

8

Holy Help in Listening

John 14:5-31

John (writer of the Gospel of John) and Luke (of our previous study) were contemporaries. Both lived during the lifetime of Jesus and were a part of establishing the early church. John takes a more theological approach to recounting the life and teachings of Jesus. In chapter 14 of John's Gospel, we see a beginning theology of the Holy Spirit, always present but shadowed in the Old Testament (as in Genesis 1:2 and Ezekiel 2:2) but now more clearly defined as a special gift: God present with and within his people after the earthly life of Jesus.

GROUP DISCUSSION. What are some of your wonderings about the Holy Spirit?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Give thanks to God for the presence of his Spirit. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you better appreciate the text before you.

John was one of the three disciples closest to Jesus. Enjoy Jesus' loving encouragement to his closest friends. *Read John 14:5-31.*

1. Thomas, Philip and Judas each had a question for Jesus. What are the questions they ask?

What does each question suggest about their concerns as they talked together?

2. Focus on the dialogue between Jesus and Thomas in verses 5-7. What comfort might Thomas have found in Jesus' answer to his question?

Why might some be offended by Jesus' answer to Thomas?

3. What frustration do you sense in Philip as he says the words of verse 8?

4. In verses 9-21, Jesus gives a thorough reply to Philip's complaint. If you were in Philip's sandals, what would you find encouraging here?

5. What would you find scary or confusing in these same verses?

6. Focus on the question from Judas in verse 22. What worry do you sense in his question?

7. What do you find in Jesus' response (vv. 23-31) that would likely encourage Judas and the other remaining disciples?

8. Given your own current setting, what encouragement do you find in Jesus' words to Judas?

9. Review again each sentence of John 14:5-31. Using the information in this text, make as many true statements as you can about God as Trinity (three persons composing one God).

10. Notice the final words of this scene: "Come now; let us leave." Jesus and the disciples were departing for the Garden of Gethsemane. As you leave your own place of study, what concept or phrase from this text do you want to take with you as enter your next event?

Select one sentence from this passage that seems to have your name on it today. Make that a focus of prayer.

Now or Later

Spend time meditating on the presence of the Holy Spirit within you as described in John 14:17. Then throughout the day, allow God's Spirit to draw you to prayer. The following hymn, "Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart," written by George Croly in 1854, may further guide your worship.

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;
stoop to my weakness, might as thou art,
and make me love thee as I ought to love.

Teach me to love thee as thine angels love,
one holy passion filling all my frame;
the baptism of the heaven-descended Dove,
my heart an altar, and thy love the flame.*

*For all five stanzas of "Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart" see www.hymnsite.com/lyrics/umh500.sht.