made that very plain, but just for those who might have missed it. It will be one week from this Wednesday, the eighth of February. And we expect everybody out.

Now, I'm continuing to talk about the vine and the branches. And I'd like to have you turn to the fifteenth chapter of John and we will read together. Oh, we'd better make it responsively because we do better that way, and then all read the seventh verse together. John 15:1-7, I am the True Vine and My Father is the

Husbandman. 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. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. "I am the Vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

Now for the Sunday nights before us in addition to the two messages already given on the vine and the branches, I want one night to talk about the purging and what that purging is. And then of course I can't pass up the seventh verse, If ye abide in Me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you. And so on, there will be very much rich truth here I am sure and I hope I'll be able to unearth it for you.

Now, our Lord says every branch that beareth not fruit, and I want to talk for a little while about that. He mentioned it twice here, or mentioned it once and mentioned the abiding not in Him. Now to begin, we have before our vision the picture of a vine with its branches. Everybody has seen that somewhere. And let us note that the one purpose of a branch is to bear fruit. There is the vine, its roots deep down into the earth and it draws the sweet moisture from the soil. And it goes up into the vine and it contains tremendous potentialities. There's the sweet juice with its nourishment, nourishment that if it were necessary, I think one could live on for a considerable length of time outside of perhaps starch and one or two other things. It has so many of the qualities necessary to nourishment. And in addition to the sweet tasting juices and the nourishment, there is the marvelous flavor.

Anything flavored with grape is satisfactory with me. I like the flavor of it and always have from the day that I used to climb up into the vines, up into the tree. We had them out on arbors as they have there, and as they do where they raise grapes really. Our grapes were the Isabel grapes they called them, The Concord, or the big blue ones, but these were a little smaller and a little more pungent. And we used to climb up into the tree and sit and eat until it was a wonder we didn't fall out. And from that hour to this hour, anything with the flavor of grape is all right with me. But this is all in the vine, but it can't get out of the vine. There it is, with all those potentialities, locked up in the vine.

Now, the vine can't possibly express what is in it. No matter what its earnest desire might be; if such a vine could ever desire, it can't get out of itself. It's locked up there. It cannot express itself alone. A branch is the vine's faculty for expressing itself. The branch is the vine's outlet for its locked up juices, its rich nourishment, its wondrous flavor. The vine has it all, but it can't get it out to the public so that the branch gives outlet to the riches of the vine. Now, we apply that to our Lord Jesus Christ, for He did it Himself and said that He was the vine, and we are the branches.

So, our Lord Jesus Christ stands the true vine in contradistinction to the false vines and all the artificial vines; He is the True Vine. But left to Himself and as He is, He cannot express Himself to the world. He cannot. The world never dreams what's in Jesus Christ any more than a man walking by a vine who had never tasted grapes or seeing the beauty of the grape, or smelled the sweet flavor and fragrance of, have tasted the flavor and smelled the fragrance of the grape, would never dream what was locked up in that vine.

So, the world cannot dream, and does not, what is in Jesus Christ for them that love Him. He must have what He calls branches in order that there may be an outlet for Him to the world; that they might show forth the excellency of Him that called him out of darkness into His marvelous light. He must have someone or ones through whom He can flow; who can act for Him, what the branch acts in the same function that the branch acts for the vine, to be the bud and give forth a flower, and then finally, to eventuate in the fruit itself.

Now that is the indication that we're necessary to Jesus Christ. Now somebody will immediately remember last Wednesday night's message, and they will say, there he goes again contradicting himself, because I talked about the self-sufficiency of God. And I said that God didn't need anybody, and that God didn't need anything, and that God had no necessary relation to anything, and that God did not need any creature in the universe. Now I say, that Jesus Christ needs the branches that He might express Himself out to the world. You'll find the contradiction there. The close thinkers will see there's no contradiction, but for those who may be, have a headache and be foggy, I'll explain what I mean.

