

BRMC Small Group Study: John 15:1-25

Leaders Guide

Please note that the suggestions below are not model answers but to help guide your study. Feel free to adapt the questions for your group.

Leader's Notes:

Context:

Jesus continues to give his last words to his disciples during the last supper in what is known as the farewell discourse.

Introduction:

John 15 can be split into three sections. Firstly, Jesus shares an analogy about the vine which represents himself (John 15:1-11). He then makes a call for the disciples to love one another (John 15:12-17). Finally, he warns about the consequences of following him (John 15:18-25).

Lesson Objectives:

- To understand the analogy of the vine.
- To understand the call to love.
- To understand the consequences that come with following Jesus.

Observation

1. What do the gardener, vine, branches, and fruits represent John 15:1-11?

- *The gardener is the Father, the vine is Jesus, and the branches are his people.*
- *The gardener cuts off every branch that does not bear fruit.*
- *But for branches that bear fruits, he prunes them so they will be even more fruitful.*

2. What does it mean for one to abide in Jesus?

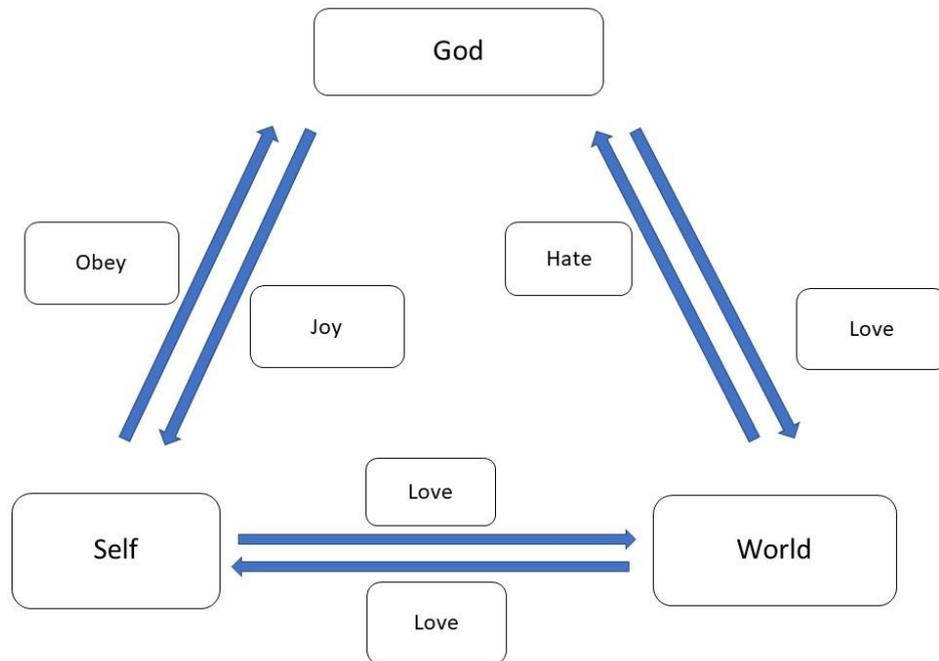
- *By abiding in Jesus, the fruitfulness of our lives will be evident and the Father will be glorified (John 15:8).*
- *Abiding in Jesus means to keep his commandments which would also allow us to abide in his love (John 15:10).*
- *We can ask for whatever we wish and it will be done for us, on the condition that it is asked in Jesus' name and is in line with his teachings (John 15:7, 16).*

Interpretation

3. Read Isaiah 5:1-7. How is the vine depicted? How does it differ from what we read in John 15?

- *In Isaiah, the vine is depicted as a bad vine that yielded only bad grapes, which resulted in the author choosing to abandon it. The vine is explicitly mentioned in verse 7 to be Israel. Even though Israel was God's "pleasant planting/ garden of delight" that was to yield good grapes (justice and righteousness), there was bloodshed and cries of distress instead.*
- *In contrast, Jesus is not only a vine but he is the good vine. Where Israel had failed, Jesus now comes as the fulfilment of the vine and we can be sure that he bears only good fruits. With this, we can also be certain that by abiding in Jesus, we would also bear good fruits.*

4. Fill in the diagram below using words that describe the relationship between God, Self, and the World (John 15:12-25)? Do you agree with your place in this picture?



- There are some helping words included above to start your discussion. Encourage your members to add in more relational words as they see it in the passage.
- Some of us may find it difficult to be part of the world but still obeying Jesus. As a Small Group, think about ways in which you have given yourself to the world more than God.

5. Why did Jesus call the disciples his friends? What does it take for one to be called his friend?

- Jesus calls the disciples his friends because all that has been heard from the Father has been made known to them. In contrast, a servant does not know what his master is doing, he simply carries out the instructions by his master. (John 15:14-15).
- Jesus calling his disciples friends is conditional. They must be obedient to do his commands which is to love each other. However, isn't being obedient something that a servant does?
- We are friends of Jesus because we are not called to follow blindly. We have been given revelation and knowledge of who he is and what he requires us to do. When we serve as friends to Jesus, we serve him not out of obligation but through love and a desire to see him glorified. Just like how we wouldn't serve our friends begrudgingly.

Application

6. How would you explain John 15:20 to a friend who feels harassed by non-Christians?

- [Further question] How would you explain this verse to a non-Christian who happened to pick up the bible and was offended by this verse?
- We must be careful to know what persecution truly is. We must be wise not to mistake an individual's personal dislike for someone as persecution of faith.
- However, persecution is now more subtle than ever. There are voices that attempt to suppress Christian teachings by claiming that it is intolerant and archaic.

7. Do you think you are a friend to Jesus? Why?