



# LISTEN

PART 2: JOHN 15-17  
DISCUSSION GUIDE



---

# INTRODUCTION

---

“Transformation” is an organic process where one form of a substance blossoms into a different form of the same substance. Think of all of the beautiful instances of transformation that will happen around you this spring: the humidity in the air transforms into clouds, clouds transform into dispensers of rain, seeds transform into plants, bulbs into flowers, and dead branches into vibrant leafy stems. The list could go on.

When the Bible talks about a person’s life after they have believed in Jesus, it describes a life of transformation. One does not simply believe in Jesus and then go on living the same way they lived before. Instead, as they put their trust in Christ, the process of transformation begins with faith the size of a mustard seed (comparable to a sesame seed!) and grows into a giant sturdy tree.

By the work of the Holy Spirit, the greedy are transformed into the generous, the proud into the humble, the lazy into the diligent, the hater into the compassionate, and the unjust into the merciful.

In John 15-17, Jesus continues teaching the disciples about some vital aspects of the transformed Christian life: abiding in him; bearing fruit; experiencing love, joy, and sorrow; and trusting in the promise of the Helper. Then, in a climactic end of this section, Jesus prays in his High Priestly Prayer: “Sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth” (John 17:17).

This again reflects Jesus’s desire that his people would be sanctified—transformed into Christlikeness—rather than just believe and not move toward spiritual maturity.

Let’s ask ourselves: how is the transforming work of the Holy Spirit evident in our lives?

This study guide is made up of three weekly sections:

## **1. DISCUSSIONS**

Each week has groupings of questions that seem to fit well together. These groupings are called “discussions.” They are designed to lead you into God’s Word, provide sermon application, and guide your group conversation. Feel free to use the discussion questions that best fit your group’s situation or needs. Beyond your Small Group, these questions can also be used in the context of a Bible study or discipleship relationship.

## **2. FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

These questions were created specifically with families in mind and we hope they’ll be useful in facilitating family discussion (maybe around the dinner table or at a different family devotional time). These questions are applicable to all ages, including young children. We pray these bless you as you disciple your family.

## **3. APPLICATION**

Each week, we’ve suggested some next steps. Whether you use these applications or find other ways to respond, our hope is that you intentionally act on and obey God’s Word.

As we take this week to focus on praying and abiding in Christ, pray along with Scotty Smith in the below prayer. Then, discuss which parts of the prayer stood out to you and which might help you abide in the love that Jesus has for you.

## A PRAYER FOR ABIDING IN JESUS' LOVE

by Pastor Scotty Smith

*As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.*

John 15:9-11(ESV)

*Dear Lord Jesus, how can it be? How is it possible that you love us as the Father loves you? With unfettered joy, the fullness of affection, and a deluge of delight. We believe, help our unbelief*

*Jesus, to abide in your love is a command we'll gladly keep. As a fish swims the depths of the Pacific Ocean and an eagle soars the heights of the Alaska skyline, so shall we seek to abide in your love. It was your obedience that earned the fullness of God's love for us, and it's our obedience that frees us to enjoy every good thing we have in you.*

*Because you have perfectly fulfilled the law for us, God's commands are no longer a burden to us (1 John 5:3). By them we understand how to love as you love us; how to live at the pace of grace, instead of at the race for more; how to steward our freedom, instead of squandering our moments. Hallelujah, we're not under the weight and condemnation of the law, we're in you and under grace (Rom. 6:14). Hallelujah, we've been set free from performance-based living, for a life of whole-heart loving. Take us farther up and farther into the ways and means of grace, Lord Jesus.*

*May your Word, and everything it teaches us, increasingly become more precious to us than fine gold, and sweeter than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb (Ps. 19:10); for it warns us of the insanity of sin and woos*

*us unto a life of true freedom and joy (Ps. 19:7-13). May the pleasure we find in obeying you be only second to the pleasure we have in being loved by you.*

*And now, as we lean into the demands, surprises, and pains of this day, knowing you are praying for the fullness of our joy, we will seek to live for the praise of your glorious grace (Eph. 1:6). So very Amen we pray, in your magnificent and merciful name.<sup>1</sup>*

## **FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

1. Talk about what it means to “abide” using a lamp as an example. When it’s plugged into a wall and turned on, a lamp gives light to a room. But without the electricity that flows through the wall to the plug, the lamp would not shine. Abiding in Jesus means we are dependent on Jesus for everything that God has promised. Just like the lamp can’t shine when unplugged from the wall, the Christian can’t live unless abiding in Jesus.
2. Talk about the relationship between love and obedience.
3. Pray that God would help your family “plug into”—or abide in—Jesus.

