



Discussion Questions for Small Groups

Light of the World: John 15:1-17

On Sunday we looked at the second half of chapter 14, in which Jesus begins to paint a picture of how the disciples will relate to him after he leaves the earth. Their role changes from following him physically, to following/obeying his commands. But he promises not to leave them as orphans, but to come to them—in a new way, through the Holy Spirit or Advocate. This will actually mean a closer relationship than ever, even though he is no longer with them physically. Today he elaborates on how important it is to stay connected to him, even in his absence.

Opening Discussion:

Have you ever been chosen for a special task, in school, at work, on a sports team, or in some other setting? How did it make you feel to be asked to play a unique role, or be chosen for a particular team?

Looking at Scripture:

Read **John 15:1-8**

Jesus is using an analogy to describe a “fruitful” relationship with him. Sometimes we skim over this passage, assuming we know what it means, without paying careful attention to all of its implications. Take a couple of minutes to think through each aspect of his analogy, and how it relates to actual life. What does it mean:

To be a branch of the vine?

To be cut off?

To be pruned?

To be purified by the message?

To remain “in him”?

For him to remain in us?

To not remain in him?

To wither and be burned?

To produce fruit/much fruit?

To bring glory to the Father?

Read John 15:9-17

What does a relationship of mutual love and friendship look like, according to Jesus?

In verse 11, Jesus brings up the idea of overflowing joy. Just a few verses earlier (14:27), he promised to leave an unworldly peace. Why do you think he is emphasizing these emotions as part of his farewell speech? What relevance might this have for us today?

What is the distinction between a slave/servant and a friend, and how does that make a difference for the disciples? How does it make a difference for us?

In verse 16 Jesus says, “You didn’t choose me. I chose you.” Yet John’s earlier description (e.g. 1:37-39) seems to indicate that, at least on a visible level, it was the disciples who initiated the relationship. Why is it important for Jesus to give them a different perspective? What did he want them to think/feel about themselves and their relationship with him?

Personal Application:

In your own life, do you have a sense of being “chosen” by Jesus? How would it make a difference if you were to live into that idea more fully?

How do you feel you are doing staying connected to Jesus in love and friendship? Do you see a corresponding level of “fruitfulness” in your life? What can you do to better “remain in him?”