

Quest for Fulfillment

Studies from the Book of John
Part 2 (Chapters 10 - 21)

A Creative Living International Publication

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Foreword

Welcome to this life-enriching seminar for men and women who already know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and others who may be seeking Him.

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Quest for Fulfillment

Studies from the Book of John Chapters 10 - 21

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LESSON 1

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10

When Jesus healed a man born blind, much turmoil resulted with the Jewish leaders (chapter 9). At last, the healed man was cast out of the synagogue for his testimony about Jesus. But Jesus sought this man out, established His relationship with him, and used the occasion to tell him and the crowd some things about Himself as the Good Shepherd.

Unlike the religious leaders who claimed to be God's shepherds but did not even care for the blind man, Jesus presented Himself as the Good Shepherd. His sheep, the faithful in Israel, would hear and follow Him without fear. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus described Himself as the door, or way, into the fold for the sheep. All who entered through Him would be saved and have abundant life. Unlike the thieves, robbers, hirelings and wolves who would scatter and kill the flock, Jesus stated that He had come to give His own life for the sheep. He also spoke of other sheep (non-Jews) who would hear His voice and become part of His flock. Jesus further declared that the Father, in love, had given Him the right to give His life for the sake of the sheep and then take His life back again.

Hearing Jesus' words, the Jews were divided in their reactions. Some said Jesus had a demon, but others argued that a demon-possessed man could not heal the blind or formulate such teachings.

During the eight-day Feast of the Dedication, Jesus was walking in the Temple when the Jews challenged Him to openly declare Himself the Messiah. Jesus answered that He had already done so, and though His miracles¹ and integrity proved His words, they would not believe because they were not His sheep. Jesus went on to say that His sheep would hear and recognize His voice and follow Him. They would be eternally secure in the hands of Jesus and the Father. Then Jesus made the clearest of His claims to deity: "I and the Father are One" (10:30). When the Jews picked up stones to stone Jesus for blasphemy (claiming to be God), Jesus implored them to open their eyes to the

evidence for His claim. They could point to no sinful words or actions in His life, and His miraculous deeds of mercy reflected the character of God, the Father, in Him. Unmoved by His words, Jesus' enemies attempted to seize Him, but he eluded their grasp. After this, Jesus crossed the Jordan to Perea and went to the area of John the Baptist's earlier ministry. Many people came to Jesus there and believed in Him.

Read John 10:1-21

1. a. Using allegory about sheep and their shepherd, how did Jesus contrast the religious leaders and Himself, the Good Shepherd, regarding God's flock (the faithful) in Israel (10:1-5)?

Reference: Note 2, *In ancient near Eastern shepherding*, page 12.

b. List the characteristics of the unfaithful leaders (shepherds) in Israel as described in Ezekiel 34:2-5,10?

Reference: Note 1, *shepherds of God's people*, page 12.

2. When the people did not understand His words, Jesus further described Himself as the gate for the sheep to enter the fold. What was Jesus saying He alone could offer (10:9; see also 14:6)?

Note: *All . . . before me* (10:8). Jesus was speaking here of the "false shepherds," like the Pharisees and the chief priests, who had existed throughout Jewish history, not the faithful Old Testament prophets.

3. How did Jesus contrast Himself and the enemies of the sheep (10:10)?

4. a. What further comparisons did Jesus draw between Himself and those who claimed to be shepherds in Israel (10:11-13)?

b. How did Jesus describe the relationship between Himself and His sheep (10:14-16)?

Note: *Not in this sheep pen* (10:16) refers to those Gentiles who would believe.

5. a. What did Jesus predict about His responsibility as the Good Shepherd (10:17-18)?

b. With these words, what opinions circulated among the Jewish leaders (10:19-21)?

Read John 10:22-42

6. When the Jews challenged Jesus to openly declare Himself the Messiah, how did Jesus respond (10:25-26)?

7. a. List the characteristics of Jesus' sheep in John 10:27-29?

b. What claim did Jesus make in the context of this teaching which His opposition viewed as blasphemous (10:30)?

Note: *I and the Father are One* (10:30) is "the clearest statement of Jesus' divinity he ever made. Jesus and his Father are not the same person, but they are one in essence and nature. Thus, Jesus is not merely a good teacher -- he is God. His claim to be God was unmistakable. The religious leaders wanted to kill him because their laws said that anyone claiming to be God should die (Lev 24:16).

8. When the Jews picked up stones to execute Jesus for blasphemy, to what did He point that they might see truth (10:32)?

9. Jesus stated that if Holy Scripture referred to leaders and judges as gods (Psalm 82:6), how much more should the sent-to-earth Son of God be called God (10:34-36). What did Jesus implore them to observe and why (10:37- 38)?

10. What happened after Jesus eluded the grasp of His enemies in Jerusalem (10:39-42)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Overcoming Insecurity

Throughout the Bible, God refers to Himself as a shepherd. People in biblical times were very familiar with the shepherding role, as sheep tending was very common. When Jesus began to describe Himself as the Good Shepherd who would lay down His life for His sheep, He was using beautiful and familiar imagery to promise protection, guidance and security for His followers.

Like sheep, who are very skittish animals, we must be secure to be at peace. No matter what our achievements or possessions, we cannot be content and satisfied unless we are free from anxiety and fear of present and future dangers.

In revealing Himself as the Good Shepherd, Jesus was promising to overcome anxiety and put fears to rest for those who trust in Him. Let's take a closer look at this refreshing and hopeful message in light of our personal quest for fulfillment.

1a. How would you describe a good shepherd's role with his sheep?

b. How would you describe a good "shepherd" of people?

2. a. What is the result of good and poor shepherding?

b. Sheep are rather smelly and senseless animals. What qualities must a good shepherd possess to care for sheep?

3. List characteristics of the Lord's care for His sheep?

Isaiah 40:11

Ezekiel 34:12,14-16

Note: In judging between sheep, "sleek and strong" (vs. 16) refers to those who oppressed the weaker sheep of God's flock in Israel.

John 10:11

4. In Psalm 23, the word Yahweh is used to describe the Good Shepherd. This Hebrew name for God means *"the God of grace; the God who is dependable; the faithful One; the God who is constant and in whom there is no change; the One who can be counted on to keep all His promises."* Why would this kind of care add to one's fulfillment?

5. a. The shepherd of biblical times used a rod and staff, which were comforts for the sheep. The rod was a stout piece of wood that the shepherd used to fight

off enemies of the sheep. The staff was a long, crooked stick that the shepherd laid across the sheep's back when it started to stray. What might these objects symbolize in our relationship with Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd?

b. What do the following verses illustrate about the Lord's protection as the Good Shepherd?

Exodus 14:14

Psalm 18:2

c. What do these verses teach about the Lord's guidance and discipline?

Psalm 25:9

Isaiah 30:21

Isaiah 48:17

6. a. What benefits of the Good Shepherd's care are described in Psalm 23?

b. What must the sheep do to benefit from the Good Shepherd's care?
Proverbs 3:5-6

Summary

7. a. What areas of your life are causing you insecurity right now? Where do you feel the need for protection or guidance?

b. When Jesus described Himself as the Good Shepherd, what did He promise you if you will trust Him with your needs?

8. What can hinder you from experiencing the care and guidance Jesus offers?

9. What do you most desire in your relationship with the Good Shepherd?

LESSON 1 NOTES

1 *shepherds of God's people.* John 1:1-30 must be understood in light of the Old Testament (and ancient Near Eastern) idea of "shepherd," which symbolized a royal caretaker of God's people. God himself was called the "Shepherd of Israel" (Ps. 80:1; cf. Ps. 23:1; Isa. 40:10-11; Ezek. 34:11-16), and he had given great responsibility to the leaders ("shepherds") of Israel, which they failed to respect. God denounced these false shepherds (see Isa. 56:9-12; Ezek. 34) and promised to provide the true Shepherd, the Messiah, to care for the sheep (Ezek. 34:23). *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1615.

2 *In ancient near Eastern shepherding,* "the fold would be a stone enclosure, roughly square in shape, with an entrance on one side. This entrance was guarded by a doorkeeper or watchman whose business it was to admit authorized persons and keep out intruders. If anyone were seen climbing into the fold on one of the other sides, it was safe to assume that he was an intruder, up to no good. To discourage such persons the top of the wall might be protected by briars. More flocks than one might be accommodated in the same enclosure; but all that was necessary was for the shepherd to stand at the entrance and call; his own sheep would recognize his voice and come to him. Not only so: the flock would be small enough for him to know each of his sheep individually and distinguish them by name. In the picture here drawn by Jesus it is the personal bond between the shepherd and his sheep that keeps them together as they follow his guidance; unlike the modern shepherd, the shepherd of Bible days did not have the assistance of a sheepdog." F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, page 224.

LESSON 2

LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

John 11

During Jesus' time of ministry across the Jordan in Perea, He received word that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, was very sick. These beloved friends of Jesus lived in Bethany, less than two miles from Jerusalem.

Upon receiving word of Lazarus' condition, Jesus told his disciples that this sickness was for the purpose of glorifying God and His Son. However, Jesus did not go directly to Bethany, but rather stayed in Perea two more days. The disciples were no doubt relieved that Jesus did not return to Judea, where His enemies had recently attempted to stone Him.

Then Jesus announced that it was time to go to Bethany to awaken Lazarus out of sleep--that is, out of death. The disciples feared for Jesus' life, and protested that He should not go back to Judea. But Jesus said that He was glad to go because the event to come would greatly build their faith. Then Thomas rallied the disciples' courage with the words, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

Jesus arrived on the outskirts of Bethany four days after Lazarus had died. Martha met Him with words of faith: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." "Your brother will rise again," Jesus assured her. "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will not die."¹

Then Martha brought Mary to Jesus, and he wept with her as they and many Jewish mourners went to Lazarus' tomb. After having the stone removed that sealed the tomb, Jesus prayed aloud to His Father. He wanted those present to see God's affirmation of His Son in the miracle about to take place. After this, Jesus called into the tomb with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" Lazarus came out, bound in grave clothes, which Jesus instructed to be taken off of him. Lazarus was released, alive and well.

Many of the Jews who saw this miracle were amazed and put their faith in Jesus. Others went straight to the religious authorities to inform them of what Jesus had done. The Sanhedrin² held a special meeting at which Caiaphas, the high priest, declared that Jesus should die because His growing popularity threatened the Jewish nation's peace with Rome. From this point on, the Jewish leaders plotted to kill Jesus.

Jesus and His disciples withdrew from the public to the village of Ephraim northeast of Jerusalem on the edge of the wilderness. As crowds began to arrive in Jerusalem for cleansing rites before the Passover, everyone was looking for Jesus and discussing what might become of the conflict between this Galilean carpenter and the mighty Jewish religious and political authorities. The chief priests and Pharisees had classified Jesus as an outlaw, and anyone who knew of His whereabouts was instructed to inform the authorities so that they might arrest Him.

Read John 11:1-16

1. What was Jesus' immediate response when word reached Him about Lazarus (11:4-6)?
2. Why were the disciples shocked at Jesus' decision to go to Judea (11:8)?
3. Why did Jesus insist that they go (11:9-15)?

Reference: Note 3, *twelve hours of daylight*, page 21.

4. Thomas is usually remembered for his doubting. What devotion and courage did he show here (11:16)?

Read John 11:17-37

5. Describe the situation as Jesus approached the home of Martha and Mary (11:17-19).

6. What positive things do you observe about Martha from this interaction with Jesus (11:20, 21-22, 27)?

7. What wonderful declarations did Jesus make in response to Martha's utter faith in Him (11:23, 25-26)?

Reference: Note 1, *I am . . . the life*, page 20.

8. How did Jesus respond to Mary, and what did His response demonstrate about Him (11:33, 35)?

Read John 11:38-44

9. What was the purpose of this event according to Jesus' prayer (11:42)?

10. a. What incredible event took place at Jesus' command (11:43-44)?

b. What authority and what relationship did Jesus reveal through this miracle?

Read John 11:45-57

11. What happened as the result of this miracle of Jesus (11:45-53, 57)?

References: Note 2, *Sanhedrin (page 21)*, and Note 4, *Caiaphas . . .*, p. 21-22.

12. Even though Jesus withdrew from the public, what transpired in His absence (11:56)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

The Ultimate Fulfillment

One of the most dreaded of human experiences is death. The greatest insecurity, the reality that brings us all back to our inability to ultimately

control life, comes from being powerless over death. The natural human yearning is that we and those we love should never die.⁵ Ecclesiastes 3:11 says this desire is God-given. "He [God] has also set eternity in the hearts of men."

We must embrace the message of hope in the power of Jesus Christ over death to fully experience peace in our quest for fulfillment. Thus, the words of Jesus in John 11:25, ". . . whoever lives and believes in me will never die" are some of the most beautiful and hopeful in the Bible. In the raising of Lazarus, Jesus assured His followers of both spiritual life in the present and eternal life in the hereafter.

Before he died, Edward the Confessor said: "Weep not, I shall not die; and as I leave the land of the dying I trust to see the blessings of the Lord in the land of the living." William Barclay wrote: "Through Jesus Christ we know that we are journeying, not to the sunset, but to the sunrise. In the most real sense we are not on our way to death, but on our way to life."

