

II. Group discussion *Each number below includes a set of questions that relate to the scripture text. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for "the big question."*

Read John 12:20-33 aloud.

1. What was the setting for this story?

Jesus' last Passover feast, the height of his popularity. Even Greeks (Gentiles?) wanted to meet him.

What do you suppose was the mood of the crowd?

Probably like conventions or festivals today, where streets are crowded, the mood is festive, and everyone is looking for excitement.

How did Jesus fit into this celebration?

"The whole world has gone after him!" (v. 19).

2. How did Jesus respond to the excitement (23)?

What do you think when you hear the word glory or glorify?

Probably visions of triumph, wealth, success and popularity.

What did Jesus mean by the word "glorified"? *Losing his life.*

How might our view of success be different from God's view?

3. How does a seed illustrate what happened to Jesus?

A seed dies & appears to decay before it produces new life.

You might bring seed pods from flowers in your yard to demonstrate.

How does this principle of dying in order to bring life apply in other situations?

When have you seen good results come from someone making a sacrifice?

A common theme in movies – Obi Wan Kenobi dying for Luke in Star Wars, Neo dying in The Matrix, Rose tossing the diamond overboard in Titanic.

The hero often pays a dear cost in order to accomplish the bigger goal.

If dying to self offers so many positives, why do so few choose this path? Is self-denial the best way to live?

4. How did Jesus feel about the road ahead of him (27)? Was he looking forward to dying?

What motivated him to go ahead with the pain?

When you face a painful situation, what helps you?

5. What happened with the voice of God (28-30)?

Why did different people hear different sounds in the voice of God?

How do you think the voice comforted Jesus?

According to Jesus, who was the intended audience of God's voice?

6. What are two results from Jesus' death (31-32)?

Satan driven out, all men drawn to Jesus.

In what ways has Satan been driven out?

In what sense have all people been drawn to Jesus?

† **The big question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

What are some good results that come from dying to ourselves like Jesus did? What are some practical steps we can take in setting aside our desires in order to serve God & others?

III. Other resources

The point – Become more like Jesus every day. Find ways to die to yourself and serve others.

Prayer ideas

Thank God for the death of Jesus.

Thank God for raising Jesus from the dead.

Thank God for Jesus' current reign and power in the world.

Pray for the day when all creation will acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

Ask God to guide our congregation through the process of discerning whom he has prepared to preach at College Hills.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Take some plant seeds to group – either buy a packet or cut some seed pods from your yard.

Give each kid a seed. Ask what it is and what it does.
How do you know this little speck could make a plant?

How is this like Jesus?

Read John 12:24-26 aloud.

What does Jesus mean by a seed dying? What happens when a seed dies? What would happen to a seed that refuses to leave its plant – say an acorn that gets lodged in the branches of its tree?

How was Jesus like a seed, according to these verses?
He died, he was buried, he rose to give new life.

Verse 26 sounds like Jesus wants us to be like him. Does that mean he wants us to die like him or like a seed?

How would we follow Jesus by dying to ourselves?

...When you disagree with a friend or sibling?

...When your parents ask you to do something you don't want to do?

...When your friends pick on another kid at school?

LIFE Group Guide

John 12—Dying to self

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: **Becoming like Jesus means dying to self.**

True life is found in dying to self. This is the example and message of Jesus for all people. Not an easy message to live, but clearly one of Jesus' core teachings.

In John 12, Jesus illustrated this principle with a seed. You might bring a seed pod with you as a teaching aid.

Service opportunity-- **Saturday, October 6, Hearthside Beautification Day from 8:00 am till 11:00 am.** We need powerwashers, weed eaters, hedge trimmers---and the hands to use them! We have certain areas that a Life Group could sign up for.

Speaking of Hearthside, some LIFE Groups have used the Activity Room and Gazebo for meals & devotionals. With the waterfall in the background, the gazebo offers a beautiful setting, plus there is a grill on-site. Call 443-1994 to reserve it!

Leadership tip: Keep it fun, keep it playful. Laughter draws people together. Yes, we're discussing serious stuff, but cultivate a positive, encouraging spirit. Jesus came to give abundant life!

I. Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone's spiritual pulse, and "break the ice." No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ What festival have you attended most recently?
- ❖ When is the last time you planted seeds in your yard? (Weeds, dandelions, and grass gone to seed don't count!)
- ❖ What did you think of the update from the transition team today? What questions do you have?

Let the transition team know what you hear.