

Island Group Discussion Guide

Abide • Connect • Share



Week of January 11, 2026

WHAT A DISCIPLE DOES • WEEK 2

ABIDE • JOHN 15:5; ROMANS 12:1-2

OPENING PRAYER TIME

Begin your meeting with 10-15 minutes of prayer using these prompts:

- Thank God for His presence with us today and His desire to deepen our relationship with Him
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide our discussion and open our hearts to His truth
- Pray for a genuine love for God to grow in each of our hearts
- Invite Jesus to reveal areas where we may be going through the motions rather than truly loving Him
- Ask for courage to move from religious activity to authentic relationship
- Pray for our church as we lean into God's direction for 2026

DISCUSSION

- **Ice breaker:** Have you ever found yourself just "going through the motions" in some area of life — work, exercise, a hobby? What made you realize it, and what did you do about it?
- **Read John 15:5.** This is how Island Church defines "abide": *a daily personal relationship with Jesus — His life flowing through yours.* What stands out to you about this definition?
- **Read Romans 12:1-2.** Pastor Paul emphasized that discipleship is not a program or class you pass — *"it is a lifestyle."* How does viewing discipleship as a lifestyle change the way you approach your faith?
- We heard that a disciple of Christ experiences transformation in four areas: *a transformed mind, transformed affections, transformed relationships, and transformed purpose.* Which of these areas do you sense God working on most in your life right now?
- The message pointed out a problem with many discipleship models: *"They have earthbound goals."* The focus becomes building up theological knowledge or spiritual exercises rather than something deeper. What's the danger in making discipleship about knowledge and activity alone?
- **Here's the "secret sauce":** In the sermon, we heard that *"love is the central discipline of the Christian life. Everything else flows from love as the centerpiece of spiritual formation."* How does this challenge or reshape your understanding of spiritual growth?
- **Read 1 Timothy 4:7-8.** Pastor Paul explained that training yourself for godliness *"is not oppressive"* — when done out of love, it helps us

understand the true life we've inherited in Christ. How does motivation change the nature of spiritual discipline?

- **Read Galatians 6:7-8.** The message illustrated this with Oscar the Grouch from Sesame Street: "*He lived in the trash. No wonder he was a grouch... What you plant in your life is what's gonna grow in your life.*" **Application question:** What are you currently "planting" in your life, and what kind of fruit is it producing?
- The sermon traced God's pursuit of humanity from the Garden of Eden to the present. We heard that "*we have become God's mission*" and that God came to find us because "*God so loved the world.*" How does knowing you are the object of God's relentless pursuit affect how you see yourself?
- **Read 1 John 4:7-11.** The message declared that "*love is the most powerful force in all of the universe*" because "*God is love.*" Why is it significant that love is not just something God does, but who God is?
- In the sermon, we were reminded of what Jesus asked Peter in John 21. He didn't ask about fasting, prayer, Bible reading, or small group leadership... He asked, "*Simon, son of John, do you love me more than all of these?*" Why do you think Jesus made love the central question?
- Pastor Paul emphasized: "*It's not to try harder. It's not devotion simply for devotion. It's not working harder to earn Jesus' affection. Because all of that negates His grace.*" **Application question:** Where might you be substituting religious effort for genuine love in your relationship with Jesus?
- **Read John 15:9-12.** Jesus says, "*Remain in my love*" — not "remain in my devotion" or "remain in your effort." How does this reframe what it means to abide in Christ?
- We heard that the covenant of love God has made with us "*cannot be broken*" because it is "*sealed by his blood*" and "*sovereignly administered.*" **Read Ephesians 2:8-9 and John 10:27-29.** How does the security of God's covenant free you to love Him without fear?
- Pastor Paul closed the sermon closed with this challenge: "*Do you love the Lord with all your heart? Do you love the Lord with all your soul? Do you love the Lord with all of your mind? And if you can't answer yes, then you've missed out on the gospel.*" **Application question:** How would you honestly answer that question today? What one step could you take this week to grow in your love for God?

CLOSING PRAYER TIME

Share prayer requests and concerns with the group. Be sure to write these down and send them to all group members so everyone can pray throughout the week, including those who were absent today.