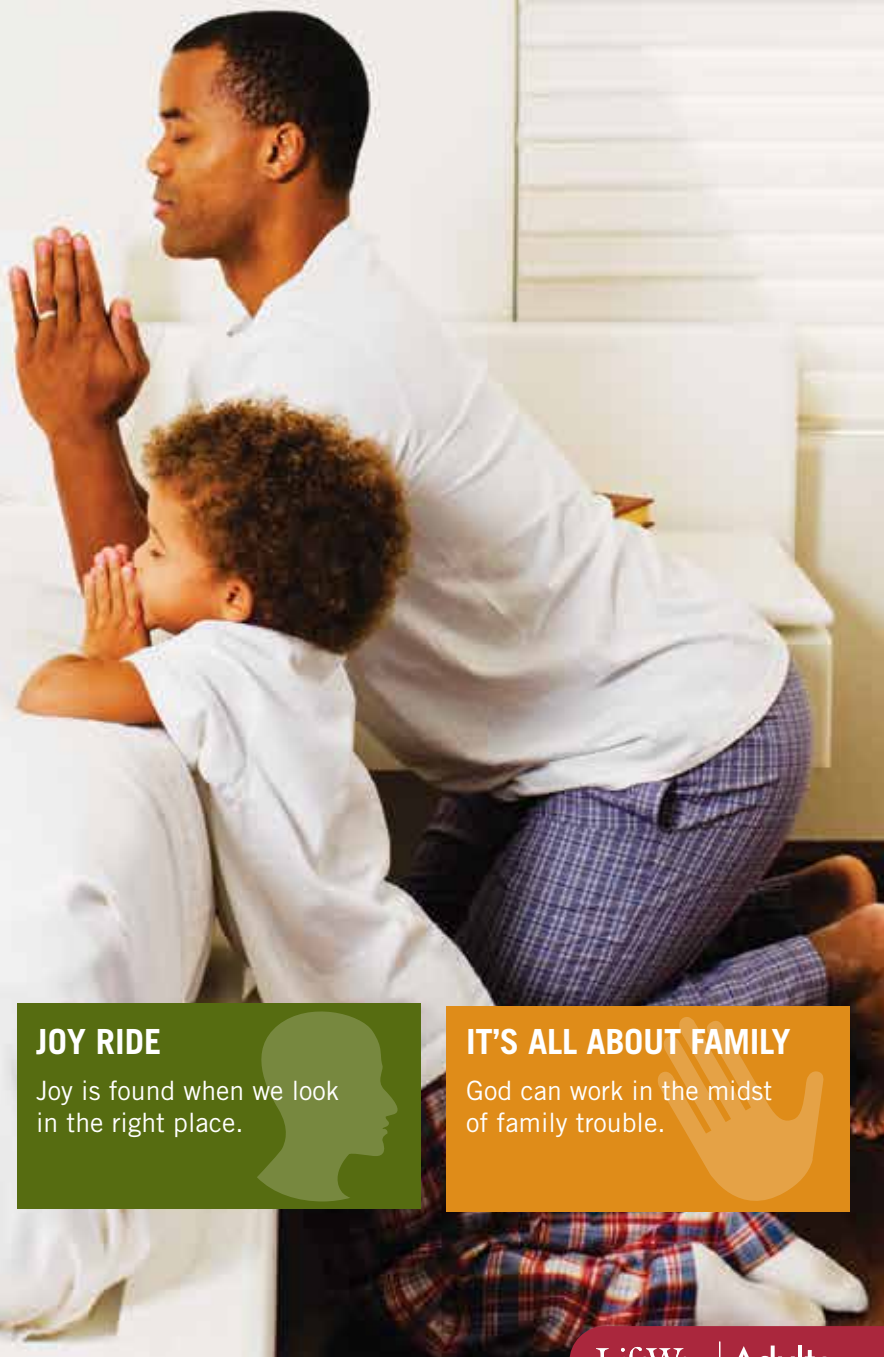




FALL 2015
www.lifeway.com/you

Leader Guide Included



JESUS JESUS JESUS

Jesus was and is the same—
yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

JOY RIDE

Joy is found when we look
in the right place.

IT'S ALL ABOUT FAMILY

God can work in the midst
of family trouble.

JESUS

Jesus Christ was with God the Father before the world was created. He became human and lived among humanity as Jesus of Nazareth. He came to show us what God the Father is like. He lived a sinless life, showing us how to live; and He died upon a cross to pay for our sins. God raised Him from the dead.

Jesus is the source of eternal life. Jesus wants to be the doorway to new life for you. In the Bible He was called the “Lamb of God” (John 1:29). In the Old Testament, sacrifices were made for the sins of the people. Jesus became the sacrificial lamb offered for your sin.

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). He is waiting for you now.

Admit to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning away from your sin.
By faith receive Jesus Christ as God’s Son and accept Jesus’ gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross.
Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: “Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.”

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision. Show others your faith in Christ by asking for baptism by immersion in your local church as a public expression of your faith.





Staying Fit ... Spiritually

We talk a lot about the importance of staying physically fit, but what about the health of your spirit? Connect, Grow, Serve, Go is a call to evaluate your present spiritual condition and discover ways to improve your spiritual health. Packed into each biblical concept—Connect, Grow, Serve, Go—is a simple way you can move forward, not remain stagnant. Best of all, these tools will stand the test of time—no “fad” diets here. They will help you become spiritually healthy, and stay that way.



WITH AN OPEN HEART
MARK 12:29-31



IN BODY, MIND, & SPIRIT
ROMANS 12:2



WITH WILLING HANDS
1 PETER 4:10-11



WITH READY FEET
MATTHEW 28:19-20





Connect urges you to worship, pray, fellowship, and relate to others in positive relationships at work, at home, and in other settings. Spiritual fitness results when you connect with God, with others, and with your church family.

