

Series: Things That Go Bump In The Night

Scripture and Background Information for August 16 - 22.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

This week we'll be looking at **John 15:1-7**. In today's text, we are still in Jesus's last teaching session before his crucifixion. Jesus is giving his disciples some of his last words, before he would die. These instructions should prepare them (and today's believers) for their ministry here on earth.

Background for John 15:1-7:

Our text today speaks about Jesus as the true vine; believers are the branches. The text talks about bringing fruit but also about not bringing fruit. It says that every branch that does not bear fruit will be taken away. Last week's text showed us that the Helper who would come would be with us forever (14:16). He would show us that we belong to Jesus, and he belongs to us (14:20). So what is our text talking about?

- When walking through our text, think about the main focus. What does the text want us to understand when it comes to our ministry here on earth? Repetition is always a tell of the author's emphasis. Count recurring words to get an idea of the text's major theme.
- In v.2 it says, "take away" but a better translation would be, "lift up." As discussed in the sermon, how can "He takes away" (verse 2) be translated more appropriately? If translated differently, what is Jesus emphasizing here?
- With all your results in mind, how does abiding in Christ look like?

Remember: The Bible does not contradict itself. Jesus is using a picture to illustrate one point. He uses a picture from the agrarian culture, which was familiar to the disciples. If you have problems understanding Jesus's message, go back to Sunday's sermon, or contact your community group mentor.

Verse 6 can be particularly tricky for some as perhaps opening the possibility of a believer losing his salvation. As said earlier, Jesus is using a typical picture of the disciple's time. The picture has one main focus, and Jesus is pressing this particular point. If Jesus talked about eternal separation from Him, he would build the whole paragraph differently. To see how Jesus views his eternal relationship to a disciple, read what he says about it earlier in 14:1-15:5. Therefore, as a church, we see verse 6 as part of the picture, which describes that everything done apart from Christ is lifeless in a spiritual sense.

Scriptures for upcoming weeks:

August 23-29	John 16:16-33
August 30-September 5.	John 17