



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Daily Discipleship Guide

Winter 2022-23 | CSB



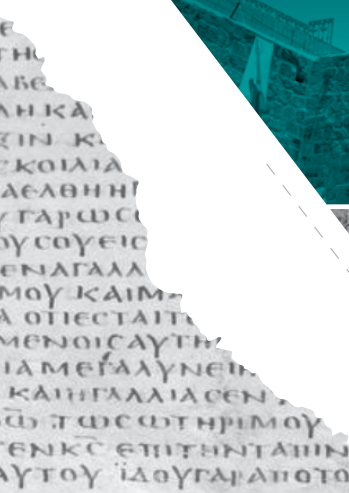
th
 without
 as made.
 e was the
 darkness; and
 ad it not.
 from God, whose
 or a witness, to bear
 that all men through
 at Light, but *was sent* to
 that Light.
 the true Light, which lighteth
 that cometh into the world.
 as in the world, and the world was
 y him, and the world knew him not.
 e came unto his own, and his own
 ived him not.
 2 But ^aas many as received him, to them
 ave he power to become the sons of God,
 even to them that believe on his name:
 13 ^oWhich were born, not of blood, nor of
 the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,
 but of God.
 14 ^pAnd the Word ^qwas made ^rflesh, and
 dwelt among us, (and ^swe beheld his glory,
 the glory as of the only begotten of the
 Father,) ^tfull of grace and truth.

JOHN'S WITNESS OF CHRIST

15 ^uJohn bare witness of him, and cried,
 saying, This was he of whom I spake, 'He
 that cometh after me is preferred before
 me: ^vfor he was before me.
 16 ^wAnd of his ^xfulness have all we received,
 and grace for grace.
 17 For ^ythe law was given by Moses, *but*
^zgrace and ^{aa}truth came by Jesus Christ.
 18 ^{ob}No man hath seen God at any time;
^{ac}the only begotten Son, which is in the
 bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

U N D E R S T A N D | E X P L O R E | A P P L Y

John 1-11



WHO CAN YOU TRUST?

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

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

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

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

- **Admit** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning from your sin.
- **By faith receive** Jesus as God's Son and accept His gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross.
- **Confess** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: "Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and my need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen."

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



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*Evangelistic Emphasis

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FROM THE TEAM

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

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

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

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

Onward,

G. Dwayne McCrary

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BIBLE READING PLAN

DECEMBER

- 1. John 1:1-5
- 2. John 1:6-8
- 3. John 1:9-13
- 4. John 1:14-18
- 5. John 1:19-23
- 6. John 1:24-28
- 7. John 1:29-34
- 8. John 1:35-42
- 9. John 1:43-51
- 10. John 2:1-12
- 11. John 2:13-17
- 12. John 2:18-22
- 13. John 2:23-25
- 14. John 3:1-8
- 15. John 3:9-15
- 16. John 3:16-21
- 17. John 3:22-30
- 18. John 3:31-36
- 19. John 4:1-10
- 20. John 4:11-14
- 21. John 4:15-19
- 22. John 4:20-26
- 23. John 4:27-33
- 24. John 4:34-38
- 25. John 4:39-45
- 26. John 4:46-54
- 27. John 5:1-9a
- 28. John 5:9b-16
- 29. John 5:17-23
- 30. John 5:24-30
- 31. John 5:31-35

JANUARY

- 1. John 5:36-40
- 2. John 5:41-47
- 3. John 6:1-7
- 4. John 6:8-14
- 5. John 6:15-21
- 6. John 6:22-27
- 7. John 6:28-33
- 8. John 6:34-40
- 9. John 6:41-46
- 10. John 6:47-51
- 11. John 6:52-59
- 12. John 6:60-65
- 13. John 6:66-71
- 14. John 7:1-5
- 15. John 7:6-9
- 16. John 7:10-15
- 17. John 7:16-18
- 18. John 7:19-24
- 19. John 7:25-29
- 20. John 7:30-32
- 21. John 7:33-36
- 22. John 7:37-39
- 23. John 7:40-44
- 24. John 7:45-52
- 25. John 7:53-8:11
- 26. John 8:12-20
- 27. John 8:21-24
- 28. John 8:25-29
- 29. John 8:30-32
- 30. John 8:33-36
- 31. John 8:37-41

