



JOURNEY
THROUGH

JOHN





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DEVELOPED BY
**Assemblies of God
National Men's Ministries**


GPH[®]
Gospel Publishing House

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Produced in the United States of America



The Journey Begins

The lessons you're about to engage are meant to help strengthen your biblical knowledge, understanding, and application. In addition to what the Bible says, studying the culture, land, language, and other background information will produce a broader and deeper understanding of what Scripture is saying to you. These lessons are intended to help provide that for you.

The format of these lessons is built on the following five questions that will help you explore the biblical author's intent, your perspective as a modern reader, and how the Holy Spirit can apply it to you. In order to gain a fuller understanding of Scripture, you should ask:

- What did this Scripture mean to the original author and audience?
- What does this Scripture mean to me today?
- How can this Scripture apply to my life?
- How does this Scripture deepen my love for God?
- How can I demonstrate this Scripture to my family and those around me?

Every lesson contains four sections that are built on the principles of these questions: The Author's Lens, My Lens, The Holy Spirit's Lens, and Upward and Outward Focus. These sections will encourage you to wrestle with the text and discover an understanding that will deepen your biblical knowledge and allow you to rightly apply what you've learned.

These lessons have been built using several resources to provide you with an in-depth study without having to purchase every single resource. But, there are a few recommended tools for purchase that will enhance your engagement with these lessons. They are:

- *Fire Bible®: English Standard Version®*
- Journal
- Colored Pencils
- Fine Point Pen

The ultimate goal of these lessons is to equip you to ascertain what the Holy Spirit and God's Word is saying to you. To do that, it's recommended that you work slowly and methodically through this deep dive into the Scripture.



For Group Leaders

The lessons you're about to engage are meant to help strengthen your biblical knowledge, understanding, and application. In addition to what the Bible says, studying the culture, land, language, and other background information will produce a broader and deeper understanding of what Scripture is saying to you. These lessons are intended to help provide that for you.

- Determine who will be the group leader. The leader will be responsible for making any copies needed, coordinating meeting times, and facilitating discussions.
- The group leader should select individuals to read aloud The Author's Lens and My Lens sections.
- Before a session begins, the group leader should read through the questions in The Holy Spirit's Lens section. Many lessons have more content than can be covered in one session, so the leader may choose to only engage part of the questions or assign group members to work through part or all the questions before arrival.
- If your group is very large, dividing into groups of three to four people is the best way to work through selected questions from The Holy Spirit's Lens for thirty to forty minutes. These groups should also commit to work together throughout the week.
- If you've divided into smaller groups, rejoin the entire group together after that small group time. Discuss as a large group a few of the selected questions from The Holy Spirit's Lens for ten to fifteen minutes.
- Finally, the leader is responsible to hold group members accountable for completing the Scripture reading before each session and ensuring that they are writing in their journals.



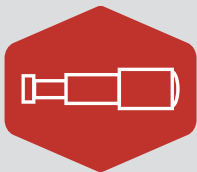
Lesson and Scripture Checklist

- Lesson 1: Introduction
- Lesson 2: John 1:1-18
- Lesson 3: John 1:19-51
- Lesson 4: John 2:1-25
- Lesson 5: John 3:1-21
- Lesson 6: John 3:22-36
- Lesson 7: John 4:1-26
- Lesson 8: John 4:27-54
- Lesson 9: John 5:1-30
- Lesson 10: John 5:31-47
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- Lesson 24: John 13:31-14:14
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- Lesson 27: John 15:18-16:4
- Lesson 28: John 16:5-33
- Lesson 29: John 17:1-26
- Lesson 30: John 18:1-27
- Lesson 31: John 18:28-19:16
- Lesson 32: John 19:17-42
- Lesson 33: John 20:1-31
- Lesson 34: John 21:1-25



Lesson 1: Introduction

Main Idea: Before you begin to chew the bite-sized pieces of this Gospel, it's best to be familiar with the entirety of the work. This first lesson will provide you with an overview of the entire Gospel of John that will prepare you for the following lessons.



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

As you begin this study, background knowledge is helpful. Please read the points below. Consider the following synopsis from the *Fire Bible*^{®1}.

- Author: John the Apostle
- Theme: Jesus Christ: The Son of God and Savior of People
- Date of Writing: AD 80–95
- Background: John records much about Jesus' ministry in Judea and Jerusalem that the other three Gospels leave out, and it gives deeper insight into the "mystery" of Jesus' personhood as both God and man.
- Purpose: John 20:31
- Survey: John has two major divisions.
 - » Chapters 1–12 describe the incarnation, introduction, and public ministry of Jesus Christ.
 - » Chapters 13–21 focus on the disciples as the nucleus of His new covenant people.

¹ Donald C. Stamps, *Fire Bible®: English Standard Version®*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 2011), 1719–1720.

- To familiarize yourself with the geography of John:
 - » You may want to reference pages 114-121 of the *Essential Atlas of the Bible*.
 - » Familiarize yourself with Maps number 11, 12, and 16 in the back of your *Fire Bible*®.
- Write down thoughts or questions you would like to answer as you study through this book.



My Lens (Eyeglasses)

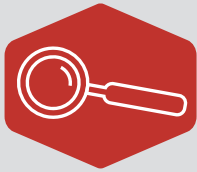
What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God’s Word is saying to you today.

- Read the entire Gospel of John before the first session.
 - » 21 chapters, preferably three chapters a day for seven days.
- Read the *Fire Bible*® chart: “The Ministry of Jesus.”
 - » What stands out to you from this chart?

 - » What is your favorite story found in John? Why?
- Read the *Fire Bible*® chart: “The Miracles of Jesus.”
 - » What stands out to you from this chart?

» What miracle speaks to you most from John? Why?

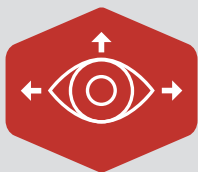
- Read the *Fire Bible*® three-page introduction to the Gospel of John.
 - » What was the most interesting thing you learned from the introduction?



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

- Highlight and write down the following in your journal as you read through John:
 - » Reoccurring words
 - » Places mentioned
 - » Names mentioned
- Circle the following words with the recommended colored pencils:
 - » "Believe" in yellow
 - » "Father" in orange
 - » "Spirit" in blue
- Look over your notes for John, and write down three things you hope to learn and apply to your life as a result of this study.
- What thoughts came to mind as you read John this week?



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God’s Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- How can the study of the Gospel of John help you deepen your love of God?

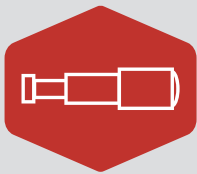
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate this love to others?



Lesson 2: The Word Became Flesh

Main Idea: John used seven important words when describing Jesus and the effect His arrival had on the world. These words are: Word, God, life, believe, glory, grace, and truth. This lesson will take a deeper look at these words.

Scripture: John 1:1-18



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

The writer of the Gospel of John was Jesus' disciple, John, not to be confused with John the Baptist who shared the common, biblical name. John was probably one of the youngest disciples of Jesus, and referred to himself in his writings as the disciple "whom Jesus loved."

John wrote his Gospel twenty to thirty years after the other three Gospels were written. His purpose for writing is summarized in John 20:30-31 when he wrote, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (ESV).

In today's lesson Scripture, John 1:1-18, the term "Word" was used four times to describe Jesus. Though the text was also written to a Gentile audience, the Jewish readers had special insight when it came to this term. When those Jewish readers saw the term "Word," they likely understood this as a reference to the Word of God that was the revelation of God himself to his people. They already possessed what we call the Old Testament, and this would have provided them with that insight.

To the Greeks, the whole idea of *logos* (the Greek term translated as “Word” in John 1) meant something different. Perhaps you have heard of the Greek philosophers Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates. Before them was another philosopher who really framed Greco-Roman thought regarding creation and gods. His name was Heraclitus. He came up with the concept that above the gods was this thing called “the *logos*.” It was an impersonal and rational god for the universe. So, when a Greek person heard the word *logos*, they thought of this philosophical idea. They associated *logos* with a purpose, reason, or rationale for the universe. So, for Heraclitus, the *logos* existed as a rationale for the universe, even above the gods.

Other Greek philosophers could not come to terms with the purpose of the universe. The Epicureans’ philosophy was that because they cannot know and understand the purpose, they should just party because it does not make any difference. The stoics’ philosophy was that because no one can know the purpose, they should go ahead and act like they know it. Neither of them really understood the purpose of life. Even today, people are still searching for purpose.

In John 1:1, the verb used by John right before *logos* is in the imperfect tense. This indicates that the “Word” continually existed. When John stated that Jesus was with God, it could be better understood as Jesus being face to face with God. This was John’s way to communicate that Jesus was not only there, but He is equal to God. He is co-eternal, co-existent, and co-equal with God. John, in essence, communicated that in the beginning there was a rationale; in the beginning, there was a reason; in the beginning, there was logic. Then in verse four, the life that John describes is eternal life, a new dimension of life, spiritual life, and a life better than you or I could imagine. The only way a person could know this life is if they know the Word who came to live among humanity.

The term translated as “believe” was also huge in John. It appears over ninety times. The idea that the term carried was that if you received Him, it was because you believed in Him. And if you believed in Him, then you received Him. To paraphrase the essence of what John is communicating, one could say, “all the terms you can use to describe who He is, I saw. He is the God of glory.”

In this first chapter, John references several Old Testament concepts and actions that parallel the arrival of Christ in His glory. In the following chart, Keener provides an example of how the narrative echoes the giving of God’s Word, the law, through Moses:¹

¹ Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 250.

Exodus 33-34	John 1:14-18
The revelation of God's Word, the Torah	The revelation of God's Word, Jesus
God dwelt among His people in the tabernacle (33:10); Moses pleaded that God would continue to dwell with them (33:14-16)	The Word "dwelt" [lit. "tabernacled"] among people (1:14)
Moses beheld God's glory (33:12-23)	The disciples beheld Jesus' glory (1:14)
The glory was full of grace and truth (34:6)	The glory was full of grace and truth (1:14)
The law was given through Moses (34:1-28)	The law was given through Moses (1:17)
No one could see all of God's glory (33:20)	No one could see all of God's glory (1:18a), but it is fully revealed in Jesus (1:18b)

Taken from The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament by Craig S. Keener. Copyright (c) 2014 by Craig S. Keener. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515, USA. www.ivpress.com

And finally, John's Gospel not only proclaimed the truth about Christ, it also was combating errors and heresy. Below is a list of some challenges he attacked head-on with his writings.

Errors about Jesus Christ While John Lived

- Some believed that Jesus was:
 - » A blasphemer
 - » Just a prophet (Gnosticism)
 - » A lesser god
- John was a contemporary of Cerinthus who taught that the world was created by lesser powers than God.²
 - » He distinguished between Jesus and Christ, saying Jesus was only a man and the spirit of the divine Christ descended upon Him at baptism and departed before the crucifixion.
 - » John is noted to have called Cerinthus "the enemy of truth." John once met him in a public building, and fearing the roof might fall in, John said, "Let us flee . . . for Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, is within."

² Quentin McGhee, Gospel of John: *The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 29.

- Docetism taught that Jesus was a divine being who only appeared human.
 - » John 1:14 refutes this error.
 - » Later in AD 107, Ignatius, an early church leader, exposed the heresy of Docetism.



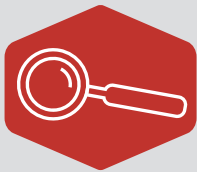
My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God’s Word is saying to you today.

John 1:1-18 was Jesus’ divine genealogy. John introduced us to Jesus in these eighteen verses. Though there are other passages of Scripture that are much easier to understand and apply, these verses are required for a person to have a complete theological understanding of Christ. It is good for us to take time to think deeply about God. What you and I think of God, know of God, and understand of God determines the quality and the depth of our walk with God. It is hard to walk deeply with a God of whom you know little or nothing.

- John wrote with the purpose that we might fully know and understand that Jesus is the Son of God.
- There is a progression of signs throughout the Gospel (seeing and hearing the works of Jesus) that leads a person to decide who Jesus is and to believe. This causes the reader to enter into a whole new dimension of spiritual life.
- John, who is introducing us to Jesus, is communicating that Jesus is not a lesser god, created god, or underneath the Father in terms of His power or His divinity. Instead, Jesus is right there with the Father because He is God (vs.1).
- There is nothing that came into being without the expression or creative power of the Son of God, Jesus (vs. 3).
- Jesus was life and He came to show us what life is. When Jesus comes into your life, you are moving from darkness to light because you are living a new kind of life—a spiritual life (vs. 4-5).
- If a person wants to know why we exist and why we are on this earth, the answer is found in the Word (vs. 1-5).
The world not only fails to recognize Jesus as Creator, but they want nothing to do with Him (vs. 10-11).

- When a person puts their faith in Jesus, a wonderful expression of God’s love comes to them and they are adopted as His children (vs. 12-13).
- The glory of God is expressed in two ways: intrinsic (all that God is) and extrinsic (His manifested presence which is usually displayed in light) (vs. 14).
- To walk with Jesus can be described as grace after grace after grace (vs. 16).
- Jesus was the perfect balance between grace and truth (vs. 17).
- If you want to know what God is like, look to Jesus. If you want to know how God feels about things, listen to Jesus. If you want to know what God would do in any situation, watch Jesus. (vs. 18).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit’s leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God’s Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?
 - » Where is this passage taking place?
 - » When is this passage occurring?
 - » Why is this passage important?
 - » What is happening in this passage?

- » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).

- Write down the eight descriptions of Jesus found in John 1:1-18. What can you ascertain from these descriptions?

- Describe the word *logos* in relation to creation, life, light, and the new birth.

- “How would you help enlighten a person who said Jesus was created?”³

- Read the *Fire Bible*® study note on John 1:1 and answer the following:
 - » What is the Greek term for “Word?”

 - » What are the three relationships to the Word?

³ Quentin McGhee, Gospel of John: *The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 31.

» What did you learn from this study note?

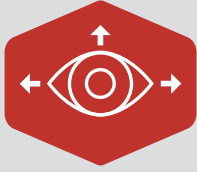
- Read the *Fire Bible*® study note on John 1:4 and answer the following:
 - » Describe life and light.

» What did you learn from this study note?

- In the following chart, summarize some concepts discussed in John 1:1-18 and some of John's other concepts throughout the rest of his book.⁴

1:1-18	John	Concepts
1:1-2	17:5	
1:4	5:26	
1:4	8:12	
1:5	3:19	
1:5	12:35	
1:9	3:19; 12:46	
1:11	4:44	
1:13	3:6; 8:41-42	
1:14	12:41	
1:14,18	3:16; 6:46	
1:17	3:16; 4:4-42; 14:6	
1:18	6:46	

⁴ Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh* (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 28.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

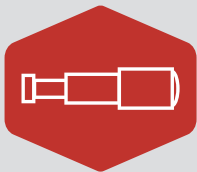
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 3: The Testimony of John the Baptist and Jesus Calls His Disciples

Main Idea: In this lesson, John the Baptist gives insight to the witness of Christ, a witness to the Jewish leaders, and a witness of Christ's Messiahship. It is because of these testimonies that some of John the Baptist's disciples follow Jesus. Finally, Jesus' disciples demonstrate that it's good to introduce people to Him.

Scripture: John 1:19-51



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

This section of Scripture dealt with a man whose name was John the Baptist. As was noted in the last lesson, John the Baptist is not the author of the Gospel of John. The Gospel was written by John, the disciple of Jesus. It was written approximately twenty to thirty years after Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote their Gospels. John wrote for the purpose that people would see the life and ministry of Jesus, might believe in Him, and by believing might have life in His name.

Through his introduction of Jesus in verses 1-18, the author built the case that Jesus was God. He then transitions into a discussion of John the Baptist who was born to Zechariah, a godly priest, and his wife Elizabeth. John's ministry began in the wilderness, and this would have likely had special meaning to the ancient readers of this Gospel. Likely they would be able to connect the idea of John's ministry in the wilderness to the Exodus journey of the children of Israel and this new exodus that would be led by Christ.

In Matthew’s Gospel, we learn that John the Baptist ate locusts and wild honey. Some scholars have argued that the Greek word that is translated as “locust” refers to mashed up carob. Either way, it’s clear that John was eating the food of the poor, and as such, identified himself with the common man living off the wild land.

John the Baptist’s ministry and time on the religious scene was relatively short. He began ministry somewhere around AD 26, and Josephus (an ancient Jewish historian) wrote that John’s ministry lasted between ten and fifteen years. It’s also worth noting that he was six months older than Jesus and that they were cousins. So, their meeting in this chapter is likely not the first. The encounter detailed in this passage took place on four different days (vs. 19, 29, 35, 43), and includes the highlight of John the Baptist’s declaration of Jesus as the Lamb. John the Baptist’s allusion to the Passover lamb was in essence a statement that his audience should now look to Jesus, the Lamb of God, who will save people from their sins.



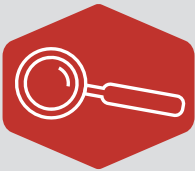
My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God’s Word is saying to you today.

John the Baptist’s ministry happened mostly along the Jordan River. The Jordan River was the main river of Israel. It started above the Lake of Galilee, traveled through it, and ended at the Dead Sea. When John came on the scene, he was like a lightning bolt as he preached through this region. As the crowds streamed to John, a dramatic turn of events happened when Jesus showed up. This resulted in John’s declaration of Jesus as the Lamb of God and some of John’s disciples leaving to follow Jesus.

- When our heart is in proper alignment, we can recognize, receive, and embrace Jesus.
- Humility is key to the Christian life.
- Be careful not to get caught up in the messenger more than the Messiah.
- Humility is when you and I are willing to lay down our rights and serve other people.
- The depth of a man is not measured by how many people he gets to follow Christ.

- You need to follow where God is working in your life.
- As you spend time with Jesus, you realize that He is like no one you have ever met.
- The power of the gospel is to transform lives.
- Once you have experienced a relationship with Jesus, you think everybody ought to have an experience with Him (vs. 40).
- Jesus sees things in you that you do not see in yourself.
- God sees you not for what you are, but what you can become.
- Distractions can cause you to miss what God desires to do in you.
- You're opening another avenue of communication with God when you meditate on His Word.
- The Christian life is about following Jesus and walking by faith and not by sight.
- When you start walking like Nathanael, the power you sense as you begin your walk with Jesus is very powerful but should continue to grow deeper (vs. 45–51).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?
 - » Where is this passage taking place?
 - » When is this passage occurring?
 - » Why is this passage important?

» What is happening in this passage?

» How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.
- What verse stood out to you? Why?
- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- Write down the thirteen descriptions of Jesus found in John 1:21–51. What can you gather from these descriptions?
- Explain John the Baptist's response on his relationship to Jesus.

- How is Jesus being described as the Lamb of God, different from other religious leaders?

- Of the five disciples called to follow Jesus, who you are most like and why?

- Read the *Fire Bible*® study note about John 1:29 and answer the following:
 - » Describe the correlation between the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:3-17) and Jesus.

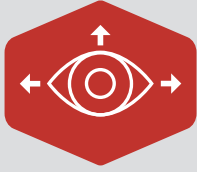
 - » Why do you think Jesus became our ultimate sacrifice?

- Read the study note about John 1:51 in your *Fire Bible*®. What are your thoughts on the comparison of Jesus to a ladder?

In the following chart, summarize some concepts discussed in John 1:1-18 and some of John's other concepts throughout the rest of his book.¹

1:1-18	Cross-reference	Your Summaries of Prophecies Related to the Messiah
1:21	Deut. 18:15,18	<p>Was John the prophet Moses wrote about?</p> <p>Who was the prophet Moses predicted?</p>
1:23	Isa. 40:3	<p>Did John fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah? Explain.</p>
1:21	Mal. 4:5-6	<p>According to Malachi, when would Elijah come?</p> <p>Why did Malachi say Elijah would come?</p>
	<p>Matt. 11:14; 17:10-13</p>	<p>In what sense was John the Baptist the Elijah who was to come?</p>
1:21		<p>If John was the Elijah who was to come, why did he tell the priests and Levites he was not Elijah?</p>

¹ Quentin McGhee, Gospel of John: *The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 36.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

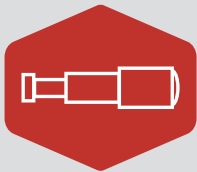
- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?
- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 4: The Wedding at Cana and Jesus Cleanses the Temple

Main Idea: This lesson helps us to understand Jesus' first miracle and His desire for everyone to have the opportunity to worship God. Jesus helps us see that God can work in a variety of places and in many different ways.

