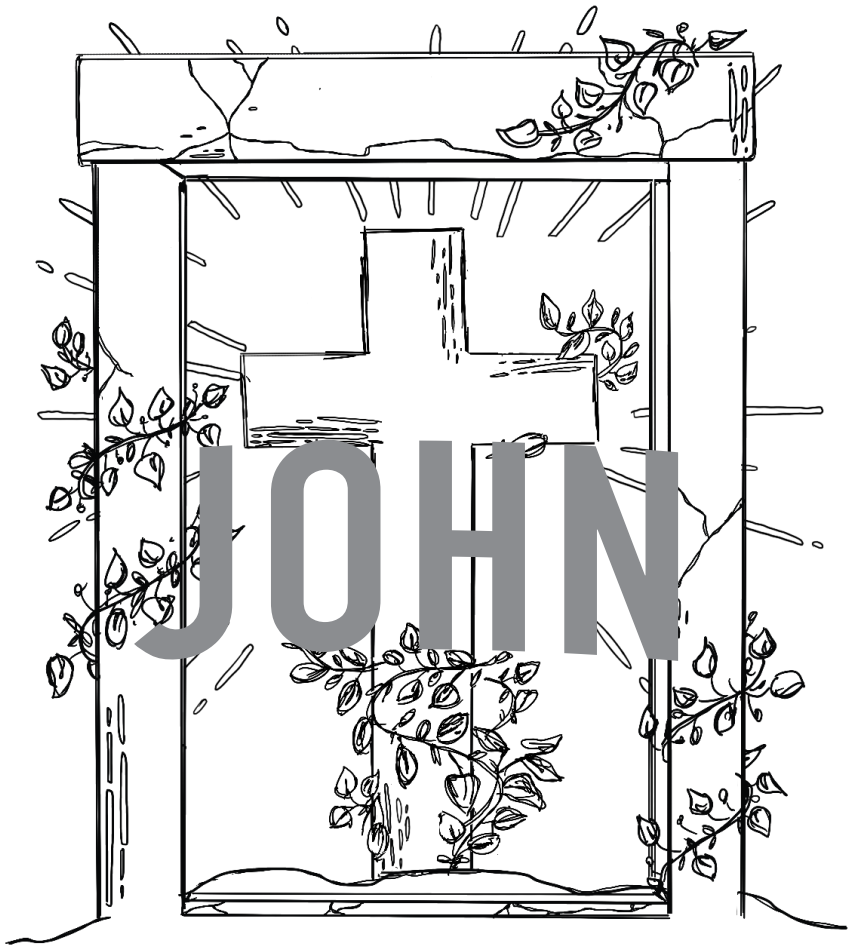


THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE

A 4-WEEK DEVOTIONAL BY J. ROGER DAVIS

YM360



## THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE

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Here are a few things you need to know to make this book meaningful for you.

### **Make This Book A Priority**

Pretty much every Christ-follower, no matter how old they may or may not be, struggles to spend meaningful time with God every day. If you're going to learn from this book and be impacted by it, you have to decide that it's important to you. The truth is that you really can learn and grow from reading this book. But it has to matter. So commit to spending at least 5-10 minutes each day with this book.

### **Have Your Bible Open**

Resist the urge to ignore the spots where this book will tell you to read a passage of Scripture. This book is only a guide for THE Book (your Bible). The spiritual growth and the close relationship with God that you want only happens by reading and doing what's in the Bible. So have your Bible or a Bible app open and a pen or pencil available as you go through this book.

### **The Book Is Designed To Help You Stick With It**

This devotional study through the Book of John was designed to be completed in four weeks. For the first five days of each week, you'll read through a few verses or a chapter in John and an insightful breakdown of those verses that will help you better understand their meaning, significance, and application. After that, each day will provide you with some questions for honest reflection and prayer prompts to guide you in responding to what you learn. There is even a dedicated page at the end of each daily devotional to journal your thoughts, jot down things from that day's study or Scriptures that stuck out to you, and note any follow-up questions you might have. The last two days of each week are left open on purpose. Life is busy and full of unforeseen surprises that pop up out of nowhere. Use these days as a time of further reflection, rest, and worship. Or use them to catch up on a day of study you missed due to one of those surprises that popped up.