Grow refers to learning and understanding more about God and His expectations of His people, which comes through Bible study. You grow by applying that knowledge to your everyday living.

Serve describes the work you do inside your church. Your church is full of ministry and service opportunities. You serve by using your spiritual gifts, skills, and passions to glorify God. All of us must work together for the church to function as God intended.

Go moves you outside the church and into the community and the world. Evangelism and missions are ways to go into your community and the world in the name of Jesus Christ. It might be uncomfortable at first, but you will experience firsthand the difference Christ can make through you.

Connect, Grow, Serve, Go must impact YOU, the individual, before it can permeate your circle of friends, your Bible study group, and then the church as a whole. But balance is the key! We must be actively participating in all four areas if we want to be spiritually healthy. All Go and no Connect with God or other believers results in powerless activity and wears you out. A steady diet of Grow without the action of Serve or Go leads to unhealthy spiritual obesity and laziness. We need a balanced spiritual diet to remain fit and able to serve God in the ways He has gifted us.

The **YOU** lessons will help you Connect , Grow , Serve , and Go . Look for these icons throughout this issue. They will help you check and maintain your spiritual health.

Fall 2015

VOLUME 8, NUMBER 1

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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR...

"There is an occasion for everything, and a time for every activity under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1).



Fall is just about here, and it is by far my most favorite season of the year! It has little to do with discovering in college that my "colors" were part of the "autumn" family (gold, bronze, yellow, brown, orange). It has everything to do with my response to God's handiwork this time of year: the vibrant foliage, amazing sunrises and sunsets, the smell of wood-burning fireplaces, that crispness in the air that seems to invigorate even after a long day, and so much more. Oh, the joy it brings!

I also know that this season won't last forever. The Word says there's a time and a season for everything under the sun. Reality says that we live in a fast-changing and complicated world. "Just keep on living" was one of my mother's favorite sayings, along with, "The older you get, the faster time goes by." There's truth in it all

I'd be remiss if I didn't offer kudos to the men and women who successfully completed the writer development conference held during the annual Black Church Leadership and Family Conference. Several of them contributed to this issue. And as always, it's our honor to pour into YOU!

Peace and blessings,

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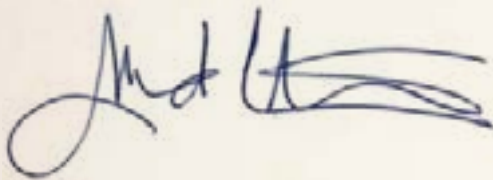
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We all face challenges in life; some are personal and some are public. I believe we are living in a time when it is taking more and more to stand for Jesus. God wants to use us to impact the world for the cause of Christ. Today, as in the time of 1 Peter, the church is undergoing persecution. Some believers are caving in. We are not! The end of 1 Peter 5:12 says, “This is the true grace of God. Take your stand in it!” That is why this collection of studies is so important. This quarter we will talk about Jesus, joy, and those who join us on the journey—our family.

What an incredible time we had this summer at Black Church Leadership and Family Conference! God moved in some amazing ways. There was powerful preaching, transformative teaching, and another awesome class completing our YOU Writer’s Conference. Make your plans now to be a part next year. Allow God to speak through YOU!

Be blessed!



Dr. Mark A. Croston, Sr.
YOU General Editor
National Director of Black Church Partnerships

**A WORD FROM THE
GENERAL EDITOR MARK CROSTON**



WWW.LIFEWAY.COM/YOU



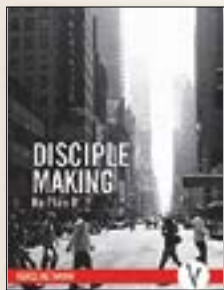
SUGGESTED DISCIPLE-MAKING RESOURCES

Here's a list of resources you can use to deepen your understanding of the units of study this quarter. These resources complement the lessons for this quarter and can be used for small group study, midweek study, or personal Bible study.



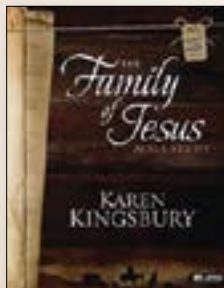
INTRANSIT: WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR WAIT? (FOR UNIT 1)

In Transit: What Do You Do with Your Wait? is designed to help adults understand that waiting without purpose leads to loneliness and doubt, but purposeful waiting brings a sense of fulfillment and an awareness of God's timing and faithfulness. This six-session study will introduce you to three truths about waiting as it traces the lives of David, Jesus, and Joseph. The companion journal in the back of this book gives you the opportunity to process what God's telling you along the way.



DISCIPLEMAKING: NO PLAN B (UNIT 2)

Jesus left us no Plan B. He spent three years revealing His Father, His kingdom, and His gospel, and now it's our turn. *Disciple Making: No Plan B* by Verge Network is a six-session Bible study to help you learn how to make disciples by modeling Jesus, pointing to Jesus, and putting Jesus' words into practice. You'll see how discipleship is motivated and fueled by the gospel. And if you fear you can't make disciples because you're unfit or incompetent, you'll find the gospel especially qualifies you for making disciples of Jesus. And in light of what God shows your group, you'll create a plan for living missionally beyond the extent of this study.



THE FAMILY OF JESUS BIBLE STUDY MEMBER BOOK (UNIT 3)

For many, family is the setting where we first learn about God. Our families influence us in positive and negative ways, and the family of Jesus was no different. They played an important role in God's story. Each person had his or her own story, but that story ultimately pointed others to Jesus. *The Family of Jesus Bible Study* is a six-week study by Karen Kingsbury that takes a look at the lives of Joseph, the protective stepfather; Zechariah, the knowing uncle; John the Baptist, the chosen cousin; Elizabeth, the faithful aunt; James, the doubting brother; and Mary, the loving mother. Each person has a strength and a struggle, all of which is culturally relevant to our lives today.