For the believer, Jesus promises to fulfill the yearning for everlasting life. He said with certainty that death is not the end, and God raised Him from the dead to prove His words were true. Let us take a closer look at Jesus' claim to destroy the power of death and give the believer the ultimate fulfillment: eternal life.

1. a. What are some of the feelings which emerge from our fear of death and dying?

b. What is the natural yearning of the human heart concerning death?

Reference: Note 5, *Regarding human yearning to live*, page 22.

2. According to the following verses, what has caused the reality of physical death? Romans 3:23; 6:23

Optional related passages: Gen 2:16-17; 3:6f; Leviticus 17:11,14; Heb 9:22.

3. How did God take the initiative to overcome this death penalty? Rom 5:8

4. a. How are we transformed from death to life according to the following?
John 1:12-13; 3:3

b. Who has the authority to give life after death according to the following?
John 5:21; 6:40

5. Besides giving Jesus the ability to raise Lazarus and several others from the dead during His earthly ministry, how did God prove Jesus' words about eternal life? I Corinthians 15:3-8a

6. What do the following verses reveal about the eternal life God promises through His Son?
I Corinthians 15:42-44, 54

Revelation 21:4

Revelation 22:5

7. How do the following describe the immediate experience of physical death for the believers?

Psalm 17:15

2 Corinthians 5:6, 8

Philippians 1:23

Reference: Note 6, *Death for the believer*, page 22.

8. As followers of Jesus Christ, we need not fear death. However, this does not keep us from experiencing grief in the losses associated with death. In this wonderful chapter of John, Jesus demonstrated the compassion of God -- His hurting with us and for us--in the grieving process (11:33-35). What did you observe about the Lord's response to our grief in John 11 (see also Luke 7:12-13)?

9. How does the Lord view the death of a believer? Psalm 116:15

Summary

10. a. What stands out to you from this lesson about the life Jesus gives?

b. What part does this understanding play in your quest for fulfillment?

11. The Scriptures say that our part in receiving eternal life is to believe in Jesus, that is--take everything that Jesus said as absolutely true and begin to stake our lives upon it in perfect trust. Have you committed yourself to this end?

LESSON 2 NOTES

1 *I am . . . the life* (11:25). The term *life* is found 36 times in John. The life Jesus gives involves first being born into God's family through faith in His Son (1:4,12-13) and receiving as God's child His life within which is eternal (14:16-17,20,23). When Jesus claimed that those who believe in Him should not die (11:26), He was obviously not saying the believer would never die physically. Rather Jesus was declaring His ability to overcome spiritual death now and, after physical death, give the believer a new body and everlasting life

(cf. I Corinthians 15:50-57, also vs. 35-44). Jesus' own resurrection from the dead would be the proof of these claims. Thus Jesus' words in the upper room: "because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19).

2 Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the supreme court of the Jews. It was comprised of priests, scribes and elders. The court had seventy-one members with the high priest as president. In the Sanhedrin there were both Pharisees and Sadducees. The *Pharisees* were a non-political party whose sole interest was in living according to Jewish law, and they did not care who governed them as long as this was possible. The *Sadducees* were a Jewish party that represented the wealthy aristocracy in Israel. Theologically unorthodox, they flatly rejected the strict adherence to Jewish law practiced by the Pharisees. Practically all the priests on the Sanhedrin were Sadducees, out to preserve their prestige and possessions. Convinced that Jesus' popularity would eventually lead to public disorder and knowing that Roman authorities would deal mercilessly with such, the Sadducees wanted to put an end to the Nazarene. The Sadducees obviously dominated the meeting of the Sanhedrin which decided to kill Jesus (John 11:45-53). In 70 A.D., Rome finally tired of Jewish stubbornness and besieged Jerusalem, leaving the city in ruins and the Sadducees with neither wealth nor power.

3 twelve hours of daylight (11:9-10). "Jesus spoke in a veiled way to illustrate that it would not be too dangerous to go to Bethany. In one sense He was speaking of walking (living) in physical light or darkness. In the spiritual realm when one lives by the will of God he is safe. Living in the realm of evil is dangerous. As long as He followed God's plan, no harm would come till the appointed time. Applied to people then, they should have responded to Jesus while He was in the world as its Light (cf. 9:4. 'We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; the night is coming, when no one can work.'). Soon He would be gone and so would this unique opportunity." Walvoord & Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, page 313.

4 Caiaphas who was high priest . . . prophesied (11:49-52). "His words were true in a way he could not imagine. Prophecy in Scripture is the impartation of divinely revealed truth. In reality Caiaphas's words meant that Jesus' death would be for the nation, not by way of removing political trouble [as Caiaphas

meant], but by taking away the sins of those who believed in him." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1620.

5 Regarding human yearning to live on forever, C. S. Lewis wrote:

"Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death; I must never let it get snowed under or turned aside; I must make it the main object of life to press on to that other country and to help others to do the same." *Mere Christianity*, page 120.

6 *Death for the believer* is an immediate passing into the presence of Jesus Christ (cf. Luke 23:42-43; 2 Corinthians 5:6, 8; Philippians 1:23). At the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Matthew 24:27-31; John 14:2-3; Acts 1:10-11), all those who have put faith in Him will receive a resurrection body like the resurrected body of Jesus (I Corinthians 15:42-44; I Thessalonians 4:14-17). Because of these truths, death is not final or horrible for the believer and is referred to in the Scriptures as "falling asleep in Christ" (I Corinthians 15:18; I Thessalonians 4:13). It is not clear biblically what believers who die before the Second Coming will experience while "asleep in Christ" except that he/she will have a rich closeness with the Lord Jesus.

LESSON 3

THE CLOSE OF PUBLIC MINISTRY

John 12

Six days before the Passover celebration in Jerusalem, Jesus and His disciples returned to Bethany. There, a dinner was held in the home of Simon the Leper (Matthew 26:6) in Jesus' honor. Martha served at this dinner while her brother, Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead, reclined at the table with Jesus.

During the dinner, Lazarus' sister Mary proceeded to anoint Jesus' feet with an expensive imported Indian perfume worth a years' wages. The fragrance filled the house. But Judas, who managed and often pilfered the money given toward Jesus' ministry, complained that the perfume should have been sold and the money given to the poor. Knowing that His death was imminent, Jesus defended Mary's act of devotion, declaring that she was preparing Him for His burial.

Meanwhile, many people had come to Simon's house when they heard that Jesus and Lazarus were there. Jesus had become such a controversial figure that He could not be so near Jerusalem without being noticed. It was now common knowledge that He had raised Lazarus from the dead, and many Jews were putting their faith in Him because of that miracle. As a result, the chief priests, who had already decided to kill Jesus, determined to kill Lazarus, too.

After spending Saturday (the Sabbath) in Bethany, Jesus made His final entry into Jerusalem on Sunday. He rode on a donkey colt, which was a sign of peace, and which also fulfilled the ancient Messianic prophecy of

Zechariah 9:9. Multitudes of wildly enthusiastic people crowded around Jesus. The crowd grew as people who had witnessed the miracle of Lazarus told others along the way. Also, thousands of Galileans who had seen the many miracles of Jesus had come for the Passover and joined the crowd.

Earlier, they had wanted to make Jesus an earthly king, but He refused. Perhaps they thought that now as He entered "the city of the great King," Jesus would consent.

The excited crowd spread palm branches on the road before Jesus and cried, "Hosanna!" (an expression of praise which meant "Please save!" cf. Psalm 118:25). They hailed Jesus, calling Him the one "who comes in the name of the Lord!" and "the King of Israel!" He entered the city with throngs of shouting people all around Him.

Even before this, Jesus' popularity had been continually increasing. To avoid a riot, the Jewish leaders were looking for an underhanded way to arrest and kill Him. Even though most of the crowd did not truly believe in Jesus, the religious leaders grumbled among themselves, saying, "The whole world has gone after Him!"

After arriving in the city, some God-fearing Greeks who had come to worship during the Passover asked to speak with Jesus. He recognized these Gentiles' request as the sign that the time for His death had come. It was time for the waiting Gentile world to receive the message of God's salvation along with the Jews.

Jesus began to explain that His imminent death was actually His way to glory. He used the analogy of a kernel of wheat "dying" in the soil before it could produce a harvest. His death for others' sins in obedience to the Father (Isaiah 53:10,12) would bring about the opportunity for spiritual life for all. Jesus explained that one who "loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (12:25). In other words, one who lives for himself only will never know eternal fulfillment. On the other hand, Jesus promised, "My Father will honor the one who serves Me" (12:26).

As His distress deepened, Jesus reiterated that He had come for this hour of sacrifice and would not evade it. "Father, glorify your name!" He exclaimed, to which God responded from heaven in an audible voice, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again" (12:28).

Jesus explained that the time had come for the prince of this world to be overthrown. Jesus must be lifted up on the cross to draw all men to God. One last time, He encouraged the crowd around Him to respond to the light while they had the opportunity. Then He withdrew from the people to prepare for the days ahead.

In spite of His countless miracles, most people did not believe in Jesus. John noted that the prophet Isaiah had predicted this hardness of heart hundreds of years before. Even so, many did believe, even Jewish leaders, who remained silent about their faith because they feared rejection by their peers.

It was Tuesday, of what is now known as the Passion Week, when Jesus reached the end of His public ministry. He would spend the next two days privately ministering to His disciples before His death and resurrection.

Many times He had repeated His message: "When a man believes in Me, he does not believe in Me only, but in the One who sent Me. When he looks at Me, he sees the One who sent Me. I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that His command leads to eternal life" (12:44-46, 49-50a).

Read John 12:1-11

1. a. What incredible act of worship did Mary perform during Jesus' dinner at Bethany (12:3)?

b. How did Jesus respond to Judas' objections (12:7-8)?

2. a. What took place while Jesus was in Bethany (12:9)?

b. What did the chief priests decide to do and why (12:10-11)?

Read John 12:12-19

3. a. How was Jesus received as He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey colt (12:12-13)?

b. For a king to ride into a city on a donkey colt was seen as an act of humility and peace in the ancient world. What did the disciples later also understand about this and the actions of the people (12:16)?

Note: Verse 13 quotes Psalm 118:25-26; verse 15 quotes Old Testament Messianic prophecy from Zechariah 9:9.

4. As people continued to spread the word that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, the crowd around Jesus grew enormously (12:17-18). How did the religious leaders who opposed Jesus respond (12:19)?

Read John 12:20-36a

5. a. When the God-fearing Greek Gentiles came to see Jesus, He knew His hour of sacrifice was near. The waiting Gentile world, in addition to the Jews, would soon learn of salvation through the Christ. What principle did Jesus explain as He saw the time for His death drawing near (12:23-24)?

b. What spiritual principles did Jesus present in the context of the approaching sacrifice of His own life (12:25-26)?

Note: In 12:25, *the man who loves his life* refers to one who concentrates on himself--his successes, his desires and goals--rather than on giving his life to Christ and the needs of others. The *man who hates his life* is one whose devotion to God is such that all other loves by comparison are hatred. His commitment to God has caused him to leave self-centeredness and self-concern behind as a life focus.

6. a. What choice was Jesus making as He discussed His death with the disciples (12:27-28; see also Matthew 26:38-39, 42, 53)?

b. What affirmation did God the Father give for the benefit of those present as He responded to Jesus' prayer, "Father, glorify your name" (12:28)?

c. What three things did Jesus say were about to happen through His death on a cross (12:31-33)?

Note: *judgment on this world* (12:31). "Jesus' death on the cross was a judgment on the world. Evil was atoned for. The world's goals, standards, and religions were shown to be folly." *prince of this world* (12:31). "The Cross was also the means of Satan's defeat (Rev. 12:10). The prince of this world (i.e., Satan; cf. John 14:30; 16:11), Jesus said, will be driven out. His power over people by sin and death was defeated and they can now be delivered out of his domain of spiritual darkness and slavery to sin (Col. 1:13-14; Heb. 2:14-15)." Walvoord & Zuck, page 318.

7. The crowd understood Jesus was saying He must die, but did not understand how this fulfilled prophecy concerning the Messiah. How would you put Jesus' final response to the people in your own words (12:35-36)?

Read John 12:37-43

8. a. What was amazing to the author (12:37)?

b. John quoted the ancient prophecy of Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 which was fulfilled in the people's response to Jesus Christ. What was God's judgment on their refusal to believe the revelation of His Son (12:38-42)?

Note: The phrase, *could not believe* (12:39) "does not mean that the people in question had no choice. They purposely rejected God and chose evil, and verse 40 explains that God in turn brought on them a judicial blinding of eyes and hardening of hearts. Yet many Jewish leaders did believe in Jesus as the Messiah (v. 42)." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1622.

9. What happened among the religious leaders (12:42-43)?

Read John 12:44-50

10. List the points Jesus made in summarizing the truth of His mission (12:44-50)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

The Right Focus

Only days remained before Jesus would fulfill the purpose for which He had come: to die for the sin of the world so that those who believed in Him would receive forgiveness and eternal life. In the face of bitter hatred against Him and as the turmoil increased within His heart, He gently reminded Himself and told others that it was for this purpose that He had come: not to judge the world, but to save it (12:47).

In this context, He illustrated from nature a very important principle of fulfillment. "Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over. In the same way, anyone who holds on to life just as it is destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love, you'll have it forever, real and eternal" (12:24-25, *The Message* translation).

