

**PLEASE DON'T READ THESE NOTES UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED YOUR LESSON.
HEARING GOD FOR YOURSELF IS WAY BETTER THAN MY COMMENTS!**

questions

Read **John 15:18-25** and **John 16:1-4**

1. What specific difficulties does Jesus tell his disciples to expect after he leaves them (**15:18-20; 16:2**)? **The world may hate them because of Jesus; they don't belong to the world; the world will persecute them because they also persecuted Jesus; they will be expelled from the synagogues; they may be killed because of their allegiance to Christ.**

2. Why will the disciples experience these difficulties?

15:18 - because the world hates Jesus (and what he stands for)

15:19 - they do not belong to the world

15:21 - because of Jesus name and because the world does not know Father God (who sent Jesus)

16:3 - the world doesn't know the Father or Jesus

♥ Does what Jesus told his disciples reflect your experience with the world? How so?

♥ *Should* it reflect your experience with the world? Why or why not? (**2 Timothy 3:12**)

♥ Has your association with Jesus ever brought trouble to you from family, friends, neighbors or co-workers? If so, how have you responded?

3. Why did Jesus tell his disciples of the persecution that would come after he left (**16:1,4**)?

He told them ahead of time so that when it happened they would not give up, become discouraged and fall away or go astray. If they expect it to happen because Jesus warned them it would happen, it will not take them by surprise and they will know they are not alone. By his Spirit, Jesus is still with them.

♥ Why would knowing ahead of time what would happen help them not go astray?

♥ Would knowing ahead of time that you might be persecuted, discourage or console you? How so?

The World – Jesus has a lot to say about *the world* in these verses. The Greek word *kosmos*, translated *world*, refers to the created order of human beings and human affairs that are in rebellion against their Creator. Satan is the *prince* who dominates the world system (**John 14:30**). (For a more complete definition, see the information box in Lesson 7.)

4. Why doesn't the Christ-follower belong to the world (**15:19**)?

Because Jesus has chosen us out of the world! The one who follows Jesus belongs to Jesus now, not the world. Because we are chosen, we are set apart for a different kind of life and purpose. It is always important to remember that we didn't choose Christ, he chose us! Our security and protection is his responsibility because he is the one who initiated the relationship.

♥ Share how Jesus chose *you* out of the world.

♥ The world functions on the basis of conformity to its standard (**Romans 12:2**). Why does the world accept those who conform to its standard and rejects those who don't? **A Christian who lives, thinks and believes differently than the world, is a constant reminder and a silent testimony to God's truth that there is a right way and a wrong way to live. Human nature does not like to be shown that it is wrong because it means we will have to change and live by a different standard.** In what ways do you feel at home in the world? Out of synch with the world?

- ♥ What did Jesus mean when he said that if he had not come, the world would not be guilty of sin (15:22,24)? Discuss his reasoning.

The world cannot believe if it does not know about Jesus or if there is no proof or evidence of Jesus' claims. Jesus' enemies heard his words and witnessed his supporting miracles. Consequently, their reaction to reject him could not have been attributed to **ignorance** of his words or to **lack of evidence** substantiating them. They are guilty because their rejection is deliberate and inexcusable.

5. After Jesus leaves, how will the Counselor, along with the disciples, continue the ministry begun by Jesus (15:26-27)?

The Holy Spirit, who Jesus sends after he ascends to heaven, will testify or witness as to the truth of the Gospel. This is a spiritual activity that He will do in the hearts of people. However, he will also need the testimony of the disciples and their experiences with Jesus to fully convince people. The disciples and the Holy Spirit will work in partnership to spread the Gospel. In a partnership, each partner has a function and both are needed to accomplish the task.

- ♥ Why do we need to keep in mind what Jesus said in 15:27-28 when we share the good news of Jesus with someone?

We need to remember that when we share the Gospel, we too, are working in partnership with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit convicts and convinces a person, but He depends on us to share the Good News and to tell others our stories of how Jesus has changed our lives and how we continue to experience him in relationship. A witness simply tells the what they know to be true. It is the Holy Spirit's job to take our testimony (stories) and use them to convince those we share the Gospel with. We never have to take on the responsibility of convincing someone of the truth. We only need to be ready to give an answer for the hope that is in us.

- ♥ What are some ways can you join the Holy Spirit in witnessing to the truth of Jesus Christ?

A relationship with the Holy Spirit is most helpful if we are working in partnership! We need to learn how to recognize His voice to us as well learning how He works and how to recognize His movements. We can have an intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit just as we can we Jesus and with the Father.

Read **John 16:5-15**

6. Jesus said it was for the disciples' good that he was going away because then he would send the Counselor to them (16:7). What are some reasons why the Holy Spirit being with the disciples is better than Jesus being with them?