FEBRUARY

- 1. John 8:42-47
- 2. John 8:48-53
- 3. John 8:54-59
- 4. John 9:1-5
- 5. John 9:6-12
- 6. John 9:13-17
- 7. John 9:18-23
- 8. John 9:24-27
- 9. John 9:28-34
- 10. John 9:35-41
- 11. John 10:1-6
- 12. John 10:7-10
- 13. John 10:11-15
- 14. John 10:16-21
- 15. John 10:22-30
- 16. John 10:31-38
- 17. John 10:39-42
- 18. John 11:1-7
- 19. John 11:8-16
- 20. John 11:17-22
- 21. John 11:23-27
- 22. John 11:28-32
- 23. John 11:33-37
- 24. John 11:38-40
- 25. John 11:41-44
- 26. John 11:45-48
- 27. John 11:49-54
- 28. John 11:55-57

MEMORY VERSES

Session 1:

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

Session 2:

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

Session 3:

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

Session 4:

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

Session 5:

“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” — John 3:16

Session 6:

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

Session 7:

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

Session 8:

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

Session 9:

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

Session 10:

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

Session 11:

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

Session 12:

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

Session 13:

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

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

OUTLINE

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

- A. The Word (1:1)
- B. The Word and Creation (1:2-5)
- C. The Word and the World (1:6-18)

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

- A. By John the Baptizer (1:19-34)
- B. To His Disciples (1:35-51)
- C. Through Miraculous Signs (2:1–12:50)

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

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

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



ON THE COVER

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


USING THE **DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE**

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

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

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

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



Getting the most from Talk It Out

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

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

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

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

...Who meet weekly...

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

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

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

In the Beginning

Jesus is the Son of God in human flesh.

JOHN 1:1-14



...with
...without
...as made.
...he was the
...darkness; and
...ed it not.
...from God, whose
...for a witness, to hear
...that all men through
...that Light, but was sent
...of that Light.
...is the true Light, which lighteth
...that cometh into the world.
...as in the world, and the world was
...y him, and the world knew him not.
...he came unto his own, and his own
...eived him not.
12 But ¹²as many as received him, to them
gave he power to become the sons of God,
even to them that believe on his name:
13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of
the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,
but of God.
14 And the Word ¹⁴was made flesh, and
dwelt among us, (and ¹⁵we beheld his glory,
the glory as of the only begotten of the
Father,) full of grace and truth.

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

...the Word stopped
...ally means "pitched
...an allusion to God's
...Israelites in the taber-
...9: 33-7). In the past God
...his presence to His people in
...and the temple. Now God has
...dence among His people in the
...re Tesh, Jesus Christ (John 1:17).
...ferences to God's glory mark back to
...asages that describe the man-ifestation
...od's presence and glory in theophanies
...ppearances of God), the tabernacle, or the
...emple (Exod. 33:22; Num. 14:10; Deut. 5:22).
...The Greek word monogenes underlying only
...begotten means "only child" (Judg. 11:34;

01

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

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

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

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

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

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

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

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

JOHN 1:1-14

1 In the beginning^A was the **Word**,^B and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was with God in the beginning. **3** All things were **created through him**,^C and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. **4** In him was life, and that life was the light of men. **5** That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it. **6** There was a man sent from God whose name was **John**.^D **7** He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. **8** He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. **9** The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world., **10** He was in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him. **11** He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. **12** But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name, **13** who were born, not of natural descent, or of the will of the **flesh**,^E or of the will of man, but of God. **14** The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his **glory**,^F the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Key Words

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. WAS THE WORD

(JOHN 1:1-5)

Believers can face the future knowing Jesus created all.

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

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

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

2. MADE KNOWN

(JOHN 1:6-8)

Believers are messengers sent to tell others about the Light.

What did John emphasize through repetition in this passage?

How might believers help other people believe in Jesus?

3. IN THE FLESH

(JOHN 1:9-14)

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

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

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

APPLY THE TEXT

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

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

KEY DOCTRINE: God the Son

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

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

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

TALK IT OUT

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prayer Requests



DAILY EXPLORATION

Day 1: John 1:1-2

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

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

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

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

Day 2: John 1:3-5

Circle the key words in these verses.

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

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

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

Day 3: John 1:6-8

Reflect on the role of a witness.

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

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

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

Day 4: John 1:9-13

Identify the ways people respond to Jesus.

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

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

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

Day 5: John 1:14

Reflect on what makes Christianity unique.

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

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

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

How does Jesus becoming human demonstrate the glory of God?

APPLY THE TEXT

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

