

Small Group Study Questions

As you reflect on the message from this week, was there anything you heard for the first time? Was there something said that challenged you or confused you?

Getting to Know You

1. Take a few moments to introduce yourselves and feel free to use any of the following questions:
 - a. What is one memory from the past summer that stands out to you the most?
 - b. What is your favorite movie-watching snack?
 - c. How long have you been at Valley and how did you first connect with us?

Digging Deeper

Our “Big Idea” this week is **his life is our life**. Spiritual life is non-existent apart from Jesus. Our own strength and wisdom produce no fruit and no joy. However, by resting and trusting in the Vine we get to experience the fullness of the life that the Gardener, our Father, desires for us.

Jeremiah 17:5–8 contrasts two ways of life for those who trust in human strength and for those who trust in the strength of the Lord. Read this passage prayerfully and carefully as you answer the following questions.

2. Verses 5 & 7 parallel each other. What similarities and differences do you see between the people described?
3. Verses 6 & 8 also parallel each other. What similarities and differences do you see between the people described?
4. The key issue in this passage is *trust*. Why do you think human hearts tend to trust in human strength rather than God? When do you find it difficult to trust God?
5. The blessed person in verses 7–8 does not always experience comfortable circumstances. What stands out to you about the strength of this tree in seasons of heat and drought? What does this tell you about the sufficiency of God's strength in your own difficult circumstances?

6. In John 15:4 and 15:9 Jesus says, "Abide in me," and "abide in my love." What correlation do you see in these invitations and the description of the blessed person in Jeremiah 17:7-8?

7. The blessings of fruit in the Bible are not merely for the benefit of the one bearing it; it is intended to bless others who around them. How does "abiding in" and "trusting" the Lord bring the fruit of blessing to others?

Live It Out

His life is our life. All the joy and spiritual prosperity we could ever want, God the Father has provided in his Son. Jesus' invitation to abide in him is an invitation to live the most joyful and fruitful life we could ever imagine?

8. What is one area of your life where you have been pursuing joy and fruit in your own strength rather than by abiding in the love and words of Jesus?

9. God the Father gets great glory in his vineyard when the branches abide in the Vine and bear the fruit of love toward one another. How does your abiding in Jesus influence the fruit of love that is on display at Valley Bible? How can you help your brothers and sisters abide and trust in Jesus so that our church can be the kind of vineyard that gives God glory?

Prayer Requests

One of the most significant ways we grow spiritually together is to pray for one another each week. Use this section to write down the requests of those in your group so you can remember to pray for them throughout the week. Remember: *what is shared in your group should stay in your group.*