Scripture: John 2:1-25



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

In John 2, Jesus was invited to a wedding in Cana in the Galilee region. It was at this event that Jesus' first miracle was recorded. Though John didn't call them miracles, he called them a synonymous term—signs. John's account of these signs reveals that Jesus wasn't just meeting needs, He was also bringing greater understanding of Him and His work.

Jesus attended this celebration with His mother, Mary, who tried to solve the problem of the hour. In that society, as a woman, it was not her place to solve the problem unless she was a stakeholder in the problem. Based on this, some scholars have argued that this was a wedding of a family member.

In the time of Jesus, weddings were different than they are today. The groom's parents met the bride's parents, and if an understanding was reached between them, there would be a betrothal. It was legally binding. Often, the man would be between the ages of eighteen and nineteen unless he was very wealthy. The girl would often be between the ages of twelve and fourteen. During the betrothal period (which usually lasted one to three years), the young man prepared for his bride. He learned his trade, saved his money, and built a room

on his father's house. When the wedding came, it typically lasted between three and seven days. The groom, along with his wedding party, went to the home of the bride. Then he, his bride, and the entire wedding party traveled to the home of the groom. For the next seven days, they feasted and celebrated. The job of the groom was to make sure the people were fed and taken care of at the wedding celebration. In fact, to not take care of the guests at the wedding feast was not only a social blunder, but it could result in a litigation. If you did not provide for your guests, it was a shame to you and your family.

Another core part of the wedding process was a ritual cleansing in a special pool called a *mikvah*. This idea of purification in Jewish ceremonial law was huge. Being ritually pure dominated the mindset of a devout Jew. Wealthy Jews often had a *mikvah* in their own home, while others used community ones. This was not a pool used for bathing, collecting water, or general washing. The *mikvah* was used for ceremonial bathing for ritual purity. This family had six pots that were used in these ceremonial cleansings. It's estimated that each of the pots held between 150–200 gallons of water. More than likely, they had that many pots because this family was very concerned with righteous purity. It's possible that John noted the sacred use of these pots to allude to the spiritual significance of the new wine Jesus was making. In other places in the New Testament, Jesus compared the new covenant to new wine.

From the story of the wedding at Cana, the scene shifted to Jesus cleansing the Temple. This term, "temple" can sometimes be confusing because there are times that the entire elevated area where the temple was built is called the temple. When one reads the New Testament, you have to decide whether the writer was actually talking about the building or the entire area of the temple. The temple was divided into the court of priests, the court of Israel, the court of women, and the court of Gentiles. Around the temple were shops where people could make purchases to be used as sacrifices. There were also many *mikvahs* where the participants could do ceremonial washing before receiving the sacrifices they purchased. After cleansing and obtaining a sacrifice, one would then move to the appropriate location to offer the sacrifice.

The problem Jesus addressed was not simply the buying and selling of animals in the temple. One big problem was the high priest's position. By this point in history, the high priest basically paid the Roman government to get the position. At the time of Jesus, the high priest was first Annas then his son-in-law Caiaphas. They controlled the temple activities. Historians wrote that the entire portico area where the sacrifices were sold was called the Bazaar of Annas. These two high priests cheated the worshipers by raising the cost of the sacrifice. There was not a standard for money exchange at that time, so the priests set the exchange rate to possibly as high as 25%. The high priests were taking advantage of the people, and when Jesus went into the temple He saw was going on, and He became angry.



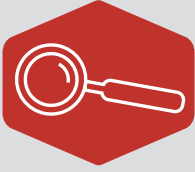
My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

In John 2:1-25, John examined a couple of things. First, John told about Jesus' first miracle. From John's perspective, the purpose of the miracle was so people might see the power of God. Once they saw the power of God, the hope was that they would believe, come to know God, and walk in newness of life. John reminded the reader that the call to serve Christ was a call to a supernatural existence of the life of God in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The second thing John examined was the temple. Jesus judged the religious situation of His day and declared it void. Jesus, in the temple, was concerned with how people worship Him. In the Old Testament, God had a temple for His people but in the New Testament, God has a people for His temple.

- God desires to work miracles in our life.
- Do what Jesus says no matter where you are (vs. 1).
- There is no place where a miracle cannot occur or that is inappropriate
- Do what Jesus says in the midst of your problems (vs. 3).
- Do what Jesus says even if you are not encouraged (vs. 3).
- God can speak to us through the needs of others.
- You may not always understand the events of your life. However, God is not indifferent to your situation and needs (vs. 4).
- A person's honor is worth more than the demands for ritual purity (vs. 6).
- Do whatever Jesus says, even if you do not understand the process (vs. 6-7).
- Jesus provides for people in abundance and quality (vs. 8).
- God is passionate about the environment in which He is worshiped.
- Who we worship, how we worship, and what we worship is absolutely important to God.
- Do not allow anything to become more important than God (vs. 12).
- Do not allow yourself to get so caught up in your service for the Lord that you forget why you are serving the Lord.
- Do not allow doubt to replace faith (vs. 18).
- Do not allow ritual to replace relationship (vs. 19).
- Do not allow dead faith to replace saving faith.



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?

 - » Where is this passage taking place?

 - » When is this passage occurring?

 - » Why is this passage important?

 - » What is happening in this passage?

 - » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- What can you learn from Jesus about attending social events?

- Read John 2:1-11, and write a summary of who Jesus is.

- Contrast Moses' first public sign of turning water into blood (Exodus 7:20; cf. Revelation 8:8) against Jesus' first sign of turning water into wine.

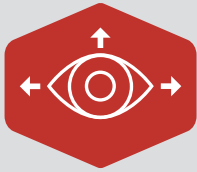
- In John 2:13-25, what are three keywords? Circle them in your Bible.

- What are your thoughts as to why Jesus was angry in the temple?

- List some ways in which Christians defile the human temple today.

- Read the *Fire Bible*® study note on John 2:11. Why are signs given?

- Read the *Fire Bible*® article about “The Temple.” Describe what you learned from the article.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God’s Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

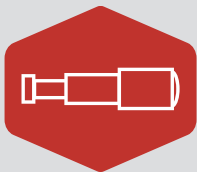
- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?
- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 5: Jesus and Nicodemus

Main Idea: This lesson is designed to help you understand and explain what it means to be born again.

Scripture: John 3:1-21



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

Jesus gave directions on how to make it from where we are to an eternity with God. Part of those directions are hinged on a concept called being born again. Five times in ten verses of John's Gospel, the concept of being born again is mentioned. This discussion of being born again happened when a man named Nicodemus came to Jesus at night.

Nicodemus was an influential religious teacher whom Jesus understood perfectly. He was a member of the Pharisee sect within Judaism—a group that was primarily seen throughout the Gospels as those who confronted Jesus about His observance of the Old Testament. The Pharisees appeared to be more religious than the other three religious groups. It has been argued that the Pharisees were also known to be more accurate than the other groups in their interpretation of the law.



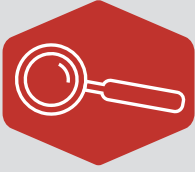
My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

John ended chapter two with these powerful words, “Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing” (John 2:23, ESV). It’s clear that the signs Jesus performed had a marked impact on those who witnessed them.

John calls Jesus’ miraculous acts “signs” because they are a display of power with a purpose. These signs were designed to point people to the message of Jesus as well as the validity of that message so that they could believe. And as discussed in a previous lesson, the reason John recorded these signs in his Gospel is so that others who didn’t see them first-hand could also believe (John 20:30-31).

- Jesus knows the condition of your heart.
- You can know about Jesus without personally knowing Him (vs. 1).
- Your outward appearance is not necessarily an indicator of what is inside you.
- The more you know Jesus, the more thoroughly you can evaluate your own spiritual condition (vs. 2-3).
- You cannot go to heaven unless you have been born again (vs. 3).
- Being born again is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in your heart (vs. 4).
- Fleshly efforts do not assure an acceptable spiritual state with God (vs. 5-6).
- Faith is required to be born again (vs. 7-8).
- Jesus is the only way to be born again (vs. 9-14).
- God’s deep desire to be with us is demonstrated by sending Jesus to us (vs. 16-18).
- God did not just show us His character, He showed us an example to follow (vs. 16-18).
- The Christian life is one of sacrifice (vs. 16-18).
- Progressing to a deeper relationship with Jesus is a process and not an event. We must keep moving through the process.



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?

 - » Where is this passage taking place?

 - » When is this passage occurring?

 - » Why is this passage important?

 - » What is happening in this passage?

 - » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*[®] map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- Read John 3:1-2. From these verses, what can you learn about Nicodemus?

- Summarize John 3:16-18 in your own words.

- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study note on John 3:5. What does “born of water” mean?

- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study note on John 3:8. Why does John compare the Holy Spirit to the wind?

- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study note on John 3:16¹ and respond to the following:
 - » How wide is God’s love?

 - » Why did God give His Son as an offering for our sins?

 - » To what does “perish” refer?

 - » What type of living do you think eternal life implies?

¹ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 34.

- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] article titled “Regeneration: Spiritual Birth and Renewal”² and respond to the following:
 - » In your own words, what is regeneration?

 - » When does a person become a child of God (John 1:12)?

 - » When does a person begin to have eternal life (John 3:16)?

 - » What do we share and partake of at the new birth (2 Peter 1:4)?

 - » Why is the new birth necessary?

 - » What three steps must a person take to be born again?

 - » At the new birth, a person turns from the old life of _____, and to a new life of _____. What are some signs that show that a person has been born again?

2 Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 34.

- » Is a person who continues practicing sin born again (1 John 3:9)? Why?

- » What is a condition for being cleansed from sin (1 John 1:7)?

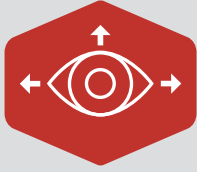
- » What is a key to receiving grace, avoiding sinful habits, and bearing good fruit instead of bad fruit (John 15:4)?

- » What does the Bible say about a person who claims to be born again, but follows the sinful ways of the world (1 John 3:6-10)?

- » Is it possible for those who have been born again to die spiritually and lose their relationship with God (Romans 8:13)? Explain.

- » Will those who practice evil inherit God's kingdom (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21)?

- » Some, like Nicodemus, err by thinking that all spiritual relationships are like physical relationships (John 3:4-6). Physical death does not change who your father is. But spiritual death breaks the relationship between a child and the Heavenly _____.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

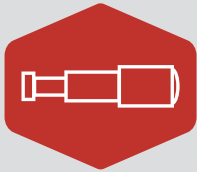
- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?
- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 6: John the Baptist Exalts Jesus

Main Idea: The issue at the heart of these verses is identity. They address how we see ourselves as followers of Jesus in comparison to those around us.

Scripture: John 3:22–36



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

If you examined the ministry of Jesus, you would notice that baptism played a huge role in His ministry. But He wasn't the only one performing this sacred act. The scene in today's verses revolves around two bands of baptizers. One band was Jesus and His disciples, and the second band was John the Baptist and his disciples.

Repentance was a key theme to bringing in the reign of the Messiah. John challenged those he came in contact with to repent. Part of repentance included a ritual immersion in water in accordance with Jewish law. This meant that a full body immersion was to take place in a person who desired to repent. Recent research places the ministry of John the Baptist primarily in the northern portion of the land of Israel, especially around the plains of Bethsaida. Taking all things into account, it is apparent that John's ministry and Jesus' baptism would have been north of the Lake of Galilee.

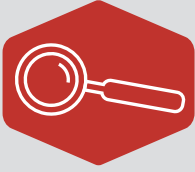


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

Thousands of people came to hear John the Baptist. As they repented of their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. John's purpose was to prepare people for the Messiah—Jesus. So, when Jesus arrived on the scene, John pointed people to Him. John knew the time had come for people to leave him and to follow Jesus.

- To Jesus, baptism is important (vs. 23-24).
- Discussions about religious activities are good starting places (vs. 25).
- When we fear, we are losing influence. Worry can creep into our lives (vs. 26).
- Our identity is shaped by how we define who we are (vs. 27-30).
- Everything in our life should bring focus to Jesus.
- Jesus should increase because He is above all (vs. 31).
- Jesus should increase because He knows what no one else knows (vs. 32).
- Jesus should increase because His words are God's words (vs. 33-34a).
- Jesus should increase because He is the giver of the Holy Spirit (vs. 34b).
- Jesus should increase because He owns everything (vs. 35).
- Jesus should increase because He gives eternal life (vs. 36).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
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 - » Why is this passage important?

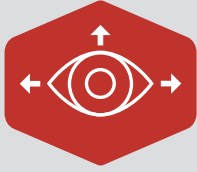
 - » What is happening in this passage?

 - » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- The setting shifts between John 3:1-21 and John 3:22-36. Describe the difference in the settings.
- When the crowds left John and went to Jesus, how did John's disciples take it? Why did they feel this way?
- What are two reasons John the Baptist informs his disciples that they should not be jealous?
- Read the *Fire Bible*® study note for verse 34. What is the key to Jesus' powerful ministry?
- Read the *Fire Bible*® study note for verse 36. What are your thoughts on the two different words mentioned?



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

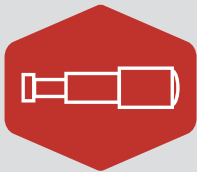
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- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 7: Jesus and the Woman of Samaria

Main Idea: Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well will reveal insight into walking with God, understanding another culture, and God's desire to reach everyone.

Scripture: John 4:1-26



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

The well in this passage had a long history with the Jewish people. This entire event took place in Samaria on the Benjamin Plateau. The patriarch Jacob came back to the land of his family after he lived with his uncle for twenty years. He returned with his family and flocks, and he stopped outside of Shechem at a place that is now called Sychar. There he dug a well. It was also near the place where Joseph, Jacob's son, would later be buried. When Joseph died in Egypt, they carried his bones during the Exodus and buried him near Shechem.

To understand the setting of this section of Scripture, a knowledge of the people who lived in Samaria, the Samaritans, is vital. After the reign of Solomon, one of Israel's greatest kings, there was a civil war of sorts that divided Israel into two kingdoms—the northern kingdom that continued to be called Israel and the southern kingdom that became known as Judah. They continued to be separate for several centuries until 753 BC when the superpower of that day, Assyria, invaded the northern kingdom of Israel. As part of their policy, they deported most of the people from regions they conquered and brought foreigners to settle in the recently conquered area.

That was exactly what Assyria did to Israel. They moved most Israelites out of the land and brought in other people. Assyria left some of the poorest of the Israelite people in the conquered land, and many of them blended religions and intermarried with the recently imported foreigners. This newly blended population is what became the Samaritans.

This continued for three centuries until the time of Nehemiah. Nehemiah returned to Israel to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. When he began, the Samaritans heard about this project. They asked to be part of the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem, but they were told that they had no right to be a part of the project. So, the Samaritans went back to the land of Samaria.

The worship and religion of the Samaritans had some similarities to Judaism, but many differences as well. The Samaritans accepted only the first five books of the Bible. Rather than Jerusalem, they declared a mountain mentioned in Deuteronomy, Mount Gerizim, and declared it as the place everybody should worship God. There was already a temple on Mount Gerizim, so they began to worship God there. In 128 BC, the leader of the Jewish people took an army to Samaria, destroyed their temple, and burned the capital, Shechem, to the ground. This event increased the already existing animosity between the Jewish people and the Samaritans.

By the time you get to the gospel era, the Jewish people could not stand the Samaritans, and the Samaritans felt likewise. This caused problems for many Jews who wanted to travel to Jerusalem which lay in the southern part of the nation. The quickest route for northern Jews was right through Samaria. Craig Keener has valuable insight about the Samaritans and this encounter. He stated:

In John 4:1-42, Jesus crosses strict cultural boundaries separating culturally distinct peoples, genders and moral status, pointing to the new and ultimate unity in the Spirit. Some features of Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman evoke earlier well scenes (Gen 24; 29; Ex 2), but to a different effect.¹

¹ Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 258.

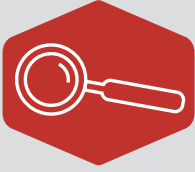


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

Some teach that the Jews never went through Samaria, but that simply is not true. The ancient Jewish historian, Josephus, recorded that Jewish people regularly traveled through Samaria. Though the trip through Samaria was quicker, Jesus could have chosen a route that avoided Samaria and the racial tension that existed there. However, if you walk with God, He will order your steps and direct your life. Jesus wouldn't be stopped by racial tension. He was on a mission to share the good news of the gospel with a woman who desperately needed to hear it. The Son of God had a divine appointment. Jesus went through Samaria to minister to one person.

- Our life is neither accidental nor incidental (vs. 4).
- Jesus is the perfect example of arriving at the right time and the right place when there is somebody who needs to hear the good news (vs. 5-6).
- Jesus went to great lengths to provide living water to all people (vs. 7-10).
- There is no one outside the reach of God's grace (vs. 11-14).
- God gives you discernment and insight. (vs. 15-18).
- Jesus reminds us of our past to show us He knows us and still accepts us (vs. 16-19).
- Conviction of sin brings spiritual sensitivity (vs. 19-20).
- Walking with God is not just a mental exercise, but it is a spiritual journey (vs. 21-24).
- Jesus is everyone's Messiah (vs. 23-24).
- No matter where you have been or what you have done, Jesus loves you and He can change your life (vs. 27-29).
- The grace we have received should be reflected back in our compassion for others.



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

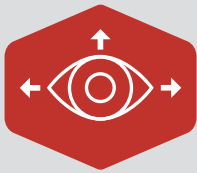
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 - » Why is this passage important?
 - » What is happening in this passage?
 - » How does this passage apply to my life?
- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.
- What verse stood out to you? Why?
- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).

- What is the significance of Jesus going through Samaria?
- “From verses 4–9, what are four types of prejudices Jesus avoided?”² Who do you avoid that Jesus would talk to today? This week, how can you practice being like Jesus and reaching out to those unlike you?
- Why do you suppose Jesus talked to the woman about water?
- Describe a time in your life when you sensed the Holy Spirit leading you in a way that did not make sense.
- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study note for John 4:23–24. What does it mean to “worship God in spirit?” Does God accept worship that is not based on truth? Why does unity with Jesus require speaking and living the truth? Explain.³

² Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 79.

³ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 221.

- Contrast Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus and His conversation with the Samaritan woman. What differences can you see? What are the similarities?



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

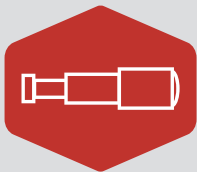
- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?
- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 8: Jesus Explains the Woman at the Well Event and Heals an Official's Son

Main Idea: God will give us divine appointments. If we ask Him to show us what He wants us to do, where He wants us to go, who He wants us to talk to, and what He wants us to say, He will respond. We must simply listen for His voice and then trust what He says. This portion of scripture is about believing, then seeing.

Scripture: John 4:27-54



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

In the first part of John 4, Jesus took time to have a conversation with a Samaritan woman. The following sums up the ancient Jewish thought regarding conversations between men and women as described in the *Mishnah* (a written collection of Jewish oral traditions and law).

The *Mishnah* (m. 'Abot 1:5) warns against prolonging conversation with a woman and adds, "even with one's own wife; how much more with a neighbor's wife." It was of less concern to the disciples that Jesus was talking with a Samaritan woman than that he was talking with any woman.¹

Not only were there issues between men and women, there were issues between Jews and Samaritans as we discussed in the last lesson. In particular, the issues were so strong they made the people in this region forsake lifelong

¹ R. H. Mounce, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke-Acts, Vol. 10 (Revised Edition)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 414.

customs of hospitality. Jesus displayed that people matter more to Him than religious actions. A careful study of how Jesus viewed Samaritans is warranted. He viewed them as a Gentile or a foreigner. Yet, Jesus' actions demonstrate that He believed Leviticus 19:34 should be lived out.

