



Words of Life

20 readings in John's Gospel

Chapters 13-17

How to make use of these readings and questions...

What you have in this small booklet is twenty short readings along with a few questions to get you thinking. In about 15 minutes you should be able to read the passage in your Bible, think about the questions, and pray about what you have read – and about other things too.

There are 20 readings, so if you aim to complete five a week, it'll take you the best part of a month to finish them.

A very brief introduction to John's Gospel

Towards the end of his Gospel John tells us why he has written – he has written so that his readers might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that by believing we would have life in his name.

*“Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that by believing you may have **life in his name**”*

John 20:30-31 (NIV)

In the first twelve chapters we are introduced to seven of Jesus' miraculous signs. And John shows how people struggle to accept that Jesus is who he claims to be. Some believe, but many do not.

Here in chapters 13-17 Jesus turns from the crowds, and focuses on his disciples, as he prepares to leave. As we read John shows us what it means to really live – to have life in Jesus' name. John gives us the words of life.

A prayer to pray...

As you come to each reading you may like to start or finish with this prayer;

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for your Son, his sacrifice and my forgiveness.

Please work in me through the Spirit and your word.

Remind me of your truth.

Transform my mind and heart;

So that I humbly love and serve,

So that I bear fruitful witness to Jesus,

And so that, by obedience, I bring glory to you

Amen



Reading 1

John 20:24-31 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. What did Thomas say when his friends told him they had seen Jesus alive?
2. When Jesus next appears, what does he offer Thomas? How do you think Thomas would have felt at that point?
3. Who is more blessed than Thomas?
4. Why has John recorded Jesus' miracles?

THINK ABOUT IT...

5. For what purpose did John write his Gospel?

PRAYER IDEAS...

Ask God to help you hear his word as you work your way through John chapters 13-17. Pray that you would be caused to trust Jesus, and to understand all that it means to have life in him.



Reading 2

John 13:1-11 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. What does Jesus *know* about the present and the future? (v1, v3, v11)
2. What do you think Peter will understand later? What *is* Jesus doing? (v7)
3. How do we see Jesus' love for his disciples in his actions? (compare v1)

THINK ABOUT IT...

4. How is this event symbolic of Jesus' death for his disciples?
5. Do I really understand the significance of Jesus' love for me?

PRAYER IDEAS...

Give thanks to God for his love for you, and for the washing and forgiveness which Jesus' sacrificial death has achieved for you.



Reading 3

John 13:12-20 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. What example has Jesus given his disciples, by washing their feet?
2. Reading between the lines – who has Judas rejected (v18, 20)?
3. Why is Jesus telling his disciples these things before they happen? (v19)

THINK ABOUT IT...

4. Jesus told his disciples to follow his example (v14). Am I?

PRAYER IDEAS...

Ask God to humble you, and help you serve others.

NOTES...

The quote from Psalm 41:9 (in verse 18) serves to identify Jesus' circumstances with King David's – so the disciples might recognise Jesus is the Messiah in the line of David (v19).



Reading 4

John 13:21-30 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. What is it that troubles Jesus? (v21)
2. Which of the disciples know that Judas will betray Jesus? (v23-24 cf v28)

THINK ABOUT IT...

3. Ponder the pain of broken relationship and betrayal that Jesus must have felt! The idea of Judas betraying Jesus is unthinkable – even to the other disciples (v29).

PRAYER IDEAS...

Ask God to help you stand-up for the truth about Jesus, despite challenges and opposition.

NOTES...

The disciple that Jesus loved (v23) is thought to be John. Though 'the disciple that Jesus loved' may sound pretentious, it is better to view it as an acknowledgment of Jesus' incredible love and mercy.



Reading 5

John 13:31-35 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. Judas has gone, and the mechanism that will lead to Jesus' death is now in motion. With his certain death looming, who does Jesus say is to be glorified?
2. How should the disciples behave in Jesus' absence?
3. How can followers of Jesus be identified?

THINK ABOUT IT...

4. Do others know that I am a follower of Jesus? Do I love my brothers and sisters in Christ?

PRAYER IDEAS...

