

Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Click on the study title you'd like to see:

INTRODUCTION

Study 1: **JESUS CHRIST IS GOD**

Leader's Guide – Participant's Guide

Study 2: **YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN**

Leader's Guide – Participant's Guide

Study 3: **MIRACLES TESTIFIED OF JESUS' DEITY**

Leader's Guide – Participant's Guide

Study 4: **JESUS AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES**

Leader's Guide – Participant's Guide

Study 5: **JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

Leader's Guide – Participant's Guide

Study 6: **JESUS IS THE MESSIAH AND KING**

Leader's Guide – Participant's Guide

Study 7: **JESUS REASSURES HIS DISCIPLES**

Leader's Guide – Participant's Guide

Study 8: **JESUS IS THE VINE**

Leader's Guide – Participant's Guide

Study 9: **JESUS' PRAYER, BETRAYAL, ARREST & TRIAL**

Leader's Guide – Participant's Guide

Study 10: **JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION**

Leader's Guide – Participant's Guide

Study Through the Bible

Introduction

So, what's the good news about John's "good news"? The word *gospel* in Greek, the language of the New Testament, means good news. Why did "the disciple that Jesus loved" (21:20, 24) feel compelled to add another Gospel to the three that had been circulating among the churches for several decades? What did he believe he needed to emphasize or add? More importantly, why did God want another Gospel to be included in the canon of his Holy Scripture? We will be answering these questions and learning why John's message was important to his first century readers and to us today.

For this study of the Gospel of John, we will engage in inductive Bible study, which means we will be trying to understand this book by looking at it on three levels. The first level is *observation*: What is happening? What is the passage describing? The second level is *interpretation*: What is it saying to its first century readers? How would they understand it? And the third level is *application*: What does it mean to us in the 21st century? How can or should we apply its eternal truths to our lives?

Simply put, (1) you read the chapter, ask the who, what, why, when, and where questions, and try to understand what is being described; (2) this study will help by providing the meaning when it is not obvious or cannot be discerned from the text; and (3) the study will ask you questions to help you personalize the Scripture and apply it to your life. It would be ideal to make this a verse by verse study, as every thought and concept is so rich in meaning, but due to time and space constraints, we will highlight what we believe John most wants us to understand about his Friend, Teacher, Savior, and Lord. All Scripture references cited are from the New International Version unless otherwise indicated.

Many of the questions asked do not have "right" or "wrong" answers but are there simply to help you think more deeply about and get more out of this account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

While there is some debate, early writers say, and most commentators believe, that the author is the apostle John, the son of Zebedee, the brother of James, the one to whom Jesus revealed his betrayer, the one to whom Jesus entrusted his mother at the crucifixion, the disciple who got to the empty tomb first, and one who saw Jesus appear alive in a locked room after he had watched him die. Thus the one writing this book was an eyewitness of Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection, and could speak with authority.

John's purpose in writing this book is clearly stated in John 20:30–31: "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." This gospel was probably composed when John was an old man living in Ephesus, around 90 A.D., as it came into circulation about that time. Although it was written to an audience of Jews and Gentiles, the vast majority of the Christian church at the time of John's writing were Gentiles, coming from a Hellenistic background. By this time, the gospel had spread throughout the entire Greco-Roman world. Being written so long after the other three Gospels, John was able to fill in some of the details not recorded by the other writers, give explanations to the Gentile audience, and address some of the false teaching that had infiltrated the church.



So, why should we study the Gospel of John? John was an intimate friend of Jesus, who loved him and felt greatly loved in return. John knew through Jesus' words and "signs" the truth of his claim that he was "the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6). He knew that Jesus had come from the Father to offer to one and all abundant life, forgiveness of sin, and eternal life. It was John's hope that in reading his good news, the reader would also embrace these truths and come to know and love his Lord and Savior, and as a result, become God's child and have a transformed life.

We want to study this book for several reasons, chiefly to have assurance of our own salvation and to be equipped to share our faith with others. We also want to look closely at the person of Jesus, the "Word made flesh" (John 1:14), not only to see what the invisible Father is like (Heb. 1:3), but also to see what we as Christians are meant to be like. Jesus is the model for our relationship with God, prayer, evangelism, and utilizing the gifts in the power of the Holy Spirit. As we begin this study, let's pray that God will open up John's message to us, to teach us the eternal truths contained there, and to reveal to each of us individually what he would have us apply to our lives to take us to the next level in our relationship with him.



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 1

LEADER'S GUIDE

Jesus Christ Is God

Jesus is eternal and one with the Father.

In his opening chapter, John records 7 names and titles of Jesus that identify him as eternal God. He is the Word, the Light, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, the Messiah, the King of Israel, and the Son of Man. In this Gospel, from start to finish, John presents evidence that Jesus is the Messiah (*Anointed One* in Hebrew; *Christ* in Greek), the Son of God, so that his readers may believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Scripture:
John 1-2

Based on:
"Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John," by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Issue

Note to leader: At the beginning of the class, provide each person with the "Participant's Guide" included at the end of this study.

John begins his Gospel with the same phrase that begins the Book of Genesis. Read John 1:1–18.

Discussion Starters:

- [Q] Why do you think John begins his Gospel with the same phrase as Genesis 1:1 rather than with the birth of Jesus?
- [Q] Why do you think Jesus is called “the Word” in this passage?

Leader's Note: Webster's dictionary defines word as “an oral or written sign denoting a thing or an idea; talk; discourse; a message; a promise; information.” We use words to convey our thoughts, to express ourselves, to let ourselves be known. Jesus was “the exact representation” of the Father (Hebrews 1:3, John 14:9), and thereby the perfect expression of God to us. He is God's message to us. The invisible Father communicates to us what he is like through his Son.

- [Q] Substitute the name *Jesus* for “the Word” in John 1:1. How does that make you think differently about this verse?

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus is the eternal God.

John declares that Jesus has always been, was with God in the beginning, and was God. This may be confusing for us to understand, but the Bible continually teaches that there is only one God, made up of three persons: the Trinity, the Tri-unity, the Three in One. Read Genesis 1:26 to find this truth “in the beginning.”

The word *Elohim*, God in Hebrew, is a plural noun that takes a singular verb because although God is plural (three persons), he is one God. One way the concept of the Trinity is explained is by looking at the different manifestations of water. For instance, it can be liquid, ice, or steam, but in each case, its essence is water. In the end, all analogies break down, however, because the Trinity is unique and beyond our experience.

- [Q] Explain how the Trinity is revealed in Genesis 1:26.
- [Q] Looking at John 1:1–18, list the ways that John makes his case that Jesus was and is God.
- [Q] Many people today believe that we are all God's children. Is this what the Bible teaches? Look again at John 1:10–13. What do these verses say to this idea?



The word *believe* used in verse 12 is also used 97 other times in the Gospel of John. In the common Greek, the original language of the New Testament and the language widely used in the Greco-Roman world *believe* means “rely on, trust in, cling to, depend on.” This is the kind of belief that makes one God’s child. It is not just an intellectual assent that he came to earth, lived, died for our sins, and rose again.

For example, if I believe it is going to rain, I will take an umbrella or wear a raincoat. In other words, it will affect my life. My belief will bear “fruit,” that is, make a difference in my life. By believing in God, I am entrusting my life to him. Many people say they believe Jesus is their Lord and Savior, but whether that belief is making any difference in their lives is a litmus test of what they truly believe.

[Q] Which belief is true for you? Are you passively accepting Jesus as your Savior, or are you “relying on, trusting in, depending on, and clinging to” him? Explain.

[Q] What do you think the phrase “to all who received him” means?

[Q] Do you know for sure that you are God’s child? Why or why not?

If you aren’t sure, stay with John. He will explain more about how to become God’s child in chapters 3 and 4.

Teaching point two: John the Baptist declared that Jesus is the Lamb of God.

Read John 1:19–34.

This is the only Gospel where John the Baptist was called John, because the author John never referred to himself by name. Therefore there was no need to distinguish between the two. However, for our purposes, to distinguish John the Baptist from the author, we will refer to him as John the Baptist.

John the Baptist was a prophet who called the Jews to repent (to have a change in attitude—to turn away from their sin, their self-will, and turn to God, desiring his will). There had not been a prophet speaking for God for 400 years. Perhaps this was why John had to be so different in order to get the people’s attention. Four hundred years of silence had allowed the Jews to get very far from the truths and the ways of the living God.

[Q] Why do you think John the Baptist called Jesus the “Lamb of God”?

To understand this terminology, we need to understand the Old Testament sacrificial system. From Genesis on, God required the shedding of the blood of an innocent, perfect, spotless animal to act as his covering over man’s sins, serving as a temporary means of his granting forgiveness. This practice pointed to the coming of the Messiah, whose shed blood would provide once and for all forgiveness of sin (Hebrews 9:22).

[Q] How did John the Baptist know that Jesus was the Son of God, the long-awaited Messiah?

Teaching point three: Jesus gathers his first disciples and begins his public ministry.

Read John 1:35–51.



In verse 41, we see Andrew going to his brother with the message, “We have found the Messiah,” and then Andrew brought his brother to Jesus. What joyous news this must have been to these faithful Jews who had been waiting so long.

[Q] Why did the first disciples decide to follow Jesus (vv. 35–37)?

[Q] Why did Nathanael decide to follow Jesus (vv. 47–51)?

[Q] Why do you think people decide to follow Jesus today?

Read John 2:1–11.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, Jesus, and two disciples (the author John and his brother James) are attending the wedding in Cana when Mary alerts Jesus that the wine has run out. In those days, it was not unusual for a wedding celebration to last a week, and to run out of wine would have been embarrassing for the hosts, the groom, and his family.

[Q] Looking at the big picture of John’s purpose—convincing his readers that Jesus is the Son of God—what in this story supports his premise? (Try to find at least 2 examples.)

[Q] Why do you think Mary came to Jesus about the wine running out, since she had presumably not seen him do a miracle prior to this time?

[Q] What does this story tell you about the kind of person Jesus was?

Not only did Jesus respond to the need of the hosts, but he also did far more than Mary could have imagined. Each jar held 20–30 gallons, so Jesus provided about 180 gallons of wine. We see him here as Jehovah Jireh (God the provider) and El Shaddai (the God who is more than enough). Remember that Jesus is “the exact representation” of the God of the Old Testament, and reveals to us what the invisible Father is like (Hebrews 1:3).

[Q] So, why do you think Jesus did this miracle?

Jesus answered his mother’s “prayer” even though it wasn’t part of his immediate plan. He hears, cares, and responds with compassion to our fervent prayers. “The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with” (James 5:16, The Message).

Teaching point four: Jesus begins to show the flaws in the faith of those around him.

Read John 2:12–25.

This story takes place in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. The men of Israel were required to come every year to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. They were also required to make a sacrifice, and because many came a long distance, vendors worked at the temple to sell the needed sacrificial animals and doves. We know from the other Gospels that Jesus saw that the vendors were overcharging and that the moneychangers were cheating the people. Also, they set up in the outer court, the only place the God-fearing Gentiles were allowed to come and worship God. Jesus was furious at the misuse and abuse of God’s temple.

[Q] How does this story support John’s view that Jesus is the Messiah?



[Q] What does this story tell us about what Jesus values?

In this passage, Jesus refers to his body as the temple of God. The Bible teaches us that our bodies, too, are the temple of God if we belong to Jesus. Today, God resides in his body, the church (1 Corinthians 3:16) and in the body of every Christian (1 Corinthians 6:19). What a staggering thought: God no longer lives in a structure, but now resides in us corporately and individually.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

Action Point: The Gospel of John instructs us that a perfect, holy God could not experience fellowship with sinful, imperfect people any more than dark and light can co-exist. But because God loves each of us so much, he sent Jesus to earth as a solution to our problem. Jesus came to earth as a man so that he could take our place and die for our sins. Only the one who was pure and had no sin could be the perfect sacrifice to pay for man's sins. So Jesus took our sins upon himself on the cross, and died. In fact, he became sin (2 Corinthians 5:21), and like us, became separated from God. He became, as John the Baptist had prophesied, the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). As with the lambs in Israel's sacrificial system, God's judgment and punishment of sin was put on Jesus and he died for the sins of the world. The good news is that he rose from the dead, proving that he had victory over sin and death. Jesus is now in a position to forgive our sins and remove the barrier that separates us from knowing God, his love, and his plan for our lives.

Receiving Christ involves turning from self to God, admitting that you are sinful and fall short of his standard of perfection (Romans 3:23), and trusting Jesus to come into your heart to forgive your sins and give you eternal life. You can use this prayer or your own words:

Lord Jesus, I need you. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be. Amen.

If you sincerely prayed this prayer, you can know that Jesus came into your life as he promised he would (Revelation 3:20). He also promises that he will never leave you, so you can know that you will always have him (Hebrews 13:5). And he promises that whoever has him has eternal life. Therefore, you can know that you will live forever with him, starting right this minute (1 John 5:11–13).

When you received Jesus by faith, these things happened:

1. Christ in the form of the Holy Spirit came into your life (Revelation 3:20 and Colossians 1:27).
2. Your sins were forgiven (Colossians 1:13–14).
3. You became a child of God (John 1:12).
4. You received eternal life (John 5:24).



5. You began the great adventure for which God created you (John 10:10, 2 Corinthians 5:17, and 1 Thessalonians 5:18).¹

Why don't you thank Jesus right now for being in your life? Just thanking him demonstrates your faith. And then go and tell a Christian friend who will rejoice with you. This is the most wonderful decision you will ever make—to trust your life to the one who created you, knows you best, and loves you perfectly (1 John 4:18).

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon

¹ The prayer and these points are from the "Four Spiritual Laws" by Bill Bright.



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 1

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

Jesus Christ Is God

Jesus is eternal and one with the Father.

In his opening chapter, John records 7 names and titles of Jesus that identify him as eternal God. He is the Word, the Light, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, the Messiah, the King of Israel, and the Son of Man. In this Gospel, from start to finish, John presents evidence that Jesus is the Messiah (*Anointed One* in Hebrew; *Christ* in Greek), the Son of God, so that his readers may believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Scripture:

John 1-2

Based on:

"Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John," by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

John begins his Gospel with the same phrase that begins the Book of Genesis. Read John 1:1–18.

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus is the eternal God.

Teaching point two: John the Baptist declared that Jesus is the Lamb of God.

Teaching point three: Jesus gathers his first disciples and begins his public ministry.

Teaching point four: Jesus begins to show the flaws in the faith of those around him.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

Action Point: The Gospel of John instructs us that a perfect, holy God could not experience fellowship with sinful, imperfect people any more than dark and light can co-exist. But because God loves each of us so much, he sent Jesus to earth as a solution to our problem. Jesus came to earth as a man so that he could take our place and die for our sins. Only the one who was pure and had no sin could be the perfect sacrifice to pay for man's sins. So Jesus took our sins upon himself on the cross, and died. In fact, he became sin (2 Corinthians 5:21), and like us, became separated from God. He became, as John the Baptist had prophesied, the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). As with the lambs in Israel's sacrificial system, God's judgment and punishment of sin was put on Jesus and he died for the sins of the world. The good news is that he rose from the dead, proving that he had victory over sin and death. Jesus is now in a position to forgive our sins and remove the barrier that separates us from knowing God, his love, and his plan for our lives.



Receiving Christ involves turning from self to God, admitting that you are sinful and fall short of his standard of perfection (Romans 3:23), and trusting Jesus to come into your heart to forgive your sins and give you eternal life. You can use this prayer or your own words:

Lord Jesus, I need you. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be. Amen.

