



GOD'S WORD IS OUR NARRATIVE

Week 01

ICEBREAKER

What word would you use to describe how you are feeling or thinking about our new group?

TESTIMONY

Give someone or a couple 5-10 minutes to share their testimony with the group.

SCRIPTURE

JOHN 15:1-8

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.

Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

"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. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

DEVOTIONAL

Jesus gives his disciples a simple picture: **a branch cannot survive disconnected from the vine.** A branch may look healthy for a little while after being cut off, but eventually the absence of connection becomes obvious. Jesus says that our spiritual lives work the same way.

We weren't created to produce spiritual life on our own. Our fruitfulness comes from remaining connected to Him. That means the foundation of a healthy community group isn't a great leader, a great discussion, or even great friendships. **IT'S JESUS.** And one of the primary ways we remain connected to Jesus is by allowing his words to remain in us.

God's Word doesn't simply give us information; it shapes how we understand God, ourselves, our relationships, our circumstances, and the world around us. As we begin this new season together, we want to help and encourage one another to stay connected to Jesus.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

1. Jesus repeatedly uses the word "remain" or "abide." What do you think it practically looks like to remain connected to Jesus in everyday life? How could we help one another stay connected to Jesus and allow God's Word to shape our lives during this season?
2. What are some things that tend to compete with God's Word for the loudest voice in your life?
3. Are there any topics or books of the Bible that you are interested in studying out together?

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: HOW YOU CONNECT

Indicate where you fall on the scales below. There are no right or wrong answers—just think about your own tendencies when it comes to connecting with others.

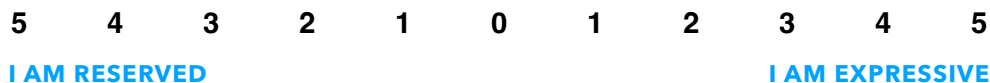
In order to relax and re-energize...



In a group conversation...



When experiencing emotions...



OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: REFLECT AND DISCUSS

- **In order to relax and re-energize...**how did you rank yourself?
How does this play out in your life?
- **In a group conversation...**how did you rank yourself?
In this group, how can we make sure everyone has the chance to speak?
- **When experiencing emotions...**how did you rank yourself?
When you are excited about something, how will the group know?