

If you have limited time to prepare, this 3-step outline is a helpful tool for leading a small group discussion:

1. Read the text from Sunday's message.
2. What did you find most helpful/confusing/new/ that you did not understand from the message?
3. What were your big takeaways? How will you put these into practice in your life?

## Getting Started

- Review the seven "I Am" statements in the Gospel of John. Discuss how you have experienced Jesus in your life in any of these ways.

John 6:35, 42, 48, 51	"I Am the Bread of Life"
John 8:12	"I Am the Light of the World"
John 10:7, 9	"I Am the Gate for the Sheep"
John 10:11, 14	"I Am the Good Shepherd"
John 11:25	"I Am the Resurrection and the Life"
John 14:6	"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life"
John 15:1, 5	"I Am the True Vine"

- Read John 15:1-11

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. <sup>2</sup>Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup>As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

## Discussion

- Through the metaphor of the vine and branches, Jesus set forth the basis for Christian living. In the Old Testament, the vine is used commonly as a symbol for Israel. Read Psalm 80 and discuss what the Psalmist was saying about Israel and how it had turned away from God. Where do you see Jesus revealed in this Psalm?  
(Other references to Israel as the vine: Isa 5:1-7; 27:2-6; Jer 2:21; 12:10; Ezek 15:1-8; 17:1-21; 19:10-14; Hos 10:1-2)
- In this metaphor of the vine and branches, what is our responsibility as a branch? What does it mean to abide or remain in Christ? How does Galatians 2:20 reinforce this concept?

*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)*

- What does it mean to glorify God? What does it look like in our lives in a practical way?
  
- How does God work through our relationship with other people who are abiding in Christ to help us grow, bear fruit and bring glory to Himself?
  
- In this passage how are love, obedience and joy interconnected in this vine and branch metaphor?
  
- As a branch on Christ's vine, how would you describe the fruit in your life and why? What "next steps" do you sense the Holy Spirit nudging you to take to grow in your intimacy with Christ resulting in deeper love, daily obedience and soul-satisfying joy, bearing fruit that will last for the Father's glory?
  - Grade A
  - Juicy
  - Green
  - Wormy
  - Sparse
  - Other

**Prayer**