

EXPERIENCING

JOHN

Part 1 - John 1-9

PURPOSE CHURCH



LIFE GROUP STUDY



Experiencing the Gospel of John

Part 1 John 1 - 9

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PURPOSE CHURCH



week 1

INTRO/THE WORD BECAME FLESH

Matthew 4:18-20, John 20:30-31, John 1:1-18

Lean In



1. Look closely at the children pictured. Which child symbolizes what you were experiencing or feeling when you first started in Rooted? (boy or girl doesn't matter) Describe why you chose that one.

2. Which child symbolizes you, when you came to the end of the 10 weeks of Rooted? Why?

3. Which child do you identify with today as we begin this study of John?

Look Down

Leader Note: Read through this background information and determine how much you want to read together as a group.

Intro to Gospel of John

Of the four Gospels, John was probably the last one written. It is the most theologically and philosophically profound Gospel account. John does not narrate Jesus' birth. Instead, he begins his Gospel at the very beginning, stating in his opening sentence that Jesus has eternally existed and that "all things were made through him" (1:3)

Other than feeding of the five thousand (John 6), the anointing at Bethany (John 12), and the passion narrative, John does not share any sizable blocks of teaching with Matthew, Mark and Luke. John is organized around carefully crafted narrative strands that highlight both the signs and teachings of Jesus. While Matthew focuses on Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, Mark focuses on Jesus as the one who ushers in the kingdom of God, and Luke emphasizes Jesus as the one who welcomes the outsider, John emphasizes Jesus as the eternal Son of God.

Date and Historical Background

The Gospel of John was written by the apostle John, the son of Zebedee. He was a Palestinian Jew and became a member of Jesus' inner circle. John most likely wrote his account of Jesus between AD70 (when Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans and the temple was destroyed) and AD 100 (the approximate end of John's lifetime). Most likely he wrote his Gospel in Ephesus, one of the most important urban centers of the Roman empire. John's Gospel was aimed at both Jews and Gentiles living throughout the Greco-Roman world.

Read Matthew 4:18-22

- *What do we learn about John?*

Read John 20:30-31

- *What do we learn about John's purpose for writing the Gospel?*

Look Out

Read John 1:1-18

1. *How is John's beginning "In the beginning..." different from Matthew, Mark and Luke? Why is this important for people today?*

2. *What truths do we learn about "the Word" in verses 1-5? Why are these important for us today?*

Leader Note: We will focus in on verses 6-8 and John the Baptist next week.

3. *What do we learn from verses 9-18? Why are these truths important for us?*

- **From verses 12-13 how do we become "children of God"?**
- **How would you explain to someone what it means to "receive" & "believe"?**

Look In

Read Matthew 4:18-22 again

Spiritually speaking in relationship to Jesus' call in your lives, where are you right now?

- *still focused on preparing the nets?*
- *comfortable in the boat?*
- *feeling left behind?*
- *leaving the boat?*
- *following hard after Jesus?*
- _____?

Live It Out

What would you like to see happen in your life and our group during this 9-week Experiencing the Gospel of John series? What is one desire you have to deepen your connection with Jesus? With others? With your God given purpose?

Pray For Each Other

Week 2 Reading & Journaling

DAY 1

RE-READ JOHN 20:30-31

Reflect on John's Purpose for writing and what you desire to experience as you study the Gospel as a group.

DAY 2

RE-READ JOHN 1:1-19

What is God revealing to you about Jesus and your relationship with Him?

DAY 3:

READ JOHN 1:6-8; 19-34

Of the titles for Jesus given so far (the Word, the Light, the Christ, the Lamb of God, the Son of God) which is the most meaningful for you right now? Why?

Week 2 Reading & Journaling Continued...

DAY 4:

READ JOHN 1:35-42

- What was Jesus inviting these two disciples of John the Baptist to do?
- What do you think caused these two to follow?

DAY 5:

READ JOHN 1:43-51

- Of the five people we read about yesterday and today: What were the circumstances of their first contact with Jesus? What do they know about Jesus when they choose to follow?
- What were the circumstances or motives that caused you to follow Jesus originally?

week 2

JOHN THE BAPTIST/THE FIRST DISCIPLES

John 1:19-51

Lean In

Leader Note: The goal of the question is to engage the group, create some energy, and have fun. As the leader, be prepared to share to get the conversation started. Allow some space for group members to share stories around their answers but don't let anyone go too long..

Choose the ONE question that fits your group best:

- Tell about a time you met or were in the proximity of a “famous” person. Was it planned or unplanned? How did you feel before, during and after the encounter?
- When you get some good news, who are the first 2 or 3 people you want to share it with?
- When you were growing up, what would it take for you to believe something your brother or sister told you? (or cousin or close friend if no siblings) Were you trusting? Gullible? Skeptical?

