

A STUDY OF  
JOHN



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# JOHN

A series on who Jesus is, what He does, and how He changes lives.

## INTRODUCTION

Imagine getting to know Jesus through the firsthand experience of one of His closest friends. In listening to this friend, you hear what Jesus said, see what Jesus did, and feel the impact of Jesus’ life. What difference would that have on your walk with Jesus as His disciple?

As we walk together through the Gospel of John, we will see our Lord through the eyes of “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 21:20, 24). It’s clear from reading this Gospel that this writer was a Jewish eyewitness of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. He was also a member of Jesus’ inner circle. Since James was martyred before this Gospel was written, and Peter is named as a friend of this writer, that leaves the Apostle John as the author.

John’s Gospel records three sets of seven—7 “I AM” statements Jesus made, 7 miracles He performed, and 7 personal encounters He had with individuals. Rather than teaching the Gospel of John chronologically from beginning to end, we will teach these three sets of seven episodes. Our hope in doing so is that we each encounter a fresh sense of who Jesus is, what He does, and how He changes lives. (By the way, that’s the heartbeat of the Gospel—the good news of who Jesus is, what He does, and how He changes our lives.)

Our goal in this teaching series is the same goal John had when he wrote his Gospel account— “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31 NKJV). Believing is more than mere acknowledgement of the facts. Believing is trusting in, relying upon, and resting on the truth. This type of believing in Jesus leads to the kind of life He teaches in the Gospel of John—an abundant and eternal life (John 3:16, 10:10).

Maybe you’ve trusted in and walked with Jesus for decades, or maybe you’re just discovering the power of His life and words. Either way, we pray this series provides you with a fresh look at Jesus, cultivating a life-giving faith in Him.

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## THE PURPOSE

The accurate study and application of God’s Word, the Bible, is a foundational part of the Christian life. The challenge of 2 Peter 3:18 is to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” and that is exactly what the John Study Journal is designed to help you do. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul instructs the young pastor that “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” A careful, intentional study of John will help you mature as a follower of Jesus. It will help you “be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” It will help you express the real Jesus where you live, work, and play.

## THE PLAN

The John Study Journal is designed to help you understand and apply the Scriptures accurately to your life using the Inductive Bible Study Method. This method helps you make key observations in a passage of scripture, interpret them within their proper context, and then apply it to daily life. For a brief introduction to Inductive Bible Study, The Training Center of Fellowship Bible Church has prepared a helpful video to get you started. You can watch the video at **[fellowshipnwa.org/John](https://fellowshipnwa.org/John)** or simply scan the QR code with your smart phone camera to access the link.



Additionally, The Training Center offers Personal Bible Study, a class that goes much deeper into this method of study. If you have not yet taken this class, we encourage you to do so to experience the riches that come from intentional exploration of God’s written Word. Visit **[trainingcenternwa.org/events](https://trainingcenternwa.org/events)** for a list of upcoming classes or contact our Training Center team at **[training@fellowshipnwa.org](mailto:training@fellowshipnwa.org)** for more information.

## THE PARTICULARS

The John Study Journal is laid out in weekly sessions with resources for daily engagement. Each session includes the following:

- Contextual introduction to aid in the study of the week’s passage.
- Scripture passage for the week, formatted with plenty of space to record insights and responses.
- Inductive study prompts (observation, interpretation, and application) to help you systematically and thoughtfully engage with the passage, along with a “Study Tips” section to aid you if you get stuck.
- Daily reading guide for the week. (We will be reading through the Gospel of Luke to give a complementary picture of the life of Christ.)
- Discussion questions to help you process the passage in personal and small group settings.

We invite you to use this journal in your personal time with God; take it to your small group; bring it when we gather for worship on the weekends. Our hope is that you will find this journal useful wherever you study John and that you will discover how the life and ministry of Jesus can guide and encourage you today.

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# 7 “I AMs”

## INTRODUCTION

### Exodus 3:13-14 ESV

*Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” <sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”*

By revealing His name to Moses, God conveyed both the immanence and the transcendence of God. He is immanent (near) as He reveals His name to Moses and invites Moses and the people of Israel into a relationship with Himself. He is transcendent (far above) as His name represents eternity, self-existence, and changelessness. This name, I AM, (usually represented as Yahweh [YHWH] and translated as LORD in our English Bibles), belonged to the covenant-keeping creator God of Israel (see Isaiah 43:10-13).

When Jesus employed the Greek equivalent of this phrase (*egō eimi*) in the Gospels, He was explicitly identifying Himself with Yahweh. His use of the phrase, specifically in the Gospel of John, demonstrates that Jesus was bearing Yahweh’s presence on the earth. In John’s narrative we will see that these “I AM” statements of Jesus are carefully connected to the signs (or miracles) that He performs, demonstrating the truth of the central claim of the book: that Jesus was God made flesh (John 1:14).



### INSIGHT

In the culture of the middle east into which Jesus was born, bread was not just a staple food and basic form of nourishment, it was a powerful symbol. The ancient Israelites had made unleavened bread in haste as they prepared to leave Egypt in the Exodus (Exodus 12:39). Jesus taught His disciples to ask God for their daily bread (Matthew 16:11) as a symbol of basic provision. It was in this context that Jesus would make His first powerful “I AM” statement in the book of John: “I AM the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst” (John 6:35 ESV).

With this simple statement, Jesus pointed to Himself as the One who could ultimately meet all of our needs. Anyone who eats bread will eventually be hungry again. Only the bread of life offered by Jesus can satisfy our heart and soul. It is only in Jesus that we can find the spiritual food that will nourish us forever. Just as bread nourishes us physically for a time, coming to Jesus will bring spiritual nourishment that lasts forever.

# WEEK ONE

## I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE



OBSERVE

This passage is filled with promises and conditions. Note everything Jesus says He or the Father will do and note the conditions.

INTERPRET

How is Jesus like bread in this metaphor?

APPLY

Does this passage bring hope? Comfort? Challenge?

John 6:32-40

*Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”*

<sup>34</sup> *“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”*

<sup>35</sup> ***Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.*** <sup>36</sup> *But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”*

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 6:25-69
- DAY 2 Psalm 2
- DAY 3 Luke 1:1-17
- DAY 4 Luke 1:18-25
- DAY 5 Luke 1:26-38
- DAY 6 Luke 1:39-56
- DAY 7 Luke 1:57-80





## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read John 6:35. What was the “I AM” statement that Jesus made and what is the concept that He was trying to convey to His listeners?
2. What is the significance of bread in our lives? How is Jesus like bread to us spiritually? How is His nourishment different than bread that we eat with our meals?
3. Earlier in John 6, Jesus performed one of His greatest miracles: the feeding of the 5,000. How would this miracle be a backdrop to the statement: “I am the bread of life”?
4. What does the promise mean that we will “never go hungry or never be thirsty”? What is required of us to experience this promise?
5. Practically speaking, how do you continue to nourish your soul spiritually? How do you make Jesus your “daily bread”?





### INSIGHT

For centuries, God's presence on earth had been symbolized by light. God revealed Himself as the great I AM through a burning bush (Exodus 3:4, 14). In the desert God lit their way at night as a pillar of fire (Exodus 13:21). God and His salvation were pictured as replacing the sun and the moon and giving light to all (Isaiah 60:19). When Jesus came into the world, He brought the light of God to His people by bringing the very presence of God to earth (Matthew 4:16, Luke 2:32).

John has carefully structured his gospel around the feasts of Israel, illustrating that each feast was designed to point to Christ. The feast of tabernacles had two primary symbols: water and light. Each night large torches would be lit. In a world where there was no artificial light, such a spectacular display in the temple, high on the hill of Jerusalem, would have been stunning. It was in this context that Jesus boldly proclaimed, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12a). While the festival would end and the torches would be extinguished, the light of Jesus would continue to shine. "Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12b).

## WEEK TWO

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD



OBSERVE

What conflict follows Jesus’ statement? How are they related?

INTERPRET

What are meant by “light” and “darkness”?

APPLY

What areas of your life need the light that comes from following Jesus?

John 8:12-20

**When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”**

*<sup>13</sup> The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”*

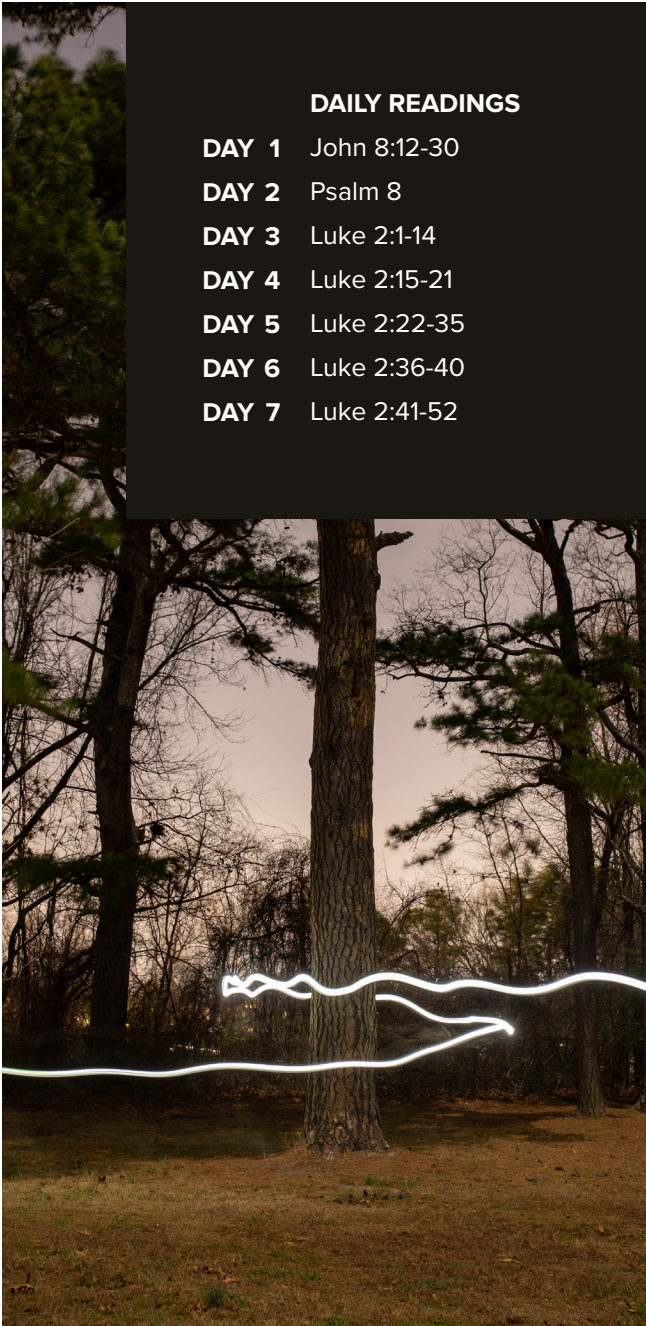
*<sup>14</sup> Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. <sup>15</sup> You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. <sup>16</sup> But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. <sup>17</sup> In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. <sup>18</sup> I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.”*

*<sup>19</sup> Then they asked him, “Where is your father?”*

*“You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” <sup>20</sup> He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.*

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 8:12-30
- DAY 2 Psalm 8
- DAY 3 Luke 2:1-14
- DAY 4 Luke 2:15-21
- DAY 5 Luke 2:22-35
- DAY 6 Luke 2:36-40
- DAY 7 Luke 2:41-52







## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read John 8:12. What was the “I AM” statement that Jesus made and what is the concept that He was trying to convey to His listeners?
2. What did Jesus mean when He said “walking in darkness”? How does following Jesus enable us to live in the light and avoid walking in darkness?
3. How does light help us in everyday life? How does darkness hinder us? Why is it important for us to have Jesus, The Light of the World, in our lives?
4. It seems the true identity of Jesus is the primary issue of John chapters 7-8. In order to prove His identity, to whom does Jesus point in John 8:12-30?
5. Share with the group a moment in your life when Jesus rescued you from darkness and brought you into the light of His life.