Visit www.lifeway.com or call 1-800-458-2772 for more information or to purchase any of these products.

YOU

CHURCH STORY

McEwen Baptist Church
McEwen, Tennessee



*Young Adult Small Group Leaders
McEwen Baptist Church, McEwen, Tennessee*

The **YOU** Connect, Grow, Serve, and Go strategic focus provides alignment and application guides for young adults in our congregation. The versatility of the leader commentary and daily reading make **YOU** Bible study curriculum a “one-stop guide” for small-group discipleship. Our congregation affirmed the need to start a Young Adult Sunday School class. We wanted this class to look totally different from the other Adult Sunday School classes so we could attract young families who attend our worship but were not enrolled in Bible study. **YOU** addresses relevant issues for young adults and their families.

Our church is located in rural middle Tennessee, and the curriculum is relevant for our community. We are a small congregation that averages 40 plus people in Sunday School. After adding **YOU**, we saw our average Sunday School attendance grow to 71 participants. Our young families are now more actively involved in the life of our church. Young adults in our congregation are now engaged in ministry and missions, which is opening doors to reach lost people in our community.

Every church needs a strategic discipleship plan. **YOU** provides a simple, systematic approach that adds value to that process. I recommend to any pastor who is stuck on how to reach young adults to try this Bible study curriculum. It's affordable, adaptable, and theologically accurate. LifeWay's **YOU** team hit a home run with this curriculum that allows the local church to have a grand-slam small-group experience!

Willie McLaurin, Interim Pastor and Ministry Strategist, Tennessee Baptist Convention

We'd love to hear how your church or small group navigated the challenges of switching to **YOU**, the blessings and benefits your church or small group experienced since switching to **YOU**, and why you would encourage other churches or small groups to give **YOU** a try. **Please limit your response to 150 words or less.** Feel free to provide a photo (jpeg) of a class or group using **YOU**.

Send responses to: beverly.sonnier@lifeway.com.



Unit 1

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus



A Bible Study of Jesus

John's Gospel presents a unique introduction of Jesus that reads like an impeccable resumé, designed to rouse your curiosity and stimulate your desire for a personal encounter with Him. His spiritual magnetism draws you to Him, forever changing your life. Prepare to be astounded because it is impossible to quantify the magnitude of Christ's love, abundant grace, and mercy.

This study takes you on a spiritual odyssey to connect with Jesus on a deeply intimate level. Join the stimulating search of the Scriptures for answers to these four salient questions:

- Who is Jesus?
- How does Jesus change me?
- What does Jesus say about my sin?
- Why Jesus?

Meet this Jesus: the living Word, the Master Fisherman, our exclusive Messiah, and the ultimate High Priest. Jesus is the full expression of God's love and communicates all that God thinks and desires for us, expressly to redeem His people and draw them into an intimate, eternal relationship with Him.

Introducing Jesus

Background Passage: John 1:1-18

Lesson Passages: John 1:1-5, 11-14

The Question: Who is Jesus?

The Point: Jesus is everything that God is.

LESSON PASSAGES

JOHN 1:1-5, 11-14

- ¹ **a** In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
 - ² He was with God in the beginning.
 - ³ All things were created through Him,
and apart from Him not one thing was created that has
been created.
 - ⁴ **b** Life was in Him,
and that life was the light of men.
 - ⁵ That * light shines in the * darkness,
yet the darkness did not overcome it.
-
- ¹¹ He came to His own,
and His own people did not receive Him.
 - ¹² But to all who did receive Him,
He gave them the right to be children of God,
to those who believe in His name,
 - ¹³ who were born,
not of blood,
or of the will of the flesh,
or of the will of man,
but of God.
 - ¹⁴ The Word became flesh
and took up residence among us.

We observed His * glory,
the glory as the **c** One and Only Son from the Father,
full of **d** grace and truth.

KEY WORDS

- a** **In the beginning was the Word:** Jesus' existence in eternity past with God. The Word is the fully divine and made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, in whom all things were created
- b** **Life:** A spiritual relationship with the Father as a disciple of Jesus Christ, empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit.
- c** **One and Only Son:** The status of Jesus the Son in the eyes of God the Father, emphasizing Christ's obedience and faithfulness to His Father's will. Christ is the "only begotten" Son in the same nature.
- d** **Grace and truth:** Echo the Hebrew pairing of "steadfast love" and "faithfulness and justice." They are the essence of Jesus' character.

For more information about key words (*), visit the glossary on pages 160–161.

MEMORY VERSE

John 1:14b

We observed His glory, the
glory as the One and Only
Son from the Father, full of
grace and truth.

Introducing Jesus

John 1:1-5,11-14

Who is Jesus?



UNIT 1 LESSON 1

A few years ago one of the kings of stand-up comedy, Steve Harvey, shared with 16,000 MegaFest participants how he would introduce Jesus Christ. His message was factual, unique, and passionate, moving himself and many in the audience to tears. John's Gospel provides a life-altering introduction to Jesus unlike any other, affirming that Jesus is the manifestation of God's love for humanity. I present to you JESUS, the Word, Life, Light and Love.

Focal Passage Outline

JESUS IS THE WORD

(John 1:1-2)

JESUS IS LIFE

(John 1:3-4)

JESUS IS LIGHT

(John 1:5)

JESUS IS LOVE

(John 1:11-14)

JESUS IS THE WORD JOHN 1:1-2

Read John 1:1-2. Much like we use words to communicate thoughts and ideas, the Son is God's visible expression of Himself. You have heard the adage, "A picture paints a thousand words." Try to fathom the exponential impact of the living, breathing, fully human, fully divine expression of God (Phil. 2:6).

