



*The Secret  
of the  
Vine*

**Producer's Comments & Study Guide**

# *The Secret of the Vine*

## **Study Guide & Producer's Comments**

**"That I may know Him..."**

**Philippians 3:10**

I believe that our ultimate purpose is to glorify God by living in a personal relationship with Him through His Son Jesus Christ, by being conformed to His image, by demonstrating our love for Him as we trust and obey Him, and by living in a continual awareness of His presence with us and in us and His desire to live His life through us! In this process, God has used everyday life parables to remind me of Him and to draw my focus back to Him. Because these parables have meant so much to me, I want to share them with you. My prayer is that the Lord will use this presentation in your heart to call you to listen to Him...to trust Him! That's what He continues to say to me through it. Let it speak to you of the beauty of His creation, of His great love for you, and of His desire to be known by you and to be loved by you! Maybe the next time you see a bunch of grapes, you'll remember this parable and remember Him!

Not many of us have the opportunity to grow up around a vineyard. We miss much of what John 15 has to tell us. It's what Jesus told His disciples during one of His last opportunities, probably as they passed by a grapevine on the way from the Upper Room to the Garden. It was during a rather thorough "pruning" process in my life that I decided that the Lord wanted me to produce this program. As I researched the process and spent time in vineyards, I became astounded by the depth of the parallel between the natural and the spiritual. Oh, how much He wants to teach us if we would just listen! This is the revised and digitally remastered version of *The Secret of the Vine* which was originally produced as a 3-projector, multimedia presentation. In the Producer's Comments, I tell the amazing story of how the Lord brought this video into being. I pray that He will use *The Secret of the Vine* to minister His love to you and through you as you share it with others!

Together...

on our way to our Father's house,



Linda King

This Study Guide may be duplicated for group use.

### **Producer's Comments**

By Linda King

The adventure the Lord took me on during the process of producing this DVD is so Him, that I want to share it with you. I pray that the Lord will use it to encourage you to anticipate Him in your life...to listen for His still small voice. It was during a pruning process in my life that the Lord let me know that He wanted me to begin producing this John 15 parable. When I started researching, I was living in Lincoln, Nebraska. I had recently produced a presentation for the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, so I talked with the Director. He told me that there was an experimental vineyard right there on East Campus of the University of Nebraska. I searched out one of the professors and asked him to teach me about the process of growing grapes. He met with me several times. As we walked in the vineyard one day, he started telling me about phylloxera. These are aphid-like insects that lay eggs in galls on the leaves and roots of grapevines. They can devastate the plant. He told me that at one point in European history, phylloxera was destroying all of the grapevines. His following words (which I wrote down verbatim) sent a chill through me because of the amazing spiritual parallel they illustrated. He said, "All

of the grapevines in Europe were dying! There was found only one vine...the roots of only one vine which could withstand the phylloxera." He explained that what they had to do was graft the weak vines onto the roots of this one strong vine if they were to be saved. What an illustration of how we are all spiritually dead without Christ, and how our only hope is to be grafted into Christ! As my research continued, I went to the vineyard often to listen to the Lord and to take photographs. For some strange reason which can only be understood as from the Lord, I became attached to one particular vine. It was the first vine on what I remember as row 5. One day as I approached "my vine," I saw a robin fly out from inside the vine. Could it be? I looked down into the heart of the vine and saw a nest! Amazing! I was so excited! Day after day, I would return to the vineyard, go to my vine, and anticipate!

As time went on, I saw the eggs! I saw the babies who had just hatched! I saw the babies grow, and grow, and I even saw one of the fledglings out of the nest. I listened to the beautiful song of the robins as the mom and dad watched me. I searched the other vines, but my special vine was the only one that had a nest.

One morning, I went to the vineyard. I saw black moldy spots on some of the vines. I rushed over to the keeper who continually tended the vineyard, and nervously asked him about the black spots I was seeing! He said, "Oh that's nothing to worry about. BUT did you see the phylloxera???"

"Phylloxera!!!! Oh, NO!!! Where???" I will never forget his response.

"Well, it's strange. The wild vines outside the vineyard get phylloxera, but not the ones in the vineyard...until now. But at least it's only one vine that has it. It's the vine...the first vine...the first vine on...row...on row...5."

"OH, NO!!!" I started running down the rows of the vineyard. My heart was pounding!!! I thought to myself, "This must be something like the Father felt when He saw sin in His children!" I reached my vine. There it was. Phylloxera!!! The tell-tale bumps were on its leaves. It was very emotional for me.

As the days passed, I often returned to the vineyard, and I watched as the phylloxera caused the leaves to curl more and more and couldn't catch the sun anymore.

I was working on another program for a group in Chicago, so one day, I loaded my equipment and headed for the Windy City. As I was driving through Iowa, I started thinking about my vine. "Isn't it strange how the one vine that had the bird's nest just happened to be the one vine that had the phylloxera? Could it be that the birds flying back and forth carried the phylloxera from the vines outside the vineyard to my vine inside the vineyard?" I was SO excited! I pulled off at the next rest stop and called the professor. I excitedly reported my potential insight, and I asked him if that were possible. After several minutes of contemplation, he said, "Well...it could be!" I asked him if I would be wrong if I put that in my script. He said, "Well.....No!" I, now even more excited, jumped back into my van, and by the time I reached Chicago, the Lord had given me the majority of the script for this video.

