

Be the Branch | Part 2

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE
Pastor Jacob Howell – 07.20.2025

"Be the Branch"

Opening Question:

- Share a time when you experienced "pruning" in your life. How did it feel in the moment, and what was the outcome?

Key Takeaways:

1. God is a "pick me up" gardener, not a "cut you off" God.
2. Pruning feels painful but isn't punishment; it's for our growth and fruitfulness.
3. God prunes dead/diseased areas, sucker branches (distractions), and even healthy areas for greater fruit.
4. Trusting God's picture for our lives allows us to embrace the pruning process.

Discussion Questions:

1. *How does viewing God as a "pick me up" gardener rather than a "cut you off" God change your perspective on challenging times?*
2. *Pastor Jacob mentions areas that need pruning: sin, toxic relationships, hurtful habits, and false idols. Which of these do you struggle with most, and why?*
3. *What are some "sucker branches" (distractions) in your life that might be preventing you from bearing more fruit?*
4. *How can we differentiate between conviction (from the Holy Spirit) and condemnation in our lives?*
5. *Pastor Jacob suggested that even good things sometimes need pruning. Can you think of a "good" area in your life that might need pruning for greater fruitfulness?*
6. *How do you typically respond to hard conversations or constructive criticism? How might viewing these as potential "pruning moments" change your reaction?*
7. *What challenges do you face in the "watering and waiting" period after pruning? How can we encourage each other during these times?*

Practical Applications:

1. Daily Prayer Exercise: Start each day by asking God, "What needs to be pruned in my life today?"
2. Time Audit: Track how you spend your time for a week. Identify any "sucker branches" that might be distracting you from bearing fruit.
3. Accountability Partners: Pair up with someone in the group to have regular, honest conversations about areas that might need pruning in your lives.
4. Gratitude Journal: Write down instances of "pruning" in your life and reflect on the fruit that came from those experiences.
5. Scripture Meditation: Spend time this week meditating on John 15:1-2. Reflect on what it means to "be the branch" in your daily life.

Closing Prayer:

Lord, thank you for being a loving gardener who prunes us for our good and your glory. Help us trust your plan for our lives, even when pruning feels painful. Give us the courage to address areas that need pruning and the patience to wait for the fruit. May we be branches that remain connected to you, the true vine, bearing much fruit for your kingdom. Amen.