Jesus's Farewell Message

Session 2: Christ Reveals the Father	
SESSION GOALS	
Every session has specific goals—things you want your group to walk away knowing, feeling, and committing to do.	
Main Idea Knowing Jesus is our path to peace, the way to know God, and the road to a full life.	
Head Change To know the truth of Scripture is meant to change our hearts, minds, and lives.	
Heart Change To feel peace in Christ when circumstances push us to anxiety and distress.	
Life Change To spend time alone with God so that we can comprehend the fullness of his love and provision for us.	
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OPEN	
Think of one of your close friendships. What did you think of him or her when you first met? How has your perception of him or her changed over time?	
There is a profound difference between knowing about someone and knowing someone personally. It is easy to know about a person—his or her likes, dislikes, favorite pastimes, etc. But knowing a friend personally, encountering his or her inner person up close, is completely different from knowing his or her favorite color.	
It is easy to know about God, collect Bible trivia, and iron all the creases out of your theology. But knowing God, encountering his love for you, and experiencing the deep truths in Scripture is something completely different. It is also our true goal as Christians.	
In this session, Francis walks us through the beginning of John 14, showing us the goodness of knowing God.	
READ	
Read John 14:1–14.	
WATCH	
Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Francis Chan's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how he answers the following questions.	
Why is it important to spend time with God and the truths of John 14–17 outside your small group time?	
How does belief in Jesus confront our troubled minds?	
What does Jesus teach us about the Father?	
Watch Session 2: Christ Reveals the Father (14 minutes).	

DISCUSS

When we read the Bible, we aren't reading a list of facts, rules, or statistics about God. We are encountering him. God is speaking to us in Scripture. What does your time in God's Word look like? Do you feel like the truths you encounter in the Bible translate into your everyday life? Why, or why not? Francis made a point of reminding us that what you learn in this study is not knowledge for a test, but to understand the fullness of God's love for you. If you were brutally honest, do you feel your knowledge of God is test knowledge or experienced truth? Why? [Note: In biblical Greek, there are two words for "knowledge" that help us understand the difference between knowing about God and knowing him personally. For a quick study on the words oida and ginosko go to **Go Deeper Section 1** at the end of this study.] In the Upper Room, Jesus was spending one last meal with his disciples. John 14–17 is his last sermon, the last chance he had to share essential and life-changing truths with them before his crucifixion. The first deep truth he shared was a command to not be distressed. Read John 14:1-4. Jesus's command is not meant to brush off our anxiety. How do you feel when you are worried or afraid and someone tells you to stop worrying? What kind of advice or support from friends have you found helpful? What truths or reassurances does Jesus give to his disciples? Jesus was about to be executed in a violent way, which he knew would distress his disciples. But he confronted and comforted them with truth: their current anxiety is not how the story would end. What makes you anxious? What negative future are you worried will become reality?

Our stories don't end with our worst fears but in eternity with Jesus. Even when we are afraid, we can look forward in hope to God's future for us. Think about your present worries. In what ways can a secure future with Jesus confront and comfort your anxiety? What does it look

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like for you to trust Jesus despite your current circumstances?		
Even when we trust Jesus and know the hope he provides, we can still experience worry and anxiety. For many of us, we just want to know what to do. What is the first step toward security and peace? Read John 14:5–6.		
Jesus is the way to God. We don't earn our way to God through good behavior or by being spiritually impressive. If we want to encounter God, we have to know Jesus. What do you think it means for Jesus to be "the way"?		
Francis said following Jesus is not about having more things to do, but about knowing him. God will direct your path, but your best next step is to know Jesus more deeply. Does knowing God feel like an effective way to overcome your current challenges? Why, or why not?		
The more we know Jesus, the more we will know truth and experience life as God intended. Even when chaos surrounds us, we can find peace and hope in Jesus. Where do you turn for peace and hope in times of chaos? What would it look like to trust God for his peace, hope, and truth in your current circumstances?		
Trusting God can be difficult, especially if you think he is angry and vindictive. For some of us, even the title "Father" brings up negative thoughts. But Jesus reveals who the Father is to us. Read John 14:7–11.		
Jesus is not a counterpoint to the Father. He is not merciful where the Father is always judgmental. If you recognize Jesus's love for you, you have seen the Father's love for you. In what ways do these verses challenge your perspective of God?		
[Note: If you want to learn more about the Father's deep love and mercy, go to Go Deeper Section 2 at the end of this study.]		
Francis said, "We learn about God the Father by listening to what Jesus says. We hear the gracious words out of the mouth of Jesus, and we go, 'Whoa, that's what the Father is like. He loves me. He doesn't want my heart troubled." Do you believe the Father doesn't want you to be		

