



COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Grow: John 13 - 17, Part 4

INTRODUCTION

The Big Idea: Real, lasting change happens through abiding in Christ.

This week in our worship gathering we heard about the transformational power of the gospel. In John 15:1-17, Jesus explains His role as the vine of true life. He teaches the disciples that apart from Him they cannot accomplish their purpose to fulfill the mission of God. Throughout the passage, Jesus tells the disciples that only he can change their character, hearts, and minds. Within the vine/branch analogy, Christ shows them that *God's love for them* is the primary power source of change in the believer's life.

Sometimes change involves "pruning" which can be the painful ways God takes away those things in our lives we are worshipping instead of him. Sometimes that change is a joyful release from chains we've been bound by. Regardless, the way we change is not by trying hard to clean up our behavior, but by first resting in what Christ has done for us.

BIBLE STUDY

LEADER NOTES: *The following questions will help you work through the passage(s). Have someone read the passage(s) aloud, dividing among two or three people if needed. If there is a good, fruitful conversation going, you do not have to cut it off to get back to the questions.*

Scripture: Scripture: Read John 15:1-17

Getting Started

1. How have you experienced the "pruning" of God in your walk with Him?

2. What was your one take away from the sermon on abiding in Christ?"

Investigation

3. When Jesus uses an extended metaphor like this it is good to explain what the metaphor is talking about. Look at 1-4 What is the role of each person in the metaphor?

- a. God – vinedresser / gardener – throw away bad branches, prune good ones
- b. Jesus – vine – provide life to the branches
- c. Church – branches – abide in Jesus, bear fruit.

4. How can we find hope in the seemingly painful idea that God will *always* prune the good branches?

- a. He is working in believer's lives at all stages
- b. There are no believers that outgrow or move past the need for pruning
- c. We will never have to be perfect, and we will always be able to depend on him!

5. According to verse 3, what is the role of the word in gospel change & how does it happen?

- a. Word provides Gospel cleansing. The more we get to know the word, the more the Spirit brings it to mind and the more desirable it becomes to us.
- b. Ps. 119:9

6. What does it mean to abide in Jesus and how does one do that?

- a. To abide in Jesus means to "rest" in what he has done for us in the gospel. They way we abide is to 1) place our faith in what he's done for us and 2) obey his commands. The more we obey his commands, in response to the gospel, the more joy we'll receive and the more we will abide in him.

7. According to vs. 8-10, what are key markers of a disciple abiding in Christ?

- a. Obedience

- b. Bearing much fruit
- c. The love of the Father
- d. JOY!!!

Application

8. “Abide” seems like such a simple command, yet it is so hard for us to constantly believe & rest in the gospel. Why is it so hard for us to believe and obey God 100% of the time?

9. What is the difference between gospel-motivated change and religious behavior modification?

10. In light of your answer to question 7, What can we do to keep from slipping back into seeking God’s approval based on our behavior?

11. According to verse 15, Christ considers his disciples friends. How does his distinction between servant and friend encourage us as believers?

12. Jesus said that he chose and appointed us to his works and ministry. How does this commissioning affect our daily lives?
 - a. Everything in our life has purpose
 - b. God uses us to accomplish his purposes
 - c. We are not working for our own glory, but for His

Takeaways

These questions and actions are intention to help you apply the truths from John 15:1-17 to your own walk with the Lord.

13. We all have a set of ideas and values we “make our home in.” They are the things that give us comfort, security, and purpose. They are what we “abide” in. What, other than Jesus, are you most likely to “Abide” in?

14. What are areas of your life you need to commit to the Lord for the purpose of “pruning” and “bearing much fruit?”

PRAYER

Prayer is an essential component of your life as a follower of Christ, and an integral part of any healthy church body. Divide up into groups of 2-3 people and use the following points to guide you through a time of prayer together.

Colossians 3:16-17 “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Colossians 3:16-17 reminds us that Christ’s words are essential to our daily walk with Him. Because of our union with Christ, everything in our life has purpose and value for the Kingdom. God is the actor who changes us into those who can, “do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Prayer Points

1. Pray for change in the areas of your life that abide in something other than Christ
2. Thank God for His appointment on your life as a disciple
3. Pray God would use you as an example of genuine gospel change to others