

Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) There are many things which reach into our lives attempting to remove our Christ-centeredness and replacing it with “anything else-centeredness.” The disciples were frightened and lacked understanding. Their response was to become self-preserving, asking questions which revealed that they wanted to know “what’s in it for me?” Do you find Christians around you who seem to be more focused on their well-being than on the purposes of Christ? What are these traits that you see and can identify, and why do you think they pose a danger?
- B) What are these tendencies in your own life? What are the pressure points in your life where things (other than Jesus Christ) seek to be in control?
- C) One of the ways Christians attempt to be “in control” is in relation to the Spirit’s work in the world. Have you ever been around, or experienced (through the media, etc.) a Christian who was attempting to accomplish the work of the Spirit in the world (convicting the world of sin, righteousness and judgment) in their own way? How did you sense that it lacked the authentic stamp of the Spirit (hint: Galatians 5:22-23).
- D) Take some time within your group to pray for one another in some of these stubborn areas of self vs. Christ-centered living. Take some time to review some of the past accountability issues and questions your group has been covering and praying for. Be sure to ask Jesus Christ to fill you to your capacity with His Holy Spirit so that you will be able to represent an accurate picture of the Lord for the world around you and our church!

A Whole New World

Long Beach Alliance Church • August 28th, 2005 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**BUT WHEN HE, THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH,
COMES, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL
THE TRUTH; FOR HE WILL NOT SPEAK ON
HIS OWN INITIATIVE, BUT WHATEVER HE
HEARS, HE WILL SPEAK; AND HE WILL
DISCLOSE TO YOU WHAT IS TO COME.**

~JOHN 16:13 (NASB)

1) What Precedes “-Centeredness” In Your Life?

- A) At first glance, Jesus’ assertion in John 16:5 (“none of you asks Me...”) seems in conflict with Peter’s question from John 13:36 (“Lord, where are you going?”). However, it is the disciples’ real question (“Why?”) with which Jesus takes issue!
- B) The disciples’ questions (cf. John 13:36, 14:4, 14:8, 14:22, 16:17-18) and their “sorrow” (16:6) reveal men who were selfishly centered on themselves. They only cared about how they would be affected by Jesus’ departure.
- C) Jesus points out to them that, in reality, His imminent departure was for their “advantage†” (16:7) because He

† The phrase “it is to your advantage” is the exact same phrase which Caiaphas used in John 11:50 (there rendered, “it is expedient”). “We may profitably reflect that this is the supreme illustration of the way God uses the acts of wicked people to effect His purposes. Caiaphas thought the crucifixion expedient. So it was, but in ways he could not have imagined.” (Morris, *The Gospel According To John*/NICNT, pg. 618).

would be sending the Spirit to them*. The Spirit would not only benefit the disciples, but also the whole world (16:8).

- D) This was a lesson for the disciples, and for us, that self-centeredness will frustrate and perplex our Christian life. Jesus-centeredness will bring advantage and the presence of the Holy Spirit, even when we do not know all the answers.

2) The Worldwide Ministry Of The Holy Spirit

- A) Jesus describes a three-fold ministry of the Spirit which is for "the world," rather than the faithful disciples (John 16:8). These are instructive (even for us!) because they are works of the Spirit and cannot be 'fabricated' by Jesus' disciples!
- B) John 16:8 describes the three works of the Spirit in the world from the context of "convicting" the world in relation to sin, righteousness and judgment. The following three verses (16:9-11) go on to explain this "Christ-centered" ministry.

* In John 16:7, Jesus presents that the Holy Spirit cannot come unless He is absent from the scene. "The thought is not that Jesus and the Holy Spirit cannot, for some unarticulated metaphysical reasons, simultaneously minister to God's people, or any other such strange notion" (Carson, *The Gospel According To John*/Pillar, pg. 533). It is evident, rather, that Jesus' departure (of which the disciples have no concrete knowledge of at this point) via the cross to the throne of God brings about the turn of the ages that ushers in the saving sovereignty of God in fullness (Beasley-Murray, *John*/WBC, pg. 280). Salvation, based on Christ's atoning work on the cross, allowed for the beginning of the much-anticipated eschatological "age of the Spirit" (see esp. Joel 2:28-32; Isaiah 11:1-10, 32:14-18; Ezekiel 11:17-20). This period was inaugurated by the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost (Morris, *The Gospel According To John*/NICNT, pg. 618). Thus, the thoughtline in Christ's comment is not one of metaphysical reality, but of an eschatological future. Carson aptly comments, "Jesus' valuation of what is for His disciples' good... ought to temper longings of "Oh-if-only-I-could-have-been-in-Galilee-when-Jesus-was-there!" sort. The same Jesus insists it is better to be alive now, after the coming of the Spirit" (Carson, pg. 534).

- C) The Spirit convicts the world of sin because those in the world do not believe in Jesus (16:9, cf. John 3:16-21). This is a gracious ministry of the Spirit, revealing to men and women their need for Jesus.

- D) The Spirit convicts the world of its righteousness (16:10), exposing the world for what it really is (John 3:19-21, 7:7, 15:22 & 24). In the absence of Christ, the Spirit reveals that the righteousness of the world is like "dirty rags" (Isaiah 64:5-6) compared to the righteousness of Jesus Christ!

- E) The Spirit convicts the world of its judgment (16:11), exposing spiritual blindness, supremely displayed in its treatment of Jesus. The Spirit reveals to the world that the moment of greatest defeat (Christ's crucifixion) is actually the moment of greatest victory & judgment (John 12:31-32).

3) The Localized Ministry Of The Holy Spirit

- A) The disciples have a relationship with "the Truth" (Jesus Christ, cf. John 14:6), but their instruction "into" the truth would be continued by the Spirit (16:13).
- B) Much in the same way in which Jesus only spoke and did what the Father (God) disclosed to Him (John 3:34-35, 5:19-20, 7:16-18, 8:26-29, 42-43, 12:47-50, 14:10), so the Spirit will only speak what is disclosed to Him (16:13)
- C) The Spirit's ministry is Christ-centered, illuminating the work of Christ and disclosing it to His disciples (16:14-15).