

**Main Emphasis Idea:**

Formation effects as a whole, and without a careful and thoughtful existence, you will ultimately become what the world wants you to be. So our goal is to create a thoughtful and careful existence, but we must understand how we do that.

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**John 15: 1-8**

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 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. 6 If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

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**Questions That Need Answers:**

1. Who is my Formation for?
  2. How do I examine my spiritual growth?
  3. How do I audit myself?
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## **Intro**

Vincent did what all of us are called to do, give. To see those around him in great suffering, and simply give of himself...

*“The Christian life is not merely about avoiding sin; it is about becoming the kind of person who naturally loves God and loves others.” — Dallas Willard*

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## **Why do people chose Formation?**

The reason people chose the path of spiritual formation is to change themselves, to better themselves, to become more holy and loving themselves... but what happens to most, is we get so caught up in ourselves, we forget what the true benefit of spiritual formation is all about.... loving and blessing others.

Tonight, we need to be able to see that maybe, just maybe, we are all spiritual, but selfish.

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## **What is the end goal of John 15?**

We have been in this section of John 15... you could almost call it the spiritual formation scriptures... But we have been stopping at verse 8... but Jesus actually fully ends this thoughts in verses 12-13.

Jesus is asking us to abide, to live inside of him, to become like him and his father, he goes on to say if we do this we can ask anything in his name and he will give it to us... but thats not how it totally ends. Jesus teaches the apostles to abide, do you know why? Because he is about to give them a commandment, which is something sacred, but it also something they can only do by how the process of abiding. This is what Jesus says...

### **John 15: 12-13**

12 “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

To love one another... and the greatest form of that love is to die to ourselves for the lives of others.

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## **How does compare to the culture today?**

Today, everything is about you...  
Do these statements sound familiar...

- \* Protect your peace at all costs.
- \* You don't owe anyone anything.
- \* If it costs your comfort, it's toxic.
- \* Your highest responsibility is to yourself.
- \* Do what makes you happy.

The glaring reality of these statements, is this, they are actually anti-biblical, they run against biblical truth...

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## **Why we gather**

So as I stated last week, we can't lose our value for being at church, we have to see the gathering together as sacred... but tonight I would add, its not simply just for the sake of gathering. Its actually to love each other deeply.

When we enter these walls, its the time we are meant to share our lives with each other, cohorts, sessions, mid-week, Sunday's, family table nights, you name it, all of it is about giving, not simply receiving.

*“A man who was merely interested in ‘his own spiritual life’ would be a most tiresome idiot.” — C. S. Lewis*

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## **1. Do you ever audit of what you are giving out?**

How often have you examined how your spiritual formation is making you someone that gives out as much as you take in?

This feels weird right? most of us examine how our spiritual formation in how it is changing us. How is it making me better... but do you examine how its making you truly more loving which means to be more giving?

I mean kindness and love are fruit of the spirit are they not?

if the fruit of spiritual formation is the fruit of the spirit, then two of those involve other people.

So then the question becomes, do you give of yourselves? Who are you investing in?

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## **2. What lies have I told myself around loving others?**

Most people, deep down aren't very giving of themselves, not naturally. But because of your life and its personal experiences you have built walls, that are built off of lies, that keep you from caring.

For some its past hurt... it means that to love again, to care about others to give of myself, means I am just going to end up hurt again. I am going to be taken advantage of.

All of these lies may carry some truth in them... Yes someone may take advantage of you again, yes you are probably extremely busy, yes it won't always feel like a rush of dopamine to give to someone else, but none of these are back doors out of the words and command of Jesus.

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## **The goal is deep roots**

Now... here is the thing about all of this, all of this means that when we give of ourselves on the basis of love and for deeper community, it means we go beyond the confines of basics... I am guilty of this all the time. I will get asked "How are you" and my answer often can be, "good" or "busy" or "hanging in there". Basic phrases to share something, without truly communicating or giving of myself.

That's what often keeps church growing big on the surface, but never having deep root systems.

And that's what giving is all about.

You see abiding is becoming a branch, connected to the vine, which is joining into a deep deep root system.

Churches that last, and are making lasting change inside their walls, their cities, and communities are churches that dig deep deep root systems.

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## **Closing Thoughts**

And at the end of the day you can't simply be at Be Love because of me, or because of a singer, or a style, but you need to be here because God has called you to be here, to do life with each other and build deep and lasting relationships.

So tonight, I ask you one more question... how deeply are we going to take the commands of Jesus, and how deeply do we want to go with building something that last.

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## **Rule of Life Practice #2**

### ***Weekly Rooting***

The practice of intentionally placing ourselves in rhythms of discipleship alongside believers who have a common pursuit of formation in Christ.

*To participate in the practice we ask that you commit to participating in one of our deeper levels of formation, either in participation in joining us weekly at Mid-Week for deeper biblical teaching, or joining our deepest levels of discipleship sessions (1 on 1 discipleship) or Cohorts (discipleship done together in community.)*

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