God, the eternal God, or His Son, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity, considered in themselves, or God in Himself, as the self-originating, the or great original, needs nobody, needs nothing. Creation never set Him on a higher throne so that if all the creatures in His universe were suddenly to be snapped out of being into everlasting emptiness, and fall away into cosmic dust and cease to be, it will not affect God that much. Absolutely not, because God being God cannot lose anything from Himself. And if all vast worlds were to be swept away and rolled and beaten back into the vacuity out of which they came, God would still be God, for God needs no supports. But, if God is going to let the world know what's in Him; if God out of the sovereign self-sufficiency is going to path out to the created world the beauties of His nature and is going to let them know what He is like, then God must have branches. Jesus Christ stands alone and stood alone and rose from the dead magnificently, and is absolutely going His undisturbed way, regardless of what men do, or angels or devils do.

So, Jesus Christ does not need for His own self-support anybody. But if He's going to feed His glories out to the world and let the thirsty, dying world taste of His beauty, then He has to have branches. Now, there's no contradiction. I hope you'll see it, and if you can't see it, then you wouldn't be able to see it if I talk for twenty minutes on the subject. So, we'll pass on and say that Jesus needs the branches. He does not need them for Himself, but He needs them if He's going to bless the world with them. I wonder if I could give an illustration of what I mean.

Suppose that there is a river. The old mother or father of waters, I forget which, Mississippi. And there it rolls, rolled out and down and into the Gulf. Now that river doesn't need anything much, if anything, it's getting on all right. But suppose that that river got an impulse to bless a wheat field or an orange grove, or some other of the groves, orchards or fields. That Mississippi would have to have an irrigation canal. Somebody would have to come up there and stand and watch the old Mississippi rolling like the Jordan, on out to the Gulf into the ocean. He would stand in awe and say, what a magnificent sight, how broad she is, and how she rolls on in her calm majesty. She didn't need him. She didn't need anybody. But, if she wanted to bless the the country around about, she'd have to have canals that her water can flow out.

So, Jesus Christ, the great Lord of glory rolls on in His magnificence and beauty. And He doesn't need anybody, but if He's going to bless others, He must have somebody. So God has put branches on Him. And those branches are the people that He redeems. Now, it says here, if any branch that beareth not fruit; let's talk a little while about that, the non-bearing branch.

Now what is that non-bearing branch? Think again about the vine. And if you've ever noticed closely you would see in the Spring that some of those branches were rooted in, or went clear in and joined to the life of the vine. And there were other branches that were stiff and shriveled, and apparently did not have connection with the life of the vine. The juice was not flowing into them. It was flowing into the others, but it was not flowing into them. They had not a vital connection with the vine. And so of course, the only thing you could do with them was to cut them off. That growth, that freak, that artificial branch, that branch that had not living union with the vine. For Jesus Christ our Lord cannot pass His life out to the world through those who are merely professing to be His children, or those who do not receive the Spirit from Jesus. They must be those who are joined to Jesus by a vital union.

Now when I say vital, I mean it exactly. I mean life union, union of life, life with life. Now, who is this person? Well, he is the Christian in name only. Revelation 3:1, if you will turn there you will find this passage. And unto the angel of the church in Sardis, writes, these things said He that had the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest and are dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. For I have not found thy works perfect. Evidently then, it's possible to be a branch in name and not be a branch in fact. Thou hast the name that thou livest and are dead; nominally a branch, actually approached protuberance, a growth, some sort of a freak there that was never joined and is not joined to the living, pulsating heart of the vine.

Now, that's what it is. And you will find in Matthew 22:11, if you will turn there, this. Well, our Lord said this, that he there was a certain man and he made a feast, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

Now there we have under another figure all together a picture of the gathering of the saints, apparently, and here was one who had not on a wedding garment. He had crashed the gate. He had pushed in. He was a guest that wasn't invited. He was there by his own will, but had never apparently yielded to the will of the host, for he did not come dressed for the occasion. So, they threw him out. Now, that's an illustration of what we mean here. That is, the branch that beareth not fruit is one that has some other relationship to Christ than a vital relationship. It has some other relationship than a living relationship. It may have a traditional relationship for instance.