### INSIGHT

The two “I AM” statements of John 10 follow a short parable (or extended analogy) in which Jesus likens His people to sheep and compares the good shepherd to the thief and the stranger. Depicting Israel as sheep in God’s pasture has deep Old Testament roots. God’s people are pictured as sheep throughout the Psalms (Psalms 74:1; 79:13; 121:4), as well as in other Old Testament writings (1 Kings 22:17; Jeremiah 13:17; 50:6).

In John 10, Jesus describes sheep in a sheepfold, or pen, where thieves want to sneak in and steal them. According to verse 6, His hearers did not understand this metaphor. So, Jesus explains His meaning in the verses that follow. “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep” (John 10:7 ESV). Jesus is teaching the only way that someone can enter the kingdom is by becoming part of His flock. As the door for the sheep, Jesus is the only way to salvation. Entry into His flock comes only through Him. Those who try to get in by any way other than through Christ are thieves who only want to steal, kill, and destroy. Jesus is The Door, and those who enter through this door will find life that is abundant (John 10:10).

## WEEK THREE

I AM THE DOOR

OBSERVE

This complicated metaphor is explained. Where is Jesus’ explanation?

INTERPRET

How is Jesus like a door?

APPLY

How are Jesus’ purposes for your life distinct from other “doors”?

John 10:1-10

*“Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” <sup>6</sup> Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.*

*<sup>7</sup> Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 10:1-10
- DAY 2 Psalm 16
- DAY 3 Luke 3:1-14
- DAY 4 Luke 3:15-20
- DAY 5 Luke 3:21-38
- DAY 6 Luke 4:1-13
- DAY 7 Luke 4:14-21







## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read John 10:7-9. What was the “I AM” statement that Jesus made and what is the concept that He was trying to convey to His listeners?
2. What is the role of a gate in a fenced-in area? What does this metaphor tell us about Jesus?
3. What does Jesus say about those who try to enter into the fold by other means than the gate? How are they contrasted to the shepherds of the sheep?
4. If Jesus is The Gate, does that make Him “inclusive” or “exclusive”? How does John 1:12 pair with John 10:9?
5. If Jesus is The Gate, what does this mean for each of us? What does this mean for our families, friends, co-workers, and neighbors?





### **INSIGHT**

Jesus' declaration "I am the Good Shepherd" follows closely after His statement that He is The Door for the sheep. By presenting Himself as The Good Shepherd, Jesus contrasts His leadership with that of the Pharisees (John 10:1-11).

Throughout the Old Testament, God is portrayed as the shepherd of Israel. He doesn't just guard the sheep (Genesis 48:15), He cares tenderly for them and carries them (Isaiah 40:11). In Ezekiel 34:2, Israel's leadership is rebuked for failing to shepherd the sheep. Jesus, in contrast, is the Good Shepherd because He will lay His life down for the sheep (John 10:11). As the Good Shepherd, Jesus leads His sheep into safety and abundance at great personal cost to Himself. Yes, He laid down His life; but, just as He predicted, He took it up again (John 10:17-18). As you study this passage, let Jesus' words sink into your heart and mind: "I am the Good Shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me" (John 10:14). Pray that you will know The Good Shepherd even more deeply this week.

## **WEEK FOUR**

### **I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD**



OBSERVE

Jesus gives several ways He is like a shepherd. List them.

INTERPRET

How does Jesus act as shepherd for His people?

APPLY

How can you practically experience Jesus as shepherd daily?

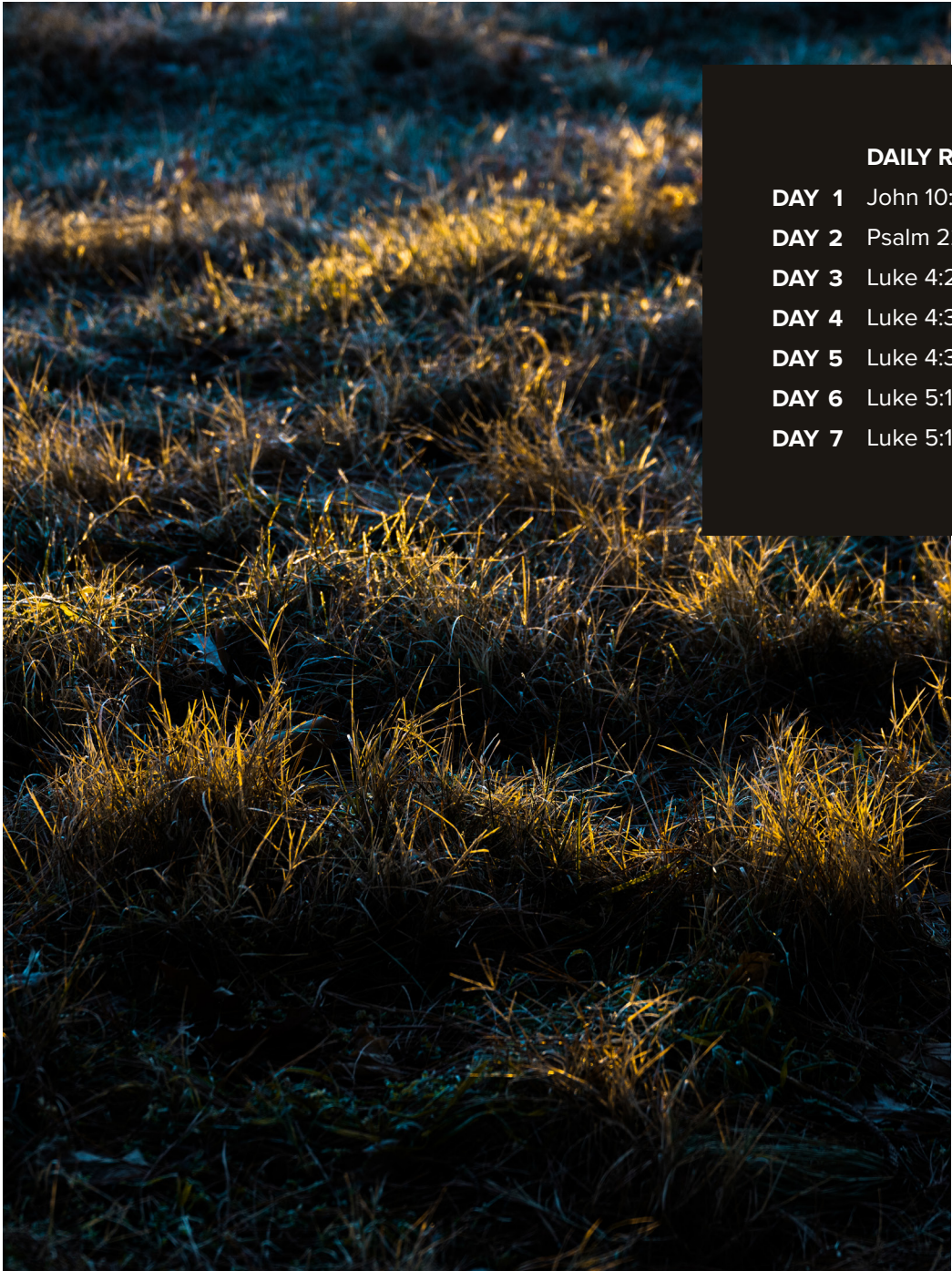
John 10:11-18

**“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”** <sup>12</sup> The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. <sup>13</sup> The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

<sup>14</sup> “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. <sup>17</sup> The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 10:11-21
- DAY 2 Psalm 22
- DAY 3 Luke 4:22-30
- DAY 4 Luke 4:31-37
- DAY 5 Luke 4:38-44
- DAY 6 Luke 5:1-11
- DAY 7 Luke 5:12-16





## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read John 10:11. What was the “I AM” statement that Jesus made, and what is the concept that He was trying to convey to His listeners?
2. What is the difference between the “hired hand” and the “good shepherd”?
3. The shepherd knows his sheep and the sheep know him. How does this relate to our relationship to the Lord?
4. Read Psalm 23 and list a few ways that the Lord plays the role of a shepherd in our lives.
5. What is the significance of our shepherd Jesus laying down His life for us?





### **INSIGHT**

In many ways, Jesus' statement to Martha in John 11:25 is the culmination of all that has come before it in the book of John. Jesus, The Bread of Life, The Light of the World, The Door for the sheep, and The Good Shepherd, is The Resurrection and The Life. Jesus is the embodied promise of salvation that leads to life eternal. It is important to note that Jesus does not merely say that He will bring about the resurrection, His claim is much bolder and more audacious. He says He is The Resurrection and The Life. Eternal life comes through the resurrection of the dead, and is found only in Jesus.

In John 5:21, Jesus said, "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it." Now in John 11:25, Jesus reveals that this life is given through Him. In the raising of Lazarus, we see the power of Jesus over death. This same power is on display when Jesus is resurrected in power and glory (Romans 1:3-4). In John 11, Jesus is looking ahead to this day when He considers the grief stricken sisters of Lazarus. "Your brother will rise again" (John 11:23), He tells Martha. Because Jesus is The Resurrection and The Life.

# WEEK FIVE

## I AM THE RESURRECTION & THE LIFE



OBSERVE

Verses 17-20 give the context. How does understanding the situation help frame Jesus’ actions.

INTERPRET

How does Jesus shift Martha’s focus?

APPLY

Where does the hope of resurrection connect with your life today?

John 11:17-27

*On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, <sup>19</sup> and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. <sup>20</sup> When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.*

*<sup>21</sup> “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.”*

*<sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”*

*<sup>24</sup> Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”*

*<sup>25</sup> **Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;** <sup>26</sup> and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”*

*<sup>27</sup> “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”*

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 11:17-27
- DAY 2 Psalm 23
- DAY 3 Luke 5:17-26
- DAY 4 Luke 5:27-32
- DAY 5 Luke 5:33-39
- DAY 6 Luke 6:1-11
- DAY 7 Luke 6:12-16

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read John 11:25. What was the “I AM” statement that Jesus made and what is the concept that He was trying to convey to His listeners?
2. This story features Jesus at the funeral of a dear friend. Why do you think He is weeping and troubled?
3. There seems to be a greater purpose behind the death and resurrection of Lazarus. Why do you think this event occurred at this time in the life and ministry of Jesus?
4. What does it mean for us that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead?
5. Why is it important for each of us to answer the question posed in John 11:25? So, what is your answer?





