

### Lesson Objectives

- We are continuing our look this week at Jesus via John's Gospel. We want them simply to be in God's word.
- We want them to understand what it means to abide in Christ.
- We want them to see that it is connected to His word and prayer.
- We want them to come up with a plan for spending time in His word and prayer this week.

### Lesson Notes

- Before you launch into the study, have snacks available and set aside 15-20 minutes for people to slow down from their day and connect with others. Use this time to personally build relationships and trust with individuals there.
- Also remember that it is always helpful to spend time with the members of your group outside of your small group time. If you haven't in a while, make it a point to setup time with a few individuals or the whole group outside of your normal time. This could be a fun group hangout or simply lunch with one or two people in your group.
- This study is designed to transition into a lesson on how to have a quiet time as our last lesson next week.

### Getting Started

- After 15-20 minutes, let everyone know you are getting started and ask them to grab a seat.

### Review

To get us started this week let's review.

- What did we talk about last time? [Last week we talked about the role of the Holy Spirit and what it looks like to be filled. We said it was like filling a balloon or allowing Jesus access to ALL areas of our house.]

### Launch

This week we are continuing our look at John's Gospel and how we can experience Jesus. Before we dive into our passage this week, answer the following question:

- To get us started consider the following questions:

What do you like most about having a roommate? What do you dislike most?

How would you describe the difference between a roommate and a friend?

Well today we are going to consider what it looks like to live with Jesus. Let's pray before we dive in.  
[Have someone pray.]

### Discussion

Read John 15:1-11

- What is the primary analogy that Jesus is using here? [A grapevine.]
- What are all the different parts of Jesus' grapevine analogy and what do each represent? [The vine is Jesus. We are the branches. God the Father is the vinedresser.]

Now that we see these are the basic parts of Jesus' analogy let's look at how they are related to each other.

- An observation we can make right off the bat is simply that God desires us to bear fruit. Recalling our conversation from last week, what does it mean to bear fruit? [We talked about the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control. We can note that bearing fruit is very relational in nature. Almost all the fruit of the Spirit involve another person.]

So God desires us to bear fruit but the problem is that in our lives there are many things that keep us from bearing this kind of fruit. God in His love for us desires to remove these things from our lives. So one of the first things Jesus wants to communicate to us involves the process of pruning. So to help us understand this process more read the following simple explanation of pruning:

*Pruning is a horticultural practice involving the selective removal of parts of a plant, such as branches, buds, or roots. Reasons to prune plants include deadwood removal, shaping (by controlling or directing growth), improving or maintaining health, reducing risk from falling branches, preparing nursery specimens for transplanting, and both harvesting and increasing the yield or quality of flowers and fruits. The practice entails targeted-removal of diseased, damaged, dead, non-productive, structurally unsound, or otherwise unwanted tissue from crop and landscape plants.*

Ok so pruning is not a painless process. In fact at first sight, superficially, it appears to be hurtful and counterproductive.

- How might God prune us, cutting things out of our lives for our own good?

Ok after Jesus has established that our relationship with Him can involve pruning he begins to encourage us in how we relate to Him. His primary encouragement is that He wants us to abide in him. To help us understand what Jesus means read the follow commentary on the word abide:

*Because the verb "abide" and its noun "abode" are not slightly old-fashioned English translations of the Greek verb menein, and because we do not often use "abide" or "abode" in everyday speech, I have chosen to translate the Greek verb with an English phrase that we use more often, which means the same thing as "abide" and which can perhaps bring Jesus' meaning a little closer: "make your home with me."*

- When you think of the concept of making your home with someone what all does that entail? [Being in the same place. Communicating regularly. Doing things together. Relying on the other person. Make decisions together. Have a family like relationship. Etc.]

