



The ALIVE! Bible Study Series
SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR SESSION 8
JOHN 16:12-15 and MARK 5:21-34

JOHN 14:16-17; 16:12-15 NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV)

Jesus Comforts His Disciples at the Last Supper

¹⁶ “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – ¹⁷ the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.” ...

¹² “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and will make it known to you.”

MARK 5:21-34 NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV)

A Request of Jesus from a Grieving Father

²¹ When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

Jesus Heals a Sick Woman

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” ²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

³⁰ At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

³¹ “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ”

³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”



The Alive! Bible Study Series
STUDY AND REFLECTION GUIDE FOR SESSION 8

“LISTENING TO THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH WITHIN”
John 14:16, 17b; 16:12-15 and Mark 5:21 - 34 (NIV)

OBJECTIVES:

- To remind you of times that “something” warned you about something, whether or not you heeded the warning,
- To hear with fresh ears and heart that the Spirit of Truth does exist within you and is the Spirit that God breathed into you at your birth (Gen. 2:7),
- To encourage you to be consciously aware of times the Spirit of Truth speaks within your soul, and

To celebrate that you have a resource within you that is wisdom and love for you.

INTRODUCTION:

Through the sessions so far you have had an opportunity to read about **being co-creators with God** in the sense of continuing to be good stewards of the incredible, beautifully balanced work that God did in creation (Genesis 1:26-27). Further you learned that **you are made in the image and likeness of God in that God breathed gifts and talents into you at your birth** (Genesis 2:7). You learned that **you are fearfully and wonderfully made** (Psalm 139:14), a perfect balance of internal, psychological, intellectual, and spiritual workings that, when cared for, can keep you strong and healthy – body, mind, and spirit. You have read and reflected on stories of Jesus’ faithfulness to his meaning and purpose here on earth (Mark 1:29-38) and **you have been encouraged to explore how to be faithful to your quest for better health and the importance of making a plan to support your commitment to better health behaviors. Prayer and planning for success are two key activities you learned are important** for staying on point toward your health goals (Nehemiah 1:4-2:20). **You have learned the importance of putting aside negative thoughts and actions**, anger, vengefulness, hateful ways that can bring about stressors – body, mind, and spirit – and can keep you from your greater good and ALIVE! goals (1 Peter 3:10-16). Hopefully, **you have learned that you do not have to be rich, a genius, or have a great job title to be noticed and used by God** for some great purpose for humanity (Luke 1:26-38).

In this session you will explore on a deeper level the Spirit of Truth that dwells in you. God’s Spirit, breathed into you at your birth (Gen. 2:7) is ever present and gives guidance, advice, warnings, and affirmations many times a day. How often have you said, “*Something told me...*” or “*I should have listened to my first mind.*”

When you are overstressed, have no balance between work, rest, and healthy exercise, you leave little time for being conscious of this Truth because you are mostly **reacting to the things that “must” be done. You leave little time for reflection about the effects all of your activities are having on you holistically. Jesus mandates us** – by his very actions of seeking solitude and getting away from the crowd from time to time – **to take the time to listen to God’s Spirit, the Spirit of Truth within so that we can regroup, recoup, and respond with informed consciousness about our actions.**

In your scriptures for Session 8, **you will have the opportunity to explore the empowering work of the Spirit of Truth within you.** May these scriptures bless you as you look deeper into this Truth for good, strength, awareness, and joy that lives within you and that is available to 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Learn to accept and trust that this Truth is available to you. Practice being still. At the end of this session, you will participate in a Lectio Divina exercise as one way of accessing the “Spirit of Truth Within” you.

You may ask what this has to do with your ALIVE! activities or goals. It has everything to do with it. Have you ever been out to dinner with friends, really satisfied that your choice for a meal was in

line with your ALIVE goals? At the end of the meal, the waitress offered you the slice of cream pie that came with your meal? You hadn't planned on pie, after all it was not a part of your meal plan for your ALIVE! goals, but you took it because it was not an extra cost. You started eating the pie and realized that you were not really enjoying it. You did not stop eating it, however, until it was all gone because in your family you learned to eat everything on your plate. Your Spirit of Truth nudged you to tell you that you were not enjoying the pie but you did not pause to grasp the feeling fully; you ignored the feeling. Later as you reflected on how you stumbled away from your goal, you may recall that there was "something" inside of you that told you that you were not enjoying the pie. Yet it quickly got dismissed without a second thought. Learn to pause, to feel, to discern this Truth and to trust that it will never lie to you, demean you, or seek to hurt your soul, even sometimes when it informs you of things that may be counter to what you desire in the moment on this earthly plain.

May you enjoy the exploration of this Spirit of Truth Within as you read and reflect on the lesson of this session. Get pencil and paper so that you can record your thoughts about this session as you go into the New Year with new hope and greater understanding of who and Whose you are and the Truth that is ever available to you. To God be the glory!

