

Bible Study

Christian Beliefs

John 14 v. 15 – 27



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Introduction

In our Bible Studies we will be using a booklet from 'A Life Builder Bible Study' series. Our overall theme for these studies is: CHRISTIAN BELIEFS. The studies were originally written by Stephen Eyre, but we will be modifying them in order that they become more usable for both home study and Church study.

These studies give us the opportunity to study the Bible in a greater depth and to reflect on what it is saying to us.

If you are unable to be with us in church and have decided that you will be doing the studies from home, it is suggested that you do the study on a Wednesday morning, for an hour, starting at 10.30am. Get yourself a tea or coffee, a Bible, pen and paper (for any notes you want to make) and begin studying.

We do hope that you enjoy the studies that have been produced!

Context

Knowing what we believe is foundational to a healthy relationship with God and others. These studies on Christian Beliefs explore what Christians need to understand about some vital topics:

God, Christ, The Holy Spirit, God's Word, human nature, salvation, the church and the 'last things'.

Having a good grasp of these beliefs will equip us to make sense of the world we live in, strengthen our assurance of our own identity in Christ and direct us to a life of integrity.

Some Thoughts To Help You While You Study

The purpose of the study is:

To grow in our responsiveness to the Spirit as he cares for us, counsels us and guides us.

Historically the doctrine of the Holy spirit is one of the least developed of all Christian beliefs. This is one reason for the current controversy over the Spirit. The Church, after two thousand years, is only beginning to give the Spirit focused attention.

The Holy Spirit is God, a member of the Trinity with the Father and the Son. His ministry is seen throughout both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, however, his ministry was focused on national leaders, prophets, priests and kings. In the New Testament every believer receives the privileged anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit's ministry in the church is rich and varied. He leads believers in holiness, empowers gifts for ministry and equips the church to witness. There are two important series of references to the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John: **John 14 v. 15 – 26 & John 15 v. 26 – 16 v. 15.**

Something to Pray as you Think

Pray the apostle Paul's prayer that ties the ministry of the Father, Son and Spirit together in the depth of our being:

'For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I

pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God’.

(Ephesians 3 v. 14 – 19)

SOMEWHERE TO MAKE A FEW NOTES:

Study 4 – The Holy Spirit

The author of the studies reflects about his time as a theological student when he says: ‘While a theological graduate student, I began to explore the work of the Holy Spirit. I attended a lecture that taught that the gifts of the Spirit and supernatural manifestations had ceased at the end of the first century. However, I had friends involved in the charismatic movement who assured me from spiritual experience that this was not true. Who was I to believe?’

PERSONAL REFLECTION: Teaching about the Holy Spirit can be exciting for some and threatening for others. Some churches major on the work of the Holy Spirit and the gifts he brings. Other churches don’t mention the Holy spirit or spiritual gifts at all. What is your experience? In what ways are you aware of the work of the Spirit in your life? In what ways would you like to see the work of the spirit in your life?

The author of the studies goes on to say: ‘In pondering the differences I began to see that understanding the Holy Spirit begins not with spiritual gifts but with a personal connection with Jesus Christ’. The foundational teaching on the Holy Spirit comes from Jesus as he prepares his disciples for a new spiritual connection with them that will bridge the gap between heaven and earth.

Read John 14 v. 15 – 27

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

The night before his crucifixion Jesus tells his disciples that he is

leaving them. They are troubled and fearful (**John 14 v. 1, 27**). What does he say to calm their fears?

How do the titles Counsellor and Spirit of truth (**John 14 v. 16 – 17**) help them understand the nature of the One Jesus promised?

What is the difference between a Christian's experience of the Holy Spirit and those of the world (**John 14 v. 17 – 18**)?

From your experience, how can our daily concerns either dull or awaken our sense of the Spirit's presence?

Jesus promises that the relationship with the Spirit will be both **permanent (v. 16)** and **intimate (v. 17)**. How does this address the anxiety of his disciples? How might this address your spiritual anxieties?

Jesus promised to not leave us as orphans but continue with us through the Holy Spirit (**v. 18**). What is the relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit? How might this insight about the presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit help provide a bridge between denominational differences on the Holy Spirit?

In the midst of anxiety, Jesus promises peace (**v. 27**). What ministries of the Holy Spirit brings peace to Jesus' followers (**v. 25 – 27**)? Other places in the New Testament teach us that the Spirit works both in our hearts directly and through fellow Christians (**Ephesians 1 v. 17 – 18 and Ephesians 4 v. 11 – 12**). How have you experienced the ministry of the Holy Spirit?

Christians believe that God is Trinity. There is one God existing in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Based on this passage how

would you describe the relationship between Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit?

Throughout this passage, Jesus emphasises the importance of keeping his commands in order to be in loving spiritual connection with him through the Holy Spirit (**v. 15 – 16, 21, 23**). Describe the relationship between love and obedience.

What has this study revealed to you about your relationship with the Holy Spirit?

Something to Do Now

Ask God to refresh and renew your sense of the Holy Spirit's work. Perhaps you could picture your heart as a large empty pool. Invite the Holy spirit to fill it. As you do make a note of what sort of insights and perspectives you gain about the Holy Spirit's work inside of you.

Something to Do Later

Take some time to read more about different aspects of the Holy Spirit:

The Spirit of God at creation (Genesis 1 v. 1)

The Spirit of God as God's presence (Psalm 139 v. 7)

The Spirit of God as holy (Isaiah 63 v. 10)

The Spirit of God as God's power (Zechariah 4 v. 6)

The Spirit of God as God (John 4 v. 24)

The Spirit of God as God's wisdom (John 14 v. 26)

Now use the opportunity to Pray