

# Gathering Guide

for Communities and Friends  
Beyond the Bio: Abiding in Jesus, September 22, 2019

## The Big Idea

Experiencing a personal relationship with Jesus doesn't happen by accident. Our relationship with our Savior comes from the resolve to not only seek Christ, but to dwell with Him and in Him. The Scriptures call this "abiding" and it is commanded by Jesus in John 15. The phrase "abiding in Christ" pictures an intimate, close relationship, and not just a superficial acquaintance. Abiding in Christ is not a special level of Christian

## Where we are in the Bible

This week we are in the first part of the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of John. This famous passage, especially the first 11 verses, uses a metaphor of vine and branches to remind us that our spiritual lives are entirely dependent on staying connected to Jesus Christ (the vine), who is the source of all power and victory in our lives. Because we (the branches) are entirely dependent on him, we are reminded that without Him we can do nothing!

## Other scriptures to consider

Psalm 80:8-16  
Isaiah 5:1-7  
Isaiah 32:16  
John 17:20-24  
1 John 2:24-29

## Finding a bit of ourselves

- When is the last time you spent at least one hour alone and uninterrupted with Jesus? How did you spend that time? If you haven't done a full hour recently, what are some things you might consider doing to help you connect with Him?
- When you spend time alone and uninterrupted with Jesus, where do you do it? What are the positives and negatives of the location you use? Where do you think would be the perfect spot?
- What item have you greatly desired over a significant period of time before you were finally able to obtain it? Compare your desire for that item to your desire to having a personal relationship with Jesus?

## Where do we go from here?

- As you read John 15:1-11 and consider the message Jesus is communicating to his disciples, why is it important to be deliberate about our intention to be close to Christ?
- In the opening story of Sunday's message, we heard how God used a mentor to "prune" Dr. Wilkinson as he while he was experiencing a low-point in his relationship with Jesus. What did that pruning consist of and how did Dr. Wilkinson respond? In what ways has God been at work in your life over the years to prune you? How about recently? Are there some areas in your life that could use a sanctified trimming?
- What does it look like for someone to "abide in Jesus"?
- The message closed with the following two questions: 1) *Are you abiding in Jesus at this point in your life?* 2) *If not, what would have to change for you to say that you are abiding in Jesus?* Now that you have had time to mediate on this, how would you answer those two questions?



## Prayer focus

Jesus ended this teaching by praying in John 17 for himself, his disciples, and for all future believers. This week, let's echo the prayer of Jesus for the following:

- That we may be one in Jesus and in God the Father (17:21-23).
- We would be in complete unity so that the world will know the Father sent us and that he loves us (17:23).
- That we would be with Jesus and see His glory (17:24).