John's prologue of Christ is unique among the four Gospels, written to believers everywhere. John's purpose for writing this Gospel was to build faith and confidence in Jesus Christ so we may believe He is the Son of God and enjoy life in Him (John 20:30-31). We should be reminded of our role in the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). John used the Word (see Diggin' Deeper, p. 13) to build a bridge to invite all audiences into the deeper truths of his account of Jesus.

How do you begin conversations with others about Jesus and the life only He can give? What strategies have you used to meet people where they are? To invite others to Christ?

John speaks of the Word, a title for Jesus, and to the preexistence of the Word to the creation of the world. The Word is distinct from God and was with Him in eternity past, implying personal communion. “The Word was God” establishes His divinity. The Word is fully God, so that what will be said about the Word will be said in the fullest sense about God.

How do verses 1-2 describe the existence, dwelling place, and nature of the Word?

Read these Scripture passages to discover other characteristics of the nature of the Word:

- Psalm 33:6
- Psalm 107:20
- Isaiah 55:11

JESUS IS LIFE JOHN 1:3-4

Read John 1:3-4. Three principle theories fundamentally underline the beliefs of most of human thought regarding how the universe was created:

- God (gods) created the universe and was/were present before the universe was created.
- The universe created itself (big bang theory).
- The universe has always existed.

Number one is the correct answer. God is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe in the ultimate sense. The Word was the Agent of creation and acted to carry out God’s will, giving Him preeminence over all creation. As the Creator of all, the Word is Lord of all, and our response to Him should be to recognize and submit to His authority (John 11:25; 14:6; I John 5:12).

How would you explain to a person that believes the big bang theory that God created the universe? Why is it beneficial to know and share this information?

Colossians 1:17 says, “He is before all things, and by Him all things hold together.” The Bible says that God the Son is not only the Creator but also the Sustainer of this immense universe.



Diggin’ Deeper



Logos

The Greek word *logos* (translated “Word”) has been used often among philosophers and theologians. Of the 330 times it is used in the New Testament, it is used 40 times in John. It shows God’s desire and ability to speak to humans.

John introduces Jesus as the Logos, drawing on a concept familiar to both Jews and Gentiles. We know emphatically that Jesus preexisted creation, was the Agent of creation, and is God’s perfect revelation in the flesh.

The impetus for this message is to lead readers to embrace the saving work of Christ Jesus.

Read the following passages.

- John 20:30-31
- Psalm 33:6
- Colossian 1:16



Did you know?

Tabernacle means “to dwell.” The adage, “Home is where the heart is,” captures the essence of God’s desire (John 3:16) for us and reverberates His love and grace toward His people. The Greek terms *skene* and *skenoo* were used to refer to the temporary structural dwellings and the act of dwelling temporarily.

Just as the tabernacle had been the center of God’s permanent presence with Israel (Ex. 29:43, 45), God has taken up residence among His people through His Son Jesus (John 1:14). God’s glory once restricted to the tabernacle is now visible through Jesus (Rev. 21:3).

Many people today seem to be obsessed with making their lives better, more meaningful, comfortable, and secure—usually according to the world’s standards. Throughout his Gospel, John distinguished between simply living and possessing true life. Real life has a spiritual dimension that is eternal and has an enduring, unending quality. It is a **b** life in relationship with our Heavenly Father, empowered by the Spirit (see Key Words, p. 11). The life given by the Word is also the * light (see Key Words Glossary, pp. 160–161) of men. Through the Word, the * darkness of ignorance, sin-blinded eyes, and self-deception are dispelled; and humanity can see!

How would you explain to a nonbeliever or a new convert the difference between living and living in Jesus?

JESUS IS LIGHT JOHN 1:5

Read John 1:5. John says that Jesus is the source of natural and spiritual life and this same life was the natural and spiritual light of men. We live in an age when artificial and natural light are in abundance. However, spiritual darkness hangs like a dark cloud.

What do the following verses say about this Light?

- John 8:12
- John 12:46
- John 3:19


The Word makes a universal appeal. The floodlight of God’s truth is that the Lord Jesus Christ is our Creator, and He has come into the world and paid the penalty for our sins. The Light reveals our sinfulness and affirms that by faith we can receive forgiveness and eternal life. John states that the light shines in * darkness (see Key Words Glossary, pp. 160–161), but “the darkness did not overcome it.” Darkness cannot shut out this Light. In this Light we all can see.

How will you impress on the unbeliever the urgency to accept the light and move into the full light of faith and salvation?

JESUS IS LOVE JOHN 1:11-14

Read John 1:11-14. Rejection can be painful. Christ came to the world He created, and it did not know Him. Even the Jewish nation chosen by God to prepare the rest of the world for the Messiah rejected Him. John's Gospel routinely uses "world" to describe people in rebellion against God, people lost in sin.

Despite God's priceless gift, how does the world still reject Him? Conduct personal introspection. What are some ways you have rejected the Word, and what corrective actions will you take?

Christ's coming was a mission of love (John 3:16). He demonstrated love and is the essence of love. The Word, full of  **grace and truth** (see Key Words, p. 11), was the once-and-for-all sacrifice that satisfied God's requirements for the removal of sin. Christ's love compels us to share the good news with the world. Those who see its truth and believe will find new life on this side of heaven and will live forevermore.

Live It!

Who is Jesus? In this lesson alone He is the second Person of the Trinity, the only begotten Son of the Father. He is God and has always existed; He is the incarnate Word, Light, Life, Love, Savior, the Agent of creation, and the Sustainer of the universe—fully man and fully God. Christ is the perfect revelation of God; everything that can be said of Jesus is true of God. Who is Jesus to you?

These inexplicable truths are too amazing to stockpile. This week introduce someone to Christ and His mission of love. Share your personal testimony about the Word and ask God's guidance to help them understand so they too can experience new life in Him and the promise of heaven.

SO WHAT? How does this apply to me?

John's presentation of the Word moves from God who is the Creator in the beginning to God who reveals the Father because He knows the Father. Jesus spanned the gap between God and humanity as the Messiah—fully God and fully man. He dwelt among His people, revealing God full of grace and truth. Those who believe and receive the gospel of Jesus can be reborn spiritually, adopted into the royal family of God with the promise of eternal life. The way to share in this intimacy with the Father is to receive salvation through Jesus and to obey the Great Commission. Find them! Bring them in! Grow them up! Send them out!

- *How will you reflect the light of Christ in your life in order to be a credible witness in a dark world?*



- *What is so amazing about grace and truth coming through one man? How will you communicate this Word in your own words to help others understand the light, life, and love of the gospel message?*

1. THE LIGHT GIVER

John 1:4-5

The light of Jesus shines forever.

Since light comes from God, nothing can drive it away. In life no challenge, difficulty, or hardship can stop the light of Jesus from shining. That is, if you believe. Jesus is willing to illuminate every heart and soul that is open to receive Him. Jesus came to bring beauty and light to all creation.

Lord, I open my heart to receive Your light in every area of my life.

2. APPLE OF HIS EYE

John 1:11-14

Jesus showed His great love by coming down to us. The author of creation became human and felt rejection from those He came to save.

We must never forget that Jesus loves us. Yes, with all our weaknesses and shortcomings, we are still the “apple of His eye!” No matter what we’ve done, His plan was always to write our names on His heart for eternity.

Jesus, thank You for loving me unconditionally. I willingly receive Your abundant grace today.

DAILY READINGS

3. BE TRANSFORMED

Psalms 103:8

Jesus wants to fill you. Then He wants to transform you. The more we willingly submit to Him, the more we become like Him. The God of compassion and love calls us to make disciples for the kingdom of God. In our next study we will discover how encountering Jesus completely changes our nature. The results are out of this world!

Thank You, Lord, for the privilege of knowing You personally. Help me submit to the process of change.

4. FOLLOW THE LEADER

Matthew 4:19-22


As a child, did you ever play Follow the Leader? The fun game challenges participants to copy the behavior of the leader. In our relationship with Christ, God doesn’t call us to be robots but desires to revolutionize our lives. Is anything keeping you from following the leader, Christ? In our next session we’ll study the cost of our commitment to Christ.

Father, I trust You as my leader. I surrender my life into Your hands.


HOW TO TEACH

Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!

Step 1: Read the Lesson and study the Leader Commentary.



Unit 3 It's All About Family



A Bible Study on Family

Whenever you need work done on anything, it makes sense to find a real expert. What might happen if you hired a plumber to fix your car? Turn the ignition switch, and it'll in gear. Step on the gas, and you go nowhere, unless your car blasts water out the tailpipe and down the street. Or, what might happen if you hired a piano teacher to tutor your daughter in advanced math? Let's just agree that paying awesome concertos won't help her pass geometry.

If we're trying to give your family major repairs or even just a tune-up, it makes sense to work with an expert. So we do consult with Dr. Phil! DrPhil The lady up the street who seems to have it all together? This five-week study on family goes right to Creator of marriage and family Himself!

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UNIT 3, LESSON 1

Family for What?

Background Passage: Genesis 1-2
Lesson Passages: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18,21-25

The Question: Why did God create family?
The Point: God created family to be a blueprint for the world.

LESSON PASSAGE

GENESIS 1:26-28

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth."

27 So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.

28 And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth."

GENESIS 2:18,21-25

18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper for him as his complement."

19 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. 20 Then the Lord God made the rib He had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. 21 And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called "woman," for she was taken from man.

22 This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. 23 Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

KEY WORDS

- Male:** To govern, to exercise authority, protect, humankind was created to sub due the earth and all of its creatures.
- Image of God:** That which resembles God in man.
- Helper:** One who assists another. This term is used many other of God than of man or woman.
- Woman:** A member of the female sex created by God from man and made to help him.
- One flesh:** Sexual union, total oneness of self so that the two become one. Created by God in each marriage (Matt. 19:6).

For more information about key words (H), visit www.lifeWay.com page 106-141.

MEMORY VERSE

Malachi 2:15
Didn't the one God make us with a covenant of His love? And what does the one seek? A godly offspring. So watch yourselves carefully, and do not seclude yourselves from the wife of your youth.

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LEADER COMMENTARY

UNIT 3, LESSON 1 (pp. 67-71)

Family for What?

Lesson Passages: Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18,21-25
The Question: Why did God create family?
The Point: God created family to be a blueprint for the world.

This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, "Why did God create family?" and drive home His love and truth. God created family to be a blueprint for the world.

FOCUS ON THESE POINTS

Created to Uniquely Reveal God (Gen. 1:26-27)
God declared His intention to create man and woman to reproduce and populate the planet. The second command called for humanity to subdue the earth. The Hebrew word *subdue* means "to tread down." This conquest of the planet was intended for human benefit, not to satisfy human greed. God delegated to humanity an authority and responsibility given to no other created being. Other animals were placed under human control. This command entails appropriate stewardship of God's design for the earth as the human habitat.

Created for Togetherness (Gen. 2:18,21-25)
The phrase "helper as his complement" indicated that this helper or partner would be fashioned specifically to fit with Adam and to be fully adequate as a counterpart. God called "the one who helps" when He came to our aid (e.g., Ps. 120:1; 115:1-3). By creating woman from the rib of man, God demonstrated that man and woman are to come together in physical, emotional, and spiritual intimacy.