BACKGROUND:

In this session you will focus on two separate events: John 14:17b; 16:12-15 and Mark 5:21-34. **The first scriptures from the Book of John invite us into a conversation Jesus is having with his disciples** after he washes their feet at the last supper he will have with them before he is taken away to be scourged, unjustly condemned, and crucified. He is trying to explain that he is leaving them soon but that they will not be abandoned. He will send the Spirit of Truth who will continue to guide them after his death, resurrection, and ascent back to his Father. **The second reading from the Book of Mark is an illustration of how the Spirit of Truth informed Jesus of an experience he was having** even when what he was saying happened did not make sense to those with him.

READING AND REFLECTION FOR JOHN 14:16-17; 16:12-15:

- **John 14:16-17** – Jesus is trying to comfort his disciples after what he knows is his last supper with them before he is arrested, unjustly tried and convicted, and then crucified. **He is explaining to them that he will not abandon them but will send another Counselor, the Spirit of Truth to guide them. They, as you, must realize that many people cannot accept this truth that there is a power within each of us that gives guidance, warnings, and affirmations all of the time.** Jesus tells the disciples – and you as well – that this Spirit of Truth lives both with and in them; with and in you.

Have you known or do you know anyone who has a very close relationship with God? If so, have you noticed that they will talk about their conversations with God? Have you noticed that they seem to have a level of peace, even when they are experiencing grief or hardship?

- **John 16:12-15** – Jesus realizes that his disciples may be overwhelmed by all that he is conveying to them at this time. **They are in disbelief** that he is going away from them and that he will suffer and die. They have seen his miracles, even raising people from the dead. Surely, it is disorienting to them to think that anything bad could happen to him.

Jesus assures them again that the Spirit of Truth will come and will guide them all into truth. They will not realize this power at work in them until after Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension when they are in the upper room and the Holy Spirit descends on them as tongues of fire. (Acts 2:1-40). It is then that they come into a new realm of understanding of the Truth and move out into their ministry with new energy and commitment to the Good News found in Jesus

Christ. The Book of Acts and the letter of the New Testament give testimony to their new understanding and truth. They become the voices of Jesus for the people as a result of what **Jesus promised, "...I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make known to you."**

It is the same for you. When you learn to trust and move, and allow the active and full participation of God's Spirit, the "Spirit of Truth" within, guide your insights and actions, you, too, will be able to discern what is good and worthy in your efforts for improved health and lifestyle for abundant living.

MARK 5:21-24a -- A Request of Jesus from a Grieving Father

- **Mark 5:21 - 23** – A crowd is drawn to Jesus. A leader of the synagogue, Jairus, comes and falls to his knees before Jesus begging Jesus to heal his daughter who is near death. He asks Jesus to come lay hands on her so that she could be fully restored to health. (*Jesus typically laid hands on people when he healed them.*)

That Jairus was a leader of the synagogue implied that he was a rich man because it was wealthy people who had enough financial resources to support the needs in the temple and support temple activities. **Jairus fell to his knees before Jesus. This is significant because rich people did not typically kneel to anyone. His daughter's healing, however, was more important to him than was the pride of his status in the community or how people would perceive his humility.** Jairus humbled himself because he realized that Jesus was a holy man with supernatural powers. He also wanted Jesus to know that his heart was intentionally geared to the love he had for his daughter and for his daughter's recovery. Jesus immediately responded and walked with Jairus toward his home.

Reflection: Paul says in Romans 12:3a, "*...do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.*" When you pray to God for strength to fulfill your ALIVE! goals, do you go to Jesus, like Jairus, with humility? When there is an altar call for prayer in your church, do you put pride aside and go to the altar to ask God for help in reaching your goals? Or, do you look around and see others with serious situations in life or more serious health issues than yours and so do not go to the altar for a blessing? Is this thinking helpful for your commitment to your health goals?

Is your God so small that He is not mindful of you and your hopes and concerns as He is with all the others who come forward with their prayers? No, your God, our God is bigger, more loving, more merciful, more available than you can possibly imagine!

MARK 5: 24b – 34: Jesus Heals the Woman with the Issue of Blood

- **Mark 5:24b** – The people followed Jesus as he moved toward Jairus' house and they crowded around him as they walked. **This is significant because he was probably being touched and bumped all along the way.** Have you ever been in a crowd leaving church or a ball game? It is very difficult not to be touched by someone, isn't it?
- **Mark 5:25-26** – **The woman with the issue of blood moved deliberately through the crowd to touch Jesus' cloak.** Anyone with blood flowing from anywhere in her/his body was considered unclean. This woman had been suffering with this unusual bleeding for 12 years and had used all of her financial resources trying to find a cure of her infirmity. **This was a serious medical problem for the woman. It was also a very serious social and religious issue for her because it meant that she was not supposed to be near other people lest she somehow touch them and make them unclean, also.** This woman with her issue of blood had been basically an outcast for 12 years, so she risked

pressing through the crowd to get near Jesus. **Do you ever feel isolated or alone when you choose not to eat the heavy carbs and fat dishes at a gathering because of your healthy eating goals? At times of feeling isolated do you say a quiet prayer for the strength to keep your ALIVE! goals?**