Jesus emphasized two elements of real fulfillment. One was wholehearted devotion to the Lord, like that of Mary when she spent what may have constituted a life's savings anointing Jesus' feet. The other was wholehearted abandonment, like that of the Son of God, to following God in serving the needs of others. We will look briefly at each of these areas as we continue our study of *Quest for Fulfillment*.

a. What hindered the religious leaders who believed in Jesus from helping others find the truth (12:42-43)?

b. What does God promise those who confess their faith in Christ regardless of what people think? 2 Timothy 1:7

4. a. On what did Jesus focus as He prepared to lay down His life?

b. What life purposes of Jesus are found in the following verses?
John 6:38-40

I Timothy 2:3-4

5. a. How did Jesus depict His heart for saving people in Luke 15:3-6?

b. What rewards would come from this focus?
Isaiah 53:11

Hebrews 12:2

6. What do the Scriptures promise those who devote themselves wholeheartedly to God?

Psalm 1:3

Psalm 16:11

Matthew 6:33 (31-32)

7. What do the Scriptures promise those who devote themselves and what they have to helping God meet the needs of others?

Proverbs 11:25

Isaiah 58:10-11

Malachi 3:10

Luke 6:38

2 Corinthians 9:6

Summary

8. Of the primary characters in John 12--Jesus, Mary, the disciples, the crowds, the religious leaders--who ultimately experienced the most fulfillment? Why?

9. a. What part does wholehearted devotion to God play in your personal quest for fulfillment?

b. What difference does caring for the needs of others make in your quest for fulfillment?

c. How was the life of Jesus an example to you of the right focus?

PRIVATE MINISTRY TO THE DISCIPLES

LESSON 4 **THE LAST SUPPER BEGINS**

John 13

Knowing the time for His death was upon Him, Jesus withdrew from the public to be with His disciples. On Thurs. evening of the Passion Week, Jesus and His disciples gathered to celebrate the Passover meal¹ in the upper room of a house in Jerusalem. This event, later known as the Last Supper, began at twilight the evening before the crucifixion of Jesus, which took place at 9 a.m. the following morning. Within 24 hours, Jesus would be in the grave. In Jn 13-17, John recorded the most complete existent eyewitness account of what Jesus said and did during His last hours. Jesus used these last hours to show His absolute love and devotion to His disciples and to all who would believe in Him.

Jesus knew that Satan² had persuaded Judas Iscariot to betray Him. He also knew that God was in control and that the cross was the appointed way back to the glory He had always known with the Father. With this perspective, Jesus wrapped a towel around His waist, poured water in a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet. Certainly this was uncomfortable for the disciples, who viewed Jesus as their Teacher and Lord. Only a slave would normally perform such a task as washing feet.

Even so, they all remained silent except Peter. When Jesus came to him, the disciple refused to have his Master wash his feet. But Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." So Peter insisted that Jesus wash "not just my feet but my hands and head as well!" Using symbolism He knew Peter would not fully comprehend until later, Jesus explained to them that after a bath, one need only have a foot washing in order to remain clean.

When Jesus arose from the task of foot washing, He taught the lessons that went with what He had just done. Other gospels record that at this dinner, a dispute broke out among the disciples about who was the greatest among them (cf. Luke 22:24-27). Jesus told them that the greatest would be the servant of

all. He stated that if He, their Lord and Teacher, served them, service of others should be their focus as His followers. "I have set you an example," Jesus said, "that you should do as I have done for you. No servant is greater than his master. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."

Then, as Jesus contemplated Judas' imminent betrayal, He became visibly and deeply troubled. He told the disciples that He was distressed because one of them who pretended devotion to Him would cruelly turn against Him. In curiosity, Peter motioned to John, who was reclining beside Jesus at the table, to ask Jesus which man would betray Him. Jesus quietly told John that the next person to whom He gave bread would be the one. That person was Judas. As Judas took the bread, Satan took full control of him.⁴ Then Jesus commanded Judas, "What you are about to do, do quickly." With this, Jesus knowingly gave the directive that would lead to His death.⁵ The disciples, including John, paid no attention as Judas went out into the night, thinking Jesus had instructed him to carry out some noble task.

Now alone with His beloved faithful disciples in the last hours before His death, Jesus began what have become known as the "Upper Room Discourses" (John 3:31-16:33). In these teachings, Jesus reflected upon what would be the crowning revelation of the glory of God: the sacrifice of His Son to provide salvation for mankind. Jesus' words, which would be fully comprehended by the disciples only after His resurrection, focused on two main topics: (1) His departure and subsequent reunion with them, and (2) the love relationship between Christ and His people.

Jesus told His disciples that in order to be glorified, He must go where they could not follow. With this, He gave the principal command for them to obey in His absence. "Love one another," Jesus said. "As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (13:34-35).

But Peter wanted to know where Jesus was going and why he could not follow. "I will lay down my life for you," Peter declared. "Will you really lay down your life for Me?" Jesus responded. "I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!"

Read John 13:1-17

1. At this point, what did Jesus know (13:1a), and what was He about to do (13:1b)?

Note: The word "love" is used 31 times in John 13-17 as John recorded Jesus' last teachings and prayers before His death.

2. Of what was Jesus certain, even though He knew that Judas intended to betray Him (13:2-3)?

3. To what did Peter react (13:4-8a)?

4. How did Jesus respond to Peter (13:8b)?

Reference: Note 3, *bath*, page 43.

5. a. What godly principles did Jesus teach through the washing of the disciples' feet (13:12-17)?

b. What does Luke 22:24-27 add to this teaching?

Read John 13:18-30

6. Why did Jesus tell the disciples one of them would betray Him (13:18-19)?

Note: In vs. 18, Jesus quoted the lament written by David in Psalm 41:9 after he was betrayed by a close and treasured associate.

7. What principles did Jesus teach the disciples regarding acceptance (13:20)?

8. a. What caused the disciples to begin to contemplate Jesus' words about a betrayal, and what was their general response (13:21-22)?

b. As the disciples stared at one another, with no idea of who the betrayer would be, what did Jesus specifically indicated to John?

Note: The disciples seemed to think the one who would betray Jesus would do so by mistake, perhaps by accidentally letting information out as to His whereabouts (cf. Mark 14:19). They would not fully comprehend until later that Jesus, knowing God's plan of redemption, purposely did not prevent Judas' action.

9. The disciples, including John, still remained oblivious to Judas' intentions. What was Jesus' directive and Judas' response (13:27, 30)?

References: Note 4, *Jesus gave the directive...* page 43.

Read John 13:31-38

10. a. What did Jesus begin to emphasize now that He was alone with the faithful disciples (13:31-33)?

Note: To *glorify* means to *reveal who He is*. Jesus also spoke here of the glorious salvation that would be provided through His death on the cross for sin.

b. What fundamental instructions did Jesus give the disciples to follow in His absence (13:34-35)?

11. a. Upon what did Peter insist (13:37)?

b. What did Jesus predict in response (13:38)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

More on Giving Living

As Jesus humbly knelt to wash the disciples' feet, His actions depicted the Son of God's incarnate condescension to meet the needs of mankind (cf. Philippians 2:4-8). While the disciples were bothered that their Lord should stoop to wash their feet, they were probably more bothered by the fact that Jesus' humble actions bore no resemblance to the powerful earthly king whom they expected the Messiah to be.

But all during His earthly ministry, Jesus mirrored the fact that God's representatives and the greatest of leaders must be humble servants. In carrying out His purpose of glorifying, or revealing, God's heart to mankind, Jesus' time was completely devoted to serving the needs of people. In offering Himself on the cross, only hours after the Last Supper, Jesus would humble Himself and suffer a terrible death to provide for man's greatest need: the opportunity for forgiveness and an authentic love relationship with his Creator. Even so, at the same time that this loving act would be cherished by many, it would be unappreciated by most.

There are many lessons to be learned here about the kind of "giving living" that produces lasting fulfillment. Last week in our Building on the Basics topic, "The Right Focus," we saw that the deepest fulfillment comes from commitment to God and to serving others. This week, we will probe further into this topic. In the context of Christ's humble service, we will make some observations about the right motivations and the obstacles we all face amidst the fulfillment of "giving living."

1. a. What are unhealthy motivations from which people do good for others?

b. What are the results of serving with these motivations?

2. Some people believe that good works make them right before God. What do the following verses say about how we are made right with God?

Romans 3:22

Ephesians 2:8-9

3. What motivations for service did Jesus model on earth?

John 14:31

John 17:24, 26

1 John 4:19

4. What does I Corinthians 13:1-3 reveal about the importance of having the right motives for serving God and people?

5. a. How does I Corinthians 13:4-8a describe the love of God which Jesus displayed and which God wants to inspire our good deeds?

b. Where does this love come from according to John 17:26b?

6. a. In reflecting God's character, Jesus even loved people who rejected his love, like Judas. He continually appealed even to those who rejected Him. When Jesus washed the feet of the one who would betray Him, what liability of serving did He model for us?

b. What principles regarding reaching out to people who are difficult to love or unresponsive are found in the following verses?

Romans 12:14, 17-21

II Timothy 2:24-26

I Peter 4:16, 19

Note: While we continue to reach out to difficult people, it is also important and Scriptural to set healthy boundaries for ourselves.

7. As Jesus washed Peter's feet, He displayed the loving patience required in serving others who have aggravating shortcomings. What do the following verses say about the constructive response to those who irritate us?

Colossians 3:12-14

James 4:11-12

8. Jesus did not just serve the socially acceptable or religious. He was known for His ministry among outcasts and "sinners." Summarize the important principles regarding serving others found in James 2:1-8?

9. a. What does Ephesians 2:10 say about the purposes God has for each of His children?

b. While Jesus was aware of *all* the tremendous needs in the world around Him, He fully accomplished His earthly mission in three years. What does the Lord promise as you seek His guidance in where and how to serve?

Psalm 32:8

II Corinthians 9:8

Summary

10. a. What motivated Jesus to serve mankind as He did?

b. In contrast to selfish motivations for doing good, why do these motivations for service produce lasting fulfillment?

11. Are there people you find difficult to care for and help? What did Jesus' response to Judas, along with the other Scriptures in this lesson, show you about loving and serving such people?

12. What does Jesus promise as you seek to let Him love and serve people through you? I Corinthians 15:58

LESSON 4 NOTES

1 *Passover meal.* The Passover commemorated the great exodus of the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt almost 1,500 years earlier. At that time, each Israelite family put the blood of a lamb on their doorpost so that their family would be "passed over" when the angel of death took the firstborn of each

Egyptian home. (See Exodus 12:1-14 for this story.) The blood of the lamb saved them from God's punishment dealt out to the Egyptians. Every year the Jews celebrated a Passover week, which would begin on the Jewish calendar 14th of Nisan between 2:30 and 5:30 p.m. At that time, a lamb was sacrificed for the sins of the people in the court of the priests. This ritual was done in order for God to "pass over," or forgive, their sins. A Passover meal would follow at twilight. The Passover meal Jesus took with His disciples fell on the Thursday of Passion Week. Jesus knew that He was about to be slain as the perfect and final "Passover lamb" (I Corinthians 5:7b). It seems that Jesus may have made secret arrangements prior to the Passover meal with His disciples so that Judas' betrayal could not interfere (Luke 22:7-13). The Lord was anxious to observe this feast with His men when He would institute the "New Covenant." In this covenant, the body and blood of Christ would provide forgiveness of sin for all who would believe in Jesus.

2 bath (John 13:10). According to many commentaries, the bath in Jesus' explanation may have symbolized initial spiritual cleansing through faith in Christ (cf. Titus 3:5). The foot washing might have symbolized continual cleansing through confession of sin (cf. I John 1:9). And the state of being clean may have symbolized being right with God.

3 Satan took full control of Judas. A host personally giving bread to a guest was a gesture of honor toward that guest. Being seated on the immediate left of the host, which very likely was the place of Judas, was also an honor. One or both of these gestures toward Judas are believed by many to have been Jesus' final appeals to the darkened heart of Judas. But the appeals were rejected. At Jesus' dismissal, Judas made his final choice to say "yes" to Satan, granting him admission and control. Regardless of what Judas' reasons were for making such a choice, Satan obviously thought Jesus' death would destroy God's plan and mission through His Son. On the contrary, Jesus' death would fulfill God's plan of redemption for mankind.

4 Jesus gave the directive that would lead to His death, i.e. "What you are about to do, do quickly" (13:27). "Jesus' words once more indicate His control. He would die as He directed, not as His opponents determined."
The NIV Study Bible, page 1624.

LESSON 5

JESUS COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES

John 14

Still in the Upper Room, Jesus began His final teachings to His disciples. They were troubled because Jesus had warned them that one of them would betray Him and that He was going where they could not follow. But Jesus told them to set their hearts at rest through faith in God and in Him. Jesus had never let them down, and He assured them that no matter how bad things appeared, He would not fail them.

Jesus explained that He was going to prepare a place for them in heaven and promised to come back to personally take them there to be with Him¹. When Thomas asked the way to where the Lord was going, Jesus declared, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me²." He was stating clearly that it is impossible to have access to God without faith in God incarnate, whom Jesus had always claimed to be. One could not truly know God without having faith in Jesus, the One in whom God the Father had represented Himself in human form.

Then Philip requested, "Lord, show us the Father." Jesus replied, "Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. Believe Me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves." Jesus explained that He would now go to the Father, and, as the disciples continued His ministry, they would be doing even greater miracles³ than He had done. Whatever they asked in His name⁴, He would do so that the Father might be glorified through them.

