

# COMMUNITY GROUP QUESTIONS

## GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

### QUICK STUDY

### REMAIN IN ME AND BEAR FRUIT

JOHN 15:1-8

04/16/2017

#### MAIN POINT

We are branches and as such only draw live from the Vine. Only from the Vine can we be truly fruitful.

#### INTRODUCTION

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

**Could someone summarize the sermon? What did y'all think about it? Did anything stick out?**

**What image comes to mind when you think of the word "abide"?**

**How would you define the word "abide" in the context of your relationship with Jesus?**

Today we will look at Jesus's teaching about walking with Him and bearing fruit as a result. If we are to be His disciples, we must be intentional about pursuing Christ and prepared to be pruned by Christ. True disciples walk with Christ by abiding in him.

#### DIGGING DEEPER

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

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**JD said that branches that are disconnected from the vine are essentially worthless and likewise, anyone who calls themselves a Christian, but aren't connected to the true vine is just as dead. Living in the Bible belt, we are surrounded by dead branches. What are the unique challenges and blessings of living in this Bible belt culture?**

**JD said the great temptation of the Christian life isn't against the desire to commit the 'great sins,' but rather to build a life apart from Jesus. How are you tempted to build a life in Oxford apart from Jesus?**

**JD said that the great skill of the Christian life is for the branch to know how to kill the temptation to build a life apart from Jesus. How do you go about killing this desire?**

**In this text, Jesus talks about being pruned not as suffering necessarily, but as abiding in Him through His word. Is this a new concept to you? What does your abiding look like?**

**What is fruit according to this text?**

**JD said that fruit will produce trust in trials. When have you walked through a trial and seen Jesus sustain you through His word?**

**Jesus said that we can do nothing without Him. How do our lives contradict this? When have we seen this to be true?**

**How can we as a group intentionally help one another with this effort?**

## PRAY

Begin your prayer time by leading the group in a time of silent prayer. Ask group members to simply spend a few moments abiding through prayer. Encourage them to praise God for being the true vine in whom we can abide. Lead them to thank God for putting this specific group of people together at this moment. Lead them to confess personal sin and lack of fruit.

Pray for specific people you know who need God to intervene in their lives, so that they might experience the peace of abiding in Christ.

## COMMENTARY

### JOHN 15:1-5

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15:1. Though this section of our study is only two paragraphs, it is impossible to separate the components of the analogy that our Lord put forth. They appear as contrasting couplets throughout the passage. First we have the vine and the branches. This was imagery that every Jew would understand. In the Old Testament the vine appeared regularly as a symbol of Israel (Ps. 80:8–10; Isa. 5:1–2, 7; Jer. 2:21). The Father owns the garden, Jesus is the vine, and his followers are the branches.

Christ and not the church is the true vine. Branches placed anywhere else are false branches. The word for gardener is *georgos*, the common word for farmer, a role retained by the Father himself. The vine with which these disciples would have been familiar was Israel, described in some detail in Psalm 80. There the psalmist prayed, “Return to us, O God Almighty! Look down from heaven and see! Watch over this vine, the root your right hand has planted, the son you have raised up for yourself” (Ps. 80:14–15).

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.