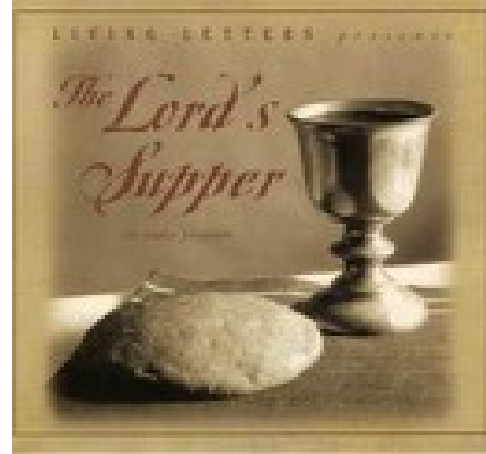


**THE BIBLE EXPERIENCE:**

**The Journey from Religion to Relationship: One Dark Night  
March 12, 2014**

**Introduction:** God's redemptive purpose is not the establishment of a religion but rather the enjoyment of a relationship, a covenant of love, a living and thriving relationship with Jesus. As John the beloved disciple wrote, "We live in Him and He is us" (1 John 4:13); and that relationship meets needs and accomplishes things that no amount of religion could ever do.



1. "As you watched that video, what sorts of things were you thinking and feeling?" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. "Did you identify with one person in the video more than another? If so, who? And why?"  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Read John 15:1-17.**

4. "Would you describe Jesus' words in this passage as 'relational' or religious? And why?" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. "Jesus talks repeatedly about his followers 'remaining' (NKJV: 'abiding') in him. What do you think he means by that?" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. "As Jesus spoke these words, he knew that his arrest, trial and crucifixion were imminent. How do you think that knowledge affected what he said to his followers?" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. "What did Jesus mean by saying, 'apart from me you can do nothing' (v. 5)?" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. "How, in practical terms, do you think we are supposed to 'remain in Jesus'?" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. "Do Jesus' words here make him sound like he's establishing a religion? If so, how? If not, why not?" \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. "Are you 'remaining' or 'abiding' in Jesus, like he says in these verses? If so, how, If not, why not?" \_\_\_\_\_

11. "Are you 'bearing fruit,' like Jesus says in these verses, If so, how? If not, why not?" \_\_\_\_\_

12. "Are you loving your fellow disciples, like Jesus tells his followers to do in these verses? If so, how? If not, why not?" \_\_\_\_\_

**Point to remember:** In providing salvation from guilt and shame, sin and death, God's purpose is not the establishment of a religion, but the enjoyment of a relationship.

**Memory Verse:** "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace". Ephesians 1:7

**Reflection Time:** Take some time to reflect on these questions, and write down any response below:

- ✓ If I pictured myself as one of the disciples around the table at the last supper, with whom do I identify most? Peter? John? Judas? Someone else? Why?
  
- ✓ Is Jesus' life in me as real to me as physical food and drink?

**Prayer:** *Lord Jesus, You are the Bread of Life. Live in me. Be my daily bread. Be my manna, my provision, my life and health. Help me, Lord not to "snack" at your table, but to feast on you, to eat my fill of your presence and power. Let my life overflow and result in blessings on those around me, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

**Next week: The Journey from Darkness to Light: Early Jerusalem**

