



Northland Christian Church

Group Discussion Guide For the Week of July 24, 2022

Use the questions below as a springboard for discussion. You do not have to answer every question. Pick the ones you think will be helpful. Remember, Ultimately we want God's answers, not man's opinions. Always land where God lands. (ex: Where do we see that in the Bible?) Give grace. Give time for growth. Don't force it. Growth takes time, love, good questions, & patient, humble support.

Connect

- Do you like to garden or work in the yard? If so, what do you enjoy about it? If not, is there another hobby that helps you relax?

Context

In John chapter 15, Jesus continues His departure instructions for the disciples. In the opening verses of the chapter, Jesus uses an extended gardening metaphor to emphasize the disciple's desperate and vital need to remain dependent on Him. Jesus teaches that He is the true vine they must be rooted in, that all who are rooted in Him will produce fruit, that His Father the Gardener intimately cares for the branches rooted in the True Vine, and finally Jesus explains the vital importance of continual dependence on the True Vine. How does this impact how we view life? Calling? Purpose? The Church? Our identity?

Engage the Bible

Read the passage and share Observations, Surprises, and Takeaways from:

John 15:1-17 NIV

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. 9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit--fruit that will last--and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other."

Discuss

1. Read 1-17 again and take note of every time Jesus says something must be 'in us'. Make a list of all the things Jesus says must be 'in us'. Then, discuss how all those things on the list are related.
2. The word abide occurs eleven times in John 15:1-17. What does it mean for a physical branch of a plant to abide (remain) in a vine? What might this look like practically for us as apprentices of Jesus? Why is it sometimes hard to abide in Christ? What in our culture pushes us away abiding in Christ?
3. What do you think Jesus means when he says that (verse 5) "apart from me, you can do nothing"? What does this verse bring to your heart and mind?
4. Looking at verse 12-15, how do you think Jesus expects us to love each other? How have you seen this happen in life?
5. At the end of verse 9, Jesus says that we must abide/remain in His love. If Jesus loves us, why do we have to 'remain in His love'? In other words, what do you think it means to not remain in His love? Look at verse 10 and discuss some of the ways we can remain in His love.
6. John 15 says that as a child of God, you are: in Christ, God's friend, chosen by Him, sent by Him on mission to bear fruit, and that He will answer you and provide for you as you press into this calling. Do you see yourself this way? How might life look different if you (the Church) more fully embraced this reality about your (our) identity in Christ?
7. In John 15:12 and John 13:34, why is it important that we not simply stop with "love one another" but see the qualifying phrase "as I have loved you?" How is loving as Jesus loved so radically different from the way people often understand love?
8. In verse 11 Jesus says that He has told us these things so that our joy will be full. What could stop us from being filled with joy?
9. How have you experienced the "pruning of God" in your life? How did it help produce greater fruit in your life? Who helped you during this time? How can you/we help someone experiencing this?

End Your Group Time in Prayer

