

**IDOL of CONTROL STUDY GUIDE**  
**Bible Study Guide**  
**Abiding in Christ: Surrender, Fruit, and the Vinedresser**  
***John 15:1–11 & Matthew 6:25–33***  
***David Wright with e2 elders***

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**1. Setting the Scene: The Thursday Night Reality**

**Context matters.**

John 15 is not a peaceful hillside teaching—it is spoken **hours before the crucifixion**. Jesus’ disciples are about to enter the most chaotic night of their lives.

**Key Insight:**

Jesus does not give them strategies for control.

He gives them one command: **Abide**.

**Discussion Questions**

- Why do you think Jesus chose *this* moment to teach about abiding?
- How does understanding the Thursday-night context change the way you read John 15?

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**2. The Sovereign Vinedresser**

**John 15:1–2**

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.”

**Two actions of the Vinedresser:**

1. **He lifts up** muddy, fruitless branches (airo = “to lift up”).
2. **He prunes** fruitful branches.

**A. The Grace of Being Lifted Up**

Branches covered in mud cannot bear fruit.

The Vinedresser kneels, washes, lifts, and restores.

**Reflection**

- Where do you feel “in the mud” right now?
- How has God lifted you up in past seasons?

**B. The Gift of Pruning**

Pruning is not punishment—it is preparation.

God removes the good to make room for the great.

**Discussion**

- What is one area where God may be pruning you?
- Why is pruning often misunderstood as punishment?

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### 3. The Myth of Autonomous Fruit

#### John 15:5

“Apart from me, you can do nothing.”

**Fruit ≠ success.**

Fruit = **eternal character** (Galatians 5:22–23).

#### Key Contrast

- You can build a business without Jesus.
- You cannot build **love, joy, peace, and patience** without Him.

#### Matthew 6 Connection: Anxiety & Control

Jesus links worry to misplaced sovereignty.

“Consider the lilies... they neither toil nor spin.”

**Branches don’t strain to produce fruit.**

They simply **remain connected**.

#### Discussion

- Where do you see the connection between control and anxiety in your life?
- What does “abiding” look like practically for you?

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### 4. The Danger of Self-Sovereignty

#### John 15:6

Branches that detach may look alive for a moment—but they wither.

**Modern Parallel** Radical independence → loneliness, burnout, spiritual dryness.

#### Discussion

- What are the cultural messages that push us toward self-sovereignty?
- How does abiding counteract those messages?

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### 5. The Promise of Full Joy

#### John 15:9–11

Jesus calls us to surrender, **not to restrict us**, but to fill us with **His joy**.

#### Illustration:

Letting Jesus drive the car on an icy mountain road.

Surrender = peace, not passivity.

#### Reflection

- What would it look like for you to “move to the passenger seat” this week?

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### 6. Practical Application: The RSVP Tool

**R – Remain**

Start your day by connecting to Christ.

**S – Surrender**

Open your hands—literally and spiritually.

**V – Value the Vines (Pruning)**

Look for God’s purpose in loss or change.

**P – Pray**

Replace worry with prayer; align your desires with His.

**Discussion**

- Which part of RSVP is hardest for you?
- Which part is God inviting you to practice today?

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**7. Personal Reflection Exercise**

Place your hands face down.

Name the things you’re gripping tightly.

Turn your palms upward.

Release them to God.

**Prayer Prompt:**

“Lord, I am not the vine. I am a branch. I surrender control and choose to abide.”

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**8. Group Prayer Focus**

- For those feeling muddy or ashamed
- For those experiencing pruning
- For those overwhelmed by anxiety
- For those ready to surrender control
- For those considering following Jesus or baptism

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**Closing Thought**

If Jesus could trust the Father with the cross,  
**you can trust Him with your Monday morning.**