

The Greatest Journey

Exploring The Questions and Challenges Jesus has for Us In the Gospel According to John

These are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and that through believing you may have life in his name. John 20:31

A 15-Week Small Group Bible Study & Daily Devotional Guide

The Greatest Journey

Welcome!

You are invited to join this greatest of all journeys. During the next 15 weeks we will explore the questions and challenges Jesus Christ has for us in this most intimate of the four gospels, the gospel according to John.

What can you truthfully say about who you believe Jesus Christ to be? What is one thing you can say about your life purpose? What are you searching for in your own pursuit of God? These are just three of the challenges Jesus Christ has for us in the first chapter of this most beloved gospel.

With this Small Group Bible Study and Daily Devotional Guide you will have the opportunity to explore, the Gospel According to John. You can do this on your own or use the prepared Bible study in your small group. You will also have the opportunity to read through the entire book of John, using the daily devotional questions written by the pastors of First Presbyterian Church Berkeley, CA.

If you are not a Christian, it is our prayer that this study guide will help you think through the claims of Jesus Christ so that you can decide for yourself if he is indeed who he claimed to be: the Messiah, the only Son of God. If you are a Christian, it is our hope that the next 15 weeks will be a season of personal renewal for you as together we recommit our lives to the One who has loved us so completely and in whom we have found life.

Small Group Bible Study

Here are a few suggestions if you plan to use the weekly Bible study in a small group.

- The overall purpose of a small group is to bring people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and with one another. "For where two or three are gathered in my name," Jesus said, "I am there among them." Matthew 18:20
- A group of not more than 12 people is ideal.
- Each week, have a designated facilitator who will help all the members of the group participate in the discussion. Avoid two common small group leadership mistakes: (1) Weak leadership, that is, the facilitator is not sufficiently in control of the group, allowing one person to dominate the conversation. (2) Overly dominant leadership, that is, the facilitator controls too much, monopolizing the discussion instead of giving the members of the group the freedom to say what is on their mind.
- Open your small group in prayer.
- Work through the questions in the order they are presented in the Bible study. To speak thoughtfully about what a passage of scripture might mean the members of the group must first work to know what is said in the text. This is why we include "Know the Text" questions at the beginning of each study before asking "What Does the Text Mean?" Once these two sets of questions are explored give your attention to applying what you've learned to your own life.
- Don't feel locked-in to the questions asked in the prepared Bible study. These questions are written to help you get a discussion going on the passage of Scripture.
- Save time to share prayer requests with one another.
- And of course, pray for one another.

Daily Devotional Guide

The following can be completed in 15-20 minutes. You can do the following at any time of the day. Many people find that the morning is best but that might not be true for you.

- Find a quiet place, if possible. Ask God to guide you through the day's scripture reading.
- Read the Bible verses for the day. What part of the passage seems to jump off the page as you read? Think through the devotional questions. Write down the insights you have into the passage as well as your unanswered questions.
- After reflecting on the verses from John, continue your time with God with prayers of praise and thanksgiving.
- Ask God for guidance in each aspect of the day ahead. How has God spoken to you through God's Word today?
- Pray for the needs and concerns of people in your life.
- Tell God what you most deeply desire in your life. Don't be surprised if God transforms some of your most deeply held desires.
- In an act of trust, intentionally release your prayers to God, trusting God to answer them.
- Spend time waiting. In silence, wait to hear what God wishes to say to you.
- Close your time of prayer with words of gratitude and thanks.

The Greatest Journey

The God Who Speaks for Himself

John 1:1-18

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

Compare Genesis 1:1-5 and John 1:1-5. What do you learn about Jesus Christ (the One called “the Word” in John 1:1) when you overlay John 1 on Genesis 1?

In your own words, list the claims John makes about Jesus Christ in John 1:1-18. Which of the claims about the identity and work of Jesus Christ is most surprising or most meaningful or most difficult for you to believe and why?

