

GROUP LEADERS NOTES – STUDY 12

QUESTION 1

- a) This is a repeat of the new commandment given to the disciples in **13:34**.
- b) It also follows on from the previous verses in chapter 15 where the disciples experience joy in obeying Jesus' commands.
- c) As we saw from verse 10, obedience proves that our love for Christ is genuine.
- d) **1 John 5:3** shows that God's commands aren't to burden us "*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome*".
- e) The commandment here is necessary as a distinguishing mark of the believer. It identifies him or her.
- f) "*You can't get much higher than this. Our love for others should be a reflection of Christ's self-giving, sacrificial love that was to take Him to the cross at Calvary...*" (Andrew Paterson).

QUESTION 2

- a) Jesus is speaking about Himself. He is the supreme standard.
- b) John Calvin wrote: "*Christ sometimes proclaims the greatness of His love to us, that He may more fully confirm our confidence in our salvation; but now He proceeds further, in order to inflame us, by His example, to love the brethren*".
- c) No one can carry his love for his friend further than this. When he gives up his life, he gives up all that he has.

QUESTION 3

- a) This is a concept that would be radical to say the least. A friend of Jesus? A friend of God.
- b) The Jew would never have contemplated such an intimate relationship.
- c) Only Abraham in the Old Testament was named as the friend of God (**Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23**).
- d) A friend is taken into a confidence.
- e) William Barclay gives a helpful insight: *“This phrase is lit up by a custom which obtained both at the courts of the Roman Emperors and of the eastern kings. At these courts there was a very select group of men called the friends of the king, or the friends of the Emperor. At all times they had access to the king: they had even the right to come to his bedchamber at the beginning of the day. He talked to them before he talked to his generals, his rulers, and his statesmen. The friends of the king were those who had the closest and the most intimate connection with him. Jesus called us to be His friends and the friends of God. That is a tremendous offer. It means that no longer do we need to gaze longingly at God from afar off; we are not like slaves who have no right whatever to enter into the presence of the master; we are not like a crowd whose only glimpse of the king is in the passing on some state occasion. Jesus gave us this intimacy with God, so that He is no longer a distant stranger, but our close friend”*.

QUESTION 4

- a) Paul describes himself as a servant of Christ Jesus in **Romans 1:1**.
- b) The point Jesus is making here is not that we no longer serve Him. It is the fact that a servant in a household is not privy to all that is going on. A friend is.
- c) Jesus makes known to His friends what He has been given from the Father.

QUESTION 5

- a) Firstly, that we don't chose Jesus; He chooses us (**Ephesians 1:4-5**). We are in no position morally or spiritually to make that choice. We are dead in our sins.
- b) But aren't we invited to seek the Lord while He may be found?
- c) It is only as the Holy Spirit breathes spiritual life into us (regeneration) that we are then able to see our need of a Saviour and come to Him for forgiveness.
- d) Secondly, bearing fruit can either refer to spiritual growth and service, or to others who come to saving faith through our work and witness. John Macarthur wrote: *“The Christian life is not a spectator sport; Jesus did not choose believers to stand idly by while the world continues on its way to hell. On the contrary, His explicit command is ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...”*
- e) Such fruit lasts forever!

QUESTION 6

- a) Jesus repeats the promise of verse 7 and 14:13-14. Here it reinforces what Jesus has taught, but also shows the link between prayer and evangelism (see **2 Thessalonians 3:1**).
- b) We are reminded of three things attached to our praying if we are to receive what we've asked for:
- c) Firstly, that it be in accord with all that the name of Jesus stands for.
- d) Secondly, that it seeks God's glory.
- e) Thirdly, that it acknowledges Christ's Lordship; i.e. It is according to His will.