

Daily Discipleship

John 14:8-17

Stories of Discipleship: An Advocate's Story

Focus Question: *What is the Holy Spirit doing this week in your life?*

word of life

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever."

John 14:16 (NRSV)

Read John 14:8-17

John 14 begins with Jesus encouraging the disciples to believe in God and not to be troubled. He tries to explain his own journey and preparations for them. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:3 NRSV)

But Philip feels lost and not satisfied with the situation. Things are disconnected. Philip simply wants to be shown the Father. That's all. Then, Philip will be satisfied.

1. *What does it feel like to not quite grasp the situation?*
2. *How easy is it to ask for direction and assistance?*
3. *Is Philip's request reasonable? How so?*

Jesus is not convinced an appearance by the Father will persuade Philip. Has Philip not been paying attention to Jesus and his words? How can Philip look at Jesus and not see the Father at work in him? Who does Philip think Jesus is?

4. *How do you explain Philip's confusion?*
5. *How do you explain the relationship between the Father and the Son?*

There is no doubt for Jesus that the essence of his own being flows from the Father. The two cannot be separated, but are united in all aspects of being. Thus, seeing Jesus *is* seeing the Father. Interacting with Jesus *is* interacting with the Father. Grounded in that close connection, Jesus encourages his disciples to ask directly to him for those things which are needed. "If in my name you ask me for anything I will do it." (John 15:14 NRSV)

6. *How might this response have helped Philip?*
7. *How might it have left him confused?*

Carefully, Jesus weaves into the discussion another aspect about the essence of God – the Holy Spirit. Jesus has been their advocate on earth, but Jesus intends to give them the Holy Spirit as another Advocate. This is not a one-time gift, but rather the Holy Spirit is forever. If Philip and his followers are having a difficult time grasping the connection between the Father and Jesus, these words by Jesus might compound their confusion.

8. *How do you explain the work of the Holy Spirit?*
9. *How might the Holy Spirit help Philip understand the words of Jesus?*
10. *How important is it to struggle with issues of faith in order to grow in faith?*

The word advocate means "to stand beside." As an Advocate, it is the Holy Spirit who stands beside and within a disciple, actively working to give clarity of truth, strengthen faith, and shed light on confusion. Amazingly, the Advocate is not distant, but this is Jesus choosing to abide in the life of a disciple through the Holy Spirit. The Advocate connects a disciple to God and the faith community.

11. *What does it mean for the Holy Spirit to abide in disciples?*

word among us

The young girl walked sadly and quietly into the courtroom with a police escort. In a flash, her familiar life and beloved family had been snatched away. Now, she was about to learn what it meant to be a ward of the state. Fortunately, she had been assigned an advocate who would speak on her behalf.

Outside the courtroom was a park filled with children. Some were playing baseball, but a few of the older guys wouldn't let one of the younger ones play with them. He was a good enough player, but they were having a fun giving him a hard time. Finally, his big brother intervened with a simple bark, "Hey, let him play! He can be on my team." A huge grin came on the face of the young boy as he thought to himself, "Wow! My brother stood up for me!"

Advocates come in all shapes and sizes.

1. *Define advocate.*
2. *Give an example of an advocate in your life.*
3. *What does it feel like to have an advocate?*
4. *Give an example of being an advocate for someone else.*

The relationship of Jesus with his disciples was multi-dimensional. Certainly, his primary role was teacher, but Jesus also served as their advocate. As his death became near, Jesus realized how devastating the crucifixion would be for them. He also recognized he could not stay with his followers on this earth. So, he made plans to send another Advocate.

5. *How was Jesus an advocate for his disciples while he was on this earth?*
6. *How is the sending of the Advocate an act of advocacy?*
7. *What does it mean for you to have Jesus send you the Advocate?*

Advocacy includes a certain degree of cheerleading, but the Spirit does not simply root on people to live life. The Holy Spirit is not a life coach to help a person get the successes and riches of the good life portrayed in commercials. Instead, the Advocate connects people to God and the faith community. It is the Holy Spirit which calls, gathers, and enlightens disciples, using the truth of God's Word to keep true faith.

The Holy Spirit abides in us. Reflect on the space you have given the Holy Spirit to abide in your life. Consider how much time, space, and energy you have allowed for helping the Holy Spirit to settle into your life.

8. *What evidence do you have the Holy Spirit is abiding in your life?*
9. *Imagine the Advocate is asked to describe what it has been like to work in your life. What would the Advocate say?*
10. *What changes might need to be made in order to be more open to the Advocate in your life?*

Prayer

Holy Spirit, it is so reassuring to hear of your presence in my life. Come, be an Advocate for my faith. Draw me closer to Jesus in all that I do. Hold me tight and do not let me stray. Amen

Dig Deeper:

Romans 8:14-17

last word

Each morning call upon the Advocate
to lead you in all your actions.



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