As long a Jesus was on earth and limited to a human body, he could not be in more than one place at a time, nor could he communicate with someone unless he was with them in person. Jesus was confined by time and space.

However, with the giving of the Holy Spirit, there are no limitations of time and space. The Holy Spirit is everywhere all the time. He can speak and act simultaneously all over the world. The gift of Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise, And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- ♥ Can you think of a way that you, today, directly benefit because Jesus left earth and sent the Holy Spirit in his place?

The Holy Spirit lives in every Christ-follower and He is talking, guiding, teaching, encouraging, and strengthening every believer, all at the same time! "God with us" now means God individually with each one of us all the time. This is way better than Jesus being confined to a human body. If Jesus, as a human, was still on earth, we would all have to wait our turn to be with him and talk to him!

7. What is the Holy Spirit's ministry to the world (16:8)? How are some ways he does this?

He will convict the world of sin and of God's righteousness and of the coming judgment. The Holy Spirit works in the hearts of humans. It is a spiritual work. He opens their spiritual eyes so that they can see Christ, he draws people to Christ, he enables them to repent and believe and then implants the very life of God into their dead souls. When the Holy Spirit convicts (a legal term that means to pronounce a verdict by which the guilt of the offender is defined and proven), he brings people to an inescapable sense of guilt so that they realize their shame and helplessness before God. The Spirit is the prosecuting attorney who present God's case against humanity. He creates an unavoidable awareness of sin so that it cannot be dismissed with an excuse or evaded by giving the excuse that "everybody is doing it."

♥ What are some reasons why a person may not see themselves as a sinner in need of a Savior?

Until the Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin, people usually excuse their behavior by thinking "everyone is doing it" or "I'm not that bad compared to some people I know."

♥ Does the Holy Spirit convict or accuse a person of their sin? What do you see is the difference?

Accuse can carry the connotation of condemnation, without a way out. A person is guilty, period. Conviction brings an acute awareness of sin, but the Holy Spirit does this so that the person will repent and be restored to a relationship with God which results in love, joy and peace.

♥ If a person you are concerned about is not aware of their own sin and its consequences, what do you think is the best thing we can do to help them: a) Explicitly point out their sin so they can see it?

b) Show them from the Bible that everyone is a sinner, including them? c) Do nothing because it is not your job to convince them? d) Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to convict and convince them? e) Pray and ask Jesus that the person will be convicted of their sin as the Holy Spirit does his work in their life?

D and E are probably the best answers. They seem similar, but we really don't need to ask the Holy Spirit to convict and convince people (d). That is his job and he is already doing that all the time. A more effective way to pray is to focus our prayers on the person so that they will see and accept what the Holy Spirit is already doing in their life. We may find ourselves doing A, B, and C – but only as the Holy Spirit directs us. We never do these things on our own initiative. That is why it is so important to have a close, intimate relationship with the Spirit. Out of relationship, he can guide and direct us and we will know when to do the right thing at the right time.

8. Jesus had more spiritual truth he wanted to share with his disciples, but they were not able to take it in and understand it at this time. *When* and *how* would these important truths be revealed (16:13-14)?

When the Holy Spirit came, after Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples began to understand many things that they could not understand before because it is the Holy Spirit gives spiritual understanding by working in individual hearts and minds. He takes the truth of Jesus and the Scriptures and makes it understandable. It is the Holy Spirit that gives us "Aha" moments when spiritual truth that did not make sense before suddenly becomes crystal clear.

♥ How does the Holy Spirit help us understand spiritual truth (1 Corinthians 2:12-14)? Why can't we understand spiritual truth with just our minds?

2 Cor. 2:14 *But people who aren't Christians can't understand these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them because only those who have the Spirit can understand what the Spirit means.*

♥ Is the Holy Spirit working in your life? How can you know?

The Holy Spirit is a person with personality and we relate to him just as we do other persons. We know he is working in our life because we "hear" him with our spiritual ears, we understand truth as he gives us spiritual understanding, we see the outgrowth or results of his living in us as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control become a way of life, and we receive his power to do what we can not do on our own. The Holy Spirit becomes a constant companion and he becomes our Counselor, Comforter, Advocate, Encourager, and Strengthener.

♥ What spiritual truth would you like the Holy Spirit to help you understand? How will you ask him?

Read **John 16:16-24**

9. What seems to bother the disciples most about Jesus' announcement in **16:16 (16:17-18)**?

They did not understand what he meant. It seemed he was talking in riddles. They didn't understand how "in a little while" they wouldn't be able to see him anymore and then "just a little while after that" they would be able to see him again. They also didn't understand what he meant when he said he was going to the Father.

♥ What spiritual truths do you now understand that you just didn't "get" before?