### **What If I Miss A Day of Reading? Or Three?**

Don't give up! Take this at your own pace! The goal is your spiritual growth and for you to grow closer to God. If you miss a day or two . . . or four . . . don't throw in the towel. Instead, pick this book back up and start where you left off. You can do this!

# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

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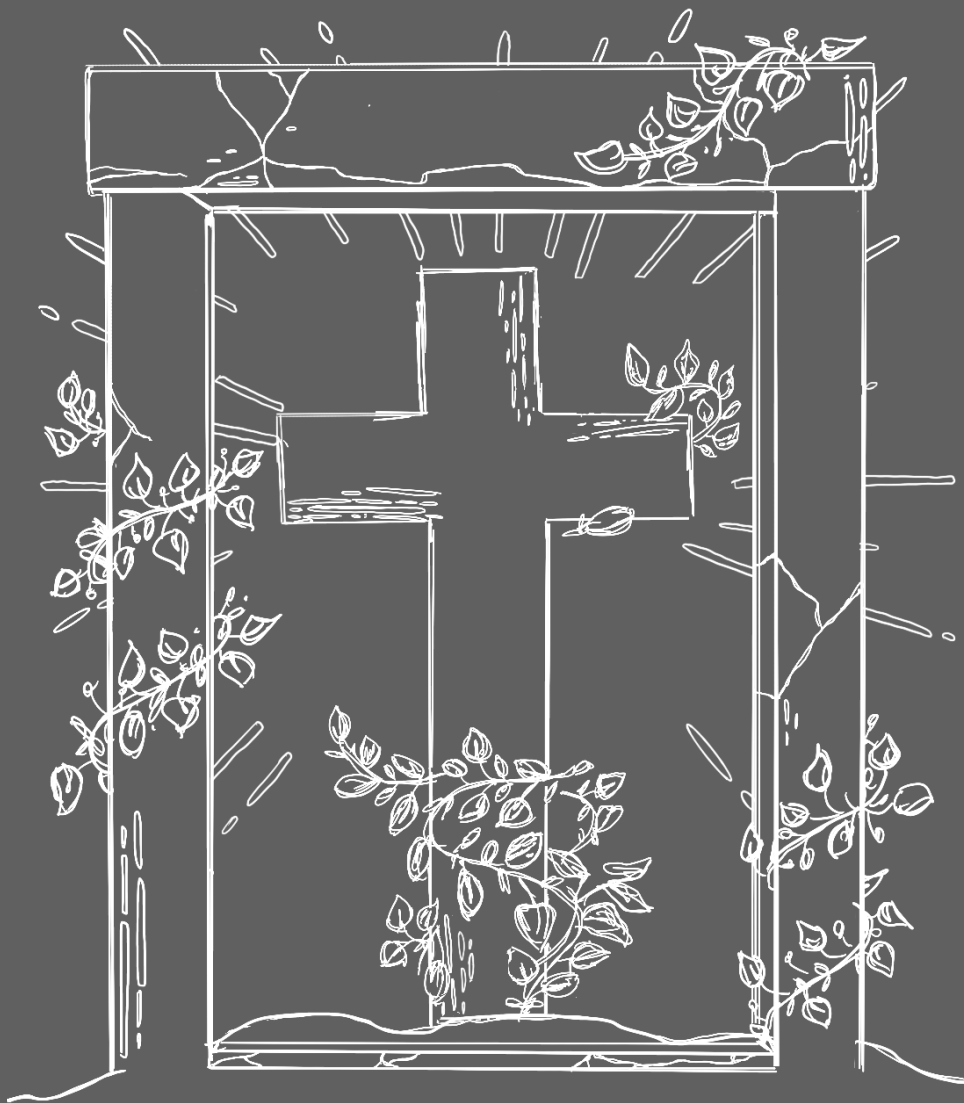
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# INTRODUCTION

If you've ever read or heard stories about Jesus in the Bible, they've most likely come from one of the four Gospels. The Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament that tell the story of Jesus, His life, ministry, miracles, death, and resurrection. At the core, the word "gospel" would translate from Latin as "good news." The first three Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are more similar in structure and how they tell the narrative of the life and death of Jesus. These three give particular attention to Jesus as the King, the Servant, and the Son of Man. But then there's the fourth Gospel, the Gospel according to John. John's recordings of Jesus offer a different perspective of Jesus and His life with a specific focus on Jesus as the Son of God. It's important to note that none of the Gospels tell a different story; they just share the *same story* from a *different perspective*.