Open Sharing From Reading

Begin by saying something like: *In this week's reading of John 1 we read about John the Baptist and The First Disciples.*

From your reading this week, what is something that stood out to you?

Look Down

Read John 1:6-9

- *What is John the Baptist's role in regards to Jesus?*

Read John 1:19-28

- *What questions do the Jewish priests and Levites (vs. 19-23) and Pharisees (vs 24-25) ask John the Baptist? What do these questions reveal about the reasons why they were sent to question John?*

Commentary:

Christ/Messiah (v. 20 & 24)—Christ is the Greek word and Messiah the Hebrew word meaning “anointed one”. Originally applied to anyone specially designated for a particular role, such as king or priest.

Pharisee (v. 24)—A member of a popular Jewish religious/political party in NT times characterized by strict adherence to the law of Moses and also to extra-biblical Jewish traditions. Jesus later confronts the Pharisees for their legalistic and hypocritical practice. The apostle Paul was a zealous Pharisee prior to becoming a follower of Jesus.

Read John 1:29-34

- *How does John answer the questions about himself and his baptism in vs 20-21, 22, 26-27, 30-31?*
- *Of the titles for Jesus given so far in the first chapter of John (Word, Light, Christ/Messiah, Lamb of God, Son of God) which is most meaningful for your right now? Why?*

Look Out

Read John 1:35-51

- *Identify each of the five people called by Jesus; Compare and Contrast:*
 - *What were the circumstances of their first contact with Jesus?*
 - *What does Jesus invite them to do?*
 - *What do they know about Jesus?*
 - *What do you think caused them to choose to follow?*
- *What similarities and differences do you see in the way Jesus invites people to follow Him today in North America? In the way we respond?*

Look In

- *When you made your decision to follow Jesus, what were your circumstances and your motives? Who was the John or Andrew in your life that God used to reveal Jesus to you or to bring you to Jesus?*

Live It Out

- *What are the things in your life right now that hinder you from following after Jesus whole-heartedly?*

We see that Andrew immediately went to share about Jesus with his brother who was part of his “oikos” (the 8-15 people in our extended household with whom we interact regularly). Who are in your 8-15 family, friends, neighbors, work, school, etc.?

Leader Note: Have enough copies of the 8-15 “BLESS” cards to give out at this time and have everyone begin to write in those in their oikos who don’t know Jesus or have drifted from Jesus or the church. Have everyone keep these cards in their Bibles or Experiencing Join booklet to begin praying for them daily and to bring them back each week to share about the ways God is leading you to BLESS them.

Pray For Each Other

Week 3 Reading & Journaling

DAY 1

RE-READ JOHN 1:6-9 and 1:19-34

Reflect on John the Baptist's role in preparing the way for the coming of Jesus

DAY 2

RE-READ JOHN 1:35-51

What is God saying to you through these accounts of the calling of the first disciple? What is He saying to you about His call to you to follow Him? What is He revealing to you about your oikos and how he wants to use you to reach them?

DAY 3:

READ JOHN 2:1-11

What unique role in, or perspective of, this miracle did each have? The disciples? Jesus' mother? The servants? Master of the banquet? Bridegroom?

Week 3 Reading & Journaling Continued...

DAY 4:

READ JOHN 2:12-25

-In these verses, what adjectives would you use to best describe Jesus as you see Him here?

-What descriptions would best fit the Jews in this passage?

-In verses 24-25 what do you think John is saying about Jesus? What exactly did Jesus know about people?

DAY 5:

SKIP AHEAD AND READ JOHN 3:22-36

-How would you have felt if you had been one of John's disciples at this point?

-What is the point of the allegory about the bride and bridegroom?

-What facts about Jesus does John bring out in verses 31-36?

week 3

WATER TO WINE & THE TEMPLE CLEANSING

John 2 & 3:22-36

Lean In

Leader Note: The goal of the question is to engage the group, create some energy, and have fun. As the leader, be prepared to share to get the conversation started. Allow some space for group members to share stories around their answers but don't let anyone go too long...**Choose the ONE question that fits your group best** (that you have an answer for):

- *Share about the funniest or most unusual thing you've witnessed at a wedding?*
- *Share about something that went wrong or did not go as planned at a wedding you were involved in?*
- *Peak & Pits: Share about the best and worst part of your day or week*

Open Sharing From Reading

Begin by saying something like: *In this week's reading of John 2 we read about Jesus turning water to wine and the temple cleansing.*

From your reading this week, what is something that stood out to you?

