

## **I AM – Week 1**

Start your group by taking some time for everyone to reflect on their day in gratitude. Take a moment to silently consider God's presence and gifts that have been present throughout the day. Tell God how you are thankful for his presence in your life today and what that means to you. Try doing this everyday this week and keep notes about what you notice you are thankful for each day.

We are at the start of Lent and at the start of a new series: I AM. During this time of Lent, it is important to create margin in your life to see God more clearly. As we stepped into this new series where we'll explore the 7 "I AM" statements that Jesus spoke, we looked at the one where he said that he is the vine and we are the branches. It shows there is a clear definition of who he is and who we are. It's important that we understand that role as "branches" and that we are pruned to make us healthier, we stay connected to the vine to get our substance, and that through it all, God's love conquers all that comes against us.

### **Discussion Questions:**

#### **Read John 15:1-11**

- Read verses 1 & 5. Roles matter. Jesus clearly lays out that God the Father is the vinedresser, Jesus is the Vine, and we are the branches. How does misunderstanding these roles effect your life? Have you ever found yourself in the wrong role and what was your life like at that time?
- Read verse 2. Pruning is love. If you want good fruit, pruning is required. It even applies to areas that are bearing fruit. Do you see it as love? Why or why not? Tell us a time that God pruned an area in your life and what that process was like.
- Read verse 5. Connection is everything. When a flower is cut to be put in a vase, it's going to survive for a few days. However, it will eventually die because it's not connected to the source that provided it sustenance. Like that flower, when we step away from God, we feel fine for a while, but eventually, it catches up to you and you realize how cut off you are. Why do we step away? What might motivate you to think it's okay to step away? What are some ways that you reconnect?
- Read verses 9 & 10. Love conquers all. God's love is amazing. It's who he is, it knocks out fear, covers a multitude of sins, and it endures all things. His love brings us back when we've stepped away. Jesus is telling us in v9 to abide in his love. Abide means to dwell, remain and stay. How can we abide in love as Jesus is telling us to do? How does staying and dwelling in his love help us to be the Christians we should be to those in our circles?
- We are in the beginning of Lent. During this season, we need to examine how we see God. The way we see God matters because what we believe to be true about God and how we see God informs how we interact with God. What are some ways during Lent that you can improve your relationship with God and also examine how you see God?