



Personal Bible Study Program 2006

John 4-8

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Colossians 3:16

To help you get the most out of bible talks on Sunday we have designed a daily bible reading program that will help you to read and apply each bible passage during the week before the bible talk. This can be a supplement to your existing bible reading program if you already have one.

We hope that you will make the most of this Bible reading program by setting aside the time to “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”.

How to use the readings:

- Print the studies out double-sided and staple the pages as a booklet
- Set aside time
- Pray for understanding
- Read the passage
- Answer the questions
- Meditate on what you learn
- Apply what you learn
- Pray in response

This Bible reading guide is available for download from the ‘Resources’ page at www.bpc.org.au

Please note that we are open to feedback on how to improve this resource. Please email your comments to office@bpc.org.au

Introduction to John’s Gospel

Towards the end of his gospel, John presents us with his purpose of writing:

³⁰Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:30, 31

Everything John writes drives towards this purpose – to convince his readers of the right identity of Jesus as well as the right response to him.

As you read each passage, keep thinking about these questions:

- How does this passage help me to believe that Jesus is the Christ?
- How do I rightly respond by believing in his name?

A helpful way to get into John’s gospel is to read it right through and get a feel of the structure and themes of John’s gospel. One of the most helpful ways to understand the structure of John is to look out for the ‘signs’. These ‘signs’ are the way that John structures his gospel. Each sign and its explanation teach something important about Jesus.

John’s gospel draws heavily from the Old Testament as there is a strong Jewish background to this gospel. So to get the most out of John, it is worth doing a bit of digging into the OT. With each of the studies, there will be a section for you to dig into the OT to help you to understand the passage a bit better as well as to appreciate the OT.

Enjoy John’s gospel and be blown away by what you learn of Jesus the Christ! But don’t just learn about him, respond by believing in our glorious Christ.

NB: The gospel of John is full of riches. Some of these riches will occupy a lifetime of reflection. So don’t be too worried if you can’t find a simple answer to all of the bible study questions. They are written to help you to think.

**Day 1 (4:1-9 Will you give me a drink?)**

Background Briefing: Jesus and his disciples beat a hasty retreat through the 'badlands' of Samaria – the shortest route between Judea in the south and Galilee in the north. The Samaritans were also descendants of Abraham, who had a few aberrant beliefs – for example, their scriptures consisted only of the five books of Moses – the Pentateuch. They also believed that the correct place for the worship of God was Mt. Gerizim, not Jerusalem.

1. If God's appointed time for his death had not yet arrived, why does Jesus "beat a hasty retreat" back to Galilee, to avoid the plotting of the Pharisees?
2. Do you think that Jesus was waiting for this particular person, or did she just 'happen' to be there, or did the Holy Spirit 'send' her at that moment?
3. What does Jesus show by speaking to someone who would not normally speak to him? What are the implications for the gospel?

Day 2 (4:10-26 Living water)

1. Check these references to "living water" in other places: Jeremiah 2:13; John 7:38 Revelation 7:17. According to John 7:38, what is signified by "living water"? In view of Jeremiah 2:13, what is Jesus inferring about himself?
2. Why does Jesus NOT give the "living water" to the Samaritan woman at this point? Do you have this living water? Or perhaps the 'spring' has dried up since you first received it? What will you do about it – today?
3. With respect to verses 23 & 24, How do we use Jesus teaching here to convince/convict "...those who evade the claims of God by professing to follow a 'correct' form of worship?"¹ Does this mean that Jesus teaches that there is no such thing as a 'sacred place'?

Day 3 (4:27-38 "He told me everything I ever did")

1. Reading verses 28, 29 & 39 what evidence is there that the 'woman at the well' had subsequently received the gift of 'living water'? Is there enough evidence to convict you of the same thing?
2. What social, ethnic and religious barriers does Jesus overturn in this encounter?
3. To whom could Jesus be referring when he says "Others have done the hard work...etc" (v.38)? (The probable answer is at the beginning of this chapter) Be sure to always acknowledge the foundational work of those who 'laboured' before you.

Day 4 (4:39-42 The conversion of the Samaritans)

1. How can we explain the surprising conversion of "many" Samaritans?
2. Does this say anything about the openness of marginalised groups in our society to the gospel?
3. What can we learn from Jesus' manner of approach to (a) a person who was essentially an outcast in her own village; and (b) explaining who he is and what he offers?
4. How is the Samaritan confession of faith in v.42 a summary of what Jesus has said from chapter 2 onwards about "the world" (see 3:16 and also 1:10)?

Day 5 (4:43-54 Home again)

1. Jesus' reply to the royal official (verse 48) reveals the purpose of miracles. We hear stories of amazing miracles from missionaries working among people who have never heard the Gospel, but miracles are very rare amongst us. Why do you think this is so?
2. When you bring your troubles to God in prayer do you 'leave it with Him' or go on fussing and fretting? See verse 50.
3. What is surprising to us about the statement "He and all his household believed"?

**Day 1 (5:1-18 An offensive healing)**

1. What was it about Jesus that offended the "Jews"? Why were they wrong?
2. In v. 14 Jesus seeks out the man he healed and gives him a warning. What worse thing may Jesus have in mind cf. vv. 28-29?
3. Who is Jesus if He has the authority to do such works and give such warnings? Are we listening to him?

(For a further comment on the relation of sin and sickness in John see 9:1-3)

Day 2 (5:16-23 Jesus and the Father (1))

1. What does Jesus say about His relation to the Father? How is this a justification for His actions?
2. What has the Father given the Son? [see also vv. 24-26] What does this mean we can trust Jesus for?
3. Why is it impossible to honour the Father without honouring the Son? What does this mean for our evaluation of the claims of other faiths to bring us to God, or for the idea that all religions are equal?

