

The Gospel of John, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 19: The Way, the Truth, and the Life

John 14:1-31

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

John 14 is one of the most beloved and comforting chapters in Scripture, spoken to frightened disciples on the night before the cross. Doctrinally, it contains the great exclusive claim, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me," the revelation that to see Jesus is to see the Father, the promise of heaven as the Father's house, and the first of the promises of the Holy Spirit. The teacher must handle the Spirit promises with care. The promises that the Spirit would teach the apostles all things and bring all Jesus' words to their remembrance (v. 26) were given first and specifically to the apostles, and they point to the inspiration of the New Testament. They should not be used to support modern claims of new revelation or continuing miraculous gifts. The heaviest doctrinal block belongs at Question 7, with major weight also at Questions 3 and 5.

At the same time, the chapter is deeply pastoral. It commands troubled hearts to trust, it grounds the hope of heaven and reunion with Christ, it welcomes honest questions, it ties love for Christ to obedience, and it leaves the gift of a peace the world cannot give. The teacher should let the chapter comfort the anxious, anchor their hope, and call them to loving obedience and to rest in Christ's peace.

So aim at both: a clear grasp of Christ as the only way to the Father, the meaning of the Spirit promises, and the nature of Christ's peace, and a heart that trusts Him, obeys Him out of love, and rests in His peace amid real trouble. The disciple we are forming is anchored in Christ the way, and untroubled because of Him.

Question 1

Student Question:

Jesus said, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me" (v. 1). What is the relationship between a troubled heart and trust in Christ, and how does Jesus offer His followers a place to put their fear?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Jesus' opening words are a command and a remedy: "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me" (v. 1). He speaks them on the night when the disciples had every reason to be troubled, betrayal, denial, and the cross looming.

Draw out the relationship between trouble and trust. Jesus does not say the disciples have nothing to fear; He gives them somewhere to put their fear. The antidote to a troubled heart is not denial or distraction but trust, “believe in God; believe also in me.” Faith is the remedy for fear.

Note that this is a command. “Let not your hearts be troubled” implies that, by God’s grace, we have some responsibility over where we let our hearts dwell. We cannot prevent every anxious feeling, but we can choose, again and again, to turn our trust toward Christ rather than spiraling in fear. Trust is something we do, often repeatedly.

Apply it pastorally. Help students see that obeying this command is not pretending they are not afraid; it is bringing their real fear to Christ and entrusting it to Him. Ask each student what currently troubles their heart and what it would look like, concretely, to redirect that fear into active trust in Jesus this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Trust in Christ as the remedy for a troubled heart (John 14:1).
- Faith as where we put our fear, not the denial of it.
- Our responsibility, by grace, over where the heart dwells.
- Active, repeated trust as obedience to Christ’s command.

Discussion Prompts

- What is the relationship between a troubled heart and trust in Christ?
- How is trusting Christ different from pretending we are not afraid?
- What currently troubles your heart, and how can you redirect it into trust?

Question 2

Student Question:

Jesus spoke of going to prepare a place in His Father’s house and coming again to take His own to be with Him (vv. 2–3). How does the hope of being with Christ forever speak to a specific fear or grief you are carrying right now?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Jesus comforts His disciples with the hope of heaven and reunion: “In my Father’s house are many rooms... I go to prepare a place for you... I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also” (vv. 2–3). Heaven is the Father’s house, and the heart of the hope is being with Christ.

Draw out the personal nature of the hope. Heaven is not a vague destination but the Father’s house, and the central joy is not golden streets but Christ Himself: “that where I am you may be

also.” The hope of the believer is, at its core, to be with the One we love. Jesus is even now preparing a place for His own.

Apply it to present fears and griefs. The hope of being with Christ forever reframes our losses and fears. Death is not the end but the doorway to the Father’s house. Separation from believing loved ones is not final. The worst the world can do cannot rob us of the place Christ is preparing.

Press for specifics. Ask each student to name a current fear or grief and to consider how the hope of being with Christ forever speaks to it. Encourage them to hold this hope not as a distant abstraction but as a present comfort that steadies them today. Ask how holding it more firmly might change the way they face that fear.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Heaven as the Father’s house, with Christ Himself as the central joy (John 14:2-3).
- Christ preparing a place and coming again for His own.
- The hope of being with Christ reframing our fears and griefs.
- Death as the doorway to the Father’s house for believers.

Discussion Prompts

- How does the hope of being with Christ speak to a fear you carry?
- How real is the hope of heaven in your daily life?
- How might holding it more firmly change the way you face loss?

