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Looking Within

John 14:15-31

Just when devout Jews were beginning to see a human (Jesus) somehow embody the divine as Yahweh's Son, Jesus introduces a greater confusion: God is also Spirit, the *Holy Spirit*-which sent the rabbis digging for a fresh look at their Hebrew texts. So here, now, is the truth of the Trinity-three identical persons within one divine being and life, all bonded together in love, and all involved in everything that each does: the Father being the planner, the Son his agent and the Holy Spirit the executive of both. This is our God!

The Spirit indwelling Christ's servants makes us aware that the Father and the Son, who lives in us, are actually with us. Our inner life is supernaturalized, and we find ourselves alive in the Lord.

GROUP DISCUSSION. When getting to know someone, does looking beneath the surface come naturally to you, or are you more likely to know a person by what they say and do? Describe an example of this from your experience.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. If someone were to know you "from the inside out" what would they likely discover?

Having identified himself as intricately connected with God the Father, Jesus now introduces the third person of the Trinity: the Holy Spirit. But to know the Spirit, we must look within. *Read John 14:15-31.*

1. This section of Jesus' talk with his disciples is like a "quote book" of famous sayings of Jesus. Which saying here do you find particularly meaningful? Why?

2. Find each mention of the Holy Spirit in this passage. What all can you know about him from these citations?

3. Jesus continues to link himself with the Father as he did in the previous reading. What further development of this connection do you find here?

4. Throughout these descriptions of connection between Father, Son and Spirit, Jesus also speaks of his followers. Where do you find yourself in the text of these various connections?

*Stop for a moment and pray about what this means to you.

5. What connections do you find between obedience and love in this text?

In view of these connections, what do you think would happen if a person tried to love God but did not try to obey him?

6. Jesus comforts his disciples about his coming death by saying, "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (v. 18). In view of Jesus' various statements before and after this important promise, what all do you think Jesus means by these words? (Examine verses 16-21.)

7. Verse 20 says, "On that day you will realize that I am in you" (v. 20). As you consider this whole section of Jesus' teaching, what evidence would you hope to find if you looked within yourself in search of the presence of Christ?

8. "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" asks the other Judas (v. 22). As you reexamine Jesus' full response to that question (vv. 23-31), what all can you say about Jesus' desires for his disciples?

For the world?

9. Jesus says to his disciples (and to us), "Because I live, you also will live" (v. 19). What does Jesus mean by this statement?

How can you reflect this statement as you go about your current activities in the world?

10. Jesus draws their time together in the upper room to a close in much the same way that he began: "Do not let your hearts be troubled" (vv. 1, 27). Slowly read aloud the words of verse 27 as though Jesus is now speaking them to you. In what areas of your life do you most need, and now receive, this blessing of peace?

Pray, thanking God for the stability he brings to these troubled areas.

Now or Later

On a large piece of paper, combine your artistic and your linguistic skills by drawing a design of the Trinity relationship defined in this chapter. Experiment with classic artistic expressions such as a triangle or interconnected circles as you create symbols linking Father, Son and Spirit. Draw lines of connection and label each line with phrases from John 14. Study the resulting annotated illustration as you attempt to better comprehend the nature of our triune God.