A few months later, a friend told me that one of the Wildlife Rescue newsletters reported that they were having trouble in the vineyard. They reported that the birds were carrying phylloxera from the wild vines outside the vineyard and were infecting the ones inside the vineyard. Is our God toooo amazing??? He had revealed that to me! I didn't have a degree in birds, plants, or bugs! All I did was listen to my Keeper. To HIM goes all the glory! There is, indeed, a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. Daniel 2:28 Anticipate...the Lord!

Have you been grafted into the Vine? Have you received the free gift of God's love, forgiveness, and Life He offers you in Christ Jesus? If you have not, please do not delay. How do you get it? Do you inherit it from your parents who always went to church? No. Is there any way you can earn it? No. Is there any way you can pay for it? No. It is a free gift. So, how do you receive this great gift from

God? The Bible tells us that we have all sinned, and that the wages of sin is death. But God loved us so much that He sent His Son Jesus. And if we believe in Him, we will not perish, but we will have everlasting life, and we will become one of God's children. Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; John 3:16; John 1:12 The Bible also tells us that when we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved. Romans 10:9

If you recognize that you have sinned, if you are willing to turn from those sins, if you believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins and rose from the dead and wants to live His life in you and through you, and if you are ready to receive His gift of forgiveness and His new life, I encourage you to invite Him into your life with a prayer such as this:

Dear Jesus, please forgive me for all my sins and for doing my own thing and going my own way all of my life. Thank You for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for all my sins! I want You to be my Savior and my Lord! I invite You into my heart and my life! I want to know You and to live for You! Thank you for the gift of Your life that You want to live in me and through me! Please help me hear Your voice and be quick to respond to You! I want to be available to You! I am dependent upon You! I want to demonstrate my love to You by obeying You! I love You! In Jesus' name I pray. AMEN."

If you sincerely prayed that prayer, you are a brand new creation! 2 Corinthians 5:17 That is cause for great celebration! The God of all creation has just transferred you out of the dominion of darkness and into the Kingdom of the Son of His love! Colossians 1:13 You have been grafted into Christ Jesus! Now, grow in Him. Read His Word the Bible. I encourage you to start with the book of John. Get involved in a church that teaches His Word. Get involved in a Bible study. He has a wonderful plan for your life!

### **Study Guide**

As you discuss this parable, focus on the spiritual truths which are illustrated by the process of growing and caring for grapevines.

What do the garden, the vine, the robins, and the Keeper each represent?

What words would you use to describe the Keeper's relationship to the vines in His garden?

Remember His warning to them: "It is often that which appears most innocent, it is often that which seems most harmless, it is often those things most beautiful and inviting which can, in the end, bring your destruction." Have you ever sensed a similar warning in your life? To what did it relate? Discuss.

"For many, the birds of the air are beautiful friends, but for you, they are your enemies!" Are there things you can think of that would be all right for some people but dangerous for you?

What did phylloxera represent? It was carried by the birds from the "wild vines which grow outside my garden." Discuss.

"The robin's song was beautiful and so inviting." Discuss.

Consider how the vine rationalized letting the robin come closer. What was the need in the vine's heart? What made him vulnerable? Are there needs in your life which make you more vulnerable?

What happened to the vine's relationship to the Keeper as a result of letting the robins build their nest? What happened to the vine itself?

With phylloxera, "The bumps on the leaves are only an outward sign. The serious impact is on the roots." Discuss.

"There was found only one Vine, the roots of only one Vine that could withstand this fatal attack." Who did this represent?

"It was the Vine which had always and forever grown up by the Keeper's house." Where is this? Who did this represent?

"He had brought a cutting of it down into the garden when the other vines were being overcome." What does this represent?

The Vine called the Keeper "Father." Why?

"Phylloxera meant death!" What does this represent?

Why was the Vine cut down? It didn't have phylloxera!

What were your thoughts and feelings when you saw the grafting process?

"He slid me deep into the heart of His Vine. It was incredible! A perfect fit!" Did you get a new sense of the intimacy involved if you have been grafted into Christ Jesus?

What was the result of what appeared to be death for both vines?

What does "Christ in you" mean? The grafting process is a perfect illustration. Discuss why and how this took place for the vine and for you.

What were the results of the grafting process for the vine?

What are the results of having Christ living in you?

Christ gave His life to pay the penalty for our sins, so that we can be forgiven. But there's more to the story. Major Ian Thomas taught me that Christ rose from the dead to give His life to us so He could live His life through us! How was that illustrated in this parable? What is an example of how you have experienced Christ living His life in you and through you? Do you experience His Holy Spirit teaching you, guiding you, comforting you?

"The Keeper, our Father, has forgiven you; you must forgive yourself." Is there anything for which you have not forgiven yourself?