Look Down & Look Out

Read John 2:1-11

- *What unique role in, or perspective of, this miracle did each of these have? Put yourself in the place of these: The disciples? Jesus' mother? The servants? Master of the banquet? Bridegroom? Describe what your thoughts and feelings would be in the experience of this miracle.*
- *According to John 2:22, why did Jesus perform this first miracle, and what was the effect?*
- *Jesus revealed His glory through this miracle, in what ways does Jesus reveal His glory to us today?*

Read John 2:12-25

- *In these verses, what one-word adjectives would you use to best describe Jesus as you see Him here?*
- *What one-word descriptions would best fit the Jews in this passage?*
- *In verses 24-25 what do you think John is saying about Jesus? What exactly did Jesus know about people?*

Look In

- *What is one area of your life where you need a miracle from Jesus today?*
- *What is one area of your life where Jesus needs to come and clear out some stuff that is getting in the way of your worship?*

Live It Out

Read John 3:22-36

- *How would you have felt if you had been one of John's disciples at this point?*
- *What is the point of the allegory about the bride and bridegroom?*
- *What facts about Jesus does John bring out in verses 31-36? What is the promise of v. 36?*
- **What is one way you can live out verse 30 this week?**

Pray For Each Other (and for your 8-15 'oikos')

Week 4 Reading & Journaling Continued...

DAY 3:

READ JOHN 4:1-26

-For Jesus, as a first-century Jewish male, to enter into compassionate dialogue with a Samaritan woman was scandalous (Jews and Samaritans hated each other, and men did not speak to women in public). What stands out to you in this encounter about what Jesus?

-About salvation and worship?

DAY 4:

READ JOHN 4:27-42

-How do the disciples respond to Jesus? What is on their minds?

-What does the woman do after the encounter with Jesus? What do you learn from this?

-How do the other Samaritans respond? What do you learn from this?

DAY 5:

READ JOHN 4:43-54

-Jesus encounters a respected Jewish Teacher, an outcast Samaritan woman, and now an official working for the Roman government. Reflect on each of these three different people and how Jesus responds to them.

-What do their responses to Jesus teach us about how we should respond to the Son of God?

week 4

ONE TO ONE ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

John 3:1-21, 4:1-54

Lean In

Leader Note: This session includes three encounters with Jesus (Nicodemus, the Samaritan Woman, the Official and his son). There is more here than you can use in one session. Look over all three sections and choose which section or which parts will be best for your group. Be sure to make the “Look In” and “Live it Out” questions a priority for your time and emphasis.

Choose the ONE question that fits your group best (that you have an answer for):

- *Share about the best gift you ever received.*
- *When you were growing up, who were the people you were told not to associate with? Why?*
- *Describe the most serious injury or illness you ever had.*

Open Sharing From Reading

Begin by saying something like: *In this week’s reading we covered accounts of three encounters with Jesus:*

1. *John 3:1-21 Nicodemus a respected Jewish teacher.*
2. *John 4:1-42 An outcast Samaritan woman*
3. *John 4:43-54 An official working for the Roman government seeking his son’s*

From your reading this week, which of these encounters impacted you the most and what stood out to you?

Look Down

Read John 3:1-21 -- Nicodemus

● *To what group did Nicodemus belong? What is significant about him coming to Jesus? That he came at night?*

● *What does Jesus claim about Himself in verses 13-15?*

Read Numbers 21:4-9 to understand Jesus’ reference to the snake. How does the “snake in the desert” illustrate what Jesus came to do?

● *We often forget that John 3:16 was part of Jesus’ response to Nicodemus. In verses 16-18 how does Jesus explain that we obtain eternal life?*

Look Out

● *What was Nicodemus thinking in verses 3-4? What do (unchurched) people think when they hear the term “born again” today?*

Look Down

Read John 4:1-42 -- The Samaritan Woman

- *As one of the disciples taught from birth as a Jew to despise Samaritans, how would you feel when Jesus decided to go through Samaria?*
- *What was the Samaritan woman really saying in reply (v.9) to Jesus’ request to her for a drink?*
- *How does she respond to Jesus words about living water and eternal life (vs. 10-14)?*
- *What do you imagine the look on her face when Jesus said:
-vs. 16-18 “Go, call your husband...”?
-v. 26 “I who speak to you am he”?*

Look In

- *In verse 19, the woman quickly turns the conversation from her life to a question about a religious controversy. What are some ways you see yourself and others responding to Jesus in a similar way when He speaks to us today?*
- *What does the woman do after the encounter with Jesus? What do you learn from this?*
- *How do the other Samaritans respond to her (v. 39)? This woman had been an outcast, what do you make of their response? What does this tell us about our preconceived notions about who God can use to reach people for Jesus?*

