



# Disciplers Bible Studies

JOHN  
LESSON 17

## Upper Room Discourses John 16

### Introduction

#### A. Underlying Theme of the Gospel

Reflect on the territory we've been over in the Gospel of John. In an overall sense, the fourth Gospel is a simple, but very profound writing about the deity and mission of the Son of God.

The underlying theme is that Jesus Christ is God – the Word that became flesh. John brings us face-to-face with the Savior of mankind, the eternal Son of God.

#### B. Statement of Purpose

John's clear statement of purpose may be paraphrased from John 20:31 as follows: *"I wrote this record basically for two reasons: (1) to prove that Jesus was the Christ, the promised Messiah for the Jews and the Son of God for the Gentiles; and (2) to cause people to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing, they may have a life of divine fellowship with Him now and forever."*

#### C. Proof

The key word in the Gospel is "believe" which occurs 98 times. To prove that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, recall John's quoted answers to these questions:

- What do you say, John the Baptist?  
*"This is the Son of God."* (1:34)
- What is your conclusion, Nathaniel?  
*"Rabbi, You are the Son of God."* (1:49)
- What do you know, Simon Peter?  
*"You are the Holy One of God."* (6:69)
- What do you believe, Martha?  
*"You are the Christ, the Son of God."* (11:27)
- What is your verdict, Thomas?  
*"My Lord and my God."* (20:28)
- What is your statement, John?  
*"Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."* (20:31)
- Jesus, what do You say of Yourself?  
*"I and the Father are One. . . I am the Son of God."*  
(10:30,36)

These seven witnesses, the seven miracles, the seven "I am" statements, and over 500 eye-witnesses of His post-resurrection appearances (1 Corinthians 15:3-8) prove beyond any reasonable doubt that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God.

### Outline of John 16:1-33

- I. Further Forewarning (16:1-4)
- II. The Work of the Holy Spirit (16:5-15)
- III. Christ's Death and Reappearance (16:16-24)
- IV. Christ's Destination (16:25-33)

#### I. Further Forewarning (16:1-4)

##### A. The Flow of Jesus' Words

As we start Chapter 16, keep in mind the flow of Jesus' words. In Chapter 15:18, He began telling the disciples about the persecution that would come upon them. All the way through 15:25, He forewarned them of the hatred of the world which reflected the hatred that the world had for Him. Then in vs. 26, He told them about the coming help of the Holy Spirit and His witness of Christ. This would empower them with the strength to bear witness of Christ.

##### B. Expect Suffering

In Chapter 16, Jesus continued to warn them to expect suffering. He had not told them about this hostile opposition at the beginning because He was with them. He had withstood this rejection Himself so that it barely phased them. But, after He departed, a Divine resource and enabling strength would come upon them and they would be able to keep their faith in the face of bitter hatred and persecution.

#### II. Work of the Holy Spirit (16:5-15)

##### A. The Advantage of Jesus' Departure

Although the disciples had closely been with Jesus for nearly three years, they still had only a dim realization of His true deity and glory. They were so saddened by His ensuing departure they did not realize

it would be to their advantage for Jesus to leave them. While Jesus was with them, He had confined Himself to time and space. The disciples really only knew Him “in the flesh.” But now, Jesus was clearly affirming to them that all believers would be better off after the Holy Spirit’s coming than they were before. The advantage was that after Jesus ascended to heaven and returned to believers through the Holy Spirit, His promise of Matthew 28:20 would literally be fulfilled, *“I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

## B. Convicting the World

The Helper’s coming would mean an increased awareness among unbelievers concerning their attitude toward Christ. The Holy Spirit would *“convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.”* Christ was not talking about the outward manifestation of sin such as murder, lying, adultery, fornication, etc. He was pointing out that the all-inclusive statement of sin is to reject the Son of God. Such an attitude of the heart and mind reveals an internal hostility and rebellion against God’s authority and rulership.

## C. Conviction of Sin

A specific function of the Holy Spirit is to convince and convict people of their desperate plight without the one, true living God. The Spirit of God brings an inescapable sense of guilt upon them (2 Samuel 1:9; Psalm 51:4.) Coming to the New Testament, rejection of Jesus is the great damning sin. This denial of Christ will always be the greatest of all sins. A man or woman may be convicted of his or her individual sin, clean up his or her life and still go to hell. Unbelief in Jesus Christ is the sin that condemns people.

## D. Conviction of Righteousness

An understanding of sin derives from a standard of righteousness. This standard emanates from a truly righteous conduct, character and standing before God. The perfect bearer and example of this standard is God’s beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

### 1. The Ordinary Man

The ordinary man sets his standard of righteousness according to cultural opinion or his environment. This standard is nothing more than the opinion of fallen humanity that can never rise above its own level. This man has subdued his conscience and chosen the standards of the world around him (Romans 1:19-24, 2:14-16.)

## 2. Jesus, the Righteous

The only righteous One, Jesus Christ, lived a perfect human life before mankind. In His person, He talked and walked God’s standard and values for all to see and hear. The Holy Spirit would convict the world of its lack of righteousness and give unbelievers the opportunity to seek the true righteousness that only Jesus provides.

