



LESSON 16 ~ peace and Joy in trouble

John 15-16

DISCUSSION STARTER

- What is one of the most difficult goodbyes you ever had to experience? What made it so hard?
- Is it easier for you to be the person leaving or the person left behind? Why?

INTRODUCTION

When William Tyndale was persecuted in the 1500's and his life threatened for translating the Bible into the English language, he said calmly, "I never expected anything else." As we will see in this lesson, Jesus offers his followers some wonderful things, but he also warns them of the persecution that will come if they stay true to him. "Don't be surprised," he said, "when you face troubles or you are thrown out of the synagogue or your life is threatened. The world hates me and it will also hate you."

Jesus wants to be very clear that there are costs for the one who chooses to be his disciple. He also wants us to be prepared for what lies ahead. The world will not take kindly to those who claim that all people are sinners in need of a Savior. The world chooses not to believe the truth and it will persecute those who do. But of course, Jesus does not leave us defeated and depressed. "I have told you these things," he assures us, "so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

PREPARATION

1. Before you read **John 16**, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you into all truth (**John 16:13**). You may want to make the following prayer your own:

Spirit of the Living God, the One who comforts, strengthens and encourages me.

I admit that I cannot understand the truth found in God's Word with only my mind.

I agree that spiritual truth has to be understood with my heart as well as my head.

So I ask You to give me spiritual understanding as I do this lesson.

I pray that You would enable me to see, hear and understand,

with my spirit, all that You want to teach me.

I ask this in the powerful Name of Jesus (as if Jesus were asking it).

Amen

2. Read **John 16** slowly and thoughtfully in your own Bible. As you read and reread, **underline or highlight** any verses, phrases or words that are meaningful to you. Put a **question mark** beside anything you don't understand. Put a ✓ beside anything you would like more information about.

You may also want to read this chapter in another translation. The Scripture handouts for these lessons contain the *Amplified Version* of the Bible. It is important, however, that you don't try to answer the questions in the lesson from just the *Amplified Version*. The questions are phrased to be answered from the *New International Version* (NIV), the *New Living Translation* (NLT), or something similar. Using **only** the *Amplified Version* may be confusing. It is given only as a supplementary text.

3. Write one question that you have about this chapter that you would like answered as you do this lesson.

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**)?

2. Why will the disciples experience these difficulties?

15:18 -

15:19 -

15:21 -

16:3 -

- ♥ 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**)?

- ♥ 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**)?

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

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

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?

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

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

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

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

♥ 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?

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)?

♥ 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?

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

♥ 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)?

♥ 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)?

♥ 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? 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**)?

- ♥ 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)?

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?

- ♥ 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?

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?

- ♥ Jesus predicts his disciples will abandon him (**16:32**). Who does Jesus ultimately depend on? How can you learn from Jesus' example ?

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?

- ♥ 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.