



Next Week's Life Group: John 3:1-21

Our Church's Definition of a Biblical Disciple of Jesus

A person who is committed to *following, being changed by,* and *on mission* with Jesus (taken from Matthew 4:19).

The Purpose of Life Groups

Life Groups are where we connect and grow with God and with others through relationships; growing in spiritual maturity as biblical disciples of Jesus. Life Groups are loving, safe and interactive; a place where people can be authentic and vulnerable as they explore, experience, and grow in relationship with Jesus, the Word, and others to inspire a culture of discipleship as we do life together. *Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 3:12-13, 10:23-25; 1 Thessalonians 5:11*



HOLY SPIRIT

MAY WEEK 13
MAY 5-6, WEEK 3

**LIFE
GROUPS
GUIDE**

Holy Spirit

"I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5

Getting Started: On a scale of 0-10, how much do you love gardening? Or, what is the very best thing to find at the Farmer's Market?

Context: Jesus is the True Vine. The cultivation of vineyards was important to the life and economy of Israel and the symbolism of the vine was familiar to every Jew. A great, golden vine, the national emblem of Israel, adorned Herod's temple. It would have been visible to the disciples when they walked from the upper room to the Mount of Olives. Israel was the "fruitful vine" that God brought out of Egypt (Psalm 80:2), "but it yielded only wild fruit" (Isaiah 5:2). Fruit can only be as good as the vine that produces it. The root stalk of Israel had been the patriarchs and the Law of Moses. Jesus said, "I am the true vine." The keyword in this passage is *abide*; it is used eleven times in these eleven verses. What does it mean to abide? It means to remain in fellowship with Christ so that His life can work in and through us to produce fruit. Jesus uses the vine metaphor to describe the vital, ongoing relationship between Himself and those who are His disciples. Love is the relationship that unites disciples to Christ just as branches are united to a vine. Since Jesus Himself did not fully explain the symbolism of verses 2 and 6, we cannot afford to be overly dogmatic about how to interpret it. The two main explanations are, (1) the removal of counterfeit Christians, and (2) temporary chastisement of fruitless Christians. We do know that it is the work of the Father, the Vinedresser, to distinguish between the branches and to do what is right for the vine. Fruitful branches are carefully cleaned and pruned. If the branch is abiding with the vine, fruit-bearing is certain. There is no guarantee of quality or uniformity, but if the life of Christ permeates a disciple, some fruit will be inevitable.



Story/Passage: John 15:1-17

I Am the True Vine

Head Level

These questions help us to examine what the Word tells us.



- From verses 7-17 what do you see as blessings and privileges (fruit) that come from abiding in Christ?
- How is obedience to commands related to love? (John 15:10 -14)

Heart Level

These questions help us wrestle with what we believe.



- Pruning may involve cutting back a healthy branch. How have you responded when it seemed like God was removing something (or someone?) that seemed valuable or good?
- How do you explain verses 7 & 16 to someone who is struggling with apparent unanswered prayer?

Hands Level

These questions help us commit to a next step and live it out in our everyday lives.



- What type of pruning are you experiencing in this season of your life? What type of fruit harvest are you preparing for as a result ?
- Is joy the same thing as happiness? Describe how you are experiencing "joy made full" as a result of having Christ abiding in you. Who can you encourage with your testimony of joy?