### INSIGHT

John 14 places the reader at a critical point in the life and ministry of Jesus. He has been in the upper room with His disciples where He has instituted the Lord's Supper (or Communion) and washed their feet (Luke 22:15, John 13:5). Soon He will be arrested, tried, and crucified. In these final hours with His disciples before His death, He is reassuring them. They will be together again in His Father's house (John 14:2-3). Thomas protests, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (John 14:5).

Jesus responds with one of the most quoted and well loved of the "I AM" statements: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Jesus is The Way: he is the only path to eternity with the Father. Jesus is The Truth: the ultimate revelation of God is incarnate in Jesus Christ. Jesus is The Life: eternal life exists only in and through Him. In Jesus, God has come to earth in the form of a man. Faith in Him, then, is the only way to know the truth that leads to life. The uniqueness of the great I AM taking on flesh in the God-man Jesus leads to the exclusiveness of His claim. It is because of who He is that He can say "I am the way" to the Father.

## WEEK SIX

### I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, & THE LIFE



OBSERVE

What two questions is Jesus answering?

INTERPRET

What “way” is Jesus referring to?

APPLY

How is trusting Jesus more than just a belief but also a “way” to follow?

John 14:5-14

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

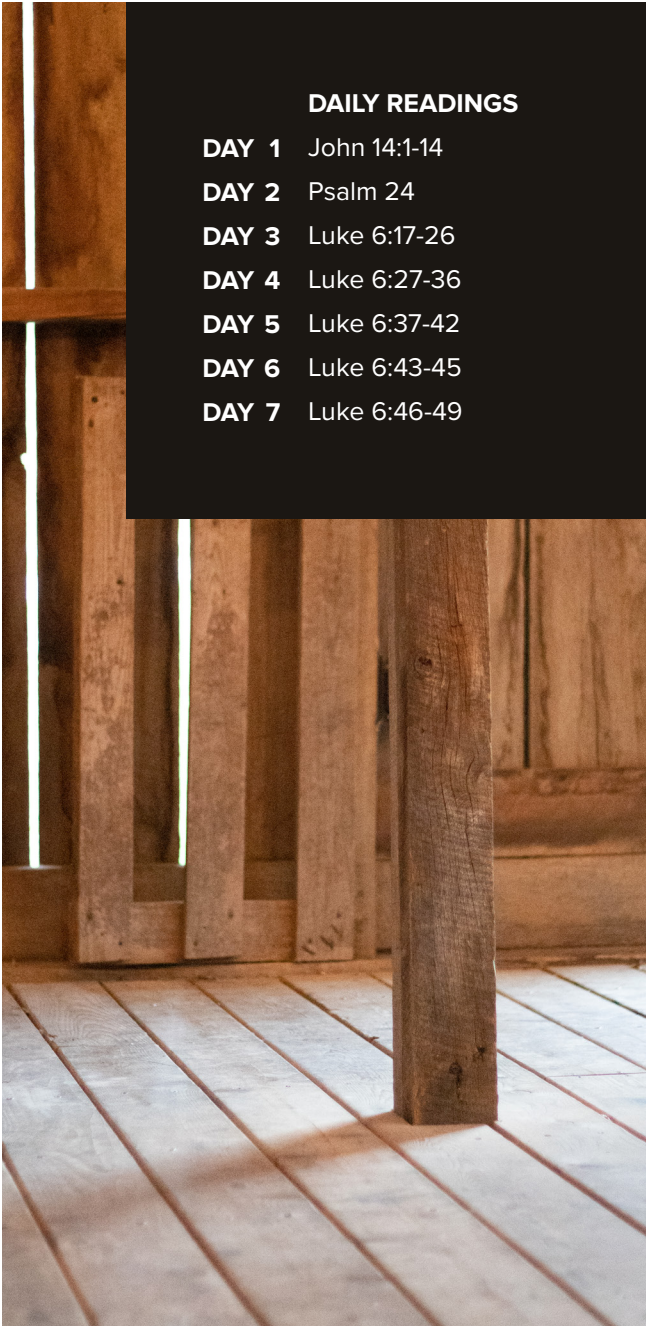
<sup>6</sup> **Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.** <sup>7</sup> If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

<sup>8</sup> Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup> Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 14:1-14
- DAY 2 Psalm 24
- DAY 3 Luke 6:17-26
- DAY 4 Luke 6:27-36
- DAY 5 Luke 6:37-42
- DAY 6 Luke 6:43-45
- DAY 7 Luke 6:46-49







## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read John 14:6. What was the “I AM” statement that Jesus made and what is the concept that He was trying to convey to His listeners?
2. In John 14:1-6, what is Jesus announcing about His life and what is He promising for our lives?
3. Break down each of the words in John 14:6: way, truth, life. Why are each so important to us in our understanding of Jesus?
4. How is Jesus our “one way” to heaven? What did He do to enable us to be restored to a right relationship to the Father?
5. Jesus said: “No one comes to the Father except through me.” How is Jesus both “inclusive” and “exclusive” at the same time?





### INSIGHT

Israel continues to be a land of vineyards. Going back to the earliest biblical accounts, grape vines have been cultivated in Israel. Israel is often symbolized as a vineyard in the Old Testament (Isaiah 5:7, Hosea 9:10, Psalm 80:8-9). So strongly is Israel associated with vineyards, the vine itself has become a symbol of the nation. Both in the time of Christ and today, Israeli money has vines minted onto the coins. And as Jesus and the disciples passed by the temple, they would have seen a huge golden grapevine incorporated in the architecture.

With this vivid imagery all around them, Jesus spoke these words, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser” (John 15:1 ESV). While the vine of Israel had not yielded the desired fruit (Jeremiah 2:21, Hosea 10:1, Isaiah 5:2), Jesus is the true vine. His followers are the branches, and by abiding in Him, we can bear fruit (John 15:5). The purpose God originally had for Israel, to be His holy people, will be fulfilled in Christ, the True Vine. It is by remaining in the true vine that believers are able to bear fruit. This fruit bearing is ultimately designed to glorify God (John 15:8). As you study this passage this week, remember why Jesus shared this with us: “These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:11).

# WEEK SEVEN

## I AM THE TRUE VINE



OBSERVE

To whom is Jesus speaking in this passage? What does He affirm about them?

INTERPRET

What is Jesus’ primary concern in this passage?

APPLY

How does abiding or remaining in Christ connect with joy and fruit in your life?

John 15:1-11

**“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.** <sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. <sup>3</sup> You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup> Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

<sup>5</sup> “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. <sup>7</sup> If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup> This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

<sup>9</sup> “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 15:1-17
- DAY 2 Psalm 40
- DAY 3 Luke 7:1-10
- DAY 4 Luke 7:11-17
- DAY 5 Luke 7:18-28
- DAY 6 Luke 7:29-35
- DAY 7 Luke 7:36-50





## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read John 15:1. What was the “I AM” statement that Jesus made and what is the concept that He was trying to convey to His listeners?
2. What does it mean for Jesus to be the vine and for us to be the branches?
3. Verse 4 gives us the “key” for being fruitful in the Christian life. What is it and what does that look like on an everyday, practical level?
4. What does it mean to be “apart” from Jesus? What are the results? Can you be “apart” from Jesus and still be going through the motions spiritually?
5. What role does obedience play in bearing fruit spiritually?





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# 7 MIRACLES

## INTRODUCTION

### John 2:11

*What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.*

John 2:11 is a concise summary of the purpose and result of the miracles of Jesus. Jesus performs a miracle (or sign), which points to His glory (see John 1:14), which compels belief (John 20:31). The miracles are such an important part of how the book of John is structured that some have referred to John 1:20–12:50 as “the book of signs.”

John’s Gospel follows a long history of God using signs and miracles to authenticate His messengers. In the Old Testament, God often used supernatural signs or miracles to get people’s attention and to compel them to listen to His spokesmen. Aaron’s staff became a serpent, indicating that the message he and Moses brought to Pharaoh was from God (Exodus 7:8-10). God sent fire down to consume a sacrifice, simultaneously validating Elijah’s message and undermining the lies of the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:30-38). Daniel was delivered from the lion’s den and his message was believed (Daniel 6:16-23). Into this history comes Jesus. The seven signs described in John serve to authenticate the message that Jesus is the Messiah as they engender belief in the witnesses – then as well as today.

### John 20:30-31

*Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.  
<sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*



## INSIGHT

The Gospel of John presents a series of numbered signs, each a supernatural display of the power and the purpose of Jesus' life and ministry. The first of these signs is recorded in John 2:1-11 with what seems to be a rather odd action: Jesus turned jars full of water into wine to help a family avoid social shame and embarrassment. Now, while the story on face-value may seem rather ordinary or even out of place, the story is loaded with symbolism and meaning.

Jesus entered the multi-day wedding festivities of a family friend in the village of Cana, and this forms the beginning of the "Cana Cycle" in John's gospel (2:1-4:54). To fail to meet the social obligations involved in such a ceremony likely guaranteed a loss in social standing and a lingering shame that would accompany the family for months or years to come. Jesus meets this family and, in the most humble and "ordinary" of ways, enables them to reverse their approaching shame for public honor.

Yet, the story is much deeper and richer in symbolism. One of the themes of the Hebrew Scriptures is God's covenant relationship with His people, which is often depicted as a marriage. This theme can be seen in the depiction of the covenant on Mount Sinai and the prophecies of Hosea. So, it is not at all surprising that the first public demonstration of Jesus' ministry in John's gospel account is performed at a wedding. Later biblical writers, reflecting on this theme, portray the great Wedding Feast of the Lamb and His people (see Revelation 19). The theme of the great wedding banquet of God and His people is coming to fruition in the life and work of the Son of God on the earth.

# WEEK ONE

WATER TO WINE

OBSERVE

Note the exchange between Jesus and His mother. What are their motivations?

INTERPRET

What symbolic significance is present in the items described?

APPLY

This miracle is unique when compared to miracles of healing and rescue. Why is this significant?

John 2:1-11

*On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, <sup>2</sup> and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup> When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.”*

*<sup>4</sup> “Woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My hour has not yet come.”*

*<sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”*

*<sup>6</sup> Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.*

*<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim.*

*<sup>8</sup> Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.”*

*They did so, <sup>9</sup> and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside <sup>10</sup> and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.”*

*<sup>11</sup> What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.*

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 2:1-11
- DAY 2 Psalm 45
- DAY 3 Luke 8:1-8
- DAY 4 Luke 8:9-15
- DAY 5 Luke 8:16-21
- DAY 6 Luke 8:22-25
- DAY 7 Luke 8:26-39







**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Read John 2:1-12. In your own words, describe Jesus' first miracle. How does this miracle point to who Jesus is?
2. For the servants who knew what happened (John 2:7), what do you suppose this supernatural sign indicated about Jesus?
3. John 2:11 is an important verse in this passage. What key points can you draw from this one verse?
4. Read John 20:30-31. What does this say about the miraculous signs performed by Jesus and their purpose?
5. How did Jesus involve others in this amazing story? How is this similar to the ways in which He involves us in His work today?





