



The Helper

John 16

16:1-2 – What is the problem with being over zealous?

In our desire to make an eternal impact in our society, we need to guard against being over zealous. In John 16:1-2, Jesus warned His followers about getting ahead of Him in convincing others to follow Him. Some of the most shameful acts in history have been done by people thinking they were doing a service for God. Attempts have been made to convert unbelievers by force. People have been tortured and killed because of religion. For the sake of orthodoxy, Christians have persecuted one another without mercy. Some of the issues may have been valid, but the methods have offended Christ. We must not harm associates in our zeal for God's concerns. It is better to err on the side of mercy. Our methods in obeying Christ's commands must comprehend His greatest command: to love!

16:4 – How does this verse help us to be more effective counselors to new Christians?

We should never promise new Christians a rose garden. Being a Christian in our society is not easy. Jesus warned His disciples about coming difficulties in John 16:4. We should likewise warn new disciples that hard times could be ahead. In our eagerness to promote the benefits of following Christ, we must not shrink back from also presenting the cost of discipleship. Preparing new believers for times of discouragement will teach them to rely on the Holy Spirit's comfort and guidance along the way. When Christians assume that following Christ will be easy, they neglect daily spiritual disciplines such as Bible study, prayer, and fellowshiping with Christian associates. Don't let that happen to you or your believing associates.

16:7 – How is it to our benefit that we are not physically with Jesus during this age?

When we consider the difficulties we have on our lives along with the problems in the world, it is natural to think how sorely we need the Lord to return. But Jesus told His disciples in John 16:7 that, *"It is for your good that I am going away"* (NIV). Jesus went away for the same reason He has not yet returned, so that we may learn to walk by faith. When Jesus seems distant or our problems threaten to overwhelm us, we should see this as an opportunity to grow in faith. Trusting God during a trial means waiting to see what good He will bring out of what may seem like complete chaos. Jesus will return some day but until then,

we should see our difficulties as tools Christ uses to strengthen us for even greater service.

16:13 – How may we know the truth?

Followers of Jesus have access to the Holy Spirit all the time. In John 16:13 Jesus said, *"[the Spirit of truth] will guide you into all truth"* (NIV). The Holy Spirit is our guide to help us navigate whatever this world throws at us. Jesus gave us a reliable map in His life and His words. These essential resources assist us to find our way as His disciples. Jesus also gives us time to absorb what we need know to follow Him. Some steps of discipleship cannot even be comprehended until we have taken previous steps of obedience. So we must never resent our limited knowledge of what lies in the future. Instead, we must trust and follow the Guide Christ has given us.

16:22 – How may we have more joy in our lives?

We may have more joy when we consider the implications of the resurrection of Jesus. In John 16:22 Jesus promised His followers that, *"I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy"* (NIV). Because Jesus lives forever, the joy of His followers will be eternal. No one can take away that joy. This is a tremendous promise for believers. When we consider the implications of Christ's resurrection, it has a powerful impact on all aspects of our lives. When we know that the Lord has a fantastic eternity in store for us, our current difficulties will fade to insignificance. And the power Christ demonstrated to us in His resurrection is available to help us today.

16:23 – Why may we go direct to God with our needs?

Thanks to Jesus, we can go direct to our greatest resource. In John 16:23 Jesus promised His followers that, *"my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name"* (NIV). Jesus made possible a new relationship between us and God. Previously, people approached God through priests. After Jesus' resurrection, any believer could approach God directly in Jesus' name. A new day has dawned; now all believers are priests, talking personally with God as Hebrews 10:19-23 attests. We approach God, not because of our own merit, but because our great High Priest Jesus has made us acceptable to God. This gives us direct access to the source of all power in the universe, something everyone can surely use.

16:30 – How does knowing the nature of God help us deal with difficulties in our life?

Recognizing that God cares enough about us to know every detail about us helps us deal with difficulties in our life. Jesus' disciples recognized this attribute in Him when they said in John 16:30, *"Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions"* (NIV). Jesus based his words and actions toward His disciples on his intimate awareness of them. He knows us just as well. None of our problems, grief, questions, and concerns are hidden from him. Hebrews 4:15-16 describes Jesus as the High Priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses, having experienced them first hand, and therefore may be approached by us. This should give us confidence to seek His help with our challenges. The Lord wants us to come to Him.

16:33 – How do difficulties benefit us?

Our difficulties can benefit us if know how they fit into God's plan. Jesus said in John 16:33, *"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"* (NKJV). God allows adversity for many reasons. We may need a difficult experience to equip us to help someone. Trials enable us learn important lessons and grow to depend more on God. In times of difficulty, it helps to remember that Jesus demonstrated His overcoming the worst this world has to offer through His resurrection. Adversity is easier to deal with when it isn't a surprise. So we should be ready for the inevitable in this fallen world by trusting in Christ to help us with all our difficulties.