

Discussion Guide

Use this guide by yourself, with a friend, or in a group to help you pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus this week!

Open

As we begin the second week of our churchwide study on prayer, the message this week focuses on building the habit of prayer into our everyday lives to keep us connected to Christ. Our foundational passage is John 15:4-5 where Jesus reminds us that the only way for us to stay spiritually healthy and bear fruit is by remaining connected to Him, but sometimes we can get too distracted by what's *immediate* to keep focused on what's *essential*. To get your group started, let everyone share about a time when they felt a strong connection to God - how old were they and what were the circumstances?

BIG THOUGHT

If we want to see God produce fruit in our lives, we have to determine to stay connected to Christ.

Dig

1. Read John 15:1-11. Jesus' teaching to his disciples in this passage revolves around three symbols—the vine, the gardener and the branches. What does His use of grapes as the primary image imply about God's expectations for the way we should be producing fruit (fruit that shows up one at a time like an apple)?
2. Why do you think Jesus calls himself the *true* vine? (v. 1) What are the *false* vines available to us in today's culture? How does Jesus distinguish between the two different types of branches? (v. 2) In nature, how do we know when a tree is dead - by what it looks like or by what it produces? And how can that help us understand Jesus' point here? What are some of the tools God uses to "prune" us for more fruitfulness in His work?

3. What does Jesus say is necessary for us to bear the fruit that God is looking for? (v. 4) In general, do you like being dependent upon someone else or would you rather be independent? Do you think our preference in this area influences the way we follow Jesus? Explain.
4. In v. 5, Jesus promises that if we'll remain connected to Him we will bear "*much* fruit." To see an example of what that looks like, turn and read Galatians 5:22-23. Which one of these character traits feels the easiest for you to demonstrate? Which one seems to be the hardest for you to develop? Tell the group about a person you know who seems to be fruitful in their lives... what do you see?
5. What warning does Jesus give in v. 6? How could Judas (who left the room at the beginning of this teaching) illustrate what Jesus is describing? Now read v. 7 - what promise does Jesus give? And what is the ultimate reason that God wants us to bear fruit?

Take it Further

Talk with God and ask Him to show you the areas in your life where you need to develop a stronger connection with Him - and then ask Him to bring fruit as you depend more and more on Him.

Daily Readings

Day 1: Lamentations 3:25

Day 2: Revelation 3:20

Day 3: 2 Peter 1:10

Day 4: 1 Kings 8:61

Day 5: Deuteronomy 6:5

Day 6: Jeremiah 29:13

Memory Verse: John 15:5



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