Look Down

Read John 4:43-54 -- Healing the Official's Son

- *As Jesus returns home, what motivates the people to welcome Him?*
- *How do you account for the contrast between the crowd's welcome (v. 45) and Jesus comments in verses 44 and 48? How are the Galileans like and unlike the Samaritans in verses 39-42?*
- *What motivates this royal official to travel so far? How would you have responded to what Jesus told him to do?*

Look In

- *When you bring a need or problem to God, how difficult is it for you to accept His response? When His response is not exactly what you were asking for, do you tend to accept it and find peace or do you keep worrying and/or telling Him the way He is supposed to answer?*
- *Describe a time when have you taken God at His word (even though the circumstances didn't warrant it) and then you discovered that God was faithful to His promise.*

Live It Out

- *We have read accounts of Jesus' encounters with a respected Jewish teacher, an outcast Samaritan woman, and now an official working for the Roman government. How did each of them approach or respond to Jesus? What can we learn about how we should approach or respond to Jesus from each of them?*
- *What do you see in the way Jesus conversed with Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, and the Roman official that you could use as a model to help you share Jesus more effectively with your oikos (8-15 relatives, friends, neighbors, work associates, etc.?)*

Pray For Each Other (and for your 8-15 'oikos')

Week 5 Reading & Journaling

DAY 1:

READ JOHN 5:1-9

-How do you picture the setting of this story (vs. 2-4)? The atmosphere? The smell? The sounds? How would you feel going into a place like this?

-Describe what you think this invalid's life had been like?

-What do you think Jesus means by His question in verse 6?

-As the invalid, what are you feeling in verses 7-9?

DAY 2:

READ JOHN 5:10-18

-What are you feeling if you are the (former) invalid in verses 10-12? Verse 13? Verse 14?

-Has your joy in God ever been squashed by someone's focus on religious legalism or tradition? What did that do to you?

-Have you ever been on the other side? Getting caught up in legalism or tradition and missing or squashing what Jesus was doing?

week 5

HEALING AT THE POOL

John 5

Leader Note: As with each week, there is more here than you can use in one session. Look it over and choose which sections or questions will be best for your group. Be sure to make the “Look In” and “Live it Out” questions a priority for your time and emphasis.

Lean In

Choose the **ONE** question that fits your group best (that you have an answer for) or make up another:

- *When you are sick, what are you like? A puppy? Superman/woman? Rip Van Winkle? Eeyore?*
- *As you get older, do you find yourself becoming more or less like your parents?*
- *Who was one of your heroes when you were growing up? Did they turn out to be someone you still admire or a disappointment?*

Open Sharing From Reading

Begin by saying something like: *In this week’s reading of John 5 we read about Jesus’ healing a man at the pool, the ensuing controversy over the Sabbath, and Jesus’ revealing of his identity and authority.*

From your reading this week, what is something that stood out to you?

Look Down

Read John 5:1-15

- *How do you picture the setting of this story (vs. 2-4)? The atmosphere? The smell? The sounds? How would you feel going into a place like this?*
- *This man had been an invalid for 38 years. Describe what you think this invalid’s life had been like? As a child? Youth? Young adult? Recent years?*
- *What do you think Jesus means by His question in verse 6?*
- *As the invalid, what are you feeling in verses 7-9?*
- *What are you feeling if you are the (former) invalid in verses 10-12? Verse 13? Verse 14?*

Look Out

- *Has your joy in God ever been squashed by someone's focus on religious legalism or tradition? What did that do to you?*
- *Have you ever been on the other side? Getting caught up in legalism or tradition and missing or squashing what Jesus was doing?*

Look In

- *This man had to wait 38 years to be healed. When have you felt that God was waiting too long to do something you'd trusted Him to do?*

Look Down

Read John 5:16-30

- *Have someone in the group read aloud verses 24-30, as if they were making these assertions about themselves with a very pompous tone (choose someone with dramatic flair). After the reading ask: how did this person make the rest of you feel?*
- *What claims does Jesus make about Himself in these verses? What does Jesus say happens to those who hear and believe? To those who do not?*

Look Out

- *How could you use verse 24 to explain the path to salvation to someone in your oikos? How could you use the same verse to help someone who believed in Christ, but who was afraid he might lose his salvation and eternal life because they sinned?*

Look Down

Read John 5:31-47

- *Who, and what, does Jesus say bears witness or testifies to His identity and authority?*
- *How do you think the religious leaders felt about these witnesses Jesus refers to?*
- *How have these religious leaders been living to “accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain praise that comes from the only God” (v. 44)?*

Look In

- *Who or what are the “witnesses” that have led you to trust and believe that Jesus is indeed the one who gives life?*
- *What are the areas of your own life where you fall into valuing the praise, respect, and affirmation of the people in your life over the praise that comes from God (v. 44)?*

Live It Out

- *Other than God, who or what do you tend to depend on in life?*
- *What is something you need to trust God with today?*

Pray For Each Other (and for your 8-15 ‘oikos’)

Week 6

Reading & Journaling

DAY 1:

READ JOHN 6:1-15

-Why did the crowd follow Jesus?

