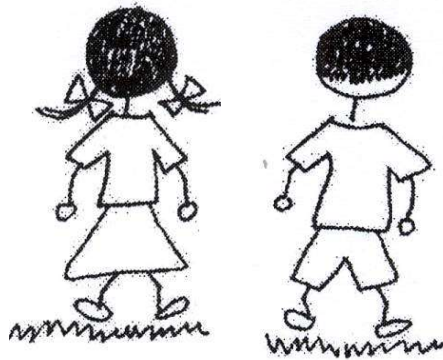


God's Vineyard

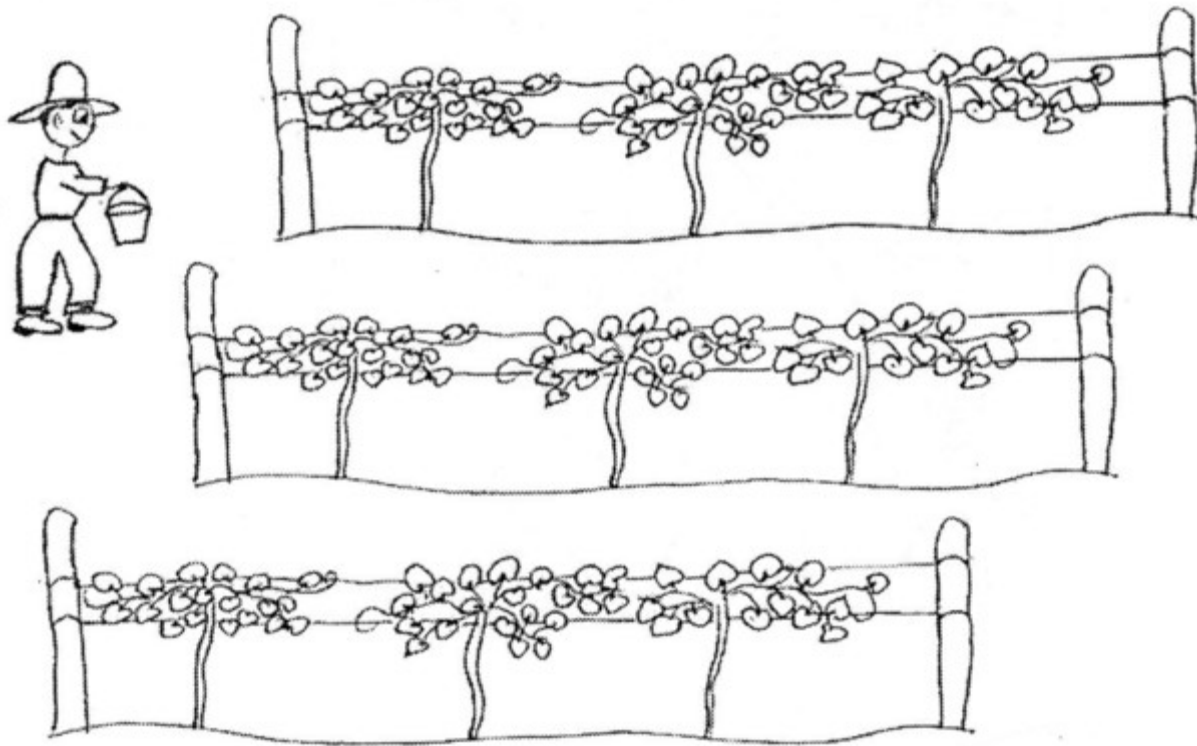
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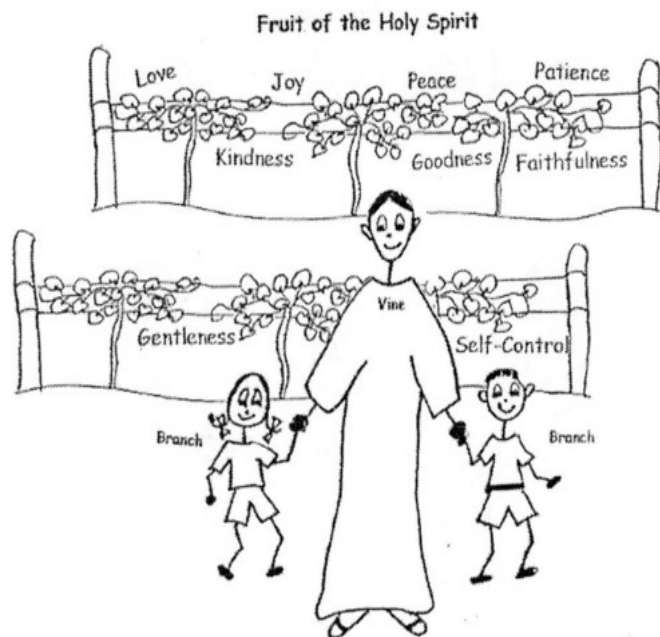
A healthy vineyard has rows and rows of beautiful, brown grape vines with lush green branches with leaves. The vine is the part of the plant that gives life and nourishment to the branches. It supplies the branches with all they need to grow and produce fruit.