Humanity was created in God's image (Gen. 1:27) so that people can enjoy a relationship with God. In 2:21-25 man and women were created like each other so that they can enjoy a relationship with each other. The idea does not imply servitude or inferiority.

Again God demonstrated His wonderful providence by providing exactly what the man needed. The man named this new creation woman. God's plan did not include union between two men or two women. Only the union of a man and a woman can fulfill completely the function of family in human existence.

Each marriage produces a family that is unique. Both husband and wife must leave their parents and establish a new family. God gave men the responsibility of leading within the family.

While the idea of the English word *shake* stresses an individual's inner attitude, the Hebrew stresses the sense of public disgrace (v. 25). Two people become "one flesh" through complete honesty and unqualified acceptance. God intended that husband and wife live together without distrust or dishonesty.

CREATED FOR BLESSING AND WORK (Gen. 1:28)

The verb "blessed" means God provided humanity with the power necessary for success. God made it possible for people to do that which He commanded.

Need more commentary/articles to increase your understanding?
www.lifeWay.com/you

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BEFORE YOU TEACH

FOR UNIT 3, LESSON 1 (pp. 67-71)

STEP 1 REACH OUT.

It's common for attendance to drop off in late fall. Going into this unit, your group members will need a fresh infusion of excitement. Go ahead, promote from the pulpit and on your church social-media pages. Have each person write a note to the group members who have attended your class or share your enthusiasm about this "It's All About Family" study.

STEP 2 READ RELATED ARTICLES.

Excellent online Biblical illustration articles relate to each lesson. Some delve into one small part or character from the lesson, and others express the primary theme of the lesson. This week's article "Created by God" (pg. 6) on www.lifeWay.com/YOU and click on DOWNLOADABLES for Unit 3, Lesson 1) gives the creation story background to set the context of the lesson.

STEP 3 ENCOURAGE AND GIVE HOPE.

Family life will be a difficult subject for some or many in your group. Be the cheerleader for your learners. Be direct about the difficulty of this topic, and then be enthusiastic about how the truths of Scripture discussed in this unit can help overcome family issues or make good families even better.

STEP 4 PREPARE A LIST OF FAMILY BLESSINGS.

Group members will need you to give examples and thought starters to "prime the pump" for their Live It! challenge this week. Brainstorm a list of simple, new things members could do or say as a blessing to a spouse (together for a family member or friend). List Gary Chapman's five "love languages" on a poster or whiteboard: words of affirmation, words of service, receiving gifts, quality time, and physical touch (see www.5loveanguages.com).

LOOK BACK

Welcome everyone to this new unit, "It's All About Family," a five-week study about God's purpose and blueprint for families. Refer to last week's Live It! assignment (p. 63) where learners were challenged to pray for the Lord in your community and opportunities to share your faith. Ask the group what they thought of the challenge. Launch this unit by reading aloud the title, The Question, and The Point for each of the five lessons. Then invite a volunteer to read aloud the "It's All About Family" Unit Overview (p. 66).

YOU OBJECT LESSON

SELFIES

Five years ago nobody had ever heard of a "selfie." Fast-forward to 2013, and we're declaring "word of the year." Invite several volunteers to show selfies on their smart phones. Be sure to have one of your own. That's funny. Say: Even if you don't take selfies, you see your reflection in mirrors, windows, and phone screens. Emphasize that God created each of us, and our families, to be reflections of His image to a lost and confused world. Say: Whenever you see a selfie or any reflection of yourself, instead of thinking about stay hairs or your derriere being too large, ask: "How am I reflecting Jesus?"

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Step 2: Prepare to teach an exciting lesson using the Before You Teach page for each lesson.

Step 3: Use the Teaching Plan for each lesson to prepare and facilitate an in-depth discussion of the lesson passage. Don't forget that you can cut out the Teaching Plan if you want to be on the same page as members of your group.

FAMILY FOR WHAT? (TEACHING PLAN)

FOR UNIT 3, LESSON 1 (pp. 67-71)

INTRODUCTION

Point out that many of us can relate to Elmer Watt's Mother's words: "God gives us our relatives, thank God we can count on friends." This week you'll be discussing why God created family in our first place. Identify the biblical model for family as one man and one woman committed in a lifelong marriage, together being a light to the world and raising up the next generation. If they are blessed with children.

Ask the group to brainstorm a list of ways our culture tries to distort God's plan for marriage. As a group, you should also make a list of societal and life pressures that can take a toll on our families. Capture items on a whiteboard or large flip chart as people offer them.

Note: Make the point up front that this discussion cannot get off track in sharing opinions on homosexual marriages, living together outside of marriage, or other distortions.

DIG INTO THE TEXT

CREATED TO UNIQUELY REVEAL GOD

GENESIS 1:26-27

- Exhort a volunteer to read Genesis 1:26-27 aloud.**
Discuss: According to these verses, what makes us unique in the scheme of creation? Exhort another volunteer to read the first paragraph under "Created to Uniquely Reveal God" (p. 68) beginning with the words "Let's go." Lead learners to discuss the first question (p. 68) which asks, "In what ways do you think humankind can reflect or mirror the image of God, even in our fallen state?"
- Review the Did You Know? comparison (p. 70) between "oneness in marriage" and the "Trinity" or tri-unity of the Godhead.** Discuss with the group the last question under "Created to Uniquely Reveal God" (p. 69): "What do you think it means to be a godly family?" Let the responses.
- Invite a volunteer to read aloud 1 Corinthians 7:32-35.** Point out that God's blessing on marriage and His design for marriage to uniquely reveal the oneness in the Godhead and reflect the connection between Christ and the church does not mean being single is in any way inferior. In fact, Paul was single.