Once the vine was cut off from all its original roots and grafted into the Vine, what was its life source? Did it still have phylloxera? Why?

"He had given His life for me. Now, all I wanted to do was to be like He was so that everyone could see Him when they looked at me!" Discuss.

"A new vine must not be allowed to produce fruit for three years." Why? What is the spiritual wisdom in that comment?

Why is training and discipline so important for a vine? For you?

Before the grafting, the one with phylloxera was a vine. After the grafting, he was a branch. Discuss this.

"I am the Vine. You are the branch." What part of the grapevine is the vine?

Please read John 15:5-6. Can a branch that is not vitally attached to a vine bear fruit?

How do we abide? Read John 15:10. Does it involve dependence? What is another word for abide?

Jesus says that if we do what He says, we will abide in His love. What does He want us to do? See John 15:12

What are the implications of loving one another as He has loved us?

There are other branches! And "Since He is in me, and I am in Him, and He is in them, and they are in Him, that makes us all one!" Discuss.

Each of us has fruit to bear as our Keeper chooses. What is the fruit He wants you to bear?

In our interaction with the other branches, on what or on whom are we to focus? On what or on whom are we not to focus?

Even in the third year, the Keeper thinned the fruit. Why?

Our natural tendency is to spread ourselves too thin! Are you spending time with Him to discover which fruit He wants to let develop in and through you?

The branch was concerned and worried about many things. The Vine told it that only one thing is necessary. What is that one thing?

Do you take time to abide in Him? To listen to Him? To enjoy the warmth of His presence? His friendship? Do you let His love fill you? Do you let Him be your peace? Your joy? Your strength? Does His love flowing through you heal your deepest hurts?

Do you live to fill others' needs and not your own?

"Only what you receive from me will be what others really need." Do you spend time with the Lord, so you have something of lasting value to give to others?

"Vines have such a tendency to want to grow in upon themselves and get entangled. The Keeper spent much of His time pulling them out of their death grip hold on one another. It was all done to keep their leaves exposed to the sun. Everything depends on this." Discuss.

The branches were not meant to stand by themselves. What is the support system the Keeper has provided for you?

Pruning is a painful but crucial part of being in the hands of the Master Keeper.

Purposes of pruning:

1. It keeps the vine strong and manageable.
2. Pruning established the desired direction for growth. Pruning the vine just in front of a bud that is on the left side causes the vine to grow to the left. Pruning the vine just in front of a bud that is on the right side causes the vine to grow to the right.
3. Grapes are only produced on the current season's growth of wood. If the Keeper didn't prune, the vine's energy would be spent on maintaining all of the unfruitful wood instead of on bearing fruit. Pruning brings out the potential.

Have you experienced the Keeper pruning in your life for each of the above 3 purposes?

Be encouraged! The Keeper only prunes those He expects to bear more fruit.

Everyone experiences suffering. But "because the Keeper is our Father, suffering can produce fruit. Without Him, it seems to be meaningless." Have you ever experienced the Lord turning a painful experience into something good? Discuss.

"A grapevine exists for one reason alone." What is that reason?

"Does the Vine...do the branches keep the fruit?" Discuss.

The vine's search for intimacy, for belonging had ended. Why did the vine feel he wasn't alone anymore?

"The Vine gave up His branches and lets me bear His fruit. I gave up my roots and let Him become my strength and security, my foundation, my anchor, my source, my storehouse, and my protection." Is Christ all of those things to you? Discuss.

In Hebrews 12:2 Jesus demonstrated the above principle. Please read and discuss.

"Remember what He has meant to you in the past." Pause and think about this.

"Remember what He means to you now." Pause and think about this.

"Remember what He will mean to you in the future." Pause and think about this.

Why is taking time to remember what the Lord has done in our lives important?

What is the secret of the Vine?

### **Harvest**

The sun and the rain have come  
summer is nearing end  
all that I needed,  
to that He did attend.  
Ever so slowly the changes I see.  
More than I could have dreamed  
fruit of His life in me.

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"His first miracle? He turned water into wine at the wedding of a friend. There's going to be another wedding, and He will be there, and all who have been grafted in, all who have come to know what it is to abide in Him, all who have born His fruit will be there too. Will you?"

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### **Other Suggested Scriptures:**

John 15, Galatians 2:20, John 14:17, Romans 8:9-11, 1 Corinthians 3:16, Colossians 1:2

### **Suggested Reading:**

***The Saving Life of Christ*** by Major W. Ian Thomas  
***Abide in Christ*** by Andrew Murray

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### **The Secret of the Vine**

A Shepherd & Associates Production

*Called to produce the tools to equip the saints to do the work of ministry.*

*May the work of our hands become tools in your hands for the Savior!*

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***Christ in you,  
the hope  
of glory!***

**Colossians 1:27 KJV**



**Other Ministry Resources from Shepherd & Associates:**

**Listen to the Butterfly**

26 minutes

(a parable comparing our spiritual development to the physical development of the monarch)

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27 minutes

(a parable using the potter/clay analogy to demonstrate the redemptive process)

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