

## *Connect Group Discussion Guide*

SERMON DATE	SERMON SERIES	SERMON TITLE
03/20/2022	The Word Became Flesh	The Vine and the Branches
Message on YouTube	 <b>The Vine and the Branches</b>	

### **MESSAGE ABSTRACT:**

This week in our study of John we examine John 15. Here, Jesus declares the seventh and final “I am” about himself: “I am the true vine” (John 15:1).

That declaration came as Jesus and His disciples had finished their last supper together and they were going to the Garden of Gethsemane. On the way, they very likely passed vineyards, as they were quite abundant at the time.

Jesus draws the comparison about the vine and the spiritual significance would not have been lost on these Jewish men: the vine was the symbol of Israel. Jesus was saying something very intimate about Himself.

And it's in this metaphor that Jesus teaches three fundamental things:

1. The purpose of the Vine is to produce branches that bear much fruit. Everything the gardener does (even our heavenly Father) is to produce more fruit of the vine. The gardener lifts up the vine, exposing it to the sun, and cleanses it from dirt and the mildew of the soil. But, as the branches, we have a part too: to remain (abide).

Doing requires two choices on our part: the choice to act and serve as Jesus did, and the choice of to maintain an attitude of dependence and gratitude. Choosing not to means no fruit, no utility. A waste of what we've been chosen to do.

2. The second thing Jesus describes is the fundamental sign of fruit: love. When we love, we remain. When we remain, we can love. The measure of fruit in our lives is love.
3. And, as hard as it is to love like Jesus, He also tells us something about hate. We will be hated. He was hated. We will be too—no matter how much we love or try to. It's not about our loving, it's about our belonging, just as it was for Jesus.

Because we belong to the vine, we can bear fruit. And because we belong to Him we don't have to live for the world's acceptance. Because we're chosen in Him we have a purpose to be fruitful. And because we remain in Him we can love like He loved—even when it hurts.

### **QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:**

1. In what way did God speak to you in the message this past Sunday?
2. What do you think it means, practically speaking, to remain (abide) in Christ?
3. When you think about the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control) (Galatians 5:22-23), which of these do you find hardest to express? Are there any circumstances when it's more difficult?
4. What thoughts go through your mind when someone expresses hate toward you? How could Jesus' words about hatred from the world better equip you in how you navigate future encounters with hatred or persecution?
5. What's your one take-away from the message and the discussion we've just had about it?