

## THE GOSPEL OF

## JOHN

## Conviction

## INTRODUCTION

John 16:1-15

*“And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.” John 16:8*

Most people would agree that the Holy Spirit is important to believers. But did you know He is vitally important to unbelievers as well? To understand this truth we can go back to something Jesus said about the Holy Spirit to His disciples before He was crucified, resurrected, and ascended into heaven.

Jesus had been preparing His disciples for His departure. He let them know that it was going to be their job to continue His ministry by making disciples of all nations. Their job would be to take His message to unbelievers and to lead them to faith in Christ to grow the Church. They must have been terrified! How in the world would they ever convince anyone of who Jesus was and what He did? They knew they were totally inadequate for the job. How often do we as Christians today feel this way?

Ninety percent of all Christians have never shared their faith in Jesus with anyone. Part of the problem is they feel they cannot do it...they feel inadequate. And they are right. All of us – in and of ourselves – are inadequate. This is why Jesus told His disciples, “It would be far better for you to have the Holy Spirit inside of you than for Me to be right beside you,” (John 16:7). Why is that true?

John 16:8 says, “And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.” The word “convict” in this verse means, “to convince beyond the shadow of a doubt.” There are certain things that an unbeliever must be confronted with, convicted by, and convinced of before he will ever be converted and come to faith in Jesus Christ. This is something only the Holy Spirit can accomplish.

We can only come to God through Jesus, and we can only come to Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit. If you are a believer, your job is simply to be a witness for Jesus. It is the Spirit’s job to bring people to faith in Christ. If you are not a believer, you will only come to Jesus when you stand convicted of your need for a Savior.

*Dear Lord, I realize that I still have so much growing to do and more ways in which to be sanctified. I pray that you would help me to be sensitive to your Holy Spirit as you prune me, convict me, guide me, and grow me. In Jesus' name, amen.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Devotional by James Merritt found @ <https://www.touchinglives.org/devotionals/conviction>

## OPEN IT

1. When have you gotten to share some great news with someone? What was the news that you shared and did the person respond with the same amount of excitement?

## READ IT

John 16:1-15

## EXPLORE IT

2. Why did Jesus share these words with his disciples?
3. What types of things were on the horizon for the disciples?
4. Why was it advantageous for Jesus to leave the disciples?
5. What would the Holy Spirit do when he came to the world according to verses 8-14?

## APPLY IT

*Most of us like to know what's going to happen in the future, no matter how bad it is. At least that way we can prepare for it. The night before Jesus was crucified, he tried to prepare his disciples for the near future—some of which was going to be bad. One more time, to be sure they understood before he went back to heaven, Jesus revisited several truths: he was going away; the disciples would be persecuted; he was sending the Holy Spirit in his place; they could pray in his name; he'd give them peace in the midst of trouble. Jesus fortified and encouraged those eleven men for the days ahead when they'd need his teaching most.<sup>2</sup>*

**6. For over three years the disciples have been on a roller coaster of emotions and experiences as they followed Jesus. Put yourself in their shoes, what thoughts or questions would fill your head upon hearing that Jesus was leaving?**

**7. Jesus shares these words so that the disciples will be kept from “falling away” (literally “caught in a trap by surprise”). How can trials and tribulations make a believer susceptible to giving up on our faith?**

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<sup>2</sup> Johnson, Lin . The Book of John (The Smart Guide to the Bible Series) (p. 195). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

*Jesus' preview of coming attractions was not a pleasant one. He wanted to prepare his disciples for what was ahead so they wouldn't be taken by surprise and go AWOL. What was ahead was persecution. Unbelieving Jewish people would think they were doing God a favor by kicking them out of the synagogues and even killing them. When John wrote this book, Jesus' warning had already come true. Believers today are not immune to persecution for their faith. Christians are still persecuted physically around the world. Others are persecuted verbally. No matter what form persecution takes, it's a compliment to be persecuted for our faith. It puts us in the same company with Jesus, and that's the best place to be.<sup>3</sup>*

**8. It is easy to see every personal setback or trouble as the world coming at us as a result of persecution. How would you define persecution and where have you seen it in your personal life?**

**9. Jesus declares that the disciples would be at odds with the world around them because of their allegiance to Christ. What things in your life are different from those around you because of your allegiance to Christ?**

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<sup>3</sup> Johnson, Lin . The Book of John (The Smart Guide to the Bible Series) (p. 196). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

