

# The Vineyard – Resources for the Branch

Stay joined together with me, and follow my teachings.  
If you do this, you can ask for anything you want, and it will  
be given to you.

Show that you are my followers by producing much fruit.  
This will bring glory to my Father.

John 15:7-8

☒ Until a baby is “full term” her existence is wholly dependent on *the life connection* to her mother: the 25” umbilical cord. “*The umbilical cord serves as a source of nutrients, including calories, proteins, fats, as well as vitamins and nutrients.*” (“*Three Functions of the Umbilical Cord*”) By the way, the length of the cord allows baby to move freely, exercising.

“When we are called to follow Christ, we are summoned to **an** ☒ **exclusive attachment to a person.**” (*The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer) Jesus emphasizes that truth here. “**Stay joined together with me and “follow my teachings.”** To those who maintain this connection, unlimited resources are available, “If you do this, you can **ask for ANYTHING** you want, and it will be given to you.” Paul got the message. “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly **BEYOND WHAT WE CAN ASK**, according to the power that works in us.” (Ephesians 3:20) “**Everything, absolutely everything,** got started in him and finds its purpose in him. He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it all together right up to this moment. (Colossians 1:16) Everything has its root in the creative power of the Creator! In other words everything is at His disposal!

Today, the average church is busy with a plethora of activities, all of which generally focus on the church itself. Little effort in time, talent and treasure is expended on that which Jesus identified as "**the main thing!**" As Rick Warren wisely said: "*Never confuse activity with productivity.*" (Rick Warren) "*The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.*" (Stephen Covey) If you doubt this, note the similarity between "*producing much fruit*" and "*go and make followers in all nations..*" (Mathew 28:28:19-20} Above every and any activity, though it be good, **this is the main thing!**

✘ This verse is often taken out of context by those who believe "*the prosperity gospel*", "*the name it and claim it: crowd.*" Paul experienced this misappropriation in the Galatian Church. "*I am surprised at you! In no time at all you are deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ, and are **accepting another gospel.***" (Galatians 1:6) Cherry picking words out of context is extremely dangerous. Here the obvious context is **remaining so as to produce fruit!** Jesus repeated this imperative just before parting the early scene. "*Go and **make followers** of all the nations.*" (Matthew 28:19-20)

Apparently the eleven believed the Master. "*The asking for anything you want*" produced resources more than adequate to accommodate the task of making disciples "*of all nations*" In one century the church had conquered the Roman Empire with the Gospel. Not a bad track record! Little wonder that the religious leaders couldn't "*take their eyes off them when they realized these two were laymen with no training in Scripture or formal education. They recognized them **as companions of Jesus.***" (Acts 4:13)