To further comfort and assure His disciples, Jesus told them that after going to the Father, He would send the Holy Spirit⁵ to be their Helper and Teacher. The Holy Spirit would be *with* them as Jesus had been, and would abide *in* them to produce Christ's character and works through them.

Referring to His imminent death and resurrection, which the disciples at this point did not comprehend, Jesus declared that the world would not see Him

again. However, He promised to return for the faithful⁶, who would be able to see Him with spiritual eyes and be a part of His resurrection life. Then Jesus described the mark of a true disciple: "If anyone loves Me, he will obey my teaching." Jesus said that those who remained faithful to His teaching would be given special love from God. "My Father will love him," Jesus promised, "and we will come to him and make our home with him." Judas (probably Haddaeus; Matt 10:3; Mark 3:18), asked why Jesus would no longer be seen by the world, but only by believers. This did not fit in with their expectation that Jesus would become the Messianic king Scripture had prophesied (cf. Note 5, page 50). Jesus responded that revelation of God would come from within the one who responded to Jesus in love and faithful obedience.

Then He announced that the "ruler of this world," or Satan, was now being given control. But he would meet his downfall (cf. 12:31)⁷, as Christ proved His great love for the Father through submission to the cross. Also, the faith of His disciples would be secured as they watched all of Jesus' predictions come to pass.

Read John 14:1-14

1. The disciples were troubled as they contemplated Jesus being betrayed by one of them and going where they could not follow. What did Jesus command them to do to find strength and hope in this time of confusion and disillusionment (14:1)?

2. What did Jesus promise about His Father's house in heaven (14:2-3)?

3. How did Jesus respond to Thomas' logical question about the way to heaven, where Jesus was going (14:5-6)?

Reference: Note 2, *No one comes to the Father except through Me,*" page 52.

4. How did Jesus respond to Philip's request to see the Father (14:8-11)?

5. a. What did Jesus promise would result from faith in Him (14:12)?

Reference: Note 3, *greater things than these,* page 53.

b. What tremendous promise did Jesus make about prayer (14:13-14)?

Note 4, *whatever you ask in my name,* page 53.

Read John 14:15-31

6. How did Jesus describe the Holy Spirit, whom He promised to send to those who love and obey Him (14:16-17)?

Note: *Counselor* (Gr. Parakletos) denotes one who is called alongside as a helper or defender, a friend at court, an advocate, reliable in guidance and

support, a comforter. Jesus had been this to the disciples on earth, and soon the Holy Spirit would take His place. Jesus would also continue this role in heaven (cf. 1 John 2:1b).

7. What did Jesus promise would happen to the believer after His departure to go to the Father (14:18-20)?

Ref: Note 5, *I will come to you*, page 53, and Note 1, *I will come back*, p. 52.

8. What did Jesus say would be true of the one who truly loves Him (14:15, 21)?

9. Judas (not Iscariot) and the other disciples wanted Jesus to reveal His power and glory as Messiah to the whole world. How did Jesus answer Judas' question about this (14:22-24)?

10. What more did Jesus teach about the Holy Spirit (14:25-26)?

11. What tremendous promise was Jesus able to make to us when we are fearful or confused (14:27)?

12. a. Why did Jesus take time to explain to the disciples what they were not yet able to fully comprehend (14:29)?

b. What did Jesus state about His battle with the "prince of this world" (14:30-31)?

References: Note 6, *meet his downfall*, page 53.

Note: *Come now; let us leave* (14:31b). It is generally believed that while Jesus here told the disciples to get ready to leave the Upper Room, they did not do so until 18:1. It is hard to imagine that the rest of the discourse could have been spoken in a public place or en route to the Garden of Gethsemane.

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Peace that Passes Understanding

Jesus was only hours away from His crucifixion. The disciples whom He loved dearly were facing disappointment and loss which they did not understand.

Why couldn't the Son of God, their Messiah, the One who calmed storms, fed thousands and raised people from the dead, just establish His kingdom on earth and put the disciples into places of leadership? Why did He have to leave them and die? There was no way Jesus could help them fully understand at this time. He probably grieved for His faithful followers as much as He grieved over the painful path He must take in the next hours. Yet *Jesus had peace and offered peace* in the midst of the darkest hour of human history--when sinful man would crucify the gracious Son of God. At this time, Jesus knew and offered a peace that comes from within and can endure even the worst of difficulty, pain or sorrow. This peace, Jesus explained, comes from the assurance of a glorious

eternal future, from the comfort and constant camaraderie of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and through the power of prayer.

Peace among men and nations is a major issue in our world today, as it has been in every generation of history. And personal peace is essential to experiencing fulfillment in life. In search of peace, many sought Jesus as a political king who would alleviate human suffering. Would this have brought peace to their world?

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you." Jesus said. "I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (14:27). Let's take a closer look at the peace Jesus offers--a peace that passes understanding.

1. a. How would you describe the peace the world gives?

b. Apart from Christ, how and where do people seek peace?

c. How is Jesus' peace different from the peace we find apart from Him?

2. a. How was Jesus related to peace in the following?
Isaiah 9:6b

Luke 2:10-14

b. In addition to John 14:27, what promise regarding peace did Jesus make in John 16:33?

3. In John 14:13-14, Jesus told the disciples they would find comfort and strength through prayer. What does Philippians 4:6-7 tell us about prayer and peace?

4. Jesus comforted His disciples through the promise of the Holy Spirit who would be sent at Pentecost to indwell them. What do the following verses tell us about the Spirit and the peace He gives?

Romans 8:15-16

Romans 8:26-27

5. Jesus promised to go and prepare a place for each believer in heaven. What is the ultimate peace Jesus offers? Revelation 21:1-4

6. a. What price did Jesus pay for the peace He offers? Isaiah 53:5

b. We cannot have the peace *of* God until we have peace *with* God. How do we begin to receive the peace Jesus offers? Romans 5:1

7. How is the peace of Christ pictured in the following?

Psalm 23:4

Isaiah 32:17-20

Isaiah 26:3

Summary

8. What place does peace have in your quest for fulfillment?

9. What promises about peace does Jesus Christ make to you?

10. Is there an area(s) of your life where you would like to experience greater peace? How can you experience this peace?

LESSON 5 NOTES

1 *I will come back* (14:3). Jesus was referring to His second coming to earth. Before He was crucified (John 14:3; Matthew 24:30-31) and again after His resurrection (John 21:22), Jesus promised that He would return to earth. He taught that the time of this event, referred to as *the day of Christ*, or simply *the Day*, is known only by God (Mark 13:32). Jesus promised to return in person, with a body (Acts 1:11), and His coming will be visible and unmistakable, with great glory and majesty. When He comes, He will judge everyone (II Timothy 4:1) and usher in the glorious new world of righteousness and peace. Some believe there will be two returns of Christ, one in the Rapture (1 Thess 4:17), the other after the great tribulation (Rev 7:14). Others see all the references in the Bible to Christ's return as aspects of one single event at the end of history. *The NIV Topical Study Bible*, page 1075. References: Amos 8:3, 9, 13; 9:11; Micah 4:6; 5:9-15; II Thess 1:6-10; Rev 19:11-16; Acts 1:9-11.

2 *no one comes to the Father except through me* (14:6). "If this seems offensively exclusive, let it be borne in mind that the one who makes this claim is the incarnate Word, the revealer of the Father. If God has no avenue of communication with mankind apart from his Word (incarnate or otherwise), mankind has no avenue of approach to God apart from that same Word, who became flesh and dwelt among us in order to supply such an avenue of approach. Jesus' claim, understood in the light of the prologue of the Gospel, is inclusive, not exclusive. All truth is God's truth, as all life is God's life; but God's truth and God's life are incarnate in Jesus." F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, p. 298.

3 *greater things than these* (14:12). "Jesus is not saying that His disciples would do more amazing miracles--after all, raising the dead is about as amazing as you can get. Rather, the disciples, working in the power of the Holy Spirit, would carry the gospel of God's kingdom out of Palestine and into the whole world." *Life Application Bible*, NIV, page 1911.

4 *whatever you ask in my name* (14:13). Asking in the name of Jesus means to ask in accordance with God's will and character. "God will not grant requests contrary to His nature or His will, and we cannot use his name as a magic formula to fulfill our selfish desires. If we are sincerely following God and seeking to do His will, then our requests will be in line with what He wants, and He will grant them." *Life Application Bible*, NIV, page 1911.

"Not simply prayer that mentions Jesus' name but...prayer aimed at carrying forward the work Jesus did--prayer that He Himself will answer (see also v. 14)." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1625.

5 *I will come to you* (14:18). Jesus was speaking of His resurrection appearances, of His second coming (see note 1 above) and about the Holy Spirit of God, who would be sent to dwell within them.

6 *meet his downfall*. Satan would meet his downfall, as Jesus said a few days earlier (John 12:31), but Satan did not know this. While he planned to overthrow Jesus, there was nothing in Jesus that Satan could lay hold of so as to gain an advantage over Him. Christ was sinless and victorious over evil. Jesus knew that when He died on the cross, He would not be the helpless victim to Satan, but rather He would be perfectly obeying the will of the Father. Jesus knew that the entire course of events would be overruled to God's end, salvation for the faithful and glory to God. In light of this, Jesus confidently pressed forward to do God's will.

LESSON 6

MORE TEACHING ON DISCIPLESHIP

John 15

As Jesus continued His farewell discourses to the disciples, He used the analogy of a vineyard to show God's careful work in the life of each believer. In the analogy, God the Father is the gardener (owner and caretaker), Jesus is the vine, and each believer is a branch on the vine. The Father continually works to prune the vine of unfruitful branches and trim the fruitful branches so that they produce more and more fruit. The branches depend on the vine for nourishment and the ability to bear fruit. Without being nourished by the vine, the branches dry up and become worthless. This illustration was simple for the disciples to understand. Every year in Palestine, the gardeners pruned their vineyards, cutting off dead lifeless wood and clipping the good branches to increase their yield. Jesus used this effective word picture to explain the Father's diligent attention to increasing the fruitfulness (i.e. the character and works of Christ) of each believer. Through abiding in Christ, the believer would draw the sustenance to *naturally* produce the "fruit" of a Christlike life. This fruitfulness would increase with time and the Father's care.

Jesus went on to explain His greatest desire for the disciples: that they live every day in the presence of God's love. Jesus explained that He had experienced the love of His Father as He continually chose to do the Father's will. They, too, would abide in the amazing love of God through obedience to Jesus' one command: "Love each other as I have loved you." Those who obeyed this command, Jesus promised, would experience the friendship of Jesus, would have the privilege of fruitful service for God, and would see the Father glorified as He faithfully answered their prayers. But as they cultivated and enjoyed loving fellowship with other believers, Jesus warned about persecution that would come from those outside that fellowship. "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first," He said. "I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."

The world would look on the disciples as aliens because Jesus had chosen them to be His people. Jesus warned them that they would experience the same

severe hostility He experienced from those who did not know the Father. But the faithful would recognize and appreciate their relationship to God.

Jesus declared that those who were hostile toward Him had no excuse for their sin, because with their own eyes they had witnessed Jesus' miracles, His godly teaching and holy lifestyle. The greatest judgment of all time would come to those cities and that generation which witnessed the very presence of the Son of God and still rejected Him (cf. Matthew 11:20-24).

In the face of the persecution they would encounter, the disciples were to testify about the Son of God, whose ministry they had witnessed firsthand. Jesus promised that the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom He would send, would also testify about Him. The Spirit would give them the words and courage to stand firm in their faith.

Read John 15:1-8

1. Who are the characters in Jesus' analogy, and who do they represent (15:1, 5)?

2. a. What is the job and purpose of the gardener (15:2)?

b. Through this analogy, what was Jesus revealing about the Father in His relationship to each believer (15:2)?

Reference: Note 2, *pruning*, page 63.

3. a. What part does the vine play (15:3-5)?

b. What was Jesus teaching about His relationship to each believer?

Note: *You are already clean ...* (15:3; i.e. trimmed clean for fruit bearing as in 15:2). The disciple is "clean" who keeps Jesus' word (14:23) and in whom Jesus' word finds lodging (cf. 15:7). Also implied is that His word is used by the Father in the pruning process.

4. a. Although the branch has no life without the vine, it is given a very important role. What is it?

b. What is fruitfulness in light of the following verses?

John 14:12

Ephesians 5:9

5. What results of abiding in Christ did Jesus promise in John 15:7-8?

Read John 15:9-17

6. a. What was Jesus' supreme desire for his disciples (15:9,11)?

b. What would make this possible (15:10,12, 17)?

7. What did Jesus say about His relationship with those who obey Him (15:13-16)?

Reference: Note 4, *whatever you ask in my name*, page 53.

Read John 15:18-27

8. a. What did Jesus tell His disciples about the animosity they would experience from the unbelieving world (15:18-21)?

Reference: Note 1, *the world hates you*, page 63.

b. What did Jesus say about the world's hatred of Him (15:22-25)?

9. Who would compel and enable the disciples to witness for Jesus Christ in spite of the persecution they would face (15:26-27; Acts 1:8)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Power to Live By

As the disciples walked with Jesus, they saw a man whom they wanted to be like. He was kind, patient and compassionate, yet firm about the truth. He had access to the infinite wisdom of God and was able to at once see the spiritual world as well as the physical. He was a whole person, at peace with God and Himself and able to unselfishly serve the needs of others. His calm and fearless walk of faith in the face of deadly enemies was awesome to the disciples.