If you sincerely prayed this prayer, you can know that Jesus came into your life as he promised he would (Revelation 3:20). He also promises that he will never leave you, so you can know that you will always have him (Hebrews 13:5). And he promises that whoever has him has eternal life. Therefore, you can know that you will live forever with him, starting right this minute (1 John 5:11–13).

When you received Jesus by faith, these things happened:

1. Christ in the form of the Holy Spirit came into your life (Revelation 3:20 and Colossians 1:27).
2. Your sins were forgiven (Colossians 1:13–14).
3. You became a child of God (John 1:12).
4. You received eternal life (John 5:24).
5. You began the great adventure for which God created you (John 10:10, 2 Corinthians 5:17, and 1 Thessalonians 5:18).²

Why don't you thank Jesus right now for being in your life? Just thanking him demonstrates your faith. And then go and tell a Christian friend who will rejoice with you. This is the most wonderful decision you will ever make—to trust your life to the one who created you, knows you best, and loves you perfectly (1 John 4:18).

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon

² The prayer and these points are from the "Four Spiritual Laws" by Bill Bright.



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 2

LEADER'S GUIDE

You Must Be Born Again

Jesus came to transform us.

In chapters 3 and 4, John shows us the transforming power of Jesus' ministry. From the powerful Pharisee Nicodemus, to an insignificant woman he met at a well, Jesus begins to change lives.

Scripture:

John 3–4

Based on:

"Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John," by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Note to leader: At the beginning of the class, provide each person with the "Participant's Guide" included at the end of this study.

Read John 3:1–21.

Nicodemus was “a member of the Jewish ruling council” and a Pharisee. The Pharisees were a group of Jews who strictly kept the law of Moses and the “traditions of the elders” (Matthew 15:2). These traditions included over 500 manmade interpretations and applications of the law of Moses regarding daily life, handed down from generation to generation in oral form. Jesus called them “rules taught by men,” and said to the Pharisees, “You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men” (Mark 7:8).

Discussion Starters:

[Q] Why do you think Nicodemus came to Jesus at night?

[Q] What do you think Jesus meant when he told Nicodemus that in order to see God’s kingdom, he must be “born again”?

Leader’s Note: *Jesus explained to Nicodemus that he must be born of water (physical birth) and of the spirit (spiritual birth). God created man to be body, soul, and spirit, but when man chose to disobey God, he died spiritually (Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23). We all are born with a body and a soul (our emotions, intellect, and will) and with a capacity for spiritual life. In other words, we are two thirds of what God intends us to be. Pascal, the French philosopher and physicist, called the spiritual void a “God-shaped vacuum, which can not be satisfied by any created thing but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ.” The great philosopher and atheist-turned Christian, St. Augustine, said, “Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.”*

[Q] Have you ever felt a void or sense of something missing? If so, how have you tried to fill it? Where do you turn for comfort?

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus wasn’t sent into the world to condemn it, but to bring us back into relationship with the Father.

Nicodemus was understandably confused by Jesus’ answer, and Jesus was frustrated at how little this teacher of Israel understood. Jesus continued to explain to Nicodemus that the only way to “enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5) is to believe in the Son of Man, who must “be lifted up” (John 3:14). Read Numbers 21:8–9.

[Q] Explain what Jesus meant when he compared his being lifted up to Moses’ lifting up the snake in the desert.



In John 3:16–18 we see how much God loves his creation. Jesus wasn't sent into the world to condemn it, but to bring people back into relationship with the Father (John 14:6). However, Jesus explained to Nicodemus that men love darkness instead of truth because their deeds are evil (John 3:19).

- [Q] Don't answer aloud, but what have you done in the dark—when no one was looking—that you know you would not have done if people could have seen you?
- [Q] Have you accepted Jesus' testimony as the truth—that he came from heaven and that God was acting through him to save you—or are you still in the dark and under God's wrath (John 3:18)? Explain.
- [Q] What do you think verse 21 means?

Teaching point two: John the Baptist explained to his disciples his role and ministry, as well as Jesus' role and ministry.

Read John 3:22–36.

John the Baptist said that Jesus is like the groom and that, he, John is kind of like the best man—he is the friend of the groom. Jesus is the exalted one, but John is content with his place and is faithful in doing what God has called him to do. John does not fall into the comparison trap like his own disciples do, who were jealous that Jesus was baptizing more people than John. John knew that Jesus had come from heaven, and that while Jesus must become greater, he must become less. John's ministry was to prepare the way for Jesus. Once Jesus' ministry had begun, John's job was almost done.

- [Q] Have you been tempted to compare your situation in life, your ministry or service, or your spiritual gifts with another Christian's? If so, how do you not give in to the "comparison trap" and the resulting jealousy or competition?
- [Q] Have you learned, like John the Baptist, to be content where you are right now? If so, explain how you have obtained this place of peace.

Optional Activity: *Do we lose our salvation each time we sin? Give several reasons why or why not. Look up these Scriptures in answering this question: John 5:24; Romans 6:23; 8:38–39; Ephesians 2:8–9; Colossians 1:13–14; Hebrews 13:5; and 1 John 5:11–13.*

Teaching point three: Jesus demonstrated radical love to others.

Read John 4:1–30.

Even though this is early in Jesus' ministry, the Pharisees were already noticing him and were concerned about his increasing popularity. Because of their growing animosity, Jesus decided to return to Galilee. To get to Galilee from Jerusalem, the shortest route was to go through Samaria. However, it was unusual for a Jew to go through Samaria because the Jews hated the Samaritans. Jews would go to any length to avoid Samaritans, because they believed contact with Samaritans would make them unclean. This was a deep-rooted prejudice dating back to 772 B.C., when Assyria conquered the northern kingdom of Israel. Many of the Israelites who were not taken to Assyria married the Gentile Assyrians who were brought into the land to



oversee the Israelites left behind. The resulting mixed race were the Samaritans—despised by their pureblood Israelite neighbors.

[Q] What does it say about Jesus that he, a Jew, went into Samaria? Jesus was a Jew and came to the Jews, but what does this story show about his heart and mission?

Clearly Jesus was not bound or controlled by the culture or the religion of his day. He was able to distinguish between man's rules and God's values. Jesus' heart, like God's, is to love. Jesus particularly had a heart for the oppressed, the poor, the wounded, and the needy.

[Q] Verse 27 says that the disciples were surprised to find Jesus talking to a woman. Why do you think they were surprised?

[Q] Give two or three examples of what Jesus did to get this woman's attention and interest.

[Q] Why do you think Jesus said, "Go, call your husband"?

Leader's Note: *Jesus had to touch this woman's conscience to deal with her sin. Remember from our last lesson, that sin separates us from God. Jesus knew she needed to acknowledge the sin in her life before she could turn away from it and embrace the life he offered her.*

[Q] Why do you think this woman brings up the issue of the "right" place to worship (v. 20)?

Leader's Note: *Perhaps it was a sincere question, as she could see that Jesus was a prophet, or perhaps she was getting uncomfortable with where the conversation was going. At any rate, Jesus answered her question and then got her back on track, explaining to her that it doesn't matter where one worships, but who one worships; and that God's worshipers must worship him in spirit and truth. We saw in chapter 3 that one can only worship God in spirit if one has received Jesus and has the Holy Spirit within. Jesus is also making it clear that salvation is only through him (John 14:6). There is no other way to God.*

[Q] Look at verses 25–26. Why do you think Jesus revealed this great truth privately?

[Q] How do you know from this story that this woman believed Jesus and put her faith in him? Give at least two examples.

[Q] What can we learn from the woman's encounter with Jesus and her resulting actions?

Leader's Notes: *This woman met the Messiah and immediately wanted to tell others about him. Although all she knew was that she had met Jesus, many people in that village believed in him because of her testimony (vv. 39–42).*

Teaching point four: Everything Jesus did pointed to who he was.

Read John 4:31–54.

[Q] What do you think Jesus was trying to teach his disciples in these verses?



This chapter ends with the author, John, telling the story of Jesus' second miracle, the healing of a government official's son. This man comes to Jesus, desperately begging him to come heal his son who is 20 miles away and at the point of death.

[Q] Although Jesus' response sounded like a rebuke, what do you think Jesus wanted the official to understand?

As we grow in our faith, we move from a faith that cries out in a crisis to a confident faith that has seen God's power and faithfulness. We move from believing in God because of what he can do for us to believing in him because of who he is. We move from wanting and having to see, like Thomas, to a faith that is able to believe even when it doesn't see (John 20:29).

[Q] Jesus had compassion on this man and healed his son. What is remarkable about this healing and what does it tell us about Jesus' power?

[Q] Name several principles you see in these two stories that you can apply to your life, to your faith, and to your witness.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

We need to embrace Jesus Christ for who he is and let him transform us. So how can we do that? Consider this three-step process:

1. Call sin sin. Don't make excuses.
2. Call your sin forgiven. Thank God that he died for that sin and forgave all your sins when you received him as your Savior and Lord.
3. Call on God to change you. Admit that you cannot change on your own and that you need him to take away your evil desires. Ask for the power of his Holy Spirit to enable you to resist temptation. Praise God who is always at work in us, "willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure" (Philippians 2:13, The Message).

Action Point: Allow time for everyone to contemplate this three-step process and begin to practice it now.

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 2

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

You Must Be Born Again

Jesus came to transform us.

In chapters 3 and 4, John shows us the transforming power of Jesus' ministry. From the powerful Pharisee Nicodemus, to an insignificant woman he met at a well, Jesus begins to change lives.

Scripture:

John 3–4

Based on:

"Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John," by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Read John 3:1–21.

Nicodemus was “a member of the Jewish ruling council” and a Pharisee. The Pharisees were a group of Jews who strictly kept the law of Moses and the “traditions of the elders” (Matthew 15:2). These traditions were over 500 manmade interpretations and applications of the law of Moses regarding daily life, handed down from generation to generation in oral form. Jesus called them “rules taught by men,” and said to the Pharisees, “You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men” (Mark 7:8).

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus wasn't sent into the world to condemn it, but to bring us back into relationship with the Father.

Teaching point two: John the Baptist explained to his disciples his role and ministry, as well as Jesus' role and ministry.

Teaching point three: Jesus demonstrated radical love to others.

Teaching point four: Everything Jesus did pointed to who he was.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

We need to embrace Jesus Christ for who he is and let him transform us. So how can we do that? Consider this three-step process:

1. Call sin sin. Don't make excuses.
2. Call your sin forgiven. Thank God that he died for that sin and forgave all your sins when you received him as your Savior and Lord.
3. Call on God to change you. Admit that you cannot change on your own and that you need him to take away your evil desires. Ask for the power of his Holy Spirit to enable you to resist temptation. Praise God who is always at work in us “willing and working at what will give him the most pleasure” (Philippians 2:13, The Message).

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 3

LEADER'S GUIDE

Miracles Testified of Jesus' Deity

*Jesus performed many miracles to confirm who he is
and to show his compassion.*

In chapters 5 and 6, John tells us how Jesus continued to give evidence of who he is. As Jesus healed invalids, fed thousands, and walked on water, he revealed he was no ordinary person. These revelations also present opportunities for his disciples to follow him. Some do, but others turn away.

Scripture:
John 5–6

Based on:
"Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John," by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Note to leader: At the beginning of the class, provide each person with the "Participant's Guide" included at the end of this study.

Read John 5:1–15.

Jesus healed an invalid at the pool of Bethesda. Bethesda comes from the Hebrew words *beit* (“house of”) and *hesed*, which means “steadfast love” or “loving kindness.” This pool was so called because it was a place where the disabled could come and be healed when “the water was stirred.” An early expansion of the text completes and clarifies this thought by adding, “For an angel (of the Lord) went down into the pool at a certain time and disturbed the water. So the person who stepped in first after the disturbing of the water was made well, whatever his disability has been.”

Discussion Starters:

[Q] Jesus was in Jerusalem for a feast. While there, he went to a pool where everyone who was in need of healing gathered. Why do you think he healed only this man?

Leader's Note: *From this example, we can see that God, in his sovereignty chooses whom he will heal, according to his plan and purpose. We often cannot see the reasons for what he does or does not do, but we can trust who he is and that his ways are perfect. One day we will see clearly, but for now, we live by faith (1 Corinthians 13:12; 2 Corinthians 5:7).*

[Q] What is keeping you an “invalid”—emotionally, physically, or spiritually? How can Jesus free you from that?

- What would your answer be if Jesus asked, “Do you want to get better?” If your answer is yes, what do you think he is calling you to do (or not to do) to allow him to heal, empower, or change you?

[Q] Give an example of a time God called you to do something that you could not do in your own strength, but were able to do in his.

[Q] What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you” (v. 14)?

Leader's Note: *See Hebrews 12:1–13.*

[Q] Why were the Jews so upset that Jesus had healed this man?



PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: The religious people of Jesus' day were good at the letter of the law, but not its spirit.

The Jews had added many rules to God's Word; many of them not only were absurd, but often missed God's heart and intentions. For example, God gave the commandment to "remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ... On it you shall not do any work" (Exodus 20:8–9). The Pharisees came up with 39 tasks that were forbidden on the Sabbath, including healing and bearing a burden. In the case of Jesus' healing the man at the pool, it was not the healing that upset the Jews, but that the healing was done on the Sabbath. Jesus had broken the Sabbath rules by healing the man, and caused the man to break the rules by ordering him to carry his mat.

The rules concerning the Sabbath were just as sacred to the Jews as the Law (the Scriptures), the traditions (man's rules), and the temple (where God resided on earth). Other religions of that day had laws, traditions, and temples, but the Sabbath was peculiar to Judaism and a most sensitive spot. Jesus never broke one of God's laws, but often ignored man's laws as we saw in chapter 4. Jesus cared more about people than about rules.

- [Q] What are some ways you have added rules to this commandment, and what are some ways you are not obeying this commandment?
- [Q] What is a current example of caring more for people's needs than about keeping rules?
- [Q] Why do you think John included this story in his Gospel?

Teaching point two: Jesus' mission was to reveal the Father to us.

Read John 5:16–30.

Jesus justified his actions by explaining that his "Father is always at his work," and that he, too, is always working (v. 17). Here, and in John 5:19–23, Jesus, by calling Jehovah his Father, claimed to be equal with God. This infuriated the Jews, who now saw him not only as a Sabbath breaker, but as a blasphemer—for which the punishment was death. From this time on they sought to kill him. In verses 19–20, Jesus affirmed the relationship he had taken on with the Father when he humbled himself and became a man (Philippians 2:7). In his human state, Jesus only knew what the Father told or revealed to him. He only did what the Father told him to do.

- [Q] What are some of the claims that Jesus made for himself in this section?
- [Q] What does Jesus say will occur when one believes his word (v. 24)?
- [Q] What are some changes you've seen in your own life as a consequence of believing in Christ?



Teaching point three: Jesus backed up his claims with miracles.

God often reveals himself through supernatural activity. For example, in the Old Testament, Moses and Elijah did miracles to prove God's existence. In the New Testament, the early church leaders healed the sick and performed some other miracles as well. Read John 5:31–45.

- [Q] What was unique about Jesus' miracles and claims?
- [Q] Jesus was given a specific ministry to do while on earth (v. 36). Ephesians 2:10 states that we are "God's workmanship, created ... to do good works, which God prepared ... for us to do." What do you know that God is calling you to do?
- [Q] Based on Jesus' teaching in verse 39, do you think it is possible for someone to study the Bible, pray, go to church, be baptized, and not know Jesus? Explain.