Question 3

Student Question:

Jesus declared, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (v. 6). What is Jesus claiming, and why is the exclusivity of this claim both offensive to the world and deeply good news?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

In answer to Thomas, Jesus makes one of His most famous and most exclusive claims: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (v. 6). This is the sixth great “I am” saying.

Unfold the claim. Jesus does not say He shows the way, teaches the truth, and gives life; He says He is the way, the truth, and the life. And He adds the exclusive clause: no one comes to the Father except through Him. There is one road to God, and it is a Person.

Address the offense and the goodness of the exclusivity. In a world that insists all religions are equally valid paths to God, this claim is deeply offensive. But help students see that it is also

profoundly good news. If there were many ways, we could never be sure we had found the right one. Because there is one way, and it is the Christ who came to find us, we can be certain. The exclusivity is matched by accessibility: the one way is open to all who come through Him.

Apply it. This claim is the foundation of the church's mission and the believer's confidence. It also calls for courage in a pluralistic culture. Help students hold the claim with both conviction and humility, and with love for those who do not yet know the way. Ask how they would explain, kindly and clearly, why Jesus is the only way to a friend who finds the idea narrow.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- "I am the way, the truth, and the life," the only way to the Father (John 14:6).
- The exclusivity of Christ as both offensive to the world and good news.
- Salvation in no other name (Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5).
- The one way open and accessible to all who come through Him.

Discussion Prompts

- What is Jesus claiming in verse 6?
- Why is the exclusivity of this claim both offensive and good news?
- How would you lovingly explain it to someone who finds it narrow?

Question 4

Student Question:

Thomas honestly admitted, "we do not know... How can we know the way?" (v. 5), and Jesus met his question with truth. How can honest questions, brought to Christ, become a path to deeper faith rather than a threat to it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question takes up Thomas's honest admission: "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" (v. 5). Thomas did not understand, and he said so plainly. His honest question drew out one of the greatest answers Jesus ever gave.

Help students value honest questions. Thomas was not rebuked for his confusion; his question opened the door to the revelation of Christ as the way. Honest questions brought to Jesus are not a threat to faith but often a path to deeper faith. God is not afraid of our questions.

Distinguish honest questions from hardened unbelief. There is a difference between a question that genuinely seeks Christ and an objection that hides an unwillingness to follow. Thomas's question was the former; he wanted to know. Such seeking, brought to Christ, is welcomed and answered.

Apply it. Encourage students who carry honest questions to bring them to Christ rather than burying them or letting them fester into doubt. And encourage them to welcome the questions of others as opportunities, not threats. Ask what honest questions they are carrying, and invite them to bring those questions to Christ and His word, trusting that He meets honest seekers.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Honest questions brought to Christ as a path to deeper faith (John 14:5).
- The difference between honest seeking and hardened unbelief.
- God's welcome of those who genuinely seek Him.
- Welcoming others' questions as opportunities, not threats.

Discussion Prompts

- How can honest questions become a path to deeper faith?
- What honest questions are you carrying right now?
- How might you bring them to Christ rather than burying them?

Question 5

Student Question:

Jesus told Philip, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (v. 9). What does this teach about how fully Jesus reveals God, and what does it mean that we come to know the Father by knowing the Son?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

To Philip's request, "Lord, show us the Father," Jesus replies, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (vv. 8-9). To see Jesus is to see God; Christ fully reveals the Father.

Draw out the fullness of the revelation. Jesus is not a partial or distorted picture of God; He is the exact representation of God's being (Hebrews 1:3). Everything the Father is, in character, love, holiness, and mercy, is revealed in the Son. We do not have to guess what God is like; we look at Jesus.

Connect this to the prologue. The Word who was God has made the Father known (1:18). The whole Gospel has been showing us the Father through the Son. Philip's longing for some further vision of God misses that the vision is standing in front of him.

Apply it to how students know God. To know the Father, we come to know the Son. The way to deepen our knowledge and love of God is not to seek some mystical experience beyond Christ but to know Jesus more, in the Gospels, in His words and works. Ask students how seeing the Father in the face of Christ shapes their picture of God, especially if they have carried distorted images of Him.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Jesus as the full revelation of the Father (John 14:9; Hebrews 1:3).
- Knowing the Father by knowing the Son.
- Christ as the exact representation of God's being.
- Correcting distorted images of God by looking at Jesus.