In our quest for fulfillment, we all yearn to be whole, at peace, and significant to the lives of others as Jesus was. We long to overcome the fears, self-doubts, anxiety, indecisiveness and selfishness that keep us from functioning as God created us to function. We yearn to experience the joy, or inner well of strength, Jesus had in the midst of heartache and hardship.

The wonderful news of John 15 is that Jesus does not ask us to live the Christian life in our own strength. He speaks of a relationship where He provides what is needed within to produce the fruits of His character that lead to wholeness and fulfillment. As we live in obedience to His Word, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-8; 4:23;6:63;7:39) to indwell each believer (14:15-16,25). The Holy Spirit produces the very life of Christ in those who choose to yield to His leadership and draw spiritual life from the Word of God. The one who abides in Christ not only naturally bears the fruit of a Christlike life, but also experiences an effective prayer life and access to God with any request (15:7,16). He/she has a sense of the presence of God's love (15:9-10), the complete joy of Christ within (15:11), the sacrificial friendship and camaraderie of Jesus Christ (15:13-15), and the privilege of being His handpicked co-worker (15:16).

The kindest words of Jesus from the Gospel of John are found in His teaching that we do not have to produce the Christian life--the wholeness of Christ--through our own efforts. By abiding in His Word and drawing on the life-giving Spirit, we are able to allow Jesus Christ to walk in our shoes and live His life through us. Let's look at this power to live by which Jesus promised as we abide in Him.

1. a. What is the result of trying to follow godly principles and live the Christian life in our own strength?

b. How would you summarize the overall promise of John 15:1-8?

2. a. How does Jesus produce His life within us? John 14:16-17 (Rom 8:11)

b. How does the "vine life" Jesus spoke about begin? Ephesians 1:13-14 (John 3:3, 5-6)

3. How is the work of the Spirit described in the these verses?
John 14:26

Philippians 2:13

4. a. What battle does Galatians 5:16-17,19-23 describe?

b. How is this battle won according to Galatians 5:16,24-25?

Ephesians 5:18b

c. If we desire to abide in Christ, how are we filled with the Holy Spirit?
Luke 11:13

5. What choices can we make in order to continue to abide in the vine?
Psalm 119:11,105 (Psalm 1:2-3)

Ephesians 4:22-24

Ephesians 4:30-32

I John 1:9

6. a. The more we choose to allow the Holy Spirit to produce the character of Christ within us, the more He will be reflected from our lives. What does II Corinthians 3:17-18 promise?

b. What qualities of Jesus Christ will people see manifested more consistently in us as we choose to abide in Christ?
Galatians 5:22-23

Ephesians 1:17-19a

II Timothy 1:7

Summary

7. a. What does the analogy of the vine and branches show about your ability to live the Christian life apart from Jesus Christ?

b. What part does the Holy Spirit play in producing the life of Christ in you?

8. As the vine, Jesus promises to produce the fruits of His very nature through your life as you yield each area of your life to Him. Is there a situation that you have been trying to work out on your own? Perhaps this prayer would express the desire of your heart:

Lord, I confess I have been handling this situation in my own strength. Please take control of this area now and fill me with your Spirit of love, wisdom and self-control. In Jesus' Name.

9. a. What aspects of Christ's character do you especially want in your life?

b. Change is a process, but what does Jesus promise as you continually choose to abide in Him?

LESSON 6 NOTES

1 *the world hates you* (15:19). "As so often in the Johannine writings, 'the world' is the godless world, the world organized in opposition to God, and therefore opposed to His people. At the moment, Jesus Himself was the target for their opposition; in a few hours He would be the victim of their hostility. It was inevitable that His associates should incur the world's hatred as He Himself had done." F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, p. 313.

2 *Pruning*. "Jesus makes a distinction between two kinds of pruning: (1) separating and (2) cutting back branches. Fruitful branches are cut back to promote growth. In other words, God must sometimes discipline us to strengthen our character and faith. But branches that don't bear fruit are cut off at the trunk because not only are they worthless, but they often infect the rest of the tree. People who won't bear fruit for God or who try to block the efforts of God's followers will be cut off from His life-giving power." *Life Application Bible, NIV*, page 1913.

3 *cuts off* (15:2) refers to judgment (as in 15:6). *pruning* relates to increasing fruitfulness. In the New Testament, the figure of good fruit represents the product of a godly life (Mt 3:8; 7:16-20) or virtues of character (cf. Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:9; Php 1:11). *thrown into the fire and burned* (15:6) is viewed by some to reflect God's judgment on unbelievers *and* those who fall away from faith in Christ. Others believe that in light of such passages as 6:39; 10:27-28, these branches probably do not represent true believers. They argue that genuine salvation is evidenced by a life of fruitfulness since a branch out of contact with Christ is lifeless (15:2,4).

LESSON 7

JESUS' FAREWELL

John 16

Still in the Upper Room with His disciples the night before His death, Jesus continued to prepare them for His departure. He had already warned them of persecution, but further explained that because of their faith, they would be expelled from the synagogue¹. Some would even view killing Jesus' disciples as worship to God. Jesus gave such warnings so that these events would not surprise His followers, but instead would prove His knowledge of all things.

Understandably, Jesus' words about leaving them filled the disciples' hearts with sorrow. "But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away," Jesus said. "Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." Jesus promised that the Counselor², the Holy Spirit, would replace Jesus' visible presence. The Spirit would be like Jesus had been to them and would equip them to face the persecution and new challenges ahead.

Jesus also explained that the Holy Spirit would have a ministry like His to the unbelieving world. Jesus had been His disciples' defense in the world, but His presence and testimony had been an indictment on those who rejected the truth. Soon the Spirit would assume the place of Christ to the unbelieving world. He would expose sin, reveal God's standard of righteousness in Christ, and judge Satan, the "prince of this world," who stood behind those who opposed the One sent by God. The very presence of the Holy Spirit in the world would show that Jesus had won the battle against the evil one.

The Holy Spirit would also become the resident advocate and teacher of Jesus' disciples, continuing to unfold the truth about God and His Son to each succeeding generation of believers. The Gospel of John and all the New Testament Scriptures, inspired by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:21) would exemplify fulfillment of this prophecy.

2. What feelings did Jesus acknowledge in the disciples regarding His departure (16:5-6)?

3. Why did Jesus say His departure would benefit the disciples (16:7)?

Note: The Counselor could be translated: "Comforter, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Standby." *The Amplified Bible*.

4. What would the Holy Spirit do as He assumed the ministry of Jesus to the unbelieving world (16:8)?

Reference: Note 5, *Three important tasks*, page 75.

5. a. What would the Holy Spirit do for Jesus' disciples (16:12-13)?

b. To what end would the Holy Spirit's activity be directed (16:14-15)?

Note: *what is to come* (16:13) "probably means the whole Christian way or revelation (as presented and preserved in the apostolic writings) still future at the time Jesus spoke." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1628.

Read John 16:16-33

6. a. How did the disciples react to Jesus' predictions (16:16-18)?

b. What promise did Jesus make as He responded to their confusion (16:19-22)?

7. What did Jesus promise would bring *complete joy* to his disciples (16:23-27)?

Reference: Note 3, *Ask and you will receive*, page 75.

8. What clear statement did Jesus make as He drew His farewell discourses to a close (16:28)?

9. The disciples did not understand God's plan, but they believed that Jesus knew all things. What final prediction did Jesus make about the hours to come (16:32)?

10. a. Why had Jesus told the disciples what He did the night before His death (16:33a)?

b. What was His final promise to His dearly loved followers (16:33b)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

The Fulfillment of Prayer

As Jesus prepared His disciples for the challenges that would face them after He left, He told them that they could not live for Him without drawing on His power. As they allowed the Holy Spirit to control their lives, they would experience God's presence and witness incredible miracles. In this context, Jesus emphasized that an effective prayer life would "complete their joy" (16:24). The one who believed in and welcomed the Son would be put in open communication with a loving heavenly Father, to whom he/she could speak with all honesty and without fear.

The joy of prayer to which Jesus referred is not only found in answers to prayer requests, but even more in the privilege of direct interaction with a loving heavenly Father. Communication with Him fulfills the heart's desire to worship as well as the need for "a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). This One who hears our every plea is all-wise, all powerful and infinitely loving. He knows and accepts us completely and is available anywhere, anytime, and under any circumstances. In His presence we encounter His love and are transformed into His image (II Corinthians 3:18). In these facets of prayer are found the greatest treasures and keys to fulfillment.

Prayer is a natural instinct of man, and an effective prayer life is *essential* for fulfillment in life. In this lesson, we will be looking at biblical principles that instruct us in how to experience the joy of prayer.

1. a. Jesus said that we must welcome Him into our lives (John 16:26-27) and pray in His name to be heard by God. This is because to enter the presence of a holy God, we must be declared holy by God. How are we declared holy (righteous, cleansed from sin) by God?

Romans 3:22-25a

II Corinthians 5:21

b. In light of this, what did Jesus declare about gaining access to God?

John 14:6

Note: Forgiveness through Christ is not exclusive, but is available of all people in all nations (Matthew 28:19-20; I Timothy 2:4-6a).

2. Jesus instructed us to pray to the Father in the name of the Son. Who helps us pray?

Romans 8:26

Jude 20

Note: *in the Holy Spirit* means "according to the Spirit's promptings and with the power of the Spirit." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1921.

3. A simple acrostic has helped many to remember the different facets of prayer. It is:

Adoration

Confession

Thanks-giving

Supplication

Adoration, or Praise.

God is honored when we begin prayer with praise. What are some of the things for which we can praise God?

Psalm 145:3-7

Psalm 145:8-9, 13-19

Confession of sin.

a. What do the following reveal about this important aspect of prayer?

Psalm 66:18

I John 1:9

b. As we ask God for forgiveness of sin, what did Jesus instruct us to do? Mark 11:25

Thanksgiving.

What instructions about gratitude to God are found in these verses?

Psalm 100:4

Ephesians 5:20

Supplication, or prayer requests.

a. What kinds of things can we pray for ourselves?

Philippians 4:6

Matthew 6:11,13

James 1:5

Psalm 51:10

b. What kinds of things can we pray for others?
Ephesians 1:15-19a

Ephesians 3:16-19

James 5:14-16

b. **Optional:** What must we remember when God does not answer specific requests when or how we desire?
Romans 8:32

Psalms 25:10a

Psalms 27:14

Isaiah 55:8-9

Job 42:2-3

4. Prayer is essential to experiencing the fulfillment Jesus spoke about. Why should we go to Him in prayer?

I Peter 5:6-7

Philippians 4:7

Jeremiah 33:3

Summary

5. What components of prayer are represented by the **A C T S** acrostic?

Why are each of these facets of prayer important for fulfillment?

6. What principles regarding prayer from this lesson are most helpful to you?

7. Do you have a certain time of day when you read the Bible and pray? Have you ever kept a prayer list in order to see God's answers more clearly? These may be habits you would want to begin or renew in order to experience the fulfillment of prayer.

Tell God all that is in your heart, as one unloads one's heart, its pleasures and its pains, to a dear friend. Tell Him your troubles, that He may comfort you; tell Him your joys, that He may sober them; tell Him your longings, that He may purify them; tell Him your dislikes, that He may help you to conquer them; talk to Him about your temptations, that He may shield you from them; show Him the wounds of your heart, that He may heal them; lay bare your indifference to good, your depraved tastes for evil, your instability. Tell Him how self-love makes you unjust to others, how vanity tempts you to be insincere, how pride disguises you to yourself and to others.

If you thus pour out all your weaknesses, needs, troubles, there will be no lack of what to say. You will never exhaust the subject. It is continually being renewed. People who have no secrets from each other never want for subjects of conversation. They do not weigh their words, for there is nothing to be held back; neither do they seek for something to say. They talk out of the abundance of the heart, without consideration they say just what they think. Blessed are they who attain to such familiar, unreserved intercourse with God. 17th Century Archbishop Francois de la Mothe Fenelon

LESSON 7 NOTES

1 *expelled from synagogue.* "At the time when the Gospel was written these words had acquired a special relevance from the inclusion in the synagogue prayers of a curse on the Nazarenes [Christians], which was intended to ensure that the followers of Jesus could take no part in the service." F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, page 317.

2 *I will send Him [the Holy Spirit] to you* (16:7). This prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:1f).

3 *Ask and you will receive.* In John 16:23-27, "Jesus is talking about a new relationship between the believer and God. Previously, people approached God through priests. After Jesus' resurrection, any believer could approach God directly. A new day has dawned and now all believers are priests, talking with God personally and directly (see Hebrews 10:19-23). We approach God, not because of our own merit, but because Jesus, our great high priest, has made us acceptable to God." *Life Application Bible*, NIV, page 1915.

4 Reference: *In Jesus' Name.* See Note 4, *whatever you ask in My name*, page 53.

5 *"Three important tasks* of the Holy Spirit are (1) convicting the world of sin and calling it to repentance, (2) revealing the standard of God's righteousness to anyone who believes, because Christ would no longer be physically present on earth, and (3) demonstrating Christ's judgment over Satan." *Life Application Bible*, NIV, page 1914.

