

SERMON BASED CURRICULUM

**Date & Sermon Series:**

July 23/24, 2016; Mountains Move

Speaker:

Pastor Joel Schmidgall

Scripture Focus: John 15:1-5

Note To Leaders:

This weekend we discussed how our life goals are often centered on achieving ultimate independence, but God wants us to move from independence to reliance on him. These questions provide a framework to prompt or foster discussion in your small group. Don't feel you have to use all or any of these questions and you don't have to make it to the end! Use the questions that best fit your group and let discussion flow.

Icebreaker Suggestions: Independence starts at an early age- When you were a kid, and your parents taught you that you could do anything you wanted and be whoever you wanted, who did you want to grow up to be?

Sermon Series Questions:

1. What thoughts are still resonating with you from the sermon?
2. What was most encouraging or challenging about this weekend's message?
3. In what ways did John 15:1-5 speak to you?

Specific Questions:

1. When pursuing independence in today's culture, we often rely on our strength, ambition, and control. When was the last time you were in a really hard place where you didn't have control? How did you get through it?
2. Pastor Joel said that he once heard, "The difference between God and you is God doesn't think he is you." Have you ever thought if you were God, you would do this...? Why do you think we have those types of control like thoughts?
3. Just like the story that Pastor Joel shared about the finger, it is easy for all of us to naturally point to ourselves for the credit instead of pointing it towards God. What is one thing you can do to help yourself remember that the glory goes to God not to self?
4. "God's way to move mountains is for us to set aside our own plans." What area do you need to set aside your plans and rely on him and his perfect plans?

5. "It isn't about having faith in your ability but the faith in God's ability." What are some ways we can shift this mindset in our lives? How can you move from thinking about your own strength/ability to God's strength/ability? Where does your focus most often rest?

6. Ephesians 3:20 is a central verse that talks about God's power in our lives. It says, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us." Where do you need to see the power of God in your life? What bold prayers do you need to pray by calling upon God's power?

7. Pastor Joel said, "If God made the mountains, why do we think he can't move them?" Have you ever wondered why God has allowed the mountains in our lives? How can you learn to trust more of God's character and timing knowing that he truly moves mountains and more importantly, cares about your specific mountains!

8. When we lean into God, God presses in closer to us. "Jesus is like the trust fall"- With this, it may require us shifting our weight to lean in closer. Where do you need to shift your weight? How can you intentionally lean more into the vine?

Challenge:

- Pastor Joel quoted and added to a saying Pastor Mark had said earlier in this series, "I'm not adapting to my circumstances but I'm going to adapt to my theology and God's reality." Are you living in a world of your reality or God's reality? Spend time this week making a comparison list of what God's reality looks like versus your reality. Then, focus on how you can tap into God's reality this week.
- Just as growing grapes can become weary in the heat and fall to the ground, so too do we become weary at times. But, our brokenness positions us for God to pick us up, help us grow and become the most useful. It is a pruning process. If you are in a season of brokenness or pruning in an area of your life, don't step back. Lean in closer to God- knowing that he will press in all the more. Spend some time journaling about all of your "broken" areas this week and give them to God to restore, pick up, and utilize for His glory.

Read, Pray, Act:

- Go deeper and study the words remain and abide this week. What do they mean? One tool that may be helpful is: <https://www.blueletterbible.org>. What do these words specifically mean to you in the context of John 15?
- If you are not in a pruning season, I would encourage you to go find someone this week who is in a pruning season. Encourage them and be open to sharing how God has moved some of the mountains in your own life.