

# Group Discussion Guide

## John 15:1–17 — The True Vine

### Passage Summary

As Jesus prepares his disciples for life after the cross, he gives them the image of the vine and branches to help them understand where true life is found. Throughout the Old Testament, God's people were often pictured as a vine that failed to produce good fruit. But Jesus declares, "I am the true vine," revealing that where humanity and Israel failed, he has succeeded perfectly.

Jesus teaches that true life, identity, joy, and fruitfulness are found only through abiding in him. Apart from Christ, we wither as branches disconnected from their source of life. Yet through union with Christ, the Father lovingly prunes and shapes his people so that they might bear lasting fruit.

This fruit is ultimately the overflow of abiding in the love of Christ. Rather than striving to earn God's love through performance, believers are invited to remain close to Jesus, trust his love, and allow his life to flow through them. The result is joyful obedience, sacrificial love, and lives increasingly marked by the character of Christ.

### Discussion Questions

1. Jesus says, "I am the true vine."

What do you think Jesus is revealing about himself through this image? Why is it significant that he calls himself the true vine?

2. Jesus repeatedly calls his disciples to "abide" in him.

What do you think it practically looks like to abide in Christ in everyday life? What tends to pull you away from abiding?

What are you most tempted to draw life from besides Christ? How might you describe to someone what success looks like in your life?

3. In verses 2 and 6, Jesus speaks both about pruning fruitful branches and cutting off fruitless ones.

How do these verses challenge or encourage you? Have there been difficult seasons in your life where God used hardship to deepen your dependence on him?

4. Jesus demonstrates in this passage that fruit is ultimately love flowing outward toward God and others.

Why do you think we often separate obedience from love? How does Jesus redefine obedience in this passage?

5. Jesus says in verse 11 that abiding in him leads to fullness of joy.

How is the joy Jesus offers different from the kind of happiness or fulfillment the world promises?

6. Verse 13 says, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends."

What might sacrificial love look like in your current relationships, family life, workplace, or church community?

7. The sermon compared the Christian life to a car with no fuel — externally polished but unable to run without gas.

Why is it exhausting to try to produce spiritual fruit apart from resting in God's love? How does remembering Christ's love reshape obedience?

8. Jesus says, "Apart from me you can do nothing."

What areas of your life most reveal your tendency toward self-reliance instead of dependence upon Christ?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for deeper abiding in Christ.

Ask God to help your group remain close to Jesus throughout the ordinary rhythms of life and to find true life and identity in him alone.

2. Pray for freedom from false sources of identity and fulfillment.

Confess the ways we often seek life in success, comfort, approval, achievement, or self-sufficiency instead of Christ.

3. Pray for hearts that truly believe the love of God.

Ask the Spirit to help you grasp more deeply that Jesus loves his people with the very love of the Father.

4. Pray for lasting spiritual fruit.

Ask God to produce the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in every aspect of your life.

5. Pray for sacrificial love toward others.

Ask God to help your group reflect the love of Christ by serving, forgiving, encouraging, and laying down your lives for one another.

6. Pray for endurance through seasons of pruning.

Ask God to help you trust him in painful or difficult seasons, believing that he is shaping you for greater fruitfulness and deeper dependence upon Christ.