The Gospel of John is widely accepted as being written by the youngest of the disciples, John. He and his brother, James, lived and traveled with Jesus for what many believe was about three years of Jesus' public ministry before His death. John is typically referred to as "John the Evangelist" or "John the Apostle," but he referred to himself as "the Disciple whom Jesus loved." I'm sure if you or I referred to ourselves like that around our siblings, it would sure stir some things up! John may have been trying to be humble, or maybe, as he later wrote and reflected on his time with Jesus, he knew the reality that he was deeply loved by the Lord. Regardless of why he referred to himself that way, there



is little doubt that John, along with James and Peter, formed a close “inner circle” for Jesus. This close proximity allowed him to witness countless miracles and moments with the Messiah.

I like to think of John as the kid in elementary school who had that big box of 64 Crayons with the built-in sharpener. With his writing and testimony, he paints a beautiful picture for us using every color the box has available. He doesn't just record the acts of Jesus and share a linear storyline from His birth in Bethlehem to His death on Calvary. He wants to make sure that the mystery of Jesus, the Son of God, is clearly and fully revealed to the reader (we will talk more about that in just a bit).

In each week of this devotional, we will take some time to journey through the 21 chapters of John. Each day, we will read through some verses and think about how those verses reveal who Jesus is and how He has identified with us. At the end of each day's devotional, there will be some questions to help you think through the message of the verses and some thoughts or prompts to help you communicate with God. Throughout these four weeks, we're going to clearly see the book's central theme of the divinity of Jesus, God becoming flesh and dwelling among us. The one true God trading in a robe of glory for a robe of flesh. This is an amazing concept to wrap our heads around, not just on Sunday mornings or Wednesday nights, but in every moment of our lives. Together, we will discover the themes of eternal life, light overcoming the darkness, becoming a witness for Christ, and the call for all of us to be people of love. Regardless of whether you're someone who has grown up in church, is a new Christian, or is just curious about Jesus, the Gospel of John is for you. This book is good news for all of us. I hope that as we study it together, the good news of the Gospel will work in us and through us. I pray that this devotional will help you see how the truths found in John apply to your life today and that once you know the truth, it will set you free! Let's get started!



# WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION

Whenever you start reading a new book, do you ever skip all the way to the last few pages just to see how it ends? The anticipation of reading through the whole book to finally figure out why the author wrote what they did can be too much for some of us to bear. The thing is, though, once you know the purpose behind the author's writing, everything else makes so much more sense! The little details or subtle hints throughout the book become much more obvious because you've already seen the bigger picture.

Some of you reading this may be repulsed by the idea of skipping to the end of a book just to see how it ends. And if that's you, let me apologize in advance because that's exactly how we're going to start this devotional. As we read the Gospel of John together, it's very important to ask the question, "Why did John write his Gospel?" We could easily read through the whole book and try to answer that question along the way, but in order to more fully understand the whole book, we need to have John's purpose in mind.

So, while you typically start with the first chapter when reading a book, we must go to the end to understand why John wrote his. Let's get started!



# WEEK 1 | DAY 1

The Purpose

**John 20:30-31**

Begin this week by opening your Bible or Bible app and reading John 20:30-31.

Have you ever pulled up to a stop light, and the person in front of you has a custom license plate? Maybe they want you to know what team they're a fan of, like "YANKEES" or "COWBOYS." Or maybe they just want you to know their name: "IAMMATT" or "MR BILL." These are called vanity plates, and for a few extra dollars at your DMV, you can decide what you want the world to know in seven characters (within a few guidelines, of course). One of my friends has a vanity plate on his car, and it reads "JN20 31".

My friend, just like the disciple John, wants to make sure everyone knows that *"Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."* And it's for this same reason that the book of John is written – that you would believe, that I would believe, and that all the world would have a chance to believe that Jesus is the Christ.