Ask God to give you a genuine care for Christians. Pray that the way you live amongst your brothers and sisters in Christ, would make the gospel of Jesus attractive to others as well.



Reading 6

John 13:36-38 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. Where is Jesus going? (look back at 13:1 and 13:3)
2. Do you think Peter really knows what he is asking? (v36a and/or v37)

THINK ABOUT IT...

3. Do you think Jesus or Peter would have found v38b more painful?

PRAYER IDEAS...

Thank God that Jesus has prepared the way for us to follow – by dying our death for us.



Reading 7

John 14:1-14 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. What might cause the disciples to be troubled? (look back at 13:33 and 13:38)
2. What should they do, rather than worry? (v1)
3. Why should the disciples know the way to where Jesus is going? (v7)
4. And how can they know God the Father? (v9)

THINK ABOUT IT...

5. Why is it that we humans try to 'find' God in so many ways – rather than in Jesus?

PRAYER IDEAS...

Ask God to help you grow to trust Jesus more. And thank God for revealing himself in Jesus.

NOTES...

In 14:4 Jesus says his disciples know the way to where he is going. The very next verse seems to contradict this. But as you keep reading you discover that because they know Jesus they *do* in fact know the way (v6-7). Jesus is the way. They Just don't realise it!



Reading 8

John 14:15-24 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. If we love Jesus, what will we do? (v15, 21, 23)
2. Who does Jesus promise to send? (v16-17) And for what purpose?
3. How will Jesus come to his disciples?* (v18ff)

THINK ABOUT IT...

4. Do I express my love for Jesus by being obedient to him?

PRAYER IDEAS...

Thank God for not leaving us alone. Pray that Jesus would continue to work in you by the Spirit to make you love him more and obey him better.

NOTES...

Jesus says he will ask the Father, and the Father will send *another* Helper / Counsellor / Advocate – the Holy Spirit. So who is the first? Check-out 1 John 2:1.

*Does verse 18 refer to Jesus coming to his disciples at his resurrection, or coming in the person of the Spirit, or coming at his 'second coming'? It is most likely referring to Jesus coming at his resurrection – for these reasons. Firstly, that is what verse 19 sounds like - when Jesus rises he does not appear to everyone, just to his disciples (v19). Also the disciples will enjoy eternal life, because Jesus does (v19). Secondly, it is the resurrected Jesus who asks God the Father to send the Spirit. That is, the coming of the Spirit is conditional upon the death and resurrection of Jesus.¹ So what do we make of verse 18? Jesus is comforting his disciples by saying that his death will not be the end, he will rise again, and he will ask God to send The Spirit. If the disciples love Jesus, they will obey him and the Holy Spirit will dwell in them.



Reading 9

John 14:25-31 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. Who is speaking to whom? (v25, 26, 29, 30)
2. How will the Holy Spirit continue what Jesus has started? (v26)
3. What does Jesus want his disciples to understand? (v29 cf 27,28)
4. Why does Jesus do what he does? (v31)

THINK ABOUT IT...

5. Ponder the role of the Holy Spirit. He does not work independently – he does what Jesus wants. Just like Jesus does God the Father's will.

PRAYER IDEAS...

Similar to yesterday – thank God for sending the Holy Spirit. Pray that he would help you to understand all that Jesus taught, and all that Jesus did.

¹ Compare Carson, D. A. *The Gospel According to John*, page 502.



Reading 10

John 15:1-8 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. How can we bear fruit? (v5)
2. If you remain in Jesus, and if his word remains in you – what sort of things do you think you might ask him for? (v7)
3. How is God glorified? (v8)

THINK ABOUT IT...

4. Ponder what it means to glorify God in your life.

PRAYER IDEAS...

Ask God to help you glorify him, by showing that you are Jesus' disciple.



Reading 11

John 15:9-17 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. How does Jesus love? (v9)
2. How might we remain in Jesus' love? (v9-10)
3. Who should we love? How? (v12-13, 17)
4. How are Jesus' followers different to servants? (v12ff)

THINK ABOUT IT...