### INSIGHT

The conclusion of the “Cana Cycle” section of John’s gospel (2:1–4:54) ends with Jesus’ return to Cana, the site of His famous “water-to-wine” story. Here, though, Jesus is met by a person with an impressive job whose son was sick to the point of death. This man was a “royal official” and we are not told if he was Jewish or not. Regardless, this man would be seen as one to be scorned because of his close association with Herod Antipas. And yet, just like Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman (earlier in chapter 4), Jesus shows unusual compassion for the unlikeliest of persons.

Once again, this demonstration of Jesus’ power is marked as a sign by the gospel writer. This time, it is the power to heal someone by His very word without being near the unwell person. What a demonstration indeed. The signs in John point the alert reader to the very core principle so perfectly summarized in John 1:18: If you want to see and experience the very presence of God, see and experience Jesus.

One last thing: note the unusual parenthesis inserted by John into the story in verse 44. While Jesus is bringing restoration and healing to a Samaritan and to this (likely) Gentile royal official, John makes an interesting and challenging claim. Despite a warm reception among the Samaritans and the Gentile nobleman, Jesus’ own brothers and sisters rejected Him. This story will develop throughout John’s Gospel, and it is one of the themes of the book. John even telegraphed it in the very beginning (see John 1:11). The astute reader is to understand that proper reception of Jesus entails believing that He is the Messiah, the Son of Living God.

## WEEK TWO

### HEALING OF THE OFFICIAL’S SON



OBSERVE

Note the context details and characters. How do they shape the story?

INTERPRET

What is unique about this story? What details stand out? Why are they significant?

APPLY

How do the unique details point toward a conclusion and an application of belief?

John 4:46-54

Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. <sup>47</sup> When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

<sup>48</sup> “Unless you people see signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.”

<sup>49</sup> The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”

<sup>50</sup> “Go,” Jesus replied, “your son will live.”

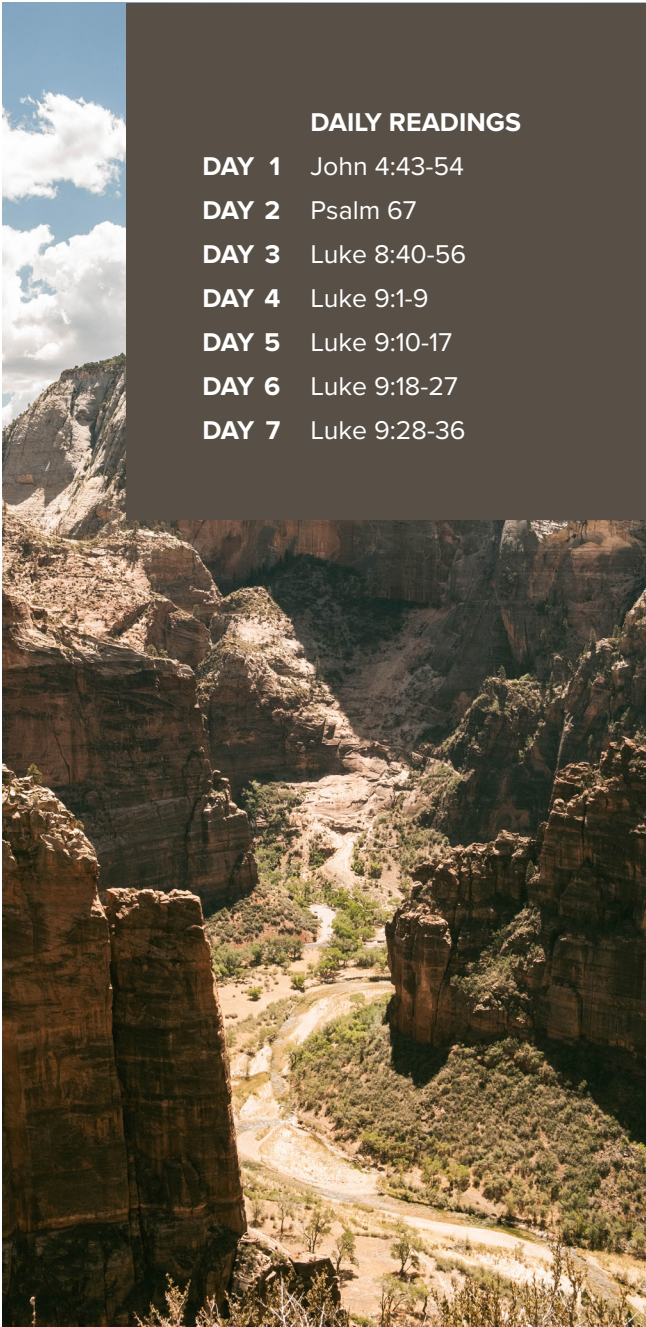
The man took Jesus at his word and departed. <sup>51</sup> While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. <sup>52</sup> When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, “Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him.”

<sup>53</sup> Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and his whole household believed.

<sup>54</sup> This was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 4:43-54
- DAY 2 Psalm 67
- DAY 3 Luke 8:40-56
- DAY 4 Luke 9:1-9
- DAY 5 Luke 9:10-17
- DAY 6 Luke 9:18-27
- DAY 7 Luke 9:28-36





## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. “Believe” is a key word found multiple times in this passage. What does it mean to you to believe in Jesus?
2. Verse 4:44 states that “a prophet has no honor in his own country.” Why would Jesus say this about His hometown of Nazareth? (For more insight, see Matthew 13:53-58.)
3. For background about the people gathered at Cana, read John 2:23-25, then look again at John 4:45, 48. Discuss the difference between belief in miraculous signs versus believing in Jesus.
4. The father in this story appears to have a genuine belief in Jesus (John 4:50). How do you suppose this miraculous healing of his son impacted his faith and the belief of his family (John 4:53)?
5. How does this passage on belief challenge your faith walk with Jesus?







#### INSIGHT

After the “Cana Cycle” (John 2:1–4:54) concludes within John’s Gospel-narrative, he then turned to depict Jesus in relationship to the Jewish festivals and expectations. What follows is a series of encounters and episodes which occur during Jewish religious holidays. Each of these festivals were steeped in Old Testament stories and expectations, and each were celebrated year-by-year as part of the yearly traditions and activities of the ancient Jewish people. As such, these were important culture-forming rituals that connected the Jewish people to their history and their God.

Yet in chapter 5, John demonstrates through a Sabbath healing that Jesus is the fulfillment of all Jewish expectations and hopes. The timing of the healing was significant because the Sabbath was the day the Jewish community rested from work and remembered their unique covenant relationship with their God. Perhaps nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the story of a man who had spent decades waiting, finally finding restoration in Jesus.

In a bizarre scene, Jesus approached a man who almost certainly was at the end of his rope. After 38 years longing for a cure, and seeking it in magical and supernatural ways, an unknown man from Nazareth walked up and asked a simple question. In an instant, the man was healed.

Naturally, this provided a backdrop for the conflict over the Sabbath, as Jesus insisted that His Father was doing the work of bringing restoration to the land and the people. This situation received plenty of unfavorable attention from the religious leaders of Jesus’ day. As the conflicts between these leaders and Jesus intensified, the demonstration of Jesus’ unique relationship with God the Father became increasingly clear.

## WEEK THREE

### HEALING CRIPPLED MAN AT BETHESDA

OBSERVE

Note the context details and characters. How do they shape the story?

INTERPRET

How is Jesus’ response to this person different than others? How could the context explain this?

APPLY

What happened in this man’s life as a result of his encounter with Jesus? How could following Jesus bring you into controversy?

John 5:1-9

*Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. <sup>2</sup> Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. <sup>3</sup> Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. <sup>5</sup> One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”*

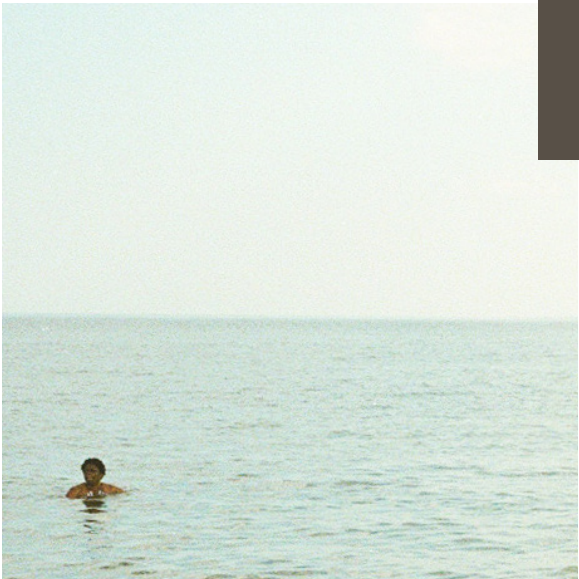
*<sup>7</sup> “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”*

*<sup>8</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” <sup>9</sup> At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.*

*The day on which this took place was a Sabbath...*

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 5:1-15
- DAY 2 Psalm 68
- DAY 3 Luke 9:37-43
- DAY 4 Luke 9:44-56
- DAY 5 Luke 9:57-62
- DAY 6 Luke 10:1-12
- DAY 7 Luke 10:13-24







## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think that Jesus asked the question in John 5:6?
2. What did the man's answer reveal about his situation and his hope for relief in John 5:7?
3. How would you have felt if you were the man who had been healed after 38 years and other people were questioning whether it was right for you to carry a mat, or even to be healed, on a Sabbath?
4. What can this passage teach us about the way we view our problems and the solutions compared with the way that the Lord sees them?
5. How does this story inspire you to pray or think differently about a challenge that you have faced for a long time, where a God-sized breakthrough is needed?





### INSIGHT

One of the most memorable stories in the Old Testament is the story of the Israelite's surprising rescue from the Egyptians and the subsequent journey of the Israelites in the wilderness. These stories occupy the first five books of the Hebrew scriptures, and form the cultural backdrop for them as a people. They celebrated this rescue every single year in a number of festivals. Each year, Jews gathered to remember that their God, Yahweh, had liberated them from their captors, saved them through the waters, fed them supernaturally with bread from above, and brought water from the rock so that they might drink. But none of these festivals were more important than the Passover. Here, songs were sung, bread was eaten, wine was tasted, and lamb was roasted, all in an effort to celebrate the simple fact that their God had delivered them! Through God's great prophet Moses, they had been delivered.