The Jewish scribes sought diligently to know the Word of God, but tragically did not recognize God when he was in their midst. Our goal in Bible study is not head knowledge, but heart knowledge; not how much we know, but who we are becoming and what we are doing with what we know. The knowledge of God's Word should bring you closer to him and mold you to be like him.

Some time had passed since the events of chapter 5, and Jesus was pursued by "a great crowd of people ... because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick" (John 6:2). Upon seeing the great crowd coming toward him, Jesus asked Philip where they could buy bread to feed all the people. Read John 6:1–15.

- [Q] What response was Jesus hoping to obtain from Philip when he questioned him (v. 5)?
- [Q] What can we learn from Andrew's answer (v. 9)?
- [Q] Why do you suppose Jesus took the fish and loaves from the young lad instead of producing food out of thin air? What does that tell us about the way Jesus works?
- [Q] Why did John call this miracle a sign (v. 14)?

John goes on to tell another story that occurred immediately after the feeding of the 5,000. Jesus had gone into the hills alone to get away from the crowd because he saw that they were ready to take him by force and make him king, which was not his Father's plan. The disciples decided to go ahead back to Capernaum (Matthew 14:22 and Mark 6:45 both say that Jesus sent them on ahead). The Sea of Galilee is a small, fresh water lake about seven miles wide. The disciples were in a small boat (about two canoes wide and two canoes long). They had gotten about half way across when a strong wind began to blow and the sea became rough.

Suddenly they saw Jesus walking toward them. They were terrified, thinking he was a ghost (Matthew 14:26). According to popular Jewish superstition of that day, the appearance of spirits during the night brought disaster. Therefore the appearance of Jesus just added to the terror they were already feeling because of the storm. But Jesus said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." What tremendous comfort the disciples must have received from those words and the familiar sound of his voice! Read John 6:16–24.



[Q] Describe a time when Jesus calmed your “troubled waters.”

Teaching point four: Jesus is the bread of life.

The people whom Jesus fed on the previous day thought he might be the leader they had been waiting for, one who would be a political deliverer like Moses. In these verses Jesus explained to them that it was God, not Moses, who gave their forefathers manna in the desert and that God now offered them the true bread from heaven. Read John 6:25–59.

[Q] What did Jesus say that God requires for one to gain the “food that endures to eternal life” (v. 27–29)?

[Q] List the promises mentioned in this passage for those who come to Jesus as the bread of life.

[Q] Ten times in this chapter Jesus states that he has come down from heaven. What other verses in this passage refer to Jesus’ deity?

[Q] The Jews in Jesus’ audience believed that living a good life would gain them eternal life. According to verses 40 and 47, what does Jesus tell them is the one and only requirement for eternal life?

➤ Based on your previous answer, what do you think Jesus meant in verses 53–58?

Read John 6:60–71.

[Q] After Jesus’ teaching in the synagogue, why do you think “many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him”?

Leader’s Note: *Jesus, the son of Joseph, was claiming to be greater than Moses and to have a unique relationship with God. He was also telling the Jews, who were forbidden by God to drink the blood of animals (Deuteronomy 12:23–25), that they must drink his blood to receive eternal life. It was hard to hear and accept.*

[Q] Why did some stay with him (v. 68)?

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

We see in these chapters not only Jesus’ ability to do the supernatural but the heart of compassion that prompted his miracles. We also see Jesus trying to teach his disciples to trust him to provide for their needs, to calm their storms, and to empower them to serve others. May we daily recognize our need to be fed and nourished by the wonderful bread of life, the true bread from heaven.

Action Point: What do you need to trust Jesus with in your life? Share it with the group and pray for each other concerning these things.

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 3

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

Miracles Testified of Jesus' Deity

*Jesus performed many miracles to confirm who he is
and to show his compassion.*

In chapters 5 and 6, John tells us about how Jesus continued to give evidence of who he is. Healing an invalid, feeding thousands, and walking on water show that this is no ordinary person. These revelations also present the demand that his disciples choose to follow him. Some do, but others turn away.

Scripture:
John 5–6

Based on:
"Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John," by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Read John 5:1–15.

Jesus healed an invalid at the pool of Bethesda. Bethesda comes from the Hebrew words *beit* (“house of”) and *hesed*, which means “steadfast love” or “loving kindness.” This pool was so called because it was a place where the disabled could come and be healed when “the water was stirred.” An early expansion of the text completes and clarifies this thought by adding, “For an angel (of the Lord) went down into the pool at a certain time and disturbed the water. So the person who stepped in first after the disturbing of the water was made well, whatever his disability has been.”

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: The religious people of Jesus’ day were good at the letter of the law, but not its spirit.

Teaching point two: Jesus’ mission was to reveal the Father to us.

Teaching point three: Jesus backed up his claims with miracles.

Teaching point four: Jesus is the bread of life.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

We see in these chapters not only Jesus’ ability to do the supernatural but the heart of compassion that prompted his miracles. We also see him trying to teach his disciples to trust him to provide for their needs, to calm their storms, and to empower them to serve others. May we daily recognize our need to be fed and nourished by the wonderful bread of life, the true bread from heaven.

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 4

LEADER'S GUIDE

Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles

We learn a lot about Jesus from what he taught at this annual feast.

Jesus continually looked beyond the superficial to the real issues. He often caused division by his claims when he was on earth, as he continues to do today. But he always answered wisely, even under pressure. In these two chapters we see that Jesus is the light of the world, and what that means for our everyday lives.

Scripture:

John 7-8

Based on:

"Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John," by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Note to leader: At the beginning of the class, provide each person with the "Participant's Guide" included at the end of this study.

In chapter 7, John tells his readers, "Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life." Now, as this chapter opens, it is time for the Feast of Tabernacles, six months before Jesus' last Passover. For a full week every year, all Jews lived in makeshift booths, commemorating the time the Israelites lived in tents during their years in the wilderness. All men living in and up to 15 miles away from Jerusalem were required to attend this feast. Jesus' brothers sarcastically encouraged Jesus to go and do some miracles to show himself to the world. Read John 7:1–13.

Discussion Starters:

- [Q] Recount a time when someone made light of something you knew was important.
- [Q] If you've ever been mocked for your faith, tell us about that experience. How did you respond?
 - How did Jesus respond to his brothers?

John goes on to tell his readers that "at the Feast, the Jews were watching for him [Jesus]. ... Some said, 'He is a good man.' Others replied, 'No, he deceives the people.'" C. S. Lewis, a 20th-century theologian and author, adds a third possibility: that Jesus himself was deceived and incorrectly thought he was the Son of God. Lewis states that either Jesus was a liar, knowing his claims were false, a lunatic, on the order of one who thinks he is a poached egg, or who he claimed to be—Lord and Savior.

- [Q] Who do you say Jesus is? A good man? A deceiver? A liar, lunatic, or Lord of heaven and earth? Give the reasons for your belief.
 - If you believe that Jesus is who he said he is, how is that conviction affecting your life?

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus looked beyond the superficial to the real issues.

Jesus taught at the temple, amazing the Jews that he knew so much without formal training. Jesus explained that his teaching was not his own, but came from God. Then he gave the key for them (and us) to know if his teaching comes from God or not: "If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own" (John 7:17). Read John 7:14–24.

- [Q] Why would we know that Jesus' teaching is from God by choosing to do God's will?

Jesus then addressed the fact that although the Jews are the recipients of God's law, not one of them was fully keeping it. "Why," he asks, "are you trying to kill me?" (John 7:19). Jesus



defended healing a man on the Sabbath by saying that the Jews misunderstood the Sabbath. He reasoned that if circumcising a child on the Sabbath does not break the Sabbath law, then healing a man also should not be considered breaking the Sabbath. In other words, as Jesus explained in Mark, “the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27). Jesus exhorted the Jews to “stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment” (John 7:24).

- [Q]** What kind of superficial judgments of people are you likely to make (dress, tattoos, piercings, race, manners, education)?
- What group of people do you tend to discount or dismiss because they are old, poor, rich, foreign, different, etc.?
 - Why do you think you have this prejudice?
 - How can you learn to avoid this automatic reaction and get to know the person underneath?

Teaching point two: Jesus often divides by his claims.

The Jews who were in Jerusalem for the Feast were wondering if their religious leaders had decided that Jesus was indeed the Messiah after all, since they allowed him to speak publicly. This puzzled them because they all knew where Jesus had come from, and the popular belief was that the Messiah would just appear.

Jesus responded to them saying, “Yes ... you know where I am from” (John 7:28). He said it was also true that he had come from God (John 7:29). And he made the offensive statement that the Jews, God’s chosen people, did not know the one who had sent him (John 7:28). At this remark, many of the Jews tried to seize him; others put their faith in him because of the miracles they had seen him do.

Jesus will often divide (Matthew 10:34). His claims are absolutely unique. Here in the same setting with the same set of facts, many wanted to kill him for committing blasphemy and others believed he was the promised Messiah.

On the last day of the Feast, after the priest poured water from the Pool of Siloam into a basin on the altar as an offering, thanking God for his gift of water, praying for rain, and remembering God’s provision of water from the rock in the wilderness, “Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’” Read John 7:25–44.

- [Q]** What did Jesus mean when he said he could quench our thirst?
- How can “streams of living water” flow from us?

[Q] Give an example of how your stand for Jesus caused a division with someone else.

Read John 7:45–52.

The chief priests and Pharisees were surprised and disappointed that the temple guards returned without Jesus. The guards explained to them that “no one ever spoke the way this man does” (John 7:46). The chief priests and Pharisees, who were educated and full of pride, felt superior to the common people and believed that Jesus had deceived these “simple” guards.



- [Q]** When have you, like the Pharisees, just gone on believing what you've been taught instead of seeking God for his wisdom?
- [Q]** Notice the many wrong conclusions reached where some searching would have revealed the truth. For example, Jesus was born in Bethlehem (John 7:42). Hosea and Jonah were prophets from Galilee (John 7:52). Describe a time when you jumped to a conclusion or went along with the crowd's opinion, only later to discover facts that contradicted your opinion.

The Pharisees declared that none of the rulers or Pharisees believed in Jesus (John 7:48–49). However, Nicodemus timidly refutes this statement by encouraging the law interpreters and keepers to keep the law concerning the treatment of Jesus (John 7:50–51). The Pharisees responded rudely and sarcastically, “Are you from Galilee, too?” (John 7:52). Then they ironically told Nicodemus, “Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee” (John 7:52). If only they had looked into it (Romans 9:30–33).

Teaching point three: Jesus always answered wisely, even under pressure.

The teachers and Pharisees tried to test Jesus by bringing to him a woman caught in adultery. They reminded Jesus that in the law Moses commanded stoning for adultery, and asked Jesus what he thought should be done. They believed they were trapping him—that if he said, “Stone her,” he would no longer be seen as the “friend of sinners” and would lose favor with the masses. Also he could run into trouble with the Romans, as they did not allow the Jews to carry out death sentences. On the other hand, if he did not advocate stoning her, he could be seen as being unsupportive of Moses' law and as condoning, accepting, or encouraging adultery. Read John 8:1–11.

- [Q]** How did the religious leaders view this woman?
- [Q]** Why didn't they bring the man? He, too, was guilty of adultery and subject to the death penalty (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22).
- [Q]** Have you ever been an onlooker when someone was being mistreated? How did it make you feel and what did you do, or not do?
- [Q]** How did Jesus handle this attempt by the Pharisees to trick him?
- Why was his response so powerful?
 - Why do you think the older ones left first?

Do you wonder what Jesus was writing on the ground (v. 6)? Some have suggested he may have been writing down the sins of the woman's accusers. Another guess is that he was writing a note to this nameless woman to calm her, as she was naturally scared of being stoned to death.

Although Jesus is kind and patient, he never condones, accepts, or tolerates sin. He tells the woman whose life he has saved, “Go now and leave your life of sin” (John 8:11). Jesus is always willing to forgive, cleanse, and restore the repentant sinner (1 John 1:9), but he never says it is okay to sin.



The attitude of the Pharisees was to condemn the woman. Jesus' was to forgive. We can know that he has this attitude toward us even when we feel awful about ourselves. He is always looking at what we can be and wants the best life possible for us. Sin destroys, separates, and violates. God hates sin because of what it does to us. Let us rejoice that though our sins are like scarlet, he will make them white as snow (Isaiah 1:18)!

Teaching point four: Jesus declared himself the light of the world.

Jesus taught in the Court of the Women. This part of the temple was so named because it was open to the women as well as to the men.

Perhaps looking at a huge lit chandelier, which symbolized God's leading of the Israelites by night with a pillar of fire, Jesus declared, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." Read John 8:12–58.

[Q] When Jesus said, "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness" (v. 12), what does "darkness" refer to?

- How does Jesus light the way for us? Give practical examples.

The Pharisees challenged Jesus' claim based on the Old Testament requirement that there must be two witnesses to establish truth. Jesus was the Truth and didn't need another witness. He knew where he was from and where he was going.

The Jews who had not accepted who Jesus was had no idea where he had come from. Jesus admonished them, "You judge by human standards" (John 8:15). Again, Jesus is trying to get the Jews to think beyond the physical world. There is a spiritual dimension, and God's truth is truer than our natural experiences or circumstances.

[Q] What kind of things help you to think beyond what you can see, to the unseen?

[Q] What can we learn about Jesus' relationship with his Father from verses 27–30? How is this true of your relationship with the Father?

[Q] What does Jesus say is the way to know truth (John 8:31–32)?

[Q] How are you a slave to sin?

- What would it take for you to become free?

[Q] Do you ever test your thoughts to determine what voice you are hearing? How do you decide if what you hear is from God, Satan, the world, or yourself (John 8:43–44)?

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

Jesus continued to claim that the God of Israel is his Father, and once again offered eternal life to the Pharisees. They continued to misunderstand him and reacted with unbelief to his claims, particularly when he said, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am" (John 8:58). "I am" is the name God used to identify himself to Moses (Exodus 3:14). This concluded Jesus'



speech, which had begun with, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). The enraged Jews planned to stone him. However, Jesus was able to hide himself and slip away. God was divinely protecting him, as his time to go to the cross had not yet come.

Action Point: In John 8:38, Jesus explains to the Pharisees that he is telling them what he has seen in the Father’s presence. God has so much he wants to tell us and show us, but we must be in his presence. How can you begin to make the time to be in the Father’s presence? Mention practical things you can begin to implement this week.

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 4

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles

We learn a lot about Jesus from what he taught at this annual feast.

Jesus continually looked beyond the superficial to the real issues. He often caused division by his claims when he was on earth, as he continues to do today. But he always answered wisely, even under pressure. In these two chapters we see that Jesus is the light of the world, and what that means in our everyday lives.

Scripture:

John 7–8

Based on:

"Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John," by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

In chapter 7, John tells his readers, “Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life.” Now, as this chapter opens, it is time for the Feast of Tabernacles, six months before Jesus’ last Passover. For a full week every year, all Jews lived in makeshift booths, commemorating the time the Israelites lived in tents during their years in the wilderness. All men living in and up to 15 miles away from Jerusalem were required to attend this feast. Jesus’ brothers sarcastically encouraged Jesus to go and do some miracles to show himself to the world. Read John 7:1–13.

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus looked beyond the superficial to the real issues.

Teaching point two: Jesus often divides by his claims.

Teaching point three: Jesus always answered wisely, even under pressure.

Teaching point four: Jesus declared himself the light of the world.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

Jesus continued to claim that the God of Israel is his Father, and once again offered eternal life to the Pharisees. They continued to misunderstand him and reacted with unbelief to his claims, particularly when he said, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am” (John 8:58). “I am” is the name God used to identify himself to Moses (Exodus 3:14). This concluded Jesus’ speech, which had begun with, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). The enraged Jews planned to stone him. However, Jesus was able to hide himself and slip away. God was divinely protecting him, as his time to go to the cross had not yet come.