Verse 27 shows the disciples' response to Jesus' detour. In their hearts they wondered why Jesus was having this conversation. But verse 35 reveals that Jesus was there because of His concern for the harvest. There was a great contrast between the way people received Jesus in Samaria and the way Jesus was received in Galilee.

The final event of chapter four is the powerful account of Jesus healing the official's son. The Greek word *basilikos* that is often translated as "official" or "nobleman" is a term used when speaking of a royal official. It is thought that this official likely served under Herod Antipas. This was the Herod (a Jewish king) that reigned over the region of Galilee. He was also the one who would later mock Jesus before He was crucified. Although Herod's palace was in Tiberius on the east side of the sea of Galilee, he lived on the north side of the sea in Capernaum. It makes sense that one of his officials would also live there. Also, it's possible that the official was stationed there to handle taxes because Capernaum was a lucrative trade route. Anyone in the position of this official had power, influence, and was used to having things his way. Yet this nobleman made the journey to Jesus in Cana from his post in Capernaum, a trip of about twenty miles. Regardless of his position in life, He was compelled to seek the aid of Jesus because of his son's illness.



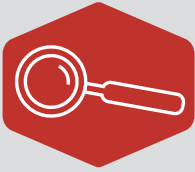
My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

These verses explore seeing the harvest from God's perspective and recognizing that God desires everyone to be a part of that harvest. If we ask God for direction, listen for His answer, and trust what He says, He will provide us with divine appointments that allow us to participate in the harvest.

Everyone experiences challenges, trials, adversities, and tests where choices are few and the decisions are difficult. There are times that life's challenges can be handled with hard work and creativity, but sometimes you just need an act of God. Sometimes you can't see the end of the struggle you're facing. Though society declares that seeing is believing, these verses demonstrate that isn't always true. Jesus taught that believing led to seeing.

- Pray for divine appointments (vs. 3).
- We must make sharing the gospel a priority in our life (vs. 31-34).
- There is a difference between the spiritual world and the physical world (vs. 35).
- We must see with spiritual eyes (vs. 35).
- God can help us be aware of the needs of people (vs. 35).
- God can work in the lives of people even before we talk to them (vs. 36-37).
- We will experience joy when others come to Christ (vs. 39-42).
- Go to God with your problems, but also go to God for more than just your problems (vs. 43-44).
- God must mean more to us than what He can do for us (vs. 45).
- Just because God's answer is not the one you expect doesn't mean it's necessarily a "no" (vs. 46-54).
- Jesus wants to do more in our life than just answer our current request (vs. 46-54).
- Believe God's Word, not your worries (vs. 49-50).
- Faith in Jesus is a priority (vs. 51-53).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
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 - » Why is this passage important?

 - » What is happening in this passage?

 - » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).

- Read John 4:27–42 and answer the following:
 - » Who was key in reaching a town of the Samaritans?

 - » What does this speak to you about reaching lost people?

 - » Who are you currently building a bridge to reach? How?

- Read the *Fire Bible*® study note on John 4:35–36. Summarize in your own words the fruit of an eternal life.

- Read John 4:43–54 and answer the following:
 - » What are four things you can learn about biblical faith from this passage?

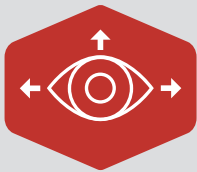
 - » What are two types of belief you discover from this passage?

 - » Look at a map of ancient Israel. How far did the official travel to get to Jesus?

 - » What is your level of perseverance compared to the official's? How can you improve?

» Discuss the difference between faith and presumption?

- Read the *Fire Bible*® study note on John 4:48. What can you learn about signs and wonders and how they pertain to the life of a believer?



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

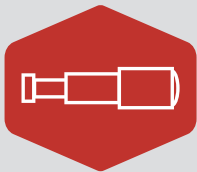
- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?
- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 9: The Healing at the Pool on the Sabbath, Jesus Is Equal with God, and the Authority of the Son

Main Idea: This section of scripture shows us that Jesus is the Son of God who has come to free us. Though life can leave us captive to pain, stress, and loneliness, Jesus has come provide freedom.

Scripture: John 5:1-30



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

In John 4, Jesus left Judea and began traveling to Galilee. During that trip, He had an encounter with a Samaritan woman. After arriving in the Galilee region, He came to the town of Cana where He healed the son of a royal official who was in Capernaum. Chapter 5 then begins with Jesus traveling back south to Jerusalem. John explains that this trip was because of a festival, though he didn't list which specific one. The festival wasn't the focus; it was the miraculous actions of Jesus on the Sabbath.

This portion of Scripture began the strong opposition to Jesus. The religious leaders of that day escalated in their conflict with Jesus as He healed a man by the pool on the Sabbath. Even though work on the Sabbath had been debated for centuries, the religious leaders were opposed to specifically Jesus' miraculous work on the Sabbath. Consider the following commentary from Mounce on the topic of work on the Sabbath. He stated, "The third-century rabbi Hoshaiah is quoted as saying that God's resting on this day from all his

works “means that he rested from work on his world; but he did not rest from work on the unrighteous and on the righteous.”¹

What moved Jesus’ enemies from anger to a desire to kill Him was His claim to be equal with God. After all, to claim to be individually equal with God was blasphemous for a mere man. Of course, Jesus was no mere man. As a result, the pious leaders wanted to kill Jesus.

Healing pools were around during the time of Christ. Jeremy Stein, content development coordinator for the Center for Holy Lands Studies, said, “In the days following the fall of Jerusalem, a shrine to Asclepius (the Greek god of Medicine) was set up at the pool of Bethesda.”² People with a variety of physical problems would travel to this pool. They could be anything from blind to crippled to completely paralyzed. Usually after they exercised all natural options, they would look for supernatural options. These types of pools had unusual overtones in that day.

Craig Keener pointed out something about the pools. He stated, “This site was later used as a pagan healing shrine; given the ancient tendency to reuse older shrines, the Jewish community in Jesus’ day may well have viewed this pool as a place of healing. The temple authorities undoubtedly did not approve—after all, sacred pools at healing shrines characterized Greek cults like that of Asclepius—but popular religion often ignores religious contradictions that seem clearer to official religious leaders.”³

It is worth noting that this man was sick for about the length of time the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. What was unusual about this length of time is that this man was older than most people lived during that time period. One can speculate the reason the age of this man was revealed was to show the greatness of the one who brought healing. It is good to remember that John’s purpose for writing his gospel was so his readers would have eternal life through believing that Jesus is the Son of God. John often used the miracles of Jesus as a platform for what He taught.

1 R. H. Mounce, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Luke–Acts, Vol. 10 (Revised Edition)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 424.

2 Jeremy Stein (Content Development Coordinator, Center for Holy Lands Studies), in discussion with the author, December 2017.

3 Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 262.

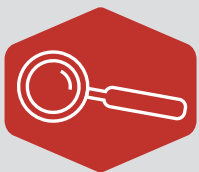


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

In John 5, there was a question about Jesus' identity. Who was Jesus? Jesus was the One who healed a sick man that set off a firestorm of criticism and controversy. There are two reasons for this firestorm. First, to the critics He was a Sabbath-breaker. Second, Jesus declared himself equal with God. Knowing Jesus' identity is absolutely essential to Christianity. Read John 5:1-30 and highlight or circle the following words: Sabbath, judges, judge, and judgment.

- Jesus brings hope to the helpless (vs. 1-15).
- Jesus cares about people (vs. 1-3).
- God does not need to rest because divine omnipotence [power] is never exhausted (vs. 16-18).
- Jesus is equal with God (vs. 19-23).
- Jesus is the Giver of spiritual life.
- Jesus is the Judge of the living and the dead (vs. 24-30).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?

 - » Where is this passage taking place?

- » When is this passage occurring?
 - » Why is this passage important?

 - » What is happening in this passage?

 - » How does this passage apply to my life?
-
- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.
 - What verse stood out to you? Why?

 - Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
 - From John 5:9-18, what are the two conflicts you read about?

 - Does Jesus' healing of the crippled man illustrate a spiritual truth? If so, what truth?

 - "In what three ways were the Israelites and the lame man alike?"⁴

4 Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 92.

- What can you glean by contrasting the lame man Jesus healed in John 5 and the blind man Jesus healed in John 9 as outlined under “The Author’s Lens” section?

- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study notes on the following verses and answer the questions:⁵

- » John 5:5: What big lesson should we learn from the man at the pool?

- » John 5:9: What are three contacts of faith that enable God to heal?

- » John 5:14: What does Jesus demand from all who profess faith in His name?

- » How would you answer someone who said that it is normal for believers to sin daily in thought, word, and deed?

- » John 5:18–24: What are six claims of Jesus here?

⁵ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 221-222.

- » John 5:24: How is faith that saves like both an intersection and a road?

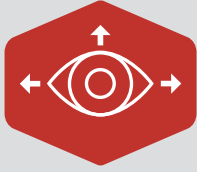
- » John 5:24: Unlike unbelievers, those who follow Jesus will never be _____.

- » John 5:26: Can a person have eternal life and be out of fellowship with Jesus? Explain.

- » John 5:29: How does true faith enable us to avoid judgment?

- » John 5:29: What are four resurrections, after the resurrection of Jesus?

- » John 5:29: What will happen to all who practice evil and die in their sins?



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

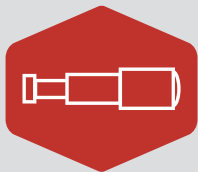
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 10: Witness to Jesus

Main Idea: Some had no problem believing Jesus was the Son of God. Others wanted to kill Jesus because He claimed to be equal with God. In this passage of Scripture, Jesus called witnesses to attest to the accuracy of His statements. Each person must decide who Jesus is.

Scripture: John 5:31-47



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

When you read John, it's clear that the Father and Son are different. However, what else is clear is that although they are different persons, they are one in character and nature. The Father and Son share everything. When Jesus was questioned by the religious leaders, His responses told them three things about himself: He is equal with God the Father, He is the Giver of life, and He is the Judge of the living (those who are spiritually alive) and the dead (those who are spiritually dead).

In this passage of Scripture, John provided witnesses to testify about Jesus. Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath. Consequently, the Jewish leaders were saying Jesus broke the Sabbath commandment. When Jesus began to give a defense, the leaders correctly understood that Jesus was saying He was equal with God. This inflamed the Jewish leaders. John chapter 5 carries the tone of being judicial, much like a court scene. Jesus was accused of blasphemy and the penalty was death. So, He produced a series of witnesses who would justify the claim He made. After careful reading of Deuteronomy 19:15, one would discover the principle needed to legally bring accusations against a person. Since self-testimony is considered invalid, Jesus began to call a series of witnesses to the stand.



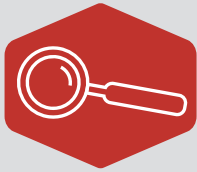
My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

Testimony on one's own behalf was not something that was readily accepted in a court of law. Witnesses were essential for a case. Perhaps Jesus did not want to appear as an isolated voice making a crazy claim. Therefore, he called five witnesses to testify on his behalf. This passage is a judicial defense of Jesus' identity.

- Jesus established the current reality (vs. 31-32).
- Jesus referenced John the Baptist as a witness. John the Baptist came, announced Jesus as the Messiah, and prepared the way for the Messiah to launch into ministry. Then, John the Baptist got out of the way (vs. 31-35).
- A lesson from John the Baptist: Unless you come to an understanding of the identity of Jesus Christ, salvation is impossible.
- Jesus used His own works as a witness (vs. 36).
 - » John 2—Jesus turned water into wine.
 - » John 2—During Passover, Jesus cleansed the temple.
 - » John 4—Jesus healed a man's dying son from twenty miles away.
 - » John 5—Jesus healed an invalid who had been sick for thirty-eight years.
 - » John 6—Jesus took a sack lunch and fed thousands of people with it.
 - » John 6—Jesus walked on water and suspended the laws of nature.
 - » John 9—Jesus opened the eyes of a blind man.
 - » John 10—Jesus made an astounding claim that He has authority to lay down His life.
 - » John 11—Jesus demonstrated His mastery over life and death as He stood at the tomb of Lazarus and called for a dead Lazarus to come out alive.
 - » John 19, 20—Jesus fulfilled His prophecy from John 10 as He breathed His last breath, surrendered His spirit, and is raised back to life.
- Jesus called God the Father as a witness (vs. 37-38).

- Jesus made a three-fold indictment against religious leaders.
 - » They did not hear the Father’s voice (vs. 37).
 - » They did not see the Father’s form (vs. 37).
 - » They had the Word of God in their head but not in their heart (vs. 38).
- Jesus called the Scriptures themselves to bear witness (vs. 39-43).
- A lesson from the Scriptures: When we read God’s Word, it should direct us to Him.
- Jesus called Moses as a witness (vs 45-47).
- Three lessons from Moses:
 - » If you had listened to Moses, you would have known all about Me.
 - » They were reading the right book, in the wrong way.
 - » If you read the Bible without the presence of Christ warming your heart, you will miss what God has for you.



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- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- Why were the religious leaders angry that Jesus healed?

- What were the rules of the Sabbath during the life of Christ?

- Which do you think is more important, religious rules or people? Why?

- Why is it important to believe the Father and Son are equal?

Summarize these verses that testify that Jesus is God the Son.¹

Witnesses to the Deity of Jesus	John	Your Summaries
The Works of Jesus	5:1-16, 36	
Jesus Himself	5:17-31	
John the Baptist	5:32-35	
The Father	5:37-38	
The Scriptures (Deut. 18:15-19)	5:39-43	
Moses	5:45-47	

¹ Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 96-97.

Summarize the “Truly, Truly” Passages.²

John	Your Summaries
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5:19	
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5:24

5:25	
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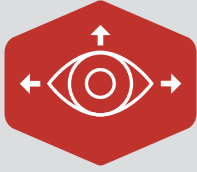
- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study notes on the following verses and answer the questions.³
 - » John 5:39: Why is it important to have more than just a knowledge of Scripture?

 - » John 5:44: Is it possible to believe and follow Christ if we love the praise of people more than the praise of God?

 - » John 5:47: Why is it important to believe the Scriptures of the Old Testament?

² Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 98.

³ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 222.



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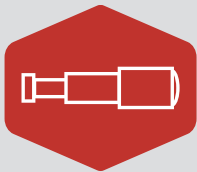
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 11: Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand and Walks on Water

Main Idea: John examines what could be the most significant miracle in the life and ministry of Jesus outside of the Resurrection. This is the only other miracle recorded in all four Gospels. After the miracle of Jesus feeding the five thousand, he sent the disciples across the lake on a boat. The feeding of the multitude and His walking on the water are signs John chose to spotlight Jesus' divinity.

Scripture: John 6:1-21



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

Jesus used Moses as a witness at the end of chapter five. Then in the next chapter, He performed a sign that might be expected of someone like Moses—He miraculously fed thousands of people. Jesus performed this miracle during a year of ministry in the Galilee region during the height of His popularity.

In the Galilee region, the Sea of Galilee was a major landmark. Though the Bible references it as a “sea,” it more closely fits the modern definition of a lake. The Old Testament refers to it as Kinnereth (or Chinnereth). The root of Kinnereth is the Hebrew word *kinnor* which is translated into lyre, a musical instrument. This connection is because the shape of the lake is very similar to that of a lyre. The lake was referred to as the Sea of Galilee until Herod Antipas came on the scene about ten years before Jesus' ministry began. Herod Antipas built a city by the name of Tiberias on the west shore of the lake. Over time, the Sea of Galilee began to be known as the Sea of Tiberias which linked the lake with the town. The Sea of Galilee is seven miles wide,

twelve miles long, and sits six-hundred feet below sea level. The Golan Heights is an elevated region on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. This is likely the setting of John 6. A specific mountain was not listed where Jesus fed the five thousand because it was probably more of an elevated area or mountain range.

John 6 was best understood by his original readers in light of the Passover. John mentioned three Passovers in the ministry of Jesus. The first Passover John mentioned is in chapter 2. The second Passover John mentioned is in chapter 6. The final Passover John mentioned was when Jesus was crucified. John was letting his readers know an exact timeline. Since Jesus' public ministry was around three and a half years, this occurrence would be halfway through His ministry. The Passover commemorated two things; first, it was a specific reference to the time that God brought them out of the bondage of slavery, and second, to the general events of Exodus. All the miracles from Exodus are summed up in the name Passover.

John wrote that there were about five thousand men at this event. Matthew added to the number by explaining that this didn't even include the women and children. So, this offers a glimpse into the massive number of people following Jesus around Galilee. According to Robert Mounce, "The crowds were *following* him because they *were seeing* the miraculous signs that he was *performing* on the sick."¹ Matthew gave a little more to the background of what transpired in the life of Jesus prior to this event. The beginning of Matthew 14 details the account of the beheading of John the Baptist. Herod Antipas, the man that ordered this execution, was located just across the Sea of Galilee. Jesus got word of this event right before this miraculous feeding. Remember, this is not only His forerunner, but also His cousin. It's amazing that even though Jesus got this horrific news that devastated Him enough to withdraw from the crowd, He still had so much compassion that He performed this benevolent miracle.

¹ R. H. Mounce, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke-Acts, Vol. 10 (Revised Edition)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 436.



My Lens (Eyeglasses)

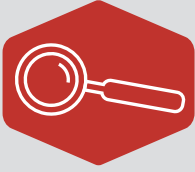
What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

Both the feeding of the multitude and walking on water confirmed the divinity of Jesus. If the miracles were illustrations that Jesus was greater than Moses, whom he called on as a witness in chapter five, then it was no surprise that He chose both of these signs. Keener said:

In the context of John's discussion of Jesus as the New Passover, new manna, and one greater than Moses, Jesus' miracle on the sea may have reminded His first hearers of Israel's crossing the sea in the days of Moses.²

- When God works in your life, there is significance beyond what you see on the surface (vs. 1-15).
- God wants to do things in your life to enlarge your understanding of His power, His greatness, and His work (vs. 1-15).
- Jesus loves people (vs. 2-3).
- God is never too busy for you.
- Jesus does not see a massive crowd, but individuals who have needs (vs. 4-5).
- God, who cares about you, is proactively meeting your needs before you even ask (vs. 6).
- Jesus wants to meet your needs, but along the way, He also wants to develop your faith.
- When you give what you have to God (money, time, talent, etc.), He can multiply it to meet your need, giving you more than you had.
- God meets needs to the fullest (vs. 10-11).
- Storms are inevitable.
- Storms do not detract from God's power but rather validate His power (vs. 19-21).
- God knows where you are, He knows your destination, and He will get you there (vs. 21).

² Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 266.



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- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

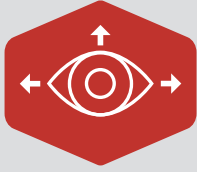
- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*[®] map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- The feeding of the five thousand is found in Matthew 14:13–23, Mark 6:30–46, Luke 9:10–17, and John 6:1–15. Read each of these four accounts. What did you learn about this miracle?
- Compare and contrast the feeding of the five thousand with the manna from heaven in Exodus, the Passover meal the disciples ate with Jesus, and the Lord’s Supper. What did you discover by looking at each of these?
- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study notes on the following verses and answer the questions.³
 - » What are miracles? What is the greatest miracle of the New Testament? (John 6:2)
 - » What are three purposes of miracles?
 - » What are four reasons why we believe miracles are for today?
 - » Are all miracles from God? Why?

³ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 222.

Throughout scripture, God uses life events as tests. Complete the following chart,⁴ and look at the responses of people in Scripture who faced test questions in life.