## **APPLICATION**

- As you read through your Bible, pray Scripture back to God, like the prayer above. Consider making this method of prayer part of your daily routine.
- In the morning, write out one of your prayers that is based in Scripture. Set a calendar appointment or an alarm on your phone to read through the prayer later in the day as a way to remind yourself to pray without ceasing.

---

Smith, Scotty. 2015. “A Prayer for Abiding in Jesus’ Love.” The Gospel Coalition. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/scotty-smith/a-prayer-for-abiding-in-jesus-love/>.

## **DISCUSSION 1**

The Law & Love (vv. 12-13; 17)

1. Do you have difficulty in seeing the intricate connection between the law and love? How does Jesus tie these two together in this passage?
2. Read Romans 13:8-10. How does Paul link the law and love together in this passage? Do you have a tendency to view the law as cold, distant, and unloving? How is this view, that living out the law is actually loving towards others, different than how you have viewed the law in the past?
3. Read verse 13. Think about the kind of love that would compel you to lay down your life for someone else. Who are some people in your life that you would lay down your life for? Take a moment and describe why you would do that for them.

## **DISCUSSION 2**

Friends, Not Servants (vv. 14-15)

4. When Jesus says in verse 14 that we are his friends if we do what he commands, does he mean that we must do works in order to be saved? Why or why not?
5. Compare and contrast the servant and the friend who are mentioned in these verses. What are some things that Christians know Jesus is doing or will do in the world that unbelievers may not know or believe?

## DISCUSSION 3

### Chosen to Bear Fruit (vv. 16-17)

1. Jesus says that those who follow him are to “go and bear fruit” (v. 16). What fruit do you think he is referring to?
2. Verse 16 does not only talk about God’s sovereignty in salvation, it also talks about the Christian life being one that bears fruit. In light of this verse and Galatians 5:22-23, can someone be a Christian and not bear fruit? Why or why not?

## FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Talk with your children about how obeying the rules of the house is actually a way that we show love to other members of the family. Ask your children: If you hit one of your parents/siblings when you’re angry, does that show love? If you don’t hit one of your parents/siblings when you’re angry, does that show love?
2. Ask your children: “What would be the purpose of an apple tree if it didn’t produce apples?” or “What would the world look like without fruit? Then, read Galatians 5:22-23 together and talk about how a Christian who doesn’t produce the fruit of the Spirit is just as surprising as a world without fruit or an apple tree that doesn’t grow apples!

## APPLICATION

- Read Exodus 19:3-6 and pay specific attention to how God anchors the Ten Commandments in love and grace. Then, read Exodus 20:1-17 and consider how each of these commandments relates to or instructs us to live with love and grace.
- Memorize the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. Then, make a list of how you can bless the people in your life this week with genuine expressions of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc.



## **DISCUSSION 1**

### Love for Friends (vv. 12-17)

1. In verses 12-17, Jesus made his love the standard for what love should look like for his disciples. Give some examples of ways that Jesus loved his friends.
2. In this section, Jesus wasn't talking about general love. What are some ways in which we are called to love fellow believers differently than we are called to "love our neighbor"? Which ways are we called to love both fellow believers and "our neighbor"?
3. What are some things that tend to bring disunity among Christians? How can we transcend these things with the kind of love Jesus describes in this passage?

