

Small Group Study Guide

"Abide" | From Sunday January 26, 2020

Appetizer:

Question: If you are married, what were the primary reasons for getting hitched? Why did you want to marry the person you are married to? If you are single, what would be some reasons as to why you would want to get married?

Read out John 15:9-11. Have someone read it a second time, to allow the Scriptures to sink in by using a second voice.

A couple questions from the passage:

Share some observations from the passage. What words stuck out to you when you heard this passage read?

What is the context of the passage? Where did Jesus say these words? When you hear the word "Abide" what does it mean to you?

Main Course:

Jeff spoke about how Paul didn't use the word Christian in his letters to describe followers of Jesus. Rather, he used the phrase, "In Christ." Jeff suggested three definitions to what "In Christ" means: (1) Having Jesus as our representative, (2) Having a new relationship with Jesus, and (3) having Jesus live inside of us.

These definitions probably ring true for many of us. However, we don't use the words "In Christ" very often. Jeff also suggested that when we talk about the heart of discipleship we tend to emphasize either the extravagant grace of Jesus or the radical discipleship of Jesus over our relationship with Jesus (just being present).

Question: Which aspect of the message of Jesus is most appealing to you: Extravagant Grace, Radical Discipleship, or a Relationship with God? Which has impacted you the most, or led you to following Jesus?

In what ways have you seen extravagant grace abused? In what ways have you seen radical discipleship affect Christians in a negative way?

Jeff talked about how being "In Christ" is actually the straw that stirs the drink of Christian living. In other words, being in relationship with Christ holds the tension between grace and challenge (or the demands of Jesus) together.

This is not always an easy concept to explain, and the Scriptures use metaphors to convey this tension, like comparing our relationship to God to a marriage or to a vine with branches. Can you think of metaphors that help us understand the importance of how relationship holds grace and demand together?

Question: How does our relationship with God hold extravagant grace and radical discipleship together? Give some examples or share some experiences where you have seen this take place.

Dessert:

Challenge:

The big point of Sunday's message was simply this: We get to know God by being with him.

1. When is the last time we've been with him? What does this look like.
2. How do we grow closer to the Lord without being lazy in depending on grace to get by, while not being legalistic by just doing a bunch of things in order to appease God or our conscience? How do we open up time to spend with God? What does abiding in Christ look like for you? And what are you going to do these week to spend time in His presence?

End the small group time with prayer for one another, praying especially for a real sense of God's abiding presence in our lives and the willingness to pay attention to what he is saying to us.