

A SUMMER UNDER THE VINE

Discovering the Fruit the Spirit Grows

Study Guide Week Two

Five Weekly Sessions for Small Groups

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WEEK TWO / THE INTERIOR LIFE

Love · Joy · Peace

All You Need is a Bus Ride

Book Reading

Read Chapter Two before you meet (pages 21–55, about 35 minutes).

Michael and Pam's love story starts with a tired girl on a bus and a borrowed shoulder. Before the chapter ever defines love, it shows love asking Michael to open his hand. This week looks at love, joy, and peace, the fruit that begins beneath the surface of a life, in a heart that stays connected to Christ.

Scripture Readings

Love

4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant **5** or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; **6** it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. **7** Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:4–7 (ESV)

Joy

16 Rejoice always, **17** pray without ceasing, **18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (ESV)

Peace

17 Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, **18** yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.

Habakkuk 3:17–18 (ESV)

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How They Fit Together

[9] As the Father has loved me, so have I 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, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

[12] This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

John 15:9–12 (ESV)

Between You and God

Take your time with these questions, as you read or after, before your group meets. You can write, pray, or simply sit with one. You won't be asked to share your answers.

1. Love sometimes asks us to open our hand and mean it. Is there something you're holding tightly that God may be asking you to entrust to Him?
2. Is there someone in your life right now where the love you feel and the love you're actually doing have drifted far apart? Is there a face that has become background noise?
3. In *The Weight of Glory*, C.S. Lewis said we are "far too easily pleased," like a child who keeps making mud pies in a slum because he can't imagine a holiday at the sea. What's actually functioning as your source of joy these days, the Blesser or just the blessings? What's one mud pie you've settled for?
4. Paul wrote "Do not be anxious about anything" from inside a prison cell (Philippians 4:6). What "cell" are you in right now that is causing anxiety? When did you last bring it to God, with thanksgiving, instead of carrying it yourself one more day?
5. Spiritual passivity hides behind spiritual-sounding words like "I'm just giving it to God." Is there anything you've been "giving to God" when what He's actually asking for is a hard conversation, repentance, or a loving action nobody wants to take?

What You Noticed

Last week you were asked to watch for love, joy, and peace in the people around you. What did you notice? Your time in Between You and God is yours to keep, but if something stood out, you're welcome to share it.

To Discuss with Others

The Story

1. Chapter Two describes a friendship that grew slowly, through years of bad timing, before it became something more. Where has God grown something good in your life out of what looked like bad timing?

Love

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4–7

2. Paul calls love a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). In John 15, Jesus commands it, but only after "Abide in my love." The chapter warns that we can get this wrong in two directions. What goes wrong when we treat love as pure feeling, something we wait to arrive? What goes wrong when we treat it as pure willpower? How does abiding change both?

3. Every line of 1 Corinthians 13:4–7 is something love does or refuses to do. The book says the opposite of love usually isn't hatred. It's indifference. Read the list backward: impatience, envy, rudeness, insisting on your own way. Which of these shows up most easily in an ordinary, busy week?

Joy

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

4. In 1 Thessalonians 5:16, "Rejoice always" uses the word *chairete* (pronounced KHAI-reh-teh), a command. The fruit, *chara* (pronounced khah-RAH), is the settled gladness that grows from belonging to Christ. How can obeying the command keep us abiding without turning it into a technique for manufacturing a feeling?
5. What mud pies does our culture settle for? Think of someone you know who had real joy in the middle of something hard. What was it rooted in?

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Peace

Read Habakkuk 3:17–18

6. Habakkuk names every source of security his world depended on, and all of it fails. His vine could be stripped by an invading army. Jesus, the true Vine, cannot fail. What difference does that make in where we place our trust?

7. Most of us know someone who seems calm only because they've stopped caring. From the outside, it can look a lot like peace. How can you tell someone who has checked out from someone who is trusting God? And when life gets hard, how do you handle it? Is that real peace, or just a way to numb the pain?

How They Fit Together

Read John 15:9–12

8. In the reading, Jesus starts with His love, asks us to stay in it, and ends with His joy in us. As the chapter puts it, "Joy says, God is still good. Peace says, I am still held." Which of those do you need to hear most right now? And why do you think love, joy, and peace come first in Paul's list, before patience and kindness?

Close in Prayer

The Week Ahead

Next week's fruit only shows up when someone else is in the room. This week, watch for patience, kindness, and goodness in the people around you, at home, at work, or in line at the store. Who surprised you? When you meet again, share what you noticed if you'd like.

Before you meet again, read Chapter Three, "King of the Promerama" (pages 57–82, about 25 minutes).

Find the book and the complete study guide at asummerunderthevine.com, or scan the QR code.