

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this Bible study series you may learn how to build up the Christian Church. Two teachers will do Bible study together from John chapter 14. We will use “the five steps” method of Bible study. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. You may join our Bible study every week by preparing for the next Bible study. You may also gather a few people around you and use this method of studying the Bible together. Doing Bible study together with a few other Christians is one of the best ways to grow to maturity as a Christian.

(S) **STEP 1. READ**

Let us read John chapter 14 together. When you are two or more people, take turns to read one verse each until you have completed the reading. Due to shortage of time, please read John chapter 14 for yourself.

(T) **STEP 2. DISCOVER**

Let us discover and discuss some important truths in John chapter 14. “Which truth in this passage is important for you?” or “Which truth in this passage touches your mind or heart?” Think and write your answer in your notebook. After a few minutes take turns to share your discoveries with one another.

(S) An important truth for me is in John 14:1-4 about the reason why Christians can have constant trust in God. Jesus literally says, “Do not let your hearts be troubled *any longer*. *Continue* to trust in God. *Continue* to trust in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places... And when I go and prepare a place for you, I come again and will take you to be face to face with me, in order that where I am you may be also.” The hearts of the disciples were filled with many kinds of emotions. They were *sad* because Christ said he was going to leave them. They were *ashamed* because they had been quarrelling about who was the greatest. They were *perplexed* because of Jesus’ prediction that one of them would betray him, another would deny him, and all would fall away from him. They were *wavering* in their faith because they were probably thinking how it was possible that the Messiah could be betrayed. At the same time they *loved* Jesus and hoped that things would change. Their faith was being tested. Therefore Jesus commanded them to continue to trust. They *can continue to trust* because Jesus Christ is equal with God the Father and because he is coming back to take them to be together with him in the new heaven and the new earth! The purpose of his going away is to prepare their permanent reunion. That is why his *going away* is not a calamity, but a blessing! The Father’s house is *heaven* and in the future Christians will live there, not in small rooms, but in completely furnished and spacious apartments or dwelling-places. Because I look forward to this permanent reunion with Christ, I can keep on trusting him.

(T) An important truth for me is in John 14:5-6 about the reason why Jesus is called the Way, the Truth and the Life. In verse 6, Jesus says, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”.

First. Jesus is the way.

He does not merely show the way to God. He *is himself* the only way to God. Jesus Christ is God. In his divine nature he is equal to each one of his divine attributes, because he possesses each attribute in an infinite degree. For example, he not only has love or exercises love, but he is love and nothing but love. Likewise, he is righteousness and nothing but righteousness, etc. And likewise he is the way, the truth, the life and nothing but the way, the truth and the life. In every one of his deeds, words and attitudes, Jesus Christ is the way between God and his elect. Jesus Christ is *the way from God to man*. All the divine blessings come down from God the Father through God the Son. He is *also the way from man to God*. He is the only means of access to God the Father. He is the only One who can restore the broken relationship of man with God. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ will have uninhibited access to God.

Second. Jesus is the truth.

He is himself *the embodiment of truth*, the final reality in contrast with the shadows of the Old Testament, which preceded him. He is also *the absolute dependable source of truth*, the One who revealed God’s eternal plan of salvation to mankind. He is the visible manifestation of the invisible God (Col 1:15) and whoever knows him knows God the Father (7). Christ himself is the truth as opposed to lies (untruths). He hates lies and opposes lies. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ will know the Creator and Saviour more and more until he will know him fully. The truth will take hold of him and influence him powerfully. The truth will set him free, guide him and sanctify him completely (Jn 8:32; 16:13; 17:17).

Third. Jesus is the life.

The life in Jesus means all the glorious attributes of God dwell in him (Jn 1:4). Because he has life in himself, he is the source of life for Christians (Jn 1:4; 3:16). As *the light of life* and *the word of life*, Christ reveals the attributes and the

will of God to Christians so that they may have fellowship with God the Father (Jn 8:12; 6:68). He came into the world so that Christians may have life and abundance (Jn 10:10). Christ himself is life as opposed to death. He conquered spiritual death, physical death and eternal death in hell. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ will have spiritual life, will be resurrected from physical death and will never suffer eternal death in hell! The life in Jesus will regenerate him, transform his lowly body and make him an heir who shares in Christ's inheritance of the new heaven and the new earth. Just as *death* means separation from God, *life* means fellowship with God! Jesus Christ set me free from my sins and gave me uninhibited access to God and abundant fellowship with God.