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 5

LEADER'S GUIDE

Jesus is the Good Shepherd

We learn from sheep how much we need a shepherd.

Jesus uses the analogy of a shepherd and his sheep for himself and his followers. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who cares for his sheep, and who even “lays down his life for the sheep.” The word *shepherd* in the Old Testament was not only used literally, but also stood for a royal caretaker of God’s people.

Scripture:

John 9–10

Based on:

“Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John,” by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Note to leader: At the beginning of the class, provide each person with the "Participant's Guide" included at the end of this study.

Chapter 9 opens with Jesus still in Jerusalem. In this chapter, John records another miracle as additional evidence that Jesus was the Jews' promised Messiah. This sign fulfills Isaiah's prophecy that the Messiah would give sight to the blind (Isaiah 29:18; 35:5; 42:7; Luke 4:18). This is the sixth sign John has described in his task of proving Jesus' divinity. Read John 9:1–12.

In chapter 8, Jesus called himself the "light of the world." Now he is giving tangible proof for that claim. Again, Jesus is using the physical to make a spiritual point. Just as Jesus is able to deliver this man from physical darkness, he is able to deliver sinful people from spiritual darkness.

Discussion Starters:

[Q] Jesus reached out to a blind man. List the other individuals he ministered to prior to this healing (for example, Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the government official, and so on). What do all these people have in common?

➤ What do you learn about Jesus from these encounters?

Leader's Note: In recalling that Jesus had just barely escaped being stoned and knew people wanted to kill him, it says a great deal that he noticed this man and his need.

[Q] What was Jesus' work and what now is ours (John 9:3–5)?

[Q] How do you think the blind man, who was not deaf, felt as he listened to the disciples talking about him?

➤ What did he (and we) learn from Jesus' words about him?

[Q] Notice how Jesus healed the man's eyes (v. 6). What do you think motivated the man to allow Jesus to put spit and mud on his eyes and follow his order to go to the Pool of Siloam, even though he was still blind?

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus came so that the spiritually blind can see.

The Pharisees discover that Jesus gave sight to a blind man. Instead of rejoicing with the man who could now see, they were upset that once again Jesus had healed on the Sabbath. Also, rabbinical law specifically forbade mixing clay, chanting charms over a wound, and application of salve to the eyes on the Sabbath. Because Jesus broke the manmade Sabbath rules, some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God." Again, there were others who asked, "How can



a sinner do such miraculous signs?” (9:16). The Pharisees decided to ask the formerly blind man what he thought. He replied that he believed Jesus was a prophet.

The Jews, seeing that he really could see, could not believe that he had been born blind, so they asked the man’s parents, who verified that he was their son and that he was born blind. When asked how he was able to see, they referred the question to their son because they were afraid of being put out of the synagogue. Being cast out would mean being cut off from all social, economic, and religious relationships. Read John 9:13–41.

- [Q] How are we like the Pharisees and the blind man’s parents and get caught up in details and miss the miracle?
- [Q] Jesus ends this chapter by talking about spiritual blindness. What is spiritual blindness, and how can we overcome it?
- [Q] What did Jesus mean in verses 40–41?

Teaching point two: Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

Jesus uses the analogy of a shepherd and his sheep for himself and his followers. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who cares for his sheep, and who even “lays down his life for the sheep.” The word *shepherd* in the Old Testament was not only used literally, but also stood for a royal caretaker of God’s people. God is called “the shepherd” in Psalm 23:1; 80:1; Isaiah 40:10–11; and Ezekiel 34:11–16, as were the leaders of Israel. Unfortunately, these leaders failed to be faithful to their God-given responsibilities, and God called them “false shepherds” (Isaiah 56:11–12; Ezekiel 34:2–4) and promised to give Israel the “true shepherd,” the Messiah, to care for the sheep (Ezekiel 34:23). Throughout this chapter, Jesus claimed that he is the promised shepherd.

The sheep pen, mentioned in verse 1, was a courtyard surrounded by walls with one entrance, where flocks were kept overnight. The walls kept the sheep from wandering and protected them from wild animals and thieves. In the morning, when a particular shepherd came to get his flock, the watchman in charge of the pen, knowing the rightful owner, would open the gate. Then the shepherd would call each of his sheep by name. The sheep knew their shepherd’s voice and responded only to him. Obediently, they would edge their way through the other herds to their shepherd. Read John 10:1–6.

- [Q] List the points Jesus is making about his relationship with his sheep in verses 3–5.
- [Q] Seeing these characteristics of Jesus and his sheep, do you believe that you are one of his flock? Do you know his voice? Are you confident that he knows your name? How do you know?

In verse 7 Jesus described himself as the “gate” for the sheep. Shepherds often guarded their sheep by sleeping between the sheep and possible predatory animals or thieves. By saying that he is the gate and that whoever enters through him will be saved, Jesus is clearly saying that one must go through him for salvation (John 3:36; Acts 4:12; Romans 10:9–10).

The word *saved* in the Greek means “delivered safe and sound as one who has survived a war; rescued as from a bad storm; healed or restored to health as in the case of a person who has



recovered from a severe illness.” It also has the sense of being acquitted or found not guilty at court. All of these meanings represent the work of our Savior. Read John 10:7–10.

[Q] If you are saved, tell in your own words how you think these meanings apply to your life.

Jesus says in verse 10 that “the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy,” but that he comes “that they [his sheep] may have life, and have it to the full.” We need to recognize that we are in a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:12).

[Q] Why do you think so many Christians are not experiencing the kind of life that Jesus came to give as mentioned in verse 10?

Jesus described himself as the Good Shepherd who “lays down his life for the sheep.” We deserved to die (Romans 6:23), but he died in our place and received God’s just punishment for our sins. In the Old Testament, the lamb’s life was given for the shepherd. The shepherd brought his lamb to the temple, leaned all his weight on the lamb’s head, and confessed his sin. Then the lamb was slain. Now Jesus—the shepherd—becomes the lamb: the spotless, perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. Isaiah prophesied, “He was pierced for our transgressions ... We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all ... He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth” (Isaiah 53:5–7). This remarkable description of Jesus was written about 700 years before Jesus’ birth. Read John 10:11–21.

When Jesus says, “I know my sheep,” the word *know* is more than an intellectual awareness. It refers to an intimate relationship, an experiential knowledge. In other words, God knows his sheep personally and intimately.

[Q] Jesus was a Jew who came to the Jews, and in verse 16 is speaking to a Jewish audience. Who do you think are the other sheep he mentions who will also be part of his flock?

In verses 17–18, months before the events of Jesus’ arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection, Jesus made it perfectly clear that he would lay down his life voluntarily (and would take it back up again). In obedience to the Father, Jesus chose to die.

[Q] This section ends with the Jews divided again as to whether Jesus is demon-possessed and raving mad or sane, wise, and sent from God. What were the two things mentioned about Jesus that made an impact on those who were open?

Optional Activity: Write a prayer to God, thanking him for loving us so much that he sent his Son, Jesus, to die for us that we may have eternal life.

Teaching point three: Jesus persisted in trying to explain his mission to the Jews.

Some time has passed. It is now December and Jesus is in Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication, or Hanukkah. This feast commemorated the restoration of Jewish worship in the temple, which occurred in 164 B.C. The Jews who gathered around Jesus asked him to tell them if he is the Christ or not. He replied, “I did tell you, but you do not believe ...” (John 10:25). Read John 10:22–42.

[Q] What are some of the reasons the Jews didn’t recognize Jesus as the Messiah?



[Q] What are some of the reasons that people today do not believe in Jesus?

[Q] What kind of assurance do you find in verses 27–29?

Jesus went back across the Jordan to where John the Baptist had been baptizing. Many who had learned about Jesus from John came to see Jesus. They saw that what John had said about Jesus was true. “And in that place many believed” (John 10:42).

[Q] Why do you think these people had such a different response from the people in Jerusalem?

[Q] Have you ever tried to explain the claims of Jesus to someone? If so, was it a positive or negative experience? Explain.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

These are some characteristics of sheep:

1. *They are known to be dumb.* They are never used in circuses because they can't be trained to perform. They tend to wander and get lost and are unable to find their way home—even when it is in sight!
2. *They are defenseless.* They have no quills like porcupines, no scent like skunks, no claws like cats, and no teeth like lions. The sheep's bite is harmless. Most have no horns. They are unable to defend themselves against attack.
3. *They are helpless.* If they are in water, their wool soaks up the water, and they sink to the bottom. Also, if they are on land and end up on their backs, they cannot turn over and get themselves up. Their kicking and bleating does not help except to alert the shepherd, who comes and sets them on their feet again.
4. *They perceive danger poorly.* They have poorly developed instincts to warn of potential danger. They often wander into a briar patch, fall over a cliff, or walk into heavy smoke.
5. *They depend totally upon their shepherd.* They require more attention and care than any other class of livestock.

Is it any wonder we are compared to sheep? How evident is our need for a shepherd to take care of us, but we are often too “dumb” to realize it.

Action Point: Think about how you are like a sheep. Write down some instances when you displayed any or all of the characteristics of sheep above. How was Jesus like a shepherd during those times?

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 5

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

Jesus is the Good Shepherd

We learn from sheep how much we need a shepherd.

Jesus uses the analogy of a shepherd and his sheep for himself and his followers. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who cares for his sheep, and who even “lays down his life for the sheep.” The word *shepherd* in the Old Testament was not only used literally, but also stood for a royal caretaker of God’s people.

Scripture:

John 9–10

Based on:

“Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John,” by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Chapter 9 opens with Jesus still in Jerusalem. In this chapter, John records another miracle as additional evidence that Jesus was the Jews' promised Messiah. This sign fulfills Isaiah's prophecy that the Messiah would give sight to the blind (Isaiah 29:18; 35:5; 42:7; Luke 4:18). This is the sixth sign John has described in his task of proving Jesus' divinity. Read John 9:1–12.

In chapter 8, Jesus called himself the “light of the world.” Now he is giving tangible proof for that claim. Again, Jesus is using the physical to make a spiritual point. Just as Jesus is able to deliver this man from physical darkness, he is able to deliver sinful people from spiritual darkness.

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus came so that the spiritually blind can see.

Teaching point two: Jesus is the Good Shepherd.

Teaching point three: Jesus persisted in trying to explain his mission to the Jews.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

These are some characteristics of sheep:

1. *They are known to be dumb.* They are never used in circuses because they cannot be trained to perform. They tend to wander and go astray and are unable to find their way home—even when it is in sight!
2. *They are defenseless.* They have no quills like porcupines, no scent like skunks, no claws like cats, and no teeth like lions. The sheep's bite is harmless. Most have no horns. They are unable to defend themselves against attack.
3. *They are helpless.* If they are in water, their wool soaks up the water, and they sink to the bottom. Also, if they are on land and end up on their backs, they cannot turn over and get



themselves up. Their kicking and bleating does not help except to alert the shepherd, who comes and sets them on their feet again.

4. *They perceive danger poorly.* They have poorly developed instincts to warn of potential danger. They often wander into a briar patch, fall over a cliff, or walk into heavy smoke.
5. *They depend totally upon their shepherd.* They require more attention and care than any other class of livestock.

Is it any wonder we are compared to sheep? How evident is our need for a shepherd to take care of us, but we are often too “dumb” to realize it.

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 6

LEADER'S GUIDE

Jesus Is the Messiah and King

Through raising Lazarus from the dead and fulfilling ancient prophecy, Jesus proved he was who he claimed to be.

Faith grows like a muscle. As we see the miracles in John and those in our own lives, we are more able to trust God's love for us and his willingness and desire to answer our prayers. However, we need to make an effort to record and remember those clear times of God's intervention because Satan always comes and tries to make us doubt that it was God. We see evidence of both those things in these two chapters.

Scripture:
John 11–12

Based on:
"Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John," by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Note to leader: At the beginning of the class, provide each person with the "Participant's Guide" included at the end of this study.

In chapter 11, John tells the reader the story of Jesus' greatest miracle and, other than his resurrection, offers the greatest proof that Jesus is truly the Son of God. Jesus' friend Lazarus is sick, and his sisters have sent word to him in Perea that "the one you love is sick" (v. 3). The sisters didn't tell Jesus what to do, they just alerted him to the problem and trusted his loving concern, wisdom, and power. Mary and Martha may have been hesitant to ask Jesus to come to Bethany as it was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and they were probably aware that the Jews in Jerusalem wanted to kill Jesus. At any rate, it took a day for the messengers to get to Jesus and when they did, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Read John 11:1–43.

Discussion Starters:

Many Jews believed that the soul remained near the body for three days after death in the hope of returning to it. By four days, all hope would be gone. Lazarus would be irrevocably dead. Jesus knew that raising Lazarus from the dead would be perceived as a far greater miracle than healing a sick man, even from a distance, as he had already done with the official's son (John 4:50–53).

- [Q] Why do you think Jesus told the disciples that Lazarus was sleeping and that he was going to Bethany to wake him? Was he just using a euphemism? Was he trying to get them to think from the natural to the spiritual? What's your opinion?
- [Q] When the disciples misunderstood, Jesus explained that Lazarus was dead and that for their sake, he was glad he was not there to heal Lazarus so that they would believe. What do you think Jesus meant by that? What did he want them to believe?

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles**Teaching point one: Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead to show us who he is.**

Martha was like many Christians today. She knew that Jesus loved her brother and that he would want to heal him. She also knew that with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26), and yet, when it really came down to believing God to do the impossible, she faltered and fell into thinking like the average person. Our prayer and challenge is to be open to what God wants to do, even if it doesn't fit within our accustomed ways of thinking and perceiving. "[We] do believe; help [us] overcome [our] unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).

Rabbis never spoke to and certainly didn't teach women. However, Jesus frequently spoke to, befriended, and taught women, placing much greater value on them than their society did. Jesus explained to Martha that Lazarus would rise again, but she did not realize he meant that day! She agreed with him because all Jews, except the Sadducees, believed in the resurrection of the dead at the end of the age. Then Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life.



He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25–26).

[Q] How did Jesus move Martha's thinking from what had happened to Lazarus to who he (Jesus) is? Why was that even more important for Martha to understand than that her brother would be brought back to life?

➤ How was this similar to the woman at the well and the blind man?

Martha is remembered in a poor light because of Jesus' gentle correction of her priorities (Luke 10:41–42). However, this passage reveals her as a woman of deep faith and spiritual discernment. Even though Jesus had not healed her brother, she still worshiped him as "the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world" (John 11:27). After this strong declaration, Martha went back home and told Mary that Jesus had come. Mary quickly went to Jesus, fell at his feet, and uttered the same words Martha had said. Probably they had remarked to each other, "If only Jesus had been here in time!"

[Q] Why do you think Jesus, seeing Mary and the mourners weeping, "was deeply moved in spirit and troubled"?

In verse 33 and again in verse 38, John says that Jesus was "deeply moved." In the Greek these words mean "to smart with anger, to have indignation, to sigh, to groan, and to murmur against."

[Q] What do you think Jesus was angry about?

