

## Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) It's amazing that we can be in the middle of a big crowd, part of a big family, even part of a growing church (of let's say, around 300?) -- and still feel very alone. There is something inside each of us which isn't satisfied exclusively with human contact. Our souls itch for more. Is the "itch" in our lives placed there and satisfied only by God, or will the "itch" depart through other means?
- B) What are some things in life which cause you to feel abandoned by God? Are there tragic moments in your personal history, times of faithlessness which you have experienced, large-scale tragedies which make no sense, periods of calm and peace where God just didn't seem real, etc., which have challenged your belief that "God with us" (remember Immanuel?) is really with you?
- C) Have you ever asked the same question as Judas in John 14:22? Have you ever wondered why God only discloses Himself to some people (those who love Him) and not to others (those who do not love Him)? Disclosure is something special in a relationship, it means more than simply allowing someone to know information about you, it means actually opening up and sharing a loving relationship with another person. Do you have someone who has disclosed themselves to you? Has God disclosed Himself to you?
- D) The great news of John 14:15-24 is that God chose to not leave any of His followers alone. He has given each believer in Jesus Christ the same Spirit which filled (John 3:34) Christ! This is amazing and radical news for each of us! God was not just "with" people during 'Bible times.' God is still, right now, with each of us. How does the actual "Spirit of God" who is alive in you (as a disciple of Jesus Christ), make a difference in the way you live? Take some time to pray with your fellow group members -- that the Spirit would have "full reign" in each of our lives -- and in all of Long Beach Alliance Church!

# Lonely No More

Long Beach Alliance Church • July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU AS ORPHANS; I WILL COME TO YOU.  
~ JOHN 14:18 (NASB)**

### **1) We Have Not Been Left Lonely**

- A) After Jesus has assured His disciples that it is better for them that He is going to be leaving them because He will be able to personally attend to their prayers, He reminds them that love produces a heart of obedience (John 14:15).
- B) Before the disciples become desperate at the idea of Christ's departure, Jesus initiates with them that He is going to be asking the Father to give them "another Helper\*" who can be with them forever (John 14:16).

\* There are two notable words here which contribute a great deal to our understanding of this passage. The first is "another," (ἄλλον - another of the same kind). It is significant because it indicates that the Holy Spirit is "of the same substance and kind" as Jesus Christ. The two things, in this case, have a commonality between them. The word for "another of a different kind" (ἕτερος) would have been used to distinguish differences between the two. The second significant word is "Helper" (NASB), "Counselor" (NIV), (παράκλητον - Paraclete, advocate, legal friend). The word means to advocate (or help/counsel) another person. The Holy Spirit was to be an advocate for the disciples, to help them remember and apply the truth (John 14:16-17) in their lives. Putting these two concepts together, the Holy Spirit would be 'another Helper' like Jesus Christ, who helped the disciples to remember the teaching of Jesus Christ, to live with the power of Jesus Christ, to even have the very same Spirit as Jesus Christ. This would not be new to the disciples, but a continuation of Christ's presence in their lives! What an extraordinary gift!

- C) Jesus goes on to explain that the primary characteristic of the Holy Spirit is 'advocating truth' (John 14:17). The world rejects the Spirit because it cannot perceive the Spirit.
  
- D) In a sly play on words, Jesus notes that the disciples know the Spirit because they know Christ and abide with Him (14:17). Jesus, in turn, will abide in His disciples through the Spirit of truth (cf. John 14:6).

## 2) You Will Not Be Left As Orphans...

- A) Jesus assures His disciples that He will not abandon them, but that He will be with them (14:18 & forever, cf. 16).
  
- B) Jesus predicts that his death and resurrection will not be "seen" (perceived) by the world, but that the disciples will see Christ (literally) and it would serve as a sign of their 'forever life' (14:19) and the unity of Father, Son & disciple (14:20).

## 3) You Will See Me, But 'The World' Will Not...

- A) Echoing John 14:15, Jesus reminds His disciples of the connection between obedience to Christ's "commandments" (cf. John 13:34-35; 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:23-24) as a necessary expression of love between disciple, Son & Father (14:21).
  
- B) The experience of love between God and those who lovingly obey God results in a mutual experience of "disclosure" between God and man (14:21).

- C) Judas (not Iscariot) responds to Christ's exclusive and unique disclosure statement with disillusion about how 'the world' will ever know about Christ (14:22). In essence, Judas asks, "why us, and not them?"
  
- D) The answer to Judas' question is simple (Jesus says), it is because of love (14:22-23). As in John 14:15 & 21, Jesus insists that love for Him is expressed in what you actually do.
  
- E) Jesus says that those who love Him will experience life with Him and, necessarily, God the Father (since you cannot speak of One without the Other). God, Son (and eventually, Spirit, cf. 14:26) will all "live" with the follower of Christ.
  
- F) Those who do not respond to Jesus Christ's love, of course, cannot share in this kind of a relationship with Christ, or with God, or with the Spirit (14:24).
  
- G) G. Campbell Morgan (famous writer/theologian) summarizes Jesus' response to Judas (also called Jude), like this:

"Now He said in effect: You ask Me, Jude, why I have abandoned the world? I have not abandoned the world. My Father and I are coming to dwell in you, and in all who shall, like you, love Me."

This is, in effect, the very name of Christ imprinted on the world, 'His name will be called Immanuel, which translated, means "God with us." ' (Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 7:14).