Discussion Guide - September 13th, 2026

How to Share the Gospel

John 15:1-6

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How to Prepare

Begin preparing by reading the full passage a few times. Then answer the questions for yourself. Then think about how your Small Group might answer them. Try re-wording the questions to fit you and your Small Group. Don't feel tied down to the discussion guide, just be sure to discuss the main point of the text in your conversations.

Resources-

https://biblehub.com/greek/3306.htm

https://biblehub.com/topical/v/vinedresser.htm

Discussion Guide Outline:

John 15:1-6

1. Necessity of the VINEDRESSER. Vv. 1-3
2. Necessity of the VINE. Vv. 4-5
3. Necessity of Living Connected to the VINE. V. 6

Scripture (New American Standard Bible 1995)

John 15:1-6

Jesus Is the Vine—Followers Are Branches

1"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.

3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.

Discussion Questions

Ask a volunteer to read John 15:1-6.

INTRODUCTION AND MAIN IDEA

1. If you are asked to stay in someone's home for an extended period of time, in order to remain there, what would you have to change about yourself? Or, if someone is welcomed into your home for as long as you live, what would you have to change about yourself?

UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION

These questions should help your Small Group dig deeper into the text and then apply it to your lives today.

I. Necessity of the VINEDRESSER. Vv. 1-3

2. What are the 2 types of branches Jesus is talking about? (Vv. 2, 6)

3. Why does a branch not bear any fruit? (1 John 5:11-12; Rom. 8:9-10; Gal. 2:20)

4. Why does the VINEDRESSER prune the branches that produce fruit? (v. 8; Ps. 106:8)

5. How does the WORD prune/clean the branches? (Heb. 4:12, Eph. 6:17)

II. Necessity of the VINE. Vv. 4-5

6. What flows from the vine into the branches? What is the purpose of the vine?

7. John recorded the following 'JESUS' "I AM" statements: "BREAD of LIFE, LIGHT of the world, DOOR, GOOD SHEPHERD, RESURRECTION and LIFE, the WAY, TRUTH, and LIFE, and the true VINE". How are we to make these truths known in and through us?

III. Necessity of Living Connected to the VINE. V. 6

8. Ultimately, what caused JESUS to proclaim judgment on those not accepted into heaven in Matt. 7:21-23; 25:11-13?

9. What does "abide/remain" have to do with John 17:3? (Jer. 9:23-24; Phil. 3:10-11)

10. What is the difference between a person possessing faith in CHRIST and a person professing faith in CHRIST? (John 4:23; Phil. 3:3; Ps. 24:3-4)

Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

John 15:1–17 Jesus' allegory of the vine and the branches is at the very heart of the Farewell Discourse (13:31–16:33). The OT frequently uses the vineyard or vine as a symbol for Israel, God's covenant people, especially in two "vineyard songs" in Isaiah (Isa. 5:1–7; 27:2–6). However, Israel's failure to produce fruit resulted in divine judgment. Jesus, by contrast, is "the true vine," and his followers abide in him and produce fruit.

John 15:1 This is the last of Jesus' seven I am sayings in this Gospel (see note on 6:35). True contrasts Jesus with OT Israel (see previous note), reinforcing John's theme that Jesus is the true Israel. The vinedresser refers back to Isaiah's first vineyard song, where God is depicted as tending his vineyard, only to be rewarded with wild grapes (Isa. 5:1–7; cf. Ps. 80:8–9). The fruitfulness of those in Christ contrasts with the fruitlessness of Israel.

John 15:2 The divine vinedresser does two things to ensure maximum fruit production: (1) he removes unfruitful branches, and (2) he prunes all the others (cf. Heb. 6:7–8). Does not bear fruit seems to indicate that the person symbolized by such a branch is not a true believer (see John 15:6, 8). In that case, in me is just a loose connection needed to make the metaphor of a vine work, reflecting a claim to be Christ's that is not genuine and not implying actual regeneration or true belief. This then would be one of several verses in John showing that not all who follow Jesus for a time and hear his teaching are genuine believers (cf. 6:66; also 13:10–11 on Judas). Others understand these branches to represent true believers who are "unfruitful" for various reasons. In favor of this view is the fact that Jesus says such branches are "in me," and that seems parallel to being "in Christ," as only believers are. However, these unfruitful branches appear to be the same branches that are "thrown away" and "burned" in 15:6, which seems clearly to be a picture of final judgment. Fruit is an image for good results coming from the life of a believer, probably in terms of bringing benefit to the lives of others and advancing the work of God in the world (see Matt. 13:8; cf. Gal. 5:22–23 for a different image of "fruit" as changed character). he takes away. The Greek verb airō can also mean "lifts up" in certain contexts, and some use this to argue that this means God "lifts up" unfruitful branches from the ground so that they will become more fruitful. This interpretation is taken by those who think the branches represent true believers who are not fruitful. But this sense seems less likely because the unfruitful branches in John 15:6 are "thrown into the fire, and burned," which is an image of final judgment. "He prunes" gives a picture of painful but necessary removal of some interests and activities in order that the remaining branches may bear even more fruit. The word translated "prunes" (Gk. kathairō) often means "to clean," and has the same root as the adjective katharos, translated "clean" in 15:3.

Commentary (from ESV Study Bible)

John 15:4 Abide in me means to continue in a daily, personal relationship with Jesus, characterized by trust, prayer, obedience (see v. 10), and joy. And I in you is a phrase without an explicit verb, but it probably is an abbreviated way of saying, "See that I abide in you"; that is, "Safeguard your relationship with me so that I continue to abide fully in you." (See notes on 8:31; 1 John 2:6.) The "in" terminology in the present passage refers back to OT covenant theology, including prophetic texts regarding a future new covenant (see Ex. 25:8; 29:45; Lev. 26:11–12; Ezek. 37:27–28; 43:9). The repeated references to fruit bearing (also John 15:5, 8) underscore that this is God's primary purpose in creation (Gen. 1:11–12, 22, 28) and in redemption (cf. John 15:8, 16). The OT prophets envisioned a time when God's people would "blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit" (Isa. 27:6; cf. Hos. 14:4–8).

John 15:5 Apart from me you can do nothing does not mean "nothing at all," for unbelievers of course carry on their ordinary activities of life apart from Christ. Rather, it means "nothing of eternal value," or an inability to produce spiritual fruit.

John 15:6 The person who does not abide in me is an unbeliever who does not have a personal faith in Christ (see note on v. 4). The verse echoes Ezek. 15:1–8, where a vine failing to produce fruit is said to be good for nothing but the fire (see Heb. 6:7–8). Fire is a common Jewish and biblical symbol for divine judgment (e.g., Isa. 30:27; Matt. 3:12 par.; 5:22; 18:8; 25:41). Some take this "fire" to imply loss of reward for true believers, not eternal judgment for unbelievers, but this does not fit as well with the image of branches being entirely burned up by a fire. See also note on John 15:2.