



That You May
HAVE LIFE

A STUDY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

women's
BIBLE STUDY



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LESSON *Thirteen*

Sorrow into Joy



As Jesus' time with the disciples was coming to an end, He gave them His final words. First, the Holy Spirit was going to convict the world of its sin and guide believers in truth. Second, the grief they would soon encounter would not last forever. And finally, though Jesus was going to leave, joy was just around the corner.

Pause for a moment and reflect: Where do you see God currently working in your life? What is He teaching you about His character? What is He revealing to you through His Word? Where are you struggling to believe His promises? Do you feel God hears you when you cry out to Him? Write your reflections below.

REVELATION

"Jesus had come to earth as the revealer of the Father, but the limited period of his ministry was too brief for the disciples to take in all that he had to reveal. His ministry of revelation would, however, be carried on after his departure by the Spirit."⁷⁰

THE SPIRIT

The Spirit of God coming would symbolize a new age for those who believed. Read Isaiah 11:1-10, 42:1-4; Ezekiel 36:24-27; Joel 2:28-32.

Read John 16:4b-33 before answering the following questions.

1. John 16:4b says, "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you." Go back to John 15:1-16:4 to remind yourself of some of the things Jesus said. Write down some of the highlights below.

Read John 16:4b-15.

2. List the roles and activities of the Holy Spirit found in this passage.

3. Why might the disciples have needed reassurance of these specific aspects of the Holy Spirit? Though this passage is specifically addressing the disciples, what do you conclude about the Spirit's continuing work in His people today? Describe a time you have recently experienced one of the roles of the Holy Spirit you listed above in question 2.

4. When Jesus was saying goodbye, He told His disciples that His leaving would be to their advantage. Why? What are the advantages of living today rather than back when Jesus was alive? (Verses 7-11)

Read John 16:16-24.

5. The disciples simply did not understand a Messiah who would come to save them through His own death. Look for their confusion in this passage. What questions were they wrestling with, and were their questions valid?

6. How did the world's response to the death of Jesus compare to the response of the disciples?

Take a minute to imagine the world rejoicing at Jesus' death. What may have prompted someone of that day to have this kind of response?

QUESTIONS

Notice how Jesus anticipated the disciple's questions. He knew them, loved them, and met them where they were. He does the same with you today.

GRIEF

The disciples overwhelming grief at Jesus' departure would one day change. It will "be dispelled when he comes to them again, imparting the joy of uninterrupted fellowship with him henceforth through the Spirit."⁷¹

CHILDBIRTH

The image of childbirth is often used in Scripture. Here it appears Jesus is hinting at Isaiah 26:17 and 66:7-14.

PSALM 30:5

“For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.”

JOY

In verse 22 Jesus said, “no one will take your joy from you.” God was about to do a work in their hearts by giving them the Holy Spirit. This was something no one would ever be able to change.

FIGURES OF SPEECH

Jesus proclaimed that He had been speaking in “figures of speech.” This had less to do with His use of metaphors and more to do with His speaking cryptically over the last couple of chapters.⁷³

GOD’S LOVE

While referencing prayer, Jesus also kindly reminded the disciples of God’s love when He headed to the cross so they could cling to this truth.

7. Define sorrow and lament. In this case, the disciples were experiencing sorrow around an anticipated loss. What were they losing when Jesus left? Why might they have feared Jesus’ departure?
8. Reread John 16:20-22. Where else in Scripture do you see the truth that God turns weeping and sorrow into joy? Where have you experienced this truth in your own life? Where are you still waiting for Him to do this?

“The world looks for happiness through self-assertion. The Christian knows that joy is found in self-abandonment. ‘If a man will let himself be lost for My sake,’ Jesus said, ‘he will find his true self.’”

— Elisabeth Elliot⁷²

9. From verses 23-24 and the passages below, is Jesus saying that every prayer you pray will be answered exactly the way you want? Explain. (See Appendix: Prayer)

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

James 4:3

Read John 16:25-33.

10. Jesus told the disciples that after the resurrection they would better understand the truths He was sharing with them. What else did Jesus claim would happen? (Verses 26-28)

11. Jesus gave the disciples an eternal perspective in their pain: He will ultimately have victory over sin and death. Write John 16:33 in the space below.

Now consider:

What can you expect in this world?

Where is peace found?

Where is hope found?

12. In what situation do you need to be reminded of Jesus' victory in your trials? (See also 2 Corinthians 4:16-18) How does God's faithfulness throughout Scripture and in your life encourage you in this hardship today?

"Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

— C.S. Lewis⁷⁵

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Psalm 119:11 refers to knowing God's Word in your heart so you might not sin against Him. Try committing John 16:33 to memory this week.

TRIBULATION

A tribulation is a "grievous trouble, severe trial, or affliction."⁷⁴

FINAL WORDS

Look back over the last few chapters to remind yourself of Jesus' final words before heading into chapter 17. Consider why Jesus chose to say these things to His disciples before His death.



BIG IDEA

What is your biggest takeaway from this week's lesson?

Notes