



Hello Growth Group Hosts! It's the sixth week of the Gospel of John Series Mar 9! This week, we encounter one of the most powerful and profound images Jesus uses to describe our relationship with Him: the vine and the branches. As we go through these verses, we'll reflect on what it means to abide in Christ, how our lives should bear fruit, and the implications of our identity as followers of Jesus.

THIS WEEK'S GOALS

- Take a moment to celebrate the group's commitment to gathering together each week and how excited you are to see how Jesus will work in the weeks ahead.
- Introduce this week's Spiritual Rep.
- **Discussion goal** - To have a deeper understanding of how we can remain faithful and fruitful in our relationship with Christ and how to apply His teachings to our daily lives.

WEEK 6 AGENDA

Icebreaker - (10-15 min)

Ask your group "Since we last met, what has been the highlight of your week?"

Spiritual Rep - Feedback (10-15 min)

Seek feedback from the group on their experience with the Spiritual Rep from last week. Give people time to talk, and listen for nuggets of growth. If needed, you can use probing questions, such as:

- Were you able to practice the Spiritual Rep?
- Was it hard to do?
- What did you experience?
- What, if anything, did you learn about God?

Spiritual Rep - Space: (In Group - 10-15 min)

Did you know that creating space in our lives for God, rest, and reflection is important? The Spiritual Rep of Space refers to the buffer or leeway we build into our schedules and lives to avoid stress and burnout. It allows us to be more present, attentive, and responsive to God's voice and the needs of others. We need space between our load and our limits. Follow the instructions below.

- Explain this week's Spiritual Rep.
- Allow 5-7 minutes for quiet reflection.
 - Your group can sit silently, pray, and reflect on their week and relationship with God.
- After the silent reflection, facilitate a discussion around the following question:
 - What are some areas in your life where you feel overloaded?
 - How can we create a space in those areas?

Spiritual Rep - Space: (During the Week)

After completing the Spiritual Rep in the group, let everyone know that the "spiritual workout" continues during the week. Here are the details to share with your group to equip them for the week ahead.

- Explain this will be a one-day exercise.
- Inform them to be intentional about setting aside time to do this.
- Ask them to begin by allowing 5-7 minutes for quiet reflection.
 - During the silence, people can sit in silence, pray, and reflect on their week and their relationship with God just like they did during group.
- After the silent reflection, have the individual challenge themselves to take a practical step in creating space in their life.
- Examples could be as follows.
 - Reducing weekly commitments by one activity.
 - Scheduling regular time for solitude or family.
 - Setting boundaries for work or digital distractions.
- Let everyone know that you will be asking for feedback at your next meeting.

Discussion - Gospel of John Series: (25-30 min)

Below you will find the discussion questions for this week. Please read the attached notes in **bold** and use them as a guide to help you facilitate the discussion with your group.

- Read John 15.
- Discussion Questions
 - As Jesus refers to himself as the true vine in verse 1, what relationship does he then discuss?
 - **Jesus refers to Himself as the "true vine," with God the Father as the "gardener" (or vine-dresser). The relationship discussed is one of dependence and intimacy. Just as a branch depends on the vine for life, nourishment, and growth, we are to depend on Jesus for our spiritual life and growth. Our life in Christ is inseparable from Him; we need to be connected to Him to bear fruit.**
 - As Jesus again calls himself the vine in verse 5, what relationship does he discuss?
 - **Jesus restates that He is the vine and we are the branches. This reinforces the relationship between intimacy and dependence. Without Him, we can do nothing. The branch's life comes from the vine; similarly, our spiritual vitality and ability to bear fruit come from our connection with Jesus. It also emphasizes our role in producing good fruit, as we can only do so when we remain in Him.**
 - What fruit does Jesus (or his Father) want his branches to bear?
 - **The fruit Jesus desires is spiritual fruit that reflects His character—such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). This fruit represents the visible results of a transformed life in Christ and is a testimony to the world of God's work in us. The Father is the one who prunes us to ensure that we bear more fruit.**

- In verse 19, Jesus tells his disciples, “You do not belong to the world, I have chosen you out of the world.” What does this mean for them; for you; for the church?
 - **This statement means that the disciples (and us as believers) are set apart by Jesus. We are not to conform to the values and ways of the world but to live according to the values of the Kingdom of God. For the disciples, it meant they were called to be distinct in their obedience and love for Christ. For us today, it means that our identity and purpose are in Christ, not in the world’s systems. The Church, as a whole, is called to be a witness to a different way of life, centered on Christ.**
- In verse 20, Jesus states, “No servant is greater than his master.” Where have you heard this before? (Hint: foot-washing) Compare and discuss these two references.
 - **We hear a similar statement when Jesus washes His disciples' feet in John 13:16, where He teaches that as He, their Lord and Master, serves them, they are also called to serve others. In both instances, Jesus is emphasizing humility and servitude. Discipleship involves following Jesus' example of self-sacrificial love and service, understanding that the Master's role includes suffering, and we, as His followers, are not exempt from this path.**
- Deep Dive Questions
 - Consider the imagery of a branch that remains on the vine to produce fruit. What implication do you see for yourself? Consider also the duty of the gardener.
 - **The branch that remains on the vine symbolizes our dependence on Jesus for spiritual vitality. If we do not remain in Him, we will wither and be unfruitful. The implication is that we must constantly abide in Jesus through prayer, the Word, and obedience to His commands to bear fruit. The gardener (the Father) prunes us to remove things that hinder our growth and refine us to bear even more fruit. This speaks to God's active role in shaping our character and faithfulness.**

- What word appears nine times from verses 9 through 17? Is this a key to the overall lesson of this chapter?
 - **The word that appears nine times in these verses is "love." Love is central to Jesus' teaching in this passage. His love for us, our love for Him, and our love for one another are foundational to bearing fruit. Jesus calls us to remain in His love and to love one another as He has loved us. This is the key to spiritual fruitfulness—it is rooted in love.**
- What challenge does Jesus make in verses 21-22? Consider each phrase in detail and as a whole.
 - **Jesus challenges His disciples by explaining that the world will hate them because it hated Him first. He warns that living out His teachings will not make us popular in the world. Verses 21-22 show that rejection, persecution, and suffering are part of the cost of discipleship. However, the challenge also includes the reality that the world's rejection of believers is a reflection of their rejection of God. This should encourage believers to stand firm, even in the face of opposition, knowing that our identity and loyalty are to Christ, not the world.**

Pray (10 min)

Pray together as a group in response to the scripture reflection. Have the group share any prayer requests.

Hangout (5-15 min)