## **DISCUSSION 2**

### Hate for Jesus (vv. 18-25)

1. Read verses 18-25. What were some of the different responses that people had towards Jesus in his ministry? Give examples.
2. Read John 7:7. According to this passage, why did people hate Jesus? What are some ways that Jesus exposed the sinful, religious spirit of those who hated him?
3. Have you ever met someone who hates Christianity? What were their reasons? How should the church respond to these reasons?

## DISCUSSION 3

### Hate for You (vv. 1-4)

1. According to John 15:18, we are hated because of the hate people have for Jesus. Have you ever been treated wrongly because of your faith in Christ? Give examples.
2. Read 16:1-4. What are some of the most extreme ways that Christians have been persecuted in America and overseas? How do these verses comfort us as we follow Christ in the midst of persecution?
3. Though we will be hated because of Jesus, some professing Christians have brought reproach on the name of Jesus because of their false teaching or immoral lifestyles. What are some examples of this? Why is it important that we rightly represent Christ to a fallen world?

## FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Read John 15:12-17 together and ask your children how Jesus's actions in this passage show true love. What about Jesus shows us what real love looks like. What does love look like in this passage? How have you seen your parents or siblings display this type of Christlike love?
2. Read verses 18-25. What is the response that Jesus received from many people while he was on earth? Read John 7:7. Why did people hate Jesus even though he did many good things?
3. As a family, list out a few of the ways that you enjoy spending time with God (Ex. reading the Bible, listening to worship music, or going to church). Then, read John 16:1-4. Explain to your children how many Christians around the world must hide their faith in God because it is dangerous to be a Christian. Consider using the College Park missionary Prayer Guide to pray for some of our missionaries in dark parts of the world.

## APPLICATION

Take some time to journal what you're learning this week. As you do, consider the following:

- How can you practically love a fellow Christian this week? Who could you pray for? Who could you help with the gift of your time, your talents, or your treasure? Who would be most blessed by a generous gesture?
- In the last six months, have you shared your faith? If so, don't forget to thank God for the fruit you've seen. If not, how can you take steps to share your faith more regularly? Write down the names of people you hope will come to faith in Christ and then pray over the list.

## **DISCUSSION 1**

Jesus is Now Going to the Father (vv. 4b-6)

1. What does Jesus tell his followers will happen when he goes to the Father (vv. 7-8)?
2. Throughout the New Testament and especially in Acts, what are some of the amazing things that the apostles do in the power of the Holy Spirit? What are some ways that the Church grew with the coming of the Holy Spirit?
3. In John 16:6, how does Jesus describe the disciples' reaction to his news that he is leaving them? Explain.

## **DISCUSSION 2**

The Role of the Holy Spirit (vv. 7-11)

1. In 16:8-11, what does Jesus say that the Holy Spirit will do when he comes?
2. How does 1 Corinthians 2:10-13 fulfill what Jesus said the Holy Spirit would do?

## **DISCUSSION 3**

The Holy Spirit Guides the Disciples & the Church (vv. 12-15)

1. Read Acts 2:1-13. What did the disciples receive and what was the result?
2. Read John 16:13. How does this assertion give confidence to the disciples that the Holy Spirit will truly help them as they go out to fulfill the Great Commission?
3. According to John 16:14-15, what is the role of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity?

## **FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

1. When someone you love leaves your house, are you sad or happy when they leave? Can you imagine how sad it was when the disciples heard that their friend (15:14), Jesus, was going to leave earth to go live with the Father? Why are people sad when their friends leave them?
2. Read through with your children all of the ways that the Holy Spirit helps them. How does the Holy Spirit convict you of sin? How does he help you obey? How does he help you tell the truth?

## **APPLICATION**

- Pray to the Father and ask the Holy Spirit to convict you of sin, show you how to live rightly, and to lead you in truth so that you may glorify the Son. Dwell on the work of the Trinity—how he is changing your heart. Give thanks to God for this work.
- Make a two-sided list. On the left side, write down some ways that you tend to be self-centered. On the right side, write down how you can be Jesus-centered instead, as the Holy Spirit helps you take your focus off yourself.

