

## Drawing Closer to God - Week 4

God has given us his Word and Spirit to teach and encourage us and to reveal himself to us. To draw closer to him, we must know him and to know him more, we must spend time with him. We can do this in many ways privately. We can also draw closer together as his people to be in his presence, hear his words and voice in our hearts and then share and encourage each other. By being intentional in prioritizing spending time listening to God and hearing God through each other, we can be empowered by the Holy Spirit to live out our faith.

### John 16:5-15 The Work of the Holy Spirit

<sup>5</sup> “But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. <sup>6</sup> Instead, you grieve because of what I’ve told you. <sup>7</sup> But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate<sup>[j]</sup> won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup> And when he comes, **he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment.** <sup>9</sup> The world’s sin is that it refuses to believe in me. <sup>10</sup> Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. <sup>11</sup> Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

<sup>12</sup> “There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. <sup>13</sup> **When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.** He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. <sup>14</sup> He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. <sup>15</sup> All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘**The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.**’

<sup>17</sup> After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. <sup>2</sup> For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. <sup>3</sup> **And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.** <sup>4</sup> I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup> Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.

<sup>6</sup> “I have revealed you<sup>[k]</sup> to the ones you gave me from this world. They were always yours. You gave them to me, and they have kept your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they know that everything I have is a gift from you, <sup>8</sup> for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me.

<sup>9</sup> **“My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you.** <sup>10</sup> All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring me glory. <sup>11</sup> Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name;<sup>[l]</sup> now **protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are.** <sup>12</sup> During my time here, I protected them by the power of the name you gave me.<sup>[m]</sup> I guarded them so that not one was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures foretold.

<sup>13</sup> “Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world **so they would be filled with my joy.** <sup>14</sup> I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. <sup>15</sup> **I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one.** <sup>16</sup> They do not belong to this world any more than I do. <sup>17</sup> **Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.** <sup>18</sup> **Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.** <sup>19</sup> And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.

*<sup>20</sup> "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. <sup>21</sup> I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.*

*<sup>22</sup> "I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. <sup>23</sup> I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. <sup>24</sup> Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began! <sup>25</sup> "O righteous Father, the world doesn't know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me. <sup>26</sup> I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then **your love for me will be in them and I will be in them"***

### **Divide into groups of 3 (4 at the most)**

Sit in silence. With your eyes closed, breathe deeply in and out a few times. Relax your body and your mind and let go of worries, frustrations and to do lists for this time set aside for God and his Word. Note that we are made of spirit, soul, heart, and body. God gave us many senses to experience him and the world he gave us. He can use any and all of them to draw us closer to himself.

**Prayer** – We use many forms of prayer in privately and in our corporate worship: Biblical (Psalms), formal, written, repeated (Lord's Prayer), corporate, personal, "arrow" etc. Jesus prayed routinely in private and said he was always in communication with God his father. Jesus prayed for himself and prayed for the kingdom work and for his followers. As you close your eyes, I will read the scripture above with Jesus's prayer at the Last Supper. Just listen, enjoy the presence of God and let the Holy Spirit bless you.

**Centering Prayer** – This is a listening prayer and a type of God-centered meditation. Please close your eyes, breathe, relax in a comfortable position. Choose a word or phrase that draws you to God. Sit in silence and focus on this word. As thoughts come, notice them and let them go. Do nothing else but this for 10 minutes.

**Sharing** – What was this time like for you? How did you feel? What did you hear from God?

As you share in your groups, remember to focus on listening to, understanding, encouraging, and blessing the person sharing, noticing how you see God moving in them.

**Praying for each other** – Now take turns to pray for each person in your group, reflecting what they shared and blessing them and their growing relationship with Jesus. Your prayer can be short or long, simple or detailed yet motivated by the love God has for you and them as we are called to be one body in Jesus.

**Silence in the presence of God and Centering Prayer are practices that allow us to listen to God and enjoy being with him. This time of God centered meditation can give us the space to rest, reflect and prepare.**