Reference	Person	Test Question	Response	Result
Genesis 3:1-7				
Genesis 22:1-19				
Numbers 13				
Judges 6:6				
1 Samuel 1:9-10				
2 Kings 20:1-6				
2 Chronicles 16:12				
Daniel 6:6-28				
Jonah 2:1-2				
John 4:43-54				

⁴ Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 103.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

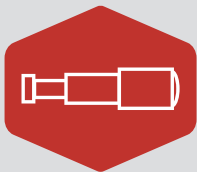
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 12: I Am the Bread of Life

Main Idea: Jesus cares about physical needs, including hunger. However, spiritual needs are greater. The meal that Jesus provided was an illustrated message on spiritual bread. He used the physical to help people understand the spiritual.

Scripture: John 6:22–71



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

Jesus used the bread and fish from a sack lunch at the start of the chapter to feed the people. He then walked on water, a few miles from land, during stormy weather. If you look at the principles behind these miracles, it's easy to see the parallel between them and the miracles God provided in Exodus like the provision of manna (bread) and parting of the sea (water). Just like God performed miracles of bread and water for Moses and the Israelites, Jesus performed miracles of bread and water in this passage of Scripture. Jesus' divine power was on display.

Jesus had just fed the multitudes physically, but He was about to give them a spiritual lesson—spiritual bread. Jesus would soon declare He was the Bread of Life. Jesus, like other Jewish teachers, would have used a method of interpreting God's Word that was driven by language. Passages with similar wording would be used to develop a theological idea. So in this passage, Jesus would have used certain Old Testament Scripture to develop a theological idea.

The people Jesus fed were still on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. The next day, they realized that Jesus and His disciples were gone. Some of

the people left to go find Jesus and found Him at Capernaum. It was at this point that Jesus began to describe what was more important than physical food, their relationship with God. In this passage of Scripture, Jesus, in an established method of rabbinic debate, corrected their misunderstanding of the passage just cited.¹



My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God’s Word is saying to you today.

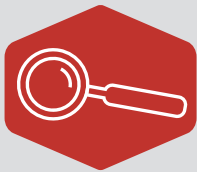
Just like natural food creates a satisfaction and desire for more, so does spiritual food. God created us for fellowship with Him, and nothing short of this will satisfy. This passage teaches that when we take and eat the bread (we are going to find out that the bread is a Person) we gain spiritual life. John’s Gospel used this metaphor to teach that if we eat something it becomes a part of us and a part of our life.

Toward the end of chapter 6, Jesus is in the synagogue at Capernaum. During teaching, there were often opportunities for interaction with the speaker. Jesus often dialogued with His audience. The verses leading up to the moment in the synagogue reveal the building tension in the crowd from dialogue to frustration. Verse 28 says, “they said to him.” Verse 34 says, “they said to him.” Verse 41 escalates to, “the Jews grumbled about him.” And verse 52 reveals that, by this point, “the Jews disputed among themselves.” It’s clear that they were frustrated with the responses they received.

- It is acceptable to go to God with your problems, but you should go to God for more than your problems (vs. 22–25).
- Spend your time on things that have eternal value and purpose, (vs. 26–27).
- God takes delight in a person whose heart is alignment with His (vs. 26–27).
- A living faith in Jesus is the only thing that will save (vs. 28–29).
- Jesus’ goal was to instill in us a belief in God (vs. 29).
- Belief can sometimes be hard, and like others, we may want a sign (vs. 30–31).
- The bread of life is a Person (vs. 32–33).

¹ R. H. Mounce, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Luke–Acts, Vol. 10 (Revised Edition)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 443.

- Jesus will always be with us to sustain us (vs. 34–35).
- God stands ready to supply your spiritual needs (vs. 36–37).
- God is righteous and just (vs. 38–40).
- He is God, and we are not (vs. 41–42).
- Our desire should be to have everything God wants for us (vs. 43–51).
- God wants everything we are (vs. 52–53).
- Many people do well with believing, but it is realizing the cost of discipleship that causes people to walk away (vs. 60–66).
- It is possible to be around Jesus and not believe in Him (vs. 64, 70).
- A true disciple gives all that they are for all He is (vs. 67–68).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?

 - » Where is this passage taking place?

 - » When is this passage occurring?

 - » Why is this passage important?

 - » What is happening in this passage?

- » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- How does or should Christianity meet a person's physical needs?

- What spiritual truth does Jesus teach by using the bread?

- What was the main purpose of Jesus feeding the multitude? Explain.

- How is Jesus like bread?

- Contrast the manna God used to feed Israel with Jesus as the bread of life.

- When you read that Jesus instructed His disciples to eat his flesh, what came to your mind? How does this compare to the Israelites eating the Passover Lamb?

- What are two things that hindered the crowd from listening and learning?

- Why do you think some listeners didn't understand the teachings of Jesus?

- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study notes and answer the following questions.
 - » John 6:35: What are the seven "I Am" statements of Jesus in John?²

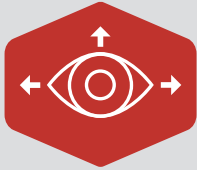
 - » John 6:37: What great promise does Jesus give to all those who come to Him?

 - » John 6:40: Will some perish even though that is not God's will for them?

 - » John 6:44: If God draws all people to himself, how are some lost?

² Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 222.

- » John 6:54: How does one receive spiritual life? What are three things pointed out in this verse?



Upward and Outward Focus

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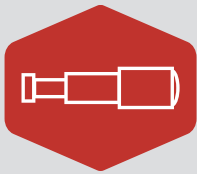
- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?
- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 13: Jesus at the Feast of Booths and Rivers of Living Water

Main Idea: People have a variety of attitudes and expectations when it comes to Jesus. Regardless of those, each individual has to decide what their relationship with Him will be. For those who choose to follow Jesus, He becomes a priority in their life. The result is a deep relationship with Jesus that flows in and through the believer to those with whom they come into contact.

Scripture: John 7:1-52



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

Between the end of John chapter 6 and the beginning of seven, six months passed. John didn't record the elapsed time, but the other Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) help us with this timeline gap. Those other authors also told that Jesus, although He did interact with many crowds, ministered more to His disciples. Through this, he was preparing them for His crucifixion.

Beginning in John 7, the Cross loomed only six months away. These time estimates are derived from John 6 noting that it was around Passover. That would place the events of that chapter in March or April, depending on the year in the Jewish calendar. John 7 took place during the Feast of Tabernacles (also known as the Feast of Booths). This was one of the major feasts in the Jewish calendar that happened in the fall, approximately October. In the Old Testament, there were three feasts that all Jewish men were required to attend in Jerusalem: Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Tabernacles (Booths). The Feast of Tabernacles was a time of rejoicing where the people of Israel

celebrated the bounty God had given throughout the year. Part of this was a remembrance of the time God gave water from the rock and made provision in the wilderness.

The Jewish men would stay in tents (also called booths) made from palm branches. It was a time of feasting and celebration as they not only looked back to God’s provision, but also looked forward to the time when the Messiah would come. Craig Keener noted the level of participation in the festival when he stated, “Festal pilgrims typically traveled in groups (Josephus even speaks of entire towns going).”¹

Jerusalem was filled with people who came from all over the nation of Israel. The city was jammed with pilgrims who came to worship. Every day the priests left the temple mount to make their way down to the pool of Siloam. They would then return to the temple mount with water from the pool. The temple mount was over fifteen football fields in size and was filled with people. The priestly choir sang the *Hallel*, which was a recitation of Psalms 113-118, and they would pour out the water they gathered before the Lord. The men of Israel said, “Give thanks to the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord.” They would have a palm branch in one hand and citrus fruit in another which they lifted up as they worshiped the Lord. They looked forward to the time that the Messiah would come and miraculously provide water for the land. Festivities took place into the night for seven days straight.



My Lens (Eyeglasses)

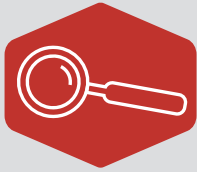
What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God’s Word is saying to you today.

In John 7, Jesus used imagery to tell something very significant. The entire temple mount was covered with people. Toward the end of the feast, after the priests poured out the water they collected from the Pool of Siloam, “Jesus stood up and cried out, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink’” (John 7:37b, ESV). In the middle of Jesus telling about an incredible offer of salvation, the living water, masses stood in unbelief in the face of truth.

- It is possible to be so familiar with Jesus that you don’t believe in Him (vs. 1-4).
- As a believer, you have a divine assignment (vs. 6-9).

¹ Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), Page 269.

- When we identify with Christ, we could have to face our fears (vs. 10-13).
- Fear and unbelief can cause believers to get caught up in insignificant things (vs. 14-15, 24-31).
- God walks before you (vs. 25-31).
- Fear and unbelief can lead to fake spirituality (vs. 32-36).
- Jesus allows us to receive the thing that will wash us, strengthen us, and bring us joy (vs. 37-39).
- God will transform us from the inside out (vs. 37-39).
- Fake spirituality and familiarity can keep people from responding to the gospel (vs. 40-52).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?

 - » Where is this passage taking place?

 - » When is this passage occurring?

 - » Why is this passage important?

 - » What is happening in this passage?

- » How does this passage apply to my life?
- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.
 - What verse stood out to you? Why?
 - Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
 - Look through this chapter and identify ten to twelve attitudes people had toward Jesus. Which one(s) do you see in people today?
 - As you read this passage, what are some of the expectations that caused people to turn away from Jesus?
 - What expectations do you see today that cause people to turn away from Jesus?
 - Do you think choosing to do God's will or knowing Jesus should come first? Why?

- Compare and contrast John 7:37–39 with Isaiah 55:1. What are your thoughts? What do you think water, milk, and wine represent?

- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study notes and answer the following questions.²
 - » John 7:2: How did the Feast of Tabernacles get its name?

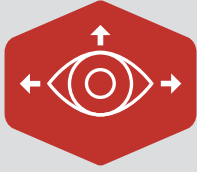
 - » John 7:7: What causes sinners to hate believers?

 - » John 7:17: Why do some people not recognize the truth?

 - » John 7:38: The Bible has the same authority over us as _____.
 - » What types of ministry does the Holy Spirit bring, flowing through us?

 - » John 7:39: What makes it possible for the Spirit to flow through all believers?

² Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 222.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

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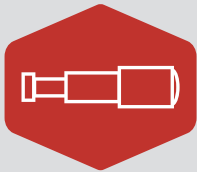
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 14: The Woman Caught in Adultery

Main Idea: Jesus is focused on forgiveness and restoration of those who have done wrong, not condemnation. This story reveals a lot about the attitude Jesus had toward sinners. He did not allow people to remain in their sin. However, Jesus wanted to forgive and give people a new beginning in him.

Scripture: John 8:1-11



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

In many Bibles, there is a phrase that explains that some of the earliest copies of John do not include 7:53-8:11. Because we don't have original manuscripts of the Bible, we're left to reconstruct the biblical text from the best and oldest copies available. Archaeologists make discoveries of new copies from time to time, and they have to be weighed into translation decisions, which leads to notes like this one. Some of the older copies, far older than the ones used in the KJV, do not include this story in John.

So, how does one handle this discrepancy? Can this passage be regarded as scriptural? These answers can only be found when we answer these four additional questions. First, is there anything in this passage that contradicts what is taught in scripture? Second, are the principles of the text consistent with other Scriptures? Third, is there any definitive proof that would say these verses should be left out? Finally, is what we see happening in these verses consistent with what we know of Jesus' life, ministry, teaching, and activities that we find elsewhere in the Gospels? Based on the answers to these questions, this study will examine these verses. Many scholars agree that this

passage is a legitimate Gospel account, and for centuries they have allowed this to remain in John's Gospel.

In John 7, the feast of Tabernacles was taking place. This feast looked forward to the time the Messiah would reign and a miraculous provision of supernatural water was provided to the people. Jesus, on the last day of the feast, got up and said, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink" (John 7:37, ESV).

It was common for rabbis to stand, read the Scriptures, then sit and give the explanation of the Scripture they had just read. In chapter 8, we find Jesus doing this as He was seated and teaching people in the temple. In the middle of His teaching, the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman to Jesus caught in the act of adultery. There were crimes in Judaism that were punishable by death. The most common were idolatry, murder, and adultery. But the scribes' and the Pharisees' actual intent was to trap Jesus.

The Mishnah (the Jewish collection of oral law) suggested that there were two penalties that could happen for adultery. One was to take the man and place him in a pool of dung with a soft cloth placed around his neck. Then a rope was placed around his neck until he had been strangled. After his death, if he was a relative, you could get him if you wanted him. Two, the woman would be stoned. The scribes and the Pharisees came to Jesus and asked Him what He thought should happen to the woman.

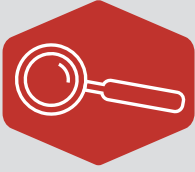


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

There are three times in the Bible that God physically wrote. In Exodus 31, God gave Moses two tablets of stone written by the finger of God. This had to do with the law. In Daniel 5, a pagan king had a banquet and he mocked the God of Israel. The Bible records that human-looking fingers appeared and wrote on the plaster of the king's palace. The king saw the hand as it wrote. This had to do with God's judgment. Lastly, in John 8, is when Jesus wrote in the dust. The message had to do with God's grace.

- You can have a new beginning in Jesus.
- A relationship with Jesus can cause drama among religious people (vs. 1-4).
- Religious people will try to discredit you if you have a life-altering relationship with Jesus (vs. 5-6).
- You should deal with your own sinfulness and sin issues (vs. 9-10).
- Jesus does not condemn, but at the same time, He calls us to a life of obedience and holiness (vs. 10-11).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

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Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
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 - » What is happening in this passage?
 - » How does this passage apply to my life?
- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.
- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- Do you think this passage of Scripture agrees with Jesus' life and teachings?

- In regards to this passage, how do you understand condemnation and forgiveness?

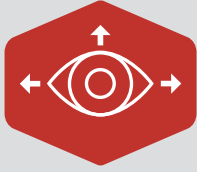
- Does Jesus teach that sinning is okay? Explain.

- Give an example of someone to whom Jesus has given a new beginning.

- Read the *Fire Bible*® study notes and respond to the following.¹
 - » John 8:7: What should a believer's response be toward those who sin and are outside the church? What about those who sin and are inside the church?

 - » John 8:11: Rather than condemnation, Jesus offered _____ to the sinful woman. Receiving forgiveness would result in leaving _____.

¹ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 222.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

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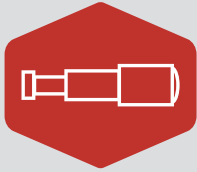
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 15: I Am the Light of the World

Main Idea: Following Jesus means a believer practices walking in His light and following His commands. Our actions emphasize a relationship between obeying and living according to the precepts put forth by Jesus. The more we obey and follow Him, the more we grow and become mature like Him.

Scripture: John 8:12–30



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

The events of this passage take place in the fall, six months before Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus was in Jerusalem to celebrate a major Jewish festival. His audience in this portion of Scripture was the Pharisees. Robert Mounce had this to say about the audience Jesus addressed in John 8: "In fact, it is interesting that while the crowd is mentioned eight times in ch. 7, the designation does not occur again until 11:42. In ch. 8 Jesus deals exclusively with his Jewish adversaries."¹

The setting of John 8 was the Feast of Tabernacles. Josephus, the Jewish historian, reveals that the Feast of Tabernacles was a highly celebratory and very well-attended Jewish feast. The people would walk in a procession around the altar and they would sing the *hallel* (specific Jewish psalms) every day of the feast. Water from the Pool of Siloam would be poured out on the altar located in the Inner Court. This feast was to recall Israel's wilderness wanderings.

¹ R. H. Mounce, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke-Acts, Vol. 10 (Revised Edition)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 473.

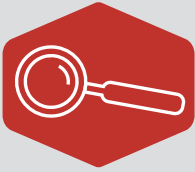


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

Jesus stood in the court on the temple mount where a source of light had been. The light that lit up the night sky of Jerusalem was the menorahs that served as a symbol of God's divine light piercing the darkness. Jesus, in that setting, then proclaimed the bold statement, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12, ESV). Just as the pillar of fire lit the way for the people out of Egypt into the Promised Land, out of the land of slavery into freedom, Jesus is the light that will lead His people out of slavery to sin and into the land of relationship with God.

- Jesus calls us to follow Him (vs. 12).
- Following Jesus is the same as a servant serving his master (vs. 12).
- People who value religion over relationships can get caught up in questioning Jesus (vs. 13).
- People with a particular religious bent can overly focus on the outward things (vs. 14-18).
- People who don't understand Jesus can insult Him (vs. 19).
- Without a personal relationship with Christ, one could walk in self-righteousness (vs. 20-22).
- Good people who practice religion can become focused on the world's standards, the world's philosophy, the world's thinking, and the world's entertainment (vs. 23).
- People who walk in religion can walk in an unbelieving life (vs. 24).
- It is hard for people who walk in religion to acknowledge the truth of walking in a relationship with Jesus (vs. 25).
- The choice is yours to either walk in religion or relationship (vs. 28-30).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

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Application:

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- What verse stood out to you? Why?

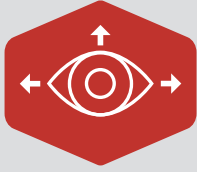
- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*[®] map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- Compare and contrast John 8:12–30 with Colossians 1:13–14. What did you learn?
- What can you learn from John about children of light and children of darkness?
- Name some of the benefits you have received from walking in the light?
- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study notes and answer the following questions.²
 - » John 8:12: What are some differences between walking in darkness and walking in light?
 - » John 8:15: By what standards will Jesus ultimately judge people?

² Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), Pages 222.

Summarize the following verses that reveal God as light.³

Reference	Characteristics of Light	Your Summaries of Ways God Is Light
Ex. 13:21-22	Light that leads	
Ex. 14:19-25	Light that protects	
Ps. 27:1	Light that saves	
Ps. 44:3; Acts 12:7	Light that brings deliverance	
Ps. 119:105	Light that guides	
Zech. 14:5b-7	Light of God's presence	
Is. 60:19-22; Mt. 4:15-16	Light of salvation	
1 John 1:5-7	Light of righteousness	
Rev. 21:23-24	Light of glory	

³ Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 124.



Upward and Outward Focus

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- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

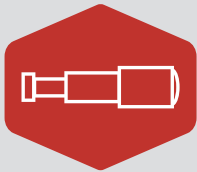
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 16: The Truth Will Set You Free

Main Idea: We care about freedom. We celebrate freedom. But often the types of freedoms dictate how we are allowed to express those freedoms. In John 8, Jesus talked about freedom. It was a freedom that was more important than any other. Jesus talked about a spiritual freedom that involves both living with God now and forever in eternity.

Scripture: John 8:31-59



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

This passage of Scripture has the same setting as the previous lesson. As you consider this passage, it may be helpful to review what was in The Author's Lens from Lesson 15. The events of this passage take place in the fall, six months before Jesus' crucifixion. Jesus was in Jerusalem to celebrate a major Jewish festival, and His audience was the Pharisees. Robert Mounce had this to say about the audience Jesus addressed in John eight: "In fact, it is interesting that while the crowd is mentioned eight times in ch. 7, the designation does not occur again until 11:42. In ch. 8 Jesus deals exclusively with his Jewish adversaries."¹

The setting of John 8 was the Feast of Tabernacles. Josephus, the Jewish historian, reveals that the Feast of Tabernacles was a very well-attended Jewish feast that was highly celebratory. The people would walk in a procession around the altar and they would sing the *hallel* (specific Jewish psalms) every day of the feast. Water from the Pool of Siloam would be poured out on the altar located in the Inner Court. This feast was to recall Israel's wilderness wanderings.

¹ R. H. Mounce, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke-Acts, Vol. 10 (Revised Edition)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 473.



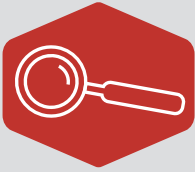
My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

In this passage, Jesus talked about three aspects of faith and freedom. Jesus' audience thought they were free, but He showed them what true freedom was and that presumption of God's grace was not acceptable.

Jesus was aware that there were people who appeared to put their faith in Him. There are people who think that because they believe there is a God, they believe in the existence of Jesus, and they believe that the Bible is true that they are saved. This passage revealed that it is possible to have an emotional response to the gospel and not be saved. Jesus cares about every aspect of a person's life, but He especially cares for a person's spiritual condition. And since spiritual condition hinges on authentic belief, Jesus challenged them and us on the issue of their belief.