## E. Conviction of Judgment

### 1. Condemnation of Satan

The Holy Spirit’s convicting work would also include judgment which would come upon the world for rejecting Jesus. The ruler of the world, Satan, will have already been judged at the cross. Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection would be compelling proofs that would cause many to think again about Jesus. His resurrection would amount to a condemnation of the devil and his angels. Once the ruler of the world had been condemned, his followers could expect to be condemned unless they turned to Christ.

### 2. Neutrality Not Possible

It is not possible to be consciously neutral in the world. An individual is either governed by the prince of the world, Satan, or by the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ. The devil and all who out of ignorance, indifference or sheer resistance choose Satan’s camp will remain there forever unless they are convicted by the Holy Spirit and converted by the Son of God.

Warren Wiersbe describes it saying: “When a lost sinner is truly under conviction, he will see the folly and evil of unbelief; he will confess that he does not measure up to the righteousness of Christ; and he will realize that he is under condemnation because he belongs to the world and the devil (Ephesians 2:1-3). . . There can be no conversion without conviction, and there can be no conviction apart from the Spirit of God using the Word of God and the witness of the child of God.”

## F. The Spirit of Truth

The disciples were insensitive to more spiritual truth at this time, so Jesus told them that the coming Spirit of truth would guide them into all truth. He would not bring things to them on His own, but would teach them what He heard from the Father and Son. Since the Son spoke only in obedience to the Father, the source of both Jesus’ and the Holy Spirit’s teaching was the Father. He would explain

things present and reveal things still future. He would glorify the Son even as the Son had glorified the Father.

### III. Christ's Death and Reappearance (16:16-24)

#### A. Confused Disciples

Jesus next directed the disciples to His imminent death and reappearance after His resurrection in the Person of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. His statements confused the disciples and they talked to one another about His meaning. How could Jesus return to His Father and in a little while see them again?

#### B. Jesus' Explanation

Jesus sensed their perplexity and explained that His departure would bring great sadness to them, but great joy to the world. His statements, "*you will not see me*" (ascension,) and "*you will see Me again*" (the Holy Spirit's coming) emphatically claimed that He and the Holy Spirit are One (Romans 8:9; Philipians 1:19; 1 Peter 1:11.)

##### 1. Pregnant Woman Comparison

Jesus compared their confused thinking with the feelings of a pregnant woman at her delivery. His death and the woman's delivery are both very painful experiences. But the result after the painful experience is so wonderfully joyful that it displaces the former pain and sorrow. In a similar manner, the disciples' sorrow at His departure and death would be replaced with great joy at His reunion with them after the resurrection. This joy would stay with them in spite of the rejection and persecution He had told them they would encounter. John MacArthur writes, "The same event that made the hateful realm of mankind (world) rejoice and cause grief to the disciples will be the same event that will lead to the world's sorrow and the believer's joy."

#### C. Pray to the Father

By the phrase, "*in that day*", Jesus meant that after His resurrection and ascension, their joy would be great. Even though He would be absent from them in body, they could pray directly to the Father in His name. The Father would answer their questions and grant their petitions when prayed for "*in My name*." The disciples had not gone directly to the Father in Jesus' name before. They were Old Testament believers and probably had based their prayers on God's promises in the Old Testament.

### IV. Christ's Destination (16:25-33)

#### A. Figurative Language

Time was drawing near for Jesus to have His final prayer with His beloved disciples. He acknowledged that He had not been giving them direct responses to their questions, but had been speaking in figurative language. He was referring to the entire upper room discourses. Apparently, He knew that a plain, straight-forward description of their future would have been difficult for them to accept.

#### B. Pray to the Father

To further understand Jesus' teaching, the disciples should pray to the Father in Jesus' name. The Father loved them because they loved His Son and believed that Jesus and the Father were One. This special love would move the Father to answer their petitions and accept Jesus' intercession and sponsorship of them (John 15:9-16).

#### C. Return to the Father

Jesus then told them plainly where He was going, "*I came from the Father and have come into the world. Again I leave the world and go to the Father.*" This was a new revelation to the disciples. It encompassed Jesus' mission from the Incarnation to the Ascension. To the reader of John's Gospel, His mission was clear from John 1:10-11, 14, 3:16-17, 14:19, but this was the first time the disciples heard it so clearly. They said they believed He had answered their questions about His destination clearly.

#### D. Disciples Run for Cover

Jesus then told them in effect that their faith was still weak. Their later actions of abandoning Christ in the crisis of His arrest and crucifixion indicate that they did not really possess the understanding that they claimed. Although Peter and John would follow Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest after His arrest, they and the other disciples would abandon Him when pressured by the crowd.

#### E. Peace and the Divine Overcomer

Jesus' words in the last verse of Chapter 16 meant that peace in Him would sustain them through the hostile pressure of the world. The enemies of God and His Word rejected Jesus and His ministry and would reject them (and all believers) as well. However, His victory on the cross as the "strong man" who came and ruined Satan's kingdom (Matthew 12:25-29,) enabled Him to say, "*In the world you will have*

*tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”*

**Application:**

Reread Jesus' last victorious statement above and note 1 John 5:4-5 which says, *“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”* Have you buried these promises in your heart? Does your faith lead you to prayerfully reflect and trust them when situations and circumstances in your life become stressful, grievous, painful or overwhelming?