(S) STEP 3. QUESTION

Let us try to understand all the truths in John chapter 14 and ask our questions about the things we still do not understand. "Which question about anything in this passage would you like to ask to the group?" Think and write your question in your notebook. Then discuss the questions and try to find answers.

1st Question. (14:7-9) What does it mean to really know God?

(T) In John 14:7-9 Jesus says, "If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do *know* him and have *seen* him. Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father". Jesus says that his disciples had too often failed to see that he is the only way that gives access to God, the only truth that sanctifies people for God and the only life that gives abundant fellowship with God. If they had more carefully pondered his words and observed his deeds, then they would have learned to know Christ. And then they would have known the Father, that is, they would have gained insight by mental reflection into the person of God the Father. Now that Christ had told his disciples that he himself is the way to the Father, they actually see, recognise and know God the Father! No one in the Old Testament has had this privilege to see, recognise and know God the Father in such a concrete, visible and even permanent way! The verbs in the original (perfect tenses) indicate that once a person has gained this spiritual knowledge and vision of God the Father in Christ, it has abiding results. The believer will forever continue to know and see the Father in Christ! The entire passage indicates that the revelation of salvation apart from Jesus Christ is impossible. God's final and permanent revelation of his plan of salvation is only in Jesus Christ! Therefore, *to know God* means to have gained spiritual knowledge and vision of God. It means to have gained access to God the Father through Christ. It means to have been set free and sanctified through Christ. And it means to have abundant fellowship with God the Father through Christ.

2nd Question. (14:12) What are the greater works Christians will do?

(S) In John 14:12 Jesus promises his disciples, "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father". It is an advantage for the disciples that Jesus is going to the Father in heaven, because it will make them much more effective! They will be able to perform the works that Jesus had been doing, that is, miracles in the physical realm (2 Cor 12:12). But they will also be able to perform *greater works than these, that is, miracles in the spiritual realm!* John 5:20-24 teaches that the works of Jesus had consisted to a considerable extent of miracles in the physical realm, like healing the sick and raising the dead, and these were performed largely among the Jews. The greater works of the disciples will be of a higher character and vaster in extent. *The greater works of the disciples will especially consist of the conversion of the Gentile nations in the whole world!* Jesus is thinking of his work through his disciples in the world. He is thinking of passages like John 12:23-32, where he would draw all men to himself and of John 17:20, where he would pray for all the people who would believe in him through the message of the disciples. But these greater works can only be done after the death and resurrection of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ on the disciples.

3rd Question. (14:13-14) May Christians ask for anything in prayer?

(T) In John 14:13 Jesus promises his disciples, "I will do whatever you ask in my name". This verse may not be taken out of context. Otherwise people will abuse this promise and ask for all kinds of selfish things. This verse refers to the greater works of verse 12. The greater works of verse 12 needs the prayers of the disciples. In the book of Acts, both works in the physical realm as well as works in the spiritual realm were connected to prayer. For example, the prayer in Acts 4:24 was followed by boldly speaking the word. The prayer in Acts 6:4 was followed by the spreading of the word of God and the rapid increase in numbers of those who became obedient to the Christian faith. The prayers by Cornelius and Peter in Acts 10:2 and 9 resulted in the conversion of the first Gentiles to the Christian faith. And the prayers in Acts 12:5 and 12 resulted in the release of Peter from prison! The prayers which Jesus Christ will answer should be prayers in his name. To pray 'in the name of Jesus' means to pray on the basis of his completed work of salvation for Christians and it means to pray according to his sovereign will. And because he has not revealed everything concerning his sovereign will, Christians need to pray in faith "Your will be done" and then trust that his answer is always the best answer! Sometimes his answer will be "yes"; sometimes "no" and sometimes "wait"!

4th Question. (14:25-26) What is the distinction between the teaching by Jesus and the teaching by the Holy Spirit?

(S) In John 14:25-26 Jesus says, “All this I have spoken while still with you. But the ... Holy Spirit ... will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you”. In these verses, Jesus draws a distinction between his teaching during the time he was still on earth and his teaching through the Holy Spirit during the time he is gloriously exalted in heaven! While he was with his disciples on earth, he taught them many things. The four Gospels are full of Jesus’ teachings while he was still on earth. But some of the most important events had still not taken place. Jesus still had to die, be resurrected, ascend to heaven and take his seat on the throne in heaven! Jesus said that after his physical departure from the earth, through the coming Holy Spirit he would make many things much clearer to his disciples. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would teach his disciples everything that is necessary for salvation and for their task as Christ’s witnesses. And he promised that the Holy Spirit would remind them of everything he had taught them while he was still on earth. Jesus would continue to fulfil his prophetic task through the recalling and teaching of the Holy Spirit.

