



PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- You can watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.

Welcome: *Icebreaker – When you need to get away, where do you typically like to go?*

Study Tip: Israel had a long history of being called God’s chosen vine prior to the coming of Jesus (see Psalm 80:8-19; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 2:21; Ezekiel 19:10-14; Hosea 10:1). While this illustration may seem foreign to our day, it would have resonated with a people group driven by an viticultural economy. It can be of value for us to step into the shoes of the 1st century disciples to explore all of the cultural assumptions behind our text. For this study guide, let’s take a look at two pieces of history that discuss the viticulture economy of the first century. The first quote comes from a man named Pliny the Younger who recorded viticultural customs in the 1st century. The second quote comes from a Papyrus that describes viticultural practices in 280 AD!

“Thus there are two kinds of main branches; the shoot which comes out of the hard timber and promises wood for the next year is called a leafy shoot or else when it is above the scar [cause by tying the branch to the trellis] a fruit-bearing shoot, whereas the other kind of shoot that springs from a year-old branch is always a fruit-bearer. There is also left underneath the cross-bar a shoot called the keeper – this is a young branch, not longer than three buds, which will provide wood next year if the vine’s luxurious growth has used itself up – and another shoot next to it the size of a wart, called the pilferer is also left, in case the keeper-shoot should fail.”

“We being responsible for the remaining operations after those mentioned above, consisting of breaking up the ground, picking off shoots, keeping the vines well tended, disposition of them, removal of shoots, needful thinnings of foilage...”

These two quotes illustrate that ultimately, the gardner determines whether a branch is lifted into a position where it can become a fruit-bearer or taken away all together. Instead of focusing on who remains in the vine an who is outside the vine, spend this study guide exploring the command to *abide* that we have been given.

What’s Going on This Week

This week, Pastor Danny Strange brought us into the first week of our new series titled *Healthy and Thriving*. Danny directed our attention to *John 15:1-8* in order to give us the one secret to flourishing in 2022: *abiding in Jesus*. As you engage with this study guide, challenge yourself to expose any external sources of life that you seek apart from Jesus and remember that Jesus claims to be the only TRUE source of flourishing for all time. Therefore, wrestle with what it means to actually *abide* in the vine, the source of life that is Jesus Christ, especially as we move into the early weeks of 2022.

“Everything in us wants to find flourishing in every source *but* Jesus...If you want to flourish in 2022, learn how to make Jesus your *only* source.” – Pastor Danny Strange



GROUP MEETING (60 – 90 minutes)

Worship (10 – 15 minutes)

Take time with your group and prepare your hearts as you enter into the presence of God for this meeting.

Option 1: Worship Music Have someone share their favorite song. You can find it online, play it, and even sing along with your group! Have them explain why the lyrics have impacted them!	Option 2: Silence and Meditation One of the challenges from today's text is the command to <i>abide</i> . Before this study guide, spend some time meditating on what abiding means for your relationship with Jesus.	Option 3: Scripture Meditation <i>Matthew 11:28-30</i> plays a central role in this week's lesson. Spend some time engaging this text and allowing the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to any observations you may have.
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Word #1: Explore What it Means to Abide in Jesus Alone (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: John 15:1-7 – In this famous passage of the gospel according to John, Jesus offers one simple command to his disciples: *abide in him*. However, we know that in our lives, making Jesus our single-origin source of fruitfulness and flourishing is one of the most difficult things to do. Everything in us wants to find flourishing in every source but Jesus. This leads us to a place where we wither and die on the Vine. **Can you describe a season of your life where you felt that you were firmly *abiding* in Jesus? If so, what are some of the factors that led to this state of being? What advice would you give to your group members seeking to abide in Jesus? When do you feel like you are not abiding in Jesus and what are some of the alternative sources that you tend to turn to apart from Jesus?**

Host Tip: As the facilitator, try and aim the discussion at ways this question effects people personally. This should not be a theoretical discussion, but tangible ways that people find themselves struggling to abide with Jesus. Pay attention to any commonalities with the group and use them to carry on the conversation to the next question.

Word #2: Commit to Making Jesus Your Single Source (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: John 15:8-17 – As Jesus closes this discussion about the true Vine, he begins talking about some practical ways in which we can abide in him and bear much fruit. Jesus' discussion revolves around (1) meditating on the words of God, (2) resting in the love of Jesus, and (3) reflecting the love of Jesus to others around us. **As we look to be Healthy and Thriving in the year 2022, into which one of these 3 areas do you wish to grow deeper? How would you like to see the group grow in these 3 areas?**

Host Tip: This would be a great time to bring up our Life Group pillars of Worship (resting in the love of Jesus), Word (Meditating on the words of God through scripture), Welcome (Reflecting the love of Jesus to the church), and Witness (Reflecting the love of Jesus to the community). Spend some time evaluating where the group stands.



Witness (20 – 25 minutes)

- Pray that the Holy Spirit would teach us how to make Jesus our single source of life.
- Pray that we would all grow in the ministry of Welcome, Worship, Word, and Witness
- Pray for any individual prayer request that comes up in your group.
- **Pray for the entire group and how they may be able to participate in future group meetings.**
- **Pray for an interaction with someone who you can invite into your next group meeting!**
- **Pray for God's hand in the multiplication and revival of your group!**

We invite you to attend our Worship and Vision Night for Community Life on Wednesday, 1/19!

Throughout the Week

-Stay up to date with Local Ministry Opportunities: If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at [3Crosses.org/neighborhood](https://3crosses.org/neighborhood)

-Join relief efforts locally and around the world: Looking to contribute to what is going on both locally and around the world? Visit our website and join one of the [relief efforts](#) being made available through our church partners or sponsor an [indigenous missionary](#)!

-Life Groups 2022: For more information about joining a group, hosting a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at avanegas@3crosses.org