

## John 17:6-17 Reflection Guide

Ask a man who has been stranded without food and water what the most valuable thing on earth is...he'll tell you water / food...**there is no life without them.** To you and I these things may be readily accessible...taken for granted...but they can be considered most precious...without them there is no life. It is true that without physical food our bodies would die in a matter of days. But without soul nourishment, we perish forever.

Do we think about God's word this way? The bible does...

- *Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy of my heart*" (Jer. 15:16).
- *"man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God"* (Matt 4:4).
- Job 23:12... "I have treasured the **words** of his mouth more than my portion of **food.** "
- *The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver"* (Psalm 119:72).

Given it's incomparable value, it's no surprise that the enemy of our soul, the evil one, would seek to undermine it's worth and cultivate doubt / suspicion. He is the deceiver, Father of lies...if he can get you to begin to doubt the truth, sufficiency, power of God's Word...then he can tempt you to disregard it and ultimately disobey it.

Therefore Jesus is thanking God that his disciples have received and kept his word as THE TRUTH. Let's explore this implications of this.

### 1. DISCIPLES OF JESUS BELIEVE GOD'S WORD IS THE TRUTH

*<sup>6</sup> "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they know (certainty, confidence...of what?) that everything that you have given me is from you. (based on what?) <sup>8</sup> For I have given them the words that you gave me,*

Jesus is saying that His disciples believe (*they know*) that everything Jesus has, including His Words come from the Father. Jesus' words are actually God's Words. He is speaking the Words of God. *John 3:34: "He whom God has sent utters the words of God."* He is saying that they believe His Words are of divine origin. So when Jesus is speaking, God is speaking. "*They believe the teaching I gave them is not just teaching, but it's revelation. It's authoritative, objective truth.*" That's what Jesus is saying here. *the church*, is the body of people who accept the apostolic teaching as divine.

That's huge, because what Jesus is saying is, "*You're not the church if you don't believe what the apostles have written and taught you is the Word of God.*" Jesus says that He has passed on God's Word to His disciples. The disciples pass it on to other people.

### HOW DOES A POST-CHRISTENDOM WORLD HEAR THIS?

**Objective Truth** = water is essential to life...if you don't get it, you'll die...true for everyone whether you believe it or not. **Subjective Truth** = country music is a wonderful musical form...some people love it...some people hate it...those who like it know that they can't demand that everyone else like it

In Christendom, religious truth was always seen as objective truth...people may differ about which religion is true but everyone believed that they all couldn't be right. Very much like scientific discovery which grew out of Judeo/Christian principles.

Science could not grow out of Buddhism or Hinduism, because Eastern religions did not believe in the reality of the material universe. They believed it was an illusion, but Christianity comes along, and Christianity says God is not an impersonal being, but God is a person, and therefore, God thinks and speaks and is rational, and since he created the world and it's real, that world is the creation of a personal, rational being, and therefore, if you study it, you'll find order to it.

Until a couple hundred years ago, it was understood that, "the most absolute / objective truth is religious truth." Then, people began to say "*religious truth is like subjective truth*". You believe Jesus is God. You believe Jesus is not God. You're both right, because if you believe it, it's true for you". Many will say its like the subjective preference for Country Music. (However, someone making the shift to "all religious truth is subjective" is making an objective truth statement! They are claiming to have the information/objectivity that does not exist!)

**Are we convinced that God's word is the truth for all people for all time? Why? Why not?  
What do our actions say about our convictions?  
How has our conviction about this waned? Why? Have any doubts have been planted?**

**Describe a recent conversation where you presented truth about Jesus.  
How did they respond? Did they respond from Christendom or Post-Christendom?  
How have you responded to those that relegate the gospel to subjective truth?**

## **2. JESUS' DISCIPLES RECEIVE GOD'S WORD**

*<sup>8</sup> For I have given them the words that you gave me, and **they have received them** and have come to **know in truth** that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me....*

**It's one thing to believe that God's Word is authoritative, it's another thing all together to receive them as authoritative in your life.** To surrender to the Word of God requires a posture of humility, allow something else to take control, allowing it into your life. When we do it begins to do it's hard cultivating work...tear up the soil of your heart, expose sin, and "weeds".