Ok if these are some of the what it looks like to make your home with someone, it is interesting to note that Jesus adds, encouragingly, "I am [making my home] with you." This gracious addition enhances Jesus' invitation because it tells us that Jesus is not just a passive inviter, awaiting our move before he makes his; he has already made his move and therefore would very much like ours: "I am both taking the initiative and making the invitation; please accept my invitation and initiative; I want very much to live with you." There is Gospel in this in that Jesus takes the first step towards us.

- What are ways you have seen Jesus making His home with you?

Ok so Jesus says that we need to be pruned and that we need to abide to bear fruit but he makes a strong claim. He says that we can do NOTHING without him!

- Do you agree with this? Why? [As they wrestle with this question here is a helpful commentary you can read them: "Of course we can do "all sorts of things" apart from Jesus. But Jesus' "absolutely nothing" is substantive, not mathematical; qualitative, not quantitative; lasting, not ephemeral. Since we long to do something substantial, Jesus' fifth-verse sentence first promises those that make their home with him they will do some very substantial things; but here at his sentence's end he warns absentee Christians of fail to do anything that is substantial."]

So we are beginning to see that if we want to be effective Christians, fruitful disciples, helpful persons, then being at home with Jesus is the necessary and, indeed, the indispensable condition. All of us want to be useful. The single most important condition to this end is a housing decision, a real-estate transaction! Where will we live? If Jesus is our home, our text is promising, almost everything else (the "fruit") will take care of itself. The condition is simple; the consequence fruitful.

Now that we are beginning to get a picture of Jesus' analogy and understand his words let's consider what this might look like for us practically.

In verse 7 we see Jesus say that, if we abide in Him, and His words abide in us, we can ask whatever we wish, and it will be done for us. There are two main encouragements we can take from this. God's word and prayer. Think about what we talked about regarding your relationship with a roommate. One of the key components of your relationship with your roommate is communication. You talk to your roommate and your roommate talks to you. God's word and prayer work in the same way. The Bible is God speaking to us and prayer is us speaking to God.

- What would it look like for us to make our home with Him using His Word and prayer? [You can encourage them towards regular bible reading and to set aside time specifically for prayer. If they are new to this you can encourage them to read a short book of the bible this week and to spend time talking with God about what they read.]
- [You don't have to talk about this but If they happen to have questions about the fact that is says he will do ANYTHING we ask you can explain that portion more. Obviously we have all experience asking God for things that he does not deliver on. The passage is clear to say that, AS we make our home with him THEN we can ask. In making our home with Jesus he is going to prompt us WHAT to ask for. Like what we talked about with pruning there are things that we sometime want that are NOT good for us. He lovingly denies those requests. As we live with him we begin to ask for things that are good for us and he grants those requests. Ultimately we see that we can fall into an error on both sides of asking for anything not according to his word. Or on the other hand we can not ask at all.]

Now that we have a more practical picture of what it looks like to make our home with Jesus let's consider His final encouragement to us regarding abiding. He further defines abiding in Him as abiding in His love. Consider this, Jesus' like us experienced pruning. The Cross was His ultimate pruning, where He was cut off from the Father that we might be grafted into the vine.

- As you consider making your home with Jesus, how does it affect you to know that he love you enough to be willing to be cut off for you?

Ok let's talk about what this means for us personally.

### **Apply**

Get with a partner and take some time to make a plan for how you can abide in Christ this week. Use the follow questions to help:

- What prevents me from making my home with Jesus?
- How can I incorporate His word into my life this week?
- How can I incorporate set aside time for prayer in my life this week?

### **Pray**

Finish up by praying for your plan for making your home with Jesus. You can simply ask Him to:

- Make His home with you
- Help you to make our home with Him by incorporating His word and prayer in your life this week

[If you want, depending on where you feel your group is, before you end your time, you can ask if some of them would like to share their prayer. Assure them that they don't have to share if they don't want to. You can finish up the time praying for the group.]

[Lastly cast vision for next time. We will be wrapping up our study next week with an even more practical look at how we spend time with Jesus.]