Some people have a traditional relationship to Christ. Their grandfather was a Christian, and their father was a Christian, and they're Christians. And they're going to see that their children are Christians. But they're Baptists or they're Presbyterians or they are Alliance, or something else. And they say, my

grandfather was one and my father and I am. And so they maintain toward Christ a traditional relationship. Maybe they don't even go that far. Maybe they're simply members of a society that's called Christian as in England or Scotland or Wales or the United States or Canada; people that by nationality are Christian. So they're traditionally Christians, but they have no vital union to Christ at all. They are not joined to Him by living union, traditional Christians and brother there are an awful lot of them.

Then there are ecclesiastical Christians, Christians that are Christians by manipulation. Somebody has done something to them when they were young, or a little later. And so they're Christians by ecclesiastical manipulation or worrying of ecclesiastical machinery has made them Christians. They have been baptized when they were babies, or they have been confirmed when they were twelve, or they have had something done to them by the ecclesiastical authorities, but it has not made them members of the vine. It has not brought them into living union with the Vine, only church union, not living union.

And then some people, as I've pointed out, have an emotional relation to Christ. Their relation is only emotional. Oh, there's an awful lot of that. You find a lot of that in hymnology, and a lot of that in poetry, and a lot of it among people. Jesus, I remember one time hearing a Jewish rabbi who was not a Christian. He was not a Christian at all. He said so and he lived and died a rabbi in the Jewish church, one of the great rabbis of his generation. I was always glad I got to hear that man, glad I got to look into that great face and see that tall forehead and hear that magnificent Oregon voice, Rabbi Wise who died maybe 15 years ago. But he was a great man, a great, great thinker, great man. I heard him preach.

And long toward the end of his sermon, this great Rabbi stretched out his arms wide and began talking about Jesus. And he said, "this Jesus is the finest product of the Jewish race, and I, for my part, though a Jew, I throw my arms around Him and embrace the son of Israel, the finest product of the Jewish people." And yet he lived and died wholly without Christ. He admired Christ the way you would admire Lincoln. He admired Christ the way German admires Gathig. He admired Christ the way an Englishman admires Shakespeare. He admires Christ the way the Democrats admired Roosevelt, and Republicans admire the General, purely emotion. The heart goes out, and they say, well, this is wonderful, this, this Jesus. Let's study Him. Let's analyze Him. Let's read His books. Let's, let's see what He wrote. Let's read the Sermon on the Mount. Let's integrate His philosophy into our living. And so they are emotionally attached to Jesus.

And they're not true branches of the vine either; any branch in Me that beareth not fruit. Why doesn't the branch bear fruit? Because it does not have a vital, living union with vine. So, it's possible to have an emotional relationship to Jesus, and a philosophical. I have covered it all most. It's entirely possible to have a philosophical relation to Jesus Christ. You know, there are two kinds of philosophy. There's speculative philosophy and there's moral philosophy. Speculative philosophers, such men as Spinoza and his type, they speculate on things. They think about the heavens and matter and atoms and stars. They're speculative philosophers. Then there are the moral philosophers, moral philosophers. I quoted to the young people downstairs, old Confucius. He was not a religious man. He was a moral philosopher. So was Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus and Franklin and Seneca. So it's entirely possible to take the moral philosophy of Jesus Christ, the moral philosophy of non-aggression and of non-defense, and of meekness and humility. That's the philosophy of Jesus. It's a moral philosophy.

I was reading to Ed this morning. He came bouncing in and was, Ed Maxey was talking to me about Plato. And I told him that one of the great men of the past, one of the greatest moral philosophers of the past, had been a great lover and follower of Plato, Marcus Aurelius. And I found a volume of Marcus Aurelius and I said, now Ed, when I get done reading these marked passages you won't think you're Christian. So I

began to read Marcus Aurelius, a standard for a human character. My brethren, it was so infinitely lofty, so much higher than the average church member ever knows, that you're ashamed to read it and compare yourself with the ideas of a common Roman pagan.

But of course, the Sermon on the Mount rises beyond anything Marcus Aurelius ever knew. It rises beyond Seneca or with any of the rest of them. Nobody, nobody had the philosophy Jesus had, the moral philosophy. And there are those who adopt Jesus' moral philosophy. And their relationship to Jesus is the relationship of a patronist to Plato, of a stoic to Marcus Aurelius. That isn't enough, he beareth not fruit.