Leader's Note: *Perhaps Jesus was angry at what sin had done to his creation. Sin ushered in sickness, sadness, suffering, and death. In this section we clearly see the humanity of Jesus. He got angry, he wept, and he loved deeply. Jesus was "a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering" (Isaiah 53:3). We can be comforted by the fact that not only does Jesus truly know how we feel, he is our merciful High Priest who will "help us in our time of need" (Hebrews 4:15–16).*

In verse 39, when Jesus reached the tomb and said, "Take away the stone," Martha was truly shocked. Jesus didn't rebuke her for her lack of faith. He understood that neither she, nor anyone else, had ever seen a person restored to life after the body had begun to decay. He did remind her that he had said if she believed in him, she would see the glory of God.

[Q] Do you, as a believer, anticipate and look for the glory of God in your life? Tell about a time you have seen the glory of God.

➤ How is God using you to display his glory and goodness?

[Q] Are you able to go through difficult situations without doubting God's love? If so, how do you do that? If not, what might help you to do that?

Read John 11:44–57.

Verse 45 says, "many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him." Wouldn't you think so?! What is surprising is that not all of them did! Obviously, some were not seeking after truth, but for ways to protect their own selfish interests.



[Q] The Sanhedrin was the High Court of the Jews, made up of the chief priests, the elders, and the teachers of the law. It was Israel's religious ruling body and had political power with Rome. In considering Jesus' fate, what was the primary motivating factor of the Sanhedrin for wanting to get rid of Jesus?

[Q] How was Caiaphas' suggestion prophetic (vv. 50–51)?

Caiaphas, the high priest from 18–36 A.D., a Sadducee, was not concerned about Jesus' guilt or innocence but only about what was politically expedient for Israel. Isn't it interesting that even though Caiaphas was not a believer, God could still use him and speak through him? The leaders of Israel thought they were in control, but God was working out his predetermined plan. Originally, the leaders had wanted to wait to arrest Jesus until after Passover, but God had decreed that Jesus would die at the same time the Passover lamb was slain for the sins of the people.

Teaching point two: Mary demonstrated radical devotion to Jesus.

Chapter 11 ended with many Jews coming to Jerusalem for the annual Passover celebration. Chapter 12 begins with Jesus coming back to Bethany six days before the Passover. As we know from chapter 11, Bethany was the home of Jesus' friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, whom he recently raised from the dead. They were all at a dinner given in Jesus' honor. Martha, true to her nature, was serving. Lazarus and Jesus reclined at the table dining, and Mary poured about a pint of her very expensive perfume on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. This act of Mary's was unusual for many reasons: 1) "Cleaning" feet was the activity of a slave. 2) The cost of the perfume she used was the equivalent of a year's wages. 3) A respectable woman would not take her hair down in public. 4) Mary used her hair rather than a towel to dry Jesus' feet. This story is in every Gospel. Obviously, it made a deep impression on all who witnessed or heard of it.

Read John 12:1–11.

[Q] What can we learn from Mary's act of worship?

[Q] Mary's pint of perfume was probably her most precious possession, to be used for her dowry or for her future financial security. What do you think compelled her to use it all on Jesus' feet? Give several reasons.

➤ What might be an equivalent thing to do today?

[Q] What did Judas fail to understand when he objected to Mary's action?

[Q] What can you expect from God if you are extravagant in your devotion to him? (See Luke 6:38 and Matthew 6:33.)

This section ends with the chief priests wanting to kill Lazarus as well as Jesus, because many of the Jews believed in Jesus because of Lazarus. A man they knew had died was now walking around for all to see.



Teaching point three: Jesus declared himself Messiah and King.

Jesus left Bethany the next day, perhaps to put some distance between Lazarus and himself for Lazarus' protection. At any rate, on his way to Jerusalem, he was greeted by a "great crowd that had come for the Feast [and had] heard that Jesus was on his way" (John 12:12). This great crowd included Passover visitors from outside of Judea, many of whom had seen or heard of Jesus, and the local people who had witnessed or heard about Jesus' raising of Lazarus. Many of these people had come to believe that Jesus was indeed their Messiah. They came, worshiping him with palm branches and quoting Psalm 118, a Messianic psalm, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Psalm 118:25–26). John adds that they also said, "Blessed is the King of Israel!" (John 12:13).

The people probably expected Jesus to make himself king, drive out the Romans, and establish a new Jewish kingdom. However, they missed the fact that Jesus' coming to Jerusalem on a donkey was also a fulfillment of prophecy, indicating that the Messiah would be humble and peaceful (Zechariah 9:9). In Rome, when a triumphant king returned to his capital city, he rode on a white horse. When he was going on a mission of peace to visit his people, he rode on a donkey. Jesus entered Jerusalem as a humble king to fulfill Zechariah's prophecy, to obey the Father's will, and to openly announce that he was the King of Israel, the promised Messiah. These Jews understood that he was the Messiah, but misunderstood that his was not an earthly kingdom. Not even the disciples understood until after Jesus was glorified and they had received the Holy Spirit.

Read John 12:12–19.

[Q] Why was this triumphal entry, just a week before Jesus died, so important?

Read John 12:20–36.

The Pharisees, seeing so many coming out to meet Jesus, worried that they were losing control. In 12:20, even some of the Greeks who had come to worship at the Feast wanted to meet Jesus. These were Gentile "God-fearers" who believed in and worshiped the God of the Jews, but who had not converted to Judaism or been circumcised. These men came to Philip, probably because he had a Greek name and was from Bethsaida, a Hellenistic city in Galilee. They asked if they could have an appointment with Jesus.

[Q] Notice how God used Philip's name and background to make him approachable to the Greek Gentiles. What are ways God can use your background, interests, and so on so that unbelievers can relate to you? What is your sphere of influence?

[Q] What do you think Jesus meant when he told Philip and Andrew that "the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (John 12:23)?

[Q] What made Jesus able to see beyond his present pain to his future reward?

[Q] How does the analogy of a kernel of wheat relate to Jesus' life and death (v. 24)?

[Q] How are we to take verse 25?

A truly satisfying life comes to those who seek God and surrender their lives to him. God has made us, knows us intimately, and knows what is going to give us the most meaningful,



rewarding, and fulfilling life. However, due to the Fall, our desires are contrary to what is best for us and, if not tempered, will lead to our destruction. Therefore, we must die to self and live to know and obey God. As we learn that God's way "works" and is better, we will be more willing to trust and obey him for our present and future. As we know and embrace his truth, we will find that it does set us free from our bondages to addictions, selfishness, fears, and so on (John 8:32,36).

[Q] In verse 26, Jesus says, "Whoever serves me must follow me." Why would you want to follow Jesus if it means dying to self (Galatians 2:20) and daily taking up your cross (Matthew 16:24)? List 2 good reasons found in John 12:26.

Jesus never led the disciples to think dying to self would be easy. In fact, his very next words expressed his agony at the thought of what it meant to him. However, he was able to have victory in his struggle and surrender to God's will. Jesus was able to focus beyond his death to the joy that was to come (Hebrews 12:2).

[Q] Share a time when you denied yourself and did the right thing. How did that ultimately make you feel?

- What about a time when you compromised your convictions? Do you know why? What were the results?

In verse 28, God's response was for those present, so they would recognize his association with Jesus; surely the man Jesus was encouraged to hear his Father's thundering approval (John 12:29). In verse 31, Jesus was still trying to warn his fellow Jews, "Now is the time for judgment on this world." He continued, "Now the prince of this world will be driven out." Though Satan thought the Cross was his victory, it really was his defeat and rendered him condemned and powerless at the name of Jesus (Luke 10:18–19; John 16:11; 2 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 6:10–18; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14).

[Q] Do you recognize Satan's lies? How do you combat them?

[Q] What did Jesus mean in verse 32?

Passover was the perfect setting for Jesus' death and resurrection for several reasons. One was that it brought so many people and cultures to one place: Judean Jews, transplanted Jews who had taken on the characteristics of the cultures where they lived, Gentile converts, and the Gentile God-fearers. It also was the ideal setting for events to make an impact across the known world. With such a concentration of people in Jerusalem (about 2.7 million), many would have unbelievable, but true, stories to take back home with them. Most of these people would have heard or witnessed that at the moment of Jesus' death, the curtain of the temple tore in two from top to bottom, the earth shook, and bodies of dead people came out of their tombs and later, after Jesus' resurrection, went into the city and appeared to many people (Matthew 27:51–53). Many of these people probably would have heard about Jesus' tomb being found empty even though Pilate had placed soldiers to guard it at the request of the chief priests and Pharisees (Matthew 27:62–66). They knew that Pilate had not had any of these soldiers killed, suggesting that he knew that they had been unable to secure the tomb. Probably many also saw or heard about Jesus' post-resurrection appearances (Luke 24:13–35), all according to the Father's plan.



In verse 34, one of the Jews from the crowd asked Jesus how he could die and still be the Christ. Their law had taught them that the Christ would remain forever. Jesus did not try to clear up their confusion. Rather, he warned them to put their trust in him while he was still with them. Referring to himself as the light, Jesus urged the crowd not to let darkness overtake them.

- [Q] Have you ever been in a totally dark place, such as a cave or a windowless room? What was that experience like?
- [Q] Do you see your friends who do not know Jesus as walking in darkness? Why or why not?

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

Read John 12:37–50.

It is hard to believe that after all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, many still did not believe in him. This was a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy many hundreds of years before (Isaiah 6:10; 53:1). It is important for us to realize that Isaiah's foreknowledge did not cause the unbelief. God merely told him that there would be many who would not believe. It is also important to realize that many did believe (John 12:42). Similarly, today, there are many who believe in Jesus and many who do not.

- [Q] What does God's Word say that we are to do about "the lost" (Matthew 28:19–20; Acts 1:8)?
- [Q] Why did some who believed not speak up (John 12:42)? What similar situations might we face today?

Action Point: As Christ's ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20), we have a message to give to all the people in this world who do not know, often do not care, and rebel against the one who demonstrated his love by giving his life for them (John 3:16). Are you taking your responsibility seriously? Who might the Lord be urging you to pray for and speak to about him?

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 6

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

Jesus Is the Messiah and King

*Through raising Lazarus from the dead and fulfilling ancient prophecy,
Jesus proved he was who he claimed to be.*

Faith grows like a muscle. As we see the miracles in John and those in our own lives, we are more able to trust God's love for us and his willingness and desire to answer our prayers. However, we need to make an effort to record and remember those clear times of God's intervention, because Satan always comes and tries to make us doubt that it was God. We see evidence of both those things in these two chapters.

Scripture:
John 11–12

Based on:

"Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John," by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

In chapter 11, John tells the reader the story of Jesus' greatest miracle and, other than his resurrection, offers the greatest proof that Jesus is truly the Son of the one true God Jehovah. Jesus' friend Lazarus is sick, and his sisters have sent word to him in Perea that "the one you love is sick" (v. 3). The sisters didn't tell Jesus what to do, they just alerted him to the problem and trusted his loving concern, wisdom, and power. Mary and Martha may have been hesitant to ask Jesus to come to Bethany as it was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and they were probably aware that the Jews in Jerusalem wanted to kill Jesus. At any rate, it took a day for the messengers to get to Jesus and when they did, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Read John 11:1–43.

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead to show us who he is.

Teaching point two: Mary demonstrated radical devotion to Jesus.

Teaching point three: Jesus declared himself Messiah and King.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

Read John 12:37–50.

It is hard to believe that after all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, many still did not believe in him. This was a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy many hundreds of years before (Isaiah 6:10; 53:1). It is important for us to realize that Isaiah's foreknowledge did not cause the unbelief. God merely told him that there would be many who would not believe. It is also important to realize that many did believe (John 12:42). Similarly, today, there are many who believe in Jesus and many who do not.

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 7

LEADER'S GUIDE

Jesus Reassures His Disciples

*As the end of Jesus' time on earth loomed near,
the disciples needed his wisdom and hope.*

Chapter 13 begins just before the Passover Feast, which would occur the following night. John sets the scene for us: “The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.” *The Message* translates it this way: “The Devil by now had Judas ... firmly in his grip, all set for the betrayal.”

Scripture:
John 13–14

Based on:
“Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John,” by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Note to leader: At the beginning of the class, provide each person with the "Participant's Guide" included at the end of this study.

Beginning with chapter 13, John's pace slows dramatically. The first 12 chapters covered over 3 years, and the next 6 chapters cover one night. It is Jesus' last supper and the last night of his life. What mixed feelings he must have had! Jesus had become a man and lived on this planet for 33 years. He would miss his loved ones, but he was ready to do what he had come to do and was looking forward to returning to his former glory. Jesus' visit to Earth would leave him forever changed and always a part of the human race.

Jesus particularly loved his band of faithful followers, his disciples. In this chapter he showed them the full extent of his love, beginning with washing their feet. He knew his time had come and devoted his last hours to instructing, warning, and encouraging his disciples. Read John 13:1–2.

Discussion Starters:

[Q] How do you think Satan was able to get a grip on Judas?

[Q] The disciple Peter, in his epistle to the church in Jerusalem many years later, described Satan as "a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). What weak spots make you vulnerable to the enemy of your soul?

➤ How do you protect yourself against his trickery and deceit?

Jesus knew before this night that Judas would betray him (John 6:70–71). In John 13:3, John tells us that Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power. Jesus was in total control of his situation and chose to submit to the Father's plan and to let Judas go on with his plan. Jesus was not a victim or a martyr.

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus modeled servant leadership.

Read John 13:3–17.

[Q] Why do you think Jesus washed his disciples' feet? Give as many reasons as you can think of.

Jesus "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). Service expressed who Jesus was. He did not depend on the response of others. Imagine being willing to die for those who would reject your loving, selfless, sacrificial gift!

[Q] How do you imagine Judas felt as Jesus washed his feet?



- How do you think Jesus felt as he washed Judas' feet?

[Q] Why didn't Peter want Jesus to wash his feet?

Leader's Note: *This was an unforgettable lesson in humility for Peter. Probably, he remembered this night when he urged the recipients of his first epistle to clothe themselves with humility (1 Peter 5:5).*

The word translated *wash* in verses 5, 6, 8, 12, and 14 in the Greek means “to wash a part of the body.” The word used in verse 10 and translated as “had a bath” means “bathed all over.” The distinction is important because Jesus was trying to make a point. When a sinner puts his trust in Jesus, he is “bathed all over” and his sins, past, present, and future, are washed away, forgiven, and forgotten (1 Corinthians 6:9–11; Titus 3:3–7; Hebrews 10:17; Revelation 1:5).

However, the redeemed sinner will continue to sin and when he does, he needs “only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean” (John 13:10). He does this by confessing his sin (agreeing with God about his sin) and asking God to forgive and cleanse him (1 John 1:9). The believer's relationship with God will never change, but unconfessed sin does break his fellowship with God and hinders his walk with the Lord (Psalm 66:18; 1 Peter 3:7; 1 Corinthians 3:1–3).

[Q] What do you think Jesus meant when he told the disciples that now they should do as he has done for them (John 13:15)?

- What are some ways your church and you individually are carrying on Jesus' example of loving, humble service?

Greatness, in Jesus' eyes, does not come from having many servants, but from being the servant of many. Jesus said, “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all” (Mark 10:43–44). Jesus set the example for us and instructed us to do as he did (John 13:15). He also said, “Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them” (John 13:17).

However, Jesus qualified his statement by saying that he is not referring to all of them. He then quoted from Psalm 41:9, a prophecy about the Messiah, saying, “He who shares my bread has lifted up a heel against me,” as in a horse kicking. The first part of that verse, that Jesus did not quote, says, “Even my close friend, whom I trusted ...” Read John 13:18–30.

Jesus announced to the Twelve that one of them would betray him. They were shocked. Their astonishment shows that Judas had concealed from the eleven his true feelings about Jesus. It also shows that Jesus had in no way treated Judas differently from the others or in any way prejudiced them against him. Only Jesus and Judas knew who the betrayer was.

