

FACILITATOR / TEACHER GUIDE
SESSION 8 – I AM THE TRUE VINE
JOHN 15:1–11

PURPOSE OF THIS SESSION

This final session brings the entire study of Jesus’ **“I AM” statements** to its conclusion. In **“I am the true vine,”** Jesus offers a closing image that gathers everything He has revealed about Himself throughout John’s Gospel.

These words are spoken on the eve of His arrest. The disciples are about to face fear, loss, and separation. Rather than giving final instructions or warnings, Jesus speaks about **abiding, remaining, and staying connected**.

The goal of this session is to help participants reflect on **faith as an ongoing relationship**, not a one-time decision—to consider what it means to live a life that continually draws strength, direction, and fruitfulness from Christ.

INTENDED USE

This lesson is designed for **personal preparation and group discussion**. Participants should complete the Student Guide before the group gathering. The facilitator’s role is to **guide conversation, invite honest reflection, and help the group integrate the entire series**, rather than teach new material.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, participants should be able to:

- **Understand Jesus’ image of the vine and branches**
 - **Recognize abiding as the core of Christian life**
 - **Reflect on spiritual fruit as the result of connection, not effort**
 - **Consider pruning as part of growth rather than punishment**
 - **Integrate the themes of the entire “I AM” series**
 - **Identify next steps for ongoing life with Christ**
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FACILITATOR PREPARATION

Before leading the session:



- **Read John 15:1–11 slowly and prayerfully**
 - **Review the full arc of the “I AM” statements**
 - **Reflect on your own experience of abiding, growth, and pruning**
 - **Prepare to hold a reflective, unhurried pace**
 - **Be ready to help the group look back and look forward**
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SESSION FLOW (60–75 MINUTES)

1. WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Welcome participants and name that this session **concludes the study** of Jesus’ “I AM” statements.

Open with prayer, asking God to:

- Help the group reflect honestly
- Deepen awareness of connection with Christ
- Open hearts to ongoing growth

Suggested prayer focus:

- **Staying connected to Christ**
 - **Openness to growth and change**
 - **Trust in God’s work beyond this study**
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2. ORIENTING THE GROUP: WHERE WE ARE IN JOHN (5 MINUTES)

Briefly set the context:

- John 15 continues Jesus’ final teaching before His arrest
- The disciples are about to experience separation and loss
- Jesus speaks about how life with Him will continue

Key teaching point:

The central word in this passage is “abide” — remain, stay, dwell.

Remind the group that this statement gathers everything Jesus has already said about Himself.



3. DISCUSSION: THE IMAGE OF THE VINE (5–10 MINUTES)

Invite participants to reflect on the image Jesus chooses.

Discussion prompts:

- **What stands out to you about the vine and branches image?**
- **Why do you think Jesus ends His teaching with this metaphor?**
- **What does this image suggest about dependence and life?**

Facilitator insight:

The branch does not strive to produce fruit—it remains connected.

4. DISCUSSION: “I AM THE TRUE VINE” (10 MINUTES)

Read Jesus’ statement aloud slowly.

Key idea:

Jesus identifies Himself as the **source of life, nourishment, and growth**.

Discussion prompts:

- **What does it mean that Jesus is the “true” vine?**
- **How does this connect to earlier “I AM” statements?**
- **What false sources of life or security compete for our attention?**

Encourage participants to reflect personally, not abstractly.

5. DISCUSSION: ABIDING VS. STRIVING (10 MINUTES)

Explore Jesus’ repeated emphasis on remaining.

Key teaching point:

Fruitfulness flows from **connection**, not performance.

Discussion prompts:

- **How would you describe the difference between abiding and striving?**
 - **Where do people tend to measure faith by effort or results?**
 - **What practices help you stay connected to Christ?**
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6. DISCUSSION: PRUNING AND GROWTH (10 MINUTES)



Address Jesus' words about pruning.

Facilitator guidance:

Pruning is not punishment—it is purposeful shaping.

Discussion prompts:

- **Why is pruning necessary for growth?**
- **How might this image challenge our understanding of difficulty or loss?**
- **Where might God be shaping or refining your life right now?**

Hold space for vulnerability. Avoid forcing interpretation.

7. DISCUSSION: FRUIT THAT REMAINS (5–10 MINUTES)

Focus on the result of abiding.

Key idea:

Fruit is the visible outcome of an invisible connection.

Discussion prompts:

- **What kind of fruit does Jesus seem to be describing?**
 - **How does fruit differ from success or productivity?**
 - **How does love relate to abiding and fruitfulness?**
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8. LOOKING BACK: THE FULL “I AM” JOURNEY (5–10 MINUTES)

Invite the group to reflect on the entire series.

Possible prompts:

- **Which “I AM” statement stood out most to you?**
- **How has your understanding of Jesus changed?**
- **What themes connect all these statements together?**

Facilitator insight:

Each statement reveals not just what Jesus gives, but **who He is**.

9. LOOKING FORWARD: LIFE AFTER THE STUDY (5–10 MINUTES)

Invite personal reflection and optional sharing.



Reflection questions:

- **What does abiding with Christ look like in your daily life?**
- **What practices help you remain connected?**
- **What is one next step you sense God inviting you to take?**

Encourage concrete, gentle commitments.

10. CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING (5 MINUTES)

Close in prayer, thanking God for Christ's presence throughout the study.

Optional prayer focus:

- **Ongoing connection with Christ**
- **Trust in God's shaping work**
- **Fruit that grows from love**

You may choose to end by reading **John 15:5** aloud as a shared blessing.

KEY TAKEAWAY FOR FACILITATORS

This final session is not about conclusion, but **continuation**. The image of the vine invites participants to see faith as a living, ongoing relationship—one sustained by connection, not effort. Allow the session to feel reflective and spacious. The aim is not to summarize everything, but to help participants leave with a clear invitation:

Remain. Stay connected. Let life grow from Christ.