John shares with us a dynamic and distinct picture of Jesus that, while in complete unity with the other gospel writers, more deeply reveals Jesus as the Christ, fully God and fully man. If John were in your English class and had to provide a purpose statement to your teacher, it would be simple: Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. However, this isn't just a conclusion found at the end of John's book; it is the entire foundation and focus that John

is establishing for all who read his Gospel account. Throughout the book, he will reveal to you and me that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, the Promised One who takes away the sins of the world. He does this by sharing and showing Jesus' various Messianic "signs" or miracles, as well as Jesus' words that point to the importance of believing in Him and the gift that comes from that faith.

Faith, however, can be only yours. It does not matter what your parents believe, what your pastor believes, your small group leader, or even your friends. In the end, it matters what you believe. Your faith must be yours. If Jesus is who the Bible says He is and who He claimed to be, the Son of the living God, then the only logical response would be to trust Him as your Savior and Lord. To have life in His name. I pray that, as you read through the words of this book, you and your faith will grow in a new and dynamic way.

## REFLECTION

1. What do you think it means that Jesus is “the Christ” and “the Son of God?” Why do you think John wanted us to know that’s important?
2. In your own words, explain what it means to have life in Jesus’ name.
3. What does it mean to have faith in Jesus? What do you think it means that your faith has to be yours? ly?

## PRAYER

If you have previously placed your faith in Jesus, thank Him for leaving heaven and coming to earth to live the life He has lived so that you could be with Him forever in eternity. If you are not sure you have faith yet, ask God to give you an open mind and heart for whatever He has for you over these coming weeks. Pray and ask God whatever you want, knowing He is available to listen and wants to talk with you.



# MY THOUGHTS FOR TODAY



# WEEK 1 | DAY 2

The Word Became Flesh

**John 1:1-5**

Begin today by opening your Bible or Bible app and reading John 1:1-5.

Every year when you experience the Christmas season, it is likely full of various traditions like favorite holiday movies, Christmas sweaters, shopping, favorite foods, family get-togethers, gift exchanges, singing Christmas carols, and probably the story of Jesus being born in a borrowed manger in the town of Bethlehem. The nativity scene has become a part of Christmas tradition since Saint Francis of Assisi created one in 1223 to help get a clearer picture of the meaning of Christmas. Since then, nativity scenes have become a part of many Christian homes and churches in various shapes and sizes. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke mention Bethlehem and Jesus' birth to the virgin Mary, the Gospel of Mark doesn't have any birth narrative included, and then there's John...

John does not take the reader to the little town of Bethlehem on a silent starry night; he takes us all the way to the real beginning, showing a direct link between the nature of God and the nature of the Word, Jesus Christ. **Re-read John 1:1-2.** John will highlight at great lengths that Jesus is the Word incarnate (that means "in the flesh" or "in human form"). But in the first words of his gospel account, he shows Jesus as eternal, already existing with God before creation, and it ties back to the opening words of Genesis 1. You may have read them before, but take a minute and go read the first verse of the Bible. You see the connection

that John makes with the language *"In the beginning."* John highlights the interpersonal connection of the Word (Jesus) being with God. This is a foundational building block of a doctrine (a doctrine is basically a core Christian belief) called "the Trinity." This doctrine is that one God exists in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All three in one. If that doesn't make sense to you, don't worry. It's been a topic of deep, intense discussion for a very, very long time. However, the Bible is clear that all three Persons are each one-hundred-percent God rather than each being a third of God.

Look again at Genesis and check out verse 1:26. Do you see it? Who is God talking to? While the text does not explicitly give the identity of the "us" here, this is God the Father communicating with the Son and Spirit, further showing that they're together in the beginning. Here, in the first chapter of the Bible, we see the first hint of this foundational truth!

Now, back in John 1:3, we see what was made by God - all things. That means everything in the entire universe was created by God. And it was all created by a creative God who spoke things into existence, and He did all of this in unison with the Son. It is also important to note that when God created things, He declared them good, according to what we see in Genesis 1:31. God does not make mistakes. He does not need an eraser, a mulligan, or a do-over. Everything He makes is not just good; it is very good. That's also a reminder that you were created by a God who makes good things on purpose. You are no mistake. You are created and loved by God.