- A formula for spiritual freedom is belief, plus abiding in the truth, plus knowing the truth, which equals freedom (vs. 31).
- True disciples remain faithful to Jesus' teachings (vs. 31-32).
- People who walk in unbelief do not like the truth. They have a tendency to redefine truth according to their understanding (vs. 33-34).
- Living in Christ helps people believe, abide, know, and walk in freedom (vs. 34-35).
- Grace cannot be borrowed (vs. 37-38).
- There are only two families on this earth: those in the family of God with God as their Father and those who are not with the devil as their father (vs. 39-47).
- True faith recognizes Jesus is God (vs. 48).
- Jesus is the Son of God, co-equal, co-eternal, and co-existent with God (vs. 48-59).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?
 - » Where is this passage taking place?
 - » When is this passage occurring?
 - » Why is this passage important?
 - » What is happening in this passage?
 - » How does this passage apply to my life?
- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.
- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- What does it mean to abide in the Word of God?
- How does culture define freedom? How does Jesus define freedom?
- How does Jesus identify real disciples?
- How does Jesus tie grace and truth into His teaching about sin?
- Write out your testimony.

Better equip yourself to identify those who walk in darkness and are without the Light of Life by filling out the charts below.²

John 8	Evidence That Unbelievers Are Prisoners of Darkness
8:13-18	They did not accept the truth Jesus spoke about himself, nor the _____ testimony about Jesus through the prophets and His miracles.
8:19	They did not know His _____.
8:21-24	They would die in their _____, and be unable to follow Jesus to _____.
8:23	They were of the _____.
8:27	They did not _____ that Jesus was teaching about His _____.
8:34-35	They were _____ of _____ with no _____ place in God's family.
8:44	They were children of _____.

- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study notes and answer the following questions.³
 - » John 8:31: How can we recognize true disciples of Jesus?

 - » John 8:32: The truth sets us free from what three things?

 - » John 8:35: Do slaves of sin have a permanent place in the family of God?

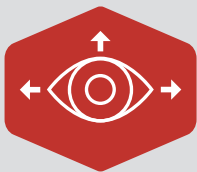
² Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 125.

³ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 222.

- » John 8:36: How are the lives of true believers different from the lives of the unsaved?

- » John 8:42: What is the evidence of being a child of the Father?

- » John 8:44: What is a major characteristic of the devil and his children?



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.



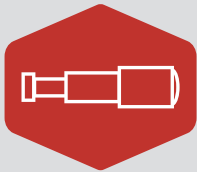
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 17: Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

Main Idea: As you walk through suffering, questions come to mind. *Why is this happening? How could this happen to me? Where is God in all of this?* These questions can unfortunately find a permanent home in your heart if you're not sure how to answer them. Jesus addressed some of these questions about suffering head-on in this portion of Scripture.

Scripture: John 9:1-41



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

John didn't indicate exactly how much time elapsed between chapter 8 and chapter 9. For certain, the miracle took place between the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:14) and the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22) which was about two months later. This miracle took place at the pool of Siloam. Archeological evidence suggests that this pool was used as a *miqva'ot* (ritual immersion pool), so pilgrims could purify themselves before entering the temple to fulfill their religious responsibilities.

There is something more to be considered than just the physical setting. Exploring why the man was born blind was an extremely important discussion to those present. This was a major theological undercurrent being dealt with at this time. Craig Keener wrote, "Jewish people acknowledged punishment for ancestral sin; many believed in prenatal activity; and some allowed even for prenatal sin."¹

¹ Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 276.

Jesus challenged the known theological suppositions of the day. He seemed to drive home the point that the miraculous wasn't limited to what the religious leaders understood or fit their understanding. Jesus went beyond theological debates and laws of His day and dealt with needs that were present before Him.

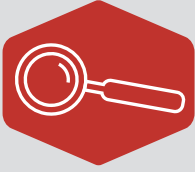


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

John 9 was a passage that spoke directly to the questions encountered during pain and suffering. In this passage and throughout this story, the people discovered that suffering revealed a number of things. Namely, suffering in the life of a believer reveals the purpose of God, the person of Christ, and a path toward strong faith.

- Suffering can be an opportunity for God to reveal himself (vs. 1-5).
- A man's current condition cannot always be tied to a past reason (vs. 1-5).
- Christians walk through life with a dramatically different perspective on suffering than the world (vs. 1-5).
- God is big enough to have a purpose in your suffering and big enough to desire to bring you out of that by His healing touch (vs. 6-7).
- This man's suffering provided the opportunity for Jesus to do a miracle and reveal who He is (vs. 7).
- Knowledge of who Jesus is can be progressive revelation (vs. 8-17).
- The Sabbath is not about rules, but about relationship (vs. 13-14).
- A powerful testimony is a strong defense to combat people who doubt (vs. 18-34).
- Faith can grow stronger in the midst of persecution (vs. 30-34).
- Suffering can reveal the Person of Christ (vs. 35-41).
- God can use suffering to change us (vs. 35-41).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?

 - » Where is this passage taking place?

 - » When is this passage occurring?

 - » Why is this passage important?

 - » What is happening in this passage?

 - » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*[®] map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- Could sin be the root of all problems on earth? Explain.

- Can your personal sin cause problems in other people's lives? Explain.

- Describe a time in your life where you glorified God in the midst of your tough time.

- From John 9:39–41, describe how Jesus came to bring judgment with two outcomes.

- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study notes and answer the following questions.²
 - » John 9:3: Is all sickness the result of personal sin?

 - » What are some reasons why godly people suffer?

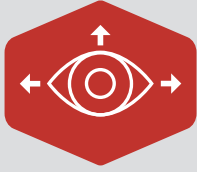
 - » John 9:34: Should those who are saved leave their old forms of religion?

² Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 222.

John recorded the words “Son of Man” thirteen times. Complete the following chart and journal your thoughts.³

John	Your Thoughts on “Son of Man” in the Gospel of John
1:51	
3:13,14	
5:27	
6:27	
6:53	
6:62	
8:28	
9:35	
12:23	
12:34	
13:31	

³ Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 132.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

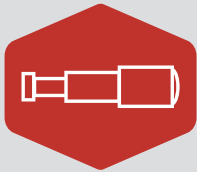
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 18: I Am the Good Shepherd

Main Idea: This section of Scripture helps the reader understand the role of Jesus as Leader in a person's life. Jesus often used illustrations to drive home a point of who He was, and on this occasion, He described himself as the Good Shepherd and His followers as sheep.

Scripture: John 10:1-21



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

The original text of the Bible didn't come with verse markers or chapter breaks. Those were added later to make it easier to reference specific portions of Scripture. So, when you move from one chapter to the next, sometimes there is no significant change in location, participants, or topic. It appears this is the case in John chapter 10.

Jesus continued His discussions with the Pharisees with an allegory based on an Old Testament image of God as the Shepherd of Israel. Though the audience could have attached Jesus' imagery to several Old Testament shepherds, perhaps Ezekiel 34 would have been the most pointed description that the Pharisees would have had in their minds.

Robert Mounce offers an interesting thought as to which shepherd imagery when he states, "Ezekiel 34 begins with a castigation of the shepherds of Israel, who 'only take care of themselves' and allow the sheep to be scattered (vv. 2-6); it closes with a declaration by the Sovereign Lord that the nation of Israel is his flock, the sheep of his pasture, and that he is their God (v. 31)."¹

¹ R. H. Mounce, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke-Acts, Vol. 10 (Revised Edition)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 499.

Jesus juxtaposes himself against a bad shepherd. To do this, He explained what the characteristics of a good shepherd should be. Furthermore, He told the Pharisees that He was the Good Shepherd and they were bad shepherds. As expected, this infuriated them.



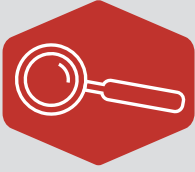
My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

John chapter 9 contains the miraculous story of a man who was healed. Though he was born blind, Jesus provided healing by placing mud on his eyes and instructing the man to wash in the pool of Siloam. When the blind man washed in the pool, his sight was restored miraculously. The leaders were not happy with this miracle.

Then John 10 is about another kind of leader—One who is very personal, relational, warm, and encouraging. It was a story of how Jesus relates to us and how He desires for us to relate to Him. It's a passage on shepherding. In the Bible, people are often referred to as sheep. This was because most of the Bible was set in a time and part of the world where shepherding was an occupation everyone understood. Jesus used that reality and helped His audience to understand that a walk with the Lord is like a sheep with the shepherd.

- The Good Shepherd comes to the sheep (vs. 1).
- The Good Shepherd has a desire to be close to His sheep.
- The Good Shepherd wants to provide for the good of His sheep.
- The Good Shepherd calls the sheep (vs. 3).
- One of the marks of spiritual maturity is the ability to understand when a voice is really the Good Shepherd.
- The Good Shepherd watches and protects His sheep (vs. 11-15).
- The Good Shepherd unites (vs. 16).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?
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 - » When is this passage occurring?
 - » Why is this passage important?
 - » What is happening in this passage?
 - » How does this passage apply to my life?
- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.
- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- Compare and contrast Ezekiel 34:1–31 with John 10:1–21. What do you gather from these two passages?
- How is Jesus our gate?
- How does the Good Shepherd differ from a hired shepherd?
- Why should we listen to the Good Shepherd?

Fill in the chart which lists the characteristics the sheep should have toward the Good Shepherd.²

John 10	Characteristics of Sheep
10:3–5, 14, 16, 27	
10:9	
10:16	
10:28	

² Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 138.

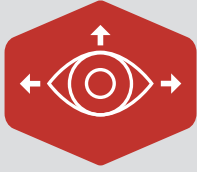
- Read the *Fire Bible*³ study notes and answer the following questions.
 - » John 10:1: What are the characteristics of the false shepherds of Isaiah 56:9-12?

 - » John 10:9: At night, several shepherds often led their sheep into a safe pen surrounded by stone walls and with only one gate. As sheep that went through the gate were safe, _____.

 - » John 10:11: What is the main mark of Jesus, the Good Shepherd?

 - » John 10:14: Does Jesus know the name and needs of each of His children?

³ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 222.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

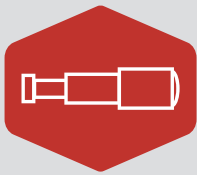
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 19: I and the Father Are One

Main Idea: Explore the relationship between Jesus and the Father. Sociologists have recognized the significant impact of human fathers on the lives of their children. That impact is multiplied when it comes to the Heavenly Father's impact on spiritual life and vitality. Your spiritual life is enhanced dramatically when you understand yourself in light of God the Father, your relationship to Him, and your identity in Him.

Scripture: John 10:22-42



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

Approximately three months passed between verses twenty-one and twenty-two. This passage of Scripture takes place at the Feast of Dedication. Today, the feast is known as Hanukkah and occurred around December in Jerusalem. Craig Keener said, "Jesus attends an extra-biblical festival in Jerusalem, commemorating Israel's deliverance in the time of the Maccabees. Ironically, Israel's truest deliverer faces rejection from some of his people at this festival of national deliverance."¹ According to Edersheim, "the Temple, which had been desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes, was once more purified, and re-dedicated to the service of Jehovah."² This joyous feast lasts eight days and centered around the harvest which focused on another harvest ingathering.

In this passage, God was referred to as Father eleven times. This is a rather large amount, especially in contrast to the Old Testament where God was referred to as Father only fifteen times throughout. In the New Testament, God

¹ Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 280.

² Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. 2, (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896), 226.

was referred to as Father 245 times. Of those New Testament occurrences, John referenced Him as Father 119 times. This is an indicator that the fatherhood of God was an important theme to the author, John.

This passage marked the end of Jesus' public ministry. From this point until the final week of Jesus' life, He was out of the public eye. The next time Jesus entered into Jerusalem, He was crucified.

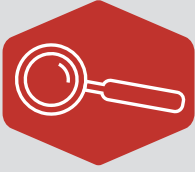


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

John 10 is a warm and relational passage where God revealed His great care for people. In John 10:1-21, John presented Jesus as the Good Shepherd. As you move toward the second half of the chapter, Jesus transitions from using the shepherd metaphor to defining His actual identity and ministry through His relationship with God the Father.

- The effectiveness of Jesus' ministry is connected with His relationship with the Father.
- Our relationship with God the Father and our understanding of that relationship is essential to living a dynamic spiritual life.
- All that Jesus did in His humanness was done in relationship with and in proximity to God the Father.
- Jesus' relationship with God the Father defined His identity.
- Jesus lived His powerful life out of His relationship with the Father.
- Trying to live a Christian life as if you do not have a Father causes you to live as spiritual orphans.
- Spiritual orphans view God as loving based on performance.
- Spiritual orphans view God as setting unreasonable standards and being harsh and critical when we miss them.
- Spiritual orphans view God as fickle and fulfilling His word only when He feels like it.
- Spiritual orphans view God as cold and aloof.



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
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 - » Why is this passage important?
 - » What is happening in this passage?
 - » How does this passage apply to my life?
- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.
- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- Describe your relationship with your earthly father.

- How has your relationship with your earthly father affected your relationship with your Heavenly Father?

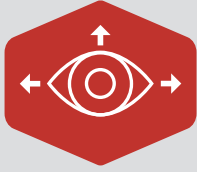
- Why and how should you follow Jesus as your Shepherd?

- Read the *Fire Bible*® study notes and answer the following questions.³
 - » John 10:27: How can we identify the Lord's sheep?

 - » John 10:28: What promise does Jesus give to all who follow Him?

 - » John 10:34: What happens to those who live like they are their own gods?

³ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 222.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

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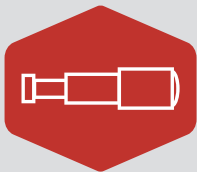
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 20: Death of Lazarus and I Am the Resurrection and the Life

Main Idea: John used this passage of Scripture to reveal the relationship between Jesus and the ruling priests. From this passage, one gains insight on how to respond when faced with a dire circumstance. In the circumstances of life, Jesus was not intimidated by questions. When all seemed hopeless, Jesus showed up and spoke life.

Scripture: John 11:1-57



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

The first miracle of Jesus that John shared in his Gospel took place at a wedding. The miracle this lesson's Scripture took place at a funeral. Typically, weddings are a joyous occasion. Funerals typically are sorrowful. Craig Keener had this insight regarding these miracles: "If Jesus' first sign (water turned to wine) evoked in reverse Moses' first plague (water turned to blood), his climactic sign (raising Lazarus) might evoke Moses' final plague (death, in that case of the firstborn)."¹

The town of Bethany that John referenced was located two miles east of the capital city of Jerusalem, just over the Mount of Olives on the road to Jericho. At the beginning of this passage, Jesus was most likely at least one-hundred miles away from Bethany. Bethany was more than likely a great place to rest on the trip to Jerusalem. Also, during the feasts, the population of Jerusalem would swell, and Bethany would be within the confines of the regulations for Jewish ritual.

¹ Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 282.

In addition to the location of Bethany and the death of Lazarus, there were other historical factors at play in John 11. Burial was something which had a different meaning in the time of Christ. During this time in history, prepared bodies were laid in niches and left for a year to decay. After that time, a member of the family would come back with an ossuary the length of the deceased persons thigh bone and place what remained of the deceased inside.

More than the procedure of burying the dead, the thought of what happened when people died was at work. Robert Mounce said about one school of prevailing Jewish thought, “According to rabbinic belief, the soul of a person who has died hovers over the corpse for three days, because it desires to reenter the body. But on the fourth day, when the face of the dead person begins to change in appearance, the soul leaves (cf. *Lev. Rab.* 18.1).”² Since Jesus’ friend had been dead for four days, the people could be absolutely certain the raising of Lazarus from the dead was indeed a miracle from God.

From this backdrop, Jesus gave a glimpse into the mindset of the ruling priests. In response, they could not allow Jesus to continue or He would only gain more support from the people. This momentum could have caused the ruling priests to lose their position in the Jewish life and society they had known.

² R. H. Mounce, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Luke–Acts, Vol. 10 (Revised Edition)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 516.



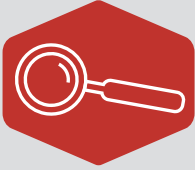
My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

John chapter 11 is about a resurrection in one sense, but more accurately a resuscitation because Lazarus would die again, later in his life. This was one of three times in the Gospels that Jesus raised somebody from the dead. He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. He stopped the funeral procession in Luke 7:11, at a village called Nain, and raised a widow's son from the dead.

John's version of this unique story was longer than the other accounts of the found in the other Gospels. John 11 is the story of Jesus interacting with close friends. These were people that Jesus had spent a great deal of time with in his earthly ministry which made the interaction more personal.

- There are times we cannot understand the way in which God is working in our life.
- God's lack of quick action is not a sign that He doesn't care about your situation.
- If you can make complete sense of your God, you are probably not following the God of the Bible.
- The resurrection is not so much an event as it is a person.
- God is the Source of life.
- God cares about what people are going through.
- God enters the sorrow, brokenness, tragedy, hurt, and anguish of our life's situations.
- Even when you cannot understand God, you can trust Him.
- Even though God knows the outcome, He is not indifferent to our pain.
- Even when it seems all hope is gone, God can work a miracle.
- Eternal life is found only in Him.



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?
 - » Where is this passage taking place?
 - » When is this passage occurring?
 - » Why is this passage important?
 - » What is happening in this passage?
 - » How does this passage apply to my life?
- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.
- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- Why do you think John mentions love two times in John 11:1-5?

- Describe a time when you or someone you know has questioned God's love in a time of sorrow.

- Describe a time in your life when a blessing came as a result of a trial.

- List three ways Jesus encouraged Martha to believe.

- What are your thoughts about Caiaphas and the ruling priests?

- Read the *Fire Bible*® study notes and answer the following questions.³
 - » John 11:4: For believers, how is death like a door?

³ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 223.

- » John 11:5: Do sickness, suffering, and death come to people who love God? How should Christians respond to these challenges?

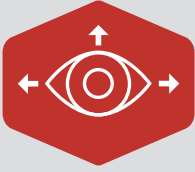
- » John 11:6: Why do you think Jesus delayed two days after he heard that Lazarus was ill?

- » John 11:26: What do the words “will never die” in this passage mean?

- » John 11:33: What do the words “deeply moved” in this passage reveal to us about Jesus?

- » John 11:35: How can the tears of Jesus encourage us?

- » John 11:44: How can the resurrection of Lazarus encourage us?



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

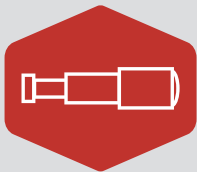
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 21: Mary Anoints Jesus at Bethany and the Triumphal Entry

Main Idea: This Scripture illustrates what it's like to be gripped by the love of God and totally devoted to Christ. By including this account, John showed how someone could be consumed with honoring, worshiping, and pleasing God so extravagantly that others who see this kind of act may not even understand. That passage also displays Jesus as a King who was worth following, worth proclaiming, brought peace, and brought hope.

Scripture: John 12:1-19



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

John chapters 1 through 11 cover three-and-a-half years of Jesus' life. John 12 through 21 cover the last week of Jesus' life. Compared to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, John provided the largest narrative of Jesus' final week of His life. The story in the first eleven verses was the Saturday before the crucifixion, six days before Passover, and several weeks after Lazarus was raised from the dead.

The focal point of the first eleven verses was Mary, who had poured about twelve ounces of an expensive oil on the feet of Jesus. The idea that she poured this expensive oil on the feet of Jesus speaks to the notion that either her family could afford to purchase the perfume or the perfume was something that was passed down from generation to generation. Robert Mounce said, "In today's currency, its value would have been about \$30,000."¹

¹ R. H. Mounce, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke-Acts, Vol. 10 (Revised Edition)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 529.

The next day, the setting shifted. If the meal took place on Saturday night, verses 12-19 take place on Sunday of the Passion Week. The people heard that Jesus was on His way to the city. They gathered some palm branches and went to meet Him. As with every Jewish festival, there was a great crowd assembled. What better time could there be to announce that you would be the king than when you have a large audience? Many Jewish people felt as if this was the time that Jesus would assume a role as the political leader they had envisioned.

