



One Hope Community Church Suggested Reading Plan & Guide Book of John: Chapter 15 part 2

Spiritual transformation happens when we purposefully spend time with God each day. God created you and is waiting to be known by you.

Always begin in prayer, start the conversation with God by asking Him to use His Holy Spirit to reveal whatever wisdom and insights He wants you to learn. Open your Bible, reflect on what you have read, perhaps take notes. The questions below are designed to help you examine the scriptures for both cultural context and personal application, to engage with the Holy Spirit for relational growth with God and to review with your small group if you are in one. This is your space for your time with God, learning and experiencing spiritual transformation. The plan is laid out for five days of reading and reflecting.

We know small groups meet on various days. You may find it helpful to read all of the verses and begin working through the questions before you meet so that you are ready to discuss them with your small group whenever it meets. The discussion with your small group is meant to help you learn from each other and grow deeper in community.

Song for the week: Closer - Brandon Lake

Song links: https://youtu.be/H3zzhyqC_4E?si=aN0US7cOS07rxRyk

Suggested Reading Plan John 15:18-27

Day 1: John 15:18-19

Day 2: John 15:20-21

Day 3: John 15:22

Day 4: John 15:23-25

Day 5: John 15:26-27

Lent

The name Lent comes from the Old English "lencten" which means "springtime, spring" and from German "langitinaz" which means "long-days, lengthening of the day." In almost all other languages, Lent's name comes from the Latin term "quadragesima" or "the forty days." Lent is celebrated for 40 days.

Not always, but often in the Bible numbers have meanings. During the time it was written, people understood the significance of the symbolism of numbers. The number 40 symbolized periods of testing, purification, preparation and growth. It is the amount of time Moses stayed on the mountain with God before receiving the 10 commandments (Exodus 24 and 34) and that the Israelite spies were in the land of Canaan (Numbers 12). It is the duration of Elijah's travel to the cave where he saw his vision (1 Kings 19). And it was the number of days Nineveh was given to repent (Jonah 3). It rained 40 days and nights while Noah and his family were safely in the ark (Genesis 7-8). Forty days is also how long Jesus spent in the wilderness fasting and praying before He began His ministry (Matthew 4, Mark 1 and Luke 4).

Putting it into practice: Have you chosen what you will give up or add during Lent? It is not too late to begin the practice which helps aid in the creation of spiritual transformation and connection with God as we remember the sacrifice He made (giving up) so that we may be made right with God through belief (adding us in to His family). If you have missed some days, give yourself the same grace God gives you and begin anew.

As 40 days symbolizes testing, purification, preparation and growth, do you notice any of these things in your life as you participate in Lent and focus on Jesus? If so, how is it affecting your relationship with God? How is it affecting your relationship with others?

John 15:18-19

Comparison was a teaching tool of ancient elaboration. Jesus turned His dialogue from love in God's community (abiding in the Vine) to hatred in the world.

Comparison continues to be a valuable teaching tool. What comparisons can you think of to differentiate living in the world verses living in Christ (abiding in the Vine)? How might you use these comparisons when witnessing to others about Jesus?

Jesus, fully human and fully God, entered into the world which was against Him. Herod tried to kill Him when He was an infant. During Jesus' ministry people continued to show Him hatred by calling Him names, attempting to discredit Him and attempting to stone Him. Eventually He was crucified.

Jesus started with "if the world hates you" which is a gentle statement. He knew that His disciples would be treated as He was. In telling them, He showed them love and prepared them. He knew they were agitated by the conversation about His leaving so He gently and tenderly presents this truth.

We know that this applies to us, too. When people in your life are against you for your faith, do you find comfort in knowing that Jesus personally experienced hatred? Jesus responded to people being against Him in a variety of ways, including leaving them and going where people would accept His teaching and He would be safe. There were times when He stayed and times when He left. How does His example inform your actions when people are against you or hate you?

In the Mediterranean area during that time, friendship typically meant being an enemy with a friend's enemy. Today, this often continues in governments and sometimes with individuals. There is a difference between that way and God's way. God has no enemies. He hates sin, never the sinner. Jesus continually showed love to everyone. Do you find it easy or difficult to separate a person from their sin? Practically, how do you show love and boundaries to others who may be against you?

Jesus said, "I have chosen you out of the world." Jesus affirmed to His disciples that He chose them to be first followers and disciples and soon apostles. He introduced them to His new command which was different from the world's view. He chose them for these purposes.

Putting it into practice: Are you looking for your purpose? Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance

for us to do.” These good works are part of your daily purpose. Ask God to show you what He has prepared for you today. Who does He want you to serve and show love to?

John 15:20-21

Jesus said “they do not know the One who sent Me.” Not only were people rejecting Jesus, they did not know God. To know someone is deeper than knowledge of them. The Jews and Gentiles knew of God. Many knew of God’s laws. But they did not know God. Their idea of Him was wrong.

We know of people we hear about or read about. But we know those who we spend time with. How do you spend time with God? How do you learn about Him? How do you hear Him speak to you?