## DISCUSSION 1

Jesus Will Soon be Gone (vv. 16-22)

1. In verse 16, Jesus told his disciples they won't see him for a while and then, they will see him again. What did he mean?
2. Prior to this, Jesus had told the disciples about his death and resurrection. Why do you think they still did not understand?
3. Jesus knew the disciples were struggling to understand. How does he react to their confusion? What does he share in order to help them deal with the sorrow of separation (v. 20)?

## DISCUSSION 2

Prayer in Light of Jesus's Departure (vv. 23-24)

1. In the original Greek, two different words are translated as "ask." The first, in verse 23, means inquire; in verse 24, it means petition. When Jesus is gone, they will not ask him questions but can request petitions. What is the condition for answered prayer?
2. What is the result of answered prayer?

## DISCUSSION 3

Shared Love between Father, Son & Believers (vv. 25-33)

1. How does verse 26 give you confidence in prayer and remind you of the care of the Father?
2. Jesus said the disciples would "be scattered, each to his own home." When did this happen? Why was he, nevertheless, not alone? How can that encourage us?

3. Jesus said in verse 33 that the disciples can have peace. Why can we/they have peace? What gives us all encouragement?

## **FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

1. Talk to the family and ask, “What should children do when they do not understand what parents say?”
2. Ask your children why they trust you. Have them share a few of the ways they demonstrate that they trust you?
3. Share prayer requests as a family. Then, talk about what it looks like to trust God in prayer, especially when he doesn’t answer the way we want (parents, start the conversation by sharing honestly about how you’ve struggled when God hasn’t answer your prayers the way you want).
4. Ask: what are ways that Jesus has overcome the world?

## **APPLICATION**

- This week, commit to pray in Jesus’s name and make a list of answered prayers—both the yes and no answers.
- Pray for peace in the world. Make a list of areas in which Jesus has overcome the world.

## DISCUSSION 1

Jesus Prays for His People (vv. 1-7)

1. Read John 17:1-17. What stands out to you in this passage? What is confusing?
2. Read Hebrews 5:1-10. According to this passage, what does it take to be a high priest? How does John 17:1-5 set up the following prayer as Jesus's "High Priestly Prayer"?
3. What does it mean that Jesus is our "High Priest"? Why should Jesus's prayers for us be comforting?
4. According to verses 2, 3, 6, 9, 12, and 14, Jesus is praying for his people and not the rest of the world. What separates the people of God from the rest of the world? How should this humble Christians?

## DISCUSSION 2

Jesus Keeps His People (vv. 18-24)

1. How is it that a Christian doesn't fall away from the faith?
2. Read 1 John 2:19. What does this passage reveal about "falling away" from faith? If someone is truly a believer and has seemingly "walked away," what will happen to them according to these texts?
3. Do you know anyone who's walked away from the faith? What led to this? How can you pray for them?
4. Reread John 17:15. Some Christians believe that in order to be faithful to Christ, they must never be in contact with the things of this world. Is this true according to this verse? What is the right balance of being in the world but not of the world?



## DISCUSSION 3

Jesus Purchases His People (vv. 25-31)

1. What is the hour that Jesus refers to in verses 1-4? How would Jesus be glorified in that hour?
2. Why is the death of Christ so critical to our faith? Why can't someone be saved apart from the death of Christ?
3. Have you ever studied the different positions regarding Christ's atonement? What should all Christians agree upon regardless of their view of the atonement?

## FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Read Hebrews 5:1-2 together. Have your children list some of the responsibilities of a High Priest that are mentioned in this passage. Then, discuss how Jesus is our perfect High Priest because he is fully God and fully man and because he died and rose again. Ask: how is Jesus better than a human high priest?
2. Talk about what "debt" is, and what it means to "pay off debt." Then say something to the effect of, "Because humans are sinners, we have a sin debt that must be paid. Either we must pay the debt with our lives, or someone who is perfect can pay our debt with his life. Jesus was perfect and loves his people, so he paid off the sin debt of every person that is sorry for their sin and believe in him as their Savior!" Then discuss your salvation testimony with them. This should be a time of rejoicing in Jesus's atoning work for you!
3. Since Jesus loved his people, he prayed for his people. Who are some people that you love that you can also pray for?

