

QUESTIONS

DAY 1: Read Study 4 Review Notes

1. Share your favourite verse from Chapter 14.

2. What did you learn about the activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

DAY 2: John 15:1-8

3. What descriptions did Jesus give of himself and of his Father in these verses?

4. a) How does the gardener make a branch more productive?

b) Can you see any application of this in the life of a believer?

5. What is the first essential for a branch to bear fruit?

6. If we remain in Christ, drawing on him and his Word for nourishment, what will result?

DAY 3: John 15:9-17

7. How is love demonstrated?

8. What example of love are we to follow?

9. a) From verse 15, how does Jesus refer to his disciples?

b) For what purpose had the disciples been chosen?

10. Choose a favourite verse from this reading. Share how it speaks to you.

DAY 4: John 15:18–25; Matthew 5:13–16; Romans 12:2

11. From verses 18–19:

a) Why should believers not be surprised if they face opposition and ridicule?

b) What is the challenge to every believer in these verses?

12. Which two things did Jesus say should have convinced “the world” of his identity?

13. How did Jesus emphasise the close relationship between himself and his Father in these verses?

DAY 5: John 15:26–16:4; Mark 13:11; 1 Peter 3:15

14. What two names are given to the Holy Spirit in verse 26?

15. In times of persecution and opposition what will the Holy Spirit do?

16. a) What is required of believers in the face of opposition?

b) How can we have confidence to do this?

DAY 6: John 16:5–15

17. What was necessary before the disciples could experience the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit?

18. What role does the Holy Spirit have “in the world”?

19. a) What role would he have in the life of the disciples (and all believers)?

b) Can you share your own experience of the Spirit’s work in your life?

DAY 7: John 16:16–33

20. In verses 19–22 Jesus was speaking about what the disciples would experience when he went away. Consider verse 22 and share how this has application in every age.
21. From these verses, why does God accept the prayers we offer in the name of the Son?
22. a) What precious comfort is offered in verse 33?
- b) Have you ever needed to rely on this promise and subsequently experienced the victory promised here?

Study 5 REVIEW NOTES (to be read at home after class)

John Chapters 15 and 16

The chapters we have just studied are some of the loveliest for the Christian. Conscious of his coming trial and crucifixion, Jesus wanted to give teaching that encouraged his disciples and built them up in their faith.

Chapter 15 opens with the well-known illustration of the vine and the branches. Jesus' declaration in **verse 1**, "I am the true vine" is the last of the seven I AM statements in John's Gospel.

The background to this discourse is important and Hendriksen comments that this was Jesus' last opportunity before his trial and crucifixion "to warn the disciples not to be like Judas but to remain in the faith, to manifest in their lives not the work of Satan but the fruits of the Holy Spirit". References to the fruitfulness of the vine would be readily understood by those raised in the Jewish faith as many verses in the Old Testament speak of the vine and its fruit, both natural and spiritual.

On any vine there can be two types of branches, the branch that is drawing its life from the vine will thrive, the branch that is breaking away from the vine will be lifeless, will wither and die because a branch cannot sustain itself. It is important not to miss the vital teaching that a fruitful vine needs pruning so that it bears more fruit, **verse 2!** What a graphic picture this is of the Christian life. There is only one way to grow spiritually and bear fruit and that is to be connected to Christ and to be drawing life from him, **verse 5.**

Some people express concern that **verses 2 and 6** indicate that those once abiding in Christ will be cut off or destroyed if they become stagnant and fruitless. Hendriksen emphasises that these verses refer to those who were never "true believers, and for them the in-the-vine relationship, though close, was merely outward." And Warren Wiersbe suggests, "If anything, **verse 6** describes divine discipline rather than eternal destiny."

Jesus returns to the positive outcomes of abiding or remaining in him, in **verses 7 and 8.** Those who are walking with Jesus and drawing life from his Words will be in his will and therefore their prayers will be effective. In addition to this they will also bring glory to the Lord God, the fruit they bear confirming their position as followers of Jesus.

What a serious challenge comes to us as we consider this teaching. Are our lives today making a statement about our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ?