LESSON 8

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS OWN

John 17

Probably still in the Upper Room before leaving for the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus lifted His face to heaven and prayed before the disciples. In this prayer, known as His high-priestly prayer, Jesus first prayed for Himself, then for His disciples, and finally for all those who would believe as a result of the first disciples' witness.

"Father, the hour has come," He began. "Glorify your Son that your Son may glorify you." It was time for the cross, which Jesus had known all along would climax His earthly ministry. The dignity with which He would endure the cross, God's means of redemption for mankind,¹ would reveal both the character of Jesus Christ and the limitless love of God for man.

Above all, the cross would make eternal life possible for those who would become God's children. In His prayer, Jesus defined eternal life as an intimate relationship with God. "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (17:3). Jesus stated that the cross would complete the work the Father had for Him on earth, and was the obedient way for the Son to return to His Father's presence. There, Jesus would resume His eternal place of glory where all that belonged to His Father--dominion, wisdom and power--also belonged to Him (17:5,10).

After praying for Himself regarding the cross before Him, Jesus prayed for His disciples, whom He described as "those whom you gave me out of the world" (17:6).² In response to the promptings of God's Spirit, Jesus' disciples had come to believe with certainty that Jesus had come from God and had spoken God's words. Jesus did not pray that God would take these men and women out of the world, for they would be His ambassadors in reaching the world (17:21,23; II Corinthians 5:18-20). He prayed instead that God would protect them from the evil one³ and sanctify them (set them apart and produce His character in them) as they went about the task of witnessing for Him in a

hostile world.⁴ Jesus committed Himself to the sanctification of His disciples (17:19).

After this, Jesus prayed for all those who would believe in Him as a result of the first disciples' witness. With utter confidence in God's ability to reach the world through this small band of followers, Jesus looked forward to the millions who would be redeemed as a result of their faithful testimony. The essence of Jesus' prayer for all who would believe was for unity, or oneness.⁵ This would come from oneness with God. "Just as you are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us so that the world may believe..." (17:21). Jesus prayed that the love which united Him with His Father would fill His church and would demonstrate Christ's reality and God's redemptive love to the world.

Finally, Jesus prayed that those who believed in Him would be with Him forever, beholding and sharing His eternal glory. Even after His departure to heaven, Jesus promised that He would continue to reveal the Father to believers so that they would experience the Father's love and Christ's abiding presence.

Read John 17:1-5

1. a. To what did Jesus refer in John 17:1 when He said, "Father, the time has come" (cf. 2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23,27; 13:1)?

b. To what end did Jesus ask the Father to glorify the Son (17:1)?

Note: To *glorify* means to reveal and honor.

c. What would the cross reveal about the Father and the Son (Romans 5:8; 8:31-34)?

2. How did Jesus describe eternal life (17:3)?

3. a. What had Jesus purposed to do on earth (17:4)

b. What did He look forward to beyond the cross (17:5)?

Read John 17:6-19

4. What did Jesus say was true of those who responded to God's truth through Him (17:6,8)?

Reference: Note 1, *those whom you gave me*, page 85.

5. What did Jesus pray for the disciples as He left them to evangelize a hostile world (17:11-12,14-16)?

Note: Judas was the "one doomed to destruction," who was lost because he chose to betray Jesus (see Psalm 41:9). **References:** Note 2, *evil one*, page 85, Note 3, *the world*, page 85, Note 5, *by the power of your name*, page 86.

6. What would Jesus' words later produce in the disciples' lives (17:13)?

7. a. How would Jesus Christ's followers be sanctified (set apart for service and built in godly character) in the midst of their ministry to the world (17:17-18)?

b. To what task did Jesus also commit Himself (17:19)?

Read John 17:20-26

8. a. Who did Jesus include in His prayers (17:20)?

b. What was Jesus' primary desire for all believers and why (17:21-23)?

Reference: Note 4, *unity*, or *oneness*, page 86.

9. a. What did Jesus will for all who would believe in Him (17:24)?

b. As He concluded His prayer, what did Jesus promise to do and why (17:26)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Bonds of Love

The deepest need in our quest for fulfillment is identity, a place of belonging, among people who love us unconditionally. This is the need Jesus addressed in His high priestly prayer the night before His death. In this prayer, He revealed God's desire that we first and foremost experience bonds of love with Him and a place in His eternal family. This oneness with God and sanctification through His word produces unity and loving relationships with other believers. The love and unity among believers then bears witness to the unbelieving world of the reality of Christ, drawing many to the light of God's love (John 17:23).

But mighty forces are at work to destroy the bonds of love and unity which fulfill individual believers and build the body of Christ. Jesus prayed against these forces in His intercession for those who would believe. First He prayed for protection against the evil one (17:15), who is behind all destruction of faith and healthy relationships (Ephesians 6:11-12). Selfishness and pride can also destroy oneness among believers, so Jesus prayed that His people would be filled with the Father's love and would be unified by Jesus' indwelling presence.

The unity in God's family for which Jesus prayed can produce the purest bonds of love because it is sustained by the infinite love of God within individual believers. This love, unselfish and always with the best interest of others in mind, allows the believer to give and receive the sense of identity and

unconditional love that fulfills human longing. As we continue our study of *Quest for Fulfillment*, let's take a look at the bonds of love God has designed to fulfill the children in His family.

1. Where is our identity, or place of belonging, as a believer in Christ?
John 1:12

Ephesians 2:19-22

I Timothy 3:15

2. a. The household of God is also referred to as the "body" of Christ on earth, of which Christ is the Head and believers are the various parts (cf. Ephesians 4:4-6,15-16; 5:30). Selfish choices can tear down the body and prevent fulfillment of needs. What destructive attitudes and actions must be avoided?
I Corinthians 3:3

Psalms 101:5 (James 3:14)

Proverbs 20:19

b. What other forces can destroy the oneness in the body of Christ for which Jesus prayed?

Matthew 7:1, 3

Philippians 2:21

I Timothy 6:10

Titus 1:16

c. What effect does such behavior within the body of Christ produce in the non-believing world? Romans 2:23-24 (II Peter 2:2)

d. What must we remember when we find ourselves in conflict with other believers? Ephesians 6:12

3. a. List the attitudes and actions we can choose which will build the body of Christ and allow us to find fulfillment within it?

Romans 12:9-19

Colossians 3:16-17

Ephesians 4:1-3

Ephesians 4:15-16

b. What does the Spirit of God produce within which builds the body of Christ and allows us to find fulfillment within it?

I Corinthians 13:4-8a

Galatians 5:22-23

c. What does God want to happen through the church's united witness to the world?

LESSON 8 NOTES

1 *those whom you gave me* (17:6,9,24). Commentators agree that this does not speak of predestination. Barclay writes: "This does not mean that God destined some men to be disciples and some to refuse discipleship. Think of it this way. A parent dreams great dreams for his son; he works out a future for him, but the son can refuse that future and go his own way. If we love someone we are always dreaming of his future and planning for greatness; but the dream and the plan can be frustrated. God has His plan, His dream, His destiny for every man; and our tremendous responsibility is that we can accept or reject it. To be given to Jesus by God means that the Spirit of God moves our hearts to respond to the appeal of Jesus." William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, Vol 2, pgs 212-3.

2 *evil one* (17:15), or Satan. "The whole world lies in the power of the evil one who dominates it as a usurper (1 John 5:19; cf. 1 John 2:13f.; 3:12; 5:18); Jesus prays that they may be delivered from him, just as he had already taught them to pray for such deliverance (Matthew 6:13)." F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, page 333.

"It is uplifting to feel that God is the sentinel who stands over our lives to guard us from the assaults of evil. The fact that we fall so often is due to the fact that we try to meet life in our own strength and forget to seek the help and to remember the presence of our protecting God." William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, Volume 2, page 216.

3 *the world* (17:9,14-17,18,21). John uses the word "world" for human society organizing itself without God. Jesus prayed that His disciples would be strengthened to go into the world to reveal God and win the world back to Him (17:21,23).

4 *unity, or oneness* (17:21-23). "Jesus' great desire for his disciples was that they would become one. He wanted them unified as a powerful witness to the reality of God's love. Are you helping to unify the body of Christ, the church? You can pray for other Christians, avoid gossip, build others up, work together in humility, give your time and money, exalt Christ, and refuse to get side-tracked arguing over divisive matters." *Life Application Bible*, NIV, p. 1917.

5 *by the power of your name* (17:11). "The name of God in the Old Testament denotes not only His character (as in verse 17:6 above), but also His power; cf. Psalm 20:1; Psalm 54:1; Proverbs 18:10. By the Father's power, imparted to Jesus, Jesus Himself had guarded them as a treasure entrusted to Him by the Father." F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, page 332.

LESSON 9

ARREST, TRIAL & CRUCIFIXION

John 18-19

After Jesus' prayer of John 17, He and His disciples left the house where they had celebrated the Passover meal. They went outside the city to a place where they had often met in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. Because it was familiar, Judas led the Roman troops and Jewish officials straight to Jesus for arrest. Carrying torches and weapons, they seemed to have expected a search for Jesus among the trees and caves. Instead, He stepped out before them and asked, "Who is it you want?" When they answered, "Jesus of Nazareth," He replied, "I am He." With this, the entire company drew back and fell to the ground¹. Surely Judas, who was leading them, stood out to the shocked disciples.

Repeating that He was the one they sought, Jesus requested that they take Him and let the disciples go. But Peter took out his sword and attacked, cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus touched the man's ear and healed it (Luke 22:51) and instructed Peter to put away his sword. "Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" Jesus asked, bringing calm to the volatile situation.

Then the high priest's officers bound Jesus and took Him to Annas², a former high priest and the father-in-law of the current high priest, Caiaphas. Annas questioned Jesus in an attempt to get evidence to convict Him of blasphemy. Jewish law required that witnesses produce evidence of a criminal's guilt, so Jesus asked why Annas did not question those who had heard Him speak instead. For this answer, one of the high priest officials rebuked Jesus and struck Him in the face. Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas, who had already determined that Jesus should die (18:14).

In the meantime, Peter and another disciple, perhaps John,³ had followed Jesus. The other disciple was known and was admitted at the high priest's home, and he facilitated Peter's entry. There, Peter was first questioned about his association with Jesus by the maid-servant and doorkeeper, then by men

standing by the fire, and finally by one of the high priest's servants related to the man whose ear Peter cut off in the garden. With each inquiry, Peter emphatically denied knowing Jesus. Then the rooster crowed, completing the fulfillment of Peter's denial which Jesus had predicted (13:37-38).

During night proceedings with the Jewish council (cf. Luke 22:63-71), it was determined that Jesus should die for blasphemy. But before Roman authorities, the Jewish leaders would accuse Jesus of treason in order to obtain a death sentence. Under Roman rule, the Jews had no authority to carry out a death penalty, or they would have killed Jesus by stoning. John notes that Jesus had predicted His death would come by crucifixion (cf. 18:32; Matthew 20:18-19).

Completing their trial in the very early morning hours, the Jewish leaders took Jesus to the Roman governor, Pilate, at his palace. They did not even have a written indictment against Jesus when they approached Pilate, probably assuming Pilate would take them at their word. Because the case was so vaguely presented, Pilate did not initially assess that it was worth his time to hear (18:31). But when they charged Jesus with claiming to be king of the nation (cf. Luke 23:2-3), which suggested revolutionary intent, Pilate took Jesus aside to question Him.

"Are *you* the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked Him, his emphasis on "you" signifying that to Pilate the prisoner appeared anything but kingly. Jesus responded, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

Even though Jesus admitted to being a king, Pilate saw a man harmless in manner with no political agenda. He went back to the Jews and declared Jesus innocent, suggesting that he release Jesus under the yearly practice of releasing one prisoner at Passover. But the Jews responded by demanding the release of a criminal named Barabbas⁴, not Jesus.

To appease the Jews, Pilate had Jesus flogged⁵, after which the soldiers mocked Him, putting a crown of thorns and purple robe on Him and striking Him repeatedly in the face. After this brutal treatment, Pilate presented Jesus to the

Jews and pronounced Him innocent. Immediately, the chief priests and their officials shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" They insisted that because Jesus had claimed to be the Son of God, Pilate should allow them to crucify Jesus for blasphemy according to their law.

With this new information, Pilate became superstitiously troubled with the thought of God being involved in the situation. He took Jesus into the palace and asked Him, "Where do you come from?" When Jesus did not answer, Pilate reminded Jesus that he had the power to free or crucify Him. Jesus responded, "You would have no power over Me if it were not given to you from above." He told Pilate that those who actually brought Him to the governor carried greater guilt.

Pilate, probably moved by fear of the inexplicable person before him as well as by a conviction of Jesus' innocence, renewed his effort to release Jesus. But the Jews kept shouting and accused Pilate of disloyalty to Caesar if he set Jesus free. Finally, Pilate sat down in the judgment seat to make a decision and asked, "Shall I crucify your king?" Desperate to see Jesus die, the chief priests answered with a shocking statement of blasphemy for a Jew: "We have no king but Caesar."