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean that to see Jesus is to see the Father?
- How does knowing the Son deepen our knowledge of God?
- How does seeing the Father in Christ correct your picture of God?

Question 6

Student Question:

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us" (v. 8), still longing for something more when Christ was right in front of him. Where do you look for something more when Christ Himself is what you most need, and how do you refocus on Him?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question takes up Philip's wistful request: "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us" (v. 8). Philip wanted something more, some further vision, when the One who is the full revelation of God was right in front of him.

Help students recognize the same restlessness in themselves. We often crave something more, a better experience, a clearer sign, a different circumstance, a new spiritual high, when Christ Himself is what we most need and already have. Like Philip, we can miss the sufficiency of Christ while longing for an addition.

Draw out the sufficiency of Christ. Jesus' gentle rebuke implies that He is enough; in Him we have the Father. The Christian life is not a search for something beyond Christ but a deepening into Him. He is not a stepping-stone to something better; He is the better thing.

Press for specifics. Ask each student where they look for something more, more excitement, more proof, more circumstances, more experiences, when Christ Himself is what they most need. Invite them to refocus on Him, to find in Christ the sufficiency they have been seeking elsewhere. Ask what it would look like this week to seek Christ Himself rather than an addition to Him.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The sufficiency of Christ Himself (John 14:9).
- The restless craving for something more than Christ.

- The Christian life as deepening into Christ, not seeking beyond Him.
- Refocusing on Christ as the answer to our longing.

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you look for something more when Christ is what you need?
- How does Philip's request expose our restlessness?
- What would it look like to seek Christ Himself this week?

Question 7

Student Question:

Jesus promised, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth" (vv. 16–17), and said the Spirit would "teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (v. 26). To whom were these specific promises first given, and what do they tell us about how we received the inspired teaching of the New Testament?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal block of the lesson, and it must be handled with care, since it concerns the first of the Spirit promises that run through chapters 14 through 16. Jesus promises, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth" (vv. 16–17), and specifically, "the Helper, the Holy Spirit... will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (v. 26).

Identify the original recipients. These specific promises, that the Spirit would teach them all things and bring all that Jesus said to their remembrance, were given first and directly to the apostles in the upper room. They were the ones who had been with Jesus, who had heard His words, and who needed those words brought to remembrance. The promise to bring to remembrance "all that I have said to you" presupposes hearers who had personally heard Jesus teach, namely the apostles.

Draw out what this means for us. These promises point to the inspiration of the New Testament. The Spirit enabled the apostles to remember accurately and teach faithfully what Jesus said and did, and to be guided into the full truth (16:13). The result is the inspired apostolic witness preserved for us in the New Testament Scriptures (compare 2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:20–21). We did not receive the teaching of Jesus by our own private revelations; we received it through the Spirit-inspired apostles, recorded in Scripture.

Guard carefully against misuse. These promises should not be used to support modern claims of new revelation or of continuing miraculous sign gifts, as though the Spirit today gives believers fresh truth beyond Scripture or guides them into doctrines the apostles did not deliver. The Spirit's work of guiding into all truth was fulfilled in the apostolic age and is preserved for us in

the completed New Testament. The faith was “once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). To claim new revelations is to go beyond what the Spirit gave through the apostles.

Apply it with both confidence and humility. Help students see that they have, in the New Testament, the trustworthy and sufficient teaching the Spirit gave through the apostles. This gives great confidence: we are not left to guess or to chase ever-new revelations; we have the apostles’ Spirit-guided witness. And it gives a healthy humility: we submit to that completed revelation rather than presuming to add to it. The indwelling Spirit still works in believers today, but He works through the truth He has already revealed, not by delivering new doctrine. Ask students how a high view of the Spirit-inspired Scriptures shapes the way they read and submit to the New Testament.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The promises of the Spirit’s teaching given first and specifically to the apostles (John 14:16–17, 26).
- These promises pointing to the inspiration of the New Testament (2 Timothy 3:16–17; 2 Peter 1:20–21).
- The apostolic, Spirit-guided witness as how we received the teaching of Jesus.
- A clear guard against modern claims of new revelation or continuing miraculous gifts.
- The faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).
- The Spirit working today through the truth already revealed, not by new doctrine.

Discussion Prompts

- To whom were the promises of verses 16, 17, and 26 first given?
- How do these promises relate to the inspiration of the New Testament?
- Why should we not use them to claim new revelation today?