Then there's the aesthetic. I'll be brief there because the average rank and file aren't affected much that way. But some people love beauty. They're greatly affected by beauty, the beauty of a sunset, the beauty of a starry night, the beauty of a poem, the beauty of music. It affects them, affects them emotionally, aesthetically. And there's something about Jesus, the story of His life. The beauty of Luke's beautiful story concerning Him.

The book of Luke is said to be the most beautiful story and the most beautiful book in the world. And it's the most beautiful book in the world and that passage in the second chapter, There were shepherds abiding in the field keeping watch over their flock by night and so on, is probably the most beautiful passage ever penned by mortal man. And that gets a hold of some people. It just affects them. They're aesthetically affected. Their sense of beauty and proportion and line and tone and color and form and perspective. Even if it never gets on canvas, in their own heads, they think of Jesus. How marvelously, He lived, how wonderfully He stood, how beautifully He taught, how charming was His effect upon His world, how He stands head and shoulders, and the cross of Christ towers o'er the wrecks of time. All the light of sacred story gathers around His head sublime.

There are whole churches in the city of Chicago, prosperous, prosperous churches. Well to do, prosperous churches. Their only relation to Jesus is an aesthetic relation. They can sing, in the cross of Christ I glory, and dream and wonder and look with aesthetic appreciation upon the beauty that is Jesus, but they're not united to Jesus by living union. They laugh at you if you talk to them about it. They'd say, born again, new birth, get away, that's old fashioned theology. We don't believe in it.

Now, what is the test of the true life? It's fruit bearing. The only way you can be sure that that branch is joined to the vine is if it bears fruit. We'll believe there will be tendrils, there will be buds and finally there will be fruit. And if the true renewal is taking place, if the life union has been established, if we are joined to Christ by a living union, then we will bear some kind of fruit. Somebody says, what kind of fruit is it Mr. Tozer? Do you mean, get out and get busy for the Lord? Do you mean, run from house to house pushing bells? You can do that. That's a good practice and it's good and some people are won that way.

What do you mean Mr. Tozer? I don't mean activity at all. We're not talking about activity here. Fruit is not something the branch does. It's something that branch exudes. The branch is passive, and the vine working through the branch produces the fruit. If He was talking about some other angle, He would use a different figure of speech. But He's talking now about fruit. Now what is the fruit of the Holy Ghost? The fruit of the juices, the fruit of the vine, that which when it comes out, tells what the vine is like? What is it?

What is that which, when it appears in the Christian in any degree, tells what Jesus is like. I don't have to guess. I can give it to you: love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. There they are, Galatians 5:22-23. You say that's the fruit of the Spirit. Well, it's the Holy Ghost that is the liquid, the juice that flows out of Jesus Christ through His branches and out to produce

fruit for the world to see and smell and taste and touch and love and appreciate. Love instead of hate, joy instead of pessimism and gloom, peace instead of fear and anxiety, long suffering instead of impatience and churlishness, gentleness instead of violence and harshness, goodness instead of selfishness and sin, faith instead of doubt and unbelief, meekness instead of arrogance and self assertiveness, temperance instead of self-indulgence; the fruit of the Spirit.

If any branch bears not fruit, fruit of love, if any branch bears not fruit, fruit of joy, if any branch bears not fruit, the fruit of peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness. If any branch bears not the fruit, the meekness and temperance and faith, He taketh it away. It has not been indeed a branch and He doesn't reckon it so. And He will say I knew you not. But Lord, did not we speak in Thy name? Lord, quoting now, Lord did not we do wonders in Thy name? He says, I never knew you because you've never been joined to Me in vital union. I've never known you as the vine knows the living branches. I don't know you. You've imitated me. You've admired me. You've been a part of the traditional Christendom that's named by My name. But I personally don't know you. You're not joined to me. You're not, you're not a part of my Living Life. And He knows it all the time, and we can know it by the absence of the fruit of the Spirit. That kind of teaching or school of thought that makes the fruit of the Spirit to be some far-off starry dream that we can hope for and never receive, I think that's as bad as heresy.