The palm branches and the shouts of Hosanna were patriotic symbols for the Jewish people. In the palm branches and the shouts of Hosanna, they were celebrating nationalistic pride. Jeremy Stein, Content Development Coordinator for the Center for Holy Land Studies said, “Two-hundred years before, Israel was ruled by the Seleucids. There was a revolt and the Seleucids were ousted which gave the Jews political and national independence. How did they celebrate? Upon the final removal of Greek forces from the city of Jerusalem, Simon, the head of Jewish forces at that time, entered the fortress [of the city] singing hymns of praise and thanksgiving, while waving Palm branches and playing harps, cymbals and lyres.”² This adds perspective to the point the crowd was making when Jesus rode down the street and they greeted Him with palm branches.

Then around thirty to forty years later, after Jesus, there was another insurrection. The insurrectionists planned their rebellion and even minted their own money. These coins were minted with a palm branch on them as a sign of their rebellion. The sign of their insurrection was a palm branch.

² Jeremy Stein (Content Development Coordinator, Center for Holy Lands Studies), in discussion with the author, December 2017.



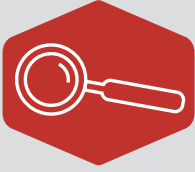
My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

In John chapter 12, the author showed how Mary responded to the powerful work of the Savior from the previous chapter. In fact, John made it clear that the person of the two events should be understood as the same individual. In John 11:2, he said, "It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill" (ESV).

The events of John 12:1-9 were also recorded in Matthew 26 and Mark 14. The scene continued into a packed Jerusalem. Rumors spread like wildfire that some guy named Lazarus, two miles away in a town named Bethany, had been raised from the dead after four days in the grave. Jesus spoke the word and Lazarus came out of the grave. As the story spread, people made the journey to meet Lazarus.

- Extravagant worship moves the heart of Jesus.
- Extravagant worship is thankful in its response (vs. 1).
- Extravagant worship is sometimes perceived as wasteful to people watching (vs. 3-6).
- Extravagant worship can be displayed in a manner you are not accustomed to (vs. 3-6).
- Extravagant worship can produce deeper spiritual insight (vs. 7).
- Extravagant worship is applauded by God (vs. 7-9).
- Jesus is a King in His own right (vs. 12-19).
- Jesus is a King with His own agenda (vs. 12-13).
- Jesus is a King who comes in peace and speaks peace (vs. 14-15).
- Jesus is a King whose kingdom is advancing (vs. 16-19).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

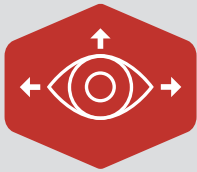
- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
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 - » When is this passage occurring?
 - » Why is this passage important?
 - » What is happening in this passage?
 - » How does this passage apply to my life?
- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.
- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*[®] map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- Why would Mary anoint Jesus with something that was worth a year's wages?
- How should you express your thanks to the One who died for you?
- Describe how you worship God beyond singing.
- What was the motivation of the ruling priests to plot to kill Lazarus?
- Why do you think Jesus rode a donkey instead of a horse?
- Describe the type of peace that Jesus came to bring.
- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study notes and answer the following questions.³
 - » John 12:3: What was the value of the perfume that Mary gave to Jesus?
 - » What did Jesus prophesy about Mary's act of worship?

³ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 223.

- » John 12:12–13: What does the Hebrew word “*Hosanna*” mean?

- » Were the Jews asking for salvation from sin, or from the Romans? How was their request different than what Jesus came to provide?



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God’s Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

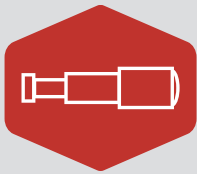
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 22: Greeks Seek Jesus, Unbelief of the People, and Jesus Saves

Main Idea: In this passage of Scripture, John revealed that Jesus was not a political Savior but a spiritual Savior. He showed that the deepest need people have is spiritual. For John, it all began by knowing Jesus. When John talked about people and Jesus, it solicited two kinds of responses—people who wanted to come to Jesus and those who would reject Jesus.

Scripture: John 12:20–50



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

This section of Scripture is a continuation of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Jerusalem was filled with people who came to celebrate Passover. Normally, Jerusalem was estimated to have between 50,000 and 80,000 people that lived in the city. During Passover, there was at least a quarter of a million people who came to celebrate. They filled the city and countryside.

Many of those who came had heard about Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. So, as Jesus entered Jerusalem, multitudes of people lined His path into Jerusalem and hailed Him as Messiah. They presumed that if Jesus could raise people from the dead, then He would not have trouble removing Rome's control over Israel. The people wanted a political deliverer. What Jesus offered the people was not political salvation, but spiritual salvation.

During His visit to Jerusalem, Jesus taught on the temple mount—the elevated area that the temple sat on. The temple proper housed the Holy Place and

the Holy of Holies, and no one taught there. Incense was offered in the most Holy Place and the high priest went into the Holy of Holies only once a year. Outside of the temple proper was where the sacrifices would be burned and offerings made. Outside the temple proper was an area known as the court of the Gentiles.

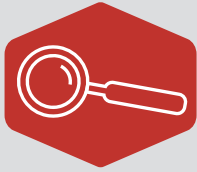


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

In John chapter 12, Jesus had a dialogue which brought His public ministry to a close. Within this dialogue, two types of people are described. Some who wanted to come to Jesus, and others who saw the things Jesus did but still did not surrender to Him as Christ.

- People want to meet Jesus (vs. 20-23).
- Jesus calls us to let go of what we treasure to take hold of what is most valuable (vs. 24-26).
- God's request can cause us to wrestle within ourselves (vs. 27).
- A regenerated heart is needed to understand the things of the Spirit (vs. 28-29).
- Jesus lays out His purpose (vs. 30-34).
- Jesus calls for a commitment to serve Him (vs. 35).
- Seeing the supernatural does not mean someone will believe in Jesus (vs. 36-43).
- You move to spiritual light once you follow Jesus (vs. 44-50).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?

 - » Where is this passage taking place?

 - » When is this passage occurring?

 - » Why is this passage important?

 - » What is happening in this passage?

 - » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- How did Jesus respond to the Greeks who desired to see Him?
- Describe the parallel of the death of a seed and harvest to the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- What does it mean to die to self?
- What are the two groups into which Jesus separated all people?

Complete the following chart with the missing characteristics and explanations of those who lived in the light.¹

Scriptures	Characteristics	Explanation
Jn. 12:44-45, Jn. 12:50b		Jesus is the messenger and the image of God.

The belief that saves is the belief that:

Jn. 12:46,
Jn. 3:21

Jn. 12:50a	Spiritually Alive	
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¹ Quentin McGhee, Gospel of John: *The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 155.



- Read the *Fire Bible*® study notes and answer the following questions.²
 - » John 12:23: How is being a fruitful Christian like planting a seed?

 - » John 12:25: To hate one's life means to value the interests of _____ far above interests of _____.

 - » John 12:26: What are some things that faith in Jesus includes?

 - » John 12:31: Who is the prince of this world?

 - » What power did Jesus take away from him at Calvary (Colossians 2:15)?

 - » When will the final judgment of the prince of the world occur?

 - » John 12:32: Although some teachings incorrectly state that Jesus draws some people but not others, Jesus taught that he draws _____ to himself. If Jesus draws people to himself, why do they not come to Him?

² Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 223.

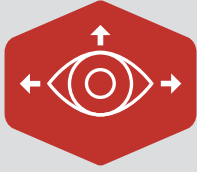
- » John 12:39: Why do some people’s hearts become harder and harder?

- » John 12:43: What are some ways you can overcome the temptation to please people more than God?

Complete the following chart with the missing characteristics and explanations.³

Scriptures	Characteristics	Explanation
Jn. 12:37–38 Isa. 53:1	Unbelieving	
Jn. 12:40 Isa. 6:10		Why did God blind their eyes (see Mat. 13:10–15)?
Jn. 12:42–43		These had shallow faith, but it is not the saving faith for which John is preaching. God was in second place in the hearts of these people.
Jn. 12:47–48	Disobedient	

³ Quentin McGhee, Gospel of John: *The Word Became Flesh* (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 28.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

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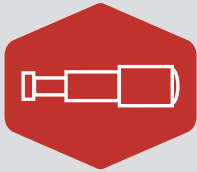
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 23: Jesus Washes Disciples' Feet and Judas' Betrayal

Main Idea: In this passage, John revealed the personal and private ministry of Jesus to His disciples. Jesus used the Last Supper to help drive servanthood into their heart. He demonstrated what love in action meant as he served those in His care.

Scripture: John 13:1-30



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

John chapter thirteen began the final details about the last day before Jesus' crucifixion. This was an extremely personal time of ministry for Jesus. In order to gain some added perspective on this moment, a reminder of the three parts of the Gospel of John may be helpful. The chart on the following page by Quentin McGhee will prove such an overview.¹

¹ Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 158.

	John 1-12	John 13-17	John 18-21
Scope of Ministry	Jesus' <i>public</i> ministry to Israel	Jesus' <i>private</i> ministry to His disciples	Jesus' <i>global</i> ministry to all people
Type of Ministry	Seven signs and seven teachings that reveal who Jesus is	Conversations of Jesus with His disciples	The Lamb of God dies to take away the world's sin
Responses to Jesus	Some choose to believe; many, such as Israel's leaders, reject Jesus	Judas betrays Jesus; Peter denies Him; the disciples scatter; the Father glorifies His Son	The centurion believes; John watches near the cross; some worship Jesus
Span	Three or more years	Less than twenty-four hours	Part of forty days
Theme	Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God	The hour has come for Jesus to be glorified	Jesus is lifted up, glorified, and ascends

John provided great detail about the Last Supper. The other gospel writers described the Last Supper in ten verses, whereas, John uses five chapters. In just a few hours, Jesus was arrested, tried unjustly, falsely condemned, and delivered over for crucifixion after a severe flogging. At 9:00 a.m., he was nailed to the cross and bore the weight of the sin of the world.

This passage of Scripture took place the night before the crucifixion. Jesus and His disciples were in an upper room. It was not uncommon for meals to be accompanied by a time of teaching. Jesus began their time together by providing an example of servanthood. He began to wash the feet of the disciples which sparked an in-depth discussion. The students of rabbis wanted to walk so close to their teacher that they could catch the dust off their feet. The students longed to wash the feet of their master.²

With this act, Jesus inverts the leadership pyramid. Instead of the top leader receiving all of the accolades and perks, Jesus displays His rights as a leader as One who serves. Craig Keener said, "Jesus' removing his outer garments

² Jeremy Stein (Content Development Coordinator, Center for Holy Lands Studies), in discussion with the author, September 2018.

to serve them would also appear as a sign of great humility before them. By so serving, Jesus prefigures his death as the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 on behalf of the many.”³

Jesus and His followers were at a crucial crossroad. Jesus was soon to be gone, but He left His message in the care of those who followed Him. Death is the entrance to find eternal joy.



My Lens (Eyeglasses)

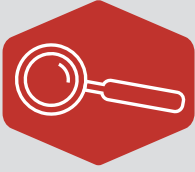
What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God’s Word is saying to you today.

Throughout the Gospel of John, the author repeated the word “know” over forty times. For example, in John 3:1-17 John repeated “know” three times as he juxtaposes what Nicodemus knew against what Jesus did. These occurrences show that John was very committed to his readers knowing and understanding specific information about Jesus.

John wrote five chapters to help his readers know what took place the final night before Jesus’ crucifixion. He wanted people to know what was going on in the mind and the heart of the Son of God. Apparently, John believed some of the details regarding Judas were important, So, he laid it all out. By the upper room, Judas had already made his deal with the priests to betray Jesus.

- Jesus understands the timing of His purpose (vs. 1-5).
- Jesus displays humility (vs. 2-5).
- Jesus demonstrates that what we do for someone is a demonstration of love (vs. 6-20).
- Joy is a by-product of serving.
- Jesus demonstrated how to lay down your rights, your privileges, and your responsibility.
- Jesus gives us a choice to serve Him (vs. 21-30).
- You can live near God’s presence and still not be changed by God’s power (vs. 21-30).
- Sin left unchecked and unconfessed in a person’s life begins to work and to warp and to callous and to close their heart to God (vs. 21-30).

³ Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 288.



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

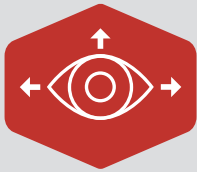
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 - » When is this passage occurring?
 - » Why is this passage important?
 - » What is happening in this passage?
 - » How does this passage apply to my life?
- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.
- What verse stood out to you? Why?
- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).

- Describe a time in your life where you focused on yourself.
- How were you taught to think about others?
- Describe how Jesus taught us to serve other people.
- After looking at verse 3, list three things that helped Jesus serve.
- Describe your spiritual journey as it relates to others in your life.
- How can someone like Judas be so close to Jesus, but still end up the way he did?
- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study notes and answer the following questions.⁴
 - » John 13:5: What principle did Jesus teach by washing the feet of His disciples?
 - » John 13:14: If washing feet is not a custom today, how can we apply the principle it illustrates?

⁴ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 223 - 224.

- » John 13:22: How are some people in the church today like Judas?

- » John 13:26: What warning does the life of Judas give us (see Luke 22:3)?



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

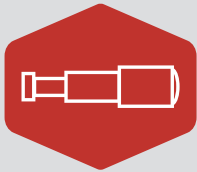
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 24: A New Commandment and Jesus Is the Way, the Truth, and the Life

Main Idea: Love to all humanity is not only possible, but even commanded by Jesus. He prepared His disciples for His inevitable departure. And Jesus also prepared them to walk in peace in the midst of adversity.

Scripture: John 13:31–14:14



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

In John chapters 13 through 17, Jesus prepared His followers for the death He was about to experience and His subsequent return to the Father. John 13:31–35 outlined the betrayal and death on which Jesus was about to embark. It is from this point forward that what Jesus was ultimately sent to do would be fulfilled.

These verses revealed the love God had for humanity. God's love for us was made clear through the action and passion of Jesus. Jesus gave His disciples a new command based on this love. The command to followers of God to love others isn't new. In fact, the disciples would have likely known Leviticus 19:18 "Love your neighbor as yourself" (ESV). But the idea of imitating God's love, regardless of whether or not the recipient is worthy of that love, was new. Jesus instructed His followers to love everyone the way God does, because we're all created in the image of God.

In John 14, Jesus did not want His disciples to be shocked when He returned to His Father. So, He prepared them for that departure. Jesus assured His disciples that a peaceful heart was available to them as they endured the coming days and years.

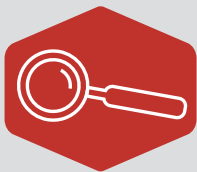


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

The disciples heard Jesus talk about His coming death. He told them that He would be handed over to the chief priest and the leaders. Once this happened, He explained that He would also be abused, beaten, and die. However, the most startling thing He said to them was that He would be leaving.

- Jesus gives new commands (vs. 13:31-35).
- Jesus gives the promise of a place (vs. 13:36-38).
- Jesus has plenty of room in the promised place (vs. 14:1-4).
- Jesus provides direction to the promised place (vs. 14:5-7).
- Jesus promises supernatural supply (vs. 14:8-14).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

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Application:

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- » Why is this passage important?

- » What is happening in this passage?

- » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).

- How can a person be glorified and serve at the same time?

- Describe what it looks like to serve others. List some personal examples.

- Memorize John 16:6. Why is this a good Scripture to memorize?

- Read the *Fire Bible*® study note on the following passages and answer the following questions.¹
 - » John 13:34: Does love for one another guide us to follow the same leaders? Does love for one another guide us to have the same beliefs?

 - » John 13:35: What are some ways the world sees our love for one another?

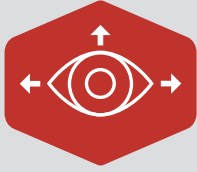
 - » John 14:2: What are some things Jesus said about heaven (Father’s house)?

 - » John 14:3: What do we call the event at which Jesus takes us to be with Him?

 - » John 14:12: How are believers today able to win converts and do miracles? In what sense are the works of Christ’s disciples greater than His works?

 - » John 14:13: What two things do praying in Jesus’ name include?

¹ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 224.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

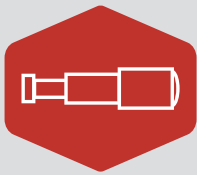
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 25: Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

Main Idea: Jesus made certain that His disciples knew that when He left, He would leave them with help. One of the central truths in verses 15 through 31 is that if you love Jesus you will keep His commandments. Jesus said four different times (verses 15, 21, 23, and 24) that if you love Him, you will keep His commands. The second central truth Jesus discussed was that He would give them help to live for Him.

Scripture: John 14:15–31



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

John 14:15 begins the discussion between Jesus and His disciples about the person and work of the Holy Spirit. In this passage, the Holy Spirit was given the name Counselor. Over the years, the word counselor has come to mean someone who gives advice. However, this word carried a different meaning in language of Jesus' day. Craig Keener said, "Here the Spirit is 'another' advocate like Jesus (cf. 9:35–41, where Jesus defends the man put out of the synagogue and accuses his accusers); Judaism was also familiar with the idea of a 'successor' who carries on a predecessor's work."¹

Jesus called himself truth. He was about to leave His disciples with a Counselor who He called the Spirit of Truth. The Spirit of Truth would be able to apply fully the redemptive work of Jesus. The church must not forget that Jesus left us a power to fulfill his request.

¹ Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 292.

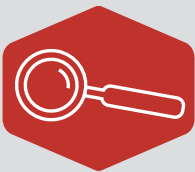


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

In John chapter 14, Jesus and the disciples were still in the upper room. Judas had already left to get the authorities to arrest Jesus. Jesus talked to the disciples in what appeared to be His last words to them. Since the Cross loomed in just a few short hours, Jesus talked about things that were important to Him and that the disciples needed to know.

- Loving God results in keeping His commandments (vs. 15).
- The core of Christianity is about loving Jesus (vs. 15, 21, 23, 24).
- Loving Jesus is about relationship.
- Living for God requires His help in our lives (vs. 16).
- The Holy Spirit is our legal counsel (vs. 16).
- The Holy Spirit will be with us (vs. 17).
- The Holy Spirit teaches us (vs. 26-29).
- The Holy Spirit gives us peace (vs. 27-31).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?

 - » Where is this passage taking place?

- » When is this passage occurring?

- » Why is this passage important?

- » What is happening in this passage?

- » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*[®] map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).

- What does it mean to love Jesus?

- Why do you think Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as “Helper?”

- Summarize four keys to a peaceful heart from John 14.

Summarize the following passages that united love and obedience.²

John 14 Your Summaries

14:15

14:21	
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14:23

14:24	
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Complete the table on the two-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit in John.³

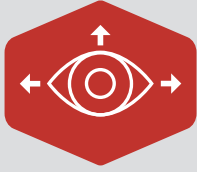
Topic	John	The Spirit's Role in Spiritual Life	The Spirit's Role in Empowerment	John
Purpose	3:5-8 7:37 16:8	The Spirit convicts us of sin, and enables us to _____ and share His eternal life.	The Spirit empowers believers _____ to the hostile world.	7:38-39
Impartation	20:22			14:15-18 16:7
Timing	20:22	Post-_____, Pre-ascension	Post-_____	16:7

² Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016),168.

³ Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016),169.

- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study note on the following passages and answer the following questions.⁴
 - » John 14:17: What are some reasons why the Spirit is called “The Spirit of Truth?”
 - » John 14:17: When did the Holy Spirit first come to live in the disciples?
 - » John 14:18: How does Jesus reveal himself to each believer?
 - » John 14:21: How do all believers show and prove their love for Christ? And what promise does Jesus give to those who love and obey Him?
 - » John 14:23: With whom and in whom does God make His home?
 - » John 14:26: Why do you think the Holy Spirit is called the Counselor?