Over a millennia later, the people of Israel found themselves once again in a dark place. Foreign oppressors ruled their land, justice seemed hard to come by, and it appeared their God had left them with nothing but silence. And on a brilliant day in the first century, crowds of desperate and hurting Israelites gathered yet again. Now, another man had come to lead the crowds. He provided bread supernaturally for all of the hungry people. In addition, the 5,000 who were gathered ate fish until their bellies were full. Not only that, but there were twelve baskets leftover. These twelve baskets would likely remind the crowd of the twelve tribes of Israel. No wonder the people responded as they did in John 6:14. Could this be the long-awaited prophet, the one like Moses, that the Israelites had been looking for all these generations? (See Deuteronomy 34:10-12.)

## WEEK FOUR

### FEEDING OF THE 5,000



OBSERVE

Who is Jesus addressing in this story? Who is His primary audience?

INTERPRET

How are Jesus’ actions connected to the disciples’ concerns?

APPLY

What lesson was Jesus teaching the disciples and in turn us?

John 6:5-14

*When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?”<sup>6</sup> He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.*

*<sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, “It would take more than half a year’s wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!”*

*<sup>8</sup> Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, <sup>9</sup> “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?”*

*<sup>10</sup> Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). <sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.*

*<sup>12</sup> When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.” <sup>13</sup> So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.*

*<sup>14</sup> After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, “Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.”*

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 6:1-15
- DAY 2 Psalm 69
- DAY 3 Luke 10:25-37
- DAY 4 Luke 10:38-42
- DAY 5 Luke 11:1-13
- DAY 6 Luke 11:14-28
- DAY 7 Luke 11:29-36





## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the crowds came to Jesus? What were they looking to receive?
2. Jesus seemed to have preplanned this sign. Why do you think Jesus performed this miracle?
3. What did the following people learn from the miracle? The disciples? The boy? The crowd?
4. Why do you think Jesus asked them to gather the leftovers?
5. What lesson does this miracle teach you about your spiritual life?







## INSIGHT

In ancient near eastern cultures, the seas were a place of chaos and violence, where the fate of the vessel or the boat rested on the will of the gods and their manipulation of the winds and the waves. Indeed, it was a scary place where the person was rarely in control and were at the mercy of the seas themselves (and the gods who controlled them, of course!). In fact, the Israelites' neighbors, the Canaanites, believed that Baal was the great god of the clouds, the one who controlled the wind and the rain. The Israelites had spent generations rejecting such an idea, instead swearing supremely to Yahweh, that Yahweh alone could control the wind and the storms (see Psalm 107:23-32).

As the Gospel of John continues, the writer tells stories to demonstrate the supreme power of Jesus, as He is the embodiment of Yahweh on the earth. And nothing could be more demonstrative than this story. Here in John 6, the disciples face the chaos and violence of a surprising storm on the Sea of Galilee, and out of nowhere Jesus did the impossible, the unthinkable: He walked on the water. This naturally led to the disciples reaction in verse 19, and yet Jesus in the most compassionate and human of ways simply spoke: "It is I; don't be afraid" (John 6:20). It goes unnoticed in English translations, but the words "It is I" are the Greek words for "I AM." Alert readers would recognize this as the divine name of the creator and covenant God of Israel given to Moses in Exodus 3—Yahweh. What a simple yet profound statement. Here the very power and might of the "I AM" who can walk on the stormy seas, speaks calmly to his few scared friends. Yet again, John's Gospel is demonstrating that the very power and presence of Yahweh has come in the person of Jesus, for this is what the gospel has been aiming at since the very introduction (see John 1:18).

# WEEK FIVE

## WALKING ON WATER



OBSERVE

Note the context that sets up the event. Note the emotion and action words.

INTERPRET

What images of seas and storms come to mind throughout the Scriptures?

APPLY

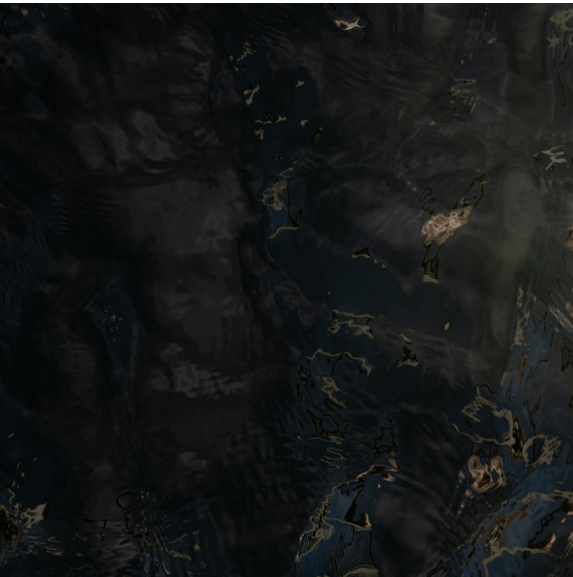
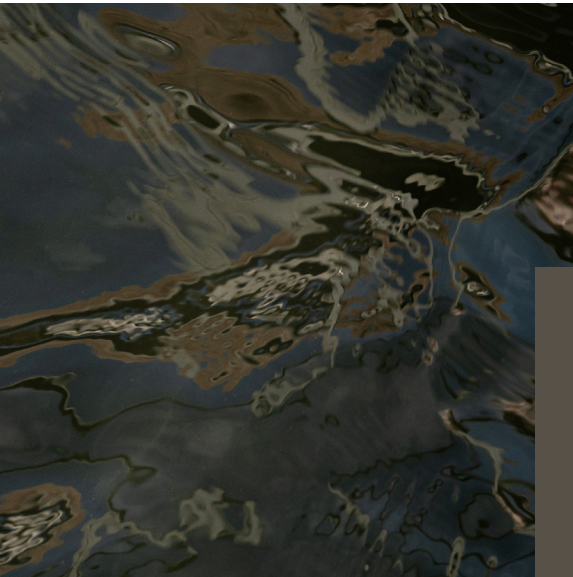
What does this miracle teach us about who Jesus is?

John 6:16-21

*When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, <sup>17</sup> where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. <sup>18</sup> A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. <sup>19</sup> When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. <sup>20</sup> But he said to them, “It is I; don’t be afraid.” <sup>21</sup> Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.*

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 6:16-24
- DAY 2 Psalm 72
- DAY 3 Luke 11:37-54
- DAY 4 Luke 12:1-12
- DAY 5 Luke 12:13-21
- DAY 6 Luke 12:22-34
- DAY 7 Luke 12:35-48







## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the practical reason Jesus had to walk on water?
2. Why do you think the disciples were initially afraid when they saw Jesus?
3. Really, there are two signs in the story, what are they and how do they defy the natural course of things?
4. What do you think the disciples learned from this miracle?
5. How does this miracle deepen your faith? What impact does this have on your spiritual life?





### INSIGHT

In John 9:1-41, the demonstration of Jesus' power once again unfolds on the Jewish Sabbath. Jesus does the impossible by healing a man who had been blind from birth. This story is rich with symbolism as the blind Israelite encounters Jesus, the One *sent* from the Father, at a pool called "Sent." Predictably, the healing results in conflict with the religious authorities of Israel. Subsequently, the blind man makes controversial statements concerning the One who healed him (John 9:30-33). This story forces the reader to choose a side: the blind man and his outrageous (yet true) claim concerning Jesus, or the side of the Pharisees who condemned the blind man and his healer.

The literary elements of this story are compelling, ironic, and humorous (see the interaction between the blind man, his family, and the Pharisees in John 9:15-34). Indeed, no one has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. While one may expect a celebration of this miracle, notice the final verse in this passage (John 9:34): the man who was healed was thrown out of the assembly. Jesus would later declare (John 15:18-25) that His followers will experience this same type of rejection. Following Jesus brings His followers both healing from God and conflict with the world.

## WEEK SIX

### HEALING A BLIND MAN



OBSERVE

Note the opening question. Look for how the whole story addresses this question.

INTERPRET

What is significant and unique about Jesus’ interaction with this man? Picture the mood and feel of the moment.

APPLY

What lesson was Jesus teaching the disciples and in turn us?

John 9:1-11

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

<sup>3</sup> “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup> As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

<sup>6</sup> After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man’s eyes. <sup>7</sup> “Go,” he told him, “wash in the Pool of Siloam” (this word means “Sent”). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

<sup>8</sup> His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, “Isn’t this the same man who used to sit and beg?” <sup>9</sup> Some claimed that he was.

Others said, “No, he only looks like him.”

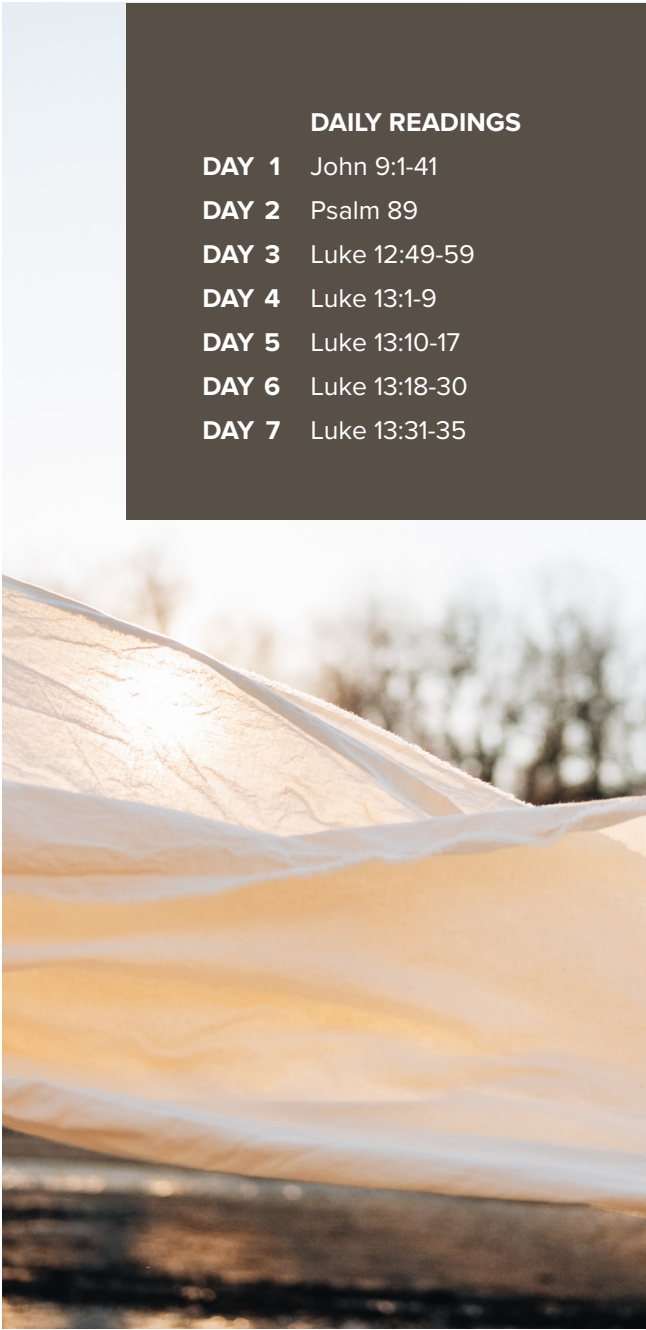
But he himself insisted, “I am the man.”

