



Discussion Guide
Abide in Christ
LEADER GUIDE

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This week, we have a standalone message from each of our campus pastors. The theme for the discussion guide will be "Abide in Christ" and will go through John 15:1-17. Abiding in Christ means making Him our home—our place of refuge, where we rest, where we return again and again for peace, care, and to be ourselves. We abide in Christ like a branch connected to its main vine. The Lord prunes, waters, and tends to us, all while we remain connected to Him and, by extension, to others who follow Jesus.

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

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"By His almighty grace you now are in Him; that same almighty grace will indeed enable you to abide in Him."

[Andrew Murray]

LEADER RESOURCES || [Leader Note](#) *We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!*

- **Passage Summary**
 - Jesus invites us to abide in Him as a way of Life. We are to build a life that is rooted and grounded in His word, in His love for us, and in obedience to his commandments. When we do these things, His joy will be in us and our joy will be full, and we will bear fruit for His glory and the good of those around us.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || [Leader Note](#) *The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another's hearts and building joy together.*

Where is "home" for you?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || [Leader Note](#) *Begin your time together thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, taking a posture of humility and dependence!*

Jesus, be our home, our refuge, our stronghold. Be our souls' comfort, our love, and our rest.

"The one I love is a cluster of henna blossoms to me, in the vineyards of En-gedi."
[Song of Songs 1:14]

BIG IDEA || [Leader Note](#) *Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today's reading and discussion.*

God desires that you have a life of deep, lasting joy, and the only path to get there is through intimate connection with Him.

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || [Leader Note](#) *Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage people to share, and look for opportunities to*

point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they're for guidance!

1. What does it mean to “abide in Christ?” How does that look in your life? *This may be useful for gauging where everyone is coming from before looking at the verses. If it looks like the conversation is getting into listing everything spiritual we do, that isn't the goal of the question. Abiding is more about what we're receiving from Christ, not what we're doing to earn Him. Remaining and abiding are about staying where we've been connected and planted, not relocating ourselves by our own actions.*

Have someone read aloud John 15:1-17. Consider having someone else read it aloud again, possibly in a different translation to gain another perspective (i.e. CEB, the Message, Amplified).

2. What has God removed this past year? *The Lord often blesses us by reduction, taking something away to set us down a different direction or to protect us. If someone in your group suffered a grievous loss, feel free to skip this question for their sake. Job 1:21 is relevant here: The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.*
3. How do people try to produce fruit themselves? *There are several places this can go. It's obvious when we are faking fruit like the prophets and leaders in Jeremiah and Micah who cry false peace, but we also fall prey to the trap of trying to work faithfully for the kingdom in hope of one day feeling like we belong there. The older brother in the Prodigal Son story (Luke 15) loses his sense of where home (abiding) is as the result of this trap, as does Cain (Genesis 4).*
4. How do we remain in the love of Jesus? *Again, this isn't about earning or laboring or striving. How do we stay at the foot of the cross? How do we keep awake, on our knees, and humble, eyes turned toward Jesus to ask of Him and receive everything we need?*
5. What does “complete joy” look like? *The contentment and satisfaction to be found in Christ is like nothing else, and those who have experienced it will hopefully be able to describe it a bit. If not, it might be worth looking up other verses about joy and reading through a few so the people in your group will be able to distinguish holy joy from counterfeit, lesser joys that will not last.*
6. Which of the false identities is the biggest pitfall for you? (examples: I am what I have, I am what I look like, I am what I do, I am what people say about me, I am who I'm with, etc.) *We can look to our possessions, other people, our health, our goals/purpose, and so many other things as sources of who we are. We cannot be receiving our identity from those other masters and abide in Christ at the same time. This is a good time to confess idols that may have crept in.*
7. If “I am a child of the living God and heir to the kingdom of heaven” is your identity instead of those other things, what would change? *Prayer, probably. We would be so much more steady, secure, and bold—our identity would be rooted and established, and therefore we would be, too. Acting like we have to earn a way into a family vs. simply being family are such different modes of existing.*
8. What does your time with your heavenly Father look like? Any adjustments you want to make this year? *We each have a different relationship with the Lord and will have different rhythms. Encourage the people in your group to have time where they are still and quiet before the Lord each day, if they don't already. Abiding is not rushed. It is not a holy to-do list. It's being with.*

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || **Leader Note** *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group*

to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.

If we remain in Jesus, **the Spirit will produce the fruit that we will bear.**

As you consider your next step, reflect on: 1) How was abiding in Christ last year? 2) How can I just BE with the Lord without making it about DOING something?

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 2 or 3 for this question, so each person has others praying with them for the needs they're taking before the throne. The possible next steps of faith below are not for discussion, but simply a resource for your group members.

Step of Faith Ideas

1. Tell the Lord that you want to abide in Christ and ask Him to teach you how.
2. Remove idols that keep trying to trap you in a lesser identity than who God says you are.

PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note *Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes to pray together. Try the prayer activity below or pray for one another's personal requests!*

Remain in Jesus

Our example of how to do all these things is how Jesus remains in the Father—His own person, yet still one. It is a mystery, but exploring mysteries is how we draw closer to God and deepen our faith.

- Pray that we would know the full extent of the love of Jesus.
- Pray that we would experience the fullness of joy in Jesus.
- Pray that Jesus would be our truest home and closest family.
- Close your time by reading this prayer together:
 - *“Teach us how to abide, to remain, to be at home with You. Let us look more like Jesus as we receive everything we need from our heavenly Father, like He did while He walked the Earth.”*