

# Life on the Vine – Marks of a Growing Disciple

Week 1

“Abide in Me” John 15:1-4

**OPEN WITH A TIME OF SILENCE.** Many of us come to RLG’s from busy days, so take a few minutes of silence to collect your thoughts, center yourselves, opening yourselves to God and to one another.

## PRAYER

### GETTING STARTED:

During the next 4 weeks leading up to Easter, we are going to be looking at this amazing allegory Jesus taught his disciples in John 15:1-17. Jesus spoke these words the night he was betrayed and arrested. The next day he would be crucified. Briefly go back and read over John 13 and 14 to get the context for what Jesus says in chapter 15.

### Read John 15:1-17 together

How does knowing the context inform your reading and interpretation of John 15?

## LEARNING & APPLYING GOD’S WORD

1. This week, we are focusing on John 15:1-4. In your own words, explain what Jesus is saying to his disciples.
2. Jesus says in verse 2 that his Father, the gardener, “cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit”. What does he mean? What questions does this raise for you about God?
3. The word “remain” can also be translated, “abide”. This is the closest possible relationship between a person and God. A person once said to me it’s like we’re “marinating” in Jesus.

Share how you “marinate” in Jesus. What do you do to remain in him?

## LIVING OUT “REAL LIFE”

4. It is not uncommon to talk with people who say something like this: “I don’t need to go to church in order to be a Christian.” Maybe you’ve said that at one point yourself.

As a group, debate this issue. Have half the group argue that you don’t have to go to church to be a Christian. Have the other half argue that you do. Each group should support their argument with scripture. Take 10 minutes to collect your arguments then start your debate.

## **SHARING AND PRAYER (Prayer Requests)**

Take some time to share prayer requests, where you need to find God's grace and peace. Be sure to give thanks for each other and pray for one another's needs. When we pray together, we find the power of God.

## **FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:**

"The opposite of grace is works, but not effort.

'Works' have to do with earning, and there simply is nothing any of us can do to earn God's love or acceptance. And, of course, we don't have to. God already loves us utterly and perfectly, and our complete acceptance is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. In God's amazing grace we live and move and have our being. But if we ever hope to 'grow in grace,' we will find ourselves engaging in effort of the most strenuous kind. As Jesus says, we are to 'strive to enter through the narrow door'. And Peter urges us to 'make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love' (2 Pet. 1:5-7)."

-Richard Foster

## **MEMORY VERSE – JOHN 15:4**

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.