The fruit of the Spirit is to the Christian, what grapes are to the branch and the branch that doesn't produce fruit year after year, and still no fruit, it's not a branch at all. It has no living union. So, they just wap that off and throw it away. But you say Mr. Tozer, I think I have some of that fruit. I think I noticed some things in my life. I have times of joy in the Lord. I have a peace I didn't know before. I think I'm more patient than I was though I still feel impatience. I'm gentler than I used to be, though I still am afraid I'm a little harsh and I think I'm meaker than I was, but there's still a little self-assertiveness. You say, does that rule me out? Oh, I'll anticipate next week's little talk and notice here, every branch that beareth fruit He purges it that it may bring forth more fruit.

No, it doesn't mean that every branch bears as much fruit as every other branch. It doesn't mean that if it bears, it's all or none. It doesn't mean that a Christian bears all the fruits of the Spirit in full degree or else none. But it means that it bears none, and they're not true Christians and are taken away. He taketh it away, taketh it away. For a while it remains and hangs there. See, this is pretty familiar ground to me. I was fifteen years old when I left the farm. And I used to see those men work and I know how they did it. I never studied horticulture in a college or I wouldn't know this much about it. But, I was there in person and looked on and saw it and lived with it. And I saw how men do with things. And I've seen, I've seen what we call them, "the corn suckers." Some of you don't know what that means. You think it's a fish, but it's not. It is a false thing that shouldn't be there, and my Father used to set me to pull them away and I loved to do it. Get rid of them. Get rid of them and they're no good. They never bear.

So, they got pulled loose because they didn't belong there. And so with other branches, they didn't belong, tomato plants even. A wise truck farmer will look at his tomato plant and know what's going to bear tomatoes and what isn't, then he'll just use his prune. Why, why leave it there to clutter up the ground? He trims it back. So, he taketh it away. He trims back his vine.

Now, I have a little exhortation to you for the next five minutes. My friends, this is the day of synthetics. I'm not gonna have anything to do with what heaven is going to be like or the New Jerusalem or the Millennium. I haven't anything to say. The Lord didn't didn't call me in on that. That's one board I don't sit on. He planned all that in Christ Jesus before the world began, and I don't know anything, what anything is

going to be like. But knowing God Almighty and how He runs things, I think I could kind of sort of deduce one thing. There won't be any synthetics there. There won't be anything that's ersatz. Is that the right German word?

We got that during the second World War. It means artificial. They made artificial beefsteak and artificial leather and artificial everything. They all it ersatz, or that's how they spell it in German, I mean, pronounced in German. Now. I'm sure there won't be any up there. Knowing God, I'm absolutely positive there won't be any synthetics there. There won't be any plastics there. And when you lay hold of something wooden, it will be wooden. And when you look at something natural, it'll be real. But we have learned how to make everything artificial to a point where we're living like monkeys in the zoo. You can be born and live and die and never see a natural thing except a bird flying overhead, if you can see him through the smog. Born in a hospital, brought up on a sidewalk, die in another hospital, wheeled to a mortuary, taken to a field where they've got artificial grass on it. It fools nobody, put down in the ground, screwed down, covered up and forgotten.

But I don't think God ever meant it to be like that my brother. I think old John Milton was right when he said God made the country, and man made the city. Some farmer down there said, amen. And I am sure I'm positive that God is going to give us a real heaven, a real heaven, whatever it is, it is going to be real. And the old man of God said in the Old Testament, better a living dog than the dead lion. So I would rather have a small piece of something real than a big chunk of something artificial. This is the day of artificial things. You don't know anything anymore. Color and sound and motion have made fools of us all.

