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| **Growth Groups Material**  (3 Studies on John 13-17)  Sep-Oct 2022 |
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These studies provide material for Growth Groups to use in conjunction with our preaching series from 25 September – 23 October, 2022.

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| **Sundays** | **Things Happening** | **Passage** |
| 18 Sept | Last week of previous series | 1 Cor 7:25-40 |
| 25-Sep | School Holidays | John 13 |
| 2-Oct | School Holidays | John 14 |
| 9-Oct | School Holidays | John 15 |
| 16-Oct | Saturday WE Away | John 16 |
| 23-Oct | Sunday WE Away | John 17 |

Three studies are included –

* One from **John 13** for groups who read the passage about to be preached (to use in the last week of term 3) – Pages 5-6
* Two from **John 17** for groups seeking a study in the first 2 weeks of term 4. Pages 7-9

**The studies have been copied (with permission) from St Luke’s Miranda**. You can download the full set of studies (including those covering chapters 14-16) here - <http://www.stlukesmiranda.org.au/s/Term-4-Bible-Study-Book.pdf>

For leaders, there are also some excellent leaders notes (on the whole Gospel) provided by St Helen’s Bishopsgate, available for download here - <https://api.st-helens.org.uk/v1.0/downloads/note-download/61/s61.pdf>

**If your group meets through the school holidays, you might choose to either**

* Use one of the studies from St Luke’s on part of chapters 14-16
* Prepare your own study on a whole chapter using the notes from St Helens
* Simply read through chapters 14-16 and discuss these questions –
  + What did Jesus think was important for his disciples to know before he died, rose and returned to the Father?
  + What in particular helps you/us to live as Christians today?

**Regarding the study structure**

The studies in this series have been written following the “COMA” method. COMA is an acronym for “Context, Observation, Meaning and Application”. It’s just a means of formalising four important ways that we can approach a text when we want to think about it properly.

**CONTEXT:** As we approach a text each week, it’s important to ground it in the bigger picture, namely God’s plans for his people throughout history. We also need to ground this text in the context of first Century Israel and, most importantly, in the context of the conversation that has happened in preceding chapters.

**OBSERVATION:** You’ll note that the first observation question is the same for each study. *“Read through the passage. What initial thoughts, questions, or insights arise from the passage*? While a great deal of time and care are put into the creation of these bible studies, it is highly likely that as your bible study group sits down and reads, that particular words or ideas will stick out. If you observe something that fascinates you as a bible study, feel free to spend some time exploring your observations. The goal of these bible studies is for people to grow in their knowledge and love of God and their appreciation of God’s word. If you are wrestling with your own thoughts and observations and never make it to the ‘official’ questions, that’s fine as long as you feel it’s fruitful for you as a group.

**MEANING:** In the ‘meaning section’ we’ll hopefully dig a little deeper and consider not only what Jesus said, but what the implications of his statements might have for his listeners. You might see this as a matter of plugging Jesus’ specific statements in a passage into the bigger matrix of God’s word as a whole.

**APPLICATION:** The goal of bible study is not just to *know* more about God, his nature and character, but to *grow* more in our Christian faith and to *be* more like Jesus. Not every passage in the bible will contain a call to action, or a specific application for our lives, but we should always ask the question *“What does this mean for my life and faith? How does this challenge my thoughts and actions?*”

Bible Studies written by Tim Goldsmith

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**Introduction to the “The upper room discourse”**

There are a number of big differences between the “synoptic” gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) and the gospel of John. One particularly striking difference is the focus that they put on the “last Supper”. While the synoptics (so called because they provide a ‘synopsis’ or summary of Jesus’ life) focus on Jesus teaching about the “Lord’s Supper”, John barely makes mention of the meal itself, instead devoting four chapters to Jesus’ final words to his disciples before his death.

Chapters 13-17 provide a sort of “summary statement” for Jesus’ teaching throughout the gospel, not unlike the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament. Some commentators view these chapters as being a collection of statements that Jesus had made, drawn together into one narrative group to achieve the end of preparing the reader for the crucifixion and resurrection that is to come. The primary argument for this is that, in comparison to the synoptics, John has shown that he is less concerned with providing a strict chronology for Jesus life and actions than maintaining a narrative flow that points towards Jesus the “Word of God”. That said, there is no compelling reason to see this episode as being anything other than a retelling of an eyewitness account.

**Key Themes**

The immanence of Jesus’ crucifixion really sets the framework for this text. Key themes include the call for Jesus’ disciples to self-sacrificially love and serve each other, to have confidence that Christ will return, and that his Spirit will be sent in the meantime. There are also themes around perseverance under trial and bearing fruit as Christians.

**CHAPTER 13**

Intro Question: If you knew that tomorrow was to be your last day on Earth, what are some final things that you'd want to do?

**CONTEXT**

1. Jesus and his friends are gathering together for a Passover meal. What was the significance of such a meal? (Have a look at Exodus 12 to see some of the back story)
2. Looking at John 12:23-28, what do you think Jesus'' gathering the disciples together for this big meal is about?