How deep is Jesus' love for his disciples? As deep as the love that God the Father has for the Son (**verse 9**). As a child of God this is the love

that is lavished upon you. Obedience to his commands is the appropriate response to such love, just as Jesus was obedient to the Father, unto death. And again in **verse 12** Jesus gives the command to *love each other*. Warren Wiersbe claims that the proof of that love “is not in our feelings but in our actions ... real Christian love is an act of the will. It means treating others the way God treats us.”

Verse 15 is really beautiful, for there Jesus declares that he has no secrets from his friends - with those who love him, he shares everything that he has learned from his Father. The very wisdom of God made known to man, through his Son, is the privilege available to all who believe.

Following his great declaration of love for them and his statement that they are his friends, Jesus reminds them of something very wonderful. He **personally chose them**. He has chosen us too. God set his love upon us. We did not choose to be his friends but he chose us. Think about this for a little while. All these lovely things he told his disciples are ours as we seek to live in him, having accepted his loving forgiveness and having been born anew into his kingdom.

These comforting and encouraging words are immediately followed by a warning that those who were identified with him could expect to face opposition from “the world”. The hostility that had been directed at him originally would be passed on to his followers.

If you are subject to rejection, ridicule, hostility because you are identified with Christ then this is exactly what Jesus predicted. How comforting to know that he is with us in all our circumstances and his grace and strength are available to us.

Although believers do not **belong** to the world they are not to **withdraw from** the world. Jesus never did this. He mixed with every kind of person imaginable. We should open our hearts and homes to the unconverted, to share Christ. In doing so we should be careful at all times to maintain a standard that honours him.

Although the world had witnessed the words and the works of Jesus, they had rejected him in fulfilment of ancient prophecy. But Jesus

declared that when the Holy Spirit was sent from the Father he would bear testimony to the truth about Jesus and the disciples too, having been eyewitnesses, must also testify.

Throughout **chapter 16** you may have noticed that Jesus was speaking about future events - “they will”, “he will”, “you will”, “I will”.

The time of his departure was **very near**. Jesus knew this but the disciples were still blissfully ignorant. Jesus’ love for them, his desire to equip them to cope is very evident in all that he shares with them in this chapter. He gives clear teaching on the work of the Holy Spirit and these promises about the Holy Spirit were to stand the disciples in good stead when Jesus departed and they were left on their own to face a hostile world.

Jesus pointed out that the work of the Holy Spirit, when he came, would be to convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. As the disciples preached and worked after Pentecost, the sin of people was exposed and many were brought to repentance. In the same way the Holy Spirit can work through us as we live in the world today.

What comfort comes to us as Jesus explains that the Holy Spirit will guide into all truth and understanding. Here is a benchmark for us as we study God’s Word. If our understanding of a passage of Scripture is confused and unbalanced, we can be sure that we have not received the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

In **verses 16–22** Jesus predicts what is about to happen. He predicts his crucifixion and resurrection. There is also the broader application for the disciples - although he was leaving, they would see him again when they died and were reunited with him in glory. The disciples were confused and Jesus tried to open up the truth of what was ahead.

He spoke to them also about their deepened relationship with God the Father which was a result of their love and trust in Jesus and a new pattern was set for prayer (**verses 23–28**); they were to go **straight to the Father**, offering their prayers, in Jesus’ name. That this

privilege was open to them was confirmation of God's love toward them - confirmation of their position as children of God.

The disciples claimed to understand and made a great declaration of faith in **verse 30**.

In **verse 31** there seems almost to be a note of relief in the voice of Jesus, yet he told them bluntly that he knew that eventually they would desert him. The NIV Study Bible commentary on **verse 32**: "the disciples had faith, but not enough to stand firm in face of disaster. Jesus knew they would fail; however, his church is not built on people's strength but on God's ability to use people even after they have failed." What comfort this brings to our hearts.

Wonderful words finish this chapter. "***Take heart, I have overcome the world***". So, dear reader never forget as you look out on this seemingly godless world he is saying to you, "I am the victor. You too can possess the courage you need to live for me wherever you are."