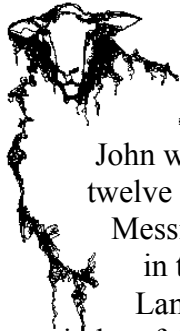


# God Grants Us Peace on Our Journey: Follow the Lamb!

## John 14:27-31



### Background for the Leader

John was well qualified to relate the gospel of Jesus Christ. He was one of the first of the twelve disciples to meet Jesus personally and believed at once that He was the expected Messiah. With his friend and fellow fisherman, Andrew, he was beside John the Baptist in the wilderness when Jesus walked by. The Baptist proclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” and John and Andrew became his followers immediately, spending the remainder of the day in fellowship with him. Some time after that, when Jesus was in Capernaum, He found Andrew and his brother Simon, whom Jesus renamed Peter, casting their fishing nets in the Sea of Galilee. After asking that they follow him to become fishers of men, He encountered John and James mending their nets in the boat with their father, Zebedee. At Christ’s invitation, those brothers also became His disciples.

It is evident from the scriptural accounts of the disciples that John experienced a close relationship with Jesus. He was one of the only three disciples (Peter and James being the other two) to be present with Jesus in some of the most pivotal moments of his life and ministry — at the Transfiguration on the mountain, when the daughter of the synagogue leader was raised from death, and as Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane where they were to keep watch. With Peter, he was sent by Jesus to prepare for the Passover meal that was to be the Last Supper. He was a witness to the crucifixion, at which time Jesus asked him to take care of his mother after his death. It is recorded that she did indeed live with John in his home as her Son had requested. These incidents suggest the trust that Jesus had in John.

John outlived the other disciples and was a major figure in the first century development of the Christian church. He spent his last years in exile on the island of Patmos. He not only wrote the Gospel According to John, but three epistles (1, 2, and 3 John) to early Christian believers, and the Book of Revelation. New Testament references to John depict him as an apostle of love and ardent seeker of the truth. In the Gospel According to John, he labeled himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

*A Prayer for the Leader: God, grant me the wisdom, the understanding, and the love typified by the Apostle John, to lead my sister Christians in this study of your peace. Through your Holy Spirit fill us with that peace, so that we may take it with us from this place and use it to comfort and brighten the lives of those around us. Amen.*

### A Note to the Leader

To prepare for all five activities in advance of the meeting date:

1. Prepare individual handouts of the text for this lesson (John 14:17-21), or have Bibles ready for individual use.
2. Assign readers for Activity One and give them copies of the scripts they will read.
3. Write the discussion topics for Activity Three on separate cards or slips of paper.
4. Have chalkboard, white board, or a large sheet of newsprint or butcher paper and appropriate marker ready for Activity Four.

It is recommended that you preview all of the activities provided for this lesson and select those that are the most appropriate in terms of time constraints, size of group, and background experiences and interests of your members.

## **Leading the Bible Study**

**Activity One:** The Peace of God (5 minutes)

**Reader 1:** In several books of the Bible, God is referred to as the “God of Peace” and there are many passages which indicate that God intends for us to be people of peace – meaning not only an absence of war, terrorism, or other worldly conflicts -- but also inner peace – peace of mind and peace in our hearts.

**Reader 2:** These are some of the verses that illustrate that intent:

**Philippians 4:7** – And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Psalms 119:165** – Great peace have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble.

**Isaiah 26:3** – You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.

**John 16:33a** – These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace.

**Romans 5:1** – Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**2 Corinthians 13:11a,b** – Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

**Colossians 3:15** – And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body, and be thankful.

**Reader 1:** If we contemplate the words in those passages, we can understand better what the peace of God is like. First of all, it is one of the blessings we receive through Jesus Christ once we have undeniably accepted him as our Savior.

