

**STUDY GUIDE FOR THE WEEK OF: February 10, 2008**

THE NEXT CHAPTER

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WEEK 3 OF THE SERIES

**“PURPOSE: GROW”**

**Scripture**

John 15:1-17

<sup>1</sup> "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. <sup>5</sup> "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. <sup>7</sup> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. <sup>8</sup> This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup> "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. <sup>12</sup> My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-- fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. <sup>17</sup> This is my command: Love each other.

**Study Notes:**

John 15 is part of what scholars call John's "Final Discourse", that group of teachings that immediately preceded Jesus' crucifixion. These are among the most essential teachings of Jesus! It is here in John 15 that we find the basis for the Purpose of our church as we enter the Next Chapter: Growing Deep in Christ, Growing Up in the body of Christ, and Growing Out in the work of Christ.

**Questions For Further Reflection:**

1. Where do you find Jesus inviting his followers to "grow deep" in a relationship with him in John 15?
2. A large part of growing deep with Jesus is placing yourself in fertile soil where you can grow. How are the spiritual disciplines (daily scripture reading/studying, prayer, giving) like fertile soil? How are you doing with the spiritual disciplines? Are you putting yourself in places that will cause you to grow (worship, bible studies/small Groups, Core classes, etc.)? Why or why not?
3. Where do you find Jesus inviting his followers to "grow up together" in John 15?
4. Do you meet regularly with other people in the church for the purpose of sharing life, concerns, burdens, joys, accountability, and encouragement in your faith? Why or why not?
5. Are you in relationships with people in different generations in our church? Why or why not?
6. Where do you read Jesus inviting his followers to "grow out" in mission in John 15?
7. Do you have non-Christian friends?
8. How are you showing your concern for the nations? The poor? The sick?
9. Are you involved in some cause that does not directly benefit you, your family, or your friends?
10. Based on your answers, how are you doing in regard to our church's purpose of Growing Deep, Growing Up, and Growing Out? In what purpose are you doing well? In what purpose do you need to continue to grow?