

The Authentic Christian and Fellowship with God — October 21 & 22, 2017
Follow-up Bible Studies

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Day One: Deuteronomy 6:4-9

- What proclamation begins this text (4)? This broadcast is the beginning of Shema, perhaps the most important prayer of Judaism. What sort of foundation do you think this verse establishes for loving God? What does it mean to you?
- How are the Israelites to love God (5)? What is distinct about loving the Lord “with all your heart”? What about “with all your soul”? “With all your strength”? Talk to God about the degree to which and the ways you love him. What is one new way you can nurture this love? Make a plan to walk it out.
- What should be “on the heart” (6)? How should the commands be talked about and memorialized (7-9)? What ideas do verses 6-9 give you for cheering yourself and others on toward the fulfilling life of loving Jesus? Put one idea into action this week.

Day Two: Matthew 4:1-11

- Set the scene of this text (1). Who are the three players (1)? How did Jesus feel after 40 days of fasting (2)? What was the first thing Satan said to him (3)? Summarize Jesus’ response (4). Despite the very basic human need to eat, he was able to resist the enemy. What do you think made this possible?
- Describe the second stop and what happened there (5-7). Imagine this scene in your mind’s eye. It’s the second time Satan begins by saying, “If you are the Son of God...” Why do you think he does this? What do you think of him quoting scripture to Jesus?
- Where did they end up next (8)? What was the enemy’s offer (9)? What was different about Jesus’ response this time (10)? What happened next (11)? How do you think Jesus felt at this point?
- What parallels are there between this passage and 1 John 2:15-17? Was it love that motivated Jesus to resist, or something else? What motivates you to flee temptation and instead do God’s will?

Day Three: John 14:15-21

- Whom does Jesus expect to keep his commands (15)? What makes this possible (16-17)? The Holy Spirit is often described as the helper, comforter or advocate; which “hat” is blessing you the most in this season? How does the Spirit make it possible to keep God’s commands, as Jesus experienced in yesterday’s text?
- Contrast the Holy Spirit’s dealings with those who know Jesus and those who do not (17). Describe what it’s like to have the Spirit inside you. How are Jesus’ promises in verses 18-20 evident in your own life? Pause now to thank God for his faithfulness.
- What does Jesus then reiterate (21)? Ask the Holy Spirit to put his finger on a command you’ve forsaken. What is he speaking? What is one way to begin keeping this command again? Describe the circle of love Jesus-followers experience (21).

Day Four: John 15:1-8

- What imagery does Jesus use to talk about himself and Father God (1)? Describe what God does with different branches (2). For verse 3, spiritually speaking, how do you think being cleansed is similar to being pruned? As following Jesus has transformed you, does it feel more like cleansing or pruning? Or both? Explain.
- What makes it possible to be spiritually fruitful (4-5)? If we break away from Jesus, what happens (5-6)? What is one way spiritual fruitfulness manifests (7)? What does this

convey to the world, and what is the chief end of such fruitfulness (8)? What do the prayers of those who remain in Jesus sound like? How are they different from those prayed by people who've broken away?

- Upon an initial reading, parts of this passage seem harsh. Picture it this way instead: a gardener carefully and lovingly pruning his prized rose bush so that it receives abundant sun and produces beautiful blooms. Place yourself in the hands of the gardener now; how does he want to take care of you so you can thrive?

Day Five: Colossians 1:3-14

- What is Paul's posture when praying for Colossae (3)? Why (4-6)? Note the way he joins their faith and love together, and how their love is for "all God's people." Deep and true love for God overflows into love for people. How is this true in both your heart and actions? Pray for grace and opportunities to grow in this love. What is the first step you can take to walk this out?
- How does the spread of the gospel mirror the Colossians' faith and love (6-8)? Describe the Good News' growth and spread in your own life and community. What is your deepest hope for the spread of the gospel? Talk to the Lord about this longing now.
- Paul then writes a prayer for those in Colossae; summarize his words (9-12)? Which phrases and sentiments remind you of other texts we've studied this week? What picture has God painted for you of what it means to authentically follow and love Jesus?
- What has God rescued us from (13)? Once rescued, where do we go (13)? What awaits us there (14)? Respond to the Lord.