-How did Philip and Andrew respond to Jesus' question/test?

-What is the significance of the fact that there was more left over after the feeding than they started with?

DAY 2:

READ JOHN 6:16-24

-On a dark and stormy night, weary from rowing and afraid of capsizing, how would you have reacted to seeing Jesus walking on the water? When he climbed aboard?

-What did the disciples fail to see in the feeding of the 5000 that could have helped them in the boat?

DAY 3:

READ JOHN 6:25-40

-Why are the crowds still searching for Jesus?

-How does Jesus use their interest in food to illustrate what he wants them to understand?

-What are the similarities and differences between manna and "the bread of life"?

-What claims does Jesus make in verses 35-40? How have you seen Jesus be faithful to these claims in your life?

Week 6 Reading & Journaling Continued...

DAY 4: **READ JOHN 6:41-59**

- How do the crowds respond to Jesus' claims (vs. 41-42)?
- What promise does Jesus repeat three times in verses. 44-51?
- On what level are the people responding to Jesus teaching?
- What new meaning do verses 53-58 give to us when we celebrate the Lord's Supper?

DAY 5: **READ JOHN 6:60-71**

- How have the people's attitudes changed since verses 14-15?
- Do you think they turned away because they did-or did not—understand what Jesus meant?
- Compare Peter's response. How much do you think Peter understood at this point?

week 6

FEEDING, WATER WALKING, AND THE BREAD OF LIFE John 6

Leader Note: As with each week, there is more here than you can use in one session. Look it over and choose which sections or questions will be best for your group. Be sure to make the “Look In” and “Live it Out” questions a priority for your time and emphasis.

Lean In

Choose the **ONE** question that fits your group best (that you have an answer for) or make up another:

- *Do you prefer to socialize at a large party, dinner with a small group, or a quiet evening to yourself?*
- *What is the scariest storm or threatening condition you ever experienced?*
- *What is your favorite bread in the whole world?*
- *Describe a time when you felt rejected?*

Open Sharing From Reading

Begin by saying something like: *In this week’s reading of John 6 we read about Jesus feeding the 5000, walking on water, proclaiming His identity and the varied response of the people in each of these settings.*

From your reading this week, what is something that stood out to you?

Look Down

Read John 6:1-15

- *Why did the crowd follow Jesus?*
- *Compare and contrast Philip and Andrew’s responses to Jesus’ question/test?*
- *How much was left over after the feeding? How does that compare with what they started with?*
- *How could the nearness to the Passover feast (v. 4 – a time when Jews from all over the empire flocked to Jerusalem) fuel the desire of the people (v. 14-15)?*

Look Out

- *Neither Philip or Andrew recognized what Jesus’ presence meant when they were faced with this difficult situation. In what ways do you do the same thing in your life?*

Look Down

Read John 6:16-24

- *What did the disciples fail to see in the feeding of the 5000 that could have helped them in the boat?*
- *What miracle took place when the disciples took Jesus into the boat?*

Look Out

- *On a dark and stormy night, weary from rowing and afraid of capsizing, how would you have reacted to seeing Jesus walking on the water? When he climbed aboard?*

Look In

- *How do you tend to respond when “storms” whip up in your life? What difference can this story make as you face those times?*

Look Down

Read John 6:25-59

- *Why are the crowds still searching for Jesus?*
 - *How does Jesus use their interest in food to illustrate what he wants them to understand?*
 - *The topics of manna and bread are prominent in the conversation between Jesus and the Jews. From what you know about the manna in the OT (for helpful background, you may want to review together Exodus 16:13-21 & 31) how would you compare it with the “true bread from heaven” which Jesus speaks of in verse 32? What are the similarities and what are the differences?*
 - *What claims does Jesus make in verses 35-40? How have you seen Jesus be faithful to these claims in your life?*
 - *How do the crowds respond to Jesus’ claims (vs. 41-42)?*
 - *What promise does Jesus repeat three times in verses. 44-51?*
 - *On what level are the people responding to Jesus teaching?*
- How does he develop the illustration even more graphically in verses 53-58?*
- What new meaning does this have for us when we celebrate the Lord’s Supper?*

