

5. Name at least one way you can roll up your sleeves and begin serving today. (write it down)

Get In The Game

Text: John 15: 1-17

What step(s) will you take in order to serve in this area?

In the space below, write down the name (or initials) of someone you want to pray for. Who do you know that needs a miraculous touch from the Lord?

*“Now may the God of peace...equip you with all you need for doing His will. May He produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ, every good thing that is pleasing to Him. All glory to Him forever and ever! Amen.”
(Hebrews 13:20a, 21)*

The Plain Truth

Christ prunes us for _____
and bearing _____.

1. Christ _____ us for growth.

2. In Christ we have _____, without Christ we _____.

3. “ To _____ is to _____.”

One Year Bible Reading

Sept. 21: Isaiah 37:1-38:22, Galatians 6:1-18, Psalm 65:1-13, Proverbs 23:24
Sept. 22: Isaiah 39:1-41:16, Ephesians 1:1-23, Psalm 66:1-20, Proverbs 23:25-28
Sept. 23: Isaiah 41:17-43:13, Ephesians 2:1-22, Psalm 67:1-7, Proverbs 23:29-35
Sept. 24: Isaiah 43:14-45:10, Ephesians 3:1-21, Psalm 68:1-18, Proverbs 24:1-2
Sept. 25: Isaiah 45:11-48:11, Ephesians 4:1-16, Psalm 68:19-35, Proverbs 24:3-4
Sept. 26: Isaiah 48:12-50:11, Ephesians 4:17-32, Psalm 69:1-18, Proverbs 24:5-6
Sept. 27: Isaiah 51:1-53:12, Ephesians 5:1-33, Psalm 69:19-36, Proverbs 24:7

September 20 & 21, 2014

Get In The Game

Life Group Lesson • Week of September 21

Many of us know what it's like to warm a bench or stand on the sidelines while the starting team takes the field. Though we are in uniform and *look* the part, we wait for our moment to come. We know that when the coach points to us and calls our name, we must be ready to "Get in the Game". Our level of readiness demonstrates how well the months, even years, of intensive conditioning have prepared us for this moment physically and mentally. It's in the game where we can make a difference, share the joys and struggles of our team, and be a part of something bigger than us.

1. Think about how Christ calls us to be on His team. Name ways you and I can prepare for our moment to take the field—to serve others in Jesus' name.

Why is it important to be ready when our moment comes?

God is big and His Spirit is always moving in the world around us. We may not always see it or be aware of it, but the Holy Spirit is at work and we must be ready to join when God calls. Otherwise, we might miss our moment. Jesus said, "My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you...Put your trust in the light while there is still time" (John 12:35a, 36a). It may be your time to take the field. Are you ready to make a difference? Are you ready to roll up your sleeves and serve others in the name of Christ? Are you ready to love hard and intercede for others through a life of prayer?

Read John 15:1-17

2. Christ is the vine and the Father is the gardener (the vinedresser). According to v2a what does the Father do to the branches that produce no fruit?

What does the Father do to the branches that do produce fruit? (v2b)

How have you experienced God's pruning in your life?

Jesus said, "Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing" (v5).

3. According to v6 what happens to branches that don't remain in the vine?

According to vv7-8 what can we expect when we do remain in Christ?

Though the Lord cares deeply about every detail of our lives, God is not a genie who grants whims and wishes. God calls us to live beyond our selfish desires—to live according to His will and pray according to His purposes. In Christ we will "produce much fruit" as we mature in His grace, bear His likeness, and share in His sacrificial love toward others. Serving others in Jesus' name and praying that they know God's love for themselves will bring a harvest of souls into Christ's Kingdom.

4. Jesus said, "This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:12-13). Who has loved you like Christ, and what have been the results?

In turn, with whom have you shared the love of Christ, and what have been the results?

It's dangerous to allow ourselves to become disconnected from the vine. The enemy wants to trick us into thinking life is all about us, that we can handle our affairs in secret without any help from our brothers and sisters in Christ. But the truth is, God has called you for more than that. Jesus said, "You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name" (John 15:16). It's at the precious name of Jesus that one day, "every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11). Isn't it a good idea to begin bowing to Christ *now*?

Perhaps you're in a place where serving others and praying for others are foreign thoughts to you. It may be that you have so many problems you don't feel worthy of serving and praying for others. The Lord is still worthy of our devotion, no matter what we're going through. Pour out your heart to Him, and ask Him to help you. If you have been resisting the Lord and allowing pride to keep you from kneeling at His feet, may I remind you that Jesus' feet are nail-pierced? His scars forever declare that no one will ever love us the way He loves us. Even now He is praying for you. "He lives forever to intercede with God on *your* behalf (see Hebrews 7:25b).