



weekend

resource guide for the week of 4 February

1 Corinthians 4:1-7: Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy... 6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that in us you might learn not to exceed what is written, in order that no one of you might become arrogant in behalf of one against the other. 7 For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

REVIEW FROM LAST WEEK: Packed away in Paul's Corinthian correspondence is a very significant verse addressed to Christians who want to live as kings rather than surrender as servants.

Question #1: Who regards you as superior?

Question # 2: What do you have that you did not receive? God does not help those who help themselves because there is no one who is so self-sufficient so as to be able to help themselves to these things! Reach out to grasp and you will find them fleeting. Reach out to receive and you will find your hands full. The irony in all this is that eventually the Christian who wants to be "king" will never attain the quality of life that the steward/servant will come to enjoy.

The irony in all this is that eventually the Christian who wants to be "king" will never attain the quality of life that the steward/servant will come to enjoy. Christian "lords" are consigned to struggle with

- Insecurity (what if someone is better than me?);
- Scarcity (what if I don't make/get enough?);
- Authority (what if no one listens to me?);
- Serenity (how can I be content when there is so much to do still?); and
- Authenticity (how can I ever reveal what I am feeling or thinking?).

God's steward, on the other hand, will enjoy a life that is

- Secure because his/her leadership rests in his/her calling in Christ and not in his superior abilities. God will equip each with everything he/she needs to succeed.
- Full because God provides out of His abundance. There are no competitive or diminishing resources with Him.
- Confident because one's authority and ability is rooted in Jesus and not in the latest leadership technique.
- Peaceful because one can know God's pleasure and blessing as He prayerfully pursues one's call and work.
- Truthful because there is nothing to hide or keep secret. The steward does not use or manipulate people for selfish purposes. Nor is his/her position predicated on proprietary or confidential information. Secrets are unnecessary.

Question #3: Why do you boast as if you had not received it? There is nothing that obscures the beauty, grace, and power of Jesus Christ more than a Christian or fellowship that insists on promoting themselves. Can the Holy Spirit

- Fill those who are already full of themselves?
- Equip those who already feel they know-it-all?
- Empower those who already feel able?
- Instruct those who feel they have moved beyond their Teacher?

Furthermore, there can be no true Church where "lords" reside for two simple reasons. First, in the Church there is only one Lord, all the rest are servants. Second, there can be no true fellowship of "lords" for each will be distracted by their need to preserve and extend their own kingdoms. Compromise is the hallmark of lords while surrender, sacrifice, and service distinguishes a fellowship of stewards.

Would you let these three questions penned by a well-seasoned soul challenge you to reconsider your own perspective, priorities, and purpose as a servant of God?

Enjoy your LifeGroup!

Getting to know one another better...

Who was your first best friend? What made this such a meaningful friendship? Do you still keep in touch?

John 15:1-17: abide... bear fruit...love...

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He lifts up; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 3 "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are 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 "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 9 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

John 15:12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. 14 "You are My friends if you do what I command you. 15 "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. 16 "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. 17 "This I command you, that you love one another.

What? (does the Bible say)

How does Jesus describe who He and the Father are? What are some truths that are present in this "parable" of their relationship?

Make a list of the "teaching points" Jesus makes in John 15.1-17.

What is the significance of the word, "abide" in this passage?

Why has Jesus spoken these things?

Now what? (should/will I think based on what this passage says)

What does it mean to “bear fruit?”

There are three categories of branches described in this passage—those bearing no fruit, those bearing some fruit, and those bearing much fruit. In which category would you place yourself and why?

Instead of commanding us to bear fruit, why is Jesus' only command "Abide in me?"

What does it mean for us to “abide” and how do we do that?

What is the significance of calling his disciples branches?

So what? (difference will this passage make in how I live)

The Father prunes fruitful branches to make them more fruitful (John 15:2). In what ways have you experienced the Father's “pruning”? What were the results?

What do you think are the most fruitful areas or relationships in your life?

What are the requirements and benefits of friendship with Christ? Is being a friend of Jesus the same as being a believer in Jesus? Explain.

What are the spiritual benefits you have experienced or you would experience abiding in Christ? How might God be inviting you to abide in Him? How can your LifeGroup encourage you?

In what practical ways can we, like Christ, lay down our lives for our friends?

Jesus' command in John 15:12 is, "Love each other as I have loved you." What are the practical ways that you might surrender to this command?

How can your LifeGroup abide in Christ together?

My prayer requests (write in advance what you want your group to pray for...)

Praying for my group...