

Session 4: John 15:18–16:33

SESSION GOALS

Every session has specific goals—things you want your group to walk away knowing, feeling, and committing to do.

Main Idea

The Holy Spirit testifies to us that Jesus has overcome the world, bringing hope, peace, and strength as we endure trials.

Head Change

To know that the Holy Spirit encourages us with the truth of Jesus's victory over worldly powers.

Heart Change

To feel hope in the Holy Spirit's presence and assurance.

Life Change

To listen to the Holy Spirit as he convicts us of sin and offers hope during trials.

OPEN

Who was your favorite teacher in school? What was the most important thing he or she taught you?

As students, we were not expected to begin class already knowing the content. Teachers explain new information. Good teachers help us understand what to do with that information. And the best teachers help us become better people.

There are many things the Holy Spirit does, but one of his primary roles is to teach us God's will and enable us to become more like Jesus. Without him we are unable to know the truth of Jesus, understand God's Word, or stand firm against opposition. Our session today explores how the Spirit testifies to Christ and enables us to face the world.

READ

John 15:26–16:33. If you are running short on time, read John 15:26–16:11, 25–33.

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Dr. Tony Evans's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.

Why is it better for us that Jesus left and the Spirit came?

Who does the Spirit testify about?

Why can we have peace during trials?

Show Session 4: *John 15:26–16:33* (12 minutes).

DISCUSS

Hearing about Jesus's departure and coming persecution is enough to make anyone afraid. But Jesus's message was one of clarity and comfort. When we know what is coming and the One who is in control, we can stand firm in chaotic circumstances.

Read John 15:26–16:11.

Jesus reminded his disciples that he was sending the Spirit of truth to them. John 15:26 is one of the few verses that reference the Trinity all together. The Spirit, sent from the Father, would testify about Jesus, the Son of God. Each person of the Trinity is united in purpose—to proclaim the wonder of Jesus to us. **What does this verse teach you about God's unity? Why is it important to know that each person of the Trinity is involved in our lives?**

Jesus offered his disciples the hope of the coming Spirit so they would not falter in the face of persecution (16:1–4). Despite being kicked out of the synagogue and even killed, remembering the truth would uphold them when opposition came. **What is your reaction when you face trouble or trials?**

What can you do to help yourself remember the Spirit is always with you?

***Note:** To learn more about how Jesus's predictions to his disciples came true, go to **Go Deeper Section 1** at the end of this study.*

Jesus told his friends that his departure was a good thing. How could that be? When Jesus left, his disciples received the Spirit, whom Dr. Evans called “our ultimate witness.” It was better that Jesus ascend to heaven so the Spirit could come and minister by dwelling within each believer. **Do you think of the Spirit as your present teacher? Why, or why not?**

What do you think it looks like to listen to or respond to the Spirit's leading?

***Note:** To learn more about the Greek title John uses for the Spirit, go to **Go Deeper Section 2** at the end of this study.*

The Holy Spirit has several tasks in the life of a believer. First, he convicts the world of sin (16:8–9). Without believing in Jesus, we cannot be forgiven and redeemed.

When have you sensed the Spirit convicting you of the wrongness, or sinfulness, of a decision you have contemplated or an action you've observed?

Which people do you pray will accept Jesus as their Lord? What role do you have in their lives, and how have you been able to influence their journey of faith?

The Spirit of truth also convicts us of righteousness (16:10). He knows what is right and what is wrong; what is God's will and what is not.

Finally, the Spirit convicts the world about judgment (16:8, 11). Jesus declared that devil has already been judged. His end is determined. He will lose. All the conflict we endure until then reflect his ineffectual efforts to change our secured destiny with Jesus. **How does knowing that God will defeat evil for good influence the way you endure pain and sorrow now?**

Read John 16:12–15.

The Spirit will glorify Jesus—make him look good, or advertise him, as Dr. Evans said. If the Spirit's job is to elevate Jesus, we should be able to determine if someone is led by the Spirit. All we need to see is if their life is elevating Jesus or themselves. **Thinking of yourself, to what degree are your words and behavior Spirit-led?**

In what ways could you glorify Jesus—advertise him—more in your life?