- **Mark 5:27-28** – It is not stated exactly how she had heard about Jesus. She must have heard about his miracles and the fact that Jairus had humbled himself and asked for Jesus’ healing power to restore his daughter. She risked severe ridicule and chastisement when she pushed through the crowd and touched Jesus’ garment. **Her faith in his ability to heal her pushed her beyond her fear of retaliation to seek the help she knew was available to her. “Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.” She was mindful of the change in her body.** When have you sensed some changes in your body, mind, or spirit? Did you ignore “that small still voice” about what you felt when you should have acted on it? What price did you pay for ignoring what the Spirit of Truth within was trying to tell you?
- **Mark 5:30-31** – **Jesus realized that “power had gone out from him.” Something extraordinary had happened within him.** People all around him were pressing in on him. Yet, he realized that someone had touched him with a deeper understanding and need of his powers. **His disciples could not believe that he was asking “Who touched me?”** since so many people were crowding around him. Jesus felt the power leave his body and spirit. Jesus trusted the Spirit of Truth in him when all around him could not understand the point of his question. But Jesus knew, and so he asked the question so that he could give the affirmation of healing to that special someone needing his help.

Have you ever had the experience of just knowing something was not right in a situation, even when everything seems right? **Did you pay attention to what you felt, or did you put more faith in what you could see or hear rather than what your Truth told you?**

- **Mark 5:32-34** – **The woman was fearful because she knew that in touching Jesus’ cloak, she had made him ritually unclean. Jesus was not concerned about the legality of what she did; his concern was that he could confirm for her that indeed she was healed of her infirmity,** and so Jesus needed her to come forward to him. He told her that because of her faith, because she dared to step outside of tradition and seek him for herself, she was healed.

You, too, can go to the Spirit of Truth in you to ask for help in your health disciplines. You will know when you are listening to the Spirit of Truth because more than likely the response will be outside of your conscious knowledge or wisdom. The thoughts that come will encourage, give revelation, and a new energy to your thinking and planning. If what you feel or hear internally is self-abasement or negative toward your better good, more than likely it is some old tape that is surfacing to defeat you. Ignore it or counter it with a positive statement about yourself. The Spirit of Truth will always support your positive efforts.

POST SCRIPT: *Jesus did go to Jairus’ house, even when met by Jairus’ servants who told Jairus that his daughter died. Jesus ignored this proclamation and told Jairus not to fear but only to believe. Jesus went to the house, took the 12 year old girl by the hand and told her to get up. She did and began to walk around and talk. Jesus told her parents to give her something to eat. What joy!*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. What are some examples of when you have listened to your Truth Within? How did those situations unfold differently than situations in which you acted automatically, or ignored your Truth?

2. In the Old Testament Book of Haggai 1:5 and 6 you will find the prophet Haggai saying, “**Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill... You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.**” In other words, you have good ideas about how to be or get healthier, but somehow these ideas never get put into concrete actions. What gets in the way of listening to your Truth?
3. How often have you hesitated about getting on the weight scale, or taking your blood pressure or blood sugar because you were afraid that the news might not be good? How have you sabotaged your health because of denying or minimizing things your body is trying to tell you about the status of your health? When is not knowing the truth good for you?

PLENARY SESSION TO DISCUSS SMALL GROUP FINDINGS

LECTIO DIVINA EXERCISE ON PAGE 6: Ephesians 3:16-17a, 20 *(If done well, this is an excellent exercise to reach deeper mindfulness about your truth for you. For your own meditation at home, use any short scripture that you like.)*

- Individual Reflection (10 minutes)
- Group feedback (20 - 30 minutes)

CLOSING REMARKS, REMINDERS, AND PRAYER



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LECTIO DIVINA
(Praying the Scriptures)

Our familiar forms of Bible study tend to approach God's Word as holy, informative and instructive. We must go to scripture in new ways if we are to experience its transforming power. Lectio Divina offers this opportunity.

Lectio – Reading the Word: Read the passage slowly, perhaps three times. Be aware of a word or phrase that captures your attention. Underline it or write it down.

Meditatio – Pondering the Word: Concentrate on the words that drew your attention. What do they bring to your imagination? What do you hear, see, or feel? How does it relate to your life or current celebrations or issues?

Oratio – Praying the Word: Become aware of what God is saying to you in this word or phrase. Move from the mind to the heart, from thinking to feeling. God's word to you may not involve words, but may be an image, a feeling, an insight, a sense of God's presence or love, or you may feel a desire to do something.

Contemplatio – Resting in the Word: Be silent for a time. Rest in God's presence in and around you. Feel God's healing love.

Operatio – Living the Word: Express (perhaps in writing in a journal) what you experienced and how you felt. Do you feel a nudge to do something? What is it? It is time to move out into the world renewed and transformed. You may not be able to identify any specific insight or change, but rest assured that God's grace is at work in you.

(Thank you to Rev. Carol McVetty for the above written narrative presented via the booklet, Devotional Reflection for Lent, from Women in Ministry in ABC of Metro Chicago, compiled by Eve Lomoro 1998)

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith ...Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.

What word of short phrase spoke to you?

After reflecting on it, what deeper truth did you find for yourself?

(You may use the back of this sheet to write your reflections.)