John closes this first passage by bringing in the concepts of life, light, and darkness. Jesus, as the "light" coming into the world, introduces the reader to the truth that life is found in Him. A reality that Jesus will also share in His own words later. Light, by nature, reveals and drives out darkness, and John is saying



that Jesus, in whom we can find true life, has come to drive out the darkness of sin from the world. This is the foundation for everything else that John will write, and it's the lens we need to look through as we keep reading!

## REFLECTION

1. Why do you think it's important to believe that Jesus was in the beginning rather than first showing up on the scene at His birth in Bethlehem?
2. Is it difficult for you to believe that God created you on purpose and delighted in creating you? Why or why not?
3. What do you think it means that, in Jesus, there is life and that life is the light? What kind of darkness do you think Jesus came to overcome?

## PRAYER

Take some time to praise God as the amazing Creator that He is. Thank Him for sending the very best to us in Jesus, the Incarnate Word, God in the flesh. Ask God to help you work out exactly what you believe about Him, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the life He calls you to live over the next week weeks. Pray that He would teach you how to be someone who lives in the light instead of the darkness that surrounds us.



# MY THOUGHTS FOR TODAY



# WEEK 1 | DAY 3

A Witness to the Messiah

**John 1:6-34**

Begin today by opening your Bible or Bible app and reading John 1:6-28.

Have you ever heard of the Biltmore Estate in North Carolina? It was built in 1889 and officially opened for friends and family on Christmas Eve, 1895, by its owner, George Washington Vanderbilt II. This massive mansion is a whopping 178,926 sq ft with 250 rooms and is listed as the largest privately owned home in the United States. Years ago, I was there visiting with a group of students, and as I took it all in, I came across a very small plaque with a quote that the owner was fond of, *“There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.”*

John 1:6 introduces us to a man known as John the Baptist or the Baptizer. This John, you need to know, is not the same John writing the gospel we’re reading together. This John was Jesus’ cousin. Pay particular attention to verse 8 and then verses 19-21. We can very clearly see that John the Baptist understood his role. He was sent by God to be a messenger of what was about to come. I like to think of him as not just a messenger preparing the way for the Lord but a mirror reflecting the beauty of the Light. John bears witness to the light that has come into a darkened world.

**Continue reading John 1:29-34.**

An important question to ask ourselves as we're still at the beginning of John's gospel is, "Why did Jesus come into the world?" And in these few verses, John the Baptist gives us a very clear answer! When John finally sees Jesus with his own eyes, do you see how he immediately responds? He identified who Jesus is, "the Lamb of God," and what His role was, "takes away the sin of the world!" Jesus is the complete message, everything that God the Father wants to communicate to His creation. For generations, a growing number of people had continued to widely disregard the message of what must have seemed like an invisible God and lived in their sin, selfishness, and rebellion. But everything changed when the long wait for a Messiah was over, and Jesus put on a robe of humanity. The struggle that is about to unfold, however, is that many people in that time of waiting were hoping for a different kind of Messiah. Instead of envisioning someone who would eternally forgive them of their sins, they wanted a conquering king to free them from Roman oppression. But the truth is, while Jesus might not have been what was expected, there's no doubt He is what was and is needed.

## REFLECTION

1. If you thought of your life as a mirror, what would it be reflecting? If you had to be honest with yourself, what would the way you live your life point others to?
2. Why do you think John called Jesus the “Lamb of God?” What do you think he meant when he said that Jesus had come to take away the sins of the world?
3. What do you think it means to “understand your role?” What might that look like in your life? What do you think God wants your role to be?

## PRAYER

If you have put your faith in Christ before, I encourage you to offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for your salvation and also a prayer of availability. Let God know that you are ready and available to serve in whatever role He wants you to. Ask Him to use you to point others to Jesus through your connections and conversations with friends and family.

If you’ve never put your faith in Jesus before, I encourage you to read through the section on page 114 in the back of this book. Make your prayer today centered on that.



# MY THOUGHTS FOR TODAY



# WEEK 1 | DAY 4

Two Words That Will Change Your Life

**John 1:35-51**

Begin today by opening your Bible or Bible app and reading John 1:35-42.

Yesterday, we were introduced to John the Baptist. In today's reading, we see Jesus beginning to assemble His core followers; this is referred to as the calling of the disciples. We don't need to be technology historians to know that there was no social media during Biblical times. But there was still a reality of having followers. One crazy thing to think about is that John the Baptist had a growing number of followers, and when Jesus came on the scene, he encouraged them to unfollow him and begin following Jesus.

The first time two of John's followers meet Jesus, He asks them an important question. This question is not just important for these two but is vital for each of us. "What are you seeking?" Jesus asks. We're all seeking something. It could be acceptance, love, popularity, riches, happiness, freedom, peace, fulfillment, or confidence. The list is almost endless. As humans with these desires, we often look high and low to satisfy them, but so often, all we find is disappointment and emptiness. To find something that brings the fulfillment we desire, it is important that we look in the right place. These two disciples quickly realized there was something different about this teacher in their presence. Could this Jesus be the long-awaited Messiah? Andrew runs to share with his brother, Simon, and proclaims, "We have found the Messiah." The term Messiah, which would be the Christ or Savior,

carries the meaning of “anointed one,” particularly one whose anointing comes from God. The Old Testament predicted and prophesied the coming “anointed one” from the line of David that would save the people of God. Quick side note: it’s important to know that it wasn’t “Mary and Joseph Christ from 123 Main Street in Nazareth.” Christ is not Jesus’ last name; it’s His title and position.

### **Continue reading John 1:43-51.**

When Jesus meets Philip, He gives the simple call, “Follow me.” These two simple words will change Phillip’s life and the rest of the disciples’ lives, and they’re words that will change your life as well. It is a life-changing call that Jesus gives. As Jesus is gathering His disciples, we are seeing an interesting pattern that will continue throughout Scripture and into today. It is a cause and effect: come and see and then go and tell.

You may think Nathanael’s comment about Nazareth is a little weird, but that’s because Nazareth was a town most people thought was fairly unimportant. When Jesus was growing up there, it likely had about 2000 people that called it home. Because of its lack of distinction, it was more likely to be the butt of a joke rather than the place where the Messiah would spend His adolescence. It catches Nathanael off guard, but Jesus repays that with evidence of His power when they first meet. Jesus makes it very clear that He already knows Nathanael and even describes where he was by saying He saw him under the fig tree, which shows the supernatural knowledge of Jesus. It’s moments like these, spread all throughout John, that point us to the truth that Jesus is the Anointed One. But Jesus doesn’t stop there. He tells them they will see even greater things. And the same is true for your life. Jesus sees you, knows where you’ve been, and He wants to show you greater things.



## REFLECTION

1. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus sees you and knows your past? Why? What kind of greater things do you think He wants to show you?
2. What are you seeking daily? Why do you think you're seeking after that thing? What might it look like to seek after Jesus instead?
3. Is it hard to believe that Jesus wants you to follow Him? Why or why not? What do you think it actually means to follow Jesus in your daily life?

## PRAYER

If you have been seeking other things than the Lord, confess that to Him and ask for forgiveness. Ask the Lord to help you seek Him daily. Pray that He would give you opportunities to choose to follow Him in your everyday life. Thank Him for calling you to follow Him despite whatever you've done in your past or will do in your future.



# MY THOUGHTS FOR TODAY



# WEEK 1 | DAY 5

The First Miracle

**John 2:1-25**

Begin today by opening your Bible or Bible app and reading John 2:1-25.

The four gospels together record 37 total miracles performed by Jesus. Mark's gospel records the most with 24, and in the book of John, we see the writer highlighting seven miraculous signs. Miracles are recorded to show the reader Jesus' authority and power, but not all of Jesus' signs, works, and miracles were recorded for us to know. What we see and know is just a glimpse of all that Jesus did. At the end of today's devotional, I've highlighted the seven miracles found in the book of John, but today, we are focusing on the first of the miracles that Jesus performed at a wedding in Cana.

In John 2, we see Jesus, His mother, and His recently called disciples being invited to a wedding at Cana in Galilee. Cana was in what we know today as northern Israel, about five miles from where Jesus grew up in Nazareth. While we don't know the identity of the bride and groom, they were likely either relatives or friends of Jesus' family due to the proximity to His hometown and the invitation extended to His mother, His friends, and Himself. Something important to know about Jewish culture is that weddings would often span multiple days (usually five to seven). Typically, the entire village would gather for the wedding celebration, and wine was at the core of this experience because it often represented joy in the Jewish culture. As a part of the Jewish tradition, the couple would drink from a shared cup of

wine, representing the life they will share and create together.

