

READY TO GROW

January 11, 2026

INTRODUCTION

New Series: Ready for Next

There's a purpose God wants to accomplish in and through our lives
Individually and as a church

Requires intentionality: Living with purpose and on purpose

Requires conviction: Faith that moves and motivates

Requires determination: Willingness to endure to overcome

Last Week:

Ready to Move

KEY POINT: Tomorrow's victories begin with today's prayers

This Week:

READY TO GROW

Biggest room in the world: room for improvement

KEY POINT: There's something God wants to work in us because there's something He wants to do through us

If we are going to be ready for NEXT there's some growing each of us needs to do

Character, capacities, and competencies

TEXT: John 15:1-16

Setting: This is the last night before the crucifixion of Jesus
He has gathered with his followers to ready what is ahead

He has washed their feet, setting an example and preparing them for the coming of the Holy Spirit
Last words are lasting words

1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.2He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.3You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.4Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.6If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.7If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.8This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.10If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.11I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.12My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.13Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.14You are my friends if you do what I command.15I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.16You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

Three key ideas about being ready to grow:

- **The Father's wants our lives to be fruitful**

Jesus begins this section of his teaching with the last of His "I AM" Statements—revealing something essential to his character and nature

I AM THE TRUE VINE...

Vine—metaphor for God's people and connected with
God's purpose

My father is the gardener

Creating spaces and interacting with the vine to produce good fruit

"He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while
every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be
more fruitful"

Cleaning and clearing

Isaiah 5:4 "When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield
only bad?"

The fruit isn't for the vine but for the gardener

For his glory and purpose

Making us to be a blessing

For our lives to reflect the life of Christ

Our connection is to grow our character

His glory and purpose

'The gracious indwelling of God with his people is not an invitation to settle
down and forget the rest of the world: it is a summons to mission, for the Lord
who dwells with his people is the one who goes before them in the pillar of fire
and cloud.'¹

Difficulty for flourishing

Pruning for purpose

Not everything that happens to us is what God wills, but in
everything for us God wills something good

HEB. 12:11-12

"...God disciplines us for our good, in order that
we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems
pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on,

¹ Bruce Milne, *The Message of John: Here Is Your King!: With Study Guide*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 219.

however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

The father wants our lives to be fruitful
For his glory and purpose

- **Fruitfulness requires our involvement**

Wishful thinking – growth without effort
Wealth without work, wisdom without instruction, strength without struggle

- **DEVOTION**

Growing fruit flows from connection with Christ

Fruitfulness from faithfulness
"Remain in me..." Ongoing abiding
ABIDING WITH

v. 7 "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you."
To Jesus
To His Word
To Prayer

- **DISCIPLINE**

If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love... (v. 10)
Keeping, guarding, watching: call to attentiveness –
Intentional focus
Disciplining ourselves for what is good rather than just living toward our wants and whims

- **DELIGHT**

Connection with Jesus produces joy—delight
Relationship is not rooted in duty, drudgery, dread
DUTY: I have to...rather, I get to

DRUDGERY: It's a burden to follow Jesus

DREAD: it's something I don't enjoy

Christianity isn't something you just have to endure but something you can enjoy!

Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart

Relationship realigns desires

Fruitfulness requires our involvement

- **We've been chosen to make a difference**

"You did not choose me, but I have chosen you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit, fruit that will last..." v. 16

God had chosen us for His purpose

Called to make a difference!

KEY POINT: There's something God wants to work in us because there's something He wants to do through us

READY TO GROW

1. Prioritize your relationship with Jesus

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (v. 5)

The impact of our life is to flow through our relationship with Jesus

Taking time to worship, read, and pray

2. Focus on a fruit to grow

Working God to grow our lives

So much growth...where to start?

Pick an area of life to grow intentionally

Begin with the character pieces more than the content pieces

Gal. 5:22-23

22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Spirit helps us

3. Don't waste your difficulties

"He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful." (v. 2)

What is surfacing? Worries, harshness,
Words, attitudes, actions

Using our challenges/difficulties as a catalyst for personal growth
Less concerned about others, more concerned about me

4. Live for His purpose

The fruit is not for the benefit of the vine but of the gardener
God wants to use our lives to be a blessing to others

Letting using our lives for His purpose

CONLUSION

KEY POINT: There's something God wants to work in us because there's something He wants to do through us

If we are going to be ready for next, we need to be ready to grow

Character, capacities, and competencies

- The Father wants our lives to be fruitful
- Fruitfulness requires our involvement
- We've been chosen to make a difference

As we begin another year, let it be a year of growth
May we bear good fruit for His glory and purpose!

RESPONSE: Lord, may my relationship with you produce good fruit so that others may know your grace and goodness!