<sup>10</sup> “How then were your eyes opened?” they asked.

<sup>11</sup> He replied, “The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.”

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 9:1-41
- DAY 2 Psalm 89
- DAY 3 Luke 12:49-59
- DAY 4 Luke 13:1-9
- DAY 5 Luke 13:10-17
- DAY 6 Luke 13:18-30
- DAY 7 Luke 13:31-35







## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read John 9:1-7. Describe the scene and the miraculous sign that happens in this passage. What is Jesus' perspective on the miracle in verse 3?
2. Read John 9:8-23. What were the reactions to this blind man receiving sight by a) people who knew him, b) by the Pharisees and Jewish leaders, and c) by his parents? How are these reactions similar or different from people who read about Jesus' miracles today?
3. Read John 9:24-34. What was the man's response to gaining his sight when speaking about it for the second time with the Pharisees?
4. Read John 9:35-41. What is the man's spiritual response with Jesus? How are his physical sight and his spiritual "sight" linked?
5. What challenges (physical, emotional, financial, etc.) can God use from your life to reveal Himself more clearly and to draw others to Jesus?





### INSIGHT

The culminating display of Jesus' power in John's Gospel is the raising of Lazarus from the dead. The story serves as a beautiful portrait of not only Jesus' authority over death but also His tender compassion as Savior King.

Jesus has a deep love for Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha. They are among His close friends. Upon entering the village, Jesus knew that Lazarus had died and that his family would be in grief. Lazarus' two sisters approach Jesus, Martha first. Martha brings her emotional pain, as well as her doubt and questions, directly to Jesus (John 11:21); but notice Jesus' response. He engages her with theological truth. He forces Martha to wrestle with the reality of the resurrection from the dead (a matter hotly debated among the Jews of Jesus' day) and insists that these realities find their ultimate fulfillment in Him. In short, He gives her a theology lesson.

Mary on the other hand, comes to Jesus with much the same pain and anguish. In fact, her words to Jesus in verse 32 are identical to those of Martha in verse 21. Yet, look at the different response from Jesus to Mary. He sees her grief, and is deeply moved; and then... He wept. With Martha, Jesus provided a theology lesson; with Mary, He simply cried with her.

What does this tell us about our King? He knows precisely what we need in our pain and grief, precisely when we need it. There is a time for theology in our grief and pain, and there is a time for weeping; Jesus is a wise friend to these sisters.

Now to the power: Jesus brings Lazarus to life! The one who had been dead was brought to life. Jesus' last recorded words in this story are illustrative: "Take off the grave clothes, and let him go!" This is why Jesus came—to bring victory over death, to strip off our grave clothes entangled by sin, and to set us free to new life. John concludes his seven-signs with this rich story of Jesus' authority over death itself.

## WEEK SEVEN

### RAISING DEAD LAZARUS



OBSERVE

Notice descriptive details.  
How do they enhance  
the story?

INTERPRET

What is the significance of  
Jesus’ prayer to the Father?

APPLY

How does this sign function  
in comparison with the other  
signs in John?

John 11:38-44

*Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. <sup>39</sup> “Take away the stone,” he said.*

*“But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”*

*<sup>40</sup> Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”*

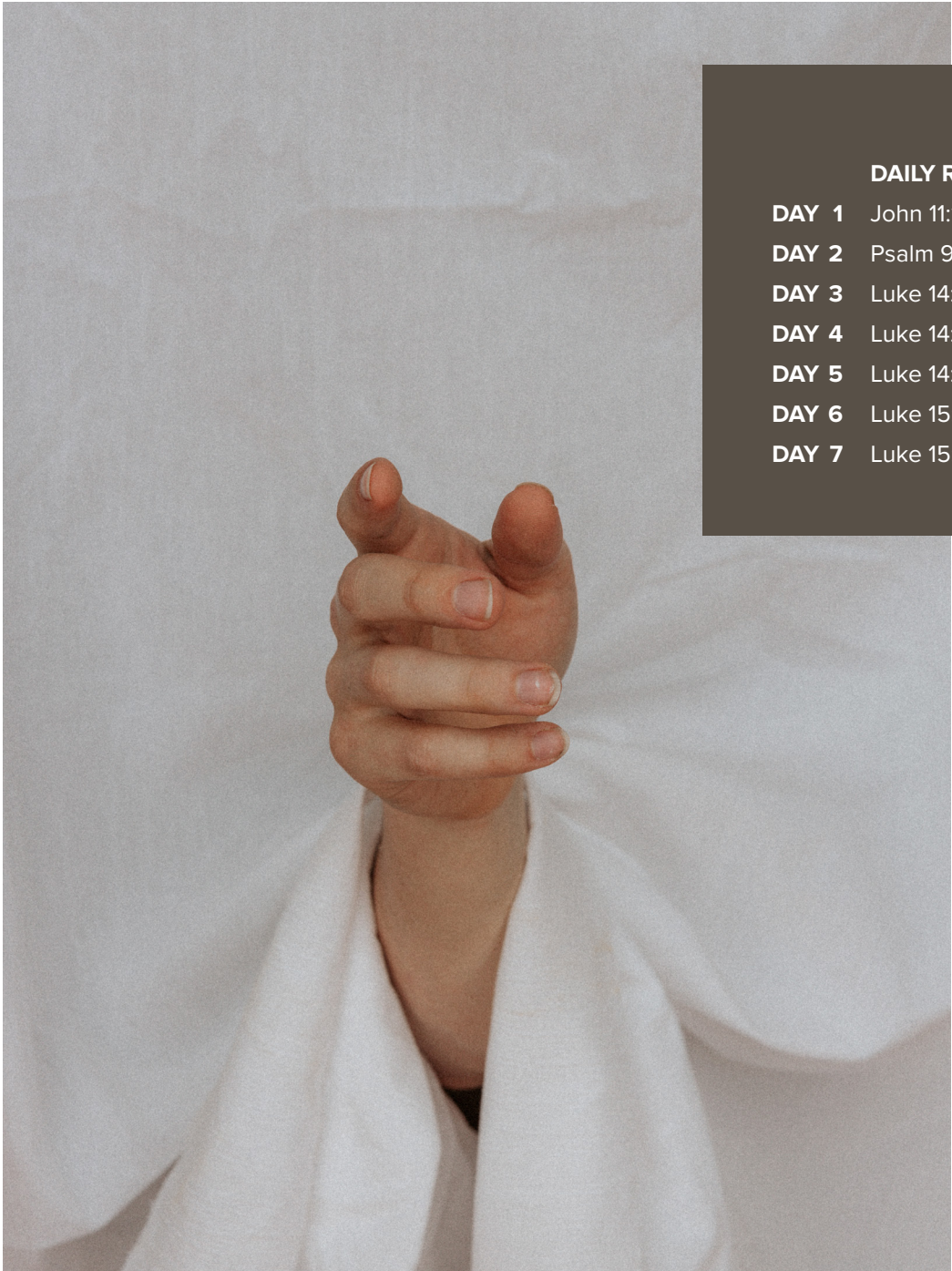
*<sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”*

*<sup>43</sup> When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” <sup>44</sup> The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.*

*Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”*

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 11:1-45
- DAY 2 Psalm 93
- DAY 3 Luke 14:1-14
- DAY 4 Luke 14:15-24
- DAY 5 Luke 14:25-35
- DAY 6 Luke 15:1-10
- DAY 7 Luke 15:11-32





## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Jesus stretch Martha's faith in John 11:17-27?
2. Describe the miraculous sign and its impact on the people in John 11:38-45. How does this foreshadow Jesus' own resurrection?
3. In what ways does this passage illustrate both Jesus' humanity and His deity?
4. What is the purpose for this miracle? Point out key verses that help reveal this.
5. What does this story teach us about the Lord's sovereignty and timing, especially when we are facing challenges, anxiety, and disillusionment of our own?





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# 7 ENCOUNTERS

## INTRODUCTION

### **John 3:1-2**

*Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”*

In the book of John, we’ve seen Jesus make seven claims to divinity in His “I AM” statements, and we’ve seen Him perform seven miraculous signs to authenticate that message. Now we will see how Jesus brought these together in seven significant encounters with the people around Him.

We will see people from a wide range of backgrounds and situations (from a religious leader to a woman about to be executed for adultery) interacting with Jesus. We will find people encountering Jesus with their doubts, their shame, their questions, and their worship. These encounters will reveal much about who Jesus is, why He came, and how we are to respond.

### **John 21:19b ESV**

*And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.”*





### INSIGHT

As a Pharisee and a member of the highest Jewish court, the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus was one of the most unlikely people to have an encounter with Jesus. Nicodemus came to Jesus at night and asked Him a series of questions; Jesus proceeds to answer questions that Nicodemus didn't ask. Jesus saw what was in Nicodemus' heart and knew what he needed to hear. Jesus went to the very core of Nicodemus' problem—he needed a spiritual rebirth and transformation that only Jesus could satisfy.

Some important things to ask yourself while reading through this story: Why do you think Nicodemus went to see Jesus alone at night? What do you think Nicodemus could've lost if other Pharisees learned what he was doing? We never learn what happens to Nicodemus from this account, but, through other parts of John's Gospel we learn that this experience led him to trust in Jesus. Perhaps, Nicodemus' life-changing encounter with Jesus presents a compelling question: "How do you see Jesus speaking to what you truly need to hear, even when you don't know what to ask?"

# WEEK ONE

## NICODEMAS



OBSERVE

Who is Nicodemus? What details can you gather about him?

INTERPRET

What is the main message of Jesus’ teaching?

APPLY

Why is this disorienting to Nicodemus? How does Jesus challenge what we think we know?

John 3:1-16

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup> He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

<sup>3</sup> Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

<sup>4</sup> “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup> You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ <sup>8</sup> The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

<sup>9</sup> “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

<sup>10</sup> “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? <sup>11</sup> Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. <sup>12</sup> I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? <sup>13</sup> No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup> Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 3:1-21
- DAY 2 Psalm 96
- DAY 3 Luke 16:1-15
- DAY 4 Luke 16:16-18
- DAY 5 Luke 16:19-31
- DAY 6 Luke 17:1-10
- DAY 7 Luke 17:11-19







## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In the opening verses (John 3:1-2), what do you learn about this man Nicodemus? What kind of a discussion does he hope to have with Jesus? Why does he come to Him at night?
2. What is Jesus trying to tell Nicodemus about being “born again” in John 3:3-8?
3. What does Jesus reveal in verses 16-21 about Himself, God the Father, eternal life, and each person’s need for salvation?
4. This passage is packed with important theological statements. Which is most meaningful to you?
5. John 3:16 is perhaps the most quoted verse from the Bible. What does it mean for you?





### **INSIGHT**

Jesus' initiative in talking to the Samaritan woman was an astonishing break from culture and tradition. It revealed His desire for salvation to stretch beyond Jews. Not only was she a female in a society where women were disregarded, and from a race that was traditionally despised by Jews, she was also living in shame as a social outcast. Drawing water in the middle of a hot day most likely meant this woman was trying to avoid uncomfortable encounters with anyone.

