



We realize you may not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like.

Small Group Questions

“The True Vine”

John 15:1-11

Previous message summary: Before Jesus goes to the cross and returns to the Father, he promises to give the disciples “another helper” to come alongside of them to help them live the Christian life and share the Gospel message. This helper is the Holy Spirit who will dwell in their hearts and minds and will lead and guide them. While it is true that Jesus is going away, it is also true that he is not going to leave his disciples as orphans alone in this world. In fact, Jesus says that if anyone loves him, he will come and make his home with them. This amazing promise of the Holy Spirit, who will dwell within people, is for the disciples and for all who love Jesus and follow his commands.

What we learned: We have a helper who comes alongside of us to lead and guide us as we live life. The Holy Spirit, who is God in every way, dwells within the Christian to lead, guide, aid in prayer, and intercede with the Father on our behalf. The Holy Spirit bears the fruit of love, joy, peace, and patience in the life of the Christian. The Holy Spirit marks us and seals us as children of God who one day will receive the inheritance of heaven and life in the presence of God forever. We have not been forgotten ... we are not alone ... God has given us his Spirit, who dwells within us.

Introduction

1. What needs to happen for a plant to bear fruit? Does the fruit grow by accident, or is it the result of an intentional effort on the part of a gardener or farmer?
 - a. In nature, when a piece of fruit is produced, what determines the kind of fruit that is produced? Can an apple tree produce oranges?
 - b. In the life of a Christian, what is the primary factor in determining the kinds of fruit (attitudes, actions, words) that will be produced in life?

- c. Read Galatians 5:22-23. When you think about your life, what kind of fruit do you want to produce? What can you do to ensure that you are producing the fruit you desire?

Discussion Questions

Read John 15:1-11

2. When Jesus says “I am the true vine,” what is he claiming about himself? Have we seen Jesus make similar statements? Read John 6:35; 8:12; 10:9 & 11; 11:25; and 14:6.
 - a. When the vine is talked about in the Old Testament, who is that a reference to? Read Psalm 80:8-16 and Isaiah 5:1-7.
 - b. Who is the vinedresser? What does the vinedresser do to care for and provide for the vineyard? Read John 15:2.
 - c. How has God provided for and cared for you?
 - d. Have you ever undergone the pruning process so that you can produce more fruit? Was that process painful? Was the result worth undergoing the pruning process?
3. How many times does Jesus use the word “abide” in this passage?
 - a. What is the key to producing fruit in the life of a Christian? What must they do in order to bear much fruit? Read John 15:5.
 - b. What does it look like for someone to “abide in Jesus”?
 - c. Are you abiding in Jesus at this point in your life? If not, what would have to change for you to say that you are abiding in Jesus?
 - d. When Jesus talks about bearing much fruit, is he talking only about evangelism? What other fruit could he be talking about that is important to see in the life of a Christian?

4. When Jesus says “apart from me you can do nothing,” what is he talking about? What things are impossible to accomplish apart from Jesus?
 - a. How does being connected to Jesus help you accomplish things that have eternal value?
 - b. What eternal things are accomplished when you are connected to Jesus?
5. What does Jesus say about those who choose to not abide in him? Read John 15:6. Is there any eternal value in the branches that are not connected to the vine?
 - a. Do you know people who have made a choice to live life apart from Jesus? What would you say to them if you had the opportunity?
 - b. As you live connected to Jesus and bear fruit in your life, how can that serve as a witness to unbelievers around you? Read John 13:35; 14:31; and Matthew 5:16.
6. What is the connection between keeping the commandments and abiding in Jesus and his love?
 - a. Can someone disregard the commands of Jesus and expect to bear the fruit that Jesus wants them to produce?
 - b. What example did Jesus leave for his disciples to follow? Read John 15:10.
7. Why does Jesus tell his disciples to abide in him? Read John 15:11. What is produced in the life a Christian who truly abides in Jesus?
 - a. When Jesus talks about joy, is he talking about happiness? What is the basis for the kind of joy that Jesus wants for his disciples?
 - b. Have you ever experienced the full joy of Jesus in your life? Did it come at a time when everything was perfect or did it come in the midst of adversity and trial? What did James say about joy in the midst of trial? Read James 1:2-4.

- c. When you have the complete joy of Jesus in your life, how does it change your relationship with God? How does it change your relationship with your family? How does it change your relationship with fellow believers? How does it change your relationship with nonbelievers?

Challenge: Jesus is the true vine, and our ultimate success in life is dependent upon our attachment to him. When we abide in Jesus and his Word we are promised that fruit will be produced in our life. When we abide in Jesus and follow his commands, we have the promise of the full joy of Jesus in our life.

Action: Make a commitment to strengthen your attachment to Jesus. This week make a decision to obey his commands, study God’s Word, meet together with other Christians for times of fellowship and prayer, and devote yourself completely to Jesus.

Next Steps:

- I will take the steps necessary to stay connected to the “true vine.”
- I will allow God to prune away those things in my life (even good things) that are keeping me from bearing fruit.
- One area in my life that needs pruned is:
_____ .