



BEST SUMMER EVER

WEEK 1 | LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CONNECT

- As a kid, what was your favorite thing to do in the summer (besides not going to school)? Share a story.

CONSIDER

- What encouraged or challenged you from the sermon and/or daily devotions this week?

CHRIST

- Spiritual growth/transformation is often a phrase heard in the Christian world, but sometimes we don't give it much thought. **In your own words, how would you describe spiritual growth/transformation?**
- John Ortberg writes, "The truth is that the term spiritual life is simply a way of referring to ones' life - every moment and facet of it - from God's perspective. Another way of saying it is this: God is not interested in your spiritual life. God is just interested in your life. He intends to redeem it." In a similar vein, Soren Kierkegaard once said, "Now, with God's help, I shall become myself."¹ **Have you ever thought about your spiritual life in this way? How does this insight impact your definition of spiritual growth/transformation?**

Read Colossians 3:1-17 as a group.

- **What resonates with you from this passage? From these verses, what do you learn about spiritual growth/transformation?** Write down all of your group answers.

Read John 15:1-8 as a group.

- **What does it mean to abide/remain?** J.C. Ryle writes, "To abide in Christ means to keep up a habit of constant close communion with Him, to be always leaning on Him, resting on Him, pouring out our hearts to Him, and using Him as our Fountain of life and strength, as our chief Companion and best friend."² **How are you doing cultivating a life of remaining or abiding in Christ? Are there specific spiritual practices that have helped you with this?**

¹ John Ortberg, *The Life You've Always Wanted* (Zondervan, 1997), 21.

² J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels: John*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1999), 3:116-117.

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- **When you hear the word "prune" in verse 2, what tension and feeling do you experience?** Pruning in a spiritual sense, often brings up ideas of refining or trials. But, pruning many fruit bearing plants includes removing flowers to make room for more fruit. In other words, removing something good for something better. **With these ideas in mind, how is God pruning your spiritual life right now?**
- Over and over, Jesus tells us that if we remain in him, we will bear much fruit. **Read Galatians 5:22-23, what kind of fruit is produced in our spiritual lives? How does the internal fruit bring about external fruit? What fruit have you seen in your life that has been produced by God?**

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, Philippians 3:13-14, 2 Timothy 2:5 and Hebrews 12:1-3.

- Paul loves to use running & training analogies for spiritual growth/transformation. **What words or phrases stand out to you in these passages? Why?**
- Corinth was the site of the Isthmian Games which were second only to the Olympics in prominence in ancient Greece. This is most likely what Paul and his readers had in mind when they read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. **What is the difference between playing to win, and playing not to lose? When it comes to your spiritual growth/transformation are you playing to win or playing not to lose?**
- We often spend months planning summer vacations, activities, camps, family gatherings, and the list could go on. **How are you planning for spiritual growth this summer? What activities or spiritual practices do you need to focus on to "run in such a way as to get the prize"?**

CALLING

- To help remain in Christ and have The Best Summer Ever, check out these suggested Bible reading plans at mynorthside.com/bestsummerever.
- **Daily Devotions:** Spend 15 minutes each day with Northside devotions. Text JOINGOD to 81411 or use the Study tab in Northside's App for Daily Devotions.
- **Memorize:** *"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."* John 15:5
- **Further Study:** **The Life You've Always Wanted** by John Ortberg