



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS John 15:18 – 16:4

Read John 15:18 – 16:4

Please note: This is the final study for the year! As a suggestion, why not have a 'thanksgiving' time next week? Next week, each person think of some blessings that God has given over 2018 and share them with the group. Then spend time giving Him thanks. Most Growth Groups will then take a break from the week beginning 16th December until February 2019.

1. The word 'Helper' (ESV) is the word 'paraclete'. Literally, it means something like 'one called alongside you to help you in your case'. **How does the context of Jesus command to His disciples to 'go and bear fruit' in chapter 15, help us understand what the role of the Spirit is, in chapter 16?**
2. The exact same word translated 'convict' is used in John 3:20 and translated 'expose'. **Discuss what you think the word convict means.**
3. **Discuss what the three 'charges' are, that the Holy Spirit convicts the world of, and what grounds these charges are based on?**
4. **Discuss in what way the Holy Spirit still convicts us of each of these three things?**
5. Every Christian has been convicted of these three things. **So, if we are indeed guilty as charged, what hope is there? In other words, where does the Holy Spirit take us to deal with that guilt? Hint: where is Jesus going in verse 5? Further Hint: 1 John 1:8-10.**
6. The cry of the whole Old Testament can be found in Isaiah 63:17. **How is this prayer answered in the New Testament and in what (or who) Jesus promises in our passage? What is the result of the Spirit's work in us? Hint: Phil 2:13**
7. Spend time thanking God for our new venue. Pray and ask Him to pour out His Spirit and ask that He would do the work of an Evangelist amongst us and many others and bring us to conviction of sin and then to Jesus for forgiveness.

Leaders Notes

1. We are so self-centred that we naturally think, 'the Holy Spirit is here to help *me* with *my* mission... etc.' But the context tells us that Jesus has appointed us to be on mission for Him. This helps us see that the role of the Spirit is first and foremost to help us with Jesus' mission to the world, not our little plans and projects for our lives. He helps us get on with the mission Jesus has entrusted to us. True, He does help us, by bringing us to Jesus. But the focus on chapter 16 is the Spirit's help in prosecuting the cause of Jesus in the world. What the Holy Spirit does for Jesus is more important than what He does for us.
2. To 'convict' means 'to convince someone of the wrongfulness of their attitude or actions'. It has an objective dimension, that is, it is objectively true that so-and-so is wrong. Like in a court of law. But the Holy Spirit also convicts on a subjective level, that is, He enters people's deepest beings and persuades them of their own wrongness.
3. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgement. The grounds for each case are: in regard to sin, they were wrong to not believe in Jesus; in regard to righteousness, their 'righteousness' was actually unrighteousness because they thought it was right to reject Jesus but actually He has gone to the Father. i.e. the Father reversed their verdict by resurrecting Jesus from the dead; and they are convicted of judgement because the world's standards of judgement are wrong, i.e. the ruler of this world has been judged.
4. Each Christian has been convicted of these things (and continues to be). The Holy Spirit has convinced us that we are sinful and that we are wrong to not entrust ourselves to Jesus. He convinces us that our righteousness is in fact, unrighteous. And He convicts us of judgement. He shows us that we are wrong in our judgements about Jesus. Jesus is more valuable, more precious than all the other things we judged as being better than Jesus. All this is an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. True, there was a time when it first happened and we first came to the cross for forgiveness. But as we grow as Christians so our conviction of our own sin grows and grows. The most mature and holy Christians are the ones who are most aware of their guiltiness before God. We grow downwards in our self-estimation and upwards in our valuing Christ.
5. The paradox of Christianity is that when we accept that we are guilty and we plead guilty, then we are in fact pronounced not guilty! This is the wonder of the gospel. Guilty people are brought to their sense, see their guilt, condemn themselves, and then go to the cross. At the cross they see Jesus bearing their sin, and suffering the penalty they should have suffered. And as they trust Jesus, they are forgiven of all their sins, and pronounced not guilty by God. All this is the work of the Holy Spirit pointing us to the crucified Saviour. BUT, if we deny guilt and resist the Holy Spirit's convicting work, we will never be forgiven and we will have to bear our own punishment.
6. Isaiah is exasperated and desperate. The entire history of Israel, God's people, is a history of failure. God has given them so much and done so much for them but they just can't keep their end of the bargain. Even if they wanted to serve and love God they just can't. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. And so Isaiah cries out, 'Oh God, why don't you just give us a new heart!' This cry is answered beautifully in the New Testament. The answer is in one word: The Indwelling Holy Spirit. (ok, four words.) He gives us a heart to want to love God and *to* love God, which is what Phil 2:13 says.