When you hear horses running on the radio, you don't hear horses running brother. Get that out of your mind. That's all from fellows sitting around a desk with rubber suckers doing that. When you hear it raining on the radio, it isn't raining, sounds and colors. I got my eyes open when the World Fair was on back there so many years ago. We walked up to a building and tap it with your knuckles and go bong, bong, bong; hollow, completely hollow, and the whole thing was hollow. You can take nothing and turn a lot of highly colored revolving lights on it and you've got the kingdom of God and the angel Gabriel. Poor fools that we are we are taken in by colored lights in motion, by hollow, painted shells by artificialities and pretenses and sounds.

I can see God Almighty rolling up a rope and getting after these cattle and driving them out of the temple of His universe into the hell where they belong. And we'll go back to the creation things as God made them. And I believe the trees that are beside the river yonder that have given their leaves for the healing of the nation are not going to be ersatz. They're going to be the real thing. I believe the golden streets are either going to be gold or something more real than gold. If gold, that's only a figure I don't know, but if it's only a figure, then it's a figure of something more wonderfully real than gold and gold is one of the elements.

So would everything else. Brethren, are going to get taken in on our religion too? I've been hearing fellows try to sell automobiles. I'm just human enough, I wouldn't ride in one of them. I wouldn't buy one. Two or three or four, you never can tell, fellows all excited talking so fast that you couldn't get a period or a punctuation mark in between words, yelling at the top of their voice, back and forth back and forth like the male three witches of Macbeth, yelling back and forth to each other about this automobile. They're all excited everybody on the dead run selling an automobile. I wouldn't buy one. I'd buy another one just because I wouldn't want to be taken in. You know, to keep myself respect. Then I hear a radio, religious service come on, and the very same technique learned from the announcers. A fellow arrives suddenly in

the studio on a dead run, panting with excitement. He's got himself a religious meeting. Oh, you're in too big a hurry Junior. Sit down and cool off. Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted in the earth.

God Almighty wouldn't allow any priests to serve in the Old Testament with wool undergarments on. He said don't wear wool I don't want you to sweat. God didn't want any priests to sweat when he was in the holy place offering the sacrifice, as much as to say I don't run my Kingdom on human sweat, human excitement and all that. That we do down here now in these terrible days of backsliding and all the rest, so that a person is very likely to grow old and die and find he's been the victim of plastic religion, synthetic spirituality, ersatz worship, artificial. Boy, you can't be too sure of yourself.

We have artificial color and artificial flavor and artificial wood, artificial silk and artificial smiles. I have never seen very many TV programs. I've looked at a few when I've been in hotels where they have them, and one or two homes. But I've often wondered how anybody could be as happy as those. Everybody has to be happy. Everybody has a smile, everybody. There isn't anybody around that are taking life seriously. Everybody's got a got a plastic smile. Artificial cheerfulness, artificial enthusiasm, artificial prayer, artificial godliness, synthetic piety, artificial spirituality. Every branch that beareth not fruit, He taketh away.

And if a man lives not in Me, that's what the word abide means. It doesn't mean continue to stay; it means live. If any man live not in Me, he is not joined to me by a living union, he's cast forth as a branch and is withered. And men gather them and cast them into the fire and they're burned. Here we are with a few hundred people on a Sunday night. Twice as much as some places, but certainly smaller than a few others in the city. If somebody wanted to be discouraged and say, I think the place should be packed out and we should have a bigger building.

Hold it Brethren, hold it. We better have a smaller group of reality than a vast number of synthetics. I'd rather know that a small number of people were joined in living union to the Vine and were being nourished there and kept there, than to have the whole world talking about us. Let the world pass by and think what they will. We know God. We want to know Him, and we want our religion to be real. No artificiality. No, no, no synthetics, no plastics, nothing created by the genius of man. Something that comes up out of the life of God and flows out through the living men and women, out to give forth fruit in some degree.

Don't be discouraged if you haven't gotten as much as Tom Hare say, or some other good man, you know, as much love as Tom has. He loves everybody. It makes me sick when I think how little love I got. Joy, I've met Christians that were so happy all the time. Peace, long suffering, they had in large measure these things, but you have them in some measure, maybe. If you don't have them in any measure, then you may be sure that you're a branch that never was joined to the vine and are not now in living union with the Vine. Where do you stand? May God help you. We're going to pray in closing.

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# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

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