5. Ponder the privilege that it is to be able to 'friends' of Jesus.

PRAYER IDEAS...

Thank God for all that we understand about His plans and purposes in Jesus – and for making us more than just 'servants'. Ask God to help you be obedient, and love each other.

NOTES...

What sort of fruit should Jesus' friends bear? Is it obedience, love for one-another, witness to Jesus, all of the above, or something else?

Jesus has used a 'vine' metaphor (v1-8) and explained and applied it (v9-17). He wants his disciples to remain in his love, to be obedient, to love each other and to serve as friends who know God's business (v15). He chose his disciples go out and bear fruit (v16).

At least for the original disciples, fruit includes the fruit of witnessing to Jesus, and in the next few verses we discover that livening like this will both generate opposition and bring condemnation. But what about for us – what fruit ought we bear?



Reading 12

John 15:18-25 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. Why can Jesus' friends expect to be hated by the world? (v18, 19)
2. Why is the world guilty of sin? (v22-24)

THINK ABOUT IT...

3. If we are not hated by the world – then are we Christian?

PRAYER IDEAS...

Thank God for choosing to save you from sin, and pray for courage to keep loving Jesus – even when times get tough.



Reading 13

John 15:26-16:4 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. Who sends the Holy Spirit? (15:26)
2. Who does the Holy Spirit bear witness to? (15:26)
3. Who else will bear witness? Why? (15:27)
4. Why has Jesus told the disciples they will face opposition? (16:1, 4).

THINK ABOUT IT...

5. Ponder the role of the Holy Spirit. He is not on about serving *our* needs. Instead he points to Jesus, and presumably gives us the strength to do likewise.

PRAYER IDEAS...

Ask God for opportunities to talk to others about Jesus. And ask that the way you talk would make the Gospel attractive to them.

NOTES...

Jesus did not tell his disciples a lot about persecution – because he was there to protect them (cf 17:12) But now he prepares them for when he is 'gone' (6v4).



Reading 14

John 16:5-11 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. Why is it advantageous that Jesus go away? (v7ff)
2. What will the Holy Spirit convict of? *

THINK ABOUT IT...

3. Consider again the role that the Holy Spirit plays. He does not conform to many popular ideas about his role does he?

PRAYER IDEAS...

Ask God to correct and shape your understanding of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

NOTES...

*The word translated 'convict' in 16:8 has a negative feel to it. It could be translated 'expose' or 'reveal guilt'. the Spirit reveals the world's guilt in regard to **sin**, guilt in regard to false **righteousness**, and guilt in regard to false **judgement** of others. Verses 9-11 unpack verse 8 for us.

- The Spirit convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin – the world has rejected Jesus.
- The reason the Spirit convicts of false righteousness is because the Spirit will take over where Jesus left-off.
- And the reason the Spirit convicts of false judgement is because the prince of false judgement now stands condemned – Jesus has conquered him (or will in his death and resurrection).



Reading 15

John 16:12-15 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. What will the Holy Spirit speak? And on whose behalf will he speak?
2. Who will He glorify? How?

THINK ABOUT IT...

Read Ephesians 6:16-18a. And consider how that passage compares with what we see the Spirit doing in John's Gospel.

Consider too the humility that we see in God. Jesus submits to God the Father. Meanwhile the Spirit submits to both Jesus and The Father.

PRAYER IDEAS...

Pray that you too would give glory to Jesus, by taking his word and putting it into practice in your life.

NOTES...

Notice the way John refers to the Holy Spirit as the 'Spirit of truth' (14:17, 15:26, 16:13). It's not his only title, but it is an important one and it describes his role to some degree.



Reading 16

John 16:16-24 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. What can't the disciples understand? (v16-18)
2. How will their experience be similar to a mother giving birth? (v19-22)
3. How will things be better once their grief turns to joy? (v22-24)

THINK ABOUT IT...

4. Jesus is speaking 'figuratively' (cf v25). But it sounds like Jesus is speaking of his death and resurrection. So, do you think we experience the same joy that the disciples are to experience?

PRAYER IDEAS...

Thank God for forgiveness and new life. Pray that you would find joy in living for Jesus.