So here, in John's account of the wedding, Jesus' mother realizes they have run out of wine, and something needs to be done before it becomes an embarrassing situation. She comes to Jesus and tells Him that they have no wine. He simply says, "Woman, what does this have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come." It is important for us to note here that Jesus was committed to the Father's timing. He was fully submitting His will to the will of the Father. It is good for us to remember that we can trust in God's timing because He is always on time.

Mary doesn't respond to Jesus directly but simply speaks these wise words to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." In these next moments, we see Jesus giving clear instructions, and He delivers the first public sign of His divinity. The Bible says it "manifested His glory," which means it revealed it. Jesus transforms approximately 120 gallons of ordinary water into wine. And the quality is so good, it's praised by the master of the feast!

There is a lot for us to digest in this story before we move on today. We see Jesus attending the wedding of someone He had some type of relationship with. This is a great picture of the personal and communal connections that Jesus has with people. This act of kindness shows that Jesus cares about everyday situations and issues that people deal with. Jesus can provide for our needs. He provides for basic needs throughout Scripture because He longs to provide for His people's deeper spiritual need. This first miracle also grew the faith of His new disciples, and I hope it also is a step in growing our faith as we read along.

## Seven Miraculous Signs Highlighted in John:

1. Turning the water into wine (v 2:1-11)
2. Healing of the royal official's son (v 4:46-54)
3. Healing a paralytic at the pool of Bethesda (v 5:1-15)
4. Feeding the 5000+ (v 6:5-14)
5. Walking on water (v 6:16-24)
6. Healing the man blind from birth (v 9:1-7)
7. Lazarus raised from the dead (v 11:1-45)

## REFLECTION

1. When you consider the miracles of Jesus, what thoughts come to your mind? Why?
2. When you think about God's timing, do you trust that He is always on time? Why or why not? What do you think makes it hard to trust in God's timing?
3. In what area(s) of your life are you not letting Jesus provide for your needs? Why do you think that is? What would it look like to let Him have control of that part of your life?

## PRAYER

As you pray today, be honest with Jesus about what you think of Him and how you view Him. Ask Him if your view of Him needs to change and what it should be. Pray that you would give control of every area of your life to Him so that He can provide for you. Pray that He would teach you how to trust in His timing and plan.



# MY THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

# WEEK 1 RECAP

## Things I Want To Remember About What I Studied This Week

So, how was the first week? I know, you're probably thinking, "Well, it was a lot of reading..." And that's definitely true! But in order to get through the whole Gospel of John in just 4 weeks, we're going to have to read big chunks of Scripture. Try not to let that deter you from taking it all in and asking God to teach you through it. If you need to read part of the devotional and Scripture, take a break, and then come back to it later, that's totally fine! If there's anything that you should've learned in this first week, it's that Jesus came into the world to take away your sins and ask you to follow Him. In order to do that well, we need to know His words. We need to learn from Him every day. So try to take it at your own pace and soak all of it in.

Here are some other things for you to reflect on as you think back through what you learned this week. On the very first day, we saw that Jesus came so that we might have life in His name. We just need to admit we've sinned and believe that He is the Savior we desperately need. We also learned that He was there at the very beginning of all things. He is God, He created all things, and all things were created through Him. We saw that John said Jesus is the light that has come into the dark, sinful world to bring all humanity back to Himself.

You should also remember that John the Baptist played a very important role in his time on Earth. He may not have been the star of the show, but that was more than okay with him. He

knew his role, and he knew that he was meant to point people to someone far greater than him - Jesus. We're meant to do the same thing in our life. Jesus is the most important thing, and we should live our lives pointing others to Him. We should be like mirrors that reflect His light to the world around us.

We also saw Jesus call His disciples and learned that He extends this same call to us. He knows our past, He knows where we've been, He knows what we've done, and He even knows what we'll do in the future. Yet, He still wants us to follow Him, and He's given us more than enough reason to commit to Him every day.

