

Week 10: John 15:1-17

Key Theme: Jesus is the True Vine

SEE my Life: Life Map & Fasting Reflection Icebreaker (15 mins)

Share briefly how your time of fasting, meditation, and reflection with your life map and Philippians 2:1-11 went. What is God reminding you of or teaching you through this experience?

Option: Share a time when you had to let go of something that you valued. Maybe it was something material like a car, or something more personal, like a job or a relationship. Whatever the case, how did you feel during the process? Do you feel the same way now that you did then?

SEE Jesus: John 15:1-17 (30 mins)

This passage focuses on the last of Jesus' "I am" statements. As you discuss the passage, keep in mind the context of the passage. Jesus is talking with his closest friends, his disciples. Jesus has predicted his betrayal, and Judas has left the room. Jesus has predicted Peter's denial, comforted his disciples, and promised the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is in this same intimate setting that Jesus says, "I am the true vine." As you discuss the botanical metaphor that Jesus uses to explain our relationship with Him, keep in mind that this is a text focusing primarily on how to grow in Christ, not on how to be saved.

1. What stands out to you from the text? What word or phrase seems significant to you? What questions do you have about the text?
2. What do each of the parts of the extended metaphor represent?
 - Vine
 - Vinedresser (gardener)
 - Branches
 - Fruit
 - Pruning
3. What does it mean to abide?
4. What are the effects of abiding?
5. What are the effects of not abiding?
6. Where do love and joy fit in here?
7. What is the difference between being a friend of Jesus and a servant? Why does this matter?
8. As you take a closer look at Jesus through this story, what aspects of his character draw you to him?

SEE my Life: Pruning and Bearing Fruit (30 mins)

As you apply Jesus' teaching on the pain and joy of the pruning and fruit-bearing process, think about each of the following sets of questions.

1. Jesus teaches, "Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, so that it may bear more fruit" (15:2). Describe a time in your life when you felt like God was "pruning" you.

What was the process like? How did you feel? What was the result? What did you learn?

2. Jesus suggests in verse 7 that He will answer prayers that align with his will and character. Have you ever had a time when you felt like you were meeting his criteria, but your prayer didn't get answered the way you thought it would? How did you feel? What did you learn through the experience?
3. Jesus says, "apart from me you can do nothing" (v. 5b). What does He mean by that? Can you describe a time when you were doing something that you thought you were doing for God, but realized you were doing it only for yourself and only in your strength? What was that learning process like?
4. Jesus says that the purpose of his teaching is that his joy would be in us and that our joy would be full. Can you describe a time when you've experienced this type of joy?

SEE the practices of Jesus: Fasting (15 mins to explain and close in prayer)

Continue with your practice of fasting this week. Skip at least one meal and purposefully spend 30-60 minutes reading and reflecting on Galatians 5:16-26, which describes the process of living by, or keeping in step with, the Holy Spirit.

- **Rejoice**—How can I praise God for giving me the Holy Spirit?
- **Repent**—What have I done wrong because I have forgotten the blessing of the Holy Spirit?
- **Recount**—How specifically has Jesus blessed me with the comfort and counsel of the Holy Spirit?
- **Request**—What is something that I am not doing right now that I need to do to apply the blessing of the Holy Spirit in my life? What do I need help with?
- **Rethink**—How can I live my life differently in light of the blessing of the Holy Spirit?
- **Reflect**—Why is God telling me today?

Close in prayer with a focus on your one person you have been praying for.