So Pilate relented to the death sentence, sending a sign to be placed on the cross that read in Aramaic, Latin and Greek: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. The chief priests protested, but Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

The soldiers led Jesus to Golgotha outside the city where He was crucified between two other men at 9 a.m. (Mark 15:25). Three hours later at noon, as the Passover sacrifices were being prepared in Jerusalem, the Lamb of God⁷ still hung on the cross. Some bystanders, like the soldiers and religious leaders, jeered (cf. Matthew 27:41-44; Luke 23:35-37) while others, like His mother, aunt, a few other women, and the apostle John, stood by the cross filled with grief. Looking down upon them, Jesus asked His mother and John to care for each other, and Mary lived in John's home thereafter. Between noon and 3 o'clock, there was darkness over the land (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44-45). Then, after four to six hours on the cross, Jesus knew that the time

of His death had come. He asked for a drink and received wine vinegar from the soldiers. Then with the words, "It is finished," Jesus bowed His head, and offered up His spirit.

The Jewish leaders had insisted that the bodies be taken down before the special Passover Sabbath, so the soldiers broke the legs of the two other men to hasten their death. But when they came to Jesus and found Him dead, they made certain of His death by piercing His side with a spear. After this, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus secured Jesus' body from Pilate and buried it in a nearby tomb.

Read John 18

John 18:1-11

1. a. Who accompanied Judas to arrest Jesus (18:3)?

b. Why was this unusual?

2. a. In what ways did Jesus maintain control over His own arrest (18:4-11)?

b. How did His arrestors react to Jesus' declaration "I am he" (18:6)?

Reference: Note 1, *fell to the ground*, page 96.

John 18:12-27

3. The Jewish leaders had to work through the night and see Pilate in the early morning hours in order to finish Jesus' trial and execution before the Passover Sabbath. What is so ironic about their zeal to remain *holy* with regard to Jewish law?

4. a. What did the arrestors first do with Jesus (18:12-13, 19)?

Reference: Note 2, *Annas*, page 97.

b. Jewish law required that witnesses produce evidence to convict a criminal. In light of this, how did Jesus respond to Annas' questions and the official who struck Him in the face (18:20-23)?

c. What did Annas do with Jesus (18:24)?

5. While Peter had had the courage to defend Jesus in the garden and to follow Him after His arrest, what did he do upon entering the courtyard of the high priest (18:17-18, 25-27; see also Mark 14:71-72)?

Reference: Note 3, *John followed*, page 97.

John 18:28-40

6. Why would the Jews not enter Pilate's palace (18:28)?

7. No doubt Pilate was incensed at being awakened so early in the morning to judge a case without even a written indictment. What caused Pilate to hear the case (18:29-33; Luke 23:20)?

8. After asking Pilate whether his question was from a Roman or a Jewish perspective, how did Jesus answer the governor's question (18:36-37)?

Note: *Is that your own idea . . .?* (18:34). If Pilate's question (v. 33) was from Roman perspective, it meant, "Are you a rebel?" If the question had originated with the Jews, it meant, "Are you claiming to be the Messianic King?"

9. a. How did Pilate respond (18:38)?

b. When Pilate suggested He release Jesus under a Passover amnesty tradition, how did the Jews respond (18:39-40)?

Reference: Note 4, *Barabbas*, page 97.

John 19:1-16

10. a. How did Pilate try to appease the Jews (19:1-5)?

Reference: Note 5, *Flogging*, page 98.

b. What clash of opinion did Pilate have with the Jews (19:6)?

11. a. What caused Pilate to question Jesus again (19:7-9)?

b. What did Jesus declare in response to Pilate's reasoning (19:10-11)?

12. a. When Pilate tried to set Jesus free, how did the Jews coerce him to pronounce the death penalty (19:12-15a)?

Reference: Note 6, *the sixth hour*, page 98.

b. What amazing statement did the chief priests make in response to Pilate's final question, "Shall I crucify your king?" (19:15b).

John 19:17-27

13. How did God, through Pilate, accurately describe Jesus to all (19:19-22)?

14. How was the Old Testament prophecy of Psalm 22:18 fulfilled at the cross (19:23-24)?

15. As her eldest son, how did Jesus care for His mother from the cross (19:25-27)?

John 19:28-42

16. After several hours on the cross, how did Jesus end His work of redemption (19:28-30)?

17. a. Why did the Jews want the bodies taken from the crosses before dark (19:31)?

b. How did the soldiers ensure that Jesus was dead (19:32-34)?

Note: Blood and water would come from the spear piercing the pericardium (the sac that surrounds the heart) and the heart itself. *NIV Study Bible*, p. 1635.

c. What did the author pause to point out about Jesus death (19:35-37)?

Note: *The man who saw* it was either the author himself, which many believe, or someone he deemed completely reliable. *Scripture . . . fulfilled* (19:36-37). God overruled to fulfill the prophecy of Psalm 34:20 and Zechariah 12:10 in the death of Christ.

18. Who boldly asked Pilate for Jesus' body, and what did they do (19:38-42; Matthew 27:59-60)?

Reference: Note 7, *Joseph...and Nicodemus*, page 98.

Summary

19. a. What do these chapters teach you about the nature of man?

b. What do they reveal about religious hypocrisy?

20. What do these chapters reveal about the character of God in the face of sinful man?

21. a. What do these verses reveal about the Cross and you?
John 3:16

Romans 5:8

Isaiah 53:3-12

b. What is your response to God's sacrifice for you?

LESSON 9 NOTES

1 fell to the ground (18:6). "They came to arrest a meek peasant and instead were met in the dim light by a majestic person." *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1631. "The men may have been startled by the boldness of Jesus' question, or by the words 'I am He,' a declaration of His divinity (Exodus 3:14). Or perhaps they were overcome by His obvious power and authority." *Life Application Bible*, page 1918. "*I am he*" (Gk. *ego eimi*) (18:5,6) could be understood by the Jewish hearers as a declaration of power and divinity because it was equivalent

to the God of Israel's self-identification "I am He" in Exodus 3:14. F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, page 341.

2 Annas (18:13-24).

a.) Annas had been high priest from A.D. 6 to 15. Four of his sons had also held the high priesthood and Caiaphas was his son-in-law. The high priest position had been for a lifetime, but with the coming of Roman governors to Palestine, the high priest position had switched hands often, attained by political jockeying and close co-operation with the Roman governors. The family of Annas was immensely wealthy, and they had intrigued and bribed their way into office. Annas remained the power behind it all. It is believed, since the shops in the Temple where sacrificial birds and animals were sold was called The Bazaars of Annas, that the family wealth came from the extortioning in the Temple which Jesus came against in John 2.

b.) *This extortion* was undergirded by the fact that all victims offered as sacrifices had to be flawless. Temple inspectors would determine if they were, and sacrificial animals from outside the Temple were always found to be flawed. Rather than be embarrassed by rejection, people bought their sacrifices at the Temple, only there a pair of doves which cost 4p outside the Temple cost 75p. William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, page 226.

3 John followed. John records that Peter "and another disciple" (18:15-16) followed Jesus to the courtyard. While it remains unsure as to whether this unknown disciple was John or a Jerusalem disciple, many believe it was John. This is because John does not ever mention his name in the gospel when speaking about himself (ex: 13:23). It also explains the detail with which John records the happenings in the high priest's courtyard.

4 Barabbas. "Barabbas was a rebel against Rome and although he had committed murder, he was probably a hero among the Jews. The Jews hated being governed by Rome and paying taxes to the despised government. Barabbas, who had led a rebellion and failed, was released instead of Jesus, the only One who could truly help Israel." *Life Application Bible*, page 1921.

5 "Flogging could have killed Jesus. The usual procedure was to bare the upper half of the victim's body and tie his hands to a pillar before whipping him with a three-pronged whip. The number of lashes was determined by the severity of the crime, up to 40 were permitted under Jewish law (Dt. 25:3). After being flogged, Jesus also endured other agonies recorded here and in the other Gospels (Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23)." *Life Application Bible*, page 1922. Scourging before sentencing for guilt was illegal by Roman law, and Pilate had declared Jesus innocent (18:38).

6 *the sixth hour* (19:14). In Jewish reckoning, Pilate's pronouncement recorded in John would have been about noon. However, other gospels record Jesus crucified at the third hour, or 9 a.m. Jewish reckoning. The only possible explanation for the discrepancy is that John was using Roman time, in which case the appearance before Pilate would have been at 6:00 a.m. and the crucifixion at 9:00 a.m. For other time references, see Mt 27:45-46; Mk 15:33-34; Lk 23:44. *The NIV Study Bible*, page 1634.

7 *Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus* "were secret followers of Jesus. They were afraid to make this allegiance known because of their positions in the Jewish community. Joseph was a leader and honored member of the Jewish council. Nicodemus, also a member of the council, had come to Jesus by night (3:1) and later tried to defend him before the other religious leaders (7:50-52). Yet they risked their reputations to provide for Jesus' burial." *Life Application Bible*, page 1925.

LESSON 10

THE RESURRECTION

John 20

In her love for Jesus, Mary Magdalene could hardly wait to go to the tomb of her Lord after the Sabbath had ended. She was up before daybreak on the first day of the week. In the darkness, she made her way to the tomb. But to her horror, Mary found the tomb open and empty. She ran to tell Peter and John, who quickly returned to investigate. They found the tomb vacant with the grave clothes lying as if the body had moved through them. This was not the work of a grave robber. Jesus had to have risen, as He promised. But the disciples still did not understand the Scriptures that had prophesied the resurrection (cf. Psalm 16:10; Psalm 110:1,4; Isaiah 53:11; Luke 18:33).

After Peter and John had left, Mary came back and remained outside the tomb, crying. As she looked inside again, she saw two angels sitting where Jesus' body had been. They asked her why she was crying. In her grief, Mary responded, "They have taken my Lord away, and I don't know where they have put Him." Turning around, she saw someone standing there, although she did not recognize that person as Jesus until He said, "Mary." She cried out, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). "Don't cling to Me," He told her. "Instead, go and tell the disciples that you have seen Me and that soon I will go back to the Father." Mary ran to tell the disciples.

That evening, when the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jews Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst. "Peace be with you!" He said, and He showed them His wounded hands and side. "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you," Jesus told the disciples. Then He gave them authority to proclaim forgiveness in His name to all who would believe.

But Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not among them when Jesus appeared. When the disciples told him about seeing the Lord, Thomas insisted he must see and feel the wounds in the Lord's hands and side before he would believe. Jesus granted his request eight days later when once again He appeared to the disciples. With this, Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!"

Read John 20:1-9

1. a. Describe events and details of this Sunday morning that stand out to you?

Note: By Jewish reckoning, any part of a day constitutes a day. Jesus was put on the cross Friday morning, was laid in the tomb Friday afternoon, and rose from the dead Sunday morning. Jesus had prophesied that He would rise on the third day (Luke 18:33; Mark 8:31; Matthew 27:63).

b. How did John respond when he saw empty grave clothes (20:8)?

Note: *saw and believed* (20:8). It is assumed from the use of the word "believe" in His gospel that John was referring to belief in the resurrection (cf. 20:29).

c. Even though they most probably believed that Jesus had risen, what did they still not understand (20:9)?

Note: Old Testament prophecies regarding the resurrection include Psalm 16:10; 110:1, 4; Isaiah 53:11; Hosea 6:2.

Read John 20:10-18

2. What seemed to be Mary's state of mind at this point (20:10-14)?

Note: Note 1, *Mary of Magdala*, page 107.

3. What was her amazing experience (20:15-16)?

4. What did Jesus instruct her to do (20:17)?

Reference: Note 2, *I have not yet returned to My Father*, page 107.

Read John 20:19-23

5. Describe the Jesus' meeting with the disciples later that day. How did the atmosphere change in their midst (20:19-20)?

6. What did Jesus commission the disciples to do, and how did He equip them for this task (20:21-23)?

References: Note 3, *breathed on them*, and Note 4, *If you forgive*, pages 108.

Read John 20:24-31

7. a. How did Jesus meet Thomas' need for evidence (20:24-27)?

b. What did Thomas's response (20:28) add to that of others who had seen their resurrected Lord (20:16,20)?

8. What blessing did Jesus declare in response to Thomas' faith (20:29)?

References: Note 5, *Because you have seen me*, page 108.

9. John declared that he had selected only a few of the many miraculous signs they had witnessed in the writing of his gospel. What was the apostle's purpose in selecting the miracles which he presented in his Gospel (20:31, considered the key verse in the book of John)?

Reference: Note 6, *The Resurrection Appearances of Jesus*, pages 108.

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Absolute Assurance

The reality of the resurrection became certain as over a 40 day period, Jesus appeared in bodily form to more than 500 people⁷--too many to support the hallucination theory of skeptics. After this, Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9), but later appeared to Stephen (Acts 7:55-60), then Paul (Acts 9:3-8; 18:9-10; 22:17-21; 23:11), and again to the apostle John (Revelation 1:10- 19).

It is hard to imagine the overwhelming feelings the disciples must have experienced as they encountered their resurrected Lord. It was enough to see Jesus

turn water into wine, still storms on open seas, heal the sick, blind and lame, feed thousands with virtually nothing, cast out demons, walk on water, and raise the dead. But now His predictions of His own resurrection had come true; He stood before them in bodily form. Suddenly it became clear that Jesus was *far* more powerful than those who had ordered His death. He had *allowed* the cross to happen. What did this mean? Seeing the resurrected Lord was only the beginning of their spiritual journey, as it is of ours.