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

How do you respond to John’s assertion in verses 5-9 that there is darkness in this world into which the light of Jesus is shining? What are examples of that darkness and how have you seen the light of the gospel illuminate and even drive out that darkness?

In verses 10-13 John says that people had different responses to the light. How might you explain the different reactions to Jesus?

John asserts in verses 14-18 that the Word who was with God and was God became a human being like you. What hope does that give you? How does that reality shape your understanding of God?

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

What do you think God thinks of you?

To what degree do you experience the surprising gift of God’s love all around you?

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The Greatest Journey

What
Are You Looking For?
John 1:19-51

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

Based only on John 1:19-51 develop personality sketches for the following people in this passage: (1) the priests and Levites sent by the Pharisees, (2) John the Baptist, (3) the Pharisees themselves, (4) Jesus, (5) the three people mentioned in verses 35-42 (Andrew, Peter and a third unnamed person. Who might he or she be?) and (6) the two men mentioned in verses 43-51 (Philip and Nathaniel).

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

How would you describe and explain the tension that is introduced into this story in verses 19-28? Is it the result of curiosity on the part of some of the religious leaders of Israel? Is it fear or something else?

By calling Jesus the “Lamb of God” in verses 29-42 what do you think John believes about the ministry of Jesus Christ? How much might John have understood about what Jesus planned to do to “take away the sin of the world?”

How is interest or curiosity in Jesus piqued in the lives of the people mentioned in verses 29-51? How was your interest in Jesus first sparked?

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

With which person in this text do you have the greatest resonance? When you think of your own personal journey to discover more about God, how would you sketch your own story?

Part 1:
Searching for God
John 1:1-5:47

Daily Devotional

Monday • John 1:1-13

What do you learn about Jesus Christ (the One called “the Word” in verse 1) that is most startling or significant or surprising to you and why?

Tuesday • John 1:14-18

John tells us that some did not realize who Jesus was, some did not accept the testimony about Jesus and some received and believed in Jesus. At this point in your life which group (or groups) of people illustrates best what you think about Jesus and why?

Wednesday • John 1:19-28

Meet John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus (a different John than the one writing this gospel). What does he say about his life mission in verses 19-28? What is one thing you can say about your life purpose?

Thursday • John 1:29-34

Who is Jesus according to John the Baptist? What can you truthfully say about who you believe Jesus to be?

Friday • John 1:35-42

One day Jesus asked the disciples of John the Baptist who were following him, “What are you looking for?” What are you searching for in your own pursuit of God?

Saturday • John 1:43-51

What convinces Philip that Jesus is the Messiah? What does the more skeptical Nathaniel need to believe? What do you need today to trust that Jesus is who he claims to be: the Savior of the world?

The Greatest Journey

Born
From Above
John 3:1-21

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

Who is Nicodemus and what does he believe about Jesus? What does Nicodemus not understand about who Jesus is and what Jesus is doing?

What does Jesus want us to understand about the Holy Spirit? What does Jesus tell us about the heart and character of God? What do we learn about ourselves and the people of the world? What do we discover about eternal life in this passage?

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

Nicodemus, a leader in Israel, came to talk with Jesus at night? Why? What has it been like for you to explore your own questions about Jesus?

What do you think Jesus means when he says that we must be reborn from above if we hope to see the kingdom of God?

What might Jesus have in mind when he promises eternal life to everyone who will put their trust in him, in addition to simply having a life that does not end? Describe what you think the nature of that life might be (its quality and characteristics).

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

Jesus says that God has a remedy for human sin and that remedy is himself. What does that mean?

What has been more difficult for you: admitting that you are in need of a cure for your sin or resting in the fact that God has forgiven your sin when you trusted in Jesus Christ? Explain why.

Part 1:
Searching for God
John 1:1-5:47

Daily Devotional

Monday • John 2:1-12

How do you react to Jesus turning 6 stone jars of water into 120 - 180 gallons of wine for this week-long wedding celebration? How does the turning of water into wine reveal the glory of Jesus?

Tuesday • John 2:13-25

The Temple had become a major center of commerce in religious commodities. Why do you think this upset Jesus so much? How do the different groups of people respond to Jesus' actions? How might you have reacted?

Wednesday • John 3:1-10

To what degree are you astonished by Jesus' statement that we must be reborn from above? What do you think he means? Why is a new beginning necessary? Why does the new birth need to come from above?

Thursday • John 3:11-21

What do you learn about the heart of God and the mission of God's Son, Jesus Christ, from this famous passage of Scripture? What does God require of humanity to receive the free gift of eternal life?

Friday • John 3:22-30

In your own words, describe John the Baptist's understanding of who he is and who he is not. How has knowing Jesus Christ shaped your identity and set you free to be who God is creating you to be?

Saturday • John 3:31-35

What bold claims are made about "the one who comes from heaven" in this passage? What bold claims are made about those who believe in the Son and those who do not? Describe your personal reaction to these assertions.

The Greatest Journey

Will You
Give Me a Drink?
John 4:1-42

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

Who was this woman, and why was she taken aback by Jesus' request for a drink? What questions did she raise in response to his request?

What does this interaction tell us about Jesus? What do we learn about the state of affairs between the Samaritans and the Jewish people in Jesus' day?

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

What lessons do we learn from the progression of the conversation between Jesus and the woman at the well? From the text, what conclusions do you come to regarding the nature of worship?

What does the text say, implicitly and explicitly, about the role of women in ministry and in the church? What does the text say, implicitly and explicitly, about racial prejudice?

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

Can you relate in any way to the woman at the well? When you think of your life, in which ways has God broken through? In which ways has God probed deeply into your affairs?

Part 1:
Searching for God
John 1:1-5:47

Daily Devotional

Monday • John 4:1-6

This text tells us that Jesus needed to leave Galilee, and "had to go through Samaria." What is the significance of his chosen route from Judea to Galilee?

Tuesday • John 4:7-15

Is there anything that strikes you as unusual about Jesus' request of the Samaritan woman for a drink of water? Is it significant that the disciples were not present?

Wednesday • John 4:16-26

What do you think was the point of Jesus' request for the woman to present her husband before him? How do you react to Jesus' response to her answer?

Thursday • John 4:27-42

What do you suppose were the questions that the disciples had as they returned to find Jesus speaking with this woman? What impact did this event have on them?

Friday • John 4:43-45

In light of the exchange that has occurred between Jesus and the Samaritan woman, how do you interpret the parenthetical statement of verse 44?

Saturday • John 4:46-54

In verse 48, Jesus says, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." What are some of your hindrances to belief? What recent events in your life have bolstered your faith in God?

The Greatest Journey

Do You Want
To Be Made Well?
John 5:1-18

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

How long had the paralytic laid at the gate? What was he waiting for? What prevented him from being healed? Did he want to be healed? What did Jesus say to him? What was the result?

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

In what ways do people lie “at the pool of Bethsaida” today? From what kinds of woundedness do they suffer? Are there people who are willing to help today? Would people let someone go ahead into the water?

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

Are there areas in your life which need healing? What keeps you at the pool side? Do you want to be healed?

Part 1:
Searching for God
John 1:1-5:47

Daily Devotional

Monday • John 5:1-9a

Jesus came into Jerusalem via the gate which would take him near those who were disabled. What does this say about his sensitivity to those in need of healing? Does Jesus still seek those in need? What was the invalid's response to Jesus' question? How did Jesus heal the man?

Tuesday • John 5:9b-18

When the man found Jesus in the temple, Jesus told him to stop sinning or something worse would happen. What did Jesus mean? Why did the Jews try to kill Jesus? Who are the people who try to kill him today?

Wednesday • John 5:19-24

Jesus said the Father will show the Son even greater things than these. What does he mean? What is the key to eternal life - the bridge between death and life? What goes through your mind as you think of this?

Thursday • John 5:25-29

Think about the last judgment. What does the scene look like? Where are people standing? Who is there? What will your reaction be when you hear the voice of the Son of God? What does Jesus say to you?

Friday • John 5:30-38

Jesus gives us four witnesses which give valid testimony about him. What are they? Do you testify to the truth of Jesus Christ?

Saturday • John 5:39-47

Jesus knows the Jewish leaders. What does he know about them? What is missing in them? Do you have the missing ingredient? How do you know?

The Greatest Journey

Where
Will We Buy Bread?
John 6:1-15

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

What has Jesus done to attract so much attention? To what need in the people is Jesus speaking?

Describe the test Jesus gives his disciples beginning in verse 5. When the test is over and the people are satisfied by this miraculous meal how do they respond?

How does Jesus react to what the people want to do to him?

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

What do the disciples learn about themselves and about Jesus from this test?

The growing crowd of people wanted Jesus to make them happy by satisfying their physical needs. We know from the rest of John's gospel that Jesus' main purpose was to make the people free. How can our desire for happiness and personal satisfaction sometimes collide with our need for God to set us free from what enslaves us?

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

What overwhelming challenge are you currently facing? What impossible situation will be changed only if Jesus takes what little you have and miraculously multiplies it?

Part 2:
Finding Jesus
John 6:1-11:57

Daily Devotional

Monday • John 6:1-15

The text says that Jesus "tested" his disciples (he knew what he intended to do to feed the 5000). What do you think Jesus wanted his disciples to learn about themselves and him? How has God taught you in pressure-filled times of testing?

Tuesday • John 6:16-59

Jesus comes to the disciples caught in a storm and says in Greek, "I AM (the name of God in the Old Testament); do not be afraid." What might have been running through your mind if you had been in that boat or heard him say "I AM the bread of life?"

Wednesday • John 6:60-71

At this point in this greatest of all journeys, which are you more inclined to say: "This teaching is difficult, who can accept it?" or with Peter say, "To whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life." Explain your answer.

Thursday • John 7:1-24

Opposition arose against Jesus when he healed the man at the pool on the Sabbath day (John 5:1-18). Some people were enraged at him for doing this. The question they ask is whether Jesus is good or leading people astray. What do you think? Why?

Friday • John 7:25-36

This was an hour of decision for the people of Jesus' day. What would they decide? Was he the promised Messiah or not? What have you decided about Jesus?

Saturday • John 7:37-52

For what are you thirsty today? Bring that need to God and ask that your thirst be satisfied by God's Holy Spirit. God will pour God's Spirit into the life of anyone who puts their faith in God's Son, Jesus Christ.

The Greatest Journey

Has No One
Condemned You?
John 8:1-11

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

According to this text why is this unnamed woman brought before Jesus?

Given the accusation against her shouldn't one other person be present as well? Where might that person be?

How does Jesus respond to the people who sought to humiliate and condemn the woman?

Who leaves this mob scene first and why?

What does Jesus say to the woman after all her accusers have gone?

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

Put yourself in the place of the woman. What would you be feeling and experiencing if you were her?

How does the light of the gospel break into this tragic scene through the words and actions of Jesus? How does Jesus offer grace and truth to both the accused and those making the accusations? Who in this scene receives the truth and grace offered by Jesus?

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

How is the grace and truth of the gospel breaking into your life? What situation or relationship in your life needs more of this gospel of truth and grace?

Part 2:
Finding Jesus
John 6:1-11:57

Daily Devotional

Monday • John 7:53-8:11

What does this remarkable encounter between Jesus and the woman teach us about our tendency to condemn others? What do we learn about God's desire to forgive and heal? What do we discover about how God wants us to live our lives?

Tuesday • John 8:12-20

In this passage Jesus declares, "I AM the light of the world." When the light of Jesus shines into a person's life what does Jesus say will happen? How have you experienced this in your own life?

Wednesday • John 8:21-30

What claims does Jesus make about himself in this passage? Are these claims objective truth (that is, true for the entire world) or relative truth, (that is true for some but not all)? What makes you think your answer to the previous question is right?

Thursday • John 8:31-38

What is the connection between continuing in the word of Jesus, seeing the truth and being set free?

Friday • John 8:39-47

The truth hurts. How do the people Jesus is talking with respond when he challenges their belief about themselves? How do you respond when a "salty" word is said to you even by someone who cares about you? Why is that?

Saturday • John 8:48-59

List everything Jesus says in this passage that agitates the people with whom he is talking. Which statement of Jesus challenges your thinking the most and why?

The Greatest Journey

Do You Believe
In the Son of Man?
John 9:1-41

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

Who are the different characters of this unusual drama? What are their motivations?

What was the nature of the miracle? In what ways was it similar to other miracles / signs in John? In what ways was it different?

What strikes you about the Pharisees in this drama? How would you characterize their beliefs?

Who speaks the truth in this drama? How does this truth fall on the ear of the "educated" spiritual leaders?

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

How is the man transformed? How do the forces at work in his "society" keep that transformation at bay? What do you like about his attitude?

What are the dangers of institutional religion? How open are you to everyday miracles? To what characters in this drama do you most relate, and why?

What do we learn about Jesus from this story?

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

Meditate on the opposing views of the Pharisees and Jesus? How can you be more joy and less law?

How open are you to transformation in others? How can you best avoid the Pharisee trap?

Open yourself to surprises from God this week.

Part 2:
Finding Jesus
John 6:1-11:57

Daily Devotional

Monday • John 9:1-7

Retributive Theology is the idea that we reap what we sow; all suffering is a result of our own sin. What would Jesus say to that theology? Jesus again repeats that he is the light of the world, but this time how is his affirmation different?

Tuesday • John 9:8-12

What is the townspeople's reaction to Jesus's miracle? How do we often react to miracles?

Wednesday • John 9:13-17

What is the Pharisees' beef with Jesus's miracle? How are we caught up with the law more than with what God is doing in our world?

Thursday • John 9:18-23

What was awkward about the parent's position? How do you feel about their answer? Where are we called to be bold and where are we called to pull back?

Friday • John 9:24-34

What is the one thing that the man knows? What is the one thing you know? How do the Pharisees dismiss this man's testimony? What ways do we refuse to listen to the truth that comes in packages we would rather ignore?

Saturday • John 9:35-41

What strikes you about Jesus's action? How does he pursue us? What is the man's reaction to Jesus' confession? Spend time today worshipping and believing.

The Greatest Journey

Do You
Believe This?
John 11:1-44

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

Put yourself in this story and retell it in your own words. If you were the one to make the 911 call to Jesus, what facts would you have relayed to him regarding this emergency?

What does Jesus do after he finishes taking the 911 call? In your own words how does Jesus explain his decision?

Contrast what Martha and Mary do when Jesus finally arrives. What do we learn about the faith of Martha and Mary?

Now that Jesus is on the scene and in charge what does he say and do in response to the death of Lazarus?

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

What do you do when you make a 911 call to God and there seems to be a delay in God's response? Can you think of specific experience of this? What help does this passage offer you in understanding a delayed response from God?

What do you learn from Martha about talking with Jesus? What do you learn about the heart of God by watching Jesus in this passage?

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

In this scene Jesus utters the greatest of all the I AM statements. Unpack the promises he makes to us in verses 11:25-26. Personalize the hope offered in these verses. How do you answer the question he asks Martha, "Do you believe this?"

Part 2:
Finding Jesus
John 6:1-11:57

Daily Devotional

Monday • John 10:1-21

Jesus calls himself "the gate for the sheep" and "the good Shepherd." What do these two images tell you about his relationship to us, his sheep? What comfort does this passage offer you?

Tuesday • John 10:22-42

What radical claim has Jesus made about his identity? How do the leaders pictured in this passage respond? What is your response to these claims?

Wednesday • John 11:1-16

Martha and Mary call for Jesus to come and save their brother Lazarus. Instead of coming immediately, Jesus stays where he is and Lazarus dies. What do you do when God delays an answer to your prayers?

Thursday • John 11:17-37

What impresses you about Martha's interaction with Jesus? Describe the faith of this amazing woman. In her confession of confidence in Jesus what does she believe about the identity and abilities of Jesus? What part of her confession do you share?

Friday • John 11:38-44

Martha sees the reality of the situation; her brother has been dead for four days. Jesus said to Martha, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" What does it mean to believe? In what is Jesus asking Martha to believe?

Saturday • John 11:45-57

How do you explain the active resistance to believing in Jesus on the part of some of the chief priests and Pharisees? What resistance is there in your own life to trusting Jesus with your life today?

The Greatest Journey

Do You Know What
I've Done for You?
John 13:1-20

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

What aspects of Jesus' identity and mission are revealed to us in this passage?

In the days of Jesus it was the personal responsibility of each person to wash their own feet. Not even a slave could be compelled to wash someone else's feet. Frame by frame, moment by moment, recount, in your own words, what Jesus does for his disciples.

Describe Peter's evolving reaction to Jesus kneeling before him to clean his feet.

What Jesus does is a living parable. How does Jesus use what he does for his disciples as an example of what he wants them to do in their interactions with one another?

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

What do you learn about the heart and character of God by watching Jesus in this scene?

Why do you think Peter is reluctant to let Jesus wash his feet? What convinces Peter to let Jesus do so?

What might it mean in the future for the disciples to wash one another's feet? Why do you think this is so important to Jesus?

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

What fellow disciple of Jesus needs you to wash their feet?

Part 3:
Trusting Jesus
John 12:1-19:42

Daily Devotional

Monday • John 12:1-19

The opening verses of chapter 12 are filled with mixed responses to Jesus. Compare the response of Mary (12:1-8) and the great crowd (12:12-13) with the response of Judas (12:4-6) and the Pharisees (12:9-11, 19). What is your heart's response to Jesus today?

Tuesday • John 12:20-36a

What do you think Jesus means when he says that we must "hate" our life in this world in order to keep it for eternal life? How can you apply this verse to your own life?

Wednesday • John 12:36b-50

What was at stake for the "authorities" who secretly believed in Jesus but would not publicly confess their faith? What kept them from telling the truth about their beliefs? In what situations do you find it difficult to talk about your faith? Why is it hard?

Thursday • John 13:1-20

What do you learn about God by watching Jesus wash the feet of his disciples?

Friday • John 13:21-30

Ironically, Judas' accepting the bread from Jesus is not a form of communion but the occasion for Satan to enter this unworthy follower. Describe what it feels like to be betrayed by a person close to you. In what ways have you betrayed Jesus this week?

Saturday • John 13:31-38

With his death only hours away what is the new commandment that Jesus has for his disciples? How will the living out of that commandment be a witness to the world about who Jesus is?

The Greatest Journey

How Can You Say,
"Show us the Father?"
John 14:1-14

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

What had Jesus said in chapter 13 to cause his disciples to have troubled hearts?

What specific promises did Jesus make to them in verses 1-4 of chapter 14?

After being with Jesus for over three years, what have both Thomas and Philip failed to realize about him? What does Jesus teach the disciples about who he is?

List the different qualities or aspects of Jesus relationship with the Father.

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

How would the promises Jesus makes in verses 1-4 bring comfort to his disciples? How does knowing that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life ease their troubled hearts?

How does knowing more clearly the nature of Jesus' relationship with the Father increase their confidence as they deal with the emotional impact of Jesus leaving them.

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

What issues are currently troubling you? How does knowing that a place is being prepared for you encourage you in the midst of your current struggles?

Part 3:
Trusting Jesus
John 12:1-19:42

Daily Devotional

Monday • John 14:1-7

What is currently troubling you? How do Jesus' words to the disciples bring you comfort and assurance?

Tuesday • John 14:8-14

Put Philip's question in your own words. How does knowing Jesus' identity as being one with the Father answer your doubts?

Wednesday • John 14:15-17

We learn about another source of comfort in these verses. What does the title Counselor (some translations have Advocate, Comforter) tell you about the Spirit's ministry in your life?

Thursday • John 14:18-24

According to Jesus how will the Holy Spirit bring comfort and help to his followers? In what specific ways has the Spirit brought comfort or help in your life?

Friday • John 14:25-26

The focus in these two verses is the role of the Holy Spirit as our teacher, reminding us of the teaching of Christ. How have you been taught by the Spirit during these weeks in John's Gospel?

Saturday • John 14:27-31

Jesus talks about the peace only he can give us. What are the qualities of this peace? How does the peace Christ offers differ from that which the world offers?

The Greatest Journey

Abide
In Me
John 15:1-17

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

This vine allegory plays quite vividly in this passage. What are the different lessons poured from this one allegory? What is needed for fruit? What is the penalty for fruitless activity?

What is the blessing of abiding? (7)

How can we little-little people glorify an almighty God? (8)

What are the motivations of Jesus to share this hard wisdom? (11)

What seems to be the natural outgrowth of proper abiding? (12-15)

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

How do branches interact with vines? If possible go and find a nearby vine as you meditate on abiding. How does one abide? What does it look like?

What aspect of vine care strikes you? In what ways are you feeling that way right now?

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

What pruning in your life would help you to abide? How open are you to God's vine care?

What would abiding look like in your life? What changes would need to be made to "abide?"

In what ways is your joy "incomplete?" From this passage how could it be more complete?

Part 3:
Trusting Jesus
John 12:1-19:42

Daily Devotional

Monday • John 15:1-11

This word abide appears so much in this passage- what do you think it means? What brings you joy in this passage? What are those things here that bring out fear? How can you abide this week?

Tuesday • John 15:12-17

Where have you heard this commandment before? How do you feel like a friend of Jesus? What can you do today as a friend?

Wednesday • John 15:18-25

What are the consequences for loving Jesus? From whence does this hatred spring? What is our natural reaction to conviction?

Thursday • John 15:26-16:4a

What is the nature of the advocate? Where does truth play a role in your life? Along with a promise of an advocate comes a promise of future happenings. What is disheartening about this promise?

Friday • John 16:4b-11

How was the death of Jesus supposed to be a good thing? How do we experience this reality in our own life?

Saturday • John 16:12-15

What will the advocate do? Why? What is declared to us by Jesus?

The Greatest Journey

Peace
For the Disciples
John 16:16-33

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

Try to outline this section. How is Jesus seeking to prepare the disciples?

How would you describe the overall point of Jesus' instructions here?

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

Why is Jesus so confident that pain will be a part of their future? What reasons will there be?

What will change the pain to joy?

Based on verse 25 and following, describe prayer.

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

How do you see the realities of pain, joy, and prayer in your own life as Christ's disciple?

Part 3:
Trusting Jesus
John 12:1-19:42

Daily Devotional

Monday • John 16:16-24

What do you think confuses the disciples about Jesus' words (v. 17)? Why will they know pain? Why joy?

Tuesday • John 16:25-28

Describe the relationship between Jesus and the Father from these verses? How does that relationship affect our relationship with God? Why?

Wednesday • John 16:29-33

What does Jesus mean by the "peace" that he leaves with his disciples? In what way(s) have you experienced it?