## APPLICATION

- Take some time this week to read and meditate on Hebrews 4:14-16.

## **DISCUSSION 1**

Connection (vv. 18-23a)

1. According to verses 18-19, who sent the disciples on mission and what does sanctification have to do with their mission? How does this relate to us today?
2. Find all the occurrences of the word “in” in this passage. Discuss how this should affect the way people in the church should relate to each other.
3. What does verse 20 mean for modern-day believers?

## **DISCUSSION 2**

Love (vv. 23b-26)

1. Count the number of times John uses “love” in this passage. What do we learn of the love of the Father and Son from this passage?
2. How do Jesus and the Father demonstrate love?

## **DISCUSSION 3**

Known (vv. 25-26)

1. Find all the occurrences of the word “know” in this passage. What types of knowledge does it refer to?
2. How can the word “know,” as used in this passage, encourage the people of God?
3. As those who know God, how are believers call to live?

## **FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

1. Talk about verse 20, in which Jesus prays for future believers and the testimony they will receive. Take turns sharing the name of someone who doesn't know Christ. Talk about how you might share Jesus with that person in the coming days and weeks.
2. If you have enough family members, split up into teams for a fun little competition like a two-legged partner race or a relay race. Afterwards, talk about what it means to be on the same team as someone else. Explain how the unity of a good team is similar the unity of Jesus and the Father. They are unified always. Ask your children to share about a time when they were not unified with someone else. Then, think together of ways that we can restore unity when we are at odds with others.

## **APPLICATION**

- Pray that God will give you grace to accept the love of God and to share it with specific people this week.
- If you have unresolved conflict with someone, ask God to help you to either ask for forgiveness or be willing to forgive so you can live in peace. Jesus came to bring peace. Strive for reconciliation this week to the glory of God.

---

## NOTES

---

---

## NOTES

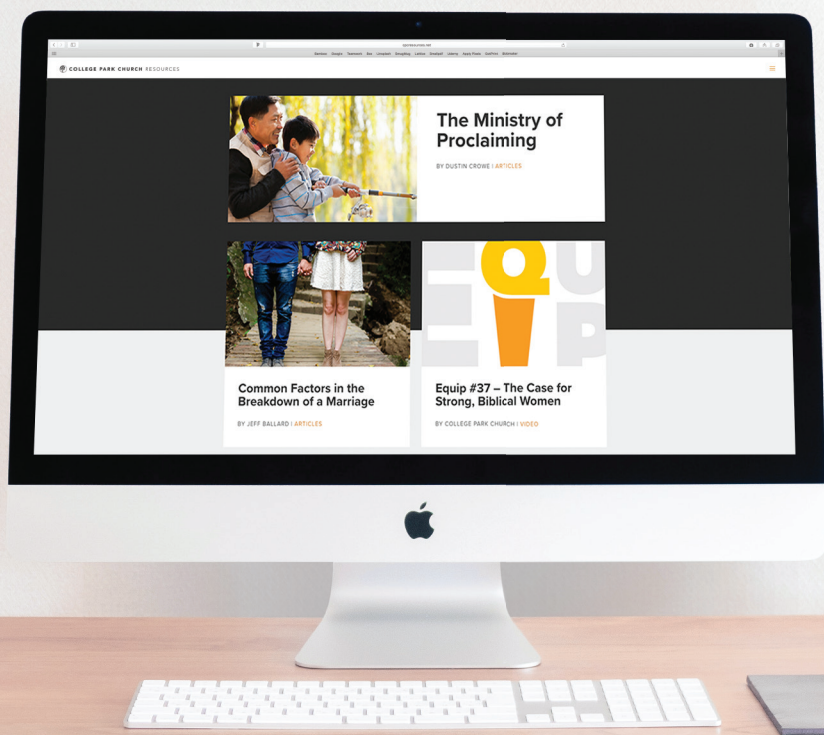
---

---

## NOTES

---

For more resources like this, visit  
**cpcresources.net**



# COLLEGE PARK CHURCH