



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Daily Discipleship Guide

Winter 2022-23 | CSB



the theme of 1:1, the Word stopped means "pitched an allusion to God's Israelites in the tabernacle (Exod. 33:7). In the past God's presence to His people in and the temple. Now God has come among His people in the flesh, Jesus Christ (John 1:17). Since to God's glory hark back to images that describe the manifestation of His presence and glory in theophanies (appearances of God), the tabernacle, or the temple (Exod. 33:22; Num. 14:10; Deut. 5:22). The Greek word *monogenes* underlying *only begotten* means "only child" (Judg. 11:34;

that Light, but *was sent* to that Light. the true Light, which lighteth that cometh into the world. as in the world, and 'the world was y him, and the world knew him not. he came unto his own, and his own ived him not. ² But ^{2a} as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: ¹³ ^o Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴ ^p And the Word ^q was made ^r flesh, and dwelt among us, (and ^s we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) ^t full of grace and truth.

JOHN'S WITNESS OF CHRIST

¹⁵ ^u John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, 'He that cometh after me is preferred before me: ^v for he was before me.

¹⁶ ^w And of his ^x fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

¹⁷ ^y For ^z the law was given by Moses, but ^{aa} grace and ^{ab} truth came by Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ ^{ac} No man hath seen God at any time; ^{ad} the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

U N D E R S T A N D

E X P L O R E

A P P L Y

John 1-11

ΕΝ ΚΑΙ
ΑΝΚΑ
ΚΙΝ ΚΑ
ΚΟΙΛΙΑ
ΔΕΛΒΗΗ
ΓΑΡΩΣ
ΟΥΣΟΥΕΙ
ΕΝΑΓΑΛΑ
ΜΟΥ ΚΑΙΜ
Α ΟΤΙΕΣΤΑΙ
ΜΕΝΟΙΣΑΥΤΗ
ΙΑ ΜΕΓΑΛΥΝΕΙ
ΚΑΙ ΗΓΑΛΙΑΣΕΝ
Ω ΤΩΣ ΩΤΗΡΙΜΟΥ
ΕΝΚΣ ΕΠΙΤΗΝΤΑΙΝ
ΑΥΤΟΥ ΙΔΟΥΓΑΡΑΠΟΤΟ



WHO CAN YOU TRUST?

In the old westerns, the good guys wore the white hats, while the villains dressed in black. On one hand, that kept things pretty simple. But, on the other hand, the best stories have a way of keeping us guessing. All of us have found ourselves shocked when a character we trusted turned out to be the enemy. And we've been pleasantly surprised to discover someone we despised was secretly working behind the scenes on behalf of the hero.

Unfortunately, what works well in books, in movies, or on television isn't so clear in real life. Sometimes, it's hard to know who's really on our side. We struggle to recognize people's true motives. When we guess wrong, the betrayal can cause indescribable hurt. We just want to know who we can trust.

Maybe that's why the apostle John was upfront in his Gospel. In a sense, he was simply telling the story of Jesus, just like Matthew, Mark, and Luke had done before him. But he also made it clear that the snippets of Jesus's life that he shared weren't just unfolding an interesting tale. They told readers exactly who Jesus was and what He was about.

In the first eleven chapters of his Gospel, John shared a lot of Jesus's teachings and described several of His miracles. But everything he wrote pointed in one direction. Jesus was the Son of God, come to earth. He was God in flesh, sent by the Father to pay the price for our sins. When we were at our worst, He arrived to offer living water, spiritual sight, and abundant life. Jesus is the undisputed hero of John's Gospel, and He can be trusted. If you're ready to accept His offer of salvation, here is what you need to do . . .

- **Admit** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning from your sin.
- **By faith receive** Jesus as God's Son and accept His 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 my need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In the name of Jesus 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.

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THE WEEK OF

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*Evangelistic Emphasis

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FROM THE TEAM

Most of us have something we experienced we wish we could put in print. Others may have shared about that event already but did so from their perspective. What they said was correct, but we may feel a need to help people go deeper into that story or event or get a fresh look at it.

Mark recorded Peter's recollections about Jesus. Luke shared what he gleaned from interviews with eyewitnesses to the events surrounding Jesus's birth, life, death, and resurrection. Matthew, an eyewitness, shared what he knew and saw. It appears that John wrote his account after Matthew, Mark, and Luke. While the others wrote more of a chronological account, John appears to have given attention to stories that brought focus to Jesus being the revealed Christ, the promised Messiah. John even tells us there were more stories

to be told (John 21:25) that he did not include. We could find some of those in the other Gospel accounts. John was writing to help his readers go deeper into the story so that they would believe in Jesus.

In the months ahead, we will be looking at the stories John included in his Gospel account. Some of these stories only appear in John's account, helping us get a deeper understanding of the identity of Jesus. Our prayer is that we will get a fresh glimpse of Jesus during this study and gain confidence that He is the promised Messiah who came to offer us abundant life.

Onward,

G. Dwayne McCrary

Dwayne.McCrary@lifeway.com



BIBLE READING PLAN

DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
<div><input type="checkbox"/> 1. John 1:1-5</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 2. John 1:6-8</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 3. John 1:9-13</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 4. John 1:14-18</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 5. John 1:19-23</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 6. John 1:24-28</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 7. John 1:29-34</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 8. John 1:35-42</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 9. John 1:43-51</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 10. John 2:1-12</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 11. John 2:13-17</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 12. John 2:18-22</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 13. John 2:23-25</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 14. John 3:1-8</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 15. John 3:9-15</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 16. John 3:16-21</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 17. John 3:22-30</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 18. John 3:31-36</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 19. John 4:1-10</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 20. John 4:11-14</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 21. John 4:15-19</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 22. John 4:20-26</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 23. John 4:27-33</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 24. John 4:34-38</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 25. John 4:39-45</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 26. John 4:46-54</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 27. John 5:1-9a</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 28. John 5:9b-16</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 29. John 5:17-23</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 30. John 5:24-30</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 31. John 5:31-35</div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> 1. John 5:36-40</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 2. John 5:41-47</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 3. John 6:1-7</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 4. John 6:8-14</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 5. John 6:15-21</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 6. John 6:22-27</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 7. John 6:28-33</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 8. John 6:34-40</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 9. John 6:41-46</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 10. John 6:47-51</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 11. John 6:52-59</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 12. John 6:60-65</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 13. John 6:66-71</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 14. John 7:1-5</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 15. John 7:6-9</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 16. John 7:10-15</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 17. John 7:16-18</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 18. John 7:19-24</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 19. John 7:25-29</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 20. John 7:30-32</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 21. John 7:33-36</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 22. John 7:37-39</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 23. John 7:40-44</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 24. John 7:45-52</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 25. John 7:53-8:11</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 26. John 8:12-20</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 27. John 8:21-24</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 28. John 8:25-29</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 29. John 8:30-32</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 30. John 8:33-36</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 31. John 8:37-41</div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> 1. John 8:42-47</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 2. John 8:48-53</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 3. John 8:54-59</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 4. John 9:1-5</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 5. John 9:6-12</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 6. John 9:13-17</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 7. John 9:18-23</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 8. John 9:24-27</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 9. John 9:28-34</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 10. John 9:35-41</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 11. John 10:1-6</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 12. John 10:7-10</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 13. John 10:11-15</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 14. John 10:16-21</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 15. John 10:22-30</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 16. John 10:31-38</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 17. John 10:39-42</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 18. John 11:1-7</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 19. John 11:8-16</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 20. John 11:17-22</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 21. John 11:23-27</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 22. John 11:28-32</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 23. John 11:33-37</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 24. John 11:38-40</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 25. John 11:41-44</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 26. John 11:45-48</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 27. John 11:49-54</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> 28. John 11:55-57</div>

MEMORY VERSES

Session 1:

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. — John 1:14

Session 2:

He found Philip and told him, “Follow me.” — John 1:43b

Session 3:

Jesus answered, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days.” — John 2:19

Session 4:

“Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” — Luke 2:11

Session 5:

“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.” — John 3:16

Session 6:

“But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again. In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up in him for eternal life.” — John 4:14

Session 7:

“And just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son also gives life to whom he wants.” — John 5:21

Session 8:

“For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” — John 6:33

Session 9:

“I know him because I am from him, and he sent me.” — John 7:29

Session 10:

Jesus spoke to them again: “I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.” — John 8:12

Session 11:

He answered, “Whether or not he’s a sinner, I don’t know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see!” — John 9:25

Session 12:

“I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me.” — John 10:14

Session 13:

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live.” — John 11:25

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

By the end of the first century, five Christian writings in circulation were attributed to John, who was a disciple of Jesus. One was an account of the revelation the Lord gave him while exiled on Patmos. Three were short letters addressed to early believers. The fifth is the Gospel John wrote with the intent of his readers coming to “believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing [they] may have life in his name” (John 20:31). Christian scholars generally agree John wrote his Gospel while living in Ephesus, late in the first century. This quarter we will be looking at the first half of John’s Gospel (chaps. 1–11); next quarter, we will study chapters 12–21.

John’s Gospel unfolds scenes from the life of Jesus in a way that is simple, straightforward, and yet theologically profound. Four words help highlight major themes that John developed in his Gospel.

Logos—John used this term, which English translations render as “Word,” to highlight the divinity of Jesus (1:1,14). Christ’s divinity is a central topic in John’s Gospel. He explicitly referred to Jesus as “God” (1:1,18; 20:28). Affirming the divinity of Jesus, John included seven “I Am” statements Jesus made. When Jesus used this title, He was echoing the name God revealed for Himself when speaking to Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3:13-15).

Love—John used the word *love* more than any other book in the New Testament. The first mention occurs in John 3:16, a verse that encapsulates the gospel message. The Gospel of John teaches that the Father loves the Son (3:35), the Son loves the Father (14:31), the Father loves those that love His Son (14:23), and Jesus loved His disciples and His friends (11:3,5,36; 13:1). Those who are Christ’s followers are to love one another (13:34).

Light—John’s Gospel also speaks of “light” more than any other New Testament book. The book opens by explaining that Jesus, the Word, came as the light that “shines in the darkness” and is the “true light that gives light to everyone” (1:5,9). John’s Gospel contrasts light with darkness. In doing so, John contrasted good and evil (3:19-21) and explained that Jesus came as the “light of the world” (8:12; 9:5).

Life—Finally, John spoke of “life” more than any other book in the New Testament and over two times more than the other three Gospels combined. John’s Gospel typically refers to “life” not in a physical sense but in a spiritual sense, meaning the abundant and eternal life that is available in Christ alone. This quarter’s study opens with the declaration that all things were created through Christ and that life is in Him (1:3-4). It closes with the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from death to life (11:1-44).

OUTLINE

I. Prelude: Christ as the Eternal Word (1:1-18)

A. The Word (1:1)

B. The Word and Creation (1:2-5)

C. The Word and the World (1:6-18)

II. Presentation: Christ as the Son of God (1:19–12:50)

A. By John the Baptizer (1:19-34)

B. To His Disciples (1:35-51)

C. Through Miraculous Signs (2:1–12:50)

III. Preparation: Instruction of the Twelve by the Son of God (13:1–17:26)

IV. Passion: Suffering of Christ as the Son of God (18:1–20:31)

V. Postlude: The Continuing Work of the Son of God (21:1-25)



ON THE COVER

The Door of Humility—the small entrance to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. John’s Gospel affirms that Jesus, the baby born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:4-7), is the eternal Son of God who took on human flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:1,14). (See Session 1.)


USING THE **DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE**

A person's spiritual growth hinges on daily Bible engagement. *Daily* implies a discipline much like exercising, brushing teeth, or eating a certain number of calories EVERY day. Our spiritual training should be no different since we need spiritual nourishment every day. The focus is the *Bible*, God's Word. There is nothing wrong with knowing the thoughts of great philosophers, leaders, or theologians, as long as God's Word is the final word on the matter. Engagement carries the idea of participation and involvement. *Engagement* is active, requiring us to read, study, and reflect.

Your *Daily Discipleship Guide* is full of tools to help you engage with God's Word. But like any tool, you have to use it to get the benefit.

- Use this resource when studying with a group. The first four pages of each session help the group examine a Bible passage and move us toward acting on the truths discovered as a group and an individual.
- Use the **Talk It Out** page to hold yourself and others accountable by meeting in a smaller group of same-sex individuals (an accountability group). Share with the smaller group what God has been teaching you through the group time and your personal daily Bible study while working to memorize a Bible verse.
- Use the **Daily Exploration** pages to go deeper into God's Word, building on your group's study experience. Engage in daily Bible study, record your thoughts, reflect on the questions, and take action.
- Use the resource every week even when you are unable to attend the group's Bible study. Missing a group Bible study does not excuse you from being engaged daily with God through His Word.

Want this resource on your phone or tablet for when you are on the go? Purchase an eBook at goExploreTheBible.com or at Lifeway.com/digitalstudies.



Getting the most from Talk It Out

Talk It Out supports groups of three or four people who come together weekly to encourage, share, and sharpen each other. While other issues may be addressed, the Talk It Out section focusses on the weekly memory verse. The questions and comments provide a means for encouraging each other to memorize Scripture while reflecting on the main point of that week's lesson.

These groups are made up of three to four people...

- Participants should be of the same gender.
- These groups should be smaller on purpose.
- These groups can meet at almost any location.
- These groups can easily accommodate each other's schedules.

Some married couples may choose to use the Talk It Out section for a weekly family devotional activity.

...Who meet weekly...

- We were created to relate, so meeting weekly is important.
- In some cases, your smaller group may need to meet virtually. You may find it best to meet face-to-face every other week or once a month and use virtual tools the other weeks.

...To hold each other accountable and encourage each other in their spiritual growth.

- Review the questions and comments in Talk It Out.
- Look for ways the memory verse relates to the main point of the lesson.
- Include time to pray for each other.

In the Beginning

Jesus is the Son of God in human flesh.

JOHN 1:1-14



with
without
as made.
re was the
darkness; and
ed it not.
from God, whose
or a witness, to hear
t, that all men through
e.
that Light, but was sent to
of that Light.
s the true Light, which lighteth
that cometh into the world.
as in the world, and the world was
y him, and the world knew him not.
He came unto his own, and his own
eived him not.
12 But as many as received him, to them
gave he power to become the sons of God,
even to them that believe on his name:
13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of
the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,
but of God.
14 And the Word was made flesh, and
dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory,
the glory as of the only begotten of the
Father,) full of grace and truth.

JOHN'S WITNESS OF CHRIST
15 John bare witness of him, and cried,
saying, This was he of whom I spake, 'He
that cometh after me is preferred before
me: for he was before me.
16 And of his fulness have all we received,
and grace for grace.
17 For the law was given by Moses, but
grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.
18 No man hath seen God at any time;
the only begotten Son, which is in the
bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

12

How does knowing a person's beginnings impact how you view them?

Many people think of Bethlehem as the beginning place for Jesus. The babe in a manger tugs at our hearts. But to appreciate what happened in Bethlehem, we must travel back through time eternal. Then, we may understand Jesus was God the Son—co-eternal, co-equal, and co-existent with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. The baby of Bethlehem was the eternal God who took on human flesh to save human beings.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

John's Gospel is a historical narrative of Jesus's ministry. John, who wrote the Gospel, was raised with his brother James in Bethsaida on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Their father, Zebedee, owned a fishing business. Simon and Andrew worked with them (Matt. 27:56; Mark 1:20; Luke 5:10). One day, while James and John were preparing the fishing nets with their father, Jesus called the two to follow Him. Some biblical scholars believe John was the youngest of the twelve apostles.

John did not begin his Gospel with the birth narrative but by declaring Jesus to be God. His prologue (John 1:1-18) contains four evidences for Jesus's deity. First, Jesus was and is eternal (vv. 1-2). While Jesus took on flesh and dwelt among us, He existed as God before time began. We cannot fully understand how God can be one God yet three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yet God's Word declares it to be true. That's where John began his Gospel. He didn't try to explain it; he simply proclaimed it.

Second, Jesus is the Creator (v. 3). Genesis began with the pre-existent God who created all things. John started there as well. As the Word, Jesus not only was with God, He was God. John declared that everything came into being through Him.

Third, God sent forth a special witness—John the Baptist—to prepare the way for Jesus (vv. 6-9). The Baptizer bore witness to the Life that was the Light of humanity—a light that can never be overcome.

A fourth argument for the deity of Christ can be found in His incarnation (vv. 10-18). The Word took on human flesh and dwelt among the people for whom He would die. As one of the Twelve, John had seen Him with his eyes, touched Him, heard Him, and walked with Him for over three years. John was a firsthand witness of the incarnate God who lived among His people.

JOHN 1:1-14

1 In the beginning^A was the **Word**,^B 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**,^C and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. **4** In him was life,, and that life was the light of men. **5** That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it. **6** There was a man sent from God whose name was **John**.^D **7** He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. **8** He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. **9** The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world., **10** He was in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him. **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 natural descent, or of the will of the **flesh**,^E or of the will of man, but of God. **14** The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his **glory**,^F the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Key Words

A. In Genesis 1:1, this is a literal statement of God's creative act. In John 1:1, it is a statement of Jesus's divinity and equality with the Father.

B Greek, *logos*. In the New Testament, *logos* refers to Jesus's message or, as in this case, to Jesus Himself.

C. God serves as the origin of all life, and Jesus was an active partner in the creation process. This reinforced John's argument that Jesus is God's Son and the Messiah.

D. John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah (Isaiah 40:3; John 1:23). He should not be confused with John the apostle and writer of this Gospel.

E. The flesh relates to human decision or a personal desire to do something. Salvation is the divine work of Christ alone and cannot be accomplished by human determination or reasoning.

F. A manifestation of God's presence. See also Exodus 33:18 and 1 Timothy 3:16.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. WAS THE WORD

(JOHN 1:1-5)

Believers can face the future knowing Jesus created all.

Why was it important for John to emphasize that Jesus existed before time?

What indications do you see of Jesus's divinity in these verses?

What was the significance of pointing out Jesus's role in creation?

2. MADE KNOWN

(JOHN 1:6-8)

Believers are messengers sent to tell others about the Light.

What did John emphasize through repetition in this passage?

How might believers help other people believe in Jesus?

3. IN THE FLESH

(JOHN 1:9-14)

Faith in Jesus secures a person's place in God's family.

How does Jesus's becoming human demonstrate the glory of God?

Why is Jesus the only one who can give us the gift of salvation?

APPLY THE TEXT

Discuss as a group ways of affirming Jesus being God the Son in human flesh during this Christmas season.

How can the group make sure that every class or group activity reinforces this truth?

KEY DOCTRINE: God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God.
(See Matt. 16:16; Phil. 2:5-22.)

BIBLE SKILL: Use multiple Scripture passages to understand a major doctrine.

Review additional passages in John's Gospel about Christ's deity. Read John 4:26; 5:18; 8:58; 10:30; 14:9; and 17:5-11. Why is it important that we understand Jesus as God the Son and not merely the Son of God? How does John consistently point to the deity of Jesus?

TALK IT OUT

Read John 1:14 together. What do you most enjoy about hanging out with a small group of believers?

We like to hang out with like-minded believers. There's just something about that sense of community we develop with others. That's the intent behind the word translated "dwelt." It's the idea of pitching a tent and staying for a period of time. The Greek word implies someone who stays with, eats with, and walks with those in his company. It is descriptive of the intimate type of communion Jesus desires to have with His creation.

What is something that you've experienced about the character of Christ?

As we spend time with one another, we learn about different character traits, likes, and dislikes. That's one of the benefits of a small group. In much the same way, we come to learn about Jesus as we spend time with Him and read the Bible.

Discuss some of the things you're currently learning about Christ. As you read the Bible, what are you discovering about His glory?

Place John 1:14 on your phone or on cards and memorize it together.

Prayer Requests



DAILY EXPLORATION

Day 1: John 1:1-2

Compare John 1:1-3 to Genesis 1:1.

The opening phrase, *In the beginning was the Word*, affirms the Word's existence from eternity past. Jews understood that God's Word has power. God spoke and universes came into existence (Gen. 1:3,6-7,9; Ps. 33:6). Healing came through His Word (Ps. 107:20). God's Word accomplishes what He intends (Isa. 55:10-11).

To say *the Word was with God* affirmed the Word's existence prior to creation. John made another reference to the Word's eternal existence by saying *the Word was God*. He was speaking of the Second Member of the Godhead and laying the foundation for the existence of the Trinity. Paul likewise declared Jesus's divinity: "For the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily in Christ" (Col 2:9). In verse 2, John reiterated and thus reemphasized the theme of verse 1, the eternal existence of the Word.

Why is it important for you to know Jesus existed before time?

Day 2: John 1:3-5

Circle the key words in these verses.

Having established the Word's eternal existence, John explained His activity from the beginning: the Word *created* all things. John's declaration again echoes Genesis 1. Genesis 1:1 shows God's dual nature: He is and He does. In the same way, the Word is and the Word does; He existed from the beginning and He creates. The New Testament elsewhere proclaims Jesus as the Creator (Col. 1:16-17).

In verses 4-5, John introduced words that serve as themes in his Gospel: *life*, *light*, and *darkness*. Just as God was the origin of light and life in Genesis, so John declared the Word to be the same. As Creator, Jesus is the origin and sustainer of physical light and life. As Redeemer, He is the origin and sustainer of spiritual light and life. John's declaration that life was in him reinforces the reality of Jesus's eternal and self-existing nature (John 5:26). Jesus came as light because humans are prone to wander in darkness (John 3:19). John was contrasting the darkness of fallen humanity with the glory of the Word that came as the light. When introducing the subject of light, John included an element of hope. Since the garden of Eden, the forces of evil have tried to destroy life and obscure the light. Darkness, though, did not win or overcome it. As the rest of John's Gospel will show—neither did death.

**What was the significance of pointing out Jesus's role in creation?
How does that reinforce John's argument?**

Day 3: John 1:6-8

Reflect on the role of a witness.

John interrupted his declarations about the light to feature the one who was a messenger or *witness* of that light, his *name was John*. Jewish readers would have recognized the significance of John the Baptizer being *sent from God*. This verb placed him on the level of Moses and the Old Testament prophets, each of whom the Lord sent with His message (Ex. 3:10-15; Isa. 6:8; Jer. 1:4-10; 25:4). Further, the Jews would have recognized that John's being sent was a fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy about sending a messenger to clear the way for the Messiah (Mal. 3:1). Thus, John the Baptist's arrival and proclamation were an integral part of God's plan.

The Gospel explains John came to testify not about himself but about who the Word was and why He came into the world. Not only did John the Baptizer have a message, he had a mission—that *all might believe through him*. Like John, believers are messengers sent to tell others about the Light. Being a witness for Jesus is not complicated. We simply tell others what we have discovered about Jesus, how He brought life and light into our lives, and how He can do the same for them.

What are ways you can help other people believe in Jesus?

Day 4: John 1:9-13

Identify the ways people respond to Jesus.

John the Gospel writer revealed truth in layers. He revealed the Word—but not by name. Similarly, he introduced John as a witness to the arrival of the Word—but told us nothing of John's ministry or work. John was setting the stage to write about the main character of his Gospel. Picking up on the theme of the Word as light, John described Him as the *true light*. The word *true* carries the idea of being authentic, dependable, and complete. In saying the true light *gives light to everyone*, John was not claiming that all would embrace the light. Rather, he was explaining that the light was intended for all and would be available for all to embrace. When the Word appeared, mankind as a whole *did not recognize him*. People missed the opportunity to know Him.

Those who did receive him received something in return. They received it not as a reward; it was something he gave. He gave them the right or the authority, to be the children of God. In becoming one of His children, people experienced a change of status. John explained to his readers how that change in status occurs: those who believed and received. Yet John was clear, this was a result of what God had done. It was not by family heritage, human action, or some religious act, but because of the will of God; "it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast" (Eph. 2:8b-9).

Why is Jesus the only one who can give you the gift of salvation?

Day 5: John 1:14

Reflect on what makes Christianity unique.

Christians often speak of Jesus's incarnation, which refers to His coming to earth in human form. Verse 14 is the clearest statement about the incarnation in the New Testament. It and verse 1 stand together like regal bookends, proclaiming that the Word was God in human form. God's Son stepped across the threshold of eternity to dwell among us. The Greek word translated *dwelt* literally means "to tabernacle," to set up His residence with us. In the Old Testament, the Hebrews understood the tabernacle to be the location where God met His people (Ex. 25:8). In the same way, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us was and is the center of God's presence for His people.

John could remember when he laid aside his nets; when he saw the blind, crippled, and deaf healed; saw dead raised to life; and saw Jesus transfigured and standing beside Moses and Elijah. John could remember Jesus's *glory*, which the Father had manifest in His *one and only Son*—who came to reveal God's *grace and truth*. The imagery is reminiscent of God in His glory passing in front of Moses and revealing His love and faithfulness (Ex. 34:5-7).

The Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us, revealing God's glory, was the exact opposite of the pagan gods that were imaginary, unapproachable, and unknowable. God's only Son came to earth in human form. He invites us to follow Him and behold His glory as He works in our lives and in our midst.

How does Jesus becoming human demonstrate the glory of God?

APPLY THE TEXT

The ancient philosophers believed the *logos* (Word) was distant and aloof. Are there areas of your life where you keep Jesus at arm's length? What steps do you need to take to allow Him to move closer to you?



LEADER HELPS

Using the Daily Discipleship Guide to Lead a Bible Study Group

The *Daily Discipleship Guide* was created for the purpose of building disciples. As the leader of the group, you play a major role. You can build disciples through the group Bible study time, encouraging daily Bible engagement, facilitating smaller groups, and apprenticing future leaders.

Building Disciples through the Group Time

Leading the group Bible study time is the most direct way you will build disciples. Each week, you will introduce the group to the Bible passage, examine the key message in that passage, challenge the group to act on that passage, and encourage them to reflect more deeply in the week that follows. Doing so requires preparation. Here is a way to prepare that gives you adequate time to study the lesson and will make the session fresh in your own life.

Early in the Week (Sunday or Monday)

- Ask God to open your mind and heart to His Word as you study.
- Read the Bible passage for the coming session, and review Understand the Context and Key Words.

Through the Week

- Ask God to use the Daily Explorations to help you understand and apply the lesson to your life.
- Complete the Daily Exploration activities in the days leading up to the group time.
- Meet with a group of three to four other teachers to share and pray for each other. Use Talk It Out to start your conversation.
- Pay careful attention to the Apply the Text sections for that session, looking for ways you need to apply the Bible in your own life.
- Start gathering items you may use in the group time.



The Day before Group Study Time

- Ask God to direct the creation of a group plan.
- Review the group plan in the back of the *Daily Discipleship Guide*.
- Review the first four pages of the *Daily Discipleship Guide* for that session and the commentary provided in the Leader Helps for that session.
- Review your responses and notes from the completed Daily Explorations.
- Listen to the weekly podcast at goExploreTheBible.com/Adults-Training.
- Adjust the plan to fit the needs of your group.
Note: You can create custom plans using the DOC file provided in the Digital Download for the Leader Pack—it's the same content printed in the Leader Helps.
- Consult *QuickSource* for additional insights and ideas.
- Review the weekly Adult Extra idea on the Explore the Bible blog (goExploreTheBible.com/LeaderExtras).
- Consult the *Explore the Bible Adult Commentary* for additional insight.
- Pull needed posters from the *Explore the Bible Leader Pack* (or create your own using Visual Ideas on pages 160–161).
- Make sure you have all your resources gathered including extra copies of the *Daily Discipleship Guide* for guests.

The Day of the Group Study Time

- Arrive early. The group time begins when the first person arrives so make sure that is you.
- Pray for the study and the group.
- Adjust the room as needed.
- Lead the study, adjusting as you go.

After the Group Study Time

- Consider the After the Session idea at the end of the group plans.
- Contact the group, encouraging them to complete the Daily Exploration section and sharing gathered prayer requests and other appropriate information.
- Record insights gained about teaching, individuals in the group, and Scripture.
- Pray for specific needs of people in the group.
- Do it all again, asking God to open your mind and heart to His Word this week.

Building Disciples by Encouraging Daily Bible Engagement

Here are some ways to encourage your group to engage with the Bible daily.

- **Visit them.** Deliver a copy of the Daily Discipleship Guide to every person in your group.
- **Ask them.** That seems simple, but the simple is not always easy. Learn to comfortably ask if group members are studying the Bible. You may want to use a statement instead of a question, such as, “I hope you took a look at the Day 3 activity for this week.” It’s a question disguised as a statement, so it’s not as threatening.
- **Tell them.** Let them know that you are using the Daily Exploration section as well. Set the standard.
- **Show them.** Point to the Daily Exploration section at the conclusion of the group study. From time to time, demonstrate how to use the section, guiding them through Day 1 as a group.
- **Invite them.** Call on pre-enlisted volunteers to share with the group what they are learning and how they are using the Daily Exploration section.

As teachers, we have taken on the responsibility of encouraging everyone on our ministry list (class roll, membership list, etc.) to engage daily in Bible study. We can’t make them do it, but we can provide them with a tool and encourage them to use it.

Building Disciples through Smaller Groups

Talk It Out is designed for smaller groups of three to four people to meet weekly. The goal of the smaller groups is simple: holding ourselves and others accountable for living a Christ-honoring life.

Create smaller groups:

- Explain the importance of the smaller groups, emphasizing the goal.
- Allow the group to form their own initial groups of three by gender (men's smaller groups and women's smaller groups). This tends to work better than assigning groups.
- Allow the smaller groups to add one person from the names on the ministry list of people who are not present.
- You may want to encourage the groups to form based on neighborhoods or proximity to work.
- Make sure some of the groups have extra space for new people and guests.
- As the Bible study group grows, you may need to reorganize the smaller groups, but try not to regroup too often so that trust can be built within each smaller group.

Support the smaller groups:

- Provide opportunities for the members of the smaller groups to pray with each other during the group time.
- Make study assignments in the weekly group time based on the smaller groups.
- Pre-enlist a volunteer to share with the larger group how participation in the smaller group is impacting his or her life.
- Periodically organize fellowship events built around the smaller groups. The smaller groups could be the basis for teams during the event.

Be in a smaller group:

- Meet with two or three other Bible study leaders as part of your weekly preparation.
- Be part of a smaller group within your class.
- Host a smaller group for guests and new group members.

Continued on next page — — — — —

Building Disciples by Apprenticing Other Leaders

Starting new groups is critical to the life of your church and the lives of the individuals in your group. People in your group need to be challenged to take on a greater role in your church. Providing the opportunity to do so helps them grow and removes the largest barrier to starting new Bible study groups—finding a leader. You can make a difference in the growth of individuals and in the future growth of your church by apprenticing potential group leaders. Here's how you can use the *Daily Discipleship Guide* to make this happen.

- **Step 1:** Prior to group time, ask a potential leader to follow along in the Leader Helps for that session as you lead the group. Tell him or her to note what you did and what you adjusted. You're just coaching your apprentice to use the book he or she has in a different way.
- **Step 2:** After that group experience, spend time with the group member going over what you did and how you adjusted the leader material for the group.
- **Step 3:** Invite him or her to do this again in a few weeks.
- **Step 4:** Ask him or her to lead a group time or part of one using the suggestions in the Leader Helps for that session. You may be away that week, or you can simply observe as a group member. Offer to help him or her prepare if needed.
- **Step 5:** As your apprentice gains confidence, allow him or her to teach more in the near future.
- **Step 6:** As a need for a new group surfaces, prepare to move on to lead the new group, with the apprentice becoming the leader of the current group (which tends to work best), or commission the apprentice and a few others from the group to start a new group.
- **Step 7:** Do it all again.

Not everyone in the group will become a Bible study leader. For those who do, you can become a mentor to potential leaders, extending your teaching ministry and demonstrating discipleship.

In the Beginning

ENGAGE

PREPARE: On a board or large sheet of paper, write: “Where did your story begin?”

INTRODUCE: As the group arrives, pass out name tags and pens. Direct their attention to the board and invite everyone to write their answers on their tag. Invite a few volunteers to briefly share something about their answer.

TRANSITION: Propose that if asked “Where did Jesus’s story begin?” many people might answer, “Bethlehem.” Allow a volunteer to read the session introduction on page 13. Distribute copies of **Pack Item 7** (*Handout: John Time Line*) and discuss the chronology of Jesus’s ministry and John’s Gospel. Emphasize that John understood the importance of beginning Jesus’s story “in the beginning.”

EXPLORE

INTRODUCE: Point out the prelude on **Pack Item 2** (*Outline of John*) and on page 9. Distribute copies of **Pack Item 9** (*Jesus’s Humanity and Deity*). Challenge the group to look for evidences of Jesus’s deity as they study John’s prelude. Call on a volunteer to note these evidences on a whiteboard as they are discovered throughout the group time.

READ: Call for a volunteer to read aloud

John 1:1-5. Invite the group to scan Genesis 1:1-5 and share any similarities they notice between the two passages. Emphasize that Jewish readers commonly referred to books of the Bible by their first few words, thus calling Genesis, “In the beginning.”

DISCUSS: Direct the group to focus on verses 1-2. Point out that John used “the Word” to describe Jesus. ***Where do you see evidence of Jesus’s deity in these verses?*** Remind the designated member to record answers.

- **(1:1-2)** John described three aspects of Jesus’s divinity. First, Jesus was *in the beginning*. Following the example of Genesis, John set the scene before time began. Prior to Bethlehem, Christ already was present and always had been. John wanted readers to understand that the Son has been eternally present just as the Father has existed forever in eternity. Second, Jesus did not come into being subsequent to God but was *with God* in the beginning. This emphasizes Christ’s total communion with the Father as God Himself. Third, the Word *was God*. His opening proclamation about the divinity of Christ left no doubt that Jesus always has been God.

ASK: *Why was it important for John to emphasize that Jesus existed before time?*

(p. 15) Emphasize that Jesus, God's Son, is equal to the other members of the Trinity and was active during creation.