♥ How do you deal with change? Moves? Transitions from one stage of your life to another? How has discomfort and pain helped you grow?

10. Jesus comforts his disciples with a promise instead of an explanation. What is the promise (**16:19-22**)?

Jesus' promise was that even though they will weep and mourn while the rest of the world rejoices, their grief will suddenly turn into great joy. He promises them that when they see him again, their joy will be so great that there will be nothing anyone could ever do again that will take their joy away.

♥ How does Jesus' analogy about a woman giving birth enhance his promise in **16:20, 22**?

♥ Contrast the world's response and the disciple's response to the absence of Jesus in **16:20**. Why the difference? The world would rejoice that Jesus had been removed and would pride itself in its victory. At Jesus' resurrection, however, the conditions would be reversed and the disciples' grief would turn to joy. How is the world's joy (**16:20**) different than the disciple's joy (**16:22**)?

♥ What grief or sorrow in your life has God turned to joy?

11. What new promise regarding prayer does Jesus give his disciples (**16:23-24**)?

Up until the coming of the Holy Spirit, the disciples brought their requests directly to Jesus and were encouraged by His prayer to the Father on their behalf. But with Jesus' "going away" and the coming of the Holy Spirit, their (and our) relationship with the Father is completely changed. By Jesus' death and resurrection, the barrier of sin has been removed and a new relationship with the Father is now possible, a relationship where we are able to address the Father directly, with great confidence, through Jesus. On the basis of Jesus' name (what He did for us to cover our unworthiness) and a sincere commitment to desire the things that would bring God glory, we can now be sure that the Father will give us what we ask for in Jesus' name.

♥ How do you see that asking, receiving, and joy are related (**16:23-24**)? What connection can you make in your own life between problems, prayer and joy?

♥ Does **16:23-24** describe your own prayer life? Why or why not?

♥ How would you explain to someone what it means to ask *in* Jesus' name (or ask *using* Jesus' name)?

When we pray in Jesus' name, we ask with the same power and confidence as if Jesus' himself were praying and asking. We stand before God on Jesus' merits and worthiness, not our own.

Read **John 16:25-33**

12. Why do you think that Jesus had to speak to his disciples figuratively, but later he could speak to them plainly (**16:25**)? What makes the difference?

Jesus did not speak plainly, nor could the disciples understand all that he was saying because of their spiritual immaturity and because they had not yet received the Holy Spirit. We simply cannot understand spiritual truth with our natural minds, no matter how hard we try. It is the Spirit of Truth that leads us into all truth and there is no other way to gain understanding about the things of God and Scripture.

♥ Do you hear Jesus plainly or are his words in Scripture confusing? If his words are sometimes confusing, what do you think will change this?

The best way to get understanding is not to study more, but to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth to you. It is the Holy Spirit that give us our "light-bulb" moments concerning spiritual truth. With his help we can see and understand things that were impossible to us before. Don't "try"; rather "ask."

13. What characterizes the relationship we can have with the Father because of Jesus (16:26-27)? Why is this important when we go through trouble or hard times?

When we come to the Father and ask in Jesus' name and the Father answers our prayers and meets our needs, we are assured that He loves us. We now have a love relationship with the Father and we know that even when we go through hard times, our Father loves us and will take care of us.

♥ Jesus predicts his disciples will abandon him (16:32). Who does Jesus ultimately depend on? How can you learn from Jesus' example? Jesus loved and needed the support of his disciples, even as we do our close friends. But people are imperfect and will let us down. Our Father in heaven, however, will never let us down and will always be with us as he works all things together for our good.

14. What is the *bad news* in Jesus' statement in 16:33? The *good news*? In your opinion, is the good news powerful enough to counteract the bad news? Why or why not?

The bad news is that while we are still in this world we will have trouble, hard times, trials and sorrows. The good news is that even though we will have trouble, Jesus promises peace in the trouble and he declares that he has overcome the world. The Amplified Bible puts it this way:

John 16:33

I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace *and* confidence. In the world you have tribulation *and* trials *and* distress *and* frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. **[I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.]**

♥ What did Jesus mean when he said that he had overcome the world? How does this provide peace?

♥ Share a time when you have experienced the peace of Christ in the midst of trouble.

♥ What area of your life is the least peaceful right now? Why? What would bring peace to this situation?

Response

On the back of this page, write out a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to **guide you into all truth relating to a specific area of your life**. Do you believe he will? How will you know he has answered?

Encounter with Jesus

Take a few moments to be still and quiet in the presence of Jesus. See Jesus with you and hear him call you by name. Do you see His look of love and acceptance? Write out **John 16:33**. Ask Jesus what personal words he would like to say to you about this verse. With your spiritual eyes fixed on Him, listen and write down what comes to your mind.