CREATED FOR BLESSING AND WORK

GENESIS 1:28

- Explain:** Verse 28 emphasizes God blessed the couple and put them right to work. He gave them a purpose: invite a volunteer to read the first paragraph under "Created for Blessing and Work" (p. 69) beginning with the words "God didn't create."
- Place learners into four subgroups, assigning one of these four verses to each subgroup:** Proverbs 8:22, Psalm 127:3-5, Ephesians 6:1-2, and Ecclesiastes 7:12-14. Instruct the subgroups to read their verses and discuss the first question "Created for Blessing and Work" (p. 69) beginning with the words "God didn't create."
- Place learners into four subgroups, assigning one of these four verses to each subgroup:** Proverbs

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Step 4: Visit www.lifeWay.com for more leader commentary, articles to enhance your understanding of the lesson passage, and a midweek plan that can be adapted for midweek or worship services.

STEP 1 SET THE TONE.

This first session sets the tone for the entire unit. Provide a brief summary about the four-session unit to generate interest. Prayerfully immerse yourself in a thorough background study of the lesson content. Approach the lesson with a learner attitude, seeking new insights, anticipating questions, feelings, and concerns your class members may have about the lesson.

STEP 2 ENGAGE AND CONNECT.

Getting class members to dialogue and engage in activities that clarify the lesson will improve their retention levels by 50 percent, as opposed to just lecturing to them. Gear the lesson to appeal to the senses and address multiple learning styles. Pray for God’s direction for engagement and connection.

STEP 3 APPLICATION. APPLICATION. APPLICATION.

Focus on the truth of the Word and the message being conveyed. Have the theological discussion, but also create a safe environment for learners to be transparent about the lesson’s impact today. Use thought-provoking questions to encourage them to share how this Word can help them grow as believers and make a difference in their lives and the lives of those with whom they interact.

STEP 4 PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.

Pray throughout the preparation and delivery of the lesson. Open and close the session with a timely prayer, providing opportunities for class members and guests to share prayer requests. You or the prayer leader may solicit volunteers to pray. Thank God for this lesson and for the ones to follow in this unit.



BACK

Greet class members and guests. **Say:** *Last week we closed out “Stand,” a powerful unit on influence. What better way to propel us into a new unit of study on Jesus, the most influential person that ever lived.* Invite volunteers to briefly share their outcome of last week’s Live It! challenge. **Say:** *Application of each of the lessons is what separates it from a great Bible story and a personal spiritual growth opportunity.* Transition into today’s study by inviting learners to share insights from their study of lesson 1.

YOU OBJECT LESSON



RESUMÉ

Provide copies of a well-written resume. **Say:** *A resume is a marketing tool designed to capture the reader’s attention, propel you through the stages of the recruitment process, and land a job.* Explain that a resumé is your first introduction to the hiring manager. It provides a synopsis of your skills, affiliations, accomplishments, experiences, and education. **Say:** *John’s prologue (John 1:1-18) is Christ’s impeccable resumé.* Emphasize that Christ is seeking the position of our personal Savior, not for hire but as an extension of His grace. He is exclusively qualified. **Ask:** *What do you know about Jesus that would impact your decision to choose Him as your Savior?* **Say:** *By saying yes to this candidate, you will be blessed for all eternity. Shop His resumé to everyone you know.*

INTRODUCTION

Before the start of class, select a one-page resumé and a brief job description for which that person IS NOT qualified. Provide enough copies for each class member. Additionally, provide each learner a copy of a basic blank resumé template with space to fill in information for each component.

Direct learners' attention to the Object Lesson (p. 102). **Say:** *Take a few minutes to review the resumé provided and determine if the applicant is a worthwhile candidate for the position. Why or why not?* Discuss responses.

Say: *Christ is not seeking gainful employment but is offering salvation through grace to everyone that believes in Him. Today's lesson will acquaint us with Jesus' qualifications as the Word, Life, Light, and Love.*

DIG INTO THE TEXT

JESUS IS THE WORD

JOHN 1:1-2

- **Invite a learner to read aloud John 1:1-2.** Discuss the power of words to communicate our thoughts, emotions, character, and intentions. **Say:** *Communication plays a critical role in human affairs. Words can hurt, heal, or serve as a weapon of conflict or as a tool of cooperation.* Point out that John, in his introduction of Jesus, capitalized on the universal use of words as a basis for providing a deeper understanding of Jesus, the **Word**. Three claims are made about the Word in these verses: the existence, dwelling place, and nature. **Ask:** *What are the bases of these claims? What message does John hope to convey to his audience by sharing these three points?*
- **Say:** *An introduction is the presentation of one person or persons to another.* Explain that introductions are generally made as a display of proper etiquette to establish a friendship, to initiate a working or romantic relationship, or to give or receive assistance. **Ask:** *What are John's intentions for this introduction? What strategy might you use, based on these verses, to present Christ to others?*

JESUS IS LIFE

JOHN 1:3-4

- Invite learners to describe what they would consider as "living the good life." **Say:** *In today's society people have an obsession and fascination with acquiring more things like increasing their bank accounts, acquiring the latest-greatest-must-have technology or bigger better homes and cars, and traveling to exotic places.* Point out that sadly the gratification is fleeting, especially when we discover that the good life is a moving target with the standards set by the world. King Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, went on a quest to discover the meaning of life thousands of years ago and found the answer. His words of wisdom might be that we are looking for life in all the wrong places.
- **Read John 1:3-4 aloud.** **Say:** John wants us to meet the Giver of both physical and spiritual life. All things were made by Him, and anything that was made, He made it. Emphasize that Jesus was the exclusive Agent of creation and the Creator of life. **Ask:** *Why did God create mankind, and how are we living up to that standard? How does Christ's life bring light to our lives?*

INTRODUCING JESUS (TEACHING PLAN)