⁴ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 224.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

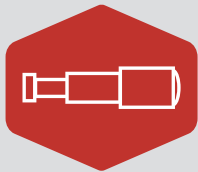
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 26: I Am the True Vine

Main Idea: Jesus made sure His disciples knew they would have help through their life's journey. In this passage of Scripture, the word “abide” was repeated eleven times. It meant to remain in relationship, to be connected to, or to remain in. The idea was that Jesus wanted His disciples to have an abiding relationship with Him.

Scripture: John 15:1-17



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

The last verse of John 14 indicates that Jesus led His disciples to another place. It's presumed that He led them to the Mount of Olives. Jesus, the master storyteller, laid out for His disciples what He wanted from them when He left—to produce fruit. He used a familiar analogy to communicate His desire to them. Craig Keener stated, “The Old Testament and Jewish literature sometimes portrayed Israel as a vineyard (e.g., Is. 5:7), or less frequently as a vine (e.g., Ps. 80:8; Hos. 10:1), and God as the vine grower (Is. 5:1-3).”¹

John's original audience likely understood vineyards. Most people at that time were acquainted with grape vines and the care needed to maintain them. Figs and olives are common in Israel. As with most agriculture, work and attention is required in order to maintain a healthy crop. There are times when a little pruning goes a long way to develop a healthy crop. However, there are times when severe pruning is needed in order to produce the best crop.

From this familiar backdrop, John began to record the words of Jesus. Here, John described the type of relationship Jesus desired with His followers. John demonstrated the connectivity and strength needed to live in this world.

¹ Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 293.

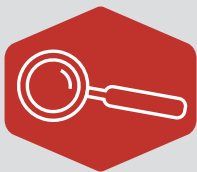


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

Jesus met with eleven of the disciples and shared His heart with them. He knew that in just a matter of hours, He would be arrested, tried unjustly, condemned to death, and hung on a cross. It was a confusing time for the disciples. Jesus was set to leave and yet He told them that He desired a relationship with them. The heart of God is for people to have a relationship with Him. From this relationship, a person can experience the grace, favor, and blessing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- God wants us to experience joy as we are fruitful for Him (vs. 1-4).
- The only way to produce healthy fruit is to be connected to Christ (vs. 4-6).
- God wants to show us He answers our prayers (vs. 7 and 16).
- God is our Friend (vs. 9-15).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

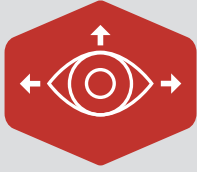
- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?
 - » Where is this passage taking place?
 - » When is this passage occurring?

» John 15:8

» John 15:16

- What does it mean to remain or abide in Christ?
- Describe why you think God prunes fruitful branches.
- List the five sequences of love from John 15:9-17.
- Which of the five sequences is your strongest? Weakest? How can you improve?
- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study note on the following passages and answer the following questions.²
 - » John 15:1: The allegory of John 15 compares Jesus to a _____ and believers to _____.

² Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 224.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

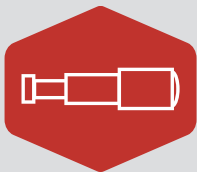
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 27: The Hatred of the World

Main Idea: Over the years, believers have suffered and been persecuted for their faith. Several years ago, Reuters reported that about one-hundred million Christians in 65 countries were enduring persecution.¹ This includes everything from imprisonment, torture, and rape to martyrdom because of their faith in Christ. In this passage, Jesus provided a reason why people would persecute believers. Then, He told His disciples how to respond amid persecution.

Scripture: John 15:18–16:4



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

During the time of Christ, comparison was a major form of explanation. Jesus' dialogue in this chapter made a comparison between Him and His followers and the world around them. In the last lesson's Scripture portion, Jesus instructed His disciples to be known by their love for one another.

In this passage, He contrasted what the world would be known for—its hatred. Robert Mounce said, "Hatred for the believer is hatred for the One whose life is being lived out through the believer. It is persecution based on association. It is 'enduring what still needs to be endured of Christ's sorrows.'"²

There was tension between the Jewish synagogues (places of religious instruction) and the members who violated the Jewish law taught there. The

¹ Tom Heneghan, "About 100 million Christians persecuted around the world: report," Reuters, January 8, 2013, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-religion-christianity-persecution/about-100-million-christians-persecuted-around-the-world-report-idUSBRE9070TB20130108>.

² R. H. Mounce, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke-Acts, Vol. 10 (Revised Edition)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 581.

synagogue leaders took disciplining these violators very seriously. One brand of discipline, or persecution, was to revoke the privileges of access to the synagogue. When the synagogue eventually began to remove the followers of Christ from their midst, as Jesus foretold in John 17, it left Christians with no legal exemption from worshipping the emperor. The followers of Christ found it difficult to explain how they were loyal to the empire.

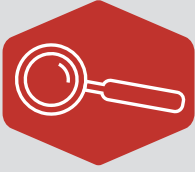


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

Jesus told His disciples that persecution was on the way. The history of the church is one of martyrdom. If one researched the apostles and how they died, one would discover that martyrdom continued through the years. Jesus stated clearly in the Book of John why people persecuted the believers. Then, Jesus taught believers how to respond to persecution.

- Following Jesus is costly.
- Persecution comes to believers because the world hates Jesus (vs. 18).
- Persecution comes to believers because we are not of the world (vs. 19).
- Persecution comes to believers because we identify with Jesus (vs. 20).
- Persecution comes to believers because the world does not know Jesus (vs. 21-25).
- Our response as believers to persecution should be to rely on the Holy Spirit (vs. 26).
- Our response as believers to persecution should be to keep sharing the truth (vs. 27).
- Our response as believers to persecution should be to stand firm (vs. 16:1-3).
- Our response as believers to persecution should be to remember it was foretold (vs. 16:4).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?
 - » Where is this passage taking place?
 - » When is this passage occurring?
 - » Why is this passage important?
 - » What is happening in this passage?
 - » How does this passage apply to my life?
- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.
- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*[®] map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- Describe some reasons why people hated Jesus.

- What is the difference between picking a fight and enduring persecution?

- What is the difference between living in the world and loving the things of the world?

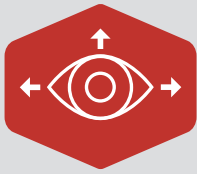
- What is the difference between running scared and informed decisions?

- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study note on the following passages and answer the following questions.³
 - » John 15:20: As the world persecuted Christ, it will persecute _____. Why does the world always persecute followers of Christ?

 - » John 16:2: Are you surprised that Jesus said religious people will persecute you? Why?

³ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 224.

- » Like Saul of Tarsus in the book of Acts, many who persecute believers think they are serving God. How is this possible?



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God’s Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

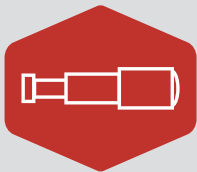
- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?
- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 28: The Work of the Holy Spirit, Sorrow to Joy, and Overcome the World

Main Idea: Jesus was about to go through a dark time. Although He was going away, He sent the Spirit to guide and comfort His followers. He wanted to encourage His disciples to remain strong throughout the struggle and that the Helper was on the way. The Holy Spirit can have a similar relationship with all believers as Jesus had with the disciples in John's day. He can inspire and empower the believer to live a life of victory here on earth.

Scripture: John 16:5-33



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

Jesus set the stage for His departure. Over the course of the hours that follow this lesson's Scripture, He was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, endured five different trials through the night (all of them illegal and unjust), was sentenced to death around 6:00 a.m., and was hung on a cross by 9:00 that morning. At that moment, He bore the weight and punishment of humanity's sin.

Jesus understood exactly what was coming and that He was soon to leave this world. Though Jesus was prepared for what was coming, the disciples were burdened with the sorrow and emotional weight of Jesus' death. It would have been easy in this moment for Jesus to focus on himself. Instead, the passage shows that He also greatly cared about what His disciples would go through once He was no longer on earth.

Jesus assured His disciples that when He was gone He would send Someone to help them along their journey. The Helper (the Holy Spirit) would encourage the disciples to walk in victory in spite of their ensuing tribulations. Jesus assured the disciples, no matter what they would face, they would not be alone as they sought to fulfill the assignment that Jesus gave to them.

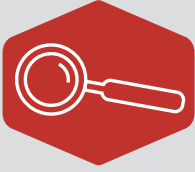


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

This portion of Scripture gave a beautiful picture of the care and compassion God has for His followers. In today's hectic world, you might think, *God is busy running the world. Does He really have time for me?* The disciples could have asked themselves these same questions. Jesus' response to their emotional state was patience, love, thinking of their needs before His own, and making sure that He encouraged them before He went to the Cross.

- The Holy Spirit brings encouragement to believers (vs. 5-16).
- The Holy Spirit convicts the world of guilt (vs. 8-11).
- The Holy Spirit guides believers into all truth (vs. 12-13).
- The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus (vs. 14-15).
- Joy is a gift for every believer (vs. 16-33).
- Joy comes from the Holy Spirit living in every believer (vs. 16-19).
- Temporary sorrow will lead to permanent joy (vs. 20-22).
- Joy comes from answered prayer (vs. 23-24).
- Joy comes from knowing He loves us (vs. 25-27).
- Joy comes from knowing God is in control of our lives (vs. 28-33).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?

 - » Where is this passage taking place?

 - » When is this passage occurring?

 - » Why is this passage important?

 - » What is happening in this passage?

 - » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*[®] map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- Why do you think the disciples felt the way they did?
- What role does the Holy Spirit play in bringing conviction?
- What is the result of the Holy Spirit convicting people of their sin?
- What are some specific ways you can apply the truth found in this portion of Scripture?
- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study note on the following passages and answer the following questions.¹
 - » John 16:7: What event brought in the age or era of the Holy Spirit?
 - » John 16:8: How does the Spirit's ministry relate to what is wrong and right? Whom does the Spirit use to convict the world of sin? How?

¹ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 224.

- » John 16:13: Into what areas of truth does the Spirit guide us?

- » John 16:14: Give some examples of how the Spirit makes real to us what belongs to Jesus.

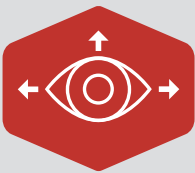
- » John 16:27: What causes God to love some people in a special way?

In the following chart, summarize some concepts discussed in John 1:1-18 and some of John’s other concepts throughout the rest of his book.²

John	Means	How Does Jesus Prepare You?
13:19	Prophecy	
14:13	Promise	
14:29	Prophecy	
15:2	Illustration	
15:11	Explanation	

² Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 189.

John	Means	How Does Jesus Prepare You?
16:1	Exhortation	
16:4	Prophecy	
16:33	Prophecy	
17:11	Prayer	
17:12	Thanksgiving	
17:13	Explanation	
17:21	Prayer	



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?



- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

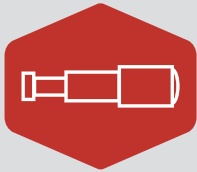
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 29: The High Priestly Prayer

Main Idea: In this passage, John provided some of Jesus' final, key points. Jesus dealt with concepts in His prayer that were important for His disciples and all followers to remember.

Scripture: John 17:1-26



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

The prayer in John 17, the longest recorded prayer of Jesus, has been referred to as the high priestly prayer. If this designation is accurate, then that chapter serves to show the reader how Jesus engaged in intercession like a high priest. Then, as a high priest, He offered a sacrifice—the ultimate sacrifice.

Jesus provided words of comfort to His disciples. Only a few hours away from His arrest in Gethsemane, Jesus opened a window of understanding into His relationship with the Father. This portion of John's writing demonstrates the strong intensity of love that Jesus and His Father had toward each other.

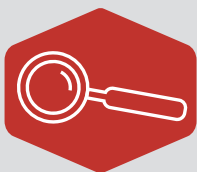


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

With the Cross looming just hours away, Jesus used His time to share something on His heart with the disciples.

- We should pray about the task God has called us to do (vs. 1-33).
- Eternal life is a quality of existence based on our personal knowledge and relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ (vs. 1-3).
- Pray for the people with whom God has given you influence (vs. 6-19).
- Jesus prays for unity (vs. 11, 22).
- Jesus prays for joy (vs. 13).
- Jesus prays for protection (vs. 14).
- Jesus prays for their sanctification [setting apart] (vs. 15-19).
- Pray for those who are yet to be saved (vs. 20-26).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?
 - » Where is this passage taking place?
 - » When is this passage occurring?

- » Why is this passage important?

- » What is happening in this passage?

- » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).

- Describe the fatherhood of God. How does your view of God's fatherhood impact you?

- Why is it important that Jesus prayed about the relationship His disciples would have with the world?

- How does our holiness affect those around us?

- Describe what you think Jesus meant when He prayed that His followers would be “one.”

- Read the *Fire Bible*® study note on the following passages and answer the following questions.¹
 - » John 17:1: Circle and number the eight concerns in the prayer of Jesus, then summarize each in your own words. Begin each of your sentences with: “That they may”

 - » John 17:3: In the present, on what does eternal life depend? In the future, what is linked to our hope of eternal life?

 - » John 17:6: Jesus prays that the Father will protect and bless whom?

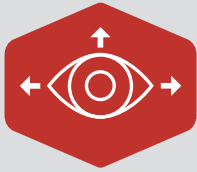
 - » John 17:17: What does sanctify mean? Where is the article on sanctification in your *Fire Bible*® and what did you learn from reading it?

 - » John 17:19: Why do you think Jesus sanctified himself?

¹ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 224.

» John 17:21: Spiritual unity is based on which seven things (see paragraph one)?

» John 17:22: On which path will believers discover glory?



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

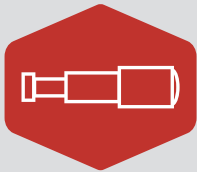
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 30: Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

Main Idea: In chapter 18, John's Gospel shows that no matter the appearance of the situation, Jesus is always in command. Jesus' reactions revealed that no matter what events take place, God is in control. The life of Christ, even in difficult times, communicated that no matter what we face, we can think of others.

Scripture: John 18:1-27



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

John 17 recorded one of Jesus' most powerful prayers. Having finished that prayer, Matthew, Mark, and Luke's Gospels recorded that those present sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. Jesus prayed, sang a hymn, and now made His way through the moonlit streets of Jerusalem with His disciples. We know it was a full moon because Passover typically begins on the night of a full moon. They traveled down a slope, walked out of the city wall, and then traveled through the Kidron Valley.

After they crossed the Kidron Valley, Jesus and His disciples entered a place called Gethsemane which means "olive press." This was a garden that was located on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives got its name because there was an abundance of olive trees. This sets the stage for John 18 which is the final stage of Jesus' earthly ministry.

The high priest gathered the temple police and walked to the fortress of Antonia, near the temple complex, to see Pilate (a Roman regional leader). They were only a short distance from where Jesus was and where the high priest lived. They confronted and convinced Pilate that Jesus was dangerous,

a revolutionary, and that He wanted to set himself up as king. They advised Pilate to arrest Jesus.

As the religious leaders made this claim to Pilate, he agreed to give them Roman soldiers to arrest Jesus. The soldiers made their way through the streets of Jerusalem with an estimated crowd of 800 to 1,000 people. They crossed the Kidron Valley toward Jesus, who was still on the slopes of the Mount of Olives. It stands to reason that Jesus saw into the valley, saw the light of their torches, saw the size of the company, and knew they were coming to arrest Him. Rather than attempt to escape, He faced the crowd courageously.

They arrested Jesus and took Him to a trial that was divided into six phases. All of them were illegal and unjust, and together they formed one of the greatest miscarriages of justice in all human history. Three phases of the trial happened before Jewish religious leaders. Three phases happened before secular leaders. Phase four was in front of Pontius Pilate, five in front of Herod Antipas, and the last phase was back at Pontius Pilate.

After the trial, Jesus was led to Annas for questioning. In AD 6, Annas was appointed as the high priest by Roman leaders. Though he was removed as high priest in AD 15, he remained a very powerful and influential leader. Between AD 15 and the time Jesus was crucified, six different high priests were appointed. The Romans kept control of this position because they understood that the high priest was the most politically, socially, and economically powerful Jewish person in Jesus' day.

At the time of Jesus, Caiaphas, son-in-law of Annas, served as high priest. The fact that Jesus, upon His arrest, was first taken to Annas tells of Annas' incredible influence. In fact, he, probably of all the religious leaders, hated Jesus more than anyone. Jesus exposed the corruptness of the priesthood. Therefore, the priesthood determined Jesus had to go. This was the mindset that precipitated this trial.

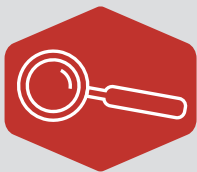


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

John 18 begins John's account of the passion of Jesus. While Matthew, Mark, and Luke made much of Judas' betrayal and Judas' kissing Christ, these events were not central to John's narrative. John's Gospel the last of the four and most recently written, intended to illustrate the glory of Christ throughout this account.

- John clearly communicates that Jesus is not a victim; He is a victor (vs. 1-4).
- The greatest of all idolatries is to worship yourself (vs. 2).
- The power of His words can be overwhelming (vs. 5-8).
- As Jesus is fulfilling God's plan, He still has a responsibility to take care of those who are around Him (vs. 8-9).
- Jesus was and is committed to walking the path that the Father set before Him (vs. 10-11).
- Jesus knows who will fail Him (vs. 15).
- Peter fails after he is attacked by Satan (cf. Luke 22:31-34).
- Even the best among us will fail Jesus, but Jesus never fails.



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?

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- » When is this passage occurring?

- » Why is this passage important?

- » What is happening in this passage?

- » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*[®] map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).

- Why would Peter respond in fear?

- What do you think about how Jesus responded to this situation?

- Describe a time when Jesus corrected you.

- Read the *Fire Bible*® study notes on John 18:11. What is the reason Christ would suffer in our place?

**Read the Ironies & Wonders column,
and then answer the questions in the right column.¹**

John 18	Ironies & Wonders	Questions
18:1	On the eve of Passover, Jesus, the Lamb of God, <i>passed over</i> the Kidron Valley, into which priests drained the blood of thousands of Passover lambs, slain in the temple.	Why was it important that no bone of Jesus was broken (John 19:31-36; Exodus 12:46)?
18:2-5	Judas was an ideal guide for those who sought to kill Christ. He knew that Gethsemane was a favorite place of Jesus to pray and fellowship (see Luke 5:16).	Why do you think a brutal betrayal occurred in a sacred place?

¹ Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh* (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 200-204.

18:3	Soldiers and Jewish officials came with torches and lanterns to arrest the Light of the world.	In Gethsemane, which light was brighter in the darkness: the torches or Jesus?
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18:3	Soldiers came with weapons to arrest the Lamb.	Who would have imagined it?
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18:6	Soldiers fell to the ground, twice, when Jesus identified himself as I Am (gk. <i>ego eimi</i>).	Why do you think Jesus revealed His power?
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18:10, 17	Peter was brave near armed soldiers, but a coward near an unarmed girl.	Why do you think Peter was not brave enough to speak up?
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18:12	Soldiers bound the One who came to free us.	Why do you think the soldiers bound Jesus?
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18:19 When questioned about His disciples, Jesus guided attention away from them to the multitude.

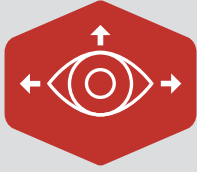
How did Jesus protect His disciples at the trial with Annas, the elderly high priest?

18:19-21	Jesus taught in public at noon, but His mock trial was in private at night.	Describe why the trial of Jesus at night was not a fair trial.
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18:22 A Jewish official slapped Jesus in the face for speaking the truth.

How did Jesus respond to being slapped in the face? How would you respond if someone slapped you in the face?

18:15-26	John records Peter's denials at one fire, to later emphasize the grace of Jesus near another fire.	At the fire with Jesus (John 21:9-12), what do you think Peter remembered?
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Upward and Outward Focus

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- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

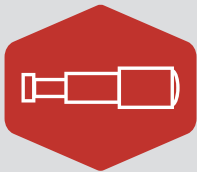
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 31: Jesus before Pilate and Delivered to Be Crucified

Main Idea: Jesus faced a mock trial and severe beating before facing His crucifixion. In the midst of His suffering, He remained steadfast in finishing the assignment for which He came.

