

# Red Letter Christian

## Life Group Leaders Guide

### Objective

This guide contains the information and questions you will need to lead a life group study during our current sermon series. Our aim is to spark Spirit-led, Bible-centered conversations that anyone can participate in regardless of how biblically literate they may or may not be. **The win** that we want you to experience is when your group members **connect** more closely with each other and with God so that they are encouraged to move forward in living out their faith.

### Directions

The *Purpose* and *Move* sections are for the leader to read to the group to provide clarity. **Do not feel pressured to cover all the questions.** Decide which ones may work best for your group. You will see brief notes interspersed between groups of questions to help give the group context for their answers. The *Notes and Commentary* section (when included) is optional reading for the leader to get background information and better understanding of the passages before leading the discussion.

### Series Overview

Sadly, when people think of Jesus-followers it is a far cry from who Jesus actually is. After all that Jesus has done for us, we cannot be content with the picture and representation that we are sharing. We must change the story and perception of who Jesus is. We believe that if people truly met the real Jesus, they would really fall in love with Him. In Red Letter Christian, we will be looking at the words of Jesus, so that we become like Jesus, so the world will see Jesus.

### Red Letter Christian Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic
1	10/20/19	Foundation
2	10/27/19	Being
3	11/3/19	<b>Socials</b>
4	11/10/19	Serve
5	11/17/19	Go
6	11/24/19	Forgive

# The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

## *Being*

### The Big Idea

You have to be with Jesus to be like Him.

### Flow of Study

**Icebreaker:** Tell us about a person you've spent a lot of time with and how they've rubbed off on you, or vice versa.

**Move #1:** Let's begin the discussion with some questions unpacking this Sunday's sermon.

1. What stood out to you from the message this weekend about *being* with Jesus?
2. Were there any things mentioned that you need to personally apply?

**Move #2:** Next, let's hear what Jesus had to say remaining in him or being with him and how that helps us bear fruit in our lives.

#### Read John 15:1-8 (NIV)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 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. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 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.

5 "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. 6 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. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

3. Why do you think Jesus uses a vine as an illustration for our relationship with him?
4. What happens by being with Jesus according to verse 3? Why is that important on a daily basis?
5. What do you think Jesus means when he urged us to abide or remain in him?
6. If we approached prayer with the objective of just being with Jesus, how would that shape the way we pray?
7. Do you have a specific time each day that you spend with Jesus? If so, what does that look like for you?

8. Where does Jesus stand on your list of priorities? It's easy to say he's number one, but what things tend to get in the way of your relationship with him?
9. What are some practical ways we can be with Jesus in our daily lives even though life is busy?

**Move #3:** Next, let's look at how being with Jesus prepared Peter and John with the boldness to carry on Jesus' ministry after him.

### Read Acts 4:8-13 (NIV)

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! 9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, 10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

11 Jesus is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone." 12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." 13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

10. Peter and John were unqualified in the eyes of the rulers and elders to speak on such things. What are some ways that being with Jesus prepared them to minister in this situation?
11. Have you ever felt like you missed an opportunity to minister to someone because you didn't know what to say or do? How did that make you feel?
12. How can intentionally being with Jesus and knowing his words prepare us to minister to those around us (coworkers, peers, neighbors, family, etc...)?

**Next Steps:** The following are things you could challenge your members to do in order to take what you studied in this curriculum farther.

1. Be with Jesus by continuing the 40-day Red Letter Challenge.
2. Spend time in prayer this week with no other agenda than just to enjoy being with Jesus.

**Prayer:** End your study with a time of praying with and for each other. Take requests, but be sure to pray also about what you've discussed today.

## Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

### On John 15:1-8

The allegory of the vine brings before us the importance of fruitfulness in the Christian life and the truth that this is the result, not of human achievement, but of abiding in Christ. There is a stern side to this. Branches that are not fruitful are purged out. Jesus is not simply issuing some comforting advice. He is outlining the difficult

but important way of service. There seems little doubt that he has in mind passages in the Old Testament that regard Israel as a vine (Ps. 80:8–16; Isa. 5:1–7; Jer. 2:21; Ezek. 15; 19:10; Hos. 10:1). Indeed, in time the vine became a symbol of Israel, and it is found, for example, on coins of the Maccabees. Interestingly, all the Old Testament passages that use this symbol appear to regard Israel as faithless or as the object of severe punishment. Jesus' description of himself as the "true" vine is to be seen against this background. The passage is the Johannine counterpart of the Pauline view of the church as the body of Christ and of believers as "in" Christ. Both are ways of bringing out the vital connection that exists between Christ and his own.

The emphasis is on the bearing of fruit. That is the only reason for growing a vine; as Ezekiel pointed out long before, a vine does not yield timber (Ezek. 15). In a vineyard fruitfulness is not simply desirable; it is imperative; that is the whole point of the vineyard; it is what the vineyard is for. Pruning is resorted to ensure that this takes place. Left to itself a vine will produce a good deal of unproductive growth. For maximum fruitfulness extensive pruning is essential. This is a suggestive figure for the Christian life. The fruit of Christian service is never the result of allowing the natural energies and inclinations to run riot. "Trims clean," more literally "cleans" where we might have expected "prunes," shows that we have now moved into the spiritual sphere. The interest is in what happens with people rather than with vines. The action of the Father is such as to cleanse his people so that they will live fruitful lives. The "fruit" is not defined here, but we need not doubt that qualities of Christian character are in mind as elsewhere in the New Testament (Matt. 3:8; 7:20; Rom. 6:22; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9; Phil. 1:11, etc.). Bultmann speaks of it as "every demonstration of vitality of faith, to which, according to vv. 9–17, reciprocal love above all belongs" (pp. 532–33).

The disciples are not to think that they are being singled out for criticism. They are already clean on account of Jesus' word (i.e., his whole message) spoken to them. He is not reproaching them, but encouraging them. He is pointing out the way in which they may continue to progress spiritually.

But they must not presume. Let them take care that they abide (NIV, "remain") in Christ. "And I in you" (NIV, "and I will remain in you") could conceivably be an imperative that Jesus directs to himself with the meaning, "You must abide in me and I must abide in you." It could be a promise, "Abide in me, and I will abide in you." But it is perhaps more probable that it is a continuation of the command to the disciples, "Abide in me, and see that I abide in you." Jesus means that the disciples should live such lives that he will continue to abide in them. The two "abidings" cannot be separated, and "abiding" is the necessary prerequisite of fruitfulness. No branch bears fruit in isolation. Every fruitful branch has vital connection with the vine. So to abide in Christ is the necessary prerequisite of fruitfulness for the Christian. Fruitfulness doubtless includes both the production of Christian character and the winning of others to follow Christ; it includes everything that results from vital union with Christ (see on v. 2). (Leon Morris, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel According to John*)