

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 465

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will be about "branches". This simple truth can transform your life! Jesus said: **"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing"** (John 15:5). This is simple, yet profound. Jesus chose to allow mortal man to participate with Him in the work of God. He didn't have to do it that way, but He did. Note that the Vine does not bear fruit, the branches do! Our Sovereign Creator did not need the help of man for anything. In His infinite wisdom, however, he permitted Adam to dress and keep the garden. God could have easily done it Himself, or assigned the task to angels, but He didn't. God chose instead to train Adam and trust him with responsibility. The Bible puts it like this: **"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it, and take care of it"** (Gen. 2:15).

God is omniscient and omnipotent. He could have created fruit any way He wanted to, but He chose to do so by means of branches. In much the same way, He obviously wants to involve man in what He is doing. Consider Noah. God could have preserved seed upon the earth in an infinite number of ways. He chose, however, to involve Noah. God created the heavens and the earth in only six days, and yet it took Noah 120 years to build the ark. God could have built the ark quicker and better, but He honored Noah with this critical responsibility. For Noah, it was a wonderful privilege, not merely a job. Every child enjoys a challenge and treasures time he spends with a loving father.

Paul described Christians as "God's fellow workers" (1 Cor. 3:9). The branch cannot bear fruit without the Vine, and the Vine cannot bear fruit without the branches. God in His infinite wisdom and Sovereign will designed it to be this way. Yes! We are laborers together with God! Unfortunately, not everyone wants to be a fruit bearing branch. Apparently we have a choice. If we choose not to abide in the Vine, we will bear no fruit and ultimately be thrown into the fire and burned (Jn. 15:6).

What are you going to choose? Do you want to bear fruit or not? If you want to bear fruit you must abide in the vine. Every parent understands that it takes time and patience to train children. The child's first effort to use a spoon, for example, invariably creates a mess. Because we love our children, however, we clean up their messes and give them another chance. That, of course, is precisely what God does for us. Involving man in the work of God is not easy! If a branch is to bear fruit, as you know, it must abide in the Vine, but the branch will also do better if it is pruned. Throughout all of Bible history God has carefully pruned his branches that they might bear more fruit:

- Isaac had a miraculous birth but he was not born of a virgin. Abraham was his father (Rom. 4:19-22).
- Moses and Aaron played an essential role in liberating the Israelites from Egyptian bondage.
- The walls of Jericho did not fall down until Joshua marched around the city.
- God did not deliver Israel from the worship of Baal without the ministry of Elijah.
- God did not heal Naaman the Syrian without involving a servant girl and the prophet Elisha.
- God did not send Jesus into the world without the help of Mary.
- Jesus did not turn the water into wine until the servants filled six jars with water.
- Jesus did not raise Lazarus from the dead until his friends rolled away the stone.
- Jesus did not preach the gospel to the world, he allowed his apostles to do that.
- The church was not started until Peter preached the gospel.
- Angels did not preach the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch, Philip did.
- God called Paul and his company to help the people of Macedonia.

- God did not give money to the poor saints in Judea, he allowed His branches to do that.
- On Judgment Day: **“the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ (Matt. 25:34-36)**
- God can help those in need any way he wants to, he has chosen, however, to do it through us!
- Annie Johnston Flint said it like this:

*Christ has no hands but our hands to do His work today*

*He has no feet but our feet to lead men in the way*

*He has no tongue but our tongue to tell men how He died*

*He has no help but our help to bring them to His side.*

*We are the only Bible the careless world will read,*

*We are the sinner’s gospel; we are the scoffer’s creed;*

*We are the Lord’s last message, given in word and deed;*

*What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?*

*What if our hands are busy with other work than His?*

*What if our feet are walking where sin’s allurements is?*

*What if our tongue is speaking of things His lips would spurn?*

*How can we hope to help Him or welcome His return?*

Please be a “branch” for Jesus!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce