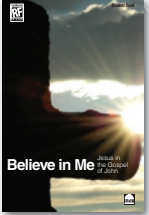


Who is Jesus?

Believe in Me: Jesus in the Gospel of John will introduce you to Jesus. You will learn that He is all that He claimed to be and that He is the one and only way to the Father. Jesus is the most important person in your life. Take time to get to know Him well!



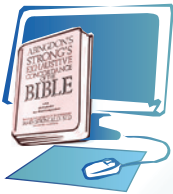
The Real Faith in Life Devotional Bible Study is designed to help you dig into God's Word. Each lesson offers devotions for Monday through Saturday, along with an In-Class worksheet to be completed during your group study.

In order for you to gain the most out of your devotional time, use the following tools along with your student book.



Journal: Purchase a journal or notebook to record your personal thoughts and prayers. Bring your journal and student book to class each week so that you can take notes during the lesson

or write any special insights you gain from a particular activity. You may also use the journal for sermon notes or for prayer requests.



Bible study tools: In order for you to dig into God's Word, consider using a Bible dictionary and a concordance. If you are not familiar with these helpful guides, ask your pastor or youth leader for a recommendation.

Or visit an online Bible tools Web site, such as www.blueletterbible.org.

This site offers commentaries, maps, and many other tools to help you in your Bible study. (This recommendation does not constitute a blanket endorsement by RBP.)

THE WORD MADE FLESH

Think of all the ways you've communicated with others in the past twenty-four hours. Maybe you sent a text to a friend, talked to a parent or teacher, sang, prayed, or journaled. The common denominator of most communication is the words—written or spoken—we use.

God used words to communicate to mankind. At times He spoke audibly. Many times He had chosen people write down His words so future generations could read them. But when the time was perfect, God sent a very special Word—His only Son, Jesus Christ—into the world. Through Jesus, God the Father communicated Himself clearly to mankind.

Memory Verse



"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

Monday

1. Turn to John 1:1 in your Bible; then look at the title above it. What does your Bible designate as the "official" title of this book? (By the way, this title was given to the book later.)



The four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are recountings of the events and teachings of Jesus Christ. Each Gospel has its own "flavor," because each writer was unique and each audience was different.

Who wrote the Gospel of John? Obviously John, right? But which John? The apostle John or John the Baptist? The writer of the Gospel of John didn't identify himself, but he left discreet clues to his identity.

2. Read John 21:20 and 21. What designation is given for the "mystery man" in this scene?
3. According to verse 20, in what earlier event had this disciple played a key role?
4. According to verse 24, what else did this disciple do?
5. How do we know that the John who wrote this Gospel was not John the Baptist? (Hint: Consider the timing of the events in Matthew 14:1–12.)



There are two ways to interpret John's description of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." One has a proud connotation: "Jesus loved me!" The other is quite the opposite: "Jesus loved me!" Given John's humble omission of his name in the Gospel, the second interpretation is probably more accurate.



Memory Verse Activity: This week's memory verse encapsulates the purpose of the entire Gospel of John. As you memorize it this week, ask yourself, *Where do I fit into this purpose statement? How can I benefit from studying John?*

Tuesday

John set the tone for his Gospel in the first eighteen verses, commonly known as the prologue.

As you read the following phrases from John 1:1, imagine that you have just received the book from John and you are reading the words for the first time.

"In the beginning was the Word."

1. If "Word" weren't capitalized as it is in our Bibles, what would you, a first-time reader, assume it meant?
2. John's Greek-speaking readers may have recognized the words "in the beginning" as the same ones that started the Greek translation of Genesis. When exactly was "the beginning"?

"And the Word was with God."

3. How does this phrase clue John's readers in to the fact that this "Word" is more than what they may have originally thought?

"And the Word was God."

4. What questions might be going through your mind at this point?
5. Read verses 2 and 3. What indications did John give to confirm that this "Word" is not just a simple way of communication but is an actual Being?

Consider this scenario: You're given an assignment to write a biography on a member of your city's government. You have three people willing to give you an interview for your report: your eleven-year-old sister, a foreign-exchange student, and the mayor of your city.

6. Which person would you choose to interview? Why?
7. Why do you think John started his Gospel by establishing his Subject's divine authority before revealing his Subject's human identity?

Wednesday

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

"He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."
(John 1:4–13)

1. Read the verses above and highlight the words John used to describe his Subject.
2. Circle all the things the Subject did.
3. Underline the responses of the people.

One characteristic of the Gospel of John is the use of words that can have multiple meanings. Two words in John 1:4 and 5 are used this way.

4. Explain how John's use of "life" in verse 4 could mean "physical existence" (as opposed to not existing; remember verse 3).
5. Explain how the use of "life" could mean "the essence of existence" (think about the meaning of the old saying, "Basketball is life")?
6. "Comprehended" (v. 5) can mean "understood," but it can also mean "overcame." Explain how both of these meanings could make sense in the context of verse 5.

Thursday

Most likely, you knew before you started this study Who the Word is, but a first-time reader of John with no knowledge of what was to come in the rest of the Gospel would be scrambling to absorb the “clues” John leaked about his Subject. Read John 1:6–13.

1. What clues could a first-time reader pick up from verses 6–8?



John 1:15 identifies this John as John the Baptist, not the apostle John.



Nowhere in the first thirteen verses are John's readers told that the Word took on a human body. However, this truth is hinted at when the writer John felt the need to explain that John the Baptist was not the Light. John the Baptist could be mistaken for the Light only if the Light Himself were a man.

Consider this scenario: A new couple starts attending your church. They're very nice, and they quickly get to know almost everyone in the congregation. They are shining examples of Christlikeness in the community, and they have lots of exciting ideas for ministry in the church. On the night the congregation votes to accept them into membership, the head deacon votes against accepting them.

2. What questions would be going through your mind?

3. Based on what you learned about the Word/Light from the first thirteen verses of John, what reason would anyone have to reject Him?

4. How do you think John's first readers may have been affected by being told that there was controversy concerning this as-yet-unnamed Subject?

Right away, John introduced the tension of his Gospel. Even though his Subject is God Himself, contains life in Himself, and shines light on mankind's darkness, people still rejected Him. John's readers knew they had a choice to make: believe or reject.

5. According to verse 12, why was it so important that John's readers chose to accept (believe on) the Subject of this Gospel?

You, as a twenty-first-century reader of John's Gospel, also have a choice to make as you study this book. What will you do about this divine Subject?

4 Real Faith in Life

Friday

The writer John hadn't mentioned the Word since the beginning of the introduction, but in verse 14 he returned to this theme.

1. What truth is finally confirmed about the Word in verse 14?
2. What other reassuring truths about the Word are included in verse 14?

John still had not revealed the human identity of the Word. Before disclosing this, he employed two more tension-building techniques.

3. Returning to the witness of John the Baptist, the writer John quoted a specific way John the Baptist testified of the Word. How could the quotation in verse 15 have given away the "mystery Subject's" identity for some readers?
4. Read verse 16. This statement is more than just a nice fact thrown in for good measure. How does this statement make the Subject a matter of personal interest to John's readers (i.e., what had the Subject done for the readers personally)?

Drum roll please! John finally gave the human name of his divine Subject: Jesus Christ (v. 17).

5. With whom is Jesus Christ contrasted? Describe the contrast.



The contrast between the law and grace is a theme John will develop throughout the Gospel.

6. Summarize John 1:18.
7. Considering the ending of John's prologue, why is it so appropriate that he began the introduction by calling Jesus the Word (remember the purpose of words)?

If you've ever been to visit a historical museum or monument, you have probably noticed that we go to great lengths to preserve and honor the words of our past. God gave us the most precious Word in the form of His Son. How does your life honor Jesus Christ, God's Word to you?

Saturday

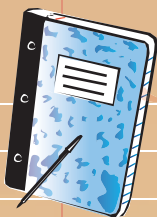
Before delving into the “meat” of John’s Gospel, we should understand the reason he wrote it. Read John 20:30 and 31.

1. What are the “these” referred to in verse 31?
2. What twofold purpose did John state as his reason for writing?
3. Review the different definitions of “life” from Wednesday’s devotions. What do you suppose John meant by his use of “life” here?
4. How does the prologue (John 1:1–18) fit into John’s purpose statement?

The Gospel of John may be very familiar to you. You may never remember a time when you didn’t know that Jesus Christ is God. But John was not just written so that those who don’t believe in Christ would understand Him and trust Him as Savior. It was also written so that those who believe would have life in His name. Commit to studying John’s Gospel with fresh eyes this quarter, and you’ll be surprised at how much you have yet to learn about Jesus Christ.



Because Jesus is the Word, I will commit to studying Him.



Journal Notes

Studying the Word

Because Jesus Christ is God's special communication to mankind, we all need to be serious about studying Him. Choose one of the commitments below that you're willing to make this quarter or write a commitment of your own. Make sure whatever you choose is something that will challenge you without overwhelming you. Be faithful to your commitment and you'll be amazed at what you learn!

- ☐ I will set aside _____ minutes each day to complete my *Real Faith in Life* devotions.
- ☐ I will aim for perfect attendance in Sunday School this quarter.
- ☐ I will read a chapter of John each day.
- ☐ I will keep a journal of things I learn while studying the Gospel of John this quarter.
- ☐ I will memorize and meditate on a passage from John. (Some suggestions are listed below. Make sure you have someone lined up to recite to!)
 - John 1:1–18
 - John 3:5–21
 - John 6:35–40, 53–58
 - John 10:1–18, 27–29
 - John 15:1–17
- ☐ I will write down questions I have as I study the Gospel of John and ask someone who has a good knowledge of the Bible about them.
- ☐