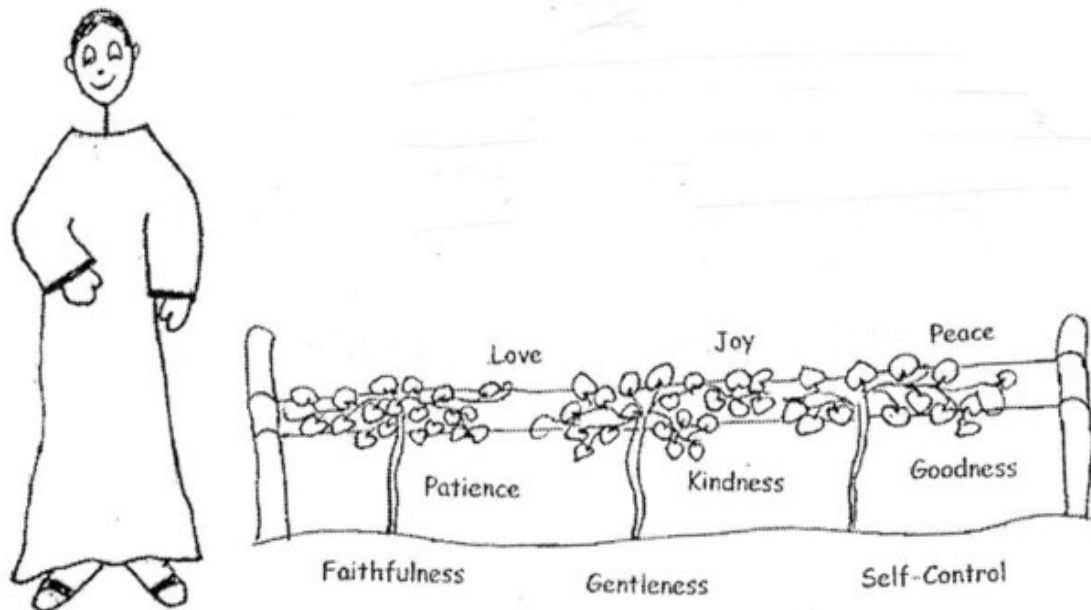
The vines must be planted in an area which has the right climate. Then, the vinedresser, the one who takes care of the vineyard, consistently cares for the vine and the branches. The work takes a lot of knowledge. He makes sure the soil and nutrients are all right. In order to have good, healthy branches, in the Spring the vinedresser will lift up and secure branches which have drooped to the ground. In the Fall he will prune or cut off branches that aren't necessary. When everything is right a good crop of grapes will be produced.

We can compare our spiritual life to a vineyard. We are in God's vineyard. God the Father is the Vinedresser. The Vine is the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are the branches. God the Father is looking over the vineyard. In His omniscience and omnipotence He designed a spiritual growth plan for the branches in the Vine, Jesus Christ. God makes sure that we have the right "soil, climate, and nutrients" for our spiritual growth. When we fall, He lifts us up and when we need pruning, He prunes us.

John 15:2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He lifts up [better translation than "takes away"]; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

