

# Why Busy People Still Feel Spiritually Empty

## Merchantville Small Group Guide

### Warm-Up Questions

1. What's something in your life right now that looks good on the outside but feels heavier than it should on the inside?
2. What's one area of life where "busy" has started to feel normal for you?

**Key Passage:** Mark 11:12-25 NLT

### Recap

In this week's message, we looked at a challenging moment in the Gospel of Mark where Jesus curses a fig tree and then cleanses the temple. At first glance, these moments can feel jarring—but together they reveal something deeply pastoral.

Both the fig tree and the temple **looked alive and faithful**, yet neither was producing the fruit they were created for. Jesus wasn't reacting to failure—He was responding to **misaligned purpose**. The problem wasn't activity; it was **disconnection**.

We explored how Jesus prunes our lives in three ways:

- **The Evil** – things that fracture us through secrecy and division
- **The Ineffective** – good things that crowd out what matters most
- **The Expired** – former rhythms or habits that no longer bring life

The sermon ended with hope: Jesus doesn't demand fruit before relationship. He invites us back into **connection**, reminding us that fruit grows naturally when we remain rooted in Him.

**Questions for Discussion** (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Which part of the sermon stayed with you the most—and why?
2. The sermon described a kind of exhaustion that isn't fixed by rest. Where do you feel that kind of weariness in your life right now?
3. Jesus confronts things that *look alive* but lack fruit. Where are you tempted to focus on appearances instead of depth?
4. Of the three pruning categories—Evil, Ineffective, Expired—which one do you feel God pressing on most right now?

5. The “ineffective” category includes good things that crowd out margin. What good thing might be quietly competing with your attention to God?
6. The sermon said: “*Fruit doesn’t grow in marginless lives.*” What would margin look like for you spiritually right now?
7. Jesus ends this passage by talking about faith and forgiveness. Is there a relationship or internal grudge that might be blocking connection with God?
8. The closing image focused on roots, not leaves. What would it look like this week for you to tend your roots instead of managing appearances?

### **Pray**

Jesus,

We don’t want lives that just look alive—we want lives that actually grow.

Give us the courage to let go of what’s choking our fruit,  
and the humility to stay connected to You.

Teach us to abide, to trust, and to grow deep roots.

Amen.