One. By means of recalling the old truths, the Holy Spirit would *teach the disciples the new truths.*

Why teach new truths? Because between this promise and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, there still occurred the following significant events: Christ’s crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, enthronement and the outpouring of his Spirit. These events need to be interpreted so that the people in the world would be able to understand the significance of these events, especially understand the significance of the death and resurrection of Christ.

Two. The Holy Spirit would recall the truths Jesus spoke while he was still on earth.

Why recall old truths? Because through the Holy Spirit, Christ would *give his disciples a deeper understanding* of the truths he taught on earth, but which were hardly registered when it was first heard (2:22; 12:16). Therefore in 1 Corinthians 2:13, Paul later says, “This is what we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words”.

The apostles would especially be Christ’s eye- and ear-witnesses. They would be the official witnesses of his death, resurrection and teachings. They would be his instruments to plant the Christian Church among the Jews, the Samaritans and the Gentiles. They would be his instruments to write the books of the New Testament. They would be the authoritative interpreters of the teachings of Jesus and thus establish Christian doctrines. That same Holy Spirit teaches Christians today to understand the Bible and reminds Christians in their daily situations of life of what Jesus wants them to do.

5th Question. (14:28-29) In what way is God the Father greater than Jesus?

(T) In John 14:28-29, Jesus says, “If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe”. Only when this verse is interpreted apart from the rest of the Bible, some people conclude that Jesus is not God or not one with the Almighty God. That conclusion is wrong, because when this verse is interpreted in the context of the Gospel of John, it is clear that Jesus is here *referring not to his divine nature, but especially to his human nature*. John 10:30 teaches that Jesus Christ, as the only-begotten Son of God, is fully equal to God the Father with respect to his essence. That is also the teaching in Philippians 2:6, Colossians 2:9 and Hebrews 1:3. But John 14:28 teaches that Jesus Christ, *as the Mediator between God and man, is himself a man and therefore inferior to God the Father*, because God is far greater than man. That is also the teaching in John 10:29, 1 Corinthians 15:28 and Philippians 2:7-8. Jesus Christ has two natures: as God he is fully equal to God the Father and as man he is inferior to God the Father. But because his two natures are never separated and also he is never separated from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, therefore Christians must view Jesus Christ as the visible manifestation of the invisible Almighty God. This is the clear teaching of the prophet Isaiah. In Isaiah 9:6, Jesus Christ is called *the mighty God* (H: El gibor) and in Isaiah 10:20-23, the LORD (H: JaHWeH), the Holy One of Israel, is also called *the mighty God* (H: El gibor). He is also called “the Lord LORD Almighty” (H: Adonai Jahweh Tsibaoth. These last words mean that God is the Leader of the heavenly armies of angels.

This is also the clear teaching of Jesus himself. In Matthew 28:18, Jesus says that all power in heaven and on earth has been given to him. This is the clear teaching of the apostle Paul. In Ephesians 1:10, Paul says that God’s plan is to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, Christ”. This is the clear teaching of the apostle Peter. In 1 Peter 3:22, Peter says that angels, authorities and powers are in submission to Jesus Christ. Let no one dishonour Jesus Christ by making him less than God the Father. John 5:23 teaches that all people should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father”!

(S) **STEP 4 and 5. APPLY and PRAY**

After brainstorming with one another and recording a list of *possible applications*, consider which possible application God wants you to turn into a *personal application*. Then take turns to pray about one truth that God has taught us in John chapter 14.

I want to enjoy the fact that I know God. Jesus Christ has revealed God the Father and his salvation to me. *To know God* means to have gained access to God the Father through Christ. It means to have been set free and sanctified through Christ. And it means to have abundant fellowship with God the Father through Christ. Yes, I want to rejoice in the reality that I know God! I have accepted Christ by faith and thus have gained access to God. I continue to study the truth about Christ in the Bible and am more and more set free from sin. I persist to remain in Christ and thus have uninhibited and abundant fellowship with God.

(T) I want to trust Christ and be involved in doing the greater works. *The greater works are the conversion of the Gentile nations!* And these greater works need my prayers. In the book of Acts 6:4, prayer was followed by the spreading of the word of God and the rapid increase in numbers of those who became obedient to the Christian faith. I too want to pray and trust God that my prayers will have the same kind of results in my village and province and country.

(S) **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Make a commitment to do Bible study every week. Prepare next week's Bible study. Use "the five steps" method to prepare John chapter 15.

Second. Join a house fellowship that does Bible study. See the workbooks "Go and build Christ's Church" and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to "Discipleship training on the air".