How do we know we know we have received God's word? We are "thirsty". Consider that physically we're like 70-80% water. But b/c water is so much a part of our make up when we lose it we get dehydrated. We know the Word of God has come into your life and made itself a part of your being b/c you desire it...you want it. This is one of the easiest ways to tell whether or not you're just a moral, nice person or whether you're a Christian...**do you desire God's Word?**

Here's a illustration: William Wilberforce was a Member of Parliament. He was a dynamic Christian who worked and eventually abolished the slave trade in the British Empire in the early 1800s. His good friend was William Pitt. A young man, very brilliant, very influential, and Wilberforce was always trying to talk to his friend Pitt about the Jesus, and he was never interested. But one day, for some reason, William Pitt said, "Hey, I'll go with you to church this Sunday," and Wilberforce was amazed.

He took him to downtown London to hear one of the best preachers of the day, Richard Cecil. You know, Wilberforce, like a lot of Christians, was always afraid, "*On the day my friend comes to church, it will be stewardship Sunday,*" but luckily that day Richard Cecil was preaching the pain off the walls, and Wilberforce couldn't believe it.

He said, "Finally, finally, my friend is hearing this." His own heart was just ripped to pieces by the Word of God and healed. The Word of God is a surgical knife. It comes on in, cuts you, and sews

you back up, taking out tumors. There was Wilberforce just being all cut up and all healed, and he couldn't believe his friend was experiencing this.

On the way out, he turned to Pitt, and he said, "what did you think?" Pitt looked around, and he said, "Wilberforce, I haven't the slightest idea what that man was talking about."

He was a brilliant man, but his heart was closed. **How much are we like William Pitt?** Consider these things:

- We don't have to believe that every single word in the bible is true, to believe the gospel is true.
- We have to let it in, and let it start cutting...tell yourself "*in this Word I will learn what Jesus taught and believed*"
- God can speak to you through His Word, b/c it's living and active...sharper than knife
- We don't have to believe in a knife for it to actually cut you...
- This isn't the knife of an enemy, it's the blade of a surgeon...who loves us.
- We can't just decide to believe that God's Word is the Truth and receive it into our soul. We need God's help.

*Piper - The glory of the Word is like the shining of the sun in the face of blind man unless God opens our eyes to that glory. And if we don't see the glory, we won't be changed (2 Corinthians 3:18; John 17:17), and if we are not changed, we are not Christians.*

Paul wrote and prayed for the church, because if we only hear his words with our ears...external senses...we won't be changed. **We need something to happen to us. To be done to us.** In Eph. 1:8 Paul prays "*that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of God's calling . . .*" The eyes of our heart need to be opened. We can also get hard of hearing, we have an enemy that seeks to destroy this. We can lose desire for God's Word and be drawn away by deceitful desires.

**What are we desiring more than God's word right now?**

**What have we forgotten about God's word?**

**How are we suffering because God's word is not like food or water to us?**

#### **HOW DOES GOD PLAN TO OPEN OUR EYES TO HIS WORD?**

In response to us praying His word! We can pray Psalm 119 this week:

- **TODAY:** That God would teach you his Word. *Psalm 119:12b, "Teach me Your statutes."*
- **MONDAY:** That God would not hide his Word from us. *Psalm 119:19b, "Do not hide Your commandments from me."*
- **TUESDAY:** That God would make us understand his Word. *Psalm 119:27, "Make me understand the way of Your precepts"* Here we ask God to cause us to understand - to do whatever he needs to do to get us to understand his Word.
- **WEDNESDAY:** That God would incline our hearts to his Word. *Psalm 119:36, "Incline my heart to Your testimonies and not to [dishonest] gain."* The great problem with us is our will - we are disinclined by nature to read and meditate and memorize the Word. So we must pray for God to incline our wills.
- **THURSDAY:** That God would give us life to keep his Word. *Psalm 119:88, "Revive me according to Your lovingkindness, so that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth."* He is aware that we need life and energy to give ourselves to the Word and its obedience. So he asks God for this basic need.
- **FRIDAY:** That God would establish our steps in his Word. *Psalm 119:133, "Establish my footsteps in Your word."* We are dependent on the Lord for the keeping of His word...
- **SATURDAY:** That God would seek us when we go astray from his Word. *Psalm 119:176, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant."* It is remarkable that David ends his psalm with a confession of sin and the need for God to come after him and bring him back.