

# BRMC Small Group Study: John 6:60-71

## Leaders Guide

Please note that the suggestions below are not model answers but to help guide your study. Feel free to adapt the questions for your group.

### Leader's Notes:

#### Context:

Prior to this passage, Jesus had given a lesson to his disciples, which included the Twelve. That lesson had been about the bread of the world and the bread of life. Jesus offered himself to his disciples as the bread of life, but most rejected him because their eyes were fixed on the world. They could not move past a literal interpretation of his words to the enduring spiritual truth that Jesus is the bread of eternal life.

#### Introduction:

In this lesson, we will see many disciples (but not the Twelve) leave Jesus after hearing his words, even after following him for a period of time. Although they heard his words, they did not believe them, much less obey them.

The Twelve, however, remained. They *believed* and *came to know* that *Jesus is the Holy One of God* (v. 68) and in doing so, they distinguished themselves from the other disciples who left. They heard the words of Jesus, believed them, and decided to obey Him.

#### Lesson Objectives:

1. Know that a true disciple *hears, believes, and obeys*.
2. Learn from the disciples who believed in Jesus.
3. Know the power of belief in helping us to obey Jesus.
4. See how Jesus predicted his ascension to heaven.

### Observation

1. Who were these 'disciples' in John 6:60?

- *Were they the twelve? Probably not (v. 67-69) because they departed from Jesus at this point. But they were people who had been numbered among the followers of Jesus. (v. 61-64)*

- *In this story, they ultimately "turned back" and stopped following Jesus (v. 66). Jesus categorized them with the unbelievers (v. 64).*

- *In this study, we will refer to Jesus' Twelve Disciples as 'the Twelve Disciples' and all other followers as disciples.*

2. What does Jesus say about the Spirit and the flesh?

- *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life (v. 63).*

- *The Spirit gives life on two levels, both immediate life to our bodies as stated in Romans 8:11, and as a deposit guaranteeing us eternal life.*
- *The flesh is effectively useless to give life.*
- *The words of Jesus are Spirit and life, then and now.*

3. Which disciples left and which stayed? What are the reasons the text gives?

- *The Twelve Disciples stayed (v. 67-69)*
- *Jesus has the words of eternal life, no one else.*
- *The Twelve Disciples had believed and came to know that Jesus is the Holy One of God.*

### **Interpretation**

4. What did Jesus mean in John 6:62 when he said, 'Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?'

- *Many disciples were offended by Jesus' command to feed on his flesh and blood; to rely spiritually on his sacrifice for them. Jesus further explained that the Son of Man ascending to where he was before would offend them even more. This could refer to the instrument of his sacrifice: his death on a cross where God placed the sins of the world upon him. Philippians 2:8-9 tells us that therefore God exalted Him to the highest place. This sacrifice would have offended the Jews, who wanted their earthly king to establish an earthly kingdom.*

5. How does Jesus know which disciples will leave him and which will not?

- *Jesus understands the Father's involvement in the process of salvation. Although the role of God's grace is not spelled out in detail here, Jesus made it clear that no one can become attached to him unless God has made it possible. The point is that Jesus was not surprised at rebellious people, and that should be an important lesson for Christians.*

6. Explain why some disciples left and why some stayed.

- *The Gospel of John describes Jesus as the Son of God in John 20:31. We must hear the Word of God, believe, and obey.*
- *There were twelve disciples, yet one of them betrayed him. Judas heard the word of God, he believed, yet he did not obey. A disciple can turn away if he hears, believes, yet does not obey.*
- *The disciples' first step on the path of obedience was to obey the work of the Lord: to believe in Jesus whom he sent.*

7. What seems to be the difference between 'belief' and 'obeying'?

- *Discipleship in John is more than a matter of saying the right words or belonging to a group. It is a matter of obediently following Jesus. As John 12:42-43 says, "yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God." These leaders heard and believed, but they would not confess their faith or live it out.*

### **Application**

8. What are some ways you can witness and tell people that you believe and have come to know that Jesus is the Holy One of God?

*- In witnessing and evangelism, witnessing is to live out the faith in such a way that makes the invisible God visible. Evangelism is to tell people about God's work through Jesus in our lives.*

*- The gospel of John is a book that often calls for decisiveness in Christian commitment. Although it has a clear mission statement in John 20:30-31, its goal for believers is not superficial belonging to Jesus. The way of the disciple is to confess their faith in Jesus; a way that leads through the acceptance of death (the flesh and blood of Jesus). The disciple is one who receives Jesus and is marked by his death, resurrection, and ascent (v. 62).*

9. Jesus' words are spirit and life. How can we take action to make his words fill our hearts as individuals and as a small group?

*- Devotions, daily quiet time, reflection.*

*- This will allow the Spirit to give life.*