

LABOR OR LOVE

John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing."

In his devotional book "Experiencing God Day-By-Day", Henry Blackaby makes a sobering declaration- "In our zeal to produce 'results' for our Lord, we sometimes become so intent on fruit production that we neglect abiding in Christ."

We must never forget with all of our being that Christ is not a theology, force, a Bible study, He is a person. To become so obsessed with the Christian life without recognizing the personhood of Christ, is to miss the greatest part of the Christian walk. Ours is to be obsessed with His personhood- knowing Him, living in vital relationship with Him by close communion. If our goal in life is to produce fruit rather than staying intimately close to Christ, we will notice a strange and sad thing happening to our lives- we will become fruitless. Yet, if our goal is to know Christ more and more, then our life will produce fruit.

There are many unique lessons about the branch, yet one primary lesson is this- the branch is not told to produce fruit. It's only job requirement is to allow the sap run freely through it. As a result of the sap running through the branch, there is a small fruit that begins to form.

As we stay close to the Lord, walk intimately with our Lord and are open to our Lord, we will notice without realizing how much fruit has been realized with seemingly little effort. Why? Because it is the nature and character of an intimate walk with the Lord to produce abundant fruit. However, there is a great danger in the Christian world- to become preoccupied with productivity to the point that we squelch the most important part of life- abiding.