

HIDDEN

Silverdale Baptist

HIDDEN • HIDDEN LIFE • JOHN 15:1-8 • 11/21-22/2020

Big Idea

Jesus is the Vine who empowers us to live productive lives for God.

Getting Started

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

How many of you feel like being busy is a badge of honor in this society?

Why?

Is lazy the opposite of busy?

How does this apply to being hidden in Christ as we have looked at it for the last four weeks?

"I'm sooo busy." We hear that a lot, don't we? Being busy is sometimes a badge of honor in our society. It can be a way to convince ourselves we are significant and important. It also can present a problem. Why? Because busyness doesn't equal productivity. The truth is, we never find ultimate purpose in what we do. Purpose is more personal. Finding purpose is about knowing Jesus and allowing Him to shape our lives. Real-life—deep, meaningful, satisfying life—comes from connecting to Jesus and allowing His life to flow through ours. Jesus made this concept very practical, and He did it by talking about a vineyard.

Learn

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Leader: *It is tempting for us to invest a lot of time discussing the salvation status of the branches that do not bear fruit. "Were the dead, non-fruit bearing branches, saved or not?" However, it is best not to push an allegory beyond its intended plain meaning. Jesus's point is we are all*

dependent on Him. If we do not abide in Him, we have no real life and cannot produce fruit. The point of this illustration is not salvation but fruit-bearing.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 15:1-8.

There are 5 key things which will help us understand these verses:

- 1. Who is the vine?**
- 2. Who is the Gardner or Vine Dresser?**
- 3. Who are the branches?**
- 4. What is the goal for the branches?**
- 5. What is the key to achieving the goal?**

Just so we don't miss it, for the branch, where does life come from?

Only hours before His arrest and crucifixion, Jesus made His seventh “I am” statement. By calling Himself the True Vine, Jesus established Himself as the Source of life. His life flows from Him to us. He is the Source of life for every branch (us), and we must be vitally connected to Him.

What does the Father do if a branch does not bear fruit?

What does the Father do if a branch does bear fruit?

In what specific ways do you think God prunes His disciples?

Verse 2 describes the process of pruning when dead branches are removed, and the decaying parts are trimmed away. Jesus said the Vineyard Keeper (God) would remove every branch that doesn't produce fruit—meaning, visible evidence of a living connection to the vine.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 15:4-8.

What is the key repeat word in this passage?

What does it mean for Jesus to abide in us?

What does it mean for us to abide in Christ?

Why are both remaining in Jesus and Jesus abiding in us necessary to produce fruit?

Jesus used one word repeatedly in this passage: “remain.” In fact, He used it 10 times throughout John 15:4-10. Jesus wanted to emphasize the mutual interweaving of His life with the lives of His followers.

What happens if we abide in Christ?

To “remain” in this context carries the idea of personal, intimate residence. Jesus emphasized that His followers must abide in Him and He in them. The intimacy of the relationship between Jesus and His followers may be difficult to express, but it is impossible to overstate!

Abide - The key to experiencing Christ's life

1. Recognize Your Need

In these verses, what does Jesus say we are able to do on our own, without Him?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 CORINTHIANS 12:19

How does Paul (the author of 2 Corinthians) describe the relationship between power and weakness?

What do you learn about Christ's power in this verse?

What do you think Paul means by "boast" in this context?

Is Paul saying we should become weak?

Paul is not saying we should become weak. We are already weak. The point is when we acknowledge our weakness, Christ's grace and power are sufficient! To quote Pastor Tony, "God's strength flows through us when we humbly acknowledge our weakness and recognize He is our strength."

2. Rest in Your Relationship

| HAVE VOLUNTEERS READ ROMANS 8:39 AND GALATIANS 4:6-7.

How secure is your relationship with Christ?

How does the Bible describe your relationship with God? What term does it use in Gal. 4?

Why does it matter how our relationship with God is described and how secure that relationship is?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 14:15

What is the right motivation for keeping Jesus's commandments?