distressed? How might your life be different if you

ritrusted that he has a better plan for you?

Knowing and trusting God is essential, but how does knowing him meet our needs today? Some of us have immediate needs that need to be addressed. Read John 14:12-14. Jesus has prepared a secure future for us, wants us to be near to him, and has a deep love for us. He also wants to help meet our needs. Often, we try to meet our needs through our power, but God wants us to rely on him for everything. What needs do you need to take to God? [Note: To learn more about what it means to pray in Jesus's name, go to Go Deeper Section 3 at the end of this study.] Jesus answers our prayers so that "the Father may be glorified in the Son." That means our prayers must be focused on glorifying God and not ourselves. What do you think it means to glorify God? In what ways can God be glorified through your prayer requests? [Note: If you would like to spend time in a guided meditation of Scripture, go to **Go Deeper Section 4** at the end of this study.] Francis started and ended this session with a plea: do not leave the truths you learn in this study in your small group. It is easy to leave this time and move on to all the pressing tasks of our day, forgetting the transformational truths God wants to share with us. Where can you get alone to meditate on the truths you have learned in this session? When will you spend time alone with God (without a phone or other distractions) to let these truths sink into your heart?

LAST WORD If you are worried that the future is out of your control, you can rest in the fact that Jesus is preparing a place for you. If you don't know the Father, you can look at Jesus to learn more about him. If you feel lost and don't know what to do next, you can trust that Jesus is your way. Your primary goal today is to know Jesus more deeply. Whether that means obeying a command you've neglected, believing in his sovereignty instead of your own wisdom, or simply praying and asking him for help, trust him. Don't let your knowledge of him turn into trivia; live by his words.

GO DEEPER

This section has two potential functions:

- 1. It can supplement your small group discussion with topics your group may be interested in. We've highlighted where each of the following segments could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide. As the leader, it would be good to familiarize yourself with this section just in case your conversation turns to one of these topics.
- 2. These sections can also function as short devotionals to carry you through the week until your next group meeting. Consider using these sections to deepen your group's study of John 13–17.

1. Knowing and Knowing

There are times when our English translations miss out on the depth of meaning in ancient Hebrew and Greek words. Some words in ancient Greek carry nuance and meanings that give us a deeper glimpse into God's truth, which is the case with the word "know" in John 14.

In Greek, there are two different words for "know": *oida* and *ginosko*. *Oida* is seen or perceived knowledge. These are facts or truths we can recite. We should all have knowledge of God, knowing who he is and what he is like. But we can't just have this kind of knowledge.

The other word, *ginosko*, is experienced and intimate knowledge. The difference between these two words is as different as recognizing a celebrity on TV and understanding your spouse so well that you can anticipate his or her needs. *Ginosko* is a deep, intimate, experienced truth. **Based on this brief description, how important is it to have both kinds of knowledge about God?**

Now read John 14:5–7. It is copied here with the Greek words noted for the word "know."

"Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know [oida] where you are going. How can we know [oida] the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known [ginosko] me, you would have known [ginosko] my Father also. From now on you do know [ginosko] him and have seen him.'" (ESV)

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Jesus told Thomas that knowing the facts about the future was less important than having a relationship with him. Knowing what will happen would not bring Thomas peace but knowing the one who holds his future could.

Jesus's answer to our anxieties seems counterintuitive: he responds to our worries with a relationship rather than solutions. The Father created us, loves us, and holds our futures in his hands. When you know—or *ginosko*—him, you can trust his loving plan, even when the future is unsure.

