

Discussion Questions for John 15-17

Gretchen Steer ~ April 18, 2018

1. Read John 15:5-8. What does it mean to be fruitful as a believer? What should we do if we don't see this in our own lives?

2. Jesus explains that the Holy Spirit is coming into the world when he returns to heaven. Look up these verses to see what the Spirit's work is: John 15:26, John 16:8-11, John 16:13, John 16:14. How do you see the Spirit working in these areas in the church worldwide today?

3. Jesus promises hardship and suffering when we belong to him, in John 15:18-19. Have you experienced this kind of hatred from the world? If we don't ever experience it, what does that say about how committed we are to Christ? For example, you may have to take unpopular stands at work in order to be honest. You may need to keep your children from something that "everyone else does" because you know it leads to sin. Think of other examples in your life and share them.

4. Read John 17:20-21. Just before Jesus' death he prayed for you and me, and all believers who would come to belong to him in the years following his death and resurrection. What characteristics must we show in our lives and in our churches to demonstrate that we truly belong to Christ? How does this bring glory to God?

5. What do you find most encouraging about the words in these three chapters? If you were saying goodbye to those you loved, what would you say to them?

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Key verse: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

1. Today's long passage includes three quite different chapters which all fit together to show how Jesus, the Spirit and God the Father work together to provide us with everything we need for a joyful life even in the face of hardship. Read through John 15-17. Now list at least two promises from each chapter. What does Jesus promise that we will experience when we are part of him?

2. Look at John 15:5-8. What does fruitfulness look like in real life? What sorts of outcomes or attitudes would we see in the life of a person closely connected to Jesus? What should we conclude if there is no evidence of fruitfulness in the life of someone who says they are a believer? If I see no spiritual fruitfulness in my own life, what should I be doing?

3. John 15:12-13 gives a description of the type of love that Christ requires. What are ways that we lay down our lives for others? Can a believer lay down their life in love for someone who rejects them or mistreats them? Give some examples.

4. Jesus promises that we will encounter hardship and even hatred, because of our connection to him. Have you experienced this yourself? Give some examples from the lives of the apostles to show how this principle was proven in the early church. [If you're stuck, look up Acts 7:54-60, Phil. 1:12-14, 2 Cor. 11:23-28, Acts 12:1-4]

5. John 16 gives us a lot of information about the person and work of the Holy Spirit. List three aspects of his work in the world. Why are these important, especially since Jesus is now in heaven rather than on earth?

6. The defining characteristics of the church are to be love and unity. How do these happen in a church? What should we do if they are not apparent? Does Jesus promise these to the church, or are they conditional?