



*Time is On Our Side | Ryan Leak | 10.28.17*

LG Weekly

## START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

**If you end up with an unexpected, free hour in your day, how are you going to spend it?**

## SHARE

*There are seasons in the rhythm of Red Rocks Church when it seems timely and appropriate to break from a teaching series in order to allow our teachers the freedom to talk about messages that have been weighing on their hearts for our church family. Over the next few weeks our pastors will be speaking on some really important topics from both the old and new testaments.*

In this weekend's message, our guest speaker Ryan Leak challenged us to consider how we choose to spend our time. It's not a new question and is probably one you've asked yourself before, but it's a question with convicting and corrective power. What is it that fills the hours of your day? After an hour at the gym, driving to work in traffic, sitting in meetings, spending time with the kids, catching up on "Stranger Things," and scrolling through Instagram before bed, the day is basically gone! When it's finally time to lay your head on the pillow, time seems to have gotten away from you, and you realize you never found or made time to spend time with your Creator God.

Contrary to what we may feel in that moment of defeated regret, time is on our side. Each of us is capable of setting aside time for and with Jesus. Ryan Leak referred to a quote by Jim Rohn, "*if you really want to do something, you'll find a way. If you don't, you'll find an excuse.*"

**Thinking about your ability to find time with God in your current season of life, what are your**

### **initial reactions to Rohn’s statement?**

As we mature in our walk with Christ, the assumption is it gets easier to find time with Jesus. But that’s not always the case. Often, our ability to find time with God goes in seasons.

**Can you point to a season or period of your life when spending time with God was natural and easy? What made it that way?**

**What practical things did you do in that season that made “finding time” with God easier?**

### G R O W

After Jesus washes his disciples’ feet and celebrates the Passover in John 13, Jesus and the disciples make their way to the Garden. As the hours draw near to his betrayal, Jesus knows these are his final moments with his disciples, so he uses their time walking to impart final thoughts and promises. Chapters 14-17 are often referred to as the “Farewell Discourse” and include some of Jesus’ most memorable sayings in all of the gospels.

It’s in this context that Jesus gives his symbolic lesson on the vine—perhaps even as they walk by a vineyard or step over a twisting vine on the path. As you read, imagine the disciples hearing this text for the first time in a setting that vividly illustrates Jesus’ teaching.

### **Read John 15:1-8**

For the disciples, hearing Jesus say, “I am the true vine,” would immediately bring to mind the picture of the nation of Israel as a vineyard. Throughout the Old Testament, books with which the disciples were incredibly familiar, the imagery of the vine is used of God’s people. The Lord carefully plants and cultivates his vineyard, Israel, but Israel consistently fails to produce good fruit.

### **Read Isaiah 5:1-7**

**How does understanding that Israel was depicted as a fruitless vineyard influence the way you read about Jesus being the true vine?**

In contrast to Israel's failure as a good, fruit-producing vine, Jesus asserts that he himself is the true vine and thereby fulfills Israel's position as the vine of God (Ps. 80:14-18). Pastor of the Village Church, Matt Chandler, in a series on the "I AM" statements of Jesus, says that when Jesus states, "I am the true vine," Jesus steps into the mess of Israel's inability to bear fruit and their ensuing judgment. He flips the Old Testament picture of the vineyard on its head, saying, "I am being what you could not be. I got you and I got this. I am the true vine; you are not the true vine. You have been unable to bear the type of fruitfulness that pleases the Lord, but I will make it possible for you."

**Looking at John 15, how does God make it possible for us to bear fruit? What does he ask us to do?**

**Based on this text, what is the end result for someone who does not bear fruit? How does this seemingly harsh reality influence the way you choose to remain in Jesus?**

## M O V E

As the vineyard itself exists to be fruitful, so we, as Christ-followers, exist to bear fruit. It is tempting to define the fruit we bear as believers by our actions or what we do *for* Jesus. Such behavior is tangible—we can accomplish it ourselves or notice someone else's ability to serve and behave better. But our "fruits" are not external religious acts off of a Pharisaical to-do list, and our ability to bear fruit is not achieved by any power of our own.

Our fruit is the evidence of a close-knit relationship with Jesus; it is the result of continued discipleship (John 15:8). When we continue to absorb Jesus teachings and character into our own understanding and life practices, our own hearts are transformed by Jesus' presence and the work of the Spirit. Soon, our character, desire, and finally, our behavior is transformed and modeled after Christ's.

### **Read Galatians 5:22-25**

Just when we think the whole talk of the vine and branches is getting too metaphorical, Paul gives us the fruit of the Spirit as a marker of the Christian life. Those who remain in the vine will bear these fruits! It's tangible, obvious and, quite frankly, serves as a kick in the pants—especially when we realize the fruit of the Spirit exist as a whole package of traits that are not

to be separated. As believers, we are expected to bear each and every fruit from Paul's list.

Still, there are likely to be seasons of life where our branches look more like Israel's—a fruitless vineyard in need of pruning. In these times, the temptation is to believe we have offended Jesus by our behavior and avoid him altogether. Even though we're supposed to find time with Jesus, the more we avoid it, the easier it gets to keep on avoiding. Before long we're in a season of doing life on our own, and we're suddenly surprised by how impatient, anxious and judgmental we've become. The fruit of the Spirit are far from the first responses of our hearts because we haven't spent time being changed by the presence of God.

The good news? We don't have to clean ourselves up before we come back to the true vine. The Father, the gardener, will do all of the pruning. When we remain in Christ, God sees us as he sees his Son and does not treat us as our sins deserve. We don't have to avoid him, we can simply run to him—eager to spend time with him and be changed by his presence!

**What about living a life characterized by the fruit of the Spirit is attractive to you? Which fruit of the Spirit do you need most today?**

**Ryan Leak closed the message with the idea that we need to make a “To Don't Do List,” where we list out things that we need to stop doing. What is one of your biggest time-wasters that God is calling you to prune out of your life?**

## PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying with and for each other. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to share more freely.

## TO GO

John 15:8

“This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

Writer - Kaylee Gosselin | Editor - Brian Zibell