Think about your future and the possibilities that it holds. What about tomorrow causes you anxiety? What would it look like to trust the God you know with your unknown future?

2. The Father of Mercy

It is not unusual to think of God as an angry father. Sure, he loves us and wants the best for us but, in our hearts, we imagine him to be disappointed, annoyed, or angry with us. We imagine that he is, at his core, unhappy with us and must be provoked to feel kindness. But this image of the Father is the opposite of his true nature. Read Hosea 11:1–7.

In this passage, Israel has—once again—turned away from God to idols. Idolatry is a repeated habit for Israel, one that provokes God's anger. Verse 7 tells us Israel is "obsessed with" (NET), "determined to" (NIV, NLT), or "bent on" (CSB, NASB) rejecting God. They looked at God and chose, even longed, to turn away from him. How do you think God will respond to their hostility and rejection? What do you expect God to do when you return to old sins?

We imagine God will smite or destroy his people. In the face of sin, we think God rushes to wrath. But his response to Israel reveals his heart, overflowing with mercy. Read Hosea 11:8–9. What explanation does God give for his unusual decision?

God is not a human; he doesn't react to situations the way we would. He is, at his core, compassionate and eager to forgive. How does God's decision in Hosea 11 challenge your perception of him?

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If you want to know the Father, you need only to look at Jesus. In him, we clearly see God's compassion for sinners. Whether we look at the miracles of his ministry or his death and resurrection, we see the heart of a Father determined to help and forgive his wayward children. Though we are bent toward—even determined to—sin, God has unmerited compassion on us. What do you think God sees when he looks at you? What would change in your life if you <i>knew</i> that he is fully aware of your sins and flaws but looks at you with love and compassion?	
3. "Whatever you ask in my name" We ask for all kinds of things in our prayers. When we hear that Jesus will give us anything we ask for, our minds race with ideas. What do you want to ask God for?	
In our society, the promise of John 14:13–14 might sound like a blank check, an offer to the life we've always wanted and everything we could imagine. But Jesus puts two important boundaries on our requests so that we will know what sort of things he promises to give to us.	
First, Jesus promises to answer any prayer made in his name. When we come to God, we do so by Jesus's authority (Hebrews 4:14–16). So, when we approach God, we are standing in a place Jesus provided as God's representative. So whatever we ask of God, it needs to be in line with what Jesus wants for us. What sorts of things do you think Jesus wants for you?	
Second, Jesus promises to grant our requests so that the Father might be glorified. That means our requests can't be about bolstering our own glory or encouraging our sin. Would your requests glorify you or God? In what ways are you tempted to ask God for things that are not spiritually healthy for you?	
Jesus promises to meet our needs (Matthew 6:25–34), but he also promises that we will experience trouble (John 16:33). Prayer is not a path to a life of prosperity but a means to know God more deeply, to see him actively work in your circumstances, and an opportunity to glorify God. What prayer requests fit within these boundaries? What would it look like to live in faith as you wait for these prayers to be answered?	

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https://reader.rightnowmedia.org/1924/740762

In the video, Francis quotes Ephesians 3:14–21. Grab your Bible and a journal and turn to that passage now. As you read, write down every unique hope Paul is praying for the Ephesian church.

Which of the requests Paul makes would you want to come to fruition in your life?

Take a moment to read through these verses. You can read out loud if you are with a group or silently if you are alone. Then, personalize Paul's ancient prayer, making his requests your own.

Paul's culminating request is that the church would know (ginonsko, see **Go Deeper Section 1** to study this word) Christ's boundless love so that they would be filled with God himself. We often pray for things to change; not for things to know. It can seem unusual, but deeply understanding God's love leads to fullness and flourishing. If you feel like you do not know God in that way, pray that he would help your head knowledge about his love become experienced truth.

Finally, reread verses 20–21. These are verses of praise. Instead of ending your time in prayer asking God for things, end in praise. Let these words be a jumping-off point into a time of worship.

