

Daily Discipleship

John 14:23-29

Prayers of Discipleship *To Keep God's Word*

Focus Question: *How do you show your love for God by keeping God's word in your life?*

word of life

Jesus answered, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." John 14:23 (NRSV)

Read John 14:23-29

Jesus continues his final instructions to his disciples at his last supper before his death. He has already washed the feet of his disciples and given them a new commandment to love one another. As a teacher who loves his students, Jesus gently prepares them for the time when he will not be with them. It is clear to Jesus that he needs to go and prepare a place for them.

But Jesus is committed to not leaving the disciples alone. Take a moment and read through John 14. Jesus explains with great compassion his expectations for his followers after he has departed. Again the theme is love, but with an emphasis on the fruits of love. He urges each disciple to keep his commandments as an expression of love. They are not obligated to do so, but love compels people to act in such ways to complement and reflect favorably on the loved one.

1. *How does following the commandments of Jesus help people to love?*
2. *How easy is it for humans to follow the commandments of Jesus?*

In John 14:23, Jesus makes a reference to his Father and himself making a home with those who keep the commandments. This Greek word used for "home" is used only twice in the New Testament and both times are found in John 14. First, Jesus uses the word in John 14:2 to express the heavenly dwelling places within his Father's house. In verse 23, Jesus uses the word to describe God settling in our lives while on this earth. Consequently, by using the same word, Jesus connects our heavenly home with God *and* God at home in us on this earth. Imagine, God setting up residence in your life.

3. *Describe what it means for God to make a home within you.*
4. *What does that type of home look like?*

Jesus teaches and expects those who love Jesus will bear fruit. In order to so, followers of Jesus need to stay close to his teachings and ways. But this teaching is not solely made by Jesus; instead he speaks on behalf of his Father in heaven.

5. *Is this a reasonable expectation? Why or why not?*
6. *How do the life and teachings of Jesus help clarify God's word?*

Jesus speaks to his disciples as one who has lived among them, sharing their joys and troubles of this life. But soon Jesus will depart from them. He knows that. Thus, his gift to them is the Holy Spirit, often called Advocate or Helper. They need not fear because they will not be alone. The Spirit will continue to teach, remind, encourage, and give them peace. Yet, the peace given is not a removal from troubled times. Jesus knows the coming days will bring agony and grief to his followers. He hopes his words of preparation will assure his disciples of the active presence and plan of God.

7. *How might the disciples have felt as they listened to the words by Jesus?*
8. *Compare the kind of peace given by this world to the peace described by Jesus in John 14:27.*

word among us

When Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast in August, 2005, over 1,000,000 people evacuated from the New Orleans area. A study from the Louisiana State University sociology department showed over 50% of homes in Baton Rouge became a shelter for someone. Families, friends, and acquaintances sought refuge and sanctuary from the storm.

Most people expected this evacuation to be like those of the past and last a few days. Pets, refrigerated food, and some clothing were brought. But, the levees were breached and the flooding began. Instead of a few days, these homes became shelters for weeks and even months. September, October, and November passed. It was one thing to open your home for a short-time to someone in need; it was something else for the guests to make your home their long-term residence.

1. *What stories have you heard about the hospitality extended during Hurricane Katrina?*
2. *Describe what it would like to host guests in your home for three months.*
3. *What changes would you need to make in your lifestyle and home to accommodate long-term guests?*

Jesus teaches that those who love him will keep his word, thus providing an opening for God to make a home in their lives. It is quite fascinating to imagine God moving into our lives on a permanent basis.

4. *What would it be like for you to have God set up residence in your life?*
5. *What changes would you need to make in your lifestyle to accommodate God?*

Hurricanes, floods, and tornadoes are just some of the acts of nature which can grieve people on this earth. The list can be expanded to include illness, death, accidents, and even human acts against one another. Life can be difficult. It is hard to go through this world alone or isolated from others. Jesus knows this. Thus, he promises the Holy Spirit to be present in our lives to encourage, advocate, and help. It is the Spirit who nudges us to follow Jesus and keep his word, but also to have peace despite the troubles of this life.

6. *Read John 14:26-27 again. What gift of the Holy Spirit do you need this week?*
7. *What of these words give you hope?*
8. *What do you need the Holy Spirit to help you to hear today?*

When someone we love departs from us, it hurts. This might be a long-time neighbor or a colleague at work. It is especially true when that loved one departs due to death. Even if death follows a long, painful illness, it is painful to be left alone. It may feel like our anchor is gone. Jesus prepares for his departure and the departures of others in our lives. He reminds us that we are not alone. He sends the best – his own Spirit – to serve as a helper. It is that Spirit which gives us peace to endure the troubles of this world and to anticipate the joys of the next world.

9. *What do you hope to remember from this lesson?*

Prayer

Come O Advocate; Come Holy Spirit, Come set up residence in our lives. Keep us closely connected to the teachings of Jesus. Hold us steadfast in faith. Give us peace; and take away our fears. In Christ, we pray. Amen

Dig Deeper: John 14

last word

This week, visualize God coming into your life
to establish a home.



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