**Reader 2:** And although it is difficult for the human mind to comprehend, that peace of heart and mind can be ours as long as we put our trust and faith in Jesus. If we love God’s law, and if we truly love God, we will love his law because it is one of love and freedom. That kind of peace helps to keep us from stumbling.

**Reader 1:** Jesus said that God’s law could be summarized as two commandments: to love God completely and to love your neighbor as yourself.

**Reader 2:** Keeping those two commandments does go hand-in-hand with having the peace of God. Jesus gave us the perfect example of that kind of love.

**Activity Two:** Lesson Scripture (20 minutes)

Discuss John’s background leading to his writing of the Gospel. Distribute Bibles or copies of

the text for this lesson (John 14: 27-31) and, if you are using the formational approach to Bible study have participants find their private places of meditation to “pray the scriptures.” (*Note: see the Bible study entitled “By Our Fruits We Are Known” for a description of the formational approach*). In approximately ten minutes call the group back together to share their insights on a volunteer basis.

**Activity Three:** Peace on Our Journeys (15 minutes)

Point out that the peace of Jesus was sufficient for comforting his disciples about his pending absence from them, although He knew the ordeal He would soon face. He asked them to be happy that He was going to the Father. Ask those present to think about their own journeys of faith and growth as Christians. How did the peace that Jesus told the disciples that He would leave in their hearts and minds help them through their own personal trials? Display the topics (stages in the journey of life and faith and their typical problems), and ask participants to select one to discuss briefly. (*Suggestions: peer pressures of the teen years, adjusting to a partner in a new marriage, responsibilities of parenthood, frustrations in a job outside the home, insecurities in being a witness for Christ, ups and downs of discovering your own identity, coping with changes that accompany aging, etc.* )

**Activity Four:** Follow the Lamb in Peace! (15 minutes)

Lead the group in construction of a web, or semantic map, of the concept of the peace of God that is given to us:

1. Begin by drawing a rectangle or oval in the center of the sheet of paper or board and writing the topic, The Peace of God, within that shape;
2. Toward the corners of the paper or board, write the labels for categories of information that participants suggest for inclusion, such as What it Is Like, How We Obtain It, How We Spread It, and Why We Need It;
3. Draw lines to connect each category listed with the topic in the center;
4. Under or around the name of each category, write the responses offered by individuals of detailed information. (*For example, the category of “Why We Need It” might include the details - to make us happier, to enrich our lives, to be right with God, to be all that we can be.*)

**Activity Five:** Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

*Dear God, through your undeserved and boundless grace, you offer us your peace – the peace that Jesus assured his disciples He would leave in the hearts and minds of believers. The peace that surpasses understanding. The peace that lifts our burdens, calms our anxieties, strengthens our faith and hope, and makes us more at one with you. Through your Holy Spirit, may we keep that peace within us always and in the greatest of gratitude. Amen.*

**About the Writer**

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## **God Grants Us Peace for the Journey: Follow the Lamb!**

### **John 14:27-31**

Our twins, Anthony and Bethany, are 12 years old now, a strong oak of a young man and a graceful willow of a young woman. At two weeks of age, our precious tiny bundles enjoyed their first stay of many in the church nursery. I recently asked them if they remembered ever being afraid that we wouldn't come back to pick them up from the nursery. With typical near-teen wisdom, they replied that they did not because they knew we loved them, and we promised we would come back.

While savoring a moment of parental pleasure in a sea of life's uncertainties, I thought of Jesus' words, "Don't be worried or afraid...I'm going away and I am coming back." Our good shepherd told us these things before they happen, so that when they do, we will believe!

We can rest safely and securely in the comfort of His peace which that world cannot offer.

#### **PRAYER:**

*Often it feels as if you are far from me, O Lord. I want to know and feel your presence daily. Help me to see you in the little things all around me...the sunrise or sunset, the laughter of children, the stories of the elderly, your word proclaimed or sung in worship, and in prayers prayed. Thank you for walking with me through life. Amen.*

Susan Horner  
Longview, Texas