Thursday • John 17:1-5

Describe Jesus' relationship with the Father? What does Jesus pray for? Do you think there is a priority order to these requests? Why or why not?

Friday • John 17:6-19

List what Jesus prays for his disciples to know and experience. Which are most real to you? Which are less clear? Why do you think that is so?

Saturday • John 17:20-26

Why are disciples to be one with the God? How do you think that makes a difference?

The Greatest Journey

Am I Not
To Drink the Cup?
John 18:1-40

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

Assign parts to different members of your small group and then read this text aloud.

Where is the climax of this part of the passion?

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

What impression does this account leave ... of Jesus? of Caiaphas? of Peter? of Pilate?

What part of the narrative do you find draws you the most? If you could have interjected some word at some point what would you have wanted to say? Why?

How do you respond to Jesus' silence?

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

Re-enact the scene again, not reading the text, but improvising the account based on your study.

Pray together with thanksgiving for the love and sacrifice of Jesus.

Part 3:
Trusting Jesus
John 12:1-19:42

Daily Devotional

Monday • John 18:1-14

How would you describe Jesus' arrest? What are the accusations? What surprises you about this scene?

Tuesday • John 18:15-24

What do you think was at the root of Peter's denial of Jesus? If you had been Peter, what would you have felt? What would you have done? What strikes you about Jesus' words?

Wednesday • John 18:25-38a

What do you notice about Peter's denials? Are they each the same or different from one another? What irony do you notice in v.28? Do you think Pilate was earnest or sarcastic in his inquiries to Jesus? What would you have asked Jesus if you had been there?

Thursday • John 18:38b - 19:16a

What are the alleged grounds of Jesus' conviction? How do you explain Jesus' silence and lack of self defense? What is your response to that?

Friday • John 19:16b-30

What is the significance of the sign they place over Jesus? What do you make of Jesus' words to and about his mother, Mary? What is it that "is finished"?

Saturday • John 19:31-42

Why does it matter that Jesus is truly dead? What do you suppose Joseph of Arimathea was thinking or feeling? Why do you think the burial is important to relate?

The Greatest Journey

Do You Love Me
More Than These?
John 21:1-25

Small Group Bible Study

KNOW THE TEXT

When you compare these resurrection appearances with those in chapter 20, what do you notice as common or distinctive?

What catches your attention about the risen Jesus going fishing? Why do you think he does this?

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

If you had been having breakfast with Jesus on the beach what do you think the experience would have been like? How would you have responded?

If you had been Peter, what would have been going through your mind when Jesus was asking you his questions?

HOW WILL YOU APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED?

Why do you think Jesus repeats the question three times?

What emotional force do you think it has on Peter? What do you think it would have had on you? Why?

What did Jesus' instruction to Peter affirm? How does it show Peter's value and trustworthiness? (Read 1 Peter 1)

What words of Jesus to you have reassured you of your value and trustworthiness? What commission has he given you to fulfill?

Part 4:
Living for Jesus
John 20:1-21:25

Daily Devotional

Monday • John 20:1-10

What surprises you about this text? What does it reflect about the authenticity of the text? How are personalities evident?

Tuesday • John 20:11-23

What seems to be similar and different about the pre-risen Jesus from the post-risen Jesus? Why does Jesus say what he does in v. 17? Why does that matter? What gifts does Jesus leave?

Wednesday • John 20:24-30

Why does Thomas doubt? What would prove Christ's resurrection to you? Has or could Jesus provide that proof?

Thursday • John 21:1-14

Why do you think this story is told at this point? What does it say about Jesus? What does it say about the disciples?

Friday • John 21:15-19

Why does Jesus ask Peter three times? What do you think the question means? What does this exchange mean to Peter?

Saturday • John 21:20-25

Does this seem like a surprising end to the gospel? Why or why not? What does it underline for the disciples? What does it underline for us?