FOR UNIT 1, LESSON 1 (pp. 11–15)

JESUS IS LIGHT

JOHN 1:5

- **Ask a learner to read John 1:5 in the dark.** Then turn the light on and make the same request. **Ask:** *What difference does the light make?* **Say:** *The dark room is a simple example of our world. It's a dark place, despite the natural and artificial light.* Point out that Jesus is the light that has come into the world to expose the darkness and offer the permanent antidote (John 8:12). **Ask:** *How does Christ bring light to the entire world? As His disciple, what is your role in illuminating the world?* Briefly discuss responses.
- **Say:** *Light and darkness are opposing forces. Verse 5 announces the triumph of light over darkness. Some people reject the light and stumble around in darkness, spending eternity separated from Christ.* **Ask:** *How would you invite someone into the light of Christ?*

JESUS IS LOVE

JOHN 1:11-14

- Remind learners of three basic types of love: *eros* (or erotic love), *philos* (the love between friends), and *agape* (unconditional love). Explain that *eros* is based on physical attraction, and *philos* is based on a give-and-take relationship. The highest form of love is God's *agape* love for His humankind.
- The most amazing example of God's love toward us was when He sent His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, to His suffering and death on the cross for our sins. Christ was perfect in every way and had no obligation to die for us, but He chose to give His life. Jesus is the personification of God's love. As phenomenal as this message is, some will accept God's love, and others will reject it. **Ask:** *How will you respond to God's astounding love?*

SO WHAT? HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO ME?

- "Introducing Jesus" is both a title and a call to action. John, an eyewitness and disciple, took a unique approach to present Jesus as the Word. Steve Harvey used his comedic platform to make an impactful introduction. Meeting Jesus should top everyone's "bucket list." You've not truly lived until you've met Jesus. Assist others in filling their spiritual vacuum as well. Use your God-given style and sphere of influence to share this life-changing and life-defining message of love.
- *What kinds of apprehensions or challenges have you experienced in making this crucial introduction, and what actions have you taken to resolve them?*
 - *What makes "Introducing Jesus" an evangelism lesson, and what is your specific role and your church's corporate role in responding in obedience?*
 - *What elements of who the Word is do you still need clarification or teaching on?*
- *As a disciple of Christ, what personal message are you prepared to share with others about who Jesus is?*

CLOSE THE SESSION

Remind learners that this lesson challenges believers, first, to receive the phenomenal message of who Jesus is; second, to understand the present and eternal impact the truth of the message can have on all who would believe it; and third, to describe the greatest love story ever told—the agape love shown by God toward His highest creation. Invite learners to take a moment to think about one thing from the lesson they would like to thank God for, and then close with a sentence prayer from each person.

Introducing Jesus

Lesson Passage: John 1:1-5, 11-14

The Question: Who is Jesus?

The Point: Jesus is everything that God is.

This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, “Who is Jesus?” and to drive home this one truth: Jesus is everything that God is.

FOCUS ON THESE POINTS

Jesus Is the Word (John 1:1-2)

Many of the dominant themes in the Gospel of John are revealed in the first several verses. His nature, His role in creation, and His work on behalf of humanity are all mentioned. His character as the life and light Giver are also introduced.

The Word was preexistent because Jesus was present at creation. The scope of the phrase “in the beginning” (John 1:1) is broadened exponentially by the fact that the Word became flesh while maintaining complete divinity. This blessed event was a major turning point for humankind. “The Word was with God” affirms Jesus’ distinct identity, assures fellowship with God, and provides clear indication of the existence of the Trinity. The Deity of the Word is definitively established because the “Word was God” (John 1:1). All that is true of the Word is also true of God without diminishing His sovereignty as the first Person of the Trinity.

Jesus Is Life (John 1:3-4)

Jesus, as the Source and Creator of life, is a major theme of the apostle John. Confirmation of this theme is provided in these statements: “For just as the Father has life in Himself, so also He has granted to the Son to have life in Himself” (John 5:26). “[He] gives life to the world” (John 6:33). “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). “Jesus Christ ... is the true God and eternal life” (1 John 5:20).

Verse 3 gives the Word superiority over all of creation and reinforces the unparalleled personal communion between God and the Word. In addition to the role of the Word as Creator, we also recognize His position as life Giver.

Just as the Word of God in the Old Testament was often revelatory, enlightening humanity of the nature

and will of God, so the Word in the New Testament (Jesus) reveals truth, the true nature of God and humanity, and the true path to salvation, the nature of real life.

Jesus Is Light (John 1:5)

The Word, which is the Light, is more powerful than darkness, and all humanity will be judged by the light of God’s will and truth. Through the Word the darkness of ignorance, sin-blinded eyes, and self-deception are dispelled; humanity is illumined by truth. John 1:5 states that light shines in darkness, but “the darkness did not overcome it.” The word “overcome” (Gk. *katalambano*) literally means “to apprehend, to lay hold of so as to possess as one’s own, or to seize.”

The light of God’s truth is that the Lord Jesus Christ is our Creator, and He has come into the world and paid the penalty for our sins. The light tells us that we are sinners, and by faith we can receive forgiveness and eternal life. For some the light of Jesus Christ is the source of their lives. “But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

Jesus Is Love (John 1:11-14)

Even though Christ created the world, His highest creation did not recognize Him when He came to earth in the flesh. Despite the overwhelming evidence that Jesus was the Savior, even the Jewish nation (whom Christ had chosen to prepare the rest of the world for His coming) rejected Him.

John 3:16 captures the true essence of the message: “For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.” Love has been declared the criterion for distinguishing the children of God from the children of the Devil. In God’s deep abiding love, He has taken up residence among us through His Son Jesus. The fact that the sovereign God dwelt among humans speaks volumes about His love and grace toward His people.



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