Secrets of the Vine: Breaking Through to Abundance

by Bruce H. Wilkinson

Discussion Guide
Developed by Cokesbury. Based on the book, Secrets of the Vine: Breaking Through to Abundance, by Bruce H. Wilkinson

Secrets of the Vine (Multnomah, 2001) shows how to break through to the abundant life and what you can do to cooperate with God to make it happen. The book explores Jesus’ words in John 15 and shares the secrets of the vine regarding how you can bear fruit for God and have a closer relationship with Jesus.

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Chapter 1
Stories from the Vineyard

This chapter examines Jesus’ words in John 15 and introduces this book.

1. What did Jesus want his disciples to know during his last time with them?

2. What new insights about Jesus’ words to his disciples did you receive from reading this lesson?

3. What expectations did the disciples have of Jesus? Why were their expectations wrong? Why do you feel that your expectations are sometimes wrong?

4. What act begins the unraveling of the disciples’ expectations? What factors sometimes cause expectations to unravel?

5. What are your expectations as you begin reading this book?
Chapter 2
**What God Wants**

*This chapter describes the rich harvest that God desires from all of us.*

1. Why did Jesus use grapes and a grapevine to get his message across to his disciples?


3. Explain the statement “We are here to fulfill God’s dream.” What is God’s dream, and how can we try to fulfill it?

4. What did you learn in this lesson about the meaning of “fruit”?

5. How much fruit do you see in your life today? Share some examples.

Chapter 3
**The Best Good News**

*This chapter reveals and explains the first secret of the vine.*

1. What could be some of the causes of not bearing any fruit as a Christian?

2. Explain God’s motive in discipline. What did you learn about discipline from reading this lesson?

3. Discuss the first secret of the vine. Why is it the best good news?

4. Have you ever felt spiritually stuck? Share your experience and what it took to recover.

5. Explain the “good hurt” and how it begins and ends.

Chapter 4
**Love by Degrees**

*This chapter examines the three degrees of intervention.*

1. What can cause us to ignore God’s discipline, and what are the results?

2. Explain the first degree of discipline, its cause, and its desired effect.

3. Explain the meaning of chastening and the second degree of discipline. Recall a time when you were chastened by your parents.
4. Discuss the third degree of discipline and how God reacts to long-term sin.

5. What did you learn about repentance from reading this lesson?

Chapter 5
A Country Awakening

This chapter reveals and explains the second secret of the vine.

1. What do you believe motivates God to intervene in a Christian’s life?

2. What do you think are God’s objectives when he intervenes?

3. Try to discuss the second secret of the vine from God’s viewpoint.

4. Explain the difference between disciplining and pruning. In what ways can the two be confused?

5. How do you believe we should respond to God’s pruning? What do we need to communicate to God?

Chapter 6
Flourishing Under the Shears

This chapter continues the discussion of pruning and its benefits.

1. Explain why, in pruning, the ways in which you respond make all the difference.

2. Discuss the difference between God’s early pruning and mature pruning in a person’s life.

3. What pruning truths should you remember when your faith seems pressed to the limit?

4. What is God’s purpose in a “test of faith”? What will you seek to remember about testing?

5. In what four areas can the mature believer be effectively pruned? Explain the rationale for each.

Chapter 7
More of God, More with God

This chapter reveals the third secret of the vine and the concept of abiding.

1. In your own words, explain the third secret of the vine.

2. Discuss some ways in which you can put your relationship with God first in your life.
3. What habits and practices need to be changed in order to put God first? What are the costs involved in making God your priority?

4. Explain what it means to abide more deeply in God.

5. What do you believe God wants from his relationship with you? What do you want in a relationship with God?

Chapter 8
Living in the Presence

This chapter continues the discussion of abiding and being God's friend.

1. Explain what it means to live in the presence and to be a person of abiding.

2. List some of the qualities you desire in a best friend.

3. Explain some of the misconceptions that exist about abiding. What barriers prevent us from abiding?

4. What are some of the promises and rewards that come from abiding in God?

5. What would you like to improve about your relationship with God after reading this chapter?

Chapter 9
Joyful Abundance

This chapter reveals how to unlock change in our lives.

1. Discuss the extraordinary leaps taken by Peter and Jabez.

2. What is the link between the Jabez prayer and the secrets of the vine?

3. List and discuss the five important reminders about guarding your harvest of good works.

4. Discuss what it means to you that God is always at work in your life.

5. Share the insights you received from reading this book and your future plans for accepting the abundance that God offers.