

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA
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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with maintaining spiritual 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" (Jn. 15:5).** It is not enough to have life, it has to be maintained. The last verse of chapter 14 tells us that Jesus and His disciples left the upper room. On their way to Gethsemane it seems they passed through a vineyard. They may have even seen a pile of branches pruned and withering. How poignant that Jesus would remind them that He was the vine and they were the branches. Just as dead branches bear no fruit, His disciples had to "remain" in contact with Christ in order to be fruitful.

There was a time when science "believed" in the spontaneous generation of life. How else could maggots appear out of no where on a piece of rotten meat? From the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans, throughout the Middle Ages, and even into the late nineteenth century, it was generally accepted that some forms of life arose spontaneously from non-living matter. Spontaneous Generation of life, however, was debunked in 1859 by Louis Pasteur. By a simple but ingenious experiment, he proved that the theory was false. Sadly, the spontaneous generation of life is still the linchpin of evolution. Those who do not "believe" in God are forced to "believe" that at some point in time life spontaneously arose from non living material.

The discoveries of Pasteur are deadly to evolutionists who do not believe in God. At some point they "believe" that somehow like Pinocchio became a "real boy", dead chemicals somehow manifested "real" life. In 1953, University of Chicago graduate student, Stanley Miller, working with Nobel Prize Laureate Harold Urey, in a carefully choreographed experiment, claimed to produce life in the laboratory. They attempted to simulate what they supposed was the make-up of the early atmosphere of earth. By sending an electric spark (simulating lightning) through the mixture they succeeded in producing some simple amino acids. This was heralded as a great triumph for those who "believe" in evolution. Consequently it was dutifully incorporated in textbooks to help students erase the need for God. Dr. John Morris, however, points out that with additional information we now know that their calculations about the earth's early atmosphere were wrong. He concluded: *"The experiment had the wrong starting conditions. It employed the wrong methods. It yielded the wrong products. Other than that, it was a wonderful experiment!"*

Julian the Apostate also tried to produce fruit from a dead branch. He ordered his pagan priests to live like Jesus without having any contact with Christ. He ordered them not to read immoral books or visit taverns. He also required strict chastity, temperance, and hospitality in every area of life. Historian Philip Schaff, however, noted that his efforts failed. Schaff said that the emperor's efforts were like *"galvanizing a decaying corpse, or grafting fresh scions on a dead trunk"*. Dead branches produce no fruit.

In this age of artificial intelligence robots routinely replace factory workers, drones fire missiles, and cars can operate without a driver. Even your cell phone can answer questions. There is, however, not a spark of life in any man made contraption. When your cell phone dies you cannot plant it in the ground and grow another. The gift of life only comes from God.

When a branch is grafted into the vine it is easy to tell if the graft was good and the branch is alive. A living branch produces fruit and a dead one doesn't! There are literally millions of examples

of lives that have been transformed by a life giving contact with Christ. It was not by accident that Saul of Tarsus was transformed into the Apostle Paul. It was not by accident that John Newton quit selling slaves and wrote the hymn “Amazing Grace”. It is not by accident that the Gospel transforms violent tribes into peaceful people. By their fruits you will know them! When someone starts thinking like Jesus and behaving like Jesus, perhaps they have a life giving relationship with Jesus. Christ in you is the hope of glory (Col. 1:27).

When Jesus spoke to His disciples about “remaining” in the Vine Judas was not there. He had already separated himself from Jesus for a measly 30 pieces of silver. The eleven others disciples could also do the same. That’s why Jesus was so emphatic about branches remaining in the Vine.

The same principle also applies to you and me. We too must “remain” in Jesus. When we continue to read the Bible, when we continue to pray, and when continue to go to church, we continue to permit His life giving power to flow into our lives and produce fruit. Like a branch drawing strength from the Vine we flourish when we “remain” in Christ.

Please read the Bible, pray, and go to church! This will help you “remain” in Christ!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce