

HEDGE

Magazine for Deaconess - Dutch Caribbean Union - Year 2022



CONNECTED!

CONTENT:



The True Vine



The Gardener
and Pruning



Ask What Ye Will



It Takes Time



Continue in My love



The Farmer and Hiremen

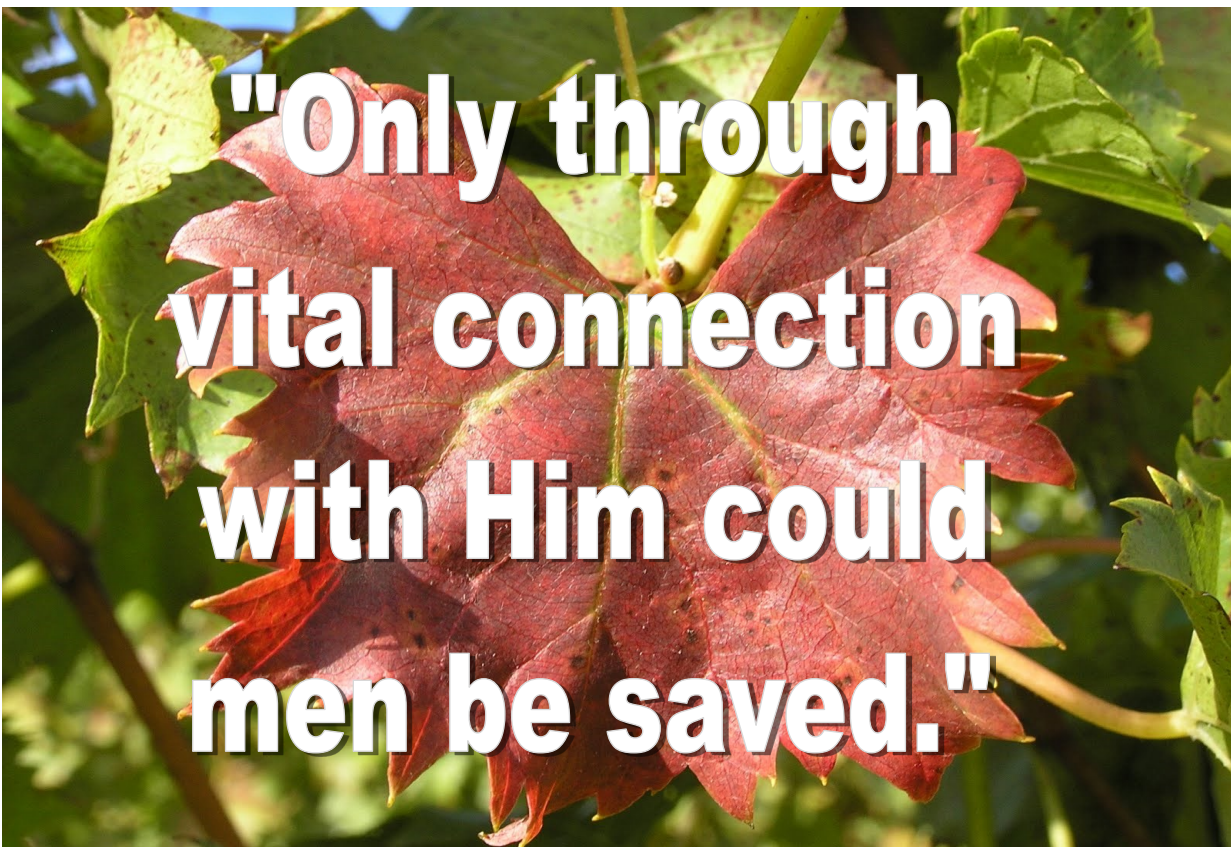


Benefits of Grapes

This magazine is a reminder for us that God stands beside us and according to Job 1:10, He is surrounding the ministerial families and the deaconesses and their respective families. May each article help to set a hedge around our homes, Beside that, we have the responsibility to be thankful and to serve with love. From those who have received much, much is required.

NOTE: All nameless article is contribution of the editor

In Bible imagery Israel had been likened to a vine (Ps. 80:8-16; Isa. 5:1-7; 27:2, 3; Jer. 2:21; 12:10). A golden vine decorated the entrance to Herod's Temple and figures of the leaves of the vine or of clusters of grapes were displayed on coins and architecture. The Jew depended upon their connection with the vine of Israel for their salvation. But Israel had proved unfaithful to its spiritual advantages and had rejected its true king, Jesus. Now Jesus presented Himself as the genuine vine. (5BC 1041, 1042).



What lessons are there in this imagery for us? Let us wander around in the vineyard with Jesus, listen to His simple teachings, and be spiritually refreshed.

Prayerfully,

Anna Maria Manuela Croes



¹ THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL were supposed to have been God's people, but one of their problems was that individuals thought they were secure solely because of their connection with Israel. The modern application would be those who think of the vine as the church and who think that all we have to do to have certainty of eternal life is to be enrolled in the church books or connect with the church. This is why Jesus' words are particularly applicable when He says, "*I am the true vine.*" John 15:1. Take your attention away from the church for the true meaning of this parable and fasten it solidly on the *true* Vine, Jesus Christ.

There is something else interesting about Jesus' choice of the vineyard to portray Himself and His relationship to His people. A Vine is a dependent plant. It does not stand alone, without support. The branches must depend on the vine. But the vine depends upon other support as well. Jesus came to show us how to depend upon another. As He depended upon His Father, so we are to depend on Him.

A vine doesn't receive much glory, credit, and honor. When the vine itself is visible, it's not that attractive. But it provides the connection to the source of nourishment for the branches, and it's amazing to discover that the branches, with all their green leaves in the spring and summertime, and their bright colors in the fall, appear more beautiful than the vine.

The vine is simply another symbol of the One who made Himself of no reputation, who took upon himself the form of a servant, and who was willing to minister to others rather than to draw attention to Himself.

IDENTITY WITH CHRIST NEEDED ²

The branches in the True Vine are the believers who are brought into oneness by connection with the Vine. The connection of the branches with one another and with the Vine constitutes them a unity, but this does not mean uniformity in everything.

Unity in diversity is a principle that pervades the whole creation. While there is an individuality and variety in nature, there is a oneness in their diversity; for all things receive their usefulness and beauty from the same Source. The great Master Artist writes His name on all His created works, from the loftiest cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop upon the wall. They all declare His handiwork, from the lofty fountain and the grand ocean to the tiniest shell upon the seashore.

The branches of the vine cannot blend into each other; they are individually separate; yet every branch must be in fellowship with every other if they are united in the same parent stock. They all draw nourishment from the same source; they drink in the same life-giving properties. So each branch of the True Vine is separate and distinct, yet all are bound together in the parent stock. There can be no division. They are all linked together by His will to bear fruit wherever they can find place and opportunity. But in order to do this, the worker must hide SELF. He must not give expression to his own mind and will. He is to express the mind and will of Christ.

The human family is dependent upon God for life and breath and sustenance. God has designed the web, and all are individual threads to compose the pattern. The Creator is one, and He reveals Himself as the great Reservoir of all that is essential for each separate life.



Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us. A mere assent to this union, while the affections are not detached from the world, its pleasures and its dissipations, only emboldens the heart in disobedience (ST Nov. 29, 1910).

GOD MAKES NO COMPROMISE

Until the heart is surrendered unconditionally to God, the human agent is not abiding in the True Vine, and cannot flourish in the Vine, and bear rich clusters of fruit. God will not make the slightest compromise with sin. If He could have done this, Christ need not have come to our world to suffer and die. No conversion is genuine which does not change both the character and the conduct of those who accept the truth. The truth works by love, and purifieth the soul (Letter 31a, 1894).

THE CIRCULATION OF LIFE

Christ alone can help us and give us the victory, Christ must be all in all to us, He must dwell in the heart, His life must circulate through us as the blood circulates through the veins. His spirit must be a vitalizing power that will cause us to influence others to become Christlike and holy (Letter 43, 1895).

³ **Jesus Christ gives us life - He is the True Vine.** Jesus is the direct source of life for the branches (*i.e.* people). Without a vine there are no branches. Branches don't spring up out of the ground even though we try to do it on our own! A vine provides the support, nutrients, and moisture for the dependant branches to live and produce fruit. Jesus tells the branches in [John 15:5](#), "*Apart from me you can do nothing.*"

NOTHING

Apart from Jesus the True Vine, we branches are fruitless. There are no good fruits produced if we are not living for Jesus. Our efforts cannot bring us closer to God. Our love for others doesn't eternally benefit them or us. Our kind things are superficial and temporary. Our goodness is worldly. All things we branches do apart from the True Vine are wrongly motivated and futile. Apart from Christ nothing we do lasts for more than a brief moment in time.

Christian unity consists in the branches being in the same parent stock, the vitalizing power of the center supporting the grafts that have united to the Vine. In thoughts and desires, in words and actions, there must be an identity with Christ, a constant partaking of his spiritual life. Faith must increase by exercise. All who live near to God will have a realization of what Jesus is to them and they to Jesus. As communion with God is making its impress upon the soul, and shining out in the countenance as an illuminating light, the steadfast principles of Christ's holy character will be reflected in humanity (RH Nov. 9. 1897).

DETACHMENT AS WELL AS ATTACHMENT

A union with Christ by living faith is enduring; every other union must perish. Christ first chose us, paying an infinite price for our redemption; and the true believer chooses Christ as first, and last, and best in everything. But this union costs us something. It is a relation of utter dependence to be entered into by a proud being. All who form this union must feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ. They must have a change of heart. They must submit their own will to the will of God. There will be a struggle with outward and internal obstacles. There must be a painful work of detachment, as well as a work of attachment. Pride, selfishness, vanity, worldliness— sin in all its forms— must be overcome, if we would enter into a union with Christ. The reason why many find the Christian life so deplorably hard, why they are so fickle, so variable, is, they try to attach themselves to Christ without detaching themselves from these cherished idols...

Believers become one in Christ but one branch cannot be sustained by another. The nourishment must be obtained through vital connection with the Vine. We must feel our utter dependence on Christ. We must live by faith in the Son of God. That is the injunction, "Abide in me." The life we live in the flesh is not to the will of men, not to please our Lord's enemies, but to serve and honor

¹ Morris Venden, Grapes, p. 8.

² 5BC 1143, 1144

³<http://www.graspinggod.com/the-true-vine.html#ixzz77nP22AX7>



**THE
GARDENER
AND
PRUNING**

¹ **The pruning knife of God** is going to either cut you down, or cut you off— one of the two. There are some people who want to believe that all trials and troubles and hard things in life come from the devil, and it's true that many of them come from that source. But here is Bible evidence for the discipline from God Himself, as part of the process necessary to our growth and fruit bearing. These words are not meant to bring despair.

God is interested in fruit. For those who are bringing forth fruit, He is interested in more fruit. And those who do not produce fruit are cut off. Verse 8 reminds us of one of the purposes of fruit bearing. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Let's be careful at this point that we don't get the impression that one of the purposes of fruit bearing is to save us in heaven. The fruit bearing glorifies God and enlarges His kingdom. It brings joy to us, for it fits with our natural impulses when we are abiding in the Vine, and it restores us to the original condition of mankind— that which God designed to be in the first place. *But the fruit bearing is not what saves us— we are saved by accepting what Jesus has already done for us at the cross.*

Yet God is interested in fruit. He is interested in character development. He is interested in seeing us saved from the results of sin and the condition of sin, as well as saving us from the penalty of sin. It is possible to actually be converted, to begin the Christian life, to join the church— but if a person does not continue the abiding relationship or continue fellowship with the Lord Jesus, the fruit does not result. It is possible to make a good start, a good beginning, like Demas and others, but having loved this present life, to allow the attraction of other things to sidetrack us from our personal relationship with God.

The branches that bear no fruit represent those who fail to remain in the abiding relationship with Christ. So you have two types, one who begins, but who does not stay with Christ; and one who begins, but who does stay with Christ. Apparently God allows those who make a good beginning, but who do not stay with Him, a period of time to demonstrate whether or not the fruit is going to be forthcoming. We know that there comes a time when branches or plants or trees have had opportunity to demonstrate themselves, and it is pointless to leave them in the garden any longer after that time.

We could speculate on just what percentage of people who make a good start are in this category. Studies have shown that the majority of church members are too busy to take even five minutes a day for personal fellowship with Christ, for private prayer and study of the Scriptures. Some surveys indicate only one in four, or one in five have any regular time for communion with God on a daily basis. This certainly is one of the reasons for the real spiritual trouble that the church finds itself in today.

Breathing, in the spiritual life, has been likened to prayer, the breath of the soul. And eating has been likened to the study of God's Word. If the majority of church members are not breathing or eating, it is pointless to talk of church growth. See [Ezekiel 37:3](#). Even among those who are in the vine, but who are not growing and not producing fruit, there is still hope that they will understand. God has never held people accountable for that which they have not understood, and that's one of the evidences of His love. God holds us responsible for that which we have had a chance to understand, and perhaps this might even include the understanding of the importance of eating and breathing.

It is possible for people to make a right start, to have a genuine conversion, and still gradually wither away because they haven't realized the necessity of abiding. It is interested that even brilliant people for long periods of time can miss the basis of what it means to abide in Christ. But God understands the problems we face in this world of sin, and He can remove the veil that is so often over our eyes.

A person who is not abiding in Christ, even though he might have made a good start, will react one of two ways to the pruning knife. *For one who is not aware of the love of Jesus, the pruning knife may appear to be a punishment instead of a discipline.* Because he is only a servant and not a friend and perhaps does not realize his sonship yet, he may not recognize the loving Father behind the chastening. But the pruning can either lead him to be more closely connected to the Vine, and thus begin to produce fruit, or it can end up in his being cut off altogether.





The problem is that the pruning is often misunderstood. It can even be misunderstood by those who have made a good start and who have also continued in the abiding relationship with Christ. Even those who are bearing fruit are going to be purged, that they may bring forth more fruit. They are pruned, not for the purpose of being cut off, but for the purpose of being cut down to size, instead of becoming high and lifted up and forgetting that they are only creatures. This cutting-down process is often painful. But for the one who is in daily fellowship with Christ, in daily recognition of the grace of God, there is the possibility of recognizing the pruning process as a discipline rather than a punishment. There is a word that comes from *discipline*, it is *disciple*. A disciple or follower of Christ, is one who accepts the discipline and sees that it has meaning.

Hebrews 12:11 is a very interesting commentary on that process. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

What is the knife? The common idea is that the knife is affliction and that God sends affliction. But does God send affliction, or does affliction come from the devil? God is in charge down here in this world, regardless of what the devil may try to do. God can use anything Satan does, or doesn't do. And He often has. Therefore, Satan, who knows that, continues to bring misery to God and people regardless, for he knows that God is going to turn something into good regardless of what he does.

Does affliction and trouble and problems really cause a person to bear more fruit? Or is it possible for a person to see the pain without the purpose? Is affliction really the only pruning knife? There are other means of pruning—but due to the world of sin in which we find ourselves and all of the trouble that the enemy brings into our lives, God

simply makes use of it to His own glory. The real pruning knife is the Word of God, not the affliction. The affliction and sorrow and disappointment is only the handle on the knife, to get us to the knife. (John 15:3; Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6). So when trouble and affliction and sorrow come, one person gets driven to the Word of God; and the other person resists it. So one person is drawn closer to God than before the trouble came; and the other person is farther away and less inclined toward God than before.

How easy it is for the trust in God to turn into trust in SELF.

See Elijah's case. After God's marvellous answers to his prayer of fire and rain from heaven, Elijah slipped into a reliance on self. Forgetful of God's care, when he gets a threat to his life, Elijah forsook his duty and fled to the wilderness and wished to die. Consider the case of a new Christian or a reawakened Christian who is filled with zeal. Then, because of the carnal nature that is always struggling for expression, that zeal is turned into fanaticism, pride in his own spiritual experience, merely positive thinking or presumption.

None of us are perfect, we all need some pruning now and then, and it is all for our eternal salvation.

God's love never fails His children. It is good that God does the pruning and not man. It is God that takes away, and He knows when the time is right, and He always purges us for our good (Romans 8:28).

¹ Morris Venden, *Grapes*, p. 39- 47



ASK WHAT YE WILL

“But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon.”



¹ ABIDE IN ME

A continuous abiding in a living connection with Christ is essential for growth and fruitfulness. Occasional attention to matters of religion is not sufficient. Riding high on a wave of religious fervor one day, only to fall low into a period of neglect the next, does not promote spiritual strength. To abide in Christ means that the soul must be in daily, constant communion with Jesus Christ and must live *His* life (Galatians 2:20). It is not possible for one branch to depend upon another for its vitality; each must maintain its own personal relationship to the vine. Each member must bear its own fruits.

² The one who is abiding in Christ has already given over the control to Christ, not only of the externals, but of the internals as well. When Christ comes in and takes control, He changes the heart. He changes the springs of action in our mind: the desire, the tastes, the inclinations. It is easy to read a text like Psalms 37:4— “Delight thyself in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart—” and say, “Oh good! Anything I want, I get.” But there’s another way to read it: “*He* shall give thee the *desires*” plural. If His words are abiding in us and we are abiding in Him, if we have surrendered to Him our will, then to ask what we will is the same as asking for what *He* wills.

³ The abiding is mutual as expressed in v.4. As men abide in Christ, Christ dwells in them and they become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). Their thoughts become so identified with the divine will that only such requests are made as are in harmony with that will (see 1 John 5:14; DA 668). Furthermore, no sin intervenes to prevent a favorable answer.

⁴ “If you abide in Me,” suggests that a beginning has already been made; that’s why He can ask us to stay with Him. We could not abide in Him if we had never yet come to Him...To abide in Him is to stay in that stance, to continue to base our hope of eternal life totally and solely upon what *Jesus* has done, and to base none of our hope on what we ourselves can do.

MY WORDS ABIDE ⁵

These words show that the indwelling of Christ is not wholly a mystical, inexplicable experience. Men receive Christ by receiving His word. As they feed upon that word it enlightens the mind. And as they make an intelligent choice to follow that word and obey it implicitly through the enabling power

of Heaven, Christ the hope of glory, is formed within (Col. 1:27). Furthermore, for this experience to be constant *they feed daily upon the word*.

CONDITIONS ⁶

Why is it that conditions must be met in order for the blank check to be honored? Why must it only be received in this way?

In the first place, it is because the branch, if it is connected to the Vine, is going to be receiving only what the Vine has to give. The sap and the continual growth of the two together, in connection and deeper connection, simply suggests a oneness that keeps a person from asking wrongly that he may consume it upon his own lusts.

What would happen, for instance, if God were to go to the man on the street, who cares nothing for God or faith or religion or the Bible, and give him this blank check: “Look, you can ask whatever you want, and I’ll do it”? Perhaps the man on the street would ask for another drink. Perhaps he would ask permission and freedom and opportunity to enjoy his own lusts. Perhaps he would ask for riches or success that would drive him even farther from realizing his need of God. God is not in the business of encouraging this kind of thing.

Let’s suppose that God were to make this offer to the nominal Christian, one who does not place much value on association with Jesus. A person who is living apart from Christ is hopelessly self-centered; he was born that way, and his requests would inevitably be selfish requests.... The professed Christian who does not know a close connection with Jesus is one of the most self-centered people in the world... And the book of James comes down on that rather hard.

Another reason why we can receive only in this way is that God intends us to meet Him with his own words. If we abide in Him, and His words abide in us— that means we are familiar with his words. We know what He has said on a given subject.

A few of God's own words —

Matthew 7:7-11

Asking for something to help another, he can know that his request is going to be heard and answered.

Luke 11:11, 12

Like a father giving good gifts to his son.

Luke 11:13

The qualifications is that He will give the Holy Spirit— and how much higher is that than a new Cadillac or a new house or a new Honda?

John 14:12, 13

What kind of works did Jesus do? For what purposes were His life, His work, His miracles, and His teachings? For others— for reaching out for the sake of the gospel of the kingdom.

What's the context again? It is the context of SERVICE and OUTREACH for the sake of the gospel.

When our requests are denied

There's another factor to consider. Sometimes with our short line of human vision, we ask for things that are NOT God's will. What do we do when our requests are denied? Do we walk away in anger from a God who has disappointed our expectations? Or do we do as did Job, and in the face of whatever sorrow or disappointment continue to love and trust Him regardless. Do we have faith and doubt Him not?

On the basis of God's Word (1 John 3:21-24) if we have some known sin or continuation in transgression in our lives, then we'd better not expect the carte blanche that He has offered. This is also suggested in Isaiah 59:1, 2.

The entire setting of John 15 has to do with abiding and fruit bearing for the glory of God.

Jesus has made it possible for us to dwell in Him, and for Him to dwell in us, so that his will and our will are swallowed up together as ONE will. These words in John 15 are addressed to *mature* Christians. You may ask, who qualifies? Just remember the good news that when the branch abides *in the vine*, that the branch is just

as valuable to the Gardener as is the vine. God loves us as He loves Jesus. As we continue to abide in Him, we know that the carte blanche He has in mind for us is potential, *so long as* we abide in the vine. It's not reserved for down somewhere toward the end of our lives.

On that basis, Pr. Morris Venden says, I am going to predict that there are times when, like Elijah, you have seen the fire come down from heaven; and there are times when, like Elijah, you have felt that your prayers are unanswered. Elijah didn't have to wait until just before he was translated to get the blank check. He had the blank check when he was trusting, and he did not have it when he was not trusting. The same is true for you and me.

In the meantime, Jesus loves you, and God loves you as much as He loves the vine. He will continue to prune and purge you for His purposes and his glory.



¹ 5 Bible Commentary, p. 1042

² Morris Venden, *Grapes*, p. 60

³ 5 Bible Commentary, p. 1043

⁴ Morris Venden, *Grapes*, p. 61

⁵ 5 Bible Commentary, p. 1043

⁶ Morris Venden, *Grapes*, p. 62-67



IT
TAKES
TIME

¹ ONE OF THE PITFALLS in the abiding relationship with Christ is that we tend to forget that it takes *time* to grow fruit. We start looking for instant results, and the very analogy of growing fruit should remind us at once that there is a time factor involved. It doesn't happen overnight.

In Luke 13 Jesus told of a man who came looking for fruit on a fig tree, and finding none, wanted to cut it down. The advice of his gardener was to fertilize the ground around it and wait for the next season, when it might well bear fruit. There *is* a time for fruit, developed in its fullness. But **one of the most discouraging things we can do in the Christian life is to look for a perpetual harvest. We don't do that in the natural world.** We don't expect perpetual harvest from our backyard gardens. If the time factor is important in the natural world, how much more important to remember it in the spiritual life as well!

How often we become impatient while waiting for the fruit to develop. How often we become impatient with just waiting, period! Human beings are not known for their patience. We are looking for the shortest line at the supermarket, the shortest line at the toll booth on the highway, the shortest line to the kingdom of heaven.

Waiting is perhaps the most intense form of the pruning and purging process that there is. Waiting shows us our true selves, or true values, our true motives. There are many things we will accept and seek if there is no wait involved. But when we find we have to wait, how often we discover that what we thought was so desirable is simply not worth waiting for.

Through the Bible history, we see people standing in line, as it were, waiting for the promised blessing of the Lord. Adam and Eve were in line as soon as they left the garden, waiting for the promised Messiah. Noah waited for 120 years for the flood to come and vindicate his reliability as a prophet of God. Moses waited forty years on the back side of Mount Horeb, tending sheep. Then he waited through another forty years with the people of Israel, as they learned the lesson of waiting on the Lord. Finally he could stand the waiting no longer, and his faith failed just on the borders of the land of promise.

David was anointed king of Israel, but had to wait. Elijah expected an immediate revival and deliverance after the day at Mount Carmel, but had to wait. The disciples expected Jesus to set up His kingdom, but had to wait. They were told to wait for the promise of the Father, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit after Christ's ascension. The saints described in Revelation are distinguished by their PATIENCE in WAITING.

There are very few facets of the Christian life that do not involve waiting in one form or another. We wait for the answer to our prayers. We wait to see the fruits develop in our lives. We wait for the promised return of Jesus, to bring all other waiting to an end.

So remember that it takes time to transform the human nature into the divine. You cannot reach the full measure of the stature of Christ in a day. We are to live one day at a time, continuing the abiding relationship with Him, and the harvest will surely come in its appointed time.

If you are concerned because you don't think you see much fruit in your own life, remember the parable of the vineyard. The results are sure, if we CONTINUE TO ABIDE IN HIM! But we must not forget the words of James in James 5:7, "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it." Our part is to continue to abide in him, and He will accomplish his part in His own time.

When you understand your part in the growth process and continue to seek that abiding relationship with him, His work will go forward to produce in you the fruits to His glory. And you will be prepared to meet him in peace on that day when we will say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isaiah 25:9, emphasis supplied.

¹ Morris Venden, *Grapes*, p. 73-75





CONTINUE

IN MY

LOVE

Without Me ¹

The carnal mind... Is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). It is impossible for man in his own strength to escape from the pit of sin into which he has fallen and to bring forth fruits unto holiness (see SC 18). Wherever men hold to the principle that they can save themselves by their own works they have no barrier against sin (see DA 35, 36).

If a man abide not

The delusion, "once in grace always in grace," is denied by this condition. It is possible for those who have been in Christ to sever their connection with Him and be lost (see on Heb. 6:4-6). Salvation is conditional upon constant abiding in Christ UNTIL THE END.

Is withered

The Christian represented by the severed branch may carry on a form of religion, but the vital power is lacking (2 Tim. 3:5, 6). Under test and trial the shallowness of his profession is seen. As the severed branches are eventually gathered and burned, also the unfruitful Christian, along with the non-professor, will suffer ultimate extinction (Matt. 10:28; 13:38-40; 25:41, 46). No overt act of disobedience is mentioned, simply the sin of NEGLECT. Compare the parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matt. 25:31-46). Those to the left of the King were excluded from the kingdom for neglect of practical Christian duty.

A Day by Day Experience ²

[John 15:8] What is it to bear fruit? It is not all comprised in coming to meeting once a week, and bearing our testimony in prayer or social meeting. We are to be found day by day ABIDING in the Vine, and bringing forth fruit, with patience, at our home, in our business; and in every relation in life manifesting the Spirit of Christ. There are many who act as though they thought an occasional connection with Christ was all that was necessary, and that they can be accounted living branches because at times they make confession of Christ. But this is fallacy. The branch is to be grafted into the Vine, and to abide there, uniting itself to the Vine fiber by fiber, drawing its DAILY supply of sap and nourishment from the root and fatness of the Vine, until it becomes one with the parent stock. The sap that nourishes the Vine must nourish the branch and this will be evident in the life of him who is abiding in Christ; for the joy of Christ will be fulfilled in him who walks not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Our professions are worthless unless we abide in Christ; for we cannot be living branches unless the vital qualities of the Vine abound in us. In the genuine Christian the characteristics of his Master will appear, and when we reflect the graces of Christ in our lives and characters, the Father loves us as He loves his Son. When this condition is fulfilled in those who profess to believe the present truth, we shall see a prosperous church; for its members will not live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and they will be flourishing branches of the living Vine (ST April 18, 1892).

Light Brings Gladness

When the light of heaven shines upon the human agent, his countenance will express the joy of the Lord within. It is the absence of Christ from the soul that makes people sad and of a doubtful mind. It is the want of Christ that makes the countenance sad, and their life is a pilgrimage of sighs. Rejoicing is the very keynote of the Word of God for all who receive Him. Why? Because they have the Light of life. Light brings gladness and joy, and that joy is expressed in the life and the character (MS 96, 1898).

No Provision for Willful Blindness

Those who have an opportunity to hear the truth, and yet take no pains to hear or understand it, thinking that if they do not hear, they will not be accountable, WILL be judged guilty before God the same as if they had heard and rejected. There will be no excuse for those who choose to go in error when they might understand what is truth. In his sufferings and death Jesus has made atonement for all sins of ignorance, but there is NO provision for willful blindness.

Light That Has Shone, Will Condemn

None will be condemned for not heeding light and knowledge that they ever had, and they could not obtain. But many refuse the truth that is presented to them by Christ's ambassadors, because they wish to conform to the world's standard; and the truth that has reached their understanding, the light that has shone in the soul, will condemn them in the judgment (RH Nov. 25, 1884).

¹ 5BC 1042, 1043

² 5BC 1144, 1145



**THE FARMER
AND HIS
HIREMEN**

¹ The kingdom of heaven, He [Jesus] said, is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. It was the custom for men seeking employment to wait in the market places, and thither the employers went to find servants. The man in the parable is represented as going out at different hours to engage workmen. Those who are hired at the earliest hours agree to work for a stated sum; those hired later leave their wages to the discretion of the householder.

So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they suppose that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

The householder's dealing with the workers in his vineyard represents God's dealing with the human family. It is contrary to the customs that prevail among men. In worldly business, compensation is given according to the work accomplished. The laborer expects to be paid only that which he earns. But in the parable, Christ was illustrating the principles of His kingdom—a kingdom not of this world. He is not controlled by any human standard. The Lord says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8, 9.

In the parable the first laborers agreed to work for a stipulated sum, and they received the very amount specified, nothing more. Those later hired believed the master's promise, *Whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.*" They showed their confidence in him by asking no question in regard to wages. They trusted to his justice and equity. They were rewarded, not according to the amount of their labor, but according to the generosity of his purpose.

So God desires us to trust in Him who justifieth the ungodly. His reward is given not according to our merit but according to His own purpose, "which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Eph. 3:11. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." Titus 3:5. And for those who trust in him He will do "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." Ephesians 3:20.

**NOT THE AMOUNT OF LABOR PERFORMED
OR ITS VISIBLE RESULTS**

but the SPIRIT in which the work is done makes it of value with God. Those who came into the vineyard at the eleventh hour were thankful for an opportunity to work. Their hearts were full of gratitude to the one who had accepted them; and when at the close of the day the householder paid them for a full day's work, they were greatly surprised. They knew they had not earned such wages. And the kindness expressed in the countenance of their employer filled them with joy. They never forgot the goodness of the householder or the generous compensation they had received. Thus it is with the sinner who, knowing his unworthiness, has entered the Master's vineyard at the eleventh hour. His time of service seems so short, he feels that he is undeserving of reward; but he is filled with joy that God has accepted him at all. He works with a humble, trusting spirit, thankful for the privilege of being a co-worker with Christ. This spirit God delights to honor.



The Lord desires us to rest in Him without a question as to our measure of reward. When Christ abides in the soul, the thought of reward is not uppermost. This is not the motive that actuates our service. It is true that in a subordinate sense we should have respect to the recompense of reward. God desires us to appreciate His promised blessings. But He would not have us eager for rewards nor feel that for every duty we must receive compensation. We should not be so anxious to gain the reward as to do what is right, irrespective of all gain. Love to God and to our fellow men should be our motive.

This parable does NOT excuse those who hear the first call to labor but who neglect to enter the Lord's vineyard. When the householder went to the market place at the eleventh hour and found men unemployed he said, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

The answer was, "Because no man hath hired us." None of those called later in the day were there in the morning. They had not refused the call. Those who refuse and afterward repent, do well to repent; but it is NOT safe to trifle with the first call of mercy.

When the laborers in the vineyard received "every man a penny," those who had begun work early in the day were offended. Had they not worked for twelve hours? They reasoned, and was it not right that they should receive more than those who had worked for only one hour in cooler part of the day? "These last have wrought but one hour," they said, "and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day."

"Friend," the householder replied to one of them, "I do thee no wrong; didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way; I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"

"So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be called, but few chosen."

The first laborers of the parable told represent those who, because of their services, claim preference above others. They take up their work in a self-gratulatory spirit, and do not bring into it self-denial and sacrifice. They may have professed to serve God all their lives; they may have been foremost in enduring hardship, privation, and trial, and they therefore think themselves entitled to a large reward. They think more of the reward than of the privilege of being servants of Christ. In their view their labors and sacrifices entitle them to receive honor above others, and because this claim is not recognized, they are offended.

Did they bring into their work a loving, trusting spirit, they would continue to be first; but their querulous, complaining disposition is un Christ-like, and proves them to be untrustworthy. It reveals their desire for self-advancement, their distrust of God, and their jealous, grudging spirit toward their brethren. The Lord's goodness and liberality is to them only a occasion of murmuring. Thus they show that there is no connection between their souls and God. They do not know the joy of co-operation with the Master Worker.





THERE IS NOTHING MORE OFFENSIVE TO GOD THAN THIS NARROW, SELF-CARING SPIRIT. HE CANNOT WORK WITH ANY WHO MANIFEST THESE ATTRIBUTES. THEY ARE INSENSIBLE TO THE WORKING OF THE SPIRIT

The Jews had been first called into the Lord's vineyard, and because of this they were proud and self-righteous. Their long years of service they regarded as entitling them to receive a larger reward than others. Nothing was more exasperating to them than an intimation that the Gentiles were to be admitted to equal privileges with themselves in the things of God.

Christ warned the disciples who had been first called to follow Him, lest the same evil should be cherished among them. He saw that the weakness, the curse of the church, would be a spirit of self-righteousness. Men would think they could do something toward earning a place in the kingdom of heaven. They would imagine that when they had made certain advancement, the Lord would come in to help them. Thus there would be an abundance of self and little of Jesus. Many who had made a little advancement would be puffed up and think themselves superior to others... They would be eager for *flattery*, jealous if not thought most important. Against this danger Christ seeks to guard His disciples.

All boasting of merit in ourselves is out of place. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise

loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord." Jeremiah 9:23, 24.

The reward is *not* of works, lest any man should boast; but it is all of grace. "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Romans 4:1-5. Therefore there is no occasion for one to glory over another or to grudge against another. No one is privileged above another. Nor can anyone claim the reward as a right.

The first and the last are to be sharers in the great eternal reward, and the first should gladly welcome the last. He who grudges the reward to another forgets that he himself is saved by GRACE alone. The parable of the laborers rebukes all jealousy and suspicion. Love rejoices in the truth and institutes no envious comparisons. He who possesses LOVE compares only the loveliness of Christ and his own imperfect character.

This parable is a WARNING to all laborers, however long their service, however abundant their labors, that without love to their brethren, without humility before God, they are nothing. There is no religion in the enthronement of self.

He who makes self-glorification his aim will find himself destitute of that grace which alone can make him efficient in Christ's service. Whenever PRIDE and SELF-COMPLACENCY are indulged, the work is marred.

It is not the length of time we labor but **our willingness and fidelity** in the work that makes it acceptable to God. In all our service a full surrender of self is demanded. The smallest duty done in sincerity and self-forgetfulness is more pleasing to God than the greatest work when marred with self-seeking. He looks to see how much of the spirit of Christ we cherish, and how much of the likeness of Christ our work reveals. He regards more the love and faithfulness with which we work than the amount we do.

Only when selfishness is dead, when strife for supremacy is banished, when gratitude fills the heart, and love makes fragrant the life—it is only then that Christ is abiding in the soul, and we are recognized as laborers together with God.

However trying their labor, the true workers do not regard it as drudgery. They are ready to spend and to be spent; but it is a cheerful work, done with a glad heart. Joy in God is expressed through Jesus Christ. Their joy is the joy set before Christ—"to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." John 4:34. They are in cooperation with the Lord of glory. This thought sweetens all toil, it braces the will, it nerves the spirit for whatever may befall. Working with unselfish heart, ennobled by being partakers of Christ's sufferings, sharing His sympathies, and co-operating with Him in his labor, they help to swell the tide of his joy and bring honor and praise to His exalted name.

This is the spirit of all true service for God. Through a lack of this spirit, many who appear to be first will become last, while those who possess it, though accounted last, will become first.

There are many who have given themselves to Christ, yet who see no opportunity of doing a large work or making great sacrifices in His service. These may find comfort in the thought that it is not necessarily the martyr's self-surrender which is most acceptable to God; it may not be the missionary who has daily faced danger and death that stands the highest in heaven's records.

The Christian who is such in his private life, in the daily surrender of self, in sincerity of purpose and purity of thought, in meekness under provocation, in faith and piety, in fidelity in that which is least, the one who in the home life represents the character of Christ—such a one may in the sight of God be more precious than even the world-renowned missionary or martyr.

Oh, how different are the standards by which God and men measure character. God sees many temptations resisted of which the world and even near friends never know—temptations in the home, in the heart. He sees the soul's humility in view of its own weakness; the sincere repentance over even a thought that is evil. He sees the wholehearted devotion to His service. He has noted the hours of hard battle with self—battle that won the victory. All this GOD and angels know. A book of remembrance is written before Him for them that fear the Lord and that think upon His name.

Not in our learning, not in your position, not in our numbers or entrusted talents, not in the will of man, is to be found the secret of success. Feeling our inefficiency we are to contemplate Christ, and through Him who is the strength of all strength, the thought of all thought, the willing and obedient will gain victory after victory.

And however short our service or humble our work, if in simple faith we follow Christ, we shall not be disappointed of the reward. That which even the greatest and wisest cannot earn, the weakest and most humble may receive. Heaven's golden gate opens not to the self-exalted. It is not lifted up to the proud in spirit. But the everlasting portals will open wide to the trembling touch of a little child. Blessed will be the recompense of grace to those who have wrought for God in the simplicity of faith and love.



BENEFITS OF GRAPES

Grapes are actually berries! They grow in bunches in temperate climates throughout the world. Grapes are also known as the “Queen of Fruits”. There are over a thousand varieties of grapes, and each variety offers something unique in taste and flavour. So no matter how you want to use this beautiful, little fruit, you’ll find a grape variety that will fit right into your menu plan!

- 1. White or green grapes:** These are the sweetest and most commonly found grape variety. Popular green grapes cultivars are Thompson seedless, Sugarone, and Calmeria.
- 2. Red grapes:** These ruby coloured grapes have the simplest flavour. They include Red Globe, Cardinal, Emperor, and Flame seedless grapes.
- 3. Blue/ Black grapes:** These grapes taste delicious due to their deep and rich black colour. Concord and Zinfandel cultivate flavourful blue-black grapes.

Top Benefits of Grapes:

Apart from their many varieties and uses, grapes provide many health benefits too!

1. Migraine:

Migraine attacks can push the sufferer over the edge. These debilitating headaches can be triggered by loud noise, light, or stress. But grapes can prove to be beneficial for people suffering from migraines. Ripe grape juice is an orthodox remedy that can cure migraine. The ripe juice must be consumed pure without dilution every morning for best results.

2. Alzheimer’s disease:

Resveratrol content in grapes can reduce the levels of amyloid-beta peptides in Alzheimer’s disease patients. Grapes can also enhance the health of your brain and delay neurodegenerative diseases.

3. Indigestion:

Grapes are important in curing dyspepsia. They can relieve and treat indigestion and irritation in your stomach. They also act as a digestive aid.

4. Breast cancer:

Purple coloured Concord grape juice can reduce the risk of breast cancer. Regular grape juice consumption has shown positive results when it comes to breast tumour mass reduction.

5. For vision:

Grapes are considered the best bet for eyes. Grapes are a rich source of lutein and zeaxanthin that maintains good eye health. So, even if your eyesight is diminishing due to ageing, regular consumption of grapes can bring light back into your life!

6. Blood cholesterol:

Pterostilbene compound present in grapes can lower your cholesterol level and prevent numerous cardiovascular diseases.

7. Kidney disorders:

Grapes can reduce uric acid and eliminate it from your body. This reduces pressure on your kidneys and keeps them healthy.

8. Asthma:

Grapes contain high assimilatory power that can increase the level of moisture in the lungs. This can help an asthma patient breathe easy. Regular intake of grape can even help cure asthma completely!

9. Antibacterial activity:

Red grapes are high in antibacterial and antiviral properties. This protects you from many infections. The antiviral properties of grapes are effective in treating and preventing poliovirus and herpes

simplex virus.

10. Constipation:

Constipation can make you feel heavy and irritable. Grapes are a rich source of sugar, organic acid and polyose, which together give the fruit its laxative properties. So, if you are looking for relief from constipation, try eating grapes or drinking grape juice. These tiny fruits contain organic acid, sugar and cellulose that can help relieve chronic constipation and tone the intestinal muscles. Grapes are rich in insoluble fiber that promotes the formation and excretion of stool.

11. Protection against sunburns:

Grapes and its seed extracts contain proanthocyanidins and resveratrol that are powerful antioxidants. Apply grape seed extract on your skin to protect it against harmful UV radiation. This also works as a sunscreen and reduces the redness caused due to sunburn and minimizes skin damage. Grape seed extracts are popularly used in many commercially produced sunscreen lotions.

12. Skin softener:

Grape seed extract contains vitamin E that helps in retaining the moisture in your skin. This also acts as an exfoliate removing dead skin cells to provide healthy and smooth skin. Grape seed oil is very gentle on the skin and acts as a good moisturizer. You can massage your skin with this oil to nourish it thoroughly.

13. Rejuvenates the skin:

Grapes are a warehouse of Vitamin C. This essential nutrient helps in collagen formation that helps in the growth of cells and blood vessels. This also adds to the strength and firmness of your skin. Grapes can give diseases free skin by removing all toxins from the body. Resveratrol in grapevines can protect the skin from harmful weather and can help rejuvenate it. It can also reduce skin discoloration.

14. Cures uneven skin tone:

Green grapes are very beneficial when it comes to managing uneven skin tones. Squeeze green grapes juice and apply it evenly on the skin. Rinse off after 15 minutes to tone the skin.

15. Lightens scars:

Green grapes can lighten the scars caused due to acne. Vitamin C helps in scar tissues and ligaments formation and repairs the skin.

16. Youthful appearance:

Green grapes can also speed up your metabolism to induce perspiration. This gives you a youthful and radiant appearance.

17. Encourages hair growth:

Grapes contain antioxidants that increase the blood circulation in your scalp which leads to good hair growth. Grape seed oil is easily absorbed into the scalp and gives you soft, shiny and manageable hair.

18. Treatment of dandruff:

Apply grape seed oil regularly to [cure seborrheic dermatitis](#). This also acts as a good moisturizer to remove dry flakes from your scalp and improve blood circulation.

19. Treatment of hair-loss:

Grapes, with an abundance of vitamin E and linoleic acid can help treat hair loss. Using grape seed oil helps in strengthening the hair follicles for strong and healthy hair. This beneficial oil can also treat split ends, brittleness and hair fall caused by rough handling of hair.

20. Aromatherapy:

Grape seed oil has a non-greasy texture that doesn't leave any residue on the scalp. This healthy oil is very light and has emollient properties, which is suited for all types of skin. This is why grape seed oil is immensely popular in aromatherapy.

21. Power up Your Weight Loss:

Resveratrol found in grapes work on your body to assist you in your weight loss efforts. It also lowers the cells' ability to store fat and causes fat cells to disintegrate. What a yummy way to lose weight!

22. Protect Your Heart:

Resveratrol in grapes has the ability to improve blood vessels dilatation that allows the blood to flow very easily in the blood vessels. This also relaxes blood vessels walls and lowers blood pressure. Low BP and relaxed blood vessel walls help protect the heart from any kind of trauma and keeps it healthy.

23. Mop Up Brain Damaging Plaques:

Grapes contain resveratrol that works as brain-protecting agent. This mops up the brain damaging plaques and free radicals that cause Alzheimer's disease.

24. Cancer radiation:

A recent study by a University of Missouri researcher shows that resveratrol found in grape skins, can make certain cancer cells more vulnerable to radiation treatment. This will make cancer treatment more reliable. Nothing better could ever come out of grapes! If this fruit can really help in cancer treatment, then it should really be hailed a super food!

25. Improve Brain Power:

Resveratrol increases the blood flow to your brains by 200%, which speeds up the mental response of the human mind. Brain food indeed!

26. Longevity Gene:

Resveratrol found in grapes activate the human gene that helps in survival and longevity. Ah, so grape actually can be the elixir of life!

27. Fight Diabetes:

Pre-diabetics patients consuming grapes can experience 10 percent drops in their blood sugar levels, due to the presence of Resveratrol. So, if you are looking to prevent diabetes, consume grapes!

28. Turn Down Inflammation:

Resveratrol has anti-inflammatory property that very effective in curing heart disease by treating inflammation in the arteries.

29. Supports Muscle Recovery:

Grapes act as a potent antioxidant that helps the cells and organs eliminate uric acid and other harmful toxins from the body. This supports muscle recovery even for pro athletes.

30. Bone Health:

Grapes are the best source of micro-nutrients such as copper, iron, and manganese that helps in the formation and strengthening of your bones. You can add grapes to your diet to prevent osteoporosis. Manganese aids in protein metabolism, collagen formation, and proper nervous system functioning.

31. LDL cholesterol:

Grapes increase nitric oxide levels in your blood to prevent blood clots and reduce the chance of heart attacks. Antioxidants in grapes prevent the oxidation of LDL cholesterol that blocks the blood vessels causing coronary diseases. Grapes have many flavonoids like resveratrol and quercetin, which fight free radicals. This also works as a cleaning-up crew and reduces clumping of platelet to filter toxins from the blood.

32. Fatigue:

Juice of Light and white grape is packed with iron content that prevents body fatigue. Anaemia patients eat grapes to promote good iron and mineral levels in the body. Deficiency of iron can make you feel tired and your mind can't work as quickly. Drink grape juice to get instant energy boost.

33. Grapes Macular degeneration:

Grapes help in preventing age-related loss of vision and macular degeneration. Consume grapes every day to reduce the risks of macular degeneration by 36 %. Grapes can help in reducing loss of vision organ systems.

34. Immune System:

Grapes are packed with flavonoids, minerals and vitamins. They are rich in Vitamin C, K, and A, all needed for healthy organ systems and immunity. This can also reduce the chance of common colds and many more serious health issues.

35. Dried grapes:

Dried grapes, called raisins, are very nutritious and treat many disorders such as constipation, anaemia, fever, acidosis and sexual dysfunction. Raisins can also be useful to gain weight quickly and protect your health.

Tips to use grapes:

- * Wash the whole bunch just before eating to discard any pesticide residues.
- Rinse in cold-water for some time.
- Place them in cold water and pat dry with a soft cloth.
- Seeds are also rich in nutrients that are pleasant to eat.
- You can add them in salads.
- Dry grapes can be used in confectionary, bread, puddings, cakes, muffins.
- You can also prepare jams, jellies and juice.
- Choose plump, wrinkles free and firm healthy-looking green stem grapes.
- Always buy ripened berries.
- They tend to spoil and ferment early at room temperature.
- Store them in the refrigerator.

You can also loosely wrap them in a paper towel and keep in a zip lock pouch in refrigerator. The tiny grape packs in a bundle of health benefits! So, the next time you feel like snacking on something tasty, try grapes. Not only are they tasty, but they give your body all the goodness of nature.



- * Packed With Nutrients, Especially Vitamins C and K.
- * High Antioxidant Contents May Prevent Chronic Diseases.
- * Plant Compounds May Protect Against Certain Types of Cancer.
- * Beneficial for Heart Health in Various Impressive Ways.

Side Effects Of Grapes: ²

Grapes can be beneficial to our health only when **consumed in moderation**. Bingeing on them can cause many side effects like:

- Acidity
- Indigestion
- Gastric Disorders
- Nausea
- Vomiting and Diarrhea

Other risks of grapes are as follows:

- Allergic reactions like rashes
- Headache
- Dry Cough
- Sore Throat, Runny Nose
- Muscular Problems
- Weight Gain
- Resveratrol toxicity in pregnant women

Those are some of the best grapes benefits for health, hair and skin. As with any food, consuming these in moderation can minimize the side effects on your body.



SOME VEGAN RECIPES WITH GRAPES: ³



¹ [42 Amazing Benefits And Uses Of Grapes \(healthbeckon.com\)](http://healthbeckon.com)

² [11 Proven Grapes Benefits and Side Effects \(Evidence-Based\) \(stylesatlife.com\)](http://stylesatlife.com)

³ [VEGAN recipe with grapes - Bing images](#)