One way we learn about God is through the Bible. Often we think of reading it, however, we can also listen to it. Click on [John 15](#) to listen to it. Did you notice anything different when you listened instead of reading the passage? Was it easier to listen than read? Consider integrating listening to scripture into your time with God.

Depending on the translation, verse 21 says either “because of My name” or “for My name's sake.” This literally means “on account of My name.” Any hatred the disciples would encounter because of teaching the gospel would be nothing to be ashamed of. The hatred would be against God and because of people’s ignorance of Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life. Any who rejected this truth was rejecting not the messengers but the One who is THE MESSAGE.

As believers we are called Christians which means “Christ followers.” We are to represent Him. How do you represent Jesus to others? What truths can you remind yourself of when you receive opposition because of His name?

John 15:22

Jewish teachers recognized that when a person knows something to be true, they are then morally responsible for it. Jesus said, “ If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin (John 15:22).”

In context, Jesus was speaking of the particular sin of persecuting and rejecting Him. If He, the Messiah, had not come, had they not heard His teachings and seen His miracles, they would not have known God the same way. They would still be guilty of many other sins, but this was the greatest sin - to reject the Messiah.

To reject Jesus as Messiah was to reject the grace of God and the mercy and forgiveness offered to them. This is a different degree of sin. The rejection of the Messiah is a “crowning act of rebellion (Barnes’ Notes on the Bible).” Compared to this, all other sin is trivial. This sin is deliberate rejection.

The sin of rejecting God and His offer of forgiveness and new life in Jesus is unforgivable and called blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. It is denying the work of the Holy Spirit witnessing to us about Jesus. Mark 3:28-29 says, “Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an

eternal sin.” Matthew 12:32 says the same thing, “ Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”

God has provided for our salvation in His Son (John 3:16). Forgiveness is found exclusively in Jesus (John 14:6).

Putting it into practice: If you have not yet accepted Jesus as your Savior and are ready to do so, use the words that follow or something similar in your own words. These are also words you can remember when you are praying with someone who has chosen to accept Jesus as their Savior:

Jesus, I confess that I am a sinner. I need you in my life. I believe that you died for my sins and that on the third day you walked out of that grave victorious over death. I welcome the Holy Spirit to live in my heart so that I can learn to follow you and love you even more and I ask you to be the Lord of my life.

John 15:23-25

“If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father”

Reading the Old Testament other people, such as Moses and Elijah, did miraculous works. What are some of the miracles you remember from the Old Testament? What was the purpose of those miracles?

Jesus’ miracles were greater than those of Moses and the prophets in three ways: in their number, in their nature and in power source. Jesus’ ministry was full of miracles. “It is probable that he performed more miracles than are recorded of Moses and Elijah, and all the prophets put together (Barnes’ Notes on the Bible).” The nature or kind of Jesus’ miracles were greater; He created, healed and raised from the dead. Finally, while Moses and the prophets invoked the power of God, Jesus spoke and it was done.

Which of Jesus’ miracles stand out to you right now? Why does that one stand out? Is there something about this miracle which resonates with a need in you? Or have you experienced a similar miracle? What conversation do you want to have with God about this miracle?

The people hated God as God, Jesus was goodness, truth and light.. “Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil (John 3:19).” What was true then is still true today. Jesus is God. Jesus is goodness, truth and light. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).”

Is there a place God is shining goodness, truth and / or light in your life? What might be His purpose for shining on it? What might He want you to know? How might He be asking you to share it with others?

Putting it into practice: One way to connect with God is through music. Click on the song title I Need a Miracle by Third Day to watch their video as you listen to the music. Is there a place in your life that needs a miracle? Take some time right now to talk to God about it. Next click on Even If by Mercy Me to watch another video. What else do you want to say to God? Then, like Jesus, end with His words “not my will but Yours be done.”

John 15:26-27

Jesus again spoke of the relationship He had with the Father and the Holy Spirit - and how God would testify to the disciples by way of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were also told to testify to what they know of Jesus. Even though people hated and rejected Jesus, He continued to show love and opportunities to choose belief in Him - such a contrast to the hatred He had just spoken of.

Putting it into practice: As a believer, you are also to testify to what you know of Jesus. Consider that the work of God in your life is a current living testimony. Each day that you interact with God, growing your relationship with Him and spending time listening to Him, you will be more aware of His work in your life. This grows your faith, but sharing it can also increase someone else’s faith or bring them to a place of belief in God. Where in your life in the past day, week, month or year have you seen God at work? Thank Him for it. Then ask Him to show you when to share your story with others for His glory.

Consider:

More than anything else, Jesus desires to be in relationship with us. - Shannon Swift

Once you know the truth of who you are, you will be set free ... defined by who Jesus says you are.
- Frank Vandy

Putting it into practice: Write a love letter to Jesus. It never has to be seen by anyone else. This is just between you and Jesus. Be open and honest about what is on your heart.

Set a daily alarm for 2:42 pm. When your alarm goes off, pray something like this: Jesus, you are the Lord of my life. I know you have a purpose and a plan for my life and I fully submit my life to you. I pray that You will make Your will known to me.