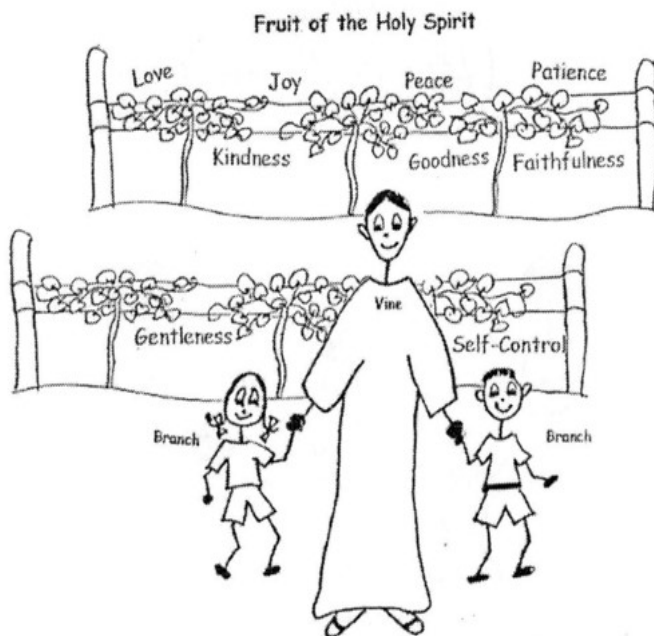


Jesus tested the soil, climate, and nutrients - or the plan of God - during His life on Earth. He was indwelt with the Holy Spirit so He always had the power of the Spirit to use in His spiritual life. He learned, believed and used God's word. He had more tests and problems than we will ever have! Jesus obeyed His Father's will and lived in His plan. The plan worked. Jesus made it through very difficult times through the power of the Holy Spirit and the word of God. He experienced the fruit of the Holy Spirit to the max!



Hebrews 12:13 For consider Him Who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

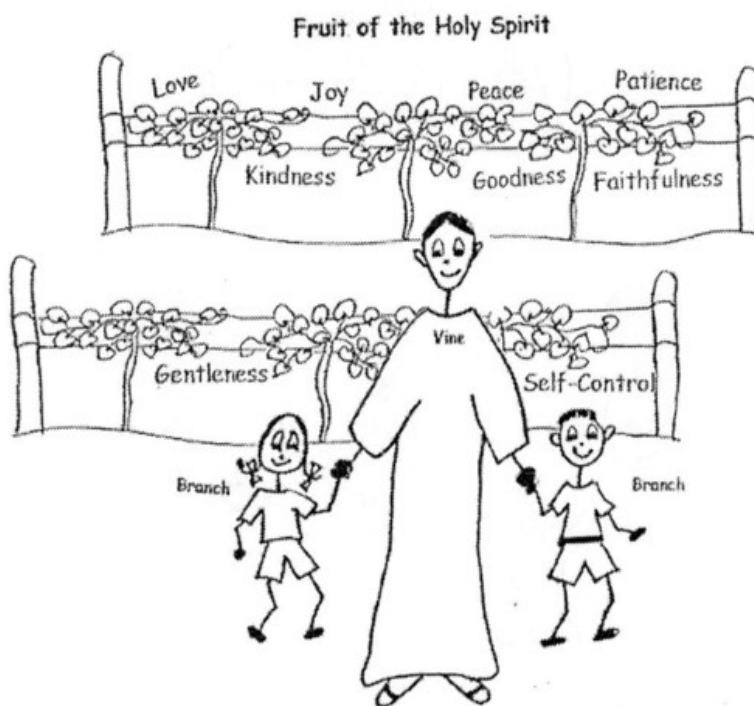
What is the fruit of the Holy Spirit? Well, it isn't some exotic fruit like papaya, or some common fruit like apples. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. It is something which God the Holy Spirit produces or grows in the life of the believer who is following the plan of God. It means that while we are learning, believing and using the word of God, the Holy Spirit is growing in us the understanding of: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.



Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law [we can't do works to experience them; we study and the Holy Spirit gives us

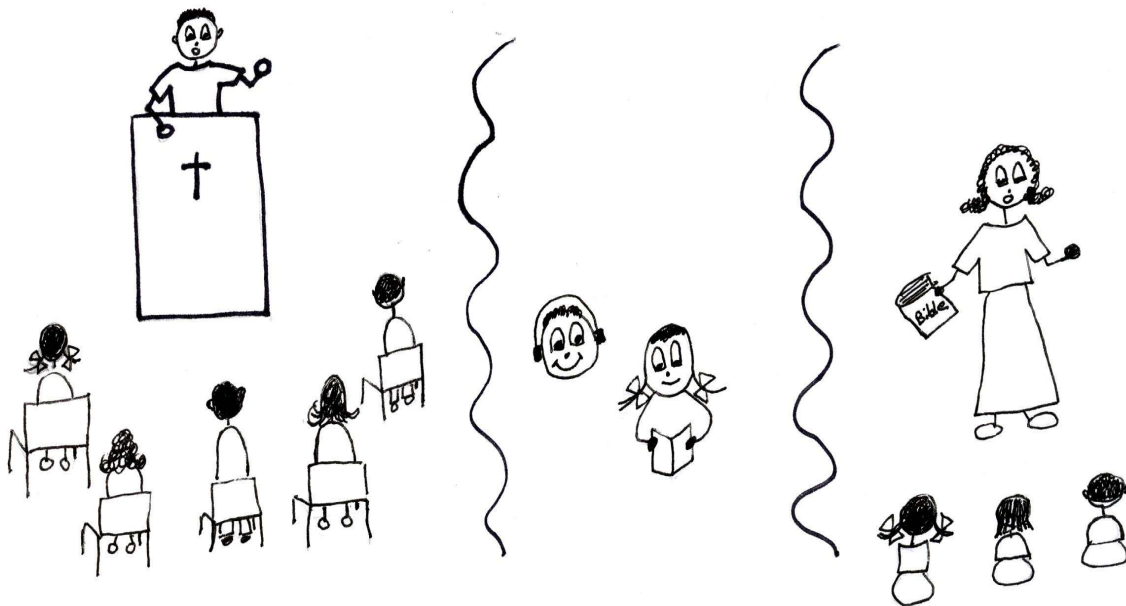
understanding so we can experience them].

