

Leader's Guide

JESUS TEACHES Us... ABOUT LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

February 25, 2007
John 17:1-26

LEADER'S GUIDE
for small group
discussion prepared
to aid you in digging
deeper and taking to
heart what we are
exploring on
Sunday mornings.



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Overview

We're going to take one more week on the idea of "mission," drawing on Jesus' prayer in the Upper Room. We want to wrestle with what it means for us to be "sent" people.

Walk it through

Many of those who have traveled in a foreign country encountered similar dynamics: others see them as "representing" America; nationals look at them thinking "so this is what an American is." Whether you want to or not, when you travel overseas as an American, you *represent America*. And that leads us into Jesus' (and Paul's) thought. As followers of Jesus, *we represent Him and His kingdom whether we intend to or not!*

As you reflect on John 17, it is clear that Jesus sees a parallel between His being "sent" into the world and the way He "sends" His followers. As He was in the world (representing His Father and His Kingdom), so are His followers. We *are* part of His mission—simply by virtue of being His.

The apostle Paul picks up this idea as well in writing to the Corinthians. He uses the language of "ambassador." This doesn't mean that every Christian is to be a full-time, vocational Christian worker engaged in cross-cultural ministry. But it does mean that *because we belong to Jesus* we cannot escape our participation in His mission. We *do* represent Him; we are ambassadors of the Kingdom of God wherever we might go and whatever we might do.

What would a community of "ambassadors" look like? What would they do as representatives of their "home country"? We long for Southside to be just such an "outpost" of what Jesus is doing in the world. Pray, talk, think, and risk being just that sort of people!

Discussion Guide

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Thinking it through . . .

Have you ever visited a foreign country? If you have, how do you feel when you are there? What's it like to live "as a foreigner"?

Part of that sense of "strangeness" that sometimes is associated with foreign travel is the realization that we don't really "belong" there. We are, in some sense, on a "mission" in that country. Holding onto that sense of "foreignness," read the closing words of Jesus' prayer in John 17:17-26.

How does Jesus think and pray about His followers' "sent-ness" into the world?

How might being on mission with Jesus in this world be like being a visitor in a foreign country?

This idea of being a "foreign visitor" is not absent from Scripture. Paul picks up the idea in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. How does Paul speak of the believer's "mission"?

What difference does this make?

Everyone will not end up with the same kind of itinerant ministry that Paul did; all won't be cross-cultural missionaries. But, apparently, all Christians are "ambassadors" for the Kingdom. As Jesus put it, all of us are "sent" into the world. What are the implications of this idea for your life . . . today?