

REFLECTION GUIDE

JOHN 6:60-71 | DISCIPLESHIP DECISIONS

KEY TERMS

Spirit and life - Jesus says that his words are *spirit*—meaning they come from God’s own Spirit—and *life*—meaning they are able to give life.

Holy One - This is an unusual title for Jesus only used one other time by a demon possessed man in Capernaum (Mark 1:24 & Luke 4:34). The title has little known background in the Old Testament or other writings, but is being used to identify Jesus as the Messiah, and not only that, but to identify him as *Holy* as God Himself is holy.

A devil - *Devil* (Greek *diabolos*) means “slanderer” or “accuser,” but in this form in the New Testament it always refers to Satan, the supreme adversary of God. Jesus is saying, then, that Judas’ actions originate from the Devil/Satan himself.

DID YOU KNOW?

In verse 61, Jesus asks, *Do you take offense at this?* The word for *offense* is the same word used in Isaiah 8:14, where the Messiah is called a *stone of offense* for Israel. Jesus suggests that rejecting him is not just about misunderstanding—it is a spiritual hardness of heart.

SYNOPSIS

After the bread of life discourse where Jesus says *unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you*, John tells us that many of Jesus’ disciples said, *This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?* (v. 60). Earlier, many in the crowd had a hard time with Jesus’ words, but now the focus is on Jesus’ own disciples’ struggle with what Jesus has said. Jesus sees their struggle and responds saying, *Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?* (vv. 61-62). Previously, Jesus claimed to have *come down* from heaven (v. 38), and now Jesus looks ahead to the time when he will ascend back to his Father. Jesus then gets at the heart of the issue—*It is the Spirit who gives life* (v. 63). There are two reasons why the disciples are struggling to believe. One, they are taking Jesus’ words too literally and are not understanding the spiritual meaning. Two, and more significantly, only the Spirit can give proper understanding of who Jesus is. Jesus then says that there are some who will not believe and *many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him* (v. 66). Jesus then looks at the twelve apostles who are remaining and says *Do you want to go away as well?* (v. 67). And Peter answers *Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God* (vv. 68-69). Peter’s declaration is that Jesus is the Messiah—and maybe more than that—is the only way to eternal life. This section ends, then, with Jesus reminding the twelve that he chose them, while also foretelling Judas’ upcoming betrayal (v. 71).

GOING DEEPER

Read Hebrews 4:14-16 and reread John 6:68. How do these verses encourage you to trust Jesus even when his teachings are difficult? What does it look like to hold fast to him in seasons of doubt or challenge?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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LEARNING THE WORD

1. Read John 6:60-71. Make some observations. What's the big idea? What stands out to you?
2. What is a disciple? What decisions (positive or negative) do we see various *disciples* make in these verses?
3. When you consider the context of this passage, how would you describe the "hard saying" of Jesus or the thing which is providing a reason for people to take offense?
4. What do verses 64-65 and 70-71 show us about Jesus' sovereignty, his knowledge, and his power?

LIVING THE WORD

5. Verse 66 says, "After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him," and then Jesus asks a pointed question, "Do you want to go away as well?"

Have you ever personally wanted to turn back and no longer walk with Jesus? Why or why not?

6. In your own walk with Jesus, how would you describe your faith in this season of your life? Is your heart full or empty, warm or cold, tender to the Lord or hardened to him, close or distant, exhilarated or bored, etc? Why do you think you are experiencing him in this way at this time?
7. In verses 68-69, Peter gives his reasoning for trusting Jesus and sticking it out. What stands out to you about Peter's faith in his answer to Jesus? What is encouraging to you in his response?
8. Have you ever made a purposeful decision to walk with Jesus as his disciple because you believed and knew that he had the words of eternal life? Why is it important to make a commitment to stay the course by faith?