We, the branches, get life through the Vine, the Lord Jesus Christ. The life that is complete in the Vine is supplied to us, the growing branches. We get all that we need to grow in the spiritual life from using the same plan of God that Jesus, in His humanity, used: the power of the Holy Spirit; and learning, believing, and using the word of God which is the thinking of Jesus Christ. What an awesome form of energy! The Vine gives life to its branches!



John 15:5 "I am the Vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me [lives in God's love], and I in him [Jesus' thinking in us], he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing."

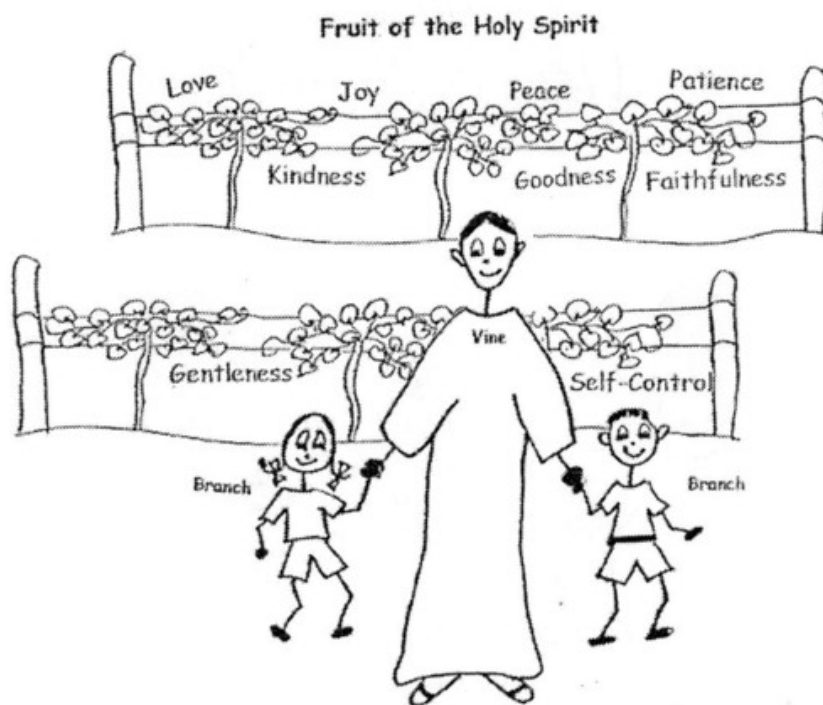
Believers are in union with Jesus Christ and will **never** be separated from Him. However, we are commanded by God to abide (**live**) in the Vine, the Lord Jesus Christ. That means to stay in the place of God's love, having the thinking of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. God's word is the thinking of Jesus Christ. If we get away from His thinking, we just need to realize we're off course and go back to His thinking. The Lord Jesus Christ abides (**lives**) in us by our thinking being the same as His thinking, the word of God. Great thoughts to guide us!



John 15:4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

In a vineyard, sometimes branches droop or fall to the ground. This is noticed in the Spring. If the branches are left there they can get muddy and moldy. They need to be lifted up and secured to the vine. So the vinedresser lifts them up and puts them in the place of good growth again. This is what God does for us believers when we fall! We certainly don't want to be left in the "mud" and get "moldy"!

