

# Personal/Small Group Study

Week of March 24, 2024 A.D.

## Triumph Through the Cross

The way of the cross is foolishness in the eyes of the world. However, you are never foolish when you are serving or honoring Jesus - even when it makes no sense to other people. The way of the cross is the way to victory, joy, honor, and eternal life. The primary challenge for those of us who follow Jesus is to develop and maintain the personal discipline to fix our hearts and minds on Christ instead of on the attractions of the world.

(Note: For every question which appears in this study, always give the reasoning and/or the explanation for each of your answers.)

### Read John 12:1-11

1. John deliberately states that Mary used "expensive perfume" to anoint Jesus. Why do you think that Mary used expensive perfume instead of cheap perfume? Is the cost of our service and our sacrifice for the sake of Jesus the only true measure of our love for Him?
2. In this passage, John offers insight into the motives of the people who are mentioned. Please compare and contrast what these verses tell you about the motives of Martha, the motives of Judas Iscariot, the motives of the "large crowd", and the motives of "the chief priests".
3. What are some examples of "random acts of Christian kindness" which might draw criticism from people who do not follow Christ?

### Read Romans 12:1,2

4. How would you evaluate Mary's actions toward Jesus based upon the teaching of these two verses? What do these verses tell us about the motivation of a Christ-follower compared to the motivation of a non-believer? Which behavior pattern provides the greater benefit to: (a) the giver? (b) the recipient? (c) the church? and (d) Christ?

### Read John 12:37-41

5. How does the condition of a person's heart influence their decision to either follow Christ or not to follow Christ? What does Jeremiah 17:9 tell us about the human heart? Do you agree with what is said in Jeremiah 17:9 ?

## Read 2 Chronicles 16:9 ( first sentence only )

6. How would you describe a heart which is fully committed to God? What is God's response to such a heart? If a person is fully committed to God, why would he or she need to be strengthened by God? How does a person receive such strength from God?

## Read John 12:23-26

7. What did Jesus mean when he said that the Son of Man would be glorified? In what way does verse 24 apply to Jesus? In what way does verse 24 apply to a person who follows Christ?
8. Does Jesus intend for verse 25 to apply to only a few Christians or to all Christians? If a person loves his life, how will he lose it? What does it mean for a man to hate his life?
9. Would you say that the average American Christian hates his life in this world? If a Christian hates his life, what would you expect his behavior to be toward God? What would you expect his behavior to be toward other people?
10. Please explain the first sentence of verse 26.
11. Do you believe that God honors the one who serves Jesus? If so, what does that honor look like?

## Read Philippians 2:3-4, Luke 16:9-11, 1 Timothy 6:17-19

12. Would these verses make any sense if we did not experience life after death? To what extent should our daily lives be influenced by the reality that every human being will spend eternity either in heaven or in hell ? Does the reality of life after death radically change the perspective and behavior of a person after he or she becomes a Christian?

**Consider :** For every Christ-follower, servanthood is not optional. It is required. Jesus was among us as one who served. As servants of Christ, we are to do whatever He instructs us to do. Jesus said that we must follow Him. This means that we must die to our human, self-centered nature. To be able to do this, we must allow Jesus to create within us new and pure hearts. Then, we are to serve God and others out of the love which we have received from our new Spirit-filled hearts.