Reading 17

John 16:25-33 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. What does Jesus say will happen in the future? (v25-27)
2. The disciples recognise who Jesus is, but do you think they really understand what he is talking about? (v29-31)
3. What needs to happen first? (v32-33)

THINK ABOUT IT...

4. We live in a new era – the time after Jesus resurrection and ascension. After the giving of the Spirit. What implications ought that have for the way we read the Bible, and the way we pray?

PRAYER IDEAS...

Thank God for the tremendous privileges that are ours. Being able to understand God's plans and purposes. Being able to know God. And being able to approach God in prayer.

NOTES...

Verses 25-26. After Jesus' death, resurrection, ascension, and the giving of the Spirit, his disciples will fully grasp all that Jesus has been saying to them in these chapters (13-17). In addition, they will be able to come to God directly, without the need of intermediaries or priests. Though the disciples *think* they understand (v29), they do not. Not yet.



Reading 18

John 17:1-5 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. What is eternal life? (v3)
2. How does Jesus glorify the Father on earth? (v4)

3. How does the Father glorify the Son? (v5)

THINK ABOUT IT...

4. How can you glorify God?

PRAYER IDEAS...

Thank God for eternal life. Ask him to help you live your life to his glory – by being obedient to him. And by continuing Jesus' work – witnessing to God's kingdom.



Reading 19

John 17:6-19 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. How has Jesus pointed his disciples to God? (v6-8)
2. What does Jesus pray for his disciples? Why does he want them protected? (v9-12)
3. Jesus does not pray that his disciples would be taken from the world – what does he pray for them? (v13-19)

THINK ABOUT IT...

4. Why are you in the world (cf v18)?

PRAYER IDEAS...

Similar to yesterday. Ask God to protect you from Satan's schemes as you live for Jesus and bear witness to him – pointing people to God, just as Jesus does.



Reading 20

John 17:20-26 □

QUESTIONS FROM THE PASSAGE...

1. Who else is Jesus concerned for in his prayer (v20)? What does he pray for them? (v20-21)

2. What does Jesus pray this unity would lead to? (v22-23)
3. What does Jesus want people to see? (v24)
4. What will Jesus continue to do (presumably through the Spirit and his disciples)? (v25-26)

THINK ABOUT IT...

5. Do I express the unity in Christ that God has brought about? Does this make the gospel attractive to others?

PRAYER IDEAS...

Pray for friends and family who do not know Jesus.

Summary

Have a look back over these questions and your notes.

1. What have you learned or been reminded of?
2. What themes or ideas have you noticed recurring in John 13-17?
3. How does John's Gospel help you understand and appreciate Jesus love for you? (cf 13:1)
4. What have you learned about life in Jesus' name?

*"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have **life in his name**"*

John 20:30-31 (NIV)

John chapters 13-17 contain Jesus' last words to his disciples before his death. In the final hours Jesus shared with his disciples what life would be like for them after his death - lives lived in the power of his Spirit. It would be an era when his followers would live radical, loving, world-confronting, God-honouring lives characterised by answered prayer and fruit bearing witness, **a life you will have if you truly love Jesus.**

My Notes

Other thoughts I've had...

Church and Growth Groups

At Church and Growth Groups we will be studying John chapters 13-17. You can find the Growth Group Bible Studies and the talks – as they become available – here: www.kenmore.org.au/downloads . Here's the plan;

Week beginning	at Church	in Growth Group
Sunday 11 October	John 20:24-31	Study 1 – Introduction & 13:1-17
Sunday 18 October	John 13:1-17	Study 2 – John 13:18-14:14
Sunday 25 October	John 13:18-14:14	Study 3 – John 14:15-31
Sunday 1 November	John 14:15-31	Study 4 – John 15:1-16:4
Sunday 8 November	John 15:1-16:4	Study 5 – John 16:5-15
Sunday 15 November	John 16:4-15	Study 6 - John 16:16-33
Sunday 22 November	John 16:16-33	Study 7 – John 17
Sunday 29 November	John 17:1-19	Spare/Social
Sunday 6 December	John 17:20-26	-