

BIG IDEA

An apprentice of Jesus chooses to be with Jesus.

SCRIPTURE

John 15:1-10, John 1:35-39, John 14:16-18, John 14:25-27

ICEBREAKER & OPENING THOUGHT

Use the icebreaker and opening thoughts to begin a conversation about what qualities others may possess that make us want to be around them. We know that Jesus, above all else, has the best qualities. Who wouldn't want a little more love, joy, peace, and gentleness in their lives? Begin to talk about ways we can be more present with Jesus and how it would feel to have these qualities more often in our day to day life.

BIBLE STUDY

Read the scriptures today to discuss and gain a better understanding of what Jesus was calling his disciples, and us, to do. He instructs us numerous times to "remain in me" and "remain in my love." Discuss the importance of this instruction and the implication of being present with him. Jesus knew that for us to bear good fruit, we needed him. God never intended for us to do it on our own, which is why we have the Holy Spirit to abide in us always. Use the discussion of the scripture to demonstrate that these instructions are as applicable to us as they were to the disciples.

LIFE APPLICATION

Use these questions to allow group members to share experiences in which the Holy Spirit was able to help guide them or comfort them. Discuss what happened when they knew the presence of God was with them. How can we recognize the opportunities in our lives to be open to his presence, and what barriers are present that may prevent that connection? Move the discussion to practical changes we can make to become more present with Jesus. Encourage members to discuss how their lives could be significantly impacted by his presence.

Brother Lawrence was famous for "Practicing the Presence of God." It is an intentional choice to become more aware of God's presence in every situation of our daily lives. This practice doesn't mean making constant verbal prayers to God, though that can be helpful. It means realizing God is always aware of you, and then learning to be more aware of him. If it helps, it might be compared to walking in the park with a loved one or friend even if you aren't carrying on a conversation; you're there together.

"It is unlikely that we will deepen our relationship with God in a casual or haphazard manner. There will be a need for some intentional commitment and some reorganization in our own lives." –William Paulsell, *Ways of Prayer*

CHALLENGE

Pastor and author, A.W. Tozer, once said, "The Spirit-filled life is not a special deluxe edition of Christianity. It is part and parcel of the total plan of God for his people." As you approach each day this week, focus on being intentional about being present with Jesus and allowing the Holy Spirit to work through you and guide you. Next week share if or how this made a difference for you.