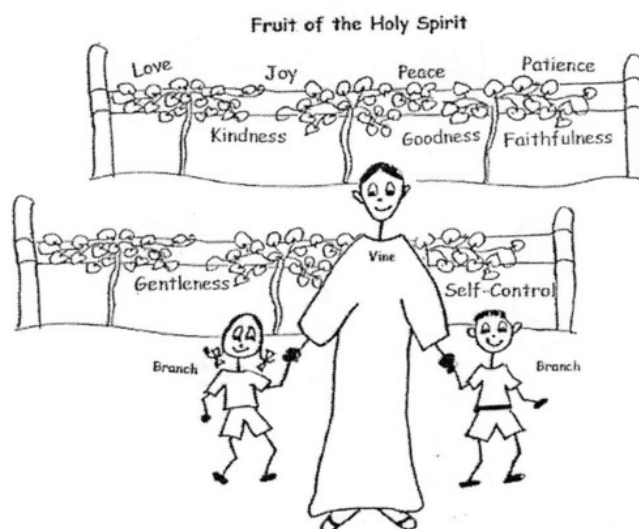
John 15:2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He lifts up; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit."



As we are growing in the spiritual life, God will prune us. This means He will give us suffering for blessing so we can grow spiritually. If everything always went well for us, we wouldn't grow up spiritually. We need



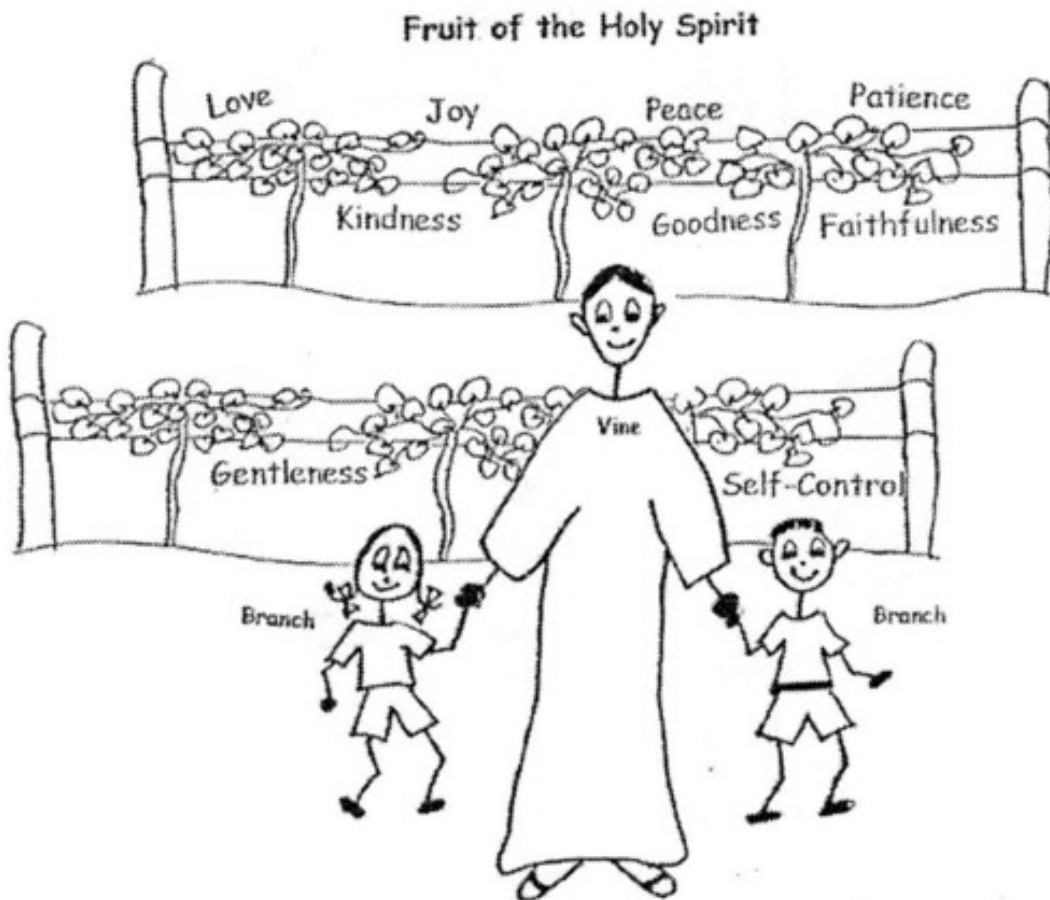
pruning so we will rely on God; God will always give us the power to go through the suffering or pruning. He loves us with an **infinite** love; that's a lot of love! God wants us to be branches **full of His life**, experiencing a great abundance of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. What a life!



John 15:2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He lifts up; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit."

Let's enjoy God's beautiful vineyard! We have God the Father as the Vinedresser; the Lord Jesus Christ as our Vine; us as His branches; and the Holy Spirit producing His fruit in our lives. We have the BEST ABODE ever so let's abide (**live**) in it!

Glory be to God!



John 15:8 "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My indoctrinated ones [students]."