

Upper Room Truths for the Christian Life

John 13-16

John 1-12 convincingly displays that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and repeatedly affirms that whoever believes in Him has everlasting life. But in John 13-16, Jesus is alone with His disciples, and talks about how to live the Christian life. Here are five keys to being a disciple of Jesus.

“Love one another.” (John 13.34-35; 15.12-13, 17)

Love ≠ shrugging at sin, lowering standards (toleration)

Love ≠ no consequences or condemnation (licentiousness)

Love = treating others the way Christ does (truth in love)

“Keep My commandments.” (John 14.15, 21, 23-24)

This ≠ a set of rules (check the box)

This ≠ no rules (‘just love everyone’)

This = ‘a way of life in loving union with Christ’

“Don’t let your heart be troubled.” (John 14.1, 27)

“My peace I give to you.”

“Be anxious for nothing!” (Phil. 4.6-7)

“Let the peace of Christ be in control in your heart” (Col. 3.15)

“Abide in Me.” (John 15.4-10)

Abiders are fruitful for God (His fruit, not ours)

Non-abiders are throwing away their lives!

Abiders have intimacy with God in prayer

“Take courage. (I have overcome the world.)” (John 16.33)

Dare to live courageously!

1. Few commands of Jesus have been twisted and mutilated more than “Love one another.” It’s been coopted by groups from hippies in the 1960s, to the ‘Coexist’ mentality of the early 2000s, to the LGBTQ+ progressives today. If “God is love” (as 1 Jn. 4.8 says He is), then what does that tell us about true love (*agape*)? How does love fit with God’s holiness, justice, punishment, and condemnation? How does this apply to relationships with one another, especially those in the body of Christ (see John 13.35)?
2. Read the “Keep My commandments” statements Jesus makes in the Upper Room Discourse (Jn. 14.15, 21, 23-24). Interestingly, this is not a command (the verbs are not imperatives). It’s not a “Do this or else!” but “If you love Me.” How does this invitation differ from all those who make rules to follow, or who water down following Jesus to a vague call to “just love everyone”?
3. Peace is like the proverbial pot at the end of the rainbow: Everyone is looking for it, and it always seems to be just out of reach. What did Jesus mean when He said, “My peace I give to you”? Why did He add, “Not as the world gives”? Have you ever known someone who – even though they were facing trials and tribulations in life – had a calm assurance about them? What is the cure for anxiety in Philippians 4.6-7? See the words “in Christ Jesus” at the end of v7?
4. Read Jesus’ ‘vine and branches’ discourse in John 15.1-10. Why did Jesus want His disciples to ‘abide’ (or remain) in Him? What does the idea of ‘abiding’ with someone signify? (If someone asked you to ‘abide’ with them, what would that entail?) In the context of the vine and the branches illustration, what does it mean for us to abide in Him? What are the results of us abiding in Christ?
5. Jesus prophesied fearful days ahead for the disciples in John 13-16. His final words are for them to “take courage”! Looking back over the entire discourse, on what basis can Jesus’ disciples face trials in life courageously? What trials are you facing courageously today?