Look In

- *How has the Christian life turned out to be different from what you expected?*
- *In what ways has Jesus satisfied your hunger and thirst for acceptance and meaning in life?*

Look Down

Read John 6:60-71

- *How have the people's attitudes changed since verses 14-15?*
- *Do you think they turned away because they did—or did not—understand what Jesus meant?*
- *Contrast Peter's response. How much do you think Peter understand at this point?*

Look Out / Look In

- *How do you see people today make Jesus into an "errand boy" or genie to meet their own personal needs or agendas?*
- *In what ways are you most tempted to do this yourself?*

Live It Out

- *Other than God, who or what do you tend to depend on in life? What can you do today to rely on God rather than on things or people to satisfy your needs?*
- *What tough, or fear inducing, situation do you need to trust God to work in this week?*

Pray For Each Other (and for your 8-15 'oikos')

Week 7

Reading & Journaling

DAY 1: READ JOHN 7:1-13

-Note: 6:4 refers to the Passover Feast and 7:2 the Feast of Tabernacles. This means that about six months goes by between chapters 6 and 7.

-Why did the Jewish leaders want to kill Jesus (see 5:18)?

-Why do his brothers urge him to attend the feast?

-Why do you think Jesus waits and then goes secretly to Jerusalem?

DAY 2: READ JOHN 7:14-24

-Given the risk, why does Jesus go to the Feast?

-How do the people react to Jesus' teaching?

-What do Jesus' responses reveal about His authority?

-How would you respond to all of this if you were one of Jesus' brothers?

DAY 3: READ JOHN 7:26-36

-Who is saying what about Jesus in this passage?

-What is causing the confusion?

-Why does Jesus' teaching in vs 14-29 provoke the responses of vs. 30-31?

-Why do you think there was such a wide range of reaction to Jesus?

Week 7 Reading & Journaling Continued...

DAY 4: READ JOHN 7:37-34

-Every day at this Feast water would be poured out as a symbol of thanks for God's provision. In light of this what would Jesus' words in verses 37-38 mean to the Jews who were present?

-What becomes the focal point in verses 41-42?

DAY 5: READ JOHN 7: 45-52

-Why did the guards not bring Jesus in?

-What justification do the Pharisees offer in refuting the guards?

-What does Nicodemus' reaction tell us about him?

week 7

TEACHING AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLE

John 7

Leader Note: As with each week, there is more here than you can use in one session. Look it over and choose which sections or questions will be best for your group. Be sure to make the “Look In” and “Live it Out” questions a priority for your time and emphasis.

Lean In

Choose the **ONE** question that fits your group best (that you have an answer for) or make up another:

- Describe a time when you were dared by your brother(s), sister(s), or a friend, to do something that turned out to be dangerous? What happened?
- When have you judged someone or something on appearance only to find out later you were wrong?
- What was your greatest frustration and your greatest breakthrough in the past week?

Open Sharing From Reading

Begin by saying something like: *In this week’s reading of John 7 we read about Jesus’ teaching at the Feast of Tabernacles.*

From your reading this week, what is something that stood out to you?

Look Down

READ John 7:1-13

Bible Commentary: Feast of Tabernacles

Chapter 7 opens with a reference (7:2) to the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Tabernacles or Festival of Tents is the third of the great Jewish annual feasts, following Passover and Pentecost. The principal passages referring to this feast are Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:34-36; Deuteronomy 16:13-15; 31:10-13. This was the most popular of the feasts. It was the equivalent of a family camp or RV gathering. Jerusalem was packed and for 8 days the people camped out in shelters on the hillsides and rooftops. It was to be a reminder of the fatherly care and protection of God while Israel was journeying from Egypt to Canaan. In comparison with their houses of bondage in Egypt their dwelling in tents in the wilderness was an image of freedom. Chapter 6 refers to the Passover Feast (6:4) so this means that about six months goes by between chapters 6 and 7.

Bible Commentary: Jesus’ Brothers

Matthew 13:55-“Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?” Jesus’ brothers did not believe in his deity in John 7. After the resurrection they all believed and we know that James and Judas, (not Iscariot, known as Jude), wrote books in the New Testament and were martyred for their faith.

- Why did the Jewish leaders want to kill Jesus (see 5:18)?
- Why do his brothers urge him to attend the feast? Do you think they are being sincere or sarcastic? (vs. 2-5 & 6:42, 66)
- Describe any opposition to or ridicule of your faith you have faced in your family? Are you more likely to be cautious or daring in sharing your faith with your family?

