

Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) In John 6:66, many of Jesus followers decide that following Him is simply too hard. They leave, and go back to their own lives. What must that have been like for them? Imagine the conversations and interactions they must have had with their families, neighbors, etc. What would you ask to someone who had abandoned following Christ because of the difficulty?
- B) What do you think happened to those people? Do you think some of them came back? What would you have said to those who abandoned Christ if you had been one of the faithful disciples who stuck it out? What if the deserters came back and wanted back into the movement, what would you say to them?
- C) Do you think it was tougher to follow Christ in person when He walked on earth, or is it more difficult today? Have things in your walk with Christ ever gotten so difficult that you have “abandoned” Jesus? Did He abandon you? How difficult was it (or is it) for you to ‘return’ to walking with Christ?
- D) We witnessed several people “go public” with their confession of Jesus Christ by being baptized this past Sunday. In what way is your walk with Jesus a “public” confession of your faith? Have you ever been baptized as a believer in Christ? Is being baptized, or some other public statement of your faith, an important aspect of your relationship with Christ?
- E) All of us struggle with moments when we decided to go “undercover” with our Christianity, rather than “go public.” Is there a situation or a person who you need to “go public” with to show (yourself and everyone else) that your relationship with Christ is the singular most important thing in your life? Share these types of situations/people with your group and spend some time praying together for accountability and support.

To Whom Will We Go?

Long Beach Alliance Church • October 31st, 2004 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**SIMON PETER ANSWERED HIM,
“LORD, TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?
YOU HAVE WORDS OF ETERNAL
LIFE. WE HAVE BELIEVED AND
HAVE COME TO KNOW THAT YOU
ARE THE HOLY ONE OF GOD.”
~ JOHN 6:68-69 (NASB)**

1) Deserting Disciples

- A) As the Israelites who were delivered from Egypt (Exodus 15:24, 16:2, 7-9, 12), and the Jewish leadership from the synagogue in Capernaum (John 6:41), Jesus’ disciples* also “grumble” against Christ (6:59-61).
- B) Jesus directly confronts His disciples about their grumbling, rhetorically asking them, ‘If you are caught in the difficulty of this simple teaching, how much more will you struggle with the details of my ascension back to where I came from’ (6:61-62). Note Greek “σκανδαλίζω/scandalizo” for “cause you to stumble” (NASB) or “offend” (NIV).

* Jesus’ disciples were a large group of followers. This larger group of disciples should not be mixed up with “the twelve” (John 6:67) disciples which figure much more prominently in the Gospels and the early church.

- C) Christ gives the most direct clarification of His teaching "style" by boldly stating that "the flesh profits nothing" while contrasting His words as "spirit and life" (6:63). Jesus' clear focus is on the eternal (spirit), and not the temporal (flesh).
- D) Jesus, who has shown us on several occasions that He "knows the hearts of men" (2:24-25), calls out those disciples "who do not believe" (6:64). Rather than 'fight for a following,' Jesus encourages those who do not believe to stop faking their followership.
- E) Having full confidence that God the Father was the source of His following, Jesus directs His disciples toward authenticity. He essentially says, 'If you're having trouble with what has happened up to now, it's only going to get harder. I'm not fooled because you follow Me, if God isn't drawing you, you're just fooling yourself' (6:64-65).
- F) After this "believe or leave" message, "many" disciples decide to leave Jesus. Note that the "difficulty" (Gk. skandalizo) which leads men to leave Christ is not one of intellectual understanding, but one of moral challenge. John Calvin comments, "the hardness (skandalizo) was in their hearts and not in the saying" (Calvin's Commentaries, John 6:60).

2) Faithful Followers For Now

- A) Jesus, pictured as a leader devoid of disciples, turns to His remaining "twelve" (see note on 1A) and asks them if they "want to go away also?" (6:67).

- B) Simon Peter, consistently reliable as a quotable disciple, responds with astounding faith in Jesus. While not formulaic in nature, Peter's confession of Christ as "the Holy One of God" (6:69) is an excellent framework for us to consider.
- i) "*Lord, to whom shall we go?*" (6:68). A true disciple of Jesus Christ is singular in their devotion and followership.
 - ii) "*You have words of eternal life*" (6:68). A true disciple of Jesus Christ believes/follows what Jesus says, even when it is difficult (skandalizo). Jesus is the Word (1:1) who came in "the flesh" (1:14), to share the message of "believing in Him" for "eternal life" (6:40).
 - iii) "*We have believed and come to know*" (6:69). A true disciple of Jesus Christ eats up the Word like food. "Belief" in Christ consumes the person resulting in a changed life of abiding in Christ, and Christ in the believer (6:56). It is a life which confesses Christ!
- C) Christ, for His part in all of this, will not be distracted by the confession of Peter. Remember, "He knows the hearts of men" (2:24-25). Jesus prophesies that one of His personally chosen "twelve" is actually under Satanic influence. Even in Christ's inner-circle, there will be eventual betrayal.
- D) John, as the other Gospel writers (Matthew 10:4, Mark 3:19, Luke 6:16) mentions that Judas Iscariot (lit., "a man from Kerioth") is going to betray Jesus Christ, a dark and foreboding ending to a chapter filled with progressive desertion of Christ's followers (6:71).