SUMMARIZE: Point out that John did not identify Jesus directly until verse 14, and even then he did not do so by name. Emphasize the power of God's Word. Briefly explain the Greek use of *logos* (Greek for "word") as abstract and impersonal. Offer copies of **Pack Item 13** (*Handout: John's Use of Logos*) for anyone who would like to study this term on their own.

- **(1:1-2)** Using the term *Word* (*logos* in the Greek), John focused on Jesus's divine nature. The Hellenistic world used the term to represent idealized rationality. Stoics believed *logos* was an unknowable principle or force that gave purpose and stability to the universe. John's Gospel stands in opposition to this teaching. John employed *logos* in a specialized sense to reference Christ. *Logos* describes the eternal Christ who became a man.
- **(1:1-2)** Jews understood that God's Word has power. God spoke and universes came into existence (Gen. 1:3,6-7,9; Ps. 33:6). Healing came through His Word (Ps. 107:20). God's Word accomplishes what He intends (Isa. 55:10-11).

DISCUSS: Direct the group to read verses 3-5 silently. *What indications do you see of Jesus's divinity in these verses? What was the significance of pointing out Jesus's role in creation?* (p. 15)

GUIDE: Direct a volunteer to read verses

4-5 aloud. Lead the group to recognize Jesus as the Source of both physical light and life and spiritual light and life. Emphasize that Jesus's light overcame spiritual darkness and the darkness of death.

- **(1:4)** As God, the Son possessed life in Himself (John 5:26), and Christ claimed to be "the life" (John 11:25; 14:6). The word for *life* can be used to describe the totality of existence—physical as well as spiritual. All living creation has derivative life, but life was inherently in Christ. He needed no external source.
- **(1:4-5)** The concept of *light* can encompass several ideas. It may mean physical light. When God said "Let there be light," Christ created light even before the making of the sun, moon, or stars. But John primarily meant spiritual light. Christ is the only source of true spiritual illumination. Light can also refer to that which reveals. As such, Jesus reveals truth about God and about ourselves. His light shows the reality of the human condition and the path to reconciliation with God.

TRANSITION: *Jesus's deity is an ongoing theme in John's Gospel. It's a key piece to his argument that Jesus is the Messiah. Another vital element is what others said about Him.*

READ: As you read John 1:6-8 aloud, encourage the group to listen for John the Baptist's purpose.

ASK: *What other titles might be appropriate for John the Baptist to use?* Lead the group in considering John the Baptist's role as witness, messenger, and testifier. Suggest that "John the

sent” might be a good name based on John 1:6. Note that John wasn’t sent by just anyone; he was sent by God the Father.

- **(1:6)** God commissioned John the Baptist in the manner and purpose of Elijah to make Christ known (Mal. 4:5; Matt. 11:14).

DISCUSS: *What did John emphasize through repetition in this passage?* (p. 15) Help the group understand the importance of keeping the focus on Jesus and not ourselves as we tell others about Jesus.

TRANSITION: *Often, we hesitate to share because we worry about how our testimony will reflect on us. In reality, God simply wants us to point others to Jesus. If we reflect Him well, people will notice and respond.*

READ: Read John 1:9-14 aloud. As the reader goes through the verses, encourage the group to listen for the difference between the world’s response to Jesus and the responses of individuals to Jesus.

PROBE: *What might we miss if we only focus on an individual’s response to Jesus? What if we only focus on the world as a whole?* Guide the group to consider what it means that Jesus’s light was given to everyone only to be rejected by most people. Emphasize God’s love for every person, but also note the role of individual responsibility in accepting the invitation to join God’s family.

ASK: *Why is Jesus the only one who can give us the gift of salvation?* (p. 15) Emphasize that nothing we do can bring us into God’s family. Share that Jesus’s deity gives Him the authority to bring us back to God.

STUDY: Discuss the meaning of “incarnation” and “tabernacle” (p. 19).

- **(1:14)** “Dwelt among us” literally means “pitched his tent,” an allusion to God’s dwelling among the Israelites in the tabernacle (Ex. 25:8-9; 33:7).

ASK: *How does Jesus becoming human demonstrate the glory of God?* (p. 15) Create several teams and encourage them to work together to complete the Bible Skill activity on page 15. Allow each team to share what they learned from their study.

CHALLENGE

COMPARE: Guide the group to recall the evidences in John 1:1-14 that validate Jesus’s deity. *How would you use these points, and other truths drawn from John 1:1-14 to explain Jesus’s deity to a friend or family member?*

RESPOND: Encourage the group to look for opportunities to tell someone else about Jesus and about how God came in human flesh to save us from sin.

PRAY: Conclude the group time with prayer, praising God for the eternal work of Jesus from the beginning to the end and for all time.

AFTER THE SESSION

Reinforce the session by contacting any group members who need to be encouraged. Let them know a new study is beginning on the Gospel of John, making sure to deliver a copy of the DDG to every member.