With compassion, Jesus reveals His knowledge of her shame and longing, and points her to Himself, the source of living water. We have that same need. Beyond our shame and longing we need to drink of living water that forever satisfies our thirst. Jesus not only fills our deepest need for a savior but replaces our identity of shame with purpose—our life-changing encounters with Jesus can be just the good news that a thirsty soul is longing for.

## **WEEK TWO**

### **WOMAN AT THE WELL**



OBSERVE

Note the details of this woman’s life.

INTERPRET

How does Jesus use the well as an illustration for this woman?

APPLY

What false sources of life are you tempted to go to instead of Jesus?

John 4:7-15

*When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)*

*<sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)*

*<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”*

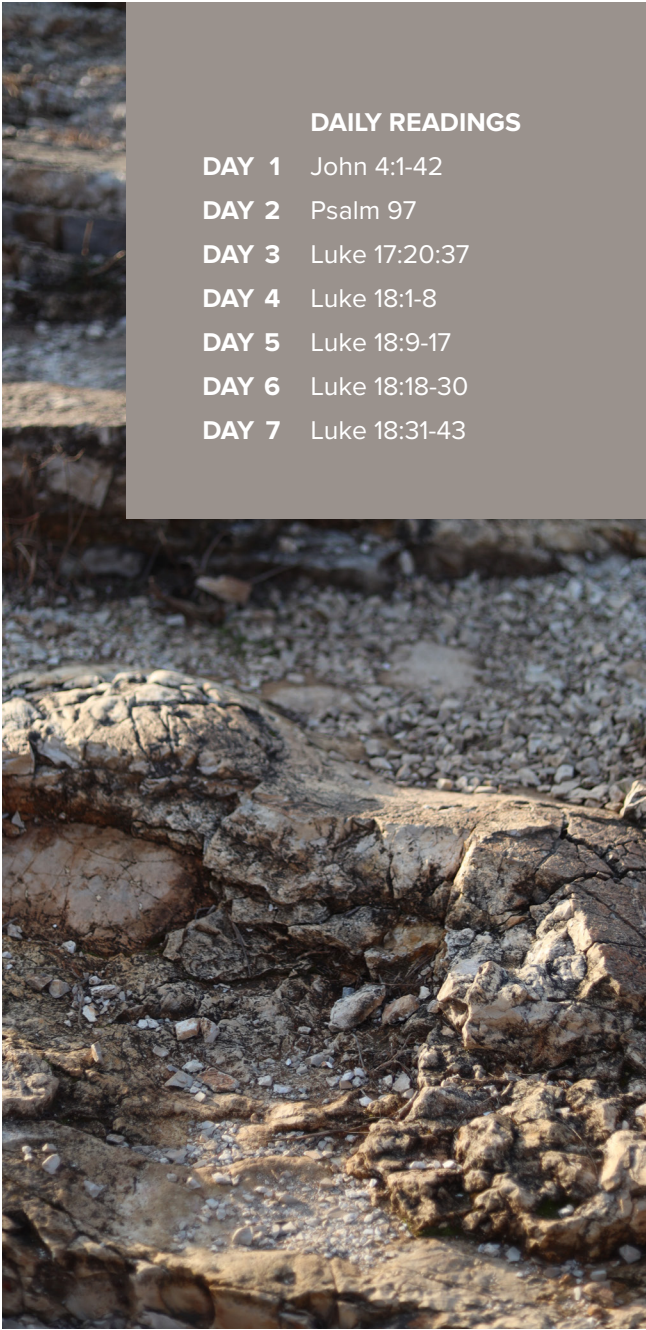
*<sup>11</sup> “Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”*

*<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”*

*<sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”*

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 4:1-42
- DAY 2 Psalm 97
- DAY 3 Luke 17:20:37
- DAY 4 Luke 18:1-8
- DAY 5 Luke 18:9-17
- DAY 6 Luke 18:18-30
- DAY 7 Luke 18:31-43





## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is the woman surprised that Jesus asked her for a drink? What social barriers is Jesus crossing?
2. What does Jesus reveal about His identity in John 4:10-13? What is the meaning of this revelation?
3. What does Jesus reveal about the woman in John 4:16-18? Why did Jesus engage this woman in this way?
4. Verse 26 is a rare but significant statement from Jesus to someone outside of the twelve. What did He reveal to the woman and why is this important? What does this statement mean to you?
5. Once the woman at the well understood the true identity of Jesus, what did she do with that news? What impact did the news have on her city?







**INSIGHT**

While the earliest manuscripts of the book of John do not contain this passage, it presents a beautiful picture of the forgiveness and love of Jesus. The story reveals the heart of Christ toward those caught in sin. Consider the scene as Jesus was teaching in the temple. The Scribes and Pharisees interrupted His teaching to confront a woman very publicly in the center of a crowd. If you were in the crowd, how would you be tempted to react? What if you were in Jesus’ shoes? What do you see in Jesus?

As you study this passage, take note of the attitude and goal of the Scribes and Pharisees. You will see a contrast between the way they see the woman and the way Jesus views her. The Scribes and Pharisees used her as a pawn in their quest to trap Jesus, without any regard for her. (Read Matthew 22:15-22 to see another example of this group trying to discredit Jesus.) Jesus, on the other hand, responds very differently. He masterfully addresses the wicked agenda of these religious leaders, while showing His true heart of compassion for the woman caught in her sin.

As you spend time in God’s Word this week, consider your motivation. Are you coming to God with an agenda? Or are you coming to Him as a dependent son or daughter in need of His love?

WEEK THREE  
WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY



OBSERVE

What is the setting of this event? How does that affect the scene?

INTERPRET

What is the debate about the law? How does it fit in the scene?

APPLY

What picture of Jesus do we see here, and how does that strike you?

John 8:2-11

*At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. <sup>3</sup> The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group <sup>4</sup> and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. <sup>5</sup> In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” <sup>6</sup> They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.*

*But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. <sup>7</sup> When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” <sup>8</sup> Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.*

*<sup>9</sup> At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. <sup>10</sup> Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”*

*<sup>11</sup> “No one, sir,” she said.*

*“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”*

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 8:2-11
- DAY 2 Psalm 98
- DAY 3 Luke 19:1-10
- DAY 4 Luke 19:11-27
- DAY 5 Luke 19:28-48
- DAY 6 Luke 20:1-8
- DAY 7 Luke 20:9-26







## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe the ploy that has been setup for Jesus.
2. To understand the background better, refer to Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22. Why do you think the adulterous man was not brought before Jesus, as well?
3. Scripture does not tell us what was written by Jesus on the ground, but what do you suppose it could have been that would have caused the Scribes and Pharisees to leave suddenly?
4. How does Jesus charge the woman?
5. How does Jesus' handling of this situation help you deal with your own sins? How does it help you in dealing with the sins of others?





### INSIGHT

This encounter took place in Bethany, a village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about a mile and a half east of Jerusalem. This is the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, where Lazarus had been raised from the dead. This is also where Jesus would soon give His final blessing to His disciples and ascend into heaven (Luke 24:50-51). The people in Bethany surely knew about Jesus, Lazarus, and his family because of what they had seen and heard roughly a week before.

Jesus was the guest of honor at a dinner, the reason for gathering. Once again, we see contrasting responses to an encounter with Jesus, this time between Mary and Judas. It centered around a jar of perfume. Mary sacrificed the expensive fragrance to Jesus as an offering without any regard for herself. Judas criticized the offering with regard only for himself. With the book of John being written at least 40 years after this encounter occurred, the full extent of Judas' treachery was not known by those in attendance. At that moment, Jesus alone would have fully known the hearts of Mary and Judas. How could others have viewed Judas' words? Would they have agreed with his assessment? As you read through the passage, consider how Jesus brings focus to the moment as He knows His time had finally come.

As you allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart this week, ask Him to reveal to you the motivations of your heart. Where is your heart right now? Take time this week to ask God to search you, know your heart, and reveal any offensive ways within you (Psalm 139:23-24).

## WEEK FOUR

### MARY OF BETHANY



OBSERVE

Observe the descriptive details and imagine the scene with each of your senses.

INTERPRET

What values are being contrasted in this story?

APPLY

What does extravagant devotion to Jesus look like in your home?

John 12:1-8

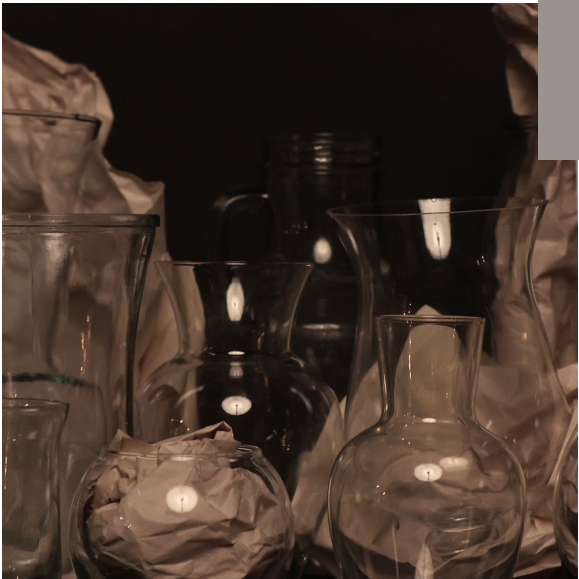
*Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. <sup>3</sup> Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.*

*<sup>4</sup> But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, <sup>5</sup> “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.” <sup>6</sup> He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.*

*<sup>7</sup> “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup> You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”*

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 12:1-11
- DAY 2 Psalm 99
- DAY 3 Luke 20:27-40
- DAY 4 Luke 20:41–21:4
- DAY 5 Luke 21:5-37
- DAY 6 Luke 22:1-6
- DAY 7 Luke 22:7-20







## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Based on what you know about Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, why do you think Mary was using the expensive perfume to anoint the feet of Jesus?
2. Knowing what is to come soon with Jesus' crucifixion, how was Mary's anointing especially meaningful?
3. This ointment is valued at 300 denarii by Judas; that would be about one year's worth of wages for a laborer. How would you have reacted to seeing (and smelling!) Mary's extravagant act of devotion?
4. How can you interpret Jesus' statement in John 12:8?
5. What is your devotion like for Jesus? How does the extravagance of Mary's love for Christ inspire you to prioritize Him more in your life and in your giving?





### INSIGHT

As governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate was accustomed to incidents with the Jews. In fact, it's believed he went to Jerusalem during the Passover week, away from his extravagant, seaside palace in Caesarea, because he anticipated potential uprisings amongst the Jews. However, to his surprise, they weren't in a riot against Caesar or Rome. They were in a riot over an innocent, nonviolent rabbi named Jesus, who allegedly claimed to be their Messiah.

Initially, he appears reluctant to get involved, telling them to deal with the matter themselves. However, the situation is serious because they demanded Jesus' death, and the death penalty could only be carried out by the Romans. Pilate's initial reluctance turns to curiosity and then to fear. He hesitates to execute an innocent man but finds himself cornered by an angry mob outside who begin to accuse him of disloyalty to Caesar for allowing Jesus to claim that He is a king.

