



Navigators Discipleship Tool



Abiding Growth: How Community Influences Your Spiritual Impact

Often, abiding growth in Christ focuses on your individual relationship with God. Jesus uses the imagery of a vine in John 15, and a vine has multiple branches and clusters of fruit. How would your concept of abiding look if it included your brothers and sisters in Christ, abiding together, to bear fruit?

Through this Bible study, cultivate a deeper understanding of John 15 and how the body of Christ influences your spiritual impact.

Jesus Teaches Abiding Growth to a Small Group

Read [John 15:1-17](#).

In John 15:5 Jesus says, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (NIV).

Have you ever seen a grapevine produce only a single grape? When you think about grapes, you think about multiple branches and clusters of grapes. That’s how they grow!

However, when you read John 15:5 and reflect on abiding in Christ, you may often consider abiding in Christ only individually and personally. A focus on abiding might mean spending more time alone with God in the Bible or spending a day alone with God.

But, Jesus was talking to His disciples *together*. Maybe the English language makes it hard for us to mentally translate the singular “you” to the plural “you all” or “y’all.” Or maybe our cultural background pushes us to emphasize only individual spirituality.

Reflection Questions

How does the plural use of the word “you” change the way you read John 15:1-17 and think about abiding growth?

Try reading other passages from the New Testament from a plural “you” perspective and see how that offers a different understanding of the need for community and abiding growth together to bear fruit.



Navigators Discipleship Tool

Understanding Abiding Growth as the Body of Christ

Read John 15:1-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-26.

Compare what Jesus says in John 15 to what Paul says about the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:12-26.

Reflection Questions

What do the images of the vine and the body tell you about your relationships to Jesus and other Christians?

What are the implications for your actions and attitudes?

Next Steps for Abiding Growth as a Community

Read John 13:34-35.

Look at a picture of a grapevine. Can you tell which grape is coming from which branch? And is it only one grape and one branch?

The branches have grown intertwining together, helping hold others up and bearing each other's weight and the weight of the fruit. The fruit will never say, "Look at what I did!" No, it's thankful to the branch, who in turn points to the vine that sustains them. Likewise, the True Vine, which is Christ, sustains us and gives us the nutrients and power to produce the fruit together.

Understanding and valuing the community in bearing fruit helps prevent pride about "my ministry." As a community, we get to point to the True Vine! Who helps bring people to faith over the years? *We do*—all the branches that intersect in and around someone's life. That's what it looks like to abide together in Christ.

Reflection Questions

Name the people in your life who make up your specific biblical community. How do they impact your spiritual growth and your growth as a disciplemaker?