John writes that when Jesus handed the bread to Judas, “Satan entered into him” (John 13:27). Up until this time Satan had greatly influenced Judas, but now with Judas' conscious decision to carry out his plan, he gave Satan permission to possess his soul.

Teaching point two: Jesus gave us a new command: to love as he loves.

Once Judas left, Jesus knew that events were about to unfold rapidly. He knew that he would be sacrificed, mankind would be redeemed, prophecies reaching back to the Garden of Eden would be fulfilled in that Satan's head would be crushed (Genesis 3:15), and the purpose of God would be realized. As the old hymn says, “Halleluiah! What a Savior!”



Now Jesus wants to prepare his remaining disciples for what is ahead. In verse 33, Jesus addressed the disciples as “my children.” This is the first time this word is used in any of the gospels and reflects Jesus’ tender intimacy, fondness, loving care, and concern. Jesus tells the disciples, as he did the Jews, that he will be with them only a little while longer and then he will be going where they cannot come. Read verses 31–38.

[Q] What is different between what Jesus told his disciples and what he told the Jews (John 7:33–34; John 13:33, 36)?

[Q] The Jews had been taught to love their neighbor as themselves (Lev. 19:18). What was new about Jesus’ commandment to love one another? How did Jesus love?

Unconditional love is certainly impossible for us to give in our own strength, as this humorous poem reminds us:

To live above with saints we love will certainly be glory.
To live below with saints we know, well, that’s another story!

[Q] However, God would not command us to do something that is impossible for us to do, so how do we obey him in this or any other command that is beyond our human ability?

Leader’s Note: *We can only do it through God’s help, by his Holy Spirit loving others through us. We admit it’s beyond us and ask for his power. Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, recommended “spiritual breathing.” When you recognize that Jesus is no longer on the throne of your life, you exhale: confess to the Lord that you are trying to live the Christian life in your own strength, which you cannot possibly do. Then inhale: Ask Jesus to once again take his rightful place on the throne of your life and to fill you with his Holy Spirit so that you may be empowered to be the person he wants you to be.*

[Q] How does that kind of love tell the world that you are a disciple of Christ?

[Q] What do you think are some of the reasons for division and lack of love and unity in the church?

[Q] What practical ways can you demonstrate Jesus’ love to those around you?

This chapter ends on a sad note, with Peter telling Jesus that he wants to go with him, even if that means laying down his life for him. Jesus answered Peter, “Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!” (John 13:38). Peter did not realize how weak and fearful he truly was.

Teaching point three: Jesus is the only way to God.

Chapter 14 begins with the disciples in a state of shock and grief following Jesus’ announcement that even Peter would deny him. For the disciples, it is a time of confusion and fear. In words of supernatural calm and confidence, Jesus reassured the remaining eleven and prepared them for what lay ahead. Read John 14:1–7.

[Q] What did Jesus tell the disciples in chapter 13 that troubled them?



Leader's Note: *That he would be betrayed and would leave them (John 13:21, 33).*

[Q] What comfort did he give them?

[Q] What promises in God's Word do you find most reassuring?

To better understand Jesus' words in John 14:2–4, we need to acquaint ourselves with the marriage analogy Jesus used in explaining his going away. In Jesus' day, when a young man desired to marry a young woman, the young man and his father would go to the girl's father and negotiate a "bride price" to compensate her parents for raising her, and as an expression of the son's love for the young woman. Once an agreement had been reached, the young man would take a cup of wine and offer it to his intended, saying, "I love you and I want to be your husband. I offer to you all that I am and all that I have." If she took the cup and drank it, she would be saying, "I receive you as my husband. I give myself to you and receive your love and the life you offer me." At that point they were betrothed or officially engaged. (Next time you take the communion cup, think of Jesus as making such an offer to you.)

Then the groom-to-be and his father would return to the father's home where the son would build a house for his bride that adjoined his father's house. (The word translated *rooms* in verse 2 literally means, "dwelling places.") When the son had finished his house and the father declared it ready, the son would return to marry his betrothed. The young woman had no idea when he would come back to marry her and take her to their home, so she needed to be prepared for his return. Jesus drew on this familiar tradition to explain to his disciples that he is their groom and that he will come back and take them to be with him forever.

Thomas was still confused as to what Jesus meant. Also, the disciples still expected Jesus to set up an earthly kingdom. Jesus therefore explained that he is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no one comes to the Father except through him (John 14:6).

[Q] Why is this verse the basis for Christian evangelism and missions?

[Q] What does this mean for all the people in the world who devoutly embrace other religions?

Christianity is often offensive to our culture, which tends to deny that sin exists. Also, our culture believes that if there is a heaven, we will get there if our good deeds outweigh our bad. Most of the world's cultures and religions are based on man trying to reach God by living a good life and doing good works. Others teach living a good life for the benefit of the after-life (for example, Nirvana) or the next life (for example, reincarnation).

Christianity is unique in many ways: 1) It is the only religion in which God becomes a man and dies for us to pay for our sins. 2) It is also the only religion in which forgiveness and salvation is a gift and not earned. 3) It is the only religion whose leader claimed to be God and proved it by rising from the dead!

Think of someone you know who needs to understand that Jesus is the only way to God. Determine to pray for that person, and when God gives you the opportunity, share with that person about your faith in Jesus. It may be that God will just have you pray, and will bring someone else along to share the gospel with him or her.



Teaching point four: Jesus gave his disciples (and us) hope for the future.

Read John 14:8–30.

Jesus was disappointed with Philip. He was the first disciple Jesus called (John 1:43) and an eyewitness to all his teachings, miracles, and near escapes, but still did not know who Jesus was. However, this time Jesus is perfectly clear, saying, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

[Q] What do you think Jesus meant by saying that his followers will do even greater things than he did?

- List some of those things he might have been referring to, found in Acts 2:1–13; 5:5, 9–10, 15; 13:11; 19:12.

[Q] Does God expect believers to do “greater things” today, or was that just for the disciples and the first-century church? Why or why not?

[Q] How does our obedience show our love for Jesus, and what do we receive in return (John 14:21)?

Jesus knew that some of the things he was telling the disciples they would not understand until the day of his resurrection. However, he knew the Counselor would remind them of everything he had said to them and would teach them all they needed to know. The role of the Holy Spirit to continue Jesus’ teaching and to enable the disciples to remember and understand his teaching was crucial for the creation of the church and for the writing of the New Testament (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20–21).

Toward the end of their supper together, Jesus offered his disciples his greatly needed peace. The peace Jesus gives is an inner work of the Spirit; it is not dependent on circumstances but based on his character.

[Q] Have you ever experienced Jesus’ supernatural peace when the circumstances were anything but peaceful? If so, explain.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

Jesus has told us that we may ask for anything in his name and he will do it. What a promise! So why do we not see more answers to our prayers? Do we pray amiss, asking with wrong motives (James 4:3) or filled with doubt (James 1:6)? Is there unconfessed sin in our hearts (Psalm 66:18)? Are we not praying fervently and effectively (James 5:16)? Are we studying God’s Word and listening to God to know that we are praying in line with his will (1 John 5:14–15)?

Action Point: Share with the group the thing that you think most hinders your prayers, and pray for each other in this regard.

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 7

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

Jesus Reassures His Disciples

*As the end of Jesus' time on earth loomed near,
the disciples needed his wisdom and hope.*

Chapter 13 begins just before the Passover Feast, which would occur the following night. John sets the scene for us: “The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.” *The Message* translated it this way: “The Devil by now had Judas ... firmly in his grip, all set for the betrayal.”

Scripture:
John 13–14

Based on:
“Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John,” by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Beginning with chapter 13, John's pace slows dramatically. The first 12 chapters covered over 3 years, and the next 6 chapters cover one night. It is Jesus' last supper and the last night of his life. What mixed feelings he must have had! Jesus had become a man and lived on this planet for 33 years. He would miss his loved ones, but he was ready to do what he had come to do and was looking forward to returning to his former glory. Jesus' visit to Earth would leave him forever changed and always a part of the human race.

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus modeled servant leadership.

Teaching point two: Jesus gave us a new command: to love as he loves.

Teaching point three: Jesus is the only way to God.

Teaching point four: Jesus gave his disciples (and us) hope for the future.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

Jesus has told us that we may ask for anything in his name and he will do it. What a promise! So why do we not see more answers to our prayers? Do we pray amiss, asking with wrong motives (James 4:3) or filled with doubt (James 1:6)? Is there unconfessed sin in our hearts (Psalm 66:18)? Are we not praying fervently and effectively (James 5:16)? Are we studying God's Word and listening to God to know that we are praying in line with his will (1 John 5:14–15)?

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 8

LEADER'S GUIDE

Jesus Is the Vine

Unless we are connected to the vine, Jesus, we will wither.

Jesus continued his teaching by using the analogy that he is the vine and his Father is the gardener. The vine was a symbol for Israel (Isaiah 5:7). Jesus tells his disciples that he is the true vine and that anyone who comes to him and belongs to him is Abraham's true, spiritual seed and heir to all the privileges and responsibilities of being God's child.

Scripture:
John 15–16

Based on:
"Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John," by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Note to leader: At the beginning of the class, provide each person with the "Participant's Guide" included at the end of this study.

Chapter 15 begins with the seventh and last I AM statement: "I am the true vine." Earlier in this study, we saw that God told Moses his name was I AM. As Jesus made these seven I AM statements, he was claiming his deity and equality with Jehovah God. Read John 15:1–8.

Discussion Starters:

- [Q] List the six other I AM proclamations found in John 6:35; 8:12, 24, 58; 10:7, 9, 11; 11:25; 14:6.
- [Q] Many people do not believe in the Trinity and do not believe that Jesus was God in the flesh. John begins his gospel stating that Jesus was with God and is God (John 1:1, 10, 14). Where else does John show Jesus claiming to be of one essence with the Father?

Leader's Note: *John 10:30; 12:45; 14:9.*

- Why is the fact that Jesus is God so important?

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus is the vine; we are the branches.

In Jesus' analogy, he explains that those branches that bear fruit, the Father prunes so that they will be even more fruitful (John 15:2), as any gardener knows.

Webster defines *prune* as: "1. to cut or lop off; 2. to trim; 3. to rid or clear of anything superfluous or undesirable; 4. to remove anything superfluous or undesirable." This is what God does so that we may become more fruitful. He "cuts us back" or disciplines us for our good and for his glory (Hebrews 12:5–11).

- [Q] What does Jesus say is the purpose of the branch?
- [Q] What kind of fruit should we be bearing?
Leader's Note: *These may be some possibilities: Matthew 3:8; 7:16–20; Galatians 5:22–23; Ephesians 5:9; Philippians 1:11; Colossians 1:10.*
- [Q] What is absolutely necessary for the branch to be fruitful?
- [Q] The word *remain* in the Greek means "to abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present." Give practical ways you can continually dwell in Jesus' presence.
- [Q] What are ways to know that you are abiding in the Vine (John 15:2, 7–8)?



[Q] What can keep you from abiding in Jesus?

[Q] What does Jesus mean, “Apart from Me, you can do nothing”?

Leader’s Note: Look at 1 Corinthians 3:11–15 for one of the possible meanings.

Read John 15:9–17.

Jesus discussed the relationship between loving and obeying him. He told the disciples that as much as God the Father has loved him, he has loved them! He then urges them to continue to obey him and remain in his love. Love and obedience go together. As John later wrote, “This is love for God: to obey his commands” (1 John 5:3).

[Q] How does obedience show our love for God?

- How does it keep us in his love?

[Q] As you think of a parent-child relationship, why does a parent give a child rules?

- As the perfect Father, God gives his children commands or rules to give them guidance and to provide boundaries and protection. How and where do you learn what God’s commands or “rules” are?

[Q] Why do you think complete joy is a result of obeying God and remaining in his love (v. 11)?

Jesus then commanded his disciples to love one another with the same self-sacrificing love that he has for them. In verse 13, Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” The word *for* means “on behalf of, in place of, as a substitute for.” The picture is that of one about to be punished for a crime, and a friend throws himself over the offender and takes the punishment in his place.

[Q] Why was that kind of selfless love critical for the gospel to spread?

[Q] Do you see Jesus as your friend? If so, what does that relationship entail?

In John 15:16, Jesus commanded his disciples to go bear fruit. Although Jesus is talking to his disciples, all of this discourse applies to us as believers as well. We, too, are to go and bear fruit, knowing that God will answer our prayers and equip us to be obedient both to our call and to loving each other as he has loved us.

[Q] What is the fruit that will last for all eternity? How can you bear this kind of fruit? What keeps you from bearing this fruit?

Teaching point two: Christians will be persecuted.

Read John 15:18–27.

Jesus seeks to prepare his disciples and the future church to live in a hostile world. The world hated, persecuted, and killed Jesus, and it will hate, persecute, and kill his followers. Jesus told the disciples that he has called them out of the world, and that they no longer belong to it.



- [Q] Why will there always be those in the world who hate Christians?
- [Q] How is contempt for Christians shown today toward believers in the U.S.A.? Abroad?
- [Q] What do you think is the world's view of "born again" Christians?
 - Is that view accurate? Why or why not?
- [Q] What are some sins among Christians in the U.S. that are dividing the church and causing distrust and hatred?
- [Q] What is the primary work of the Holy Spirit (John 15:26)?

This is the third time Jesus has told the disciples that he is going to send the Counselor to them, the Spirit of truth (John 14:16, 26). This time he adds that the Holy Spirit will testify about him. Jesus ends this teaching emphatically telling the disciples that they, too, must testify about him because they had been with him from the beginning and were eyewitnesses of his glory (John 15:27). Jesus knew the future of the church depended on the definitive testimony of these 11 disciples.

Read John 16:1–4.

Chapter 16 opens with Jesus continuing to prepare the disciples for what is to come so that when these things do occur, they will remember Jesus' words and not "go astray." Jesus did not want his disciples to be disillusioned, confused, or tempted to doubt when they began to be persecuted for their belief in him. Therefore, he revealed to them that they will be kicked out of the synagogue and even will be killed as a "service to God" (John 16:2).

- [Q] Tell about a situation where you have been so zealous in your understanding of the truth that it made you prejudiced against someone or some group. Did you later find out you were wrong? Explain.

This is why you must "do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). We must diligently study the Bible so that we are able to interpret it accurately. However, because we do err and only "know in part" at best (1 Corinthians 13:12), we should learn to be humble and open to other points of view, always testing them against God's unchangeable Word.

In verse 2, Jesus explained to the disciples that the Jews would persecute them. Jesus had not disclosed these future events to the disciples earlier because he was with them and it was not necessary for them to know. (As with the disciples, Jesus reveals things to us as we need to know them and can bear them.)

Teaching point three: The Holy Spirit works in and through us.

Read John 16:5–15.

Jesus reminded the disciples that he was going to the Father. This time they understood that he was leaving them, and they were "filled with grief" (John 16:6). Seeing the disciples so sad,



Jesus consoled them by explaining that it is good that he is going away because then he can send the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, to them (John 16:7).

[Q] Why do you think having the Holy Spirit is better than having the physical presence of Jesus? Compare the two.

Jesus goes on to explain to his disciples the work of the Holy Spirit in the world: “When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8). Notice that Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as *he*. Many people call him “it” and think of him as a force, but the Bible makes it clear that he is a person who together with Jesus and the Father constitutes one God. Just as the Father dominates the Old Testament, and Jesus is the central deity in the Gospels, the Holy Spirit is primary in Acts through Revelation, as he is given to the church. However, all are present in each time period, as is seen in this section describing the role of the Spirit in the world.

