

## May 9, 2021 – Small Group – Leader's Guide

### Read John 14:8-14

1. Philip's request to see the Father can be interpreted as his asking for the beatific vision (a personal vision of God). But Philip's request was received by Jesus as a demand out of frustration or unbelief. Why and how do we and others, like Philip, make "demands" from God out of our frustration, unbelief, or disillusionment?

*Whenever we "demand" from God either implicitly, unconsciously, or blatantly, we assume that God owes whatever it is we are demanding to us. We take on an entitlement attitude. Also, our demands may be coming from a place of deep hurt, disappointment, disillusionment, meaninglessness, aimlessness, and out of our desperation. That is understandably a grievous moment in our lives. It is important to realise that we are at least "praying" to God (vs. ignoring Him) from these places of personal destitution. When we do so, we are in fact joining and participating in an ancient tradition of radically desperate prayers with the exilic prophets and the Psalms, a tradition that seeks to lay hold of God, whether His hands or by His throat. It is the hope that we would approach God in absolute humility despite our rage, confusion, and contempt for Him.*

2. Jesus said that His works showed that He and the Father are one. What are Jesus' works and how did they demonstrate that He and the Father are one?

*Jesus' works in this context primarily referred to His miracles. His works of power demonstrated not only that He is the Messiah, but that the kingdom of God had broken into the brokenness of the world. His miracles showed that God was at work in Him, to establish justice, healing, righteousness, shalom, and the new creation, to push out the kingdom of the devil from the world. Jesus' miracles were not just acts of supernatural power but were foretastes and fruits of the new creation, revealing the character and policies of God and His kingdom.*

3. Jesus said that Christians can do greater works than He did. What did Jesus mean by that? (Clue: refer to Jesus' reason: "because I am going to the Father").

*Jesus' ascension marked the dawn of the new age of a liberated cosmos. After Jesus died, the devil, death, and destruction were dispossessed of their oppressive power and authority over the world. And so, we today live in the age of ever-growing light until the Immortal Light should reappear to set no more. The works and labour that we do in this age then is of a liberated kind, works of the new creation, the labour of God's kingdom. So, in this sense, the Christian work and labour are greater than Jesus' in that Jesus' work was prior to this present age of liberation and new creation.*

4. The primary way Christians can do greater works is by praying in Jesus' Name. How can we foster in ourselves and in our community greater confidence and practice of prayer in Jesus' Name?

*We begin with having the right mindset about prayer, not as wishful thinking or throwing out*

*positive vibes into space. Prayer is communion with God. It is a relationship. Prayer is also practical. It makes things happen. What makes prayer work is the Name of Jesus. Jesus' Name is not a magic word that automatically makes whatever prayer happen. Praying in His Name means to pray for whatever the Name stands for and is all about. With these in mind about prayer, we can develop and practise a discipline of prayer that takes Jesus' promises seriously.*