

Study Hints for Thinking Further

International Bible Lessons

John 11:17-27, 32-36

Sunday, May 20, 2012

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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be answers to the discussion questions, but hints a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why might God sometimes choose to delay in giving us what we want?

God may want to teach the most people possible about His love and grace and power to help, and this may mean delaying the giving of the gift He wants to give us until the best time. God may want us to see that what we want is not best for us or others concerned, so we will change our prayers. For example, though Mary and Martha wanted their brother back from the dead, it might not have been in his best interests to come back to Earth from the joys of heaven, from being with Abraham and others of faith. Remember, however, God intended for Lazarus to die and for Jesus to raise Lazarus from the dead when He did. God has good intentions and reasons for all He does and when He does it.

2. Why do you think people of all economic conditions and stations in life followed Jesus?

Jesus taught the truth and the Holy Spirit indwelt Jesus and confirmed His teachings; therefore, Jesus reached people of all types, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, as God drew them to Jesus. Some of the rich people who followed Jesus opened their homes so He could teach rich and poor, and so the needy could be fed both physical and spiritual food when Jesus was in their homes. To whom much is given much is required, and many wealthy people wanted to serve Jesus and others with the material blessings God had bestowed upon them. Many poor people had their needs met by Jesus, and they were able to go out and tell their poor family and friends about Him; therefore, they led others to Jesus and to believe in Him. In heaven, all will be blessed and enjoy the happiness Jesus and His Father give.

3. What truths about Jesus did Martha confess to Jesus? Do you believe these?

God the Father gives Jesus whatever He asks. On the last day, the dead will be resurrected. Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus was the One who was to come into the world. Jesus is my Lord and my Teacher (see John 11:27-28). Yes.

4. Why is it important to believe that those who die “will rise again in the resurrection on the last day”?

For the followers of Jesus, this is a part of the good news that Jesus preached, “This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day” (John 6:40). This is not good news for the one who rejects Jesus, “The one who rejects me and does not receive my word has a judge; on the last day the word that I have spoken will serve as judge” (John 12:48). So, it is important for us to believe in and live according to the truth and follow Jesus, for there are eternal consequences if we do not. Paul also wrote: “For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil” (2 Corinthians 5:10). And further, “It is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). Jesus loved, came, lived, taught, died, and rose again to save us from our sins, so we joyfully love, follow, and serve Him forever and ever. Furthermore, we need to remember what Jesus said, “And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God” (John 3:19-21).

5. Why do you think Jesus wept? Is weeping a sign of lack of faith?

I think He wept to weep with those who weep, as Paul later advised Christians. I think He wept as He felt the sorrow of Mary and Martha, their family and friends. I think He wept at the knowledge that He would be bringing Lazarus back from the joys of heaven and being with God the Father. No, weeping is not a sign of a lack of faith; otherwise, Jesus would not have wept, and no one ever had as much faith as Jesus demonstrated.

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