Look Out

READ John 7:14-24

- *How do the people react to Jesus' teaching? Why?*
- *What similarities do you see in the way people respond to Jesus' teaching today?*

Look Down

READ John 7:25-36

- *Who is saying what about Jesus in this passage? What is causing the confusion?*
- *Why do you think there was such a wide range of reaction to Jesus? In what ways do you see similar reactions to Jesus from people around you today?*

Look In

READ John 7:37-39

Bible Commentary

Each day of the Feast of Tabernacles the priest took a golden pitcher and went down to the Pool of Siloam and filled it with water. It was carried back through the Water Gate while the people recited Isaiah 12:3 "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation". The water was carried up to the Temple altar and poured out as an offering to God. The whole dramatic ceremony was a vivid thanksgiving for God's good gift of water. On the last day of the ceremony (John 7:37) this ceremony was doubly dramatic as they marched seven times round the altar in memory of the seven marches around the walls of Jericho before God gave them the victory. It is against this background, and perhaps at this very moment, that Jesus' voice rang out, "If anyone is thirsty,..." (v. 37-38)

- *With this background, what significance and meaning would Jesus' statements in verses 37-38 have to His hearers?*
- *Has the flow of the Spirit in your life lately felt more like a parched dessert? Refreshing spring? Clogged faucet? Why?*
- *What have you found helpful in releasing the stream of the Spirit's living water in your life?*

Live It Out

Read John 7:40-52

Note: Notice the various responses to Jesus amongst the people, the guards, the Pharisees, and Nicodemus.

- *As you think about the people in your oikos (8-15 in your family, neighborhood, work, school, etc.) what can you take from this chapter that will help you share with them?*
 - a reminder not to make judgments from what you see on the outside?
 - a new understanding of why they respond the way they do?
 - an opportunity to share how Jesus' living water has quenched the thirst of your soul?
 - other?

Pray For Each Other (and for your 8-15 'oikos')

Week 8 Reading & Journaling Continued...

DAY 3: READ JOHN 8:31-41

- What does Jesus want to stress to the people who believed him? What does he mean by disciples? Truth? Freedom?
- What false assumptions confuse the issue of spiritual freedom for Abraham's descendants?
- What false assumptions confuse the issue of spiritual freedom for people today?

DAY 4: READ JOHN 8:42-47

- Jesus speaks some very hard words here. What do you think His tone was as He spoke these words?
- What does Jesus reveal in verse 44 about the devil and the way he operates?
- What signs do you see in your day to day life of the devil's lies?
- What truth, that is difficult for you to face, will you ask God to help you confront today?

DAY 5: READ JOHN 8: 48-59

- What is it in Jesus' words that causes their accusations and agitation to accelerate?
- How do you respond when your authority is being challenged?
- How does a person keep Jesus' word? How well are you doing this in your life?

week 8

MORE TEACHING

John 8

Leader Note: As with each week, there is more here than you can use in one session. Look it over and choose which sections or questions will be best for your group. Be sure to make the “Look In” and “Live it Out” questions a priority for your time and emphasis.

Lean In

Choose the **ONE** question that fits your group best (that you have an answer for) or make up another:

- *What is your most vivid memory of being in the dark (Blackout? Cave? Tunnel?). What feelings do you associate with darkness?*
- *Briefly share about what you know about your ancestry or family tree? Where did they come from or any famous or colorful characters?*
- *Peaks & Pits—Share about the best and worst part of your day or week?*

Open Sharing From Reading

Begin by saying something like: *In this week’s reading of John 8 we read about Jesus and the woman caught in adultery and then His teaching and the responses of the people. From your reading this week, what is something that stood out to you?*

Look Down

READ John 7:53-8:11

Bible Commentary

The earliest manuscripts of the Gospel of John do not contain John 7:53-8:11. So there is debate amongst biblical scholars on whether this passage was really part of Scripture. It is an account about Jesus that is recorded in many copies of the Bible in different places. It may be that this story is something that happened during Jesus’ ministry but was not an original part of what John wrote. F.F. Bruce says, “This is a fragment of authentic gospel material regardless of where it is placed.”

- *What did Jesus sit down to do in the temple courts?*
- *What did the Law of Moses say should happen to the woman caught in adultery?*
- *There is no mention of the man involved with this woman. What does it tell us about those who accused her that they “caught this woman in adultery”?*

Look Out

- *These Pharisees considered this woman’s sin to be a “big” sin worthy of accusing her in public and stoning her. Which sins do we tend to categorize as “big” sins (those that are worse than all others) today?*
- *What does this scene teach us about how Jesus treats sinners who are aware of their sin and how Jesus treats sinners who are unaware of their sin?*

Look In

- *Does Jesus' grace and acceptance of you free you to change, or does it make it easier to remain in sin? How so?*