**OBSERVATION**

1. Read through John 13 as a group.

What initial thoughts, questions, or insights arise from the passage?

If you had to break this chapter up into sections, how would you do it?

1. What surprising action did Jesus take in v.2-5? How do you think this might make you feel, if your minister, or maybe your boss did the same to you?
2. Read v.6-11. Why do you think Peter responds in this way?

* What do you think Jesus’ response to Peter is about? Do you think it's really about foot washing, or about something deeper? (Matthew 16:21-23 gives us a further indication of Peter's broader mindset)

1. In verses 12-17, Jesus expands on his act of foot washing, calling his disciples to emulate the act. Do you think he's being metaphorical? If not, why don't we wash each other's feet today?

* Can you think of modern ways in which Christians in leaderships have (or maybe could/should) served you in humility?

1. Skip forward to v.34-35. How does this iconic statement of Jesus really encapsulate what he expressed physically in verses 1-17?

**MEANING**

1. What characteristics of Jesus' love do we see demonstrated in v.1-26?
2. Having spoken to John (this is the first time he is called 'the disciple whom Jesus loved') Jesus gives Judas some bread (v.26) (the sign, he said to John, which would indicate who'd betray him), then Jesus allows Judas to continue in his betrayal. Do you think this is an act of love? How so?
3. Read v.36-38. Judas plays a clear role in our narrative as the chief betrayer of Jesus, bringing about his arrest and crucifixion. How does Jesus' prophecy at the end of Chapter 13 act as a corrective for us if we're tempted to paint Judas as a sinner, but the other disciples as saints?

**APPLICATION**

1. Looking at the list of ways Jesus displays his love in question 8, how might we put some of these ways into practice this week
2. (This question is more for personal reflection than public sharing). Looking again at v.36-38, are there areas of your Christian life where you are publicly confident, but privately you know that you struggle. Pray to God that he might grant you both the confidence to acknowledge your failings and his strength to overcome them.

**CHAPTER 17:1-19**

*INTRO QUESTION:* What Book, Movie or TV show do you wish could keep on going forever and never be brought to completion?

**CONTEXT**

1. Flick back to Matthew 6:9-13, to the "Lord's Prayer". Read through it a couple of times. After you've completed question 2, come back & see what similarities you can find between this prayer and that in Matthew?

* Are there any differences between the two prayers that stand out to you?

**OBSERVATION**

1. Read through John 17:1-19 as a group. What initial thoughts, questions, or insights arise from the passage?
2. If you had to break up 1-19 into sections, where would you make the breaks? What headings would you pick for the different sections?
3. What specific things does Jesus ask of the Father?

**MEANING**

1. How is it that the Father and the Son will be glorified in the coming suffering and death of Jesus? (see also 12:23-24, 13:31-32)
2. What sense do you get from this prayer of the relationship between Jesus and the Father? What of that between Jesus and the disciples?
3. How does v3 define eternal life? How does this stand in contrast to how we might usually define it?

**APPLICATION**

1. Compare Jesus' prayer for himself to how we might usually pray for ourselves. How do his prayers provide an encouragement/corrective?
2. Look at verse 15 (and maybe Philippians 1:21-24), what does this say to the Christian who is tempted to live in a "holy huddle", separating themselves from the world around them?
3. Reflecting on v.17, what do you think "Sanctification" looks like to the modern non-Christian world? What do you think it looks like according to this passage?
4. Read through Jesus prayer again, how might his focuses inform, or even change how we pray this week (and beyond)?

**CHAPTER 17:20-26**

INTRO QUESTION: Do you have any peculiar traits or habits that you've inherited from a parent/family member? Any that you've passed on to others?

**CONTEXT**

1. Read through the first 17 verses of Ch.17 again. What were the two primary foci of Jesus’ prayer last week? How does this final section of his prayer build on that?

**OBSERVATION**

1. Read through John 17:20-26 as a group. What initial thoughts, questions, or insights arise from the passage?
2. V.21 maps out a relationship between Father, Son and the Christian community. What does it say? What is the intended goal of this relationship?
3. What additional evangelistic goal is laid out at the end of v.21
4. The Father and the Son are mentioned here, what place is there for the Holy Spirit in all of this? (See also John 14:15-17)

**MEANING**

1. These opening verses have laid out a call to unity. What does it say about the nature of that unity which is important to remember in a modern world that often preaches unity for unity's sake?

1. V.22 speaks of Christ giving believers the glory that the Father has given him. What do you think this might mean? (The good *and* bad news is that the jury is out on this one, so feel free to throw out multiple suggestions!)
2. What is Jesus asking for as he prays that his disciples would be "where I am"? Is there another section of the "Upper room discourse" that this statement reminds you of?

**APPLICATION**

1. Some would argue that the early church anticipated Christ's return within a very small time frame. How might v.20-26 speak into that expectation?
2. How do you think we ought to express our "oneness" so as to effectively show "the world" that God the Father sent Jesus for them?