Question 8

Student Question:

Jesus said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (v. 15), and “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me” (v. 21). How does this passage tie our love for Christ to obedience, and where is your love for Him being tested by a specific command right now?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-examining question takes up the repeated link in this chapter between love for Christ and obedience: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (v. 15), and “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me” (v. 21). Love and obedience are inseparable.

Draw out the connection. Jesus does not pit love against obedience or treat obedience as a cold alternative to love. He says love for Him expresses itself in keeping His commandments. Genuine love obeys; obedience that flows from love is the proof and the shape of that love. This is not legalism; it is the natural fruit of loving Christ.

Guard against two distortions. Obedience without love becomes dead legalism; claimed love without obedience is empty sentiment. Jesus joins them: those who love Him keep His word. Our obedience reveals whether our love is real, and our love makes our obedience glad rather than grudging.

Press for specifics. Ask each student where their love for Christ is currently being tested by a specific command, an area where obeying Him is costly or unwelcome. The honest test of love is not warm feelings but willingness to obey. Invite each to name one command where they will let their love for Christ show itself in obedience this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Love for Christ inseparable from obedience to Him (John 14:15, 21).
- Obedience as the fruit and proof of genuine love, not legalism.
- Guarding against both dead legalism and empty sentiment.
- Obedience made glad by love.

Discussion Prompts

- How does this passage tie love for Christ to obedience?
- Where is your love for Him being tested by a specific command?
- How can love make your obedience glad rather than grudging?

Question 9

Student Question:

Jesus left His disciples a startling gift: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (v. 27). How is the peace Christ gives different from the peace the world offers, and how do we actually receive and live in this peace amid real trouble?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Jesus leaves His disciples a parting gift: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (v. 27). This peace is given on the eve of the cross, into the middle of fear.

Contrast Christ's peace with the world's. The world's peace depends on circumstances, the absence of trouble, financial security, good health, control. It evaporates when circumstances change. Christ's peace is different in kind: it is rooted in Him and in our relationship with the

Father, and so it can survive even the worst circumstances, even the cross. It is peace in the storm, not merely peace from the storm.

Draw out how we receive and live in this peace. This peace is not the absence of trouble but the presence of Christ and trust in Him amid trouble. We receive it as we trust Him (v. 1), pray rather than worry (Philippians 4:6–7), and rest in His promises. It is a peace He gives, not one we manufacture, yet we enter it through trust.

Apply it to real trouble. Help students see that they can have Christ's peace even when their circumstances are hard, because the peace does not depend on the circumstances. Ask each student where they most need this peace right now, and what it would look like to receive it through trust rather than waiting for the trouble to pass. The same Christ who calmed the sea offers His peace to troubled hearts.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The peace of Christ, different in kind from the world's peace (John 14:27).
- Peace in the storm, rooted in Christ, not in circumstances.
- Receiving peace through trust and prayer (Philippians 4:6–7).
- Peace as Christ's gift, entered through trust.

Discussion Prompts

- How is the peace Christ gives different from the world's peace?
- How do we actually receive and live in this peace amid trouble?
- Where do you most need Christ's peace right now?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back over this chapter of comfort, from “let not your hearts be troubled” to “my peace I give to you.” What is one specific way Jesus is forming you to trust Him as the way to the Father and to rest in His peace?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The capstone question gathers the comfort of the chapter into two movements: trusting Christ as the way to the Father, and resting in His peace. These are the formation the chapter aims at.

Help students see the connection. We rest in Christ's peace because we trust Him as the way to the Father. The peace flows from the relationship; the untroubled heart is the heart that believes in God and in Christ. Trust and peace are bound together.

Make it concrete. Ask each student to name one specific way Jesus is forming them to trust Him as the way to the Father (perhaps anchoring their hope in heaven, or refusing to let a particular fear rule them) and one area where they most need to receive His peace this week.

Close in the comfort of the chapter. Spoken to frightened disciples on the worst night of their lives, this chapter still steadies trembling hearts. Let students leave with the command and the gift together: “Let not your hearts be troubled,” and “My peace I give to you.” The way to the Father is sure, the place is being prepared, and they are not left alone.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Trusting Christ as the way and resting in His peace as one life.
- Peace flowing from the relationship with Christ.
- Hope in heaven as an anchor for the troubled heart.
- Concrete, specific formation as the goal of the lesson.

Discussion Prompts

- How is Jesus forming you to trust Him as the way to the Father?
- Where do you most need to receive His peace this week?
- How does trusting Him quiet a specific fear in your life?