

# That You May Have **LIFE**

## Week 24 Discussion Questions

**Text:** John 15:1-17

Icebreaker: If you could only eat one fruit for the rest of your life, which one would it be?

1. Read this week's passage. What stands out from the text or sermon?
2. This passage begins with the final "I am" statement from Jesus found in the book of John. What does this metaphor reveal about Jesus' identity?  
**Jesus is the "true" vine, as opposed to other vines that failed. Jesus is the fulfillment of the strong and healthy vine that God desired and that was meant to flourish, multiply, and bear fruit. Jesus is our tether to soil and nutrients, without which we cannot also grow, flourish, and produce fruit.**
3. Read Psalm 80:8-13; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 12:10; Ezekiel 17 (this one is long and can be skimmed if time is sparse). Who is the vine referenced in these passages and what happened to the vine?  
**Israel is the original vine, that God planted with the intention of blessing all people (Genesis 12:1-3). The story of the Old Testament is God's relationship with Israel, who was meant to bear this same fruit, but they failed over and over again.**

When Jesus presents his disciples with the metaphor of the vine, it is not random or out of place. The disciples would have been highly familiar with this imagery as it is found throughout the Old Testament Scriptures. Historical records also tell us that a golden vine adorned the entrance of the temple, where the disciples may have been in this scene.

4. With this in mind, what significance does Jesus' renewed use of this metaphor have for his disciples and for us today?  
**Jesus use of this metaphor identifies him with Israel and when he makes the claim that he is the "true vine" he shows continuity with God's ministry to the world in the Old Testament and the ministry of Christ in the New Testament. Jesus' use of this metaphor is one more way in which he is claiming unity with God and fulfilling God's**

purposes in creation. Jesus' instruction to the disciples to be part of the vine is inviting them into God's family, and part of his story, to bring blessing to the whole world.

5. Jesus assumes that his followers will "bear fruit" but says they cannot do so without abiding in him. He uses the word "abide" eleven times in John 15:1-17. What does it mean to abide in Jesus?

To abide is to dwell, remain, reside, or continue in/with Christ. The temple imagery we talked about the past few weeks, of God dwelling with his people, of Jesus being the dwelling place of God, and that we now are temples of God in which the Holy Spirit also dwells, points to the idea that abiding with Christ is to be constantly in his presence, filled with his Spirit, seeking his kingdom and will in our lives.

6. What is the "fruit" Jesus says we will produce as the result of abiding?  
Abiding brings glory to God. Abiding will bring fullness of joy. Abiding brings sacrifice, laying down one's life for their friends. Abiding brings growth. Abiding brings belonging (friends)—being in the family of God. Abiding brings access to Jesus.

Read Galatians 5:22-26.

7. Jesus tells the disciples that they are "already clean" (Jn 15:3). The fruit produced in our lives is the work of the Holy Spirit in us, it is not something we produce on our own and it is not something that saves us. This is an important distinction. What does it look like for you to abide in Christ and live by the Spirit in your life?

The process of "pruning" has two purposes: disciplinary and directional. Sometimes the vinedresser removes a dying branch that hinders new growth and sometimes the vinedresser removes a healthy branch in order to direct new growth in a different direction.

8. When have you experienced "pruning" in your life? (Either when God cut off something negative that needed to be removed or when God cut off something good, but it created room for more growth in a different direction)? What was the result of God's pruning?
9. Jesus relates abiding and bearing fruit to our relationship with our fellow believers. What is the connection between loving others and abiding in Jesus?  
In continuity with Jesus' "I am" statement claiming his identity as the "true vine," our unity with Christ, abiding with him, and walking with the Spirit means we are part of God's family, meant to be a blessing to the world. That begins with how we treat one another. Our love for one another will reveal God's love to the world. It is

through our unity as Christ's body that we ultimately can bless the world and bring glory to God as we were always created to do.

10. What lately has deepened your connection with Christ?

11. What lately has been hindering your connection with Christ?