



# GROWTH PLAN

*Small Group Discussion Guide*



## PREPARATION

### STUDY

Spend the week studying John 5. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

### PRAY

Pray for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members, and their openness to God's Word.

### LANDING POINT

Growth comes from experiencing the Father's love and pleasure and finding my identity and place in Him.



## GROUP DISCUSSION

❑ **CONFIDENTIALITY** | What's said in the group stays in the group.

❑ **NO CROSS-TALK** | Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.

❑ **NO FIXING** | We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

❑ **SHARING** | Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.



## INTRODUCTION

*As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.*

# A FATHER'S INFLUENCE

Each of us has a father and his influence on our lives is greater than we realize. Whether your dad was (or is) present, engaged, checked out or absent, his imprint on your life is significant. Who we are today is impacted greatly by who our father was (or is) to us.

Jesus's relationship with His Father impacted every area of His life. He loved His Father; His Father loved Him, and that was significant for Jesus's life and mission. This week your group will discuss how to grow this year by receiving the good gifts our Father gives us through His Son. Growth doesn't happen when we do more *for* God. It happens when we spend time *with* Him, experience His love and pleasure, and find our identity and place in Him.

🗣️: *What are two words that describe your earthly Father?*

🗣️: *Do these two words also describe God the Father?*



## DEEPER DIVE

*Select 2-3 questions to discuss as a group.*

# JESUS AND HIS FATHER

Jesus's relationship with His Father is a major theme in John. For example, Jesus refers to God as "Father" over one hundred times in the gospel. In Chapter 5 Jesus pulls back the curtain for us to see how His relationship with His Father affected every area of his life. Let's take a look at this chapter and what it shows us about Jesus's relationship with the Father.

🗣️: *Have 2-3 volunteers read John 5. How did Jesus upset the Jewish leaders?*

Q: How would you summarize Jesus's response in 1-2 sentences?

Q: Based on this chapter, how would you describe Jesus's relationship with His Father?



## REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS

### FOUR FATHER GIFTS

The way Jesus describes His relationship with God reveals an intimate connection between Father and Son. What's remarkable is that we can relate to God in the same way today. Jesus came to reveal the Father to us and made a way for us to call God "Father." Through Him we can enjoy all the benefits of being a son or daughter of our Father.

The Father has given us four gifts<sup>1</sup> to show us the kind of relationship we have with Him through Jesus. He has given us these four things:

- *Identity (John 5:16-19)*. Jesus wanted to be like His Father. Whatever He saw the Father doing, He did the same. Finding your identity in the Father means being like Him. It means revealing more of His character in what you think, say and do.
- *Love (v.20)*. Jesus's obedience was motivated by love for His Father. When we experience love, it does something to us. It makes us want to obey because of our affection for the person loving us.
- *Pleasure (John v.30, vv.41-44)*. Jesus was more concerned about pleasing His Father than pleasing people. His main goal is ours as well—to please the Father above all else.
- *Place (vv. 21-27)*. The Father gave His Son purpose and authority. We also have purpose and authority. The Father has a role for each of us to play in His story (glorify Him) and He has given us what we need to do that.

Growth happens as we receive the Father's gifts. It doesn't happen when we try to earn them, because gifts aren't earned. They are received with gratitude. This semester, let God draw you closer to His Father heart as you receive His gifts and experience more of His love and pleasure—as you find your identity and place in Him.

Q: What would it look like for you to have a more intimate connection with the Father?  
How would that change your relationship with Him?

Q: Which of the Father's gifts is easier/more difficult to receive? Explain.

Q: What's one thing you can do this week to draw closer to the Father?

Q: How can the group be praying for you this week?



## COMMENTARY

**EQUAL TO GOD** “Jesus’s claim that the Son can do nothing of His own accord, taken with vv. 17–18, affirms two themes: (1) Jesus is equal to God, i.e., He is fully divine (vv. 17–18); (2) the Father and the Son have different functions and roles (v. 19), and the Son is subject to the Father in everything He does, yet this does not deny their fundamental equality.”<sup>2</sup>

**TWO MARKS** Jesus claimed His authority from the Father by citing two things which signify the difference between God and humans: 1) He gives life and 2) He is judge over all.<sup>3</sup>

**THE WORD** “Jesus healed the paralyzed man at the pool by His word (John 5:8). Each time He raised somebody from the dead, He spoke the word (Luke 7:11–17; 8:49–56; John 11:41–44). His Word is “living and powerful” (Heb. 4:12) and can raise sinners from spiritual death.”<sup>4</sup> Jesus is described as “the Word” in John 1 and throughout the gospel we see how He, the Word, gives life. The way to eternal life is by receiving and believing Jesus’s words.

### ENDNOTES:

1. Dave Patty, *Father God: Daring to Draw Near* (Lexington, KY: 78 Press, 2017), 25-33.
2. Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2031.
3. Andrew Paterson, *Opening Up John's Gospel, Opening Up Commentary* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2010), 46.
4. Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary, vol. 1* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 306–307.