The word *convict* (v. 8) in the Greek means “to convince someone of something, to bring to light or expose something, or to refute with a view to correction.” The job of the Holy Spirit is to point people to Jesus as the way to the Father (John 14:6). To do this, the Holy Spirit convicts people that they are sinful. Apart from the Holy Spirit’s convicting work, people do not see themselves as sinners. The world’s view is, “I’m okay, you’re okay.” God says, “You are not okay. You have ‘missed the mark,’” (the Greek meaning for sin). God’s standard is perfection.

The Holy Spirit convicts people that they need God’s righteousness, which God has made possible by Jesus’ sacrificial death. Jesus who was without sin (1 Peter 2:22) met God’s standard of perfection and righteousness and thus could pay for man’s unrighteousness. When a person receives Jesus and his forgiveness, he is clothed in Jesus’ righteousness and thus is acceptable to God (Romans 3:22). Alone we will never be perfect, but God sees us and accepts us in Jesus (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Finally, the Holy Spirit convicts the world that God will judge and punish Satan, the prince of this world, and all of those under his domain, that is, those who have rejected God’s gift of Jesus (John 16:9) and thus are still under God’s judgment (John 3:18; 5:24).

[Q] The gap between the world’s values and God’s truth seems in our day to be getting wider and wider. Give some examples of the two being “worlds” apart.

➤ How can you hate sin and its devastation but love and value the sinner?

[Q] How can you remain strong against attacks on your faith?

[Q] What does Jesus say will be the Holy Spirit’s role with the disciples (John 16:13–15)?

Leader’s Note: Notice that all three parts of the Trinity are involved in these verses.

Teaching point four: The disciples’ grief (and ours) will turn to joy.

Read John 16:16–24.

In John 16:16, Jesus tells the disciples that in a little while they will see him no more, but encourages them by adding that after a little while they will see him again. Jesus saw that the disciples did not understand. Therefore, he explained further in verses 19–22.



- [Q] To what was Jesus referring when he told the disciples they would weep and mourn?
- [Q] Why would no one be able to take away the disciples' joy?
- [Q] What do you think Jesus meant that "in that day" the disciples would no longer ask him anything (John 16:23)?

What a promise Jesus gives his followers: that whatever they ask the Father for in his name, they will have, so that their joy will be complete. Of course, this is assuming that they will ask (James 4:2), and that they will ask according to God's will (1 John 5:14–15).

- [Q] Share a time when you asked and received and your joy was made complete (John 16:24).

Read John 16:25–33.

God hates sin and what it does to people. In his love, he has provided the way for his creation to be freed from the power and penalty of sin. He loves everyone and desires for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Although God loves all people, he only has a covenant relationship with his children.

- [Q] Why does the Father love Jesus' followers (John 16:27)?
- [Q] What made the disciples finally believe that Jesus "came from God" (John 16:30)?

Jesus was pleased that the disciples finally believed in him. If you have come to believe that Jesus "came from God," briefly share your testimony here. Tell about your life before you believed in and accepted Jesus as your Savior, how and why you decided to put your trust in Jesus, and what your life has been like since then. For example, share what changes he has made and what he means to you now.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

Chapter 16 ends with Jesus preparing the disciples for the coming traumatic days by telling them what was going to happen to them. Therefore, when these things happened, the disciples would be comforted, knowing that Jesus already knew about them and had everything completely under his control.

Jesus knows what you are going through, just like he knew what the disciples were about to undergo. This chapter closes with Jesus experiencing supernatural peace in spite of knowing what he is about to endure. He finishes this discourse by warning his disciples that in this world they "will have trouble," but that they should take heart because he, their Lord and Savior, has "overcome the world" (John 16:33).

While we believers are in the world, we know that Jesus will sustain us, that God is on his throne, and that his plans for us are good. We, too, can have that same peace "which transcends all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). We also have the additional benefit of knowing that our story ends happily ever after!



Action Point: Are there things going on in your life or in the lives of your family that you don't understand? Do you feel like God is not answering your prayers? In light of this study, how can you trust Jesus in the midst of hardship?

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 8

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

Jesus Is the Vine

Unless we are connected to the vine, Jesus, we will wither.

Jesus continued his teaching by using the analogy that he is the vine and his Father is the gardener. The vine was a symbol for Israel (Isaiah 5:7). Jesus tells his disciples that he is the true vine and that anyone who comes to him and belongs to him is Abraham's true, spiritual seed and heir to all the privileges and responsibilities of being God's child.

Scripture:
John 15–16

Based on:
"Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John," by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Chapter 15 begins with the seventh and last I AM statement: “I am the true vine.” Earlier in this study, we saw that God told Moses his name was I AM. As Jesus made these seven I AM statements, he was claiming his deity and equality with Jehovah God. Read John 15:1–8.

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus is the vine; we are the branches.

Teaching point two: Christians will be persecuted.

Teaching point three: The Holy Spirit works in and through us.

Teaching point four: The disciples’ grief (and ours) will turn to joy.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

Chapter 16 ends with Jesus preparing the disciples for the coming traumatic days by telling them what was going to happen to them. Therefore, when these things happened, the disciples would be comforted, knowing that Jesus already knew about them and had everything completely under his control.

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 9

LEADER'S GUIDE

Jesus' Prayer, Betrayal, Arrest & Trial

In his prayer for his disciples and us, and the events that followed, we see clearly that Jesus is who he claimed to be.

Jesus, our Bridegroom, wants his bride to be with him and to share in his glory. In his intimate conversation with his Father, we glimpse what was most important to him right before he was arrested and faced the end of his earthly life. Jesus' last words in this amazing prayer reveal his incredible promise that he will be in his believers.

Scripture:
John 17–18

Based on:
"Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John," by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Note to leader: At the beginning of the class, provide each person with the "Participant's Guide" included at the end of this study.

Chapter 17 contains Jesus' longest recorded prayer. In it, he prays for himself, for his disciples, and for all future believers. Jesus prays this prayer as the conclusion of his great and final discourse, just prior to his betrayal and arrest. What a privilege it is for us to be able to read what was on his heart during his last night alive on earth. Read John 17:1–5, where Jesus prays for himself.

Discussion Starters:

- [Q] Jesus, who was sinless and had uninterrupted fellowship with the Father, saw the need to pray regularly. Why?
- [Q] What is always Jesus' first priority and utmost concern?
- [Q] How did Jesus glorify the Father (v. 1)?
- [Q] What do you think Jesus meant when he spoke of the glory he had with the Father "before the world began" (v. 5)?

Leader's Note: Webster defines glorify as "to extol, to honor." The word glorify in the New Testament is used chiefly in two different ways. We glorify God when we worship him for who he is, and when we display his qualities in our character, thereby making him known to those around us.

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus prayed for his disciples.

After praying for himself, Jesus turned his attention to his disciples. They were his chosen representatives to pass on to the world all that he had taught. Jesus was confident that they would spread the gospel, but he knew that they would be targets for Satan. He prayed that God would protect them from the evil one who would try to destroy their testimony. Read John 17:6–19.

- [Q] How had Jesus revealed the Father to the disciples (v. 6)?
- [Q] What had the disciples finally learned (vv. 7–8)?
- [Q] Why was Jesus able to say that glory had come to him through his disciples (v. 10)?
- [Q] Jesus said that his disciples are "in the world" but not "of the world." Give an example of how that is true of you.



Jesus did not ask the Father to take the disciples out of the world, as it was through them that the world would be reached. Likewise, we are to stay in contact with the world and be exposed to its culture so that we can reach out and share the good news of God's love.

[Q] Give an example of how you have reached out to someone with the good news of God's love.

Jesus asked God to sanctify the disciples by the truth, his word. The verb *sanctify* in the Greek means "to make holy, to set apart for holy use; to venerate."

[Q] How does God's Word sanctify you?

Teaching point two: Jesus prayed for us.

Jesus concluded his prayer by praying for all those who will believe in him through the message of his disciples. It's amazing to think that almost 2,000 years ago Jesus was praying for us! Read John 17:20–26.

[Q] What did Jesus pray for us (John 17:21–23)?

- Why would Christian unity make the world believe that God sent Jesus?
- How do division and lack of love encourage unbelief?
- How can you promote unity in Christ?
- How can we promote love and unity if we disagree about important things?

Teaching point three: Jesus is betrayed, arrested, and tried.

Chapter 18 describes Jesus' betrayal, arrest, and trial. Remember that John was an eyewitness to all of these events and wrote in the power and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Imagine what was in his mind and heart as he recalled the horror of that night.

Jesus and his disciples have finished their last meal together and have left Jerusalem to go across the Kidron Valley to an olive grove, a place where Jesus had gone often with his disciples to pray and rest. Both Mark and Matthew refer to this garden as *Gethsemane*, which means "olive press." Just as the olives were crushed by the olive press to make olive oil, Jesus was "crushed for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5). Read John 18:1–11.

[Q] After such an unsettling evening, what do you think the disciples were thinking and feeling as they approached their familiar place of prayer and rest?

[Q] Describe how Jesus was in control of the events of this night, rather than Judas and Jesus' enemies.

[Q] Why did they arrest him at night?

[Q] How did Jesus go from being "troubled" at having to face and experience crucifixion (John 12:27) to such supernatural peace and strength (John 18:4–11)?



- [Q] After the soldiers fell back and perhaps were reconsidering their mission, Jesus repeated that he was the one they wanted and asked that they let the others go. What prophecy did this fulfill (John 17:12)?
- [Q] What does it say about Jesus that even as he was being arrested, he stopped to heal Malchus's ear?

Read John 18:12–18.

In these verses, Jesus is taken to Annas, the former high priest, for a pre-trial. The Jews probably viewed Annas as their religious authority because according to the law of Moses, the position of high priest was a lifetime office. However, Rome had deposed Annas in 15 A.D., and his son-in-law Caiaphas was made the high priest.

While Jesus was being brought to Annas, John, “the other disciple,” was able to follow him into the high priest’s courtyard. However Peter, who was not known by the high priest, had to wait outside at the door. John tells his readers that “the other disciple” came back and spoke to the girl on duty and was able to receive permission for Peter to come into the courtyard.

(There is some question as to the identity of “the other disciple,” but it is most likely the author himself. It is consistent with how he refers to himself in this gospel: nameless, and in the third person. John’s father was presented in Mark 1:20 as a man wealthy enough to have hired servants, so it is not inconceivable that he would have contact with the high priest and his family.)

- [Q] What do you think John was thinking when he heard Peter tell the girl at the door that he was not one of Jesus’ disciples?

Peter goes down in history praised for being the disciple who first proclaimed that Jesus was the Messiah and criticized for being the disciple who denied Jesus three times! We wonder how he could have denied his Lord, but is it really so shocking?

Fear is a powerful emotion that can propel or paralyze us, or totally take away our joy and peace. It is at the root of many of our problems: fear of rejection, fear of abandonment, fear of financial loss, fear of health problems, fear of failure, fear of authority, fear of the future, and so on. It is such a huge problem for us that God tells us over and over in his Word not to be afraid, but to trust him. His love is perfect and he is worthy of our trust.

Optional Activity: You may want to look up the words afraid, fear, love, and trust in a concordance (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/bible/features/concordances.html>) to help you know the truth by knowing God’s promises.

John now takes the reader back to Annas’s questioning of Jesus. This questioning was not legal because there were no witnesses to establish guilt. Read John 18:19–27.

- [Q] Why do you think Annas was interested in Jesus’ disciples and teaching?
- [Q] How is Jesus an example for how we should speak when confronted?
- [Q] How did Jesus confront the official’s inappropriate behavior?



[Q] How did Peter's first denial to the servant girl make it more difficult to tell the truth the second and third times?

Read John 18:28–40.

This section opens with Jesus being taken from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor, Pilate. John does not go into the time Jesus spent with Caiaphas, probably because he is assuming the reader's familiarity with the other gospel accounts. However, John did remind the reader earlier in this chapter that Caiaphas was not an impartial judge, as he had already advised the Jews "that it would be good if one man died for the people" (John 18:14).

By now it is early morning, and "to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace" (John 18:28). To accommodate their religious beliefs, Pilate came out to them. These Jewish leaders were sincerely concerned about not defiling themselves by walking into Pilate's palace. However, they were more than willing to ignore their religion's rules, which stated that they were not to conduct a trial at night, force a prisoner to testify against himself, or have a hearing without two witnesses.

[Q] Why were the Jewish leaders so determined to have Jesus crucified?

➤ How do you know that the Jewish leaders really did not want a trial, just a crucifixion?

[Q] Why did Jesus have to be crucified (John 12:32; Galatians 3:13)?

[Q] What was Jesus' crime as stated to Pilate by the Jewish leaders (John 18:30)?

[Q] What did Jesus claim to be in response to Pilate's question (John 18:36–37)?

➤ Did this claim worry or threaten Pilate?

[Q] What do you think Jesus meant when he said that he came to testify to the truth?

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

John ended chapter 18 by making it clear that Pilate found no basis for a charge against Jesus and was willing to let him go. Isn't it tragically ironic that, as John said in the first chapter, "He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him" (John 1:11)?

Action Point: How has Jesus come to you, and what have you done with him? Have you responded to his offer of forgiveness and eternal life? If not, ask any questions about this now to help you in your decision.

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 9

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

Jesus' Prayer, Betrayal, Arrest & Trial

In his prayer for his disciples and us, and the events that followed, we see clearly that Jesus is who he claimed to be.

Jesus, our Bridegroom, wants his bride to be with him and to share in his glory. In his intimate conversation with his Father, we glimpse what was most important to him right before he was arrested and faced the end of his earthly life. Jesus' last words in this amazing prayer reveal his incredible promise that he will be in his believers.

Scripture:
John 17–18

Based on:
"Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John," by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Chapter 17 contains Jesus' longest recorded prayer. In it, he prays for himself, for his disciples, and for all future believers. Jesus prays this prayer as the conclusion of his great and final discourse, just prior to his betrayal and arrest. What a privilege it is for us to be able to hear what was on his heart during his last night alive on earth. Read John 17:1–5, where Jesus prays for himself.

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus prayed for his disciples.

Teaching point two: Jesus prayed for us.

Teaching point three: Jesus is betrayed, arrested, and tried.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

John ended chapter 18 by making it clear that Pilate found no basis for a charge against Jesus and was willing to let him go. Isn't it tragically ironic that, as John said in the first chapter, "He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him" (John 1:11)?

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 10

LEADER'S GUIDE

Jesus' Death and Resurrection

Jesus not only paid for our sins and conquered death, but he gave us the privilege of continuing his mission to the world.

We know that we are all guilty before God. The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:9–11, “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” Because of what Jesus did on the Cross, we all have hope.

Scripture:
John 19–21

Based on:
“Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John,” by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Note to leader: At the beginning of the class, provide each person with the "Participant's Guide" included at the end of this study.

Chapter 19 opens with Pilate having Jesus flogged in an attempt to appease the Jews, and the Jews manipulating and threatening Pilate in an attempt to get Pilate to condemn Jesus to crucifixion. Crucifixion was the cruelest type of execution and was reserved for the worst of Rome's criminals. It was such a horrible death that it was forbidden for Roman citizens.

The soldiers tormented Jesus, reminding us of slave owners whipping slaves, Nazis persecuting Jews, soldiers torturing POWs, and husbands beating their wives. We are shocked at man's inhumanity to man. Yet, we know this has existed since the Fall, and as early as when Adam's son Cain murdered his own brother Abel (Genesis 4:8). We grieve at our capacity to commit and tolerate evil. However, we look forward to the day when "there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things [will have] passed away" (Revelation 21:4). Read John 19:1–15.