Obedience comes out of love. Love does not come out of obedience.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ HEBREWS 4:16

What does this verse teach us about our authority to come into the presence of God?

Rest in your relationship with Jesus. You are a child of God, not simply a servant or a slave. Mercy, grace, and help are yours. You have the right to boldly enter the throne room of heaven and talk to your Father. And, nothing can ever change that!

3. Rely on Christ

What is the key repeated word in our John 15 passage?

Abide in Christ. Abide in the vine. He who abides in Jesus bears much fruit. Stay connected to Christ! Don't allow yourself to be distracted; stay focused.

Bringing glory to God is the goal for every believer. To glorify God means to make His name famous, give Him the accolades, and put Him on prominent display. We glorify God when we stay connected to Christ, and His life flows through us.

Apply

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Do you really believe you can do nothing without Christ? How do your thoughts and actions affirm this mentality? How fruitful have you been without Him?

What does remaining or abiding in Christ look like in your daily life?

What steps will you take to remain, or abide, in Christ this week?

How would you summarize the commands and promises in these verses?

Pray

Father, teach us to rest in Christ. Some of us stay busy working to try to accomplish the fruit of the spirit. Teach us to simply abide in Christ.

Dig Deeper

| JOHN 15:1-8

15:1. "I am the true vine" is the last of Jesus' seven "I am" sayings in John's Gospel. "True" contrasts Jesus with OT Israel. Joseph was called a "fruitful vine" in Gen 49:22. The reference to the Father as the vineyard keeper harks back to Isaiah's first vineyard song, where God is depicted as tending His vineyard, only to be rewarded with sour grapes (Isa 5:1-7; cp. Ps 80:8-9).

15:2. Three types of believers are named or inferred in this first part of the chapter: those who bear no fruit, those who bear some fruit, and, later in verse 5, those who bear much fruit. The fruit-bearing branches, it would appear from the text of this verse, represent true believers. But to whom does the text refer when it says, he cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit?

This passage is capable of dangerous interpretation, especially when the idea of fruit-bearing centers in evangelism. Some people teach that those who do not win others to Christ will themselves be snatched out of the vine. Such an idea is alien to the teaching of the New Testament. Perhaps Galatians 5:22-23 helps us here: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."

15:3. The disciples, however, needed neither cutting off nor trimming clean because they had already been cleansed by the Lord's word. One thing is clear at the outset of the chapter: this is not a passage on salvation, a topic John covered in earlier chapters. Here he dealt with requirements for a fruitful life on the part of believers.

15:4-6. Another key here is the word remain (abide) which appears no fewer than eleven times in the passage. It seems to suggest an effortless resting in the Lord, confident in the promised union between the vine and the true branches.

Furthermore, John used the word remain forty times in his Gospel and twenty-seven more times in his epistles. In the context of this passage, it seems to emphasize an ongoing faith and loving obedience to the Father and the Son that results in fruit. The fruit in this passage seems to focus on spirit-generated behavior of Christians, though again this is not the only interpretation. Many

sermons have been preached on emphasizing fruit as other people who have been influenced by the gospel.

15:7. Jesus added a specific dimension to the mutual abiding of the Christian life (v. 7). He set forth the condition that His words abide in believers. On the basis of this condition, He made the promise of fruitful praying. An abiding life is an obedient life. My words abide in you points to a willing acceptance of Jesus' authority as expressed through His teachings and commands. Words that remain ultimately become words that are obeyed. Whatever you wish defines the possible agenda of a believer's praying. The agenda is unlimited. Any concern is a proper subject for prayer. We can pray for anything that Jesus desires and for which He would ask the Father.

15:8. When followers of Jesus bear much fruit, God receives glory. Since believers cannot bear fruit of themselves but only by means of Christ's indwelling life, their fruitfulness is a manifestation of divine life. It thus glorifies God and serves as evidence of genuine, vital discipleship.[1]

[1] Commentary from smallgroup.com, a ministry arm of Lifeway.