

Bible Study, Series 2, Following Christ, Week 6

Personal Bible Study

Day: 1

Read: 1 John 1: 1-2:2

1. If you read the NKJV, how many times does the word "fellowship" appear and what is the meaning of the word in this context?
2. What was the reason why John and the others preached the gospel, according to verse 3? Write down this verse in your own words.
3. If you read verse 3-4, why do we so often miss the joy?
4. Verse 4-7: What does "walk in darkness" and "walk in the light" mean? What is the high toll it demands of the followers of Christ? How is our fellowship with Christ destroyed and how can it be restored?
5. In John 1:8-2:2 John is speaking to believers. What does verse 8 and 10 teach us? What do verses 9 and 2:1-2 tell us concerning our fellowship with Christ?

Day: 2

Read: Luke 10: 38-42 and John 12; 1-11

1. Verse 38: This was a house in Bethany where Jesus often stayed with Lazarus and his sisters. Read John 12: 1-2 as well.
2. Verse 39: You always find Mary at Jesus' feet. Have a look at John 11: 32 and 12: 3. What is the example she sets for us in this way?
3. Verse 40-41: Martha also loved Jesus dearly and meant everything it well. What is the mistake she made (one we so often make) and what was the result (as it is for us today?) The faultless instruction can be found in Philippians 4: 6-7.
4. Verse 42: What is the one thing that is necessary, the one thing that Mary chose? How can we apply it to our life today? What does it tell us.
5. If we read John 12: 3 and 7, why did Mary have such a great love and astonishing insight? (Before anyone else she realized that Jesus is going to die and that He is going to be buried.

Day: 3

Read: Psalm 1

1. Verse 1-2 shows the way to true happiness and life, first negative and then positive in verse 2: It tells us which company we should avoid and then how to have fellowship with God - by thinking of His word.
2. What exactly does verse 2 mean?

3. Is verse 2b really possible? Does it mean one should not have set times for Bible study, but that you should think about God's word all day as you go about your business? Read Psalm 119: 147-148 and Psalm 55L 18.
4. Verse 3. What does this beautiful picture drawn here tell us about the life of a believer? (For us living in South Africa, with our constant droughts, this is a very clear picture.) What is the most important part of such a tree and what is the message in it for our fellowship with God?
5. What does verse 4 tell us about the life of a person without God?
6. Verse 5 and 6 gives us a picture of two completely different ends to life. Think about it.

Day: 4

Read: Daniel 6: 1-11 and 14, Psalm 55: 17-19, Psalm 119: 9-11 and 147-148 and Matthew 6:6

1. All the great people of God, in the Bible, were people of prayer and studying the Word. That is where their strength came from; they were faithful in their fellowship with God. It was valuable to them. It is no wonder if we have a look at the promises in Psalm 1: 3 and Matthew 6:6.
2. Looking at the verses we read, where did Daniel's and David's strength come from? How many times a day did they seek the presence of God and prayed to Him? Read Psalm 55; 18 and Daniel 6: 11 and 14.
3. According to psalm 119: 147-148 David had his quiet time early in the morning. Do you think it is important or does it not matter what time you have it?
4. What would you say, in the light of these readings, is the connection between our quiet time and our prayers and the quality of our spiritual life?

Day: 5

Read: Psalm 84

1. Read verse 2-5 and 11 and decide what this man is singing about.
2. Have a look at these verses again and say: why is he singing like that?
3. What exactly does verse 4 mean? Read the psalm again and say what all the things are that the house of God has given him.
4. If you have a look at verse 2-3 and especially verse 3b what made the house of God so precious to him?
5. Is it possible to have a close relationship with God, to live close to God, to faithfully have communion with God but, to have no love for His House? Motivate your answer.

Day: 6

Read: Acts 2:36 - 47

1. Verse 42: What was the program of that first congregation? What is the meaning of each activity mentioned here?
2. Verse 43: "Everyone around was in awe" what is meant by this and why was it like that?
3. Verse 44-45: What is the message of these verses for us?
4. What does verse 46 and 47a tell us about those believers?
5. Why was this exceptional growth of this congregation possible (verse 47b) and why do congregations not grow like that any more today?
6. If we read these verses, how is our relationship to God and your life of personal communion with God supposed to be revealed? Is it possible to be a Christian on your own and not to be part of a congregation? Can one be active in a congregation without a life of intimate fellowship with God in our personal life?

Group Bible Study:

Read: John 15: 1-8

Today's reading culminates in "when you mature as my disciples." It therefore also deals with following Christ. It explains one of the biggest secrets of following Christ namely communion. It means the closest possible relationship with Christ that is necessary to be able to follow Christ all the way. This should be the most important thing in the life of a follower of Christ.

Verse 1: "I am the Real Vine" have a look at Isaiah 5: 1-7. The first vine God planted became wild. Therefore God made it a jungle or wilderness (Isaiah 5:6) Now with the coming of Jesus God gave us the true vine whereof no shoot will ever be lost.

Verse 3 and 7: These two verses tell us how true communion with god should be maintained and fed. Take note of the following words in verse 2: "doesn't bear grapes." And "so it will bear even more" and then in verse 5 and 8: " the harvest is sure to be abundant" and "-when you produce grapes" All of us fits into this range from bearing no fruit to abundance of fruit - the question is where? There should be growth and we should all bear fruit in abundance. For self-satisfaction there should be not place for in the life of a follower of Christ.

Because verse 1-6 is parable we are going to use the method of five questions to try and understand the message.

- 1.** What exactly is being said here? Summarize it in your own words. (Do not make any applications yet; only summarize what Jesus is saying.)
- 2.** Are there any problem words or problematic expressions? (Keep in mind that this does not only mean word etc. that you do not understand, but also well know words and expressions that we read without making sure exactly what they mean in this context.) Make a list off all these words and try to explain them. Here follows a few but there can possibly be more.
 - What is the branch of a vine?
 - Why and how must one prune the vine?
 - What does "Live in Me. Make your home in me just as I do in you" mean? (Verse 4a. Have a look at John 6: 56, 1 John 2: 24, 3: 24 and 4: 15-16)

- Does verse 6 mean that Christians can become unsaved again? Motivate your answer from the Bible.
 - Does verse 7 guarantee that our prayers will always automatically be answered? Motivate.
 - What does verse 8 mean?
3. What is the main thought of this piece?
 4. What is God saying to us for today?
 5. What is our answer going to be?