



STEPS

Week 3

Barriers to Growth

Sermon Notes

John 15:1-17 (NLT)

“I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit, so they will produce even more. You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. “Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. “I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to

lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. This is my command: Love each other.

The 4 Chairs

- Come and See- No Fruit yet
- Follow Me – Growth and Fruit
- Follow Me and Fish – More fruit
- Abide and Multiply – Much Fruit and More Branches

Branches

1. Branches that do not produce fruit

- Cut off
- May appear healthy for a little while but cannot produce fruit because it is not connected to the source. It will eventually die.

2. Branches that produce fruit

- Pruned to produce more fruit
- The Gardener is closest to the branch during pruning
- Overgrowth stunts fruitful growth

Barriers to Growth

1. Sin (John 15:5)

- Deal with Lizards before they become dinosaurs

2. Immaturity

- Comforts stunt our growth
- Abide = an ongoing command meaning a continues decision to follow Christ.
- Pruning increases faithfulness

3. Idolatry

- We can idolize outcomes instead of abiding in Christ
- Bearing fruit is the result of abiding, not the goal

Questions to Consider

1. Pastor Cody defined "abiding" as "an active daily decision to follow and obey Christ," not just passively sitting with Jesus. How does this definition challenge or change your understanding of what it means to remain in Christ?

2. The sermon emphasized that joy level and love for others are the two key indicators of whether we're abiding in Christ. On a scale of 1-10, how would you honestly rate:

- Your joy level right now?
- Your love for other believers?

3. Looking at the Four Chairs of Discipleship:

- **Chair 1:** Come & See (spiritually lost, seeking)
- **Chair 2:** Follow Me (saved but growing, sometimes broken)
- **Chair 3:** Follow Me & Fish (actively looking for Chair 1 people)
- **Chair 4:** Go Make Disciples (producing fruit, making disciples)

Which chair do you honestly think you're in right now? What evidence in your life supports that assessment?

4. Why do you think confession is so hard for Christians? What would it look like to have healthy accountability in this group?

5. What are you currently abiding in that is stealing your joy?

Application

This Week's Challenge

1. **Daily Abiding Check:** Each day this week, honestly assess: "How is my joy today? How is my love for others today?" Let these questions reveal where you're truly abiding.
2. **Confession:** Identify one sin you've been hiding and confess it to a trusted person this week.
3. **Trellis Building:** If you don't have accountability in your life, reach out to one person this week to begin that relationship.
4. **Next Steps Card:** Complete the "Next Steps" card from the sermon (or create your own version) and share it with your group leader or accountability partner.
5. **Invite Someone:** If you're in Chair 2 or 3, identify one "Chair 1" person and invite them to church, to coffee, or simply into a spiritual conversation.

★ Continue in your commitments to fasting and praying for salvation (details at dayspring.tv/fast).

Pray for one another