While their understanding would unfold with time, the resurrection of Jesus Christ immediately became the foundation of the early believers' faith. "If Christ has not been raised," Paul declared in his letter to the Corinthian believers, "our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (I Corinthians 15:14). Why? Because biblical Christianity is born and sustained through a personal relationship with the *living* Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, the early believers began their journey into the grace of God with their eyes fixed on their risen Savior. The resurrection meant everything to them as they proclaimed Jesus to the world as *the* way to receive God's forgiveness and everlasting fulfillment.

The resurrection remains the foundation for our faith today. The fulfillment Christ is able to give us is made possible because He is a living Savior and Lord. As we near the close of this study, we will reflect on the absolute assurance that this, the most outstanding truth of history, provides for our faith and fulfillment.

1. a. The resurrection of Jesus Christ proved His deity and validated all His promises. What are some of the claims Jesus made which relate to fulfillment? (*Verses in parenthesis are optional.*)

John 10:10b

John 4:14 (6:35;7:38;12:46) *regarding spiritual hunger and thirst:*

John 14:16-17 (16:13)

John 16:33 (14:27)

b. What does Matthew 28:20b add to this?

2. a. The resurrection proved that Jesus Christ reigns in God's kingdom.
What does this reign include?

John 1:3-4

Colossians 1:15-17

b. What does the following promise in the future? Philippians 2:10-11

c. **Optional:** What spiritual truth is declared in Acts 17:31 and John 5:22?
What does the resurrection of Jesus Christ assure those who have received Him, according to Romans 4:25 and Romans 3:23-24?

3. a. The resurrection demonstrated Jesus' power over death, thereby giving us absolute assurance of the eternal life He promised. What promises about eternal life did Jesus make?

John 5:24

John 11:25-26

John 14:2-3

b. What phrase in II Timothy 1:10 clearly states what Christ accomplished on the cross for the believer?

4. a. What observations about Jesus' resurrection body in John 20:19-20 and Luke 24:39 help us understand what our resurrection bodies will be like?

b. What do the following verses tell us about the bodies we are promised in heaven?

I Corinthians 15:42-44

Philippians 3:21

Revelation 21:4

5. The resurrection of Jesus Christ also allows us to be "raised" from spiritual death (existence apart from God) to spiritual life (existence in God's loving presence). How do the following describe this biblical truth?

Romans 6:3-4

Note: *baptism* means *identification with*.

Romans 8:11 (Galatians 2:20)

Summary

6. Why is biblical Christianity dependent on the resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Reference: Building on the Basics commentary, paragraph 3, page 103.

7. What does the resurrection of Jesus Christ mean to you in light of your quest for fulfillment?

8. Which of Jesus' promises, validated by His resurrection, are most meaningful to you?

9. When did the resurrection as a fact of history become real to you? Why is certainty about the resurrection essential to your witness for Christ?

References: Note 7, *Six proofs for the resurrection*, page 110.

LESSON 10 NOTES

1 *Mary of Magdala* was the first to see Jesus after His resurrection. Previously, He had cast seven demons out of Mary (Luke 8:2-3) She was among the women who attended the Lord and disciples during the Galilean ministry, providing for them out of their means (cf. Mark 15:41). Mark and Matthew agree that she witnessed the resurrection, and Luke implies so (cf. Luke 23:49,55; 24:10). John's gospel rules out confusing Mary of Magdala with Mary of Bethany, although they both were intensely devoted to Jesus.

2 *I have not yet returned to my Father* (20:17). "The meaning appears to be that the ascension was still some time off. Mary would have opportunity to see Jesus again, so she need not cling to Him. Alternatively, Jesus may be reminding Mary that after His crucifixion she cannot have Him with her except through the Holy Spirit (see 16:5-16)." *The NIV Study Bible*, p. 1636

3 *breathed on them* (20:22). This action pointed back to the life which God breathed into man at creation (Genesis 2:7). Here the Lord Jesus breathed on the disciples that they should receive spiritual life through the Holy Spirit, who would indwell them at Pentecost after Jesus' glorification 50 days later (John 7:39; Acts 2).

4 *If you forgive...*(20:23). Jesus was not giving the apostles the right which only God has of forgiving sin (Mark 2:7). While some commentators believe Jesus was referring to church or apostolic authority, others believe He spoke of discernment given by the Holy Spirit. Others believe He was giving all believers authority to proclaim that God will forgive the sin of those who believe in Jesus Christ and subsequently not forgive the sin of those who refuse to believe in Him.

5 *Because you have seen me* (20:29). "Some people think they would believe in Jesus if they could see a definite sign or miracle. But Jesus says we are blessed if we can believe without seeing. We have all the proof we need in the words of the Bible and the testimony of believers. A physical appearance would not make Jesus any more real to us than He is now." *Life Application Bible*, p1928.

6 *The Resurrection Appearances of Jesus Christ* (Walvoord & Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary on the New Testament*, page 91).

FORTY DAYS--from Resurrection to Ascension

SUNDAY MORNING

1. An angel rolled away the stone from Jesus' tomb before sunrise (Matthew 28:2-4).
2. Women who followed Jesus visited Jesus' tomb and discovered Him missing (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1-4; Luke 24:1-3; John 20:1).
3. Mary Magdalene left to tell Peter and John (John 20:1-2).
4. The other women, remaining at the tomb, saw two angels who told them about the Resurrection (Matt. 28:5-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-8).

5. Peter and John visited Jesus' tomb (Luke 24:12; John 20:3-10).

6. Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb and Jesus appeared to her alone in the garden (Mark 16:9-11; John 20:11-18): *His first appearance*.

7. Jesus appeared to the other women (Mary, mother of James, Salome, and Joanna) (Matt. 28:8-10): *His second appearance*.

8. Those who guarded Jesus' tomb reported to the religious rulers how the angel rolled away the stone. They were then bribed (Matt. 28:11-15).

9. Jesus appeared to Peter (1 Cor. 15:5): *His third appearance*.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

10. Jesus appeared to two men on the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:12-13; Luke 24:13-32): *His fourth appearance*.

SUNDAY EVENING

11. The two disciples from Emmaus told others they saw Jesus (Luke 24:33-35).

12. Jesus appeared to 10 apostles, with Thomas absent, in the Upper Room (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25): *His fifth appearance*.

THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY

13. Jesus appeared to the 11 Apostles, including Thomas, and Thomas believed (John 20:26-28): *His sixth appearance*.

THE FOLLOWING 32 DAYS

14. Jesus appeared to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee and performed a miracle of fish (John 21:1-14): *His seventh appearance*.

15. Jesus appeared to 500 (including the Eleven) at the mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18; 1 Cor. 15:6): *His eighth appearance.*

16. Jesus appeared to His half-brother James (1 Cor. 15:7): *His ninth appearance.*

17. At Jerusalem Jesus appeared again to His disciples (Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:3-8): *His 10th appearance.*

18. On the Mount of Olives, Jesus ascended into heaven while the disciples watched (Mark 16:19-20; Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-12).

7 Six proofs that Jesus actually rose from the dead.

1. The resurrection was foretold by Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

2. The resurrection is the only reasonable explanation for His empty tomb.

3. The resurrection is the only reasonable explanation for the appearances of Jesus Christ to His disciples.

4. The resurrection is the only reasonable explanation for the beginning of the Christian Church.

5. The resurrection is the only reasonable explanation for the transformation of the disciples.

6. The witness of the Apostle Paul, and the transformation of his life, can only be reasonably explained because of the resurrection. *Ten Basic Steps Toward Christian Maturity Teacher's Manual*, Here's Life Publishers, pages 58-64.

LESSON 11

"FEED MY SHEEP"

Epilogue (John 21)

In closing his book, John recounts the third appearance of Jesus to a group of His disciples. It was early one morning at the Sea of Galilee when seven of the disciples had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. Jesus, whom they did not recognize at first, stood on the shore and called out to them to cast their net on the right side of the boat for a catch. When the disciples followed His instructions, their net filled up with so many fish that they could not even pull it into the boat. John turned to Peter and said, "It is the Lord." Immediately, Peter jumped out of the boat and swam to shore. The rest followed in the boat, dragging the 153 large fish in a miraculously unbroken net. When they all reached the shore, Jesus had made a charcoal fire and cooked breakfast for them.

After they had finished eating, Jesus began an important conversation with Peter. As they walked together, Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love Me?" Repeatedly Peter answered, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love you." Each time Jesus responded, "Feed my sheep." Then Jesus warned Peter that his life of service would end in glorifying God through martyrdom. Even so, "Follow Me!" was Jesus' command to this faithful disciple. Then Peter looked back to see John following them and asked, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus replied that this was none of Peter's concern. "You must follow Me." John closed his gospel with a vow that his account had been recorded with absolute honesty. "Jesus did many other things as well," the aged apostle added. "If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written."

Read John 21:1-14

1. a. Describe the scene with regard to time, location, setting, people present, and action (21:1-4).

b. What wonderful occurrences took place during Jesus' visit (21:5-6,11-14)?

2. What did John's words and Peter's response show about these two men (cf. 21:7)?

3. a. What four statements did Jesus make (21:5,6, 10, 12)?

b. What impresses you about Jesus here?

Read John 21:15-25

4. In their conversation after breakfast, what repeated question was Jesus getting Peter to seriously consider (21:15-17)?

Note: *more than these* (21:15) probably meant "Do you love Me more than these men love Me?" because Peter had claimed a loyalty above the others (cf. 13:37; Mt. 26:33; Mk 14:29).

5. How did Peter respond, and what did his responses demonstrate?

6. What did Jesus ask Peter to do out of his love for Him (21:15-17)?

7. a. What did Jesus forewarn Peter that following Him would mean for him (21:18-19a)?

b. Even so, what was the Lord's final command to Peter (21:19b)?

8. How did Jesus discourage Peter from comparing his life to that of John (21:20-22)?

9. What rumor did John refute (21:20-23)?

10. Of what did John assure his reader (21:24)?

11. a. In retrospect, what statements did John make about Jesus' life (21:25)?

b. What did John hope for those who would read his gospel (20:31)?

BUILDING ON THE BASICS

Ongoing Fulfillment

John's record of Jesus' appearance by the Sea of Galilee captures how Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, remained committed and active in the lives of His disciples. His actions that day leave us with images of the gracious and caring aspects of God's nature which were embodied in His Son. Through the miraculous catch, Jesus displayed His bountiful providence in the face of human helplessness and inadequacy. As He cooked and served His disciples breakfast, Jesus demonstrated the kind of down-to-earth humility and joy in serving people's needs that characterize the heart of God. In choosing not to keep Peter's devotion for Himself, but to channel it into "feeding My sheep," Jesus showed God's desire to translate our love for Him into acts of caring for the needs of others.

The cross was not the end of Jesus Christ's love and service to us. "Because I live, you also will live" (14:19), He promised. So today, as then by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus lives and stands ready to lead, provide for and serve each one who loves Him. As we choose to follow Him, He promises to see to our ongoing fulfillment. We will close our study with a look at these important truths.

1. a. What did the tremendous catch in John 21 demonstrate about Jesus Christ in the midst of difficult or impossible situations?

b. What are we instructed to remember and do in the face of our human limitations and need?

Matthew 6:25, 33

I Peter 5:7

c. What is the Lord's promise in II Corinthians 9:8?

2. a. What can we observe about God's nature in Jesus' cooking for and serving breakfast to His disciples?

b. How does Philippians 2:6-8 describe Jesus Christ as a servant?

3. What aspects of the Lord's care are mentioned in the following?
Psalm 121:3, 7-8

Isaiah 41:10

Romans 8:31b-32

Philippians 4:19

4. a. Jesus revealed God's desire to serve and care for people's needs. In response to our love for Him, what does He ask us to do? John 21:15b, 16b

b. What aspects of caring for others do these verses suggest?
Galatians 6:2

I Timothy 6:18

I Peter 4:8-11

5. a. As we care for people with Christ, what is our privilege?

II Corinthians 5:18-20

b. What does Jesus promise as we serve a needy world with Him?

Matthew 28:18, 20b

6. What is the natural motivation for faith and obedience to God through Christ? I John 4:19 (Romans 5:8)

7. a. According to the 85-year old Apostle John, who had followed Christ for over 60 years, what can we expect from devotion to Him? John 1:16

b. What did Jesus promise? John 10:10b

Summary

6. a. What have you learned that Jesus wants to do for you on an ongoing basis?

b. Of what are you reminded through the story of the miraculous catch in John 21? Does this apply to some area of your life today?

7. a. What simple aspects of your walk with the Lord did Jesus discuss with Peter in John 21:16, 19b?

b. What part do such decisions play in experiencing the fulfillment only Christ can give?

8. a. As you reflect upon your study of John, what have you learned about Jesus Christ and the nature of God?

b. What have you learned about fulfillment?

c. For what are you grateful to God?

Final Note:

Perhaps through your study of *Quest for Fulfillment*, you have come to really understand for the first time who Jesus is, and that He not only wants you to know *who* He is but to have a personal relationship with Him. In Revelation 3:20, Jesus says, *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me."*

If you would like to open the door of your life to Jesus Christ right now, the following is a suggested prayer:

"Lord Jesus, I need you. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sin. I invite you to come into my life and make me the person you created me to be. Amen."

If you sincerely pray this prayer, Jesus Christ will come into your life as He promised in Revelation 3:20, and He will never leave you (Hebrews 13:5b).

**QUEST FOR FULFILLMENT:
STUDIES FROM THE BOOK OF JOHN**

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Printed in the United States of America
1-932395-13-X

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