An ever-widening gap grows between Pilate's conscious to do what is right and the pressure to maintain his image and control. He claims to have the power to determine Jesus' fate, but Jesus assertively exposes the truth that Pilate has no power over this situation.

## WEEK FIVE

### PILATE



OBSERVE

Note each of Pilate’s questions. Can you follow his thought process?

INTERPRET

What is unique about seeing Jesus interact with this kind of figure?

APPLY

Where does Jesus fit among the powers of the world today?

John 18:28-40

*Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. <sup>29</sup> So Pilate came out to them and asked, “What charges are you bringing against this man?”*

<sup>30</sup> *“If he were not a criminal,” they replied, “we would not have handed him over to you.”*

<sup>31</sup> *Pilate said, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.”*

*“But we have no right to execute anyone,” they objected. <sup>32</sup> This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.*

<sup>33</sup> *Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”*

<sup>34</sup> *“Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”*

<sup>35</sup> *“Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”*

<sup>36</sup> *Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”*

<sup>37</sup> *“You are a king, then!” said Pilate.*

*Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”*

<sup>38</sup> *“What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. <sup>39</sup> But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews’?”*

<sup>40</sup> *They shouted back, “No, not him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.*

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 18:28–19:16
- DAY 2 Psalm 105
- DAY 3 Luke 22:21-38
- DAY 4 Luke 22:39-46
- DAY 5 Luke 22:47-53
- DAY 6 Luke 22:54-62
- DAY 7 Luke 22:63-71



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who was Pontius Pilate and why was it necessary that Jesus be brought before him for trial?
2. What did Jesus reveal about Himself in His interview with Pilate? Why is this important?
3. Pilate asks a great question in John 18:38: "What is truth?" Spend some answering his question. What is the source of truth? Is truth absolute for all people in all places at all times? Can truth change?
4. When Pilate offered to release a prisoner, who did the Jewish crowd request? How do you think this made Jesus feel to hear them cry out his name?
5. The arrest and trials of Jesus put Him before the most powerful men in Jerusalem at that time. It shows that God can use adversity to advance the message of the Kingdom. How has God used your struggles to proclaim His truth and glory?







### INSIGHT

As one of the twelve disciples, Thomas had seen a lot during Jesus' ministry. Think of the miracles and the encounters that we have studied, and now imagine being there as a firsthand eyewitness of many of them. This was the experience of Thomas. We have seen him briefly twice before in John's Gospel. The first time was when Jesus announced that they were going to return to Judea (against the objections of His disciples because they feared for His life) to visit Lazarus and his family (John 11:7-8). Thomas' statement to his fellow disciples was, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (John 11:16). Thomas was ready to die with Jesus at the hands of the angry religious leaders in Judea.

Later, when Jesus talked one last time with His disciples on the night before He was crucified, Thomas spoke up again. When Jesus said He was going to prepare a place for them, Thomas said, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" (John 14:5). Jesus famously replied, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). The picture we have of Thomas is a believer ready to die for his faith, seeking to understand the teachings of his Lord, Jesus Christ.

What he was not prepared to do, however, was believe that a man could be raised from the dead. The man who asked "How can we know the way?" will now ask "how can I be expected to believe?". His encounter with the risen Christ in John 20:19-29 reveals how quickly Jesus can change a mind and a heart. John's Gospel invites us to see ourselves in Thomas, and to ask what we need to experience in order to fully believe.

## WEEK SIX

### THOMAS



OBSERVE

Look for the words “see” and “believe” in the story.

INTERPRET

How does Jesus respond to Thomas’ doubt?

APPLY

How do you deal with doubts in your life?

John 20:24-29

*Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”*

*But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”*

<sup>26</sup> *A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”*

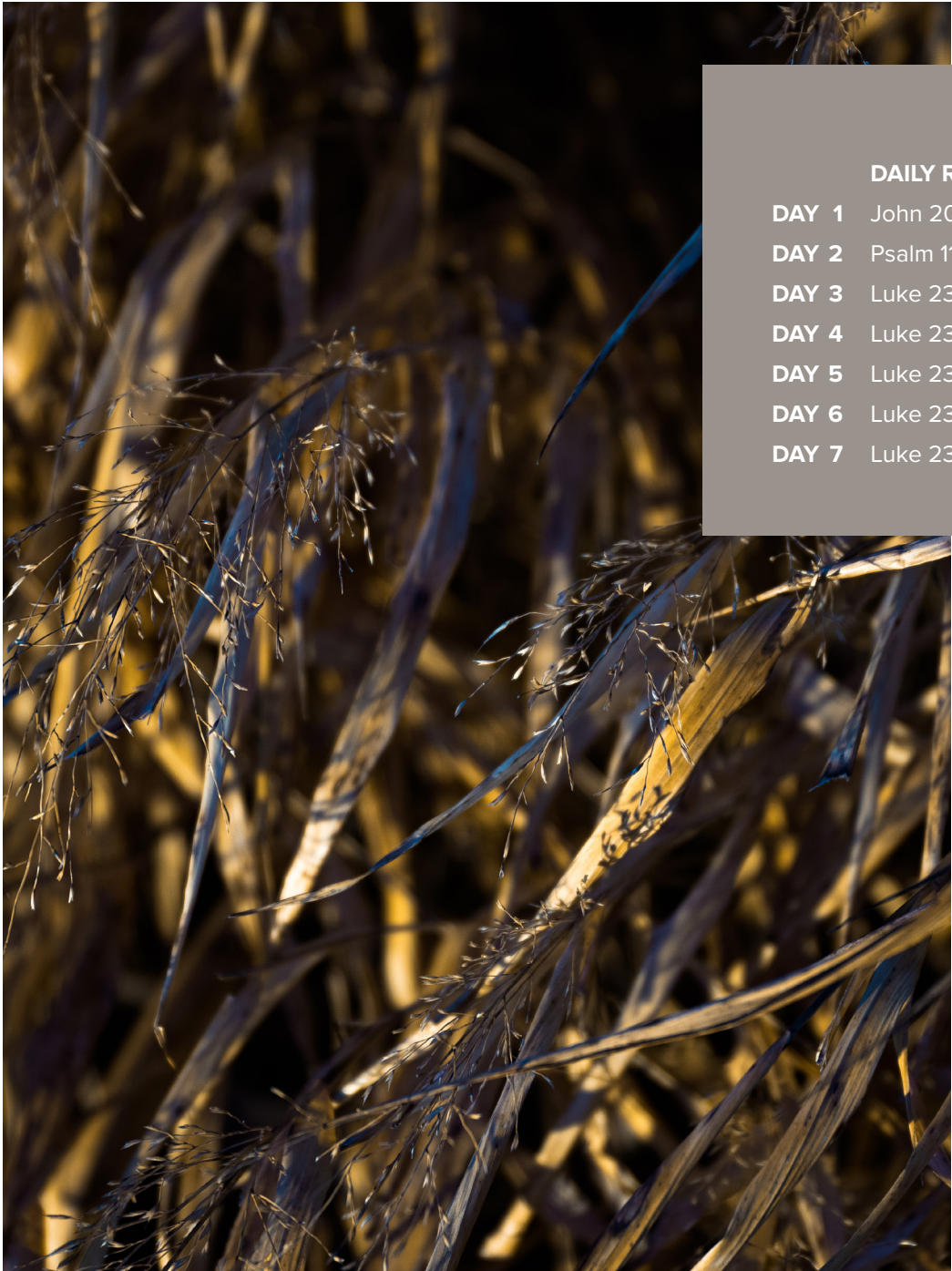
<sup>27</sup> *Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”*

<sup>28</sup> *Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”*

<sup>29</sup> *Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 20:19-29
- DAY 2 Psalm 110
- DAY 3 Luke 23:1-25
- DAY 4 Luke 23:26-38
- DAY 5 Luke 23:39-43
- DAY 6 Luke 23:44-49
- DAY 7 Luke 23:50-56







## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think Jesus repeatedly says, “Peace be with you” to the disciples when He emerges? How does this statement address their fears?
2. In John 20:21 we see this miraculous appearance has a message. What does this “sending” statement mean for the disciples?
3. How do you suppose Thomas felt about missing Jesus’ appearance? In what ways can you relate to his reaction in verses 24-25?
4. How does Jesus handle Thomas’ doubts? How is this encouraging when you experience doubts of your own?
5. In what way(s) are you having to trust in Jesus right now? Where do you need His peace?





### INSIGHT

Even though the tomb was empty and Jesus had appeared to the disciples, they had returned to their previous occupations as fishermen. Perhaps they were disillusioned. Perhaps they hadn't truly understood the significance of the empty tomb. Perhaps, Peter, in particular, felt ashamed, and unworthy to be a disciple after denying Jesus.

Jesus, in His mercy, appears to them as they are fishing. He commands them to cast their nets and they haul in an enormous catch. Peter then recognizes Jesus and swims to shore. There he finds Jesus near a fire. Jesus has set up a situation that mirrors Peter's denials; the early morning (John 18:27), the fire (John 18:18), and Jesus' "Do you love me?" questions are so pointed that Peter must have felt the weight of his shame. His response indicates that this encounter was painful (John 21:17) but Jesus' goal was to draw Peter from shame to love and service.

Jesus wants to take all our shame and transform it into love and service. We may feel unworthy to be disciples, but Jesus commissions us as well (Matthew 28:18-20). Often, our points of greatest shame become the evidence of Jesus' transforming power in our lives.

# WEEK SEVEN

## PETER



OBSERVE

Note repeated words in the story. What effect does this have?

INTERPRET

What lesson is Jesus impressing upon Peter?

APPLY

Are you ever tempted to ask “What about him/her?” in response to God’s leading? How would Jesus respond?

John 21:15-22

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

<sup>16</sup> Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

<sup>17</sup> The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. <sup>18</sup> Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.”

<sup>19</sup> Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

<sup>20</sup> Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”) <sup>21</sup> When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?”

<sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.”

DAILY READINGS

- DAY 1 John 21:1-23
- DAY 2 Psalm 118
- DAY 3 Luke 24:1-12
- DAY 4 Luke 24:13-35
- DAY 5 Luke 24:36-44
- DAY 6 Luke 24:45-53
- DAY 7 Luke 24:1-53







## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you suppose Peter immediately dives in and swims to shore as soon as he discovers that Jesus is there?
2. Why do you think Jesus ask Peter the same basic question three times in John 21:15-17? How might this relate to Peter's denials of Jesus on the day of Christ's crucifixion?
3. Look back at Jesus' teaching in John 10:11-15. What points about being a good shepherd are relevant for Peter?
4. What does Jesus mean for Peter with His repeated commands about feeding and tending His sheep? How do you see Jesus restoring Peter and setting him up for leadership in this passage?
5. In verses 19 and 21, Jesus commands Peter with the words, "Follow me." What is the Lord saying for Peter? How can we apply this in our own lives?



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