The key to enduring persecution is to trust in the Lord Jesus. Thus in verse 4, He gives us a solid reason to trust Him: **He knows the future.** He knows the trials that we will face as we serve Him and He warns us in advance so that we will trust in Him.<sup>4</sup>

**10. How does Jesus' advanced warning give you a level of peace when trouble comes?**

*“Ever since I began to explain this to you, your hearts have been full of grief” (v. 6; my paraphrase). Their response may be natural, but that doesn’t mean it’s right. In fact, Jesus gives them a mild rebuke in verse 5. From the moment they hear Jesus is leaving, their thoughts are consumed with themselves. All they think about is how this affects them. They never once consider what Jesus is thinking or feeling or what his purpose is in all that’s taking place. They don’t give his wishes or desires a second thought. His concerns are obscured by theirs.<sup>5</sup>*

**11. At no point do the disciples show any concern or compassion regarding the trials that Jesus would soon endure. How can our personal trials keep us from seeing the needs of others? How do we combat against this in our own troubled lives?**

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<sup>4</sup> Sermon notes by Steve Cole found @ <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-84-witnessing-hostile-world-john-161-11>

<sup>5</sup> Carter, Matt; Wredberg, Josh. Exalting Jesus in John (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) . B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

*After all, if the disciples really understood what was about to happen, it would be even harder for them to believe.*

- *To your advantage that Jesus is arrested?*
- *To your advantage that Jesus' ministry of teaching and miracles is stopped?*
- *To your advantage that Jesus is beaten?*
- *To your advantage that Jesus is mocked?*
- *To your advantage that Jesus is sentenced for execution?*
- *To your advantage that Jesus is nailed to a cross?*
- *To your advantage that Jesus dies in the company of notorious criminals?*
- *To your advantage that His lifeless body is laid in a cold grave?<sup>6</sup>*

**12. When has it been to your advantage to endure times of difficulties and despair? What lessons did you learn during those moments of turmoil?**

*When Jesus went away, he would send the Helper, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can be everywhere at once; Jesus was limited to wherever his body was; so the disciples really were getting something better...The Spirit not only ministers to believers, but also has a mission. He is the prosecuting attorney in God's courtroom, charged with showing unsaved human beings their lost condition. To "convict" means to show, to expose, to unmask. The Spirit's special ministry to the world is to convict of sin in three specific areas. First, the Spirit convicts of sin "because they do not believe in Me." The issue is not the specific sins that human beings commit, but the one condemning sin of unbelief. No wonder we need to keep the focus on Jesus as we witness to unsaved friends.<sup>7</sup>*

**13. Is having the Holy Spirit better than physically walking and talking with Jesus? If so, how is having the Holy Spirit better?**

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/archives/guzik\\_david/StudyGuide\\_Jhn/Jhn\\_16.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/archives/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Jhn/Jhn_16.cfm)

<sup>7</sup> Johnson, Lin . The Book of John (The Smart Guide to the Bible Series) (p. 197). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

**14. Why do some people insist on living their lives their way and doing as they see fit regardless of eternal ramifications? How does the Holy Spirit convict the world of this error?**

*Not only will the Spirit convict unbelievers of their sin; he will also guide believers into knowledge of the truth. Like a guide leads a stranger into an unknown place, the Spirit will guide Jesus' followers into an understanding of Jesus' death and resurrection. He works in tandem with the Son to tell them what Jesus didn't have time to teach, including what we now have as the New Testament.<sup>8</sup>*

**15. Why do we need the Holy Spirit's illumination to be able to understand the Bible? Why can't we read the Bible without His help?**

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<sup>8</sup> ibid

*The Holy Spirit's ministry to the disciples would be quite different from his ministry to the world. To the disciples, he would be a reliable guide into all truth (16:13a). His guidance can be trusted because he will not speak on his own, but will speak only what he hears (16:13b). The content of his message centres on the future – what is yet to come (16:13c). The Holy Spirit's guidance stretches from the very first things that happened after Jesus' departure to include everything that will happen at the end of time.<sup>9</sup>*

**16. How have you experienced this work of the Spirit—leading you with the words of Jesus in the changing circumstances of your life?**

**17. Many of us forget about, or greatly diminish the role of the Holy Spirit in the world and in the life of a Christian. Why is this the case? How can we be more sensitive to the ministry of the Spirit and his work in the world this week?**

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<sup>9</sup> Africa Bible Commentary (p. 3390). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

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