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Abide In Me (JOHN 15:1-17)

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

Have you ever been to Carousel shopping centre on a Saturday? If you are fortunate enough to find a parking spot, the press of people inside makes shopping almost impossible. It's not uncommon for us to give these instructions to the boys before plunging into the crowd: "Stay close to me and hold my hand all the time. We won't get separated if we hold on to each other."

GROUP DISCUSSION:

When you were a child, did you try to stay close to your parents in an unfamiliar place, or did you tend to wander away? Describe a memory (or fear) of being lost.

PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Have you ever felt far from Christ since becoming a Christian? What circumstances made you feel that way?

As Jesus prepared his disciples to face life without his visible presence, he impressed on them the importance of staying close to him spiritually. He said, "Remain in me." If you've ever longed to understand the secret of spiritual growth, you will find it in Jesus' words to us in John 15.

Read John 15:1-17.

- 1. Jesus' instruction to his disciples in this passage revolves around three symbols-the vine, the gardener and the branches. What is Jesus trying to communicate by calling himself the "true vine"?*
- 2. What is the significance of calling his disciples "branches"?*
- 3. Instead of commanding us to bear fruit, why is Jesus' only command "Remain in me" (v. 4)?*
- 4. What does it mean to remain in Christ?*
- 5. The fruit produced by the remaining branch is sometimes viewed as a reference to new converts. But branches produce grapes, not other branches. What other possible meanings are there for fruit?*
- 6. The Father's ministry as the gardener is to "[cut] off every branch that bears no fruit" (v. 2). What do you think that means?*
- 7. The Father prunes fruitful branches to make them more fruitful (v.2). In what ways have you experienced the Father's "pruning," and what were the results?*
- 8. What spiritual benefits result from remaining in Christ (vv. 7-11)?*
- 9. There are three categories of branches described in this passage those bearing no fruit, those bearing some fruit and those bearing much fruit. In which category would you place yourself, and why?*
- 10. If you are not bearing much fruit, what is Jesus' counsel to you in these verses?*

Picture yourself as a vine bearing abundant, healthy fruit. Ask God to help you become the person he desires you to be.

Now or Later:

What hesitancy do you have about cultivating your relationship with Jesus?

What are some specific things you can do to deepen your relationship with Jesus?

These questions are from, John, The Way to True Life Study Guide by Douglas Connelly