

Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) Thomas a' Kempis* wrote the following meditation in his classic devotional book, *The Imitation of Christ* (Ch. 56.1),

**Follow thou Me: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the life."
Without the Way, there is no going; without the Truth, there is no knowing; without the Life, there is no living. I am the Way, which thou oughtest to follow; the Truth, which thou oughtest to trust; the Life, which thou oughtest to hope for.**

I am the inviolable Way, the infallible Truth, the endless Life.

I am the straightest Way, the sovereign Truth, the true, the blessed, the uncreated Life.

If thou abide in my way, thou shalt know the Truth, and the Truth shall make thee free, and thou shalt attain eternal life.

* Thomas a' Kempis (1380-1471) was a Dutch priest who quietly lived to more than ninety years old practicing exercises of devotion, writing and copying, reading, preaching and exhorting others.

What practical difference does Jesus Christ being the way, the truth and the life make in the life of a Christ-follower?

- B) When someone confronts you with the idea that "there isn't just one way to get to Heaven... If your religion is good and pure, and your belief is sincere and it makes you a better person, I believe that you will go to Heaven. God is a God of love, mercy and peace -- right? How could God send good and sincere Buddhists, Muslims or Christians to Hell just because they don't believe what you believe about Jesus Christ? Is that really the kind of God in which you believe?"
- C) Take some time to pray with one another in your small group for the opportunity to share the Way, the Truth, and the Life with someone within your sphere of influence!

Confusion & Confidence

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**JESUS *SAID TO HIM, "I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE; NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER BUT THROUGH ME.
~JOHN 13:34-35 (NASB)**

1) Great Intentions Melt Into Reality

- A) Peter, the spokesman for the disciples and the "keeper" of their zealous spirit, proclaims his allegiance to Jesus Christ even to the point of death (John 13:36-37).
- B) Jesus Christ reveals that despite Peter's best intentions, he will betray Jesus (three times) before the next morning arrives (marked by the crow of a rooster -- 13:38).
- C) The disciples are "troubled" by the news that the strongest and most vocal disciple, Peter, is about to fail and that their Teacher, Jesus Christ, is about to leave them (John 14:1).

2) Hope For Dark Days

- A) Jesus Christ, seeing their troubled hearts (written all over

their faces), encourages the disciples to "keep the faith" despite the circumstances (14:1).

- B) Jesus pours hope into His disciples by explaining why He must depart from them (14:2-3). Jesus, who made the earth in six days (cf. Exodus 20:11; Colossians 1:16-17), explains that He is going to "prepare" places for them to live with Jesus (14:3) -- their separation will be temporary!
- C) You can almost feel the disciples spirit's begin to rise, and the ironic tone in Christ's voice as He tells His disciples that 'the way' to where He is going is already known by them (14:4)!

3) Comfort In Confusion

- A) Thomas, the disciple who often spoke when Peter was not around or able to 'take charge' (cf. John 11:16), reveals the confusion of the disciples with his perplexed question (14:5).
- B) Thomas will not let Jesus' comments stand as though he understands them. Not only does he not know where Jesus is going (cf. Peter's question, 13:36), didn't Jesus say the disciples cannot go there (cf. 13:33, 36)? How, then, could they "know the way" (cf. 14:4)? The whole thing seemed cryptic and impossible to the disciples!
- C) Jesus Christ's reply was so stunning, that, in the words of Wolfgang Musculus (16th Century Protestant Reformer), "no prophet, teacher, or apostle ever used such words as these. They are the language of one who knew that He was God."

4) The Way, The Truth, The Life

- A) Jesus Christ's answer to Thomas must first be taken as a clear claim of the exclusivity which one approaches God through. "No one comes to the Father" except through Jesus Christ (14:6).
- B) Jesus has not simply "blazed a trail" (Carson, 491), commanding others to follow his way of doing things. Jesus is THE ONLY WAY. He is the Savior (John 4:42), the Lamb of God (1:29, 34), the one who raises dead men to life (5:28-29), the way, the truth, the life (John 14:6).
- C*) By "I am the way," Jesus is saying that the Father's home is in heaven and can only be reached through faith in Jesus' life and (coming) atonement (suffering/death/resurrection). There is no other way to heaven but by Jesus Christ.
- D*) By "I am the truth," Jesus is saying that all knowledge is to know Him. Jesus is the true Messiah to which all revelation points, the central figure of all Old Testament ceremonies and sacrifices. "The one who knows Christ will not know all things, but will know the one who will take him to heaven, which is enough even in troubling times of ignorance."
- E*) By "I am the life," Jesus is saying that He is the root and fountain of all life. He is the one who gives everlasting life. The one who trusts in Jesus, however weak and ignorant he may feel, has spiritual life now, and will enjoy eternal life in heaven with Christ and the saints forevermore!

* The basic thoughtlines are summaries from J.C. Ryle's *Expository Thoughts on John*.