Read John 16:16–33. Jesus again warned his disciples that he was leaving them. Their initial sorrow, he said, would turn to joy, much like a laboring woman forgets the pain of childbirth when she sees her new baby. **What could it look like for you to find joy even during suffering? What does it look like to remain hopeful in your hardships?**

We will face suffering in this world. There's no getting around it. But Jesus offers us hope. "Be courageous! I have conquered the world" (John 16:33). With his Spirit living within us, he did not leave us alone to face the world. He's right here with us. **When have you needed**

moral courage? What comfort does Jesus's promise give you?

LAST WORD

Dr. Evans said we are like pole vaulters who lean on their poles in order to reach a height they could never touch with their own strength. We have the Spirit to help us do more than we would possibly imagine. By the Spirit, we can overcome temptations and trials and, in the process, glorify Jesus. His consistent presence with us gives us hope, clarity, help, and wisdom as we continue to turn to him in all circumstances.

GO DEEPER

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material. We've highlighted a place where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.

But you can also use these sections as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting and deepen your study of the Gospel of John.

1. The Paraclete

Jesus consoled the disciples saying, "When the Counselor comes, the one I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me" (John 15:26 CSB).

The Greek name used for the Holy Spirit in John 15 is *parakletos*. No one English translation encompasses the depth of meaning held in that one Greek word, which is why differing translations render *parakletos* as Counselor, Comforter, Helper, and Advocate. It is a title rich with connotation, forcing English translators to choose merely one aspect of its complex meaning.

As a counselor, the Spirit gives us clarity as we seek truth and holiness. He helps us gain wisdom and understand the Scriptures. **What is the value in asking the Spirit to be your counselor as you study the Bible? How has he helped you gain insight and understanding regarding God's desire for you in a given situation?**

In the KJV, *parakletos* is translated "comforter." The Spirit offers comfort to the hurting, reminding us of God's love and constant presence with us. He is in tune with our emotions and intimate needs. **In what situations have you experienced the Spirit's comfort? How could you or someone around you use his comfort today?**

In the NIV, NRSV, and NET, readers will see *parakletos* translated as "advocate." Jesus is a *parakletos* (1 John 2:1), too. He pleads with the Father as a mediator for his followers, pointing to his atoning work on the cross. The Spirit reminds us that our salvation is based on Jesus's work, not our own. **In moments of self-doubt or regret, what value can you find in praying for the Spirit to remind you that Jesus has paid the price for your sins?**

And if you read the NASB, ESV, or NKJV, you will see the Spirit called our “helper.” He actively works in our circumstances. **What situations might remind you to seek the Spirit’s help?**

The Spirit is within us now on Earth, near to us, helping us in our needs, ready to advise, comfort, envelop us in God’s all-loving embrace. **How does understanding *parakletos* give you a deeper appreciation for God’s personal attention to you?**

2. Jesus’s predictions come true.

Jesus warned the disciples of future events, difficult ones that both he and the disciples would experience. Though often we tend to think of his comments as a prediction of our persecution, many of his predictions were fulfilled within hours or days of his resurrection.

Soon after hearing Jesus’s predictions, the disciples witnessed his arrest and his ascension, experiences that solidified and validated their trust in him. What he said would happen did happen. Through his truth-telling, Jesus shows us how trustworthy he is. **How does knowing that Jesus told his disciples the truth help you trust the rest of his words?**

Other predictions by Jesus were fulfilled later during the disciples’ lifetimes. In John 15:27, Jesus says, “You also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.” In Acts 2, Peter preached to gathered crowds about Jesus’s identity.

In John 16:2, Jesus tells his disciples, “They will ban you from the synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God.” By Acts 7, the disciples had been beaten, jailed, and thrown out of their synagogues. Stephen, a deacon in the church, was stoned by members of the ruling Jewish religious party.

But, even Jesus’s most foreboding predictions did not deter the disciples from stepping out to testify about Jesus. They had every reason to trust his word, and their confidence in his saving power drove them to spread the

John 16:2 applied to the disciples, but it also describes the experiences of many future followers of Christ. Over the centuries, thousands of Jesus-followers have encountered resistance, persecution, and even death from those in authority. **What makes Jesus worth following? What confidence do you have that his words are true? What would you be willing to endure to spread the gospel?**