

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



Series: Living Like Jesus

The start of a new year is full of possibility; places to travel, goals to achieve, changes to make, new habits to create. There is a steady buzz from our world and culture that says you can live your best life *now* if only you buy this certain program or follow these 5 easy steps. And that noise grows even louder this time of year.

What if instead of asking, what can I achieve this year, we ask, how can I be more like Jesus? Join us this January as we explore different values of Jesus as revealed in the gospels and focus the new year on one simple goal: to live and to love like Jesus.

Message description:

Friendship is a key and core value of Jesus; it was foundational to how he lived and loved others. In his teaching in the gospel of John, we see how Jesus articulates his own friendship with God and likewise invites all disciples to come into relationship with God the Father through a relationship with the Son. Abide in me and I will abide in you. It is the love of Christ that connects us to the Father and sustains our own ministries of love through the Spirit. Jesus himself is the model and source of such friendship. To live more like Jesus this year, may we cultivate friendship with God, friendship with the family of God, and friendship with the oppressed.

Key Scriptures

John 15:1-17

For Further Study:

Read the full Farewell Discourse of Jesus to his disciples in John 13-17. What stands out to you? What speaks to you in this season? What brings you peace about Jesus' words and promises?

Questions Related to This Week's Message:

1. What stood out to you differently this time in Jesus' teaching on the vine and branches?
2. What difference does it make to you to know that this passage is found within Jesus' Farewell Discourse (John 14-17)? What do you think it means to abide with Christ knowing that he will die, resurrect, and ascend/leave soon after this discourse?
3. How do you experience friendship with God, the family of God, and/or the forgotten, right now? [Maybe think about it in terms of the means of grace- how do you stay connected to God and others to grow in love of grace right now?]
4. Which type of friendship do you want to be intentional to grow in this year? How can we help you do that?

Going Deeper:

Read John 21:15-19

- Why do you think Jesus asks Peter three times, do you love me?
- What do you think Jesus was referring to when he asked Peter, "do you love me more than these?"
- If Jesus were walking with you or your community, what would he point to if he were to ask, "Do you truly love me more than these?"
- Take some time and evaluate where you and/or your community invests the majority of your time and financial resources. After the assessment, would you conclude that your core values align with the core values of Jesus of friendship and love?

Challenge:

"Most faith communities will champion one or two of the friendship networks but find it difficult to focus equal attention on all three. How does our community of faith focus time and resources on the three friendship networks?" -Larry Stoess from "Think Red"

- Friendship with God?
- Friendship with the family of God?
- Friendship with the forgotten?