



Community Group Discussion Guide

Love Jesus, Live Sent – Value 3: Desperate Dependence – Nov 21, 2021

I. Starter Question:

- Talk about the most impactful prayer meeting you have ever been a part of.

II. Explanation of Value:

Values for an organization define its culture. They serve as the guardrails for how it goes about its mission and how it pursues its vision. Values keep the organization on the pathway toward its purpose.

Our third reframed value is **Desperate Dependence**: We rely on the Holy Spirit to empower our lives and the church as we humbly abide in Jesus, recognizing that we can do nothing apart from Him (Psalm 1; Jeremiah 17:7–8; John 15:4–5; 2 Corinthians 3:5–6; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Ephesians 3:14–21). One primary way this shows up in our church is through humble prayer. Based on this church value, then, we believe that *an individual disciple is submitting to the Holy Spirit*. This submission to the Lord affects not only the big things in our lives but also our moment-by-moment actions. This trait is an attribute of a disciple toward which we want to equip one another.

III. Discussion of Scripture:

Context: Jesus was speaking to His disciples as he neared the end of his life. They were already “clean” in him by faith (v.3), but they needed to be reminded of their source. Jesus also shared about the “pruning” (v.2) the Father does of his vine’s branches, desiring that they bear more fruit as they abide. This is the foundational passage for this reframed value.

John 15:4–5 (ESV)

⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

1. Discuss what it means to “abide” in Jesus. (definition: “to remain,” “to stay”)
2. What does Jesus mean by saying “apart from me you can do nothing”? Can’t we do *something* worthwhile spiritually? (see Matthew 7:21–23)
3. What is the fruit here? Where does the fruit come from? What is the quantity of fruit Jesus desires from his branches?

Context: These passages were written in a prophetic manner—to both encourage the believer and challenge the unbeliever. It is very much a compare/contrast in the ways that both will take. Notice the language used to paint the picture of the cursed/wicked versus the blessed.

Psalm 1 (ESV)

¹ Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. ⁴ The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. ⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; ⁶ for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Jeremiah 17:5–8 (ESV)

⁵ Thus says the Lord: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord. ⁶ He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. ⁷ Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. ⁸ He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

Discussion Questions:

4. Describe the way toward anti-blessing from Psalm 1:1.
5. What is the source of our blessing in Psalm 1:2? How does that compare to our source of blessing in Jeremiah 17:7?
6. Compare and contrast the fruits produced as the blessed one abides in the Lord.

Context: Paul was debating with the Corinthians regarding this ministry of the new covenant, that even they were the fruit/proof of his God-given ministry. But here Paul points to his source.

2 Corinthians 3:5–6 (ESV)

⁵ Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶ who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

7. The word “sufficient” is repeated three times here. What kind of sufficiency is Paul referring to?
8. What does he mean when he says that “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”
9. How does this passage reposition what we should be celebrating as individuals/church?

Context: Someone in Paul’s life experienced a very real vision of heaven. Many commentators say Paul was humbly referring to himself in this chapter, since he apparently ended up with the thorn due to the greatness of the revelations. Regardless, Paul shared an intimate and raw portrait of suffering that pointed him to Jesus. The lower Paul got, the higher Christ rose in his heart and through his life.

2 Corinthians 12:7–10 (ESV)

⁷ So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- 10. What was the purpose of the thorn/messenger?**
- 11. How did Jesus respond to Paul’s threefold request to take away the thorn/messenger? How does that both comfort us and challenge us in the midst of our struggles?**
- 12. What does it mean to boast about our weaknesses “so that the power of Christ may rest upon” us?**
- 13. Is contentment with weaknesses the same thing as excitement for weaknesses?**
- 14. How is “when I am weak, then I am strong” counterintuitive to our world today? How can you exemplify this desperate dependence more in your daily life?**

Context: At the close of the first half of Ephesians, Paul broke out into praise and prayer because of who God is and what He has done and will do. He wanted to broaden the Ephesians’ vision of what God can do, leading into his discussion of unity within the church and living out the Christian life in chapters 4–6.

Ephesians 3:14–21 (ESV)

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

- 15. Notice what comes first: God’s wide and deep love for you, believer. That love then fills you, believer. He then works in you, believer, far more abundantly than we can even imagine. How does that give us hope today?**
- 16. What is the source of God’s work in us and through us?**
- 17. What is the outcome of God’s power at work within us?**

IV. Responding in Prayer:

- Pray for each of us to submit to the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) in our moment-by-moment lives—not just in the big things.
- Pray that each of us would rely on God’s power within us to do the work of His ministry.
- Pray that our church would be desperately dependent on the Lord for him to do what only he can do, that he would do things that only he can take the credit for.
- Pray for a spirit of humble prayer to pervade our church, that we are not known merely as a church that prays but as a *praying church*.
- Continue to pray that our church grows in our pursuit of glorifying God by becoming a hub for an all-ages disciple-making movement, equipping one another to love Jesus and live sent.