READ John 8:12-30

- *What is Jesus really claiming in verse 12? What is his promise?*
- *How has following Jesus been like following someone with light through a dark place in your life?*
- *In these verses how do people misunderstand Jesus?*

Live It Out

- *How do people in your oikos/8-15 misunderstand Jesus? How do their lives exemplify darkness? How can you be a light-bearer to them?*

Look Down

READ John 8:31-41

- *What does Jesus want to stress to the people who believed him? What does he mean by disciples? Truth? Freedom?*
- *What false assumptions confuse the issue of spiritual freedom for Abraham's descendants?*
- *What false assumptions confuse the issue of spiritual freedom for people today?*

Look In

- *What are some ways that the truth of Jesus has set you free from sin?*
- *How can you live your daily life in ways to better enjoy your freedom in Christ?*

Look Down

READ John 8:42-59

- *Jesus speaks some very hard words here. What do you think His tone was as He spoke these words?*
- *What does Jesus reveal in verse 44 about the devil and the way he operates?*
- *What is it in Jesus' words that causes their accusations and agitation to accelerate?*
- *How does a person keep Jesus' word?*

Live It Out

- *What signs do you see in your day to day life of the devil's lies?*
- *What truth that is difficult for you to face will you ask God to help you confront today?*
- *What is one change you can make in your daily living in order to seek God's glory rather than your own?*

Pray For Each Other (and for your 8-15 'oikos')

Week 9 Reading & Journaling

DAY 1: **Look back at chapters 1-4 of John.**

- Spend time thanking God for what He has shown you during these weeks.
- What is one thing that God is reminding you of as you look back today?

DAY 2: **Look back at chapters 5-8 of John.**

- Spend time thanking God for what He has shown you during these weeks.
- What is one thing that God is reminding you of as you look back today?

DAY 3: **Read John 9:1-12**

- What does Jesus' answer (vs. 3-5) reveal about how he views this man's pain?
- In this story what is the "work of God" (v. 3)? The "night" that is coming (v. 4)? The "light of the world" (v. 5)?
- What adversity or struggle have you faced that turned into an opportunity for God to demonstrate his power?
- When you hear about another person's misfortune do you tend to react more like the disciples (questioning) or like Jesus (compassion)?

week 9

BLIND EYES SEE

John 9

Leader Note: As with each week, there is more here than you can use in one session. Look it over and choose which sections or questions will be best for your group. Be sure to make the “Look In” and “Live it Out” questions a priority for your time and emphasis.

Lean In

Choose the **ONE** question that fits your group best (that you have an answer for) or make up another:

- *As a kid (or an adult) what was the most fun you had with mud?*
- *Who is your favorite detective from TV, books or movies? Why?*
- *What one day in your life qualifies for the “roller coaster” award for most or greatest highs and lows in one 24 hour period?*

Open Sharing From Reading

Begin by saying something like: *In this week’s reading of John 9 we read about healing the man born blind and the investigation and reaction by the Pharisees and then Jesus’s teaching about spiritual blindness.*

From your reading this week, what is something that stood out to you?

Look Down

READ John 9:1-12

- *What do the disciples question (vs.1-2) and Jesus’ answer (vs. 3-5) reveal about how they each view this man and his blindness?*
- *What does Jesus mean by “the work of God” (v. 3)? The “night” that is coming (v. 4)? The “light of the world” (v. 5)?*

Look In

- *When you hear about, or observe, someone in a tough life situation does your first reaction tend to be more like the disciples (analytical) or Jesus (compassion)?*
- *Share about an adversity or struggle you faced that turned into an opportunity for God to demonstrate His power?*

Look Down

READ John 9:13-34

- *What convinces some of the Pharisees to stand against Jesus?*
- *What do the Pharisees, the parents and the man born blind have to say in this passage? What is each one sure of? Not sure of?*
- *What is the Pharisees motive in questioning the man and his parents? What in the man's response finally puts them over the top?*

Live It Out

- *As you think about your oikos, who is the toughest person for you to share your faith with? Why?*

Look Down

READ John 9:35-41

- *Why does Jesus wait until now to fully present himself?*
- *Why do you think it takes so long for this man to affirm Jesus as Lord?*
- *How has this chapter illustrated verse 39?*

Look In

- *Describe your life before following Christ and the spiritual blindness you experienced. What was it that helped you to have your spiritual eyes opened to see Jesus?*
- *How would you diagnose your spiritual sight right now? Blind spots? Near sighted? Far sighted? What is helping to correct or restore your sight?*

Live It Out

- *How can the group be praying for the needs and "spiritual eyesight" of the people in your oikos?*

Pray For Each Other (and for your 8-15 'oikos')