Scripture: John 18:28–19:16



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

In John 18, Jesus was detained by the high priest. In this passage of Scripture, Jesus faced two trials—one religious and one civil.

The religious trial had three phases to it. The first phase of the trial Jesus was tried before Annas. While he was not the high priest, he was a powerful former high priest and the father-in-law of the current one. He was possibly the person who wanted to see Jesus dead more than anyone else because Jesus called into question Annas' system of gaining money and extorting people in the temple courts. Jesus went before Annas, but they could not get the accusations to stick.

In phase two of the religious trial, they ushered Jesus Caiaphas' house, the acting high priest. While there, they called together some of the Sanhedrin (a Jewish judicial council) and accusations against Jesus began to fly. We learn from Mark's Gospel that Caiaphas asked Jesus, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus said, "I am." (Mark 14:61–62, ESV). Based on Jesus' response, the religious leaders concluded that Jesus deserved death.

In the third phase of the religious trial, the Sanhedrin convened early. They wanted to give a stamp of legitimacy to what happened in phase two. So, they convened, gave the appearance of a legal trial, and confirmed the verdict that Jesus needed to be executed.

The religious leaders, early in the morning, led Jesus through the streets of Jerusalem. Because of Roman rule and law, they didn't have the right to put someone to death. In AD 6 when Judea became a Roman province, they lost the right to carry out the death sentence.¹ So, they took Jesus through the streets of Jerusalem to the governmental headquarters of Pilate, the Governor of Judea. It was at the Praetorium where Jesus would be flogged by Pilate's soldiers.

The civil trial also had three phases. In the first phase of the civil trial, Pilate questioned Jesus to determine whether or not the accusation against Him had any basis. Pilate sent Jesus to Herod for his questioning in the second phase. Jesus would not answer Herod, so he had Jesus beaten and sent back to Pilate. In phase three of the civil trial, Jesus appeared before Pilate a second time. Pilate chose to severely beat Him through a process called flogging. Ultimately, Pilate condemned Jesus to be crucified on the Cross.

John was not interested in recording a blow by blow account of the all the trials in his Gospel. He seemed to have concern over the accusations about Jesus. John wanted to look at the noise that surrounded the trial. Also, John wanted to clearly show Jesus' true identity. But John did seem interested in the content of the trial before Pilate because he reported more details of this trial than the three other Gospel writers combined. Here he stressed the kingdom and authority of Jesus.

Pilate, one of the key players in the last days of Jesus, had been Governor in Judea for four years. In that time, he managed to infuriate the Jews on three separate occasions to the point that there was civil unrest. The Jews sent word to Rome of their frustration, and Caesar told Pilate he had one more chance to keep peace. He had one more chance to govern effectively or it would cost him his job and maybe his life.

¹ R. H. Mounce, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke-Acts, Vol. 10 (Revised Edition)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 623.

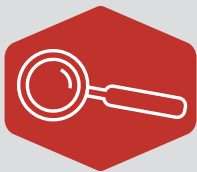


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

John's Gospel set the stage for the mock trial, severe beating, and crucifixion. In the midst of this horror, he still communicated that Jesus was King. He wanted to use this moment to display what kind of King Jesus was. Jesus, from the outset of His ministry, predicted who would kill Him. Jesus knew there was only One who gave out authority, but the religious Jews thought they were in charge. Pilate thought he was in charge. Instead, John showed that Jesus was the sovereign King.

- Jesus is the perfect King (vs. 18:28-30).
- Religious leaders wanted an executioner (vs. 18:30-32).
- Jesus is the sovereign King (vs. 18:31-32; 19:10-11).
- Jesus is the truth-proclaiming King (vs. 18:33-38).
- Jesus is the rejected King (vs. 18:39-40; 19:1-16).



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?

 - » Where is this passage taking place?

- » When is this passage occurring?

- » Why is this passage important?

- » What is happening in this passage?

- » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).

- Why do you think Jesus spent so much time in dialogue with Pilate?

- From John 19:1-16, John pressed the kingship of Jesus. Why?

- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study note on the following passages and answer the following questions.²
 - » John 18:36: Why do the followers of Jesus not fight physically for His kingdom? What responsibilities do believers have in word and deed on earth regarding the kingdom of God?

 - » What does the kingdom of God include? When will Jesus fully establish His kingdom on the earth?

 - » John 18:37: What issues today need the church's testimony of truth?

 - » John 19:1: What was it like to be flogged by the Romans?

 - » John 19:11: Is there any power on earth that God does not allow? Explain.

 - » Are some sins greater than others?

² Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 224.

- » John 19:14: Explain the discrepancy with the time of crucifixion between John 19:14 and Mark 15:25.

Read the Ironies & Wonders column, and then answer the questions in the right column.³

John 18	Ironies & Wonders	Questions
18:28–29	Seeking to murder Jesus, the Jews were concerned about being ceremonially clean on the outside.	Were Jewish leaders straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel (Matthew 23:24)? Explain.
18:36	Jesus was in our world, but His kingdom was from another place.	Where is our Lord’s kingdom?
18:38	At the trial of Jesus, Pilate asks, “What is truth?”	Was Pilate for truth or against it? Explain.
18:38; 19:4,6	The judge who condemned Jesus said three times: “I find no basis for a charge against him.”	Whom would you have expected to vote for the Jewish Messiah?

³ Quentin McGhee, Gospel of John: *The Word Became Flesh* (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 200–204.

18:28-40	A human governor condemned a divine King.	Can a human condemn God to death? Explain.
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18:40	The Jews chose to free a killer instead of a healer.	How can one choose to free a killer instead of a healer?
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19:1-3	Humans flogged the Son of God. They wrapped a purple robe around His shoulders, crammed a crown of thorns into His head; slapped and mocked Him, saying: “Hail, king of the Jews.”	How does the world mock Him today?
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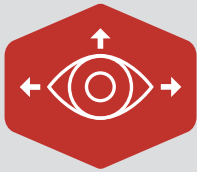
19:7	Jewish law demanded the death of any man claiming to be the Son of God—even if He was.	How can we be sure Jesus is the Son of God?
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19:11	Pilate misused his authority from God to condemn Jesus.	What was the source of Pilate’s authority?
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19:11 On trial, Jesus judged both Pilate and those seeking to kill Him. Who had the greater guilt?

Who was on trial: Jesus, Pilate, or those who sought to kill Jesus? Explain.

19:15	The Jewish chief priests said: "We have no king but Caesar." (See Psalm 47).	Who is the greater traitor: Judas or the chief priests? Explain.
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Upward and Outward Focus

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- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

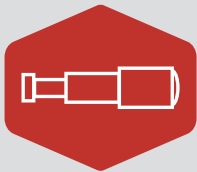
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 32: Jesus' Crucifixion, Death, and Burial

Main Idea: John provided some final key points in Jesus' life. As Jesus faced crucifixion, death, and burial, He finished the assignment for which He came.

Scripture: John 19:17-42



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

In comparison to the synoptic writers (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), John seemed to omit certain parts of Jesus' last days. In John's crucifixion passage, there is no conversation with the two thieves. There is no darkness. There is no veil being torn, earthquakes, or graves opened. John didn't even tell how long Jesus was on the cross. Instead, John seemed propelled by one thing—the desire for people to know that Jesus was God, and He came for the purpose of bearing the sin of humanity on the Cross.

Crucifixion was a common thing and was used for crowd control. The person being crucified would be placed where they were the most visible. It was a psychological message to others that this same fate awaits you if you don't have allegiance to Rome. When somebody was crucified, a plaque would describe their crime and it would be hung above their cross. Pilate hung a sign above Jesus that read "King of the Jews" in three languages. Pilate wanted all of the known world to know that Rome was in control.¹

¹ Jeremy Stein (Content Development Coordinator, Center for Holy Lands Studies), in discussion with the author, September 2018.

Typically, the way people died from crucifixion was by asphyxiation. As they hung, their body would start to sag and in excruciating pain they would push up with their legs. It was a horrific death. People would do this until they became too weak to continue to push up for air, and they would suffocate. Crucifixion could go on for days for some.

Comparatively, Jesus died a quick death. The Jewish leaders wanted His body off the cross because it was the Sabbath. They told Pilot to expedite the crucifixion. The typical way to expedite crucifixion was to break the legs of the criminal so that they could no longer push up with their legs to get air. This caused them to suffocate more quickly. The soldiers used heavy mallets to shatter the bones which added to the horrific pain of crucifixion. Since it was the Jewish day of preparation, burial needed to take place quickly.

Robert Mounce pointed out, “Because the fall of the first Adam took place in a garden (Ge. 3), it is fitting that the redemption of the human race by the second Adam (cf. Ro. 5:12-19) takes place in a garden as well: ‘At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden.’”²



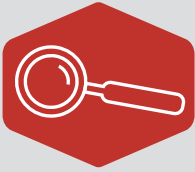
My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God’s Word is saying to you today.

One of the great truths of Scripture is the fact that God is sovereign, in control, and nothing escapes His notice. It’s important to remember this while reflecting on the Crucifixion. In this sobering passage, John describes how Jesus paid it all.

- God works through our entire situation (vs. 16-22).
- Jesus was able to take care of those close to Him even at His weakest point (vs. 23-27).
- Nothing happens by accident (vs. 28-42).
- God fulfills His promises (vs. 28-42).
- Jesus was in charge of His death (vs. 30-31).
- God was in charge of their actions (vs. 36).
- Jesus is still in charge during His burial (vs. 38-42).

² R. H. Mounce, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Luke-Acts, Vol. 10 (Revised Edition)*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 642.



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

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 - » When is this passage occurring?

 - » Why is this passage important?

 - » What is happening in this passage?

 - » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- Note whether the following statement is true or false: Jesus is the King of the Jews. Why or why not?

- Why so you think Jesus honored His mother as He was dying?

- What are some ways we can honor our parents?

- What did Jesus mean when He said, “It is finished?”

- What is the significance of Jesus dying on the day of Passover?

- Why was it important that Jesus’ bones remained unbroken?



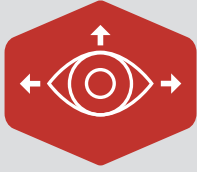
- Read the *Fire Bible*³ study note on the following passages and answer the following questions.
 - » John 19:26: The Bible says that believers have what responsibility until death?

 - » John 19:29: How did Jesus fulfill the prophecy of Psalm 69:21 on the cross?

 - » John 19:30: What are five things that Jesus finished as He died on the cross?

 - » John 19:41: What was the tomb of Jesus like?

³ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 225.



Upward and Outward Focus

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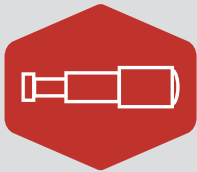
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 33: Jesus' Resurrection

Main Idea: John wanted his readers to press past a head knowledge of Jesus' resurrection and emotionally and spiritually understand the significance of this world-changing event. As he explored the necessity of the death and resurrection of Jesus, John revealed the personal touch of the Son of God.

Scripture: John 20:1-31



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

In John chapter 19, John detailed the crucifixion of Jesus. He concluded that section by recording the burial of Jesus. Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy follower of Jesus, received permission from Pilate to remove the body of Jesus from the Cross for burial before he laid the Savior in his own tomb. Jesus' body was in the grave for three traditional, Jewish days before the events of chapter twenty. Jesus' body was placed in the tomb before the Sabbath began in Israel. Once sabbath arrived, activities are ceased. The women then returned back to the empty tomb after sabbath to prepare the body to place in one of the niches.

It's confusing for some why it's noted that Jesus was in the grave for three days. To understand this day count, note that a Jewish day started at sundown, and any part of a day was counted as the whole day. He was in the grave before Sabbath (our Saturday). When the Sabbath began, no work was to be done, therefore, Jesus had to be in the grave on Friday. So, day one in the grave was Friday, Saturday until sundown was day two, then Sunday came and Jesus was resurrected. This was the third day.

In order to best understand John twenty, the importance of witnesses is necessary. Judaism highly valued having multiple witnesses to an event. Similarly, John utilized multiple witness to validate Jesus' resurrection. Christianity has as its foundation the records of a variety of eyewitnesses captured in Scripture. This variety illustrated the diversity of people that came to Jesus after the resurrection and that He accepted them as they were.

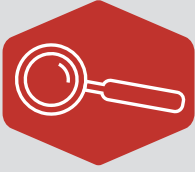


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God's Word is saying to you today.

John didn't elaborate what happened when Jesus was in the tomb, but He did write about the events surrounding the Resurrection. Jesus was in the grave after dying for the sins of mankind, and He was to ascend to heaven. This would soon inaugurate the birth of the church and begin the spread of the gospel to all the earth.

- God comes to people where they are to minister to them.
- It is difficult to understand spiritual things without the Spirit of God revealing it to us.
- We may not recognize the fact that God is with us in the midst of our grief.
- The presence of Jesus helps us navigate grief and sorrow
- Fear can cause people to do irrational things (vs. 19).
- Salvation is when God makes a miraculous change in our heart (vs. 22).
- Seeing is not necessarily believing, but believing leads to seeing (vs. 24-29).



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 - » Why is this passage important?

 - » What is happening in this passage?

 - » How does this passage apply to my life?

- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.

- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- What caused Mary to have knowledge in her heart about the resurrection?

- Why are historical facts helpful in religion? Is believing historical facts enough for Christianity? Why or why not?

- What are some things that God gives to us to help us believe?

In the following chart, summarize the verses that emphasize evidence of the resurrection.¹

John	Your Summary
20:1-2	
20:10-18	
20:19-20	
20:24-29	

¹ Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 215.

In the following chart, summarize the verses that reveal the creative breath of Jesus.²

John	Your Summary
1:1-3	
20:22	

- Read the *Fire Bible*[®] study note on the following passages and answer the following questions.³
 - » John 20:9: In the note on Matthew 28:6, how many reasons show that the resurrection is important?

 - » John 20:16: What lesson can we learn from Christ’s appearance to Mary first?

 - » John 20:17: What task did Jesus give to Mary?

 - » John 20:22: Read the article titled “The Regeneration of the Disciples” and answer the following questions:
 1. Of which event in Genesis does John 20:22 remind us?

² Quentin McGhee, *Gospel of John: The Word Became Flesh*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 215.

³ Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 225-226.

2. What command did Jesus give the disciples when He breathed on them?

3. For what purpose did Jesus breathe the Spirit into the disciples?

4. Although the disciples were followers of Jesus before the resurrection, when did they receive new life from the Spirit?

5. For what purpose did the disciples receive the Spirit in John 20:22?

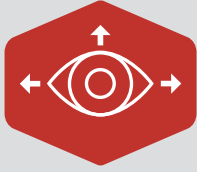
6. For what purpose did the disciples receive the Spirit in Acts 2:4?

7. When do believers first receive the Holy Spirit?

8. When do believers receive power to witness for Jesus?

9. Is there any biblical evidence that the disciples did not receive the Spirit when Jesus breathed on them and told them to receive?

- » John 20:28: What are 7 reasons why we believe that Jesus is God?



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

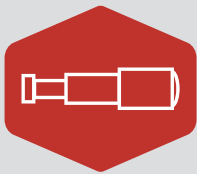
- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?



Lesson 34: Jesus Appears to Disciples

Main Idea: John's record of Jesus' third appearance to the disciples used food as a focal point. Jesus calls mature people to provide the spiritual food to others. Loving Jesus requires Jesus' disciples to love those who follow Him.

Scripture: John 21:1-25



The Author's Lens (Spyglass)

What did the Scripture mean to the original author and audience? As you explore information on the author, content, culture, history, land, and language of the Bible, you will gain a better understanding of the intended message of God's Word.

John did not write his work to be another biography of Jesus. Rather, John chose selective words and works to lead those who read into belief in Him. Chapter 21 serves as an epilogue to this goal. John provided a model for Jesus' disciples to continue to experience the risen Savior. This section provided a template for subsequent followers to believe and experience the presence of Jesus through the Holy Spirit.

There have been some suggestions by scholars over the years that John 21 was added later because this chapter is anticlimactic. Craig Keener had an observation about this assessment. He stated, "But the conclusion (book 24) of the most popularly read work of Greco-Roman antiquity, the Iliad, is also anticlimactic; ancient readers and writers would not have viewed epilogues as "later additions" or the like because of their anticlimactic character."¹

The events of John 21 took place at the Sea of Galilee (noted in this chapter as the Sea of Tiberias). The disciples were back in familiar territory and did what many had trained all their lives to do. In the midst of these familiar

¹ Craig Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 311-312.

surroundings, Jesus came to them yet again. Once again, the disciples heard the call of Jesus.

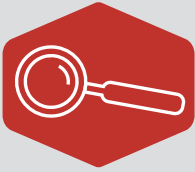


My Lens (Eyeglasses)

What does this Scripture say to you? Through studying the biblical explanations and principles in the text and bullet points below, you will better understand what God’s Word is saying to you today.

This passage was a continuation of John chapter 20. Jesus had an encounter with three different people or groups of people. Jesus was at the tomb with Mary whose heart was filled with sorrow. Jesus appeared to the disciples who were locked in a room for fear of the Jews. A week later, He interacted with Thomas who was filled with disillusionment and doubt. John 21 recorded Jesus’ fourth encounter. Though other disciples were present, this narrative focuses on the encounter with Peter. Jesus worked with Peter to help him overcome what is readily understood as Peter’s failure.

- It is very hard to see the future when your heart is overcome with feelings of failure.
- Jesus can take us back to a place where we can remember His compelling, glorious presence in our lives.
- Nothing about what we have done diminishes or changes what Jesus wants to do in and through our lives.



The Holy Spirit Lens (Magnifying Glass)

How can the Scripture apply to your life? By listening to the Holy Spirit's leading as you answer this series of questions, you can gain useful insights that will help you apply the truth of God's Word to your daily life.

Application:

- Write down your answer to the following questions here or in your journal:
 - » Who appears in this passage?
 - » Where is this passage taking place?
 - » When is this passage occurring?
 - » Why is this passage important?
 - » What is happening in this passage?
 - » How does this passage apply to my life?
- Circle and write down any reoccurring words in this passage.
- What verse stood out to you? Why?

- Review your map. (*Fire Bible*® map numbers: 11, 12, and 16).
- How did the miraculous catch of the fish encourage the disciples?
- How should love interact with feeding and correcting sheep?
- How does Peter's conversation with Jesus affect you and your walk with Him?
- List some ways you can show your love for Jesus.
- Describe your role in evangelism and discipleship.
- After reading about the confidence Jesus had in Peter and John, how would you describe the type of confidence Jesus has in you?



- Read the *Fire Bible*® study note on the following passages and answer the following questions.²
 - » John 21:3: Was going fishing an act of rebellion? Explain.

 - » John 21:6: What principle does this verse emphasize?

 - » John 21:15: How does loving God with your mind and will reveal itself? What does it mean to love God with your heart?

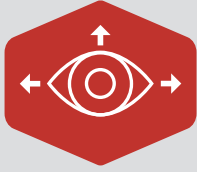
 - » John 21:16: As God's sheep, what are 3 needs we have?

 - » John 21:17: What is the qualification for serving others in Jesus' name?

 - » John 21:18: According to tradition, how did Peter die?

 - » John 21:21: What mistake did Peter make?

² Quentin McGhee, *Unlocking the Treasures of Your Fire Bible: Resources for Spiritual Understanding*, (Springfield, MO: Life Publishers, 2016), 226.



Upward and Outward Focus

How does the Scripture affect your relationship with God and others? You experience God's Word in action as you use it to direct your journey with Him and those around you. Answer the following questions and record the answers in your journal.

- Take some time to listen to the Lord about the text you just studied. How did these verses help deepen your love of God?

- Write down which verse from this study that you experienced this week.

- As a result of your deepened love of God, how can you practically demonstrate the verse you experienced to your family and to others around you?

- Reflect on everything you've discovered during your study of the Gospel of John. What truth or revelation has been the most impactful on your relationship with God and others?