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bigIdea small group discussion

Often one of the hardest parts of being a Christian is staying focused, not getting discouraged in your pursuit of Christ. But we've got to stay focused...because the best things about the Christian life aren't available to those who just get by in their spiritual walk...He can only bring deep peace and joy and mission to those who draw close—for reasons we will get to in a moment. In the movie when Sam loses his job and has to sell his bike, we see Sam go back into the old bar, talk to some old friends, and consider turning back. He doesn't do it...but he is definitely tempted to. We all will be. We all dry up sometimes, sometimes it is our fault, sometimes it is because life hits us hard, etc.

Jesus knew this was the key—and he made sure that he planted a key thought in the minds of his disciples before he died to ensure that they knew it too. They had it easy for 3 years—to interact with Jesus daily, they just had to keep up with Jesus. They practically lived together. And they were full of life—seeing Jesus teach and do miracles every day. But as Jesus approaches the cross, he needs to ensure that they get off autopilot in their walk with God. He's leaving. And in his wake, he is not only going to leave them alone, he is going to leave them in charge. Thousands of people who will look to the disciples for love and guidance and strength. And in life in general, we will dry up spiritually if we don't heed his advice too.



Key Points:

1. **A Changed Life Changes Lives.**
2. **When You Draw Close to God, You Give Him a Chance to Invite You to Something Greater: Being on Mission to the Hurting World.**
3. **Our Ability to Love Streams out of our Closeness to the Source of Love.**
4. **God is Never Done with Us. Don't Think It's All About Others.**

Big Idea: A strong relationship with God leads to being on mission with God—God pours love in, and we let it overflow as God breaks our hearts for the needs of this world.

The Gospel of John: Chapter 15

3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. **4** Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. **5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

9 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. **10** If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. **11** These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. **12** "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways did people attack you when you first became a Christian?
How did you deal with their criticism?
Why do you think they criticized you?
2. How do you connect with God on a personal level?
Has it changed much over time?
3. In what ways have you felt like God poured love into your life?
4. Describe a time when you felt like your life dried up spiritually? Specifically, what do you think caused it?
5. Have you ever felt a "wake up" moment when God opened your eyes to a person's need that He wanted you to address?
6. Why isn't God's love enough for one experience to give us what we need for the rest of life's demands?

MOVING FORWARD:

1. How passionately am I pursuing God, personally?
Grab a Bible, start a You Version plan, or use one of our devotionals and start spending time with God daily. You need the love he'll pour into your life.
2. Have I allowed God to open your eyes to the hurt that exists in this world? Do you pray for and hurt for the lostness of your coworkers, your fellow soldiers, the people at the supermarket, your neighbors, and your family? We don't invite people to church because of how awesome the church service is, we invite them because they desperately need the love of God in their lives.
3. What barriers are you hitting in your pursuit of what God has called you to? What is He trying to get you to change about your own life in the midst of this pursuit to extend God's love to others?