After having Jesus flogged, Pilate presented him to the Jewish leaders, hoping that they would soften when they looked at such a beaten, broken, shadow of a man. However, their hearts were hard and unmoved.

Discussion Starters:

- [Q] The Jews had seen Jesus' miracles and had heard his teaching; Pilate had heard Jesus' answers and "was even more afraid" when he heard that Jesus had "claimed to be the Son of God." How do you think the Jews and Pilate each justified what they were doing?
- [Q] Who was responsible for Jesus' crucifixion? (Name five.)
- [Q] Three times in this section, John tells us that Pilate tried to set Jesus free. Clearly Jesus' life, words, and claims had made an impact on him. Pilate was faced with the immediate fear of man and the future fear of God. He chose the one with temporal consequences. Do you live your life in the light of eternity or, like Pilate, do you live for today? (Your choices, big and small, reveal who you are and what you believe.)
- [Q] Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10:31 that "whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." What does that mean in everyday life?

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus paid for our sins.

In this section, John presents the final hours, death, and burial of his dearest friend, teacher, and master. After Pilate turned Jesus over to the Roman soldiers, Jesus carried his own cross to the place of the Skull, so named because a formation in the rock gave the appearance of a skull.



This site was outside the northern wall of Jerusalem and was called Golgotha in Aramaic and Calvary in Latin. Here Jesus was crucified between two criminals. Read John 19:17–30.

- [Q] Why did Jesus have to die on a cross (Galatians 3:10–14)?
- [Q] Whenever there was a crucifixion, the criminal's crime was written on a sign over his head for all to see. What charge was fastened to Jesus' cross?
- [Q] Why do you think Jesus chose to give the care of his mother to John rather than to one of his younger brothers (John 7:5)?

Optional Activity: *John continues to show how this man Jesus was the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies written hundreds of years before his birth. Write down the human, natural situation that was occurring when Jesus fulfilled a prophecy, and look up the Old Testament prophecy that described and foretold that event (John 19:23–24 – Psalm 22:18; John 19:28–29 – Psalm 69:21; John 19:31–33 – Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12, Psalm 34:20; John 19:34 – Zechariah 12:10; John 19:38–42 – Isaiah 53:9).*

In ancient Rome, when a man committed a crime, he was given a “certificate of debt” which listed his crime against the state, and then he was sent to prison to pay for his crime. When he had fulfilled his obligation to society, he was released from prison and on his certificate, which listed the charge against him, was written *tetelestai*, which means “paid in full.” He was now a free man, having satisfied his debt to society. When Jesus said from the cross, “It is finished,” he used this same term, *tetelestai*. He was saying that he, the spotless lamb, had taken on the sins of the world and that now in his death, God's wrath and judgment on sin had been poured out on him in our place. Only a perfect man could pay for our imperfection. Jesus paid the price, and God's justice was satisfied. Now we, by accepting what Jesus has done on our behalf, may be restored to fellowship with God (Colossians 2:13–14).

- [Q] Unfortunately, many have suffered unjustly at the hands of cruel men and women. Why was Jesus' suffering worse than that of anyone who has ever lived (2 Corinthians 5:21)?

Because the dead men's bodies had to be taken down before the Sabbath began at sunset, the Jews asked Pilate to have their legs broken to speed up their death by making it harder for them to breathe. The soldiers did not break Jesus' legs because they thought he was already dead. Instead they pierced his side to make sure he was dead. Read John 19:31–42.

- [Q] In an effort to disprove that Jesus rose from the dead, there is a theory that he just passed out and that his disciples took him away and revived him. How does this passage refute that? Give three proofs.

Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin and a secret disciple of Jesus. With Pilate's permission, he and Nicodemus, “the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night,” prepared Jesus' body for burial and placed him in Joseph's new tomb. A tomb in those days cost about the same as a house, and was intended to hold many family members. The Jews were not allowed to bury members of different families in the same tomb, so by giving this tomb to Jesus, Joseph would not be able to use it for himself and his family. It was a very expensive gift.

- [Q] Do you think either Joseph or Nicodemus had any hope that Jesus would rise from the dead? How do you think they viewed him?



Teaching point two: Jesus rose from the dead.

We have arrived at John's description of the most important event in the history of man—Jesus' resurrection from the dead. This event is what proves that Jesus was not a mere man and that all he said was true. It shows that his death satisfied God's punishment of sin, as his rising from the dead proves his victory over sin, death, and Satan. Therefore, we are now able, through Jesus, to receive forgiveness of our sins, life forever with God, and victory over Satan and his powers and principalities. The resurrection of Jesus is our only sure hope for real, meaningful, and eternal life. This is why Paul said, "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17). He goes on to explain, "If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead ..." (1 Corinthians 15:19–20). Christianity stands or falls on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. John, Jesus' disciple who saw Jesus die, who saw his empty tomb, and then saw his post-resurrection bodily appearances, believed Jesus rose from the dead. Let us now see how John continues to build his case as he relives and tells about the greatest day of his life. Read John 20:1–9.

Mary Magdalene was not introduced in the Gospel of John, but we learn from Luke 8 that Jesus delivered her from seven demons. She was one of his faithful followers.

[Q] When Mary Magdalene saw that the stone had been moved, she concluded that Jesus' body had been stolen. Give 2 reasons why this was a false assumption (Matthew 27:62–66).

[Q] What does the fact that Mary knew where to find Peter say about him and his actions following his repeated denials of knowing Jesus?

- Assuming that John knew of Peter's denials, what do you see in his response to Peter?
- Compare and contrast Peter's response to his sin with Judas' response to his?
- What is the only sin God will not forgive (John 3:18; John 12:48; Acts 13:39)?

Read John 20:10–18.

[Q] Why do you think Mary (of Magdala) did not recognize Jesus? She was not the only one to see the risen Jesus and not immediately recognize him (John 21:4; Matthew 28:17; Luke 24:13–38).

The very first person Jesus appeared to after rising from the dead was Mary Magdalene. What a radical and tremendous affirmation to women in a day when a rabbi would not even speak to a woman in public. And what an encouragement to women today of their value in Jesus' eyes.

Read John 20:19–23.

The disciples might have expected some rebuke from Jesus, but instead he said, "Peace be with you!"

[Q] How did Jesus equip his disciples to carry on his work?

[Q] *The Message* translation of verse 23 says, "If you forgive someone's sins, they're gone for good. If you don't forgive sins, what are you going to do with them?" What do you think this verse means?



Optional Activity: John says in verse 20 that “the disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.” Write down what you imagine they were thinking, feeling, hoping, and projecting as they looked at Jesus.

Read John 20:24–30.

[Q] Do you think you would have believed the report of the disciples, or do you think you would have had to see Jesus and his nail prints for yourself, as Thomas did? Explain.

Teaching point three: Jesus sent the disciples (and us) out to continue his mission.

John ended chapter 20 by stating his purpose in writing this book. This and other reasons have made some scholars believe that Chapter 20 was the original end of John’s gospel, and that Chapter 21 was added later by John or someone else. However, it closely resembles chapters 1–20 and reveals much more information about the resurrected Jesus, including the forgiving and commissioning of Peter, and gives closure to John’s gospel.

Chapter 21 opens with seven of the disciples back in Galilee, waiting for Jesus to come. We don’t know how long the disciples had been waiting in Galilee, but Peter decided that he was going fishing. The others decided to go with him. Here, after an incredible three and a half years, they are back to fishing. Try to imagine what they were thinking and talking about during that long night of catching no fish. Read John 21:1–14.

[Q] Except for Thomas, the disciples had seen the resurrected Jesus twice, so why do you think they did not recognize him?

[Q] Why do you think Peter reacted as he did when he realized it was Jesus?

Read John 21:15–23.

This section deals chiefly with Jesus and Peter. It involves Jesus’ forgiving, restoring, and commissioning Peter. How encouraging for us to see that when we fail Jesus, he is willing to forgive us, restore us, and even trust us to minister to his flock!

In this situation, Jesus reverts back to calling Peter *Simon*, his original name before Jesus changed it to Peter, “the rock.” Jesus asked Peter, “Simon ..., do you truly love me more than these?” (John 21:15). The “these” could refer to the fish (his trade and livelihood) or to the other disciples. Peter had earlier boasted, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will” (Matthew 26:33). In Jesus’ question, the word used for *love* in the Greek is *agape*, which means “an unselfish love; a love that wants the best for the other person; a love which involves the will.” Jesus was asking Peter if he loved him with an unselfish love. Peter, having been humbled by his denials, replied, “Lord, you know that I love you.” Here Peter is using *phileo*, the word for “being a friend to; having a natural affection or fondness for.” Jesus then responded, “Feed my lambs” (John 21:15). Jesus asked Simon a second time if he loved him unselfishly, and Peter responded, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you” (as a friend) (John 21:16). Jesus then said, “Take care of my sheep.” Even though Peter still did not respond with *agape* love, Jesus gave him more responsibility, “Train and disciple my flock.” Now, a third time, Jesus asks Peter if he loves him, using *phileo*. Peter answered, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you” (with great affection) (John 21:17). And Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”



- [Q] Why was Jesus willing to entrust his sheep to Peter when Peter was only able to love him as a friend?
- [Q] Did Peter ever reach that selfless, agape love for Jesus as he matured in his faith? How do you know?
- [Q] Even though it hurt Peter for Jesus to ask him three times if he loved him, what was Jesus doing?

Leader's Note: Peter obeyed Jesus' commands regarding his sheep by ultimately heading up the church in Jerusalem, by opening the door to Gentile believers, and by writing two epistles, 1 and 2 Peter. The following verses reveal his growth: 1 Peter 1:6–9, 13–15; 3:15; 5:7–8; 2 Peter 1:3–7.

- [Q] Peter, still very young in his faith, was distressed to hear Jesus' prophecy of his own death and asked Jesus how John would die. What did Jesus say to him about comparing how God works in one's person life with how he works in another's?

Read John 21:24–25.

John revealed that he is the author of this book. He also declared that what he has written is true because he was one of Jesus' disciples and was there as a witness to all he has reported. He concludes his gospel by acknowledging that it records just a small part of all that Jesus did. If everything he did was written down, John supposed "that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written" (John 21:25).

- [Q] Having now read this entire gospel, and knowing John's claim that it was written by an eyewitness of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and post-resurrection appearances, what have you received from this book? What decisions about Christ have you made?

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

As we bring this study to a close, let us look back over the 21 chapters of this Gospel and see what we have learned from John. We studied about Jesus' miracles, looking at the seven signs John chose to prove that Jesus was the Son of God. We learned the seven I AM statements Jesus made, proclaiming that he was God in the flesh. We saw many prophecies about the coming Messiah being fulfilled in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. We saw through the man Jesus what the invisible Father is like. We learned how to enter into a relationship with God by being born again and becoming his child. We learned why Jesus had to die and why we need him to know the Father. We have heard Jesus' teaching and have seen his wisdom. We have looked at his life and ministry, and have seen his character, kindness, compassion, and supernatural power. We learned that John's purpose in writing this book was to prove to his readers that Jesus was and is the Son of God, so that they would believe in him and receive eternal life.

Action Point: What was God's purpose for you to read and study this book? Why did he call you to set aside the time to study and reflect on the God man and your relationship to him? So, what have you received from God's powerful, living, and active Word? How has the Spirit



ministered to you? Take a few more minutes to reflect and hear from the Lord, then jot down your thoughts and share them with the group.

Let's close by thanking God. May he receive all the praise and the glory as he works in your heart so you will know him better and love him more.

Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



Study Through the Bible

Gospel of John: Knowing Jesus – Study 10

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

Jesus' Death and Resurrection

Jesus not only paid for our sins and conquered death, but he gave us the privilege of continuing his mission to the world.

We know that we are all guilty before God. The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:9–11, “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” Because of what Jesus did on the Cross, we all have hope.

Scripture:

John 19–21

Based on:

“Knowing Jesus: A Study of the Gospel of John,” by Patti Evans

PART 1

Identify the Current Issue

Chapter 19 opens with Pilate having Jesus flogged in an attempt to appease the Jews, and the Jews manipulating and threatening Pilate in an attempt to get Pilate to condemn Jesus to crucifixion. Crucifixion was the cruelest type of execution and was reserved for the worst of Rome's criminals. It was such a horrible death that it was forbidden for Roman citizens.

The soldiers tormented Jesus, reminding us of slave owners whipping slaves, Nazis persecuting Jews, soldiers torturing POWs, and husbands beating their wives. We are shocked at man's inhumanity to man. Yet, we know this has existed since the Fall, and as early as when Adam's son Cain murdered his brother Abel (Genesis 4:8). We grieve at our capacity to commit and tolerate evil. However, we look forward to the day when "there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things [will have] passed away" (Revelation 21:4). Read John 19:1–15.

After having Jesus flogged, Pilate presented him to the Jewish leaders, hoping that they would soften when they looked at such a beaten, broken shadow of a man. However, their hearts were hard and unmoved.

PART 2

Discover the Eternal Principles

Teaching point one: Jesus paid for our sins.

Teaching point two: Jesus rose from the dead.

Teaching point three: Jesus sent the disciples (and us) out to continue his mission.

PART 3

Apply Your Findings

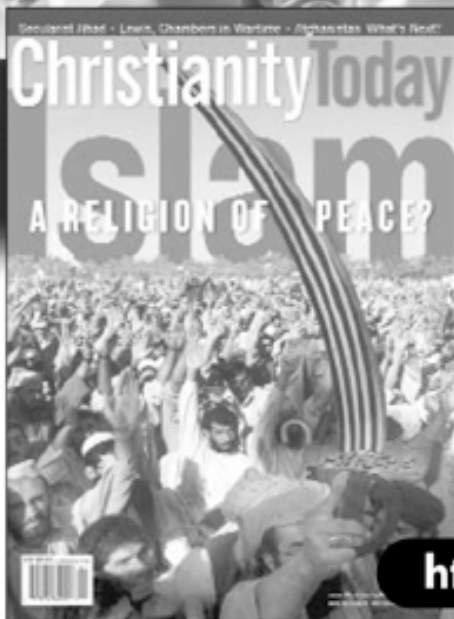
As we bring this study to a close, let us look back over the 21 chapters of this Gospel and see what we have learned from John. We studied about Jesus' miracles, looking at the seven signs John chose to prove that Jesus was the Son of God. We learned the seven I AM statements Jesus made, proclaiming that he was God in the flesh. We saw many prophecies about the coming Messiah being fulfilled in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. We saw through the man Jesus what the invisible Father is like. We learned how to enter into a relationship with God by being born again and becoming his child. We learned why Jesus had to die and why we need him to know the Father. We have heard Jesus' teaching and have seen his wisdom. We have looked at his life and ministry, and have seen his character, kindness, compassion, and supernatural power. We learned that John's purpose in writing this book was to prove to his readers that Jesus was and is the Son of God, so that they would believe in him and receive eternal life.



Study by Patti Evans, with JoHannah Reardon



UNDERSTAND THE WORLD



For a trustworthy Christian perspective on current issues, trends, and news, turn to **Christianity Today** magazine. You'll get reliable facts and views to help you make wise decisions in our ever-changing world.

Each issue will inform and challenge you with timely news coverage, compelling articles, and thought-provoking editorials. Subscribe today and SAVE! To get 3 risk-free trial issues, go to:

http://christianitytoday.com/go/ctmag_ad