Day 3 (5:24-30. Jesus and the Father (2))

1. According to Jesus whose words are we hearing when we hear Jesus' words (v. 24)?
2. What awaits every person (vv. 28-29)? Who can be confident of rising to live (v. 24)? Do you know that confidence?
3. Why can we and others be sure that Jesus' judgement will be just? Why is it important to have this assurance? V. 30

Day 4 (5:31-38 Support for Jesus' claims)

1. Who or what testifies to the truthfulness of Jesus' claims? What is the force of this testimony today?
2. What do the works Jesus performs say about Jesus? Why?
3. Why is it important that Jesus can point to testimony? What can we learn from his example about persuading people to trust Jesus?

Day 5 (5:39-47 Right and wrong reading)

1. What was wrong with the way Jesus' opponents were reading the Scriptures?
2. Jesus locates the problem in their fundamental disposition. What was the fundamental barrier to belief?
3. In what sense do the "Scriptures testify about" Jesus or has "Moses wrote about" Jesus?
4. Hopefully we "diligently study the Scriptures". How can we make that study a source of life and not a source of condemnation at the last day?

¹From "Search the Scriptures" by [A.M.Stibbs](#); IVP,1983; p.256

**Day 1 Read 6:1-15**

1. Observe the time and place of the miracle.
2. What was the crowd's motive in following Jesus? How did the miraculous feeding affect the crowd?
3. Who did the crowd think Jesus to be?
4. Why does Jesus refuse and even escape the crowd's attempt to make him king?
5. Think about Jesus' test of his disciples. Why does he do that? Why does he get them to collect the broken pieces of bread?

Day 2 Read 6:16-27

1. Jesus' walking on water is one of the most ridiculed stories in the modern world. Think of even ads on TV depicting people walking on water. Why do you think that happens?
2. Read the parallel in Matt 14:22-33 and Mark 6:47-51, both of which come immediately after the feeding of the 5000. Why are the disciples so afraid and what do they learn about Jesus?
3. The crowd realise Jesus is gone, and follow him. What is their motive?
4. What is your motive in following Jesus, or even just living today, material prosperity or spiritual growth? Pray the Lord's prayer! Pray the Lord will help you see past the fog of routine life to eternal life and the pursuit of the values of the Kingdom.

Day 3 Read 6:28-71

1. Remember again time, v.4 and place v.59.
2. This is a passage that is both very simple and very hard. What does the crowd want from Jesus? vv.30,31 What does Jesus offer them? v.32f
3. What is necessary to believe in Jesus? 36, 37, 43-45. Why do some people not accept Jesus' words?
4. Spend the day thinking about vv.28, 29, 63, 64. How can the work of God be so simple as to believe in Jesus?

Day 4 Continue to think about 6:28-71

1. How will Jesus give his flesh for the life of the world?
2. What is meant by eating his flesh and drinking his blood?
3. This passage is often interpreted as John's version of Communion esp. since he doesn't record the last supper. What is this passage not about communion? One of the most startling things is Jesus' use of flesh not body. Flesh is never used of Holy Communion.
4. To what truth does both this passage and Communion point to?

Day 5

1. Some of the disciples found Jesus' teaching too hard to stomach and turned away. Others like Peter stayed. You may find some of Jesus' teaching offensive. But have you come to the point where Peter's confession is your confession?

**Day 1 Read 7:1-13**

1. What motivates Jesus' brothers to tell him to make himself a famous celebrity?
2. Jesus seems pretty blunt with his brothers that they can do what they like since they are of the world but Jesus says he cannot go. How is Jesus different from his brothers? How is it that Jesus then does go later?
3. Jerusalem is really stirred up. What assessment had the crowds made? Why do they share their feelings in whispers?
4. The cult of celebrity is an interesting trend in modern life. All the reality shows on TV depend on people prepared to make fools of themselves to gain notoriety. What is the attitude of Jesus to the world? How does this influence us?

Day 2 Read 7:14-24

1. Jesus begins to publicly teach again in the temple. What is the reaction of the Jews? What makes them upset with Jesus?
2. How can a person find out if what Jesus' says is the truth? v.17 How do you break the conundrum that you have to know to believe and you have to believe to know? (Hard question, much of modern theology is based on merely believing, even if the facts like the resurrection are believed to be myth.)
3. The discussion with the crowd rapidly reduces to calling Jesus, demon possessed. Why??

Day 3 Read 7:25-36, 45-52

1. The Temple Guard are sent to arrest Jesus, by the Chief Priests and Pharisees. These two groups, who opposed each other, gang up on Jesus. Why do they join forces? Why do they abuse the temple guard for failing and Nicodemus for defending Jesus? 45-52
2. When "authorities" today abuse Christians, as for example Jeff Kennett called Christians, "Yesterday's People." How do we react to that??
3. What did Jesus mean he was going to where the crowd could not come? Vs 33,34

Day 4 Read 7:37-44

1. Jesus has already promised living water to the woman from Samaria, John 4:10, 13 How do vv.37, 38 add to that.
2. John helps interpret Jesus' words for his readers. Why hadn't the Spirit yet been given? What does John mean that Jesus was not yet glorified?
3. Although Jesus seldom takes upon himself terms of deity, and never openly. Think about the claim that Jesus makes "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink." How does it relate to the discussion in the previous chapter about Jesus as the bread from heaven?
4. How do the crowds react to Jesus' claim? Vs 40-44
5. Do you experience the Holy Spirit in your life today as living water? If not, what is the issue? I find this a challenge for myself so take some time to meditate on and pray for work of God to go forward in your own life.

**Day 1 (8:12) "I am the light of the world"**

"When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (8:12)

1. In the light of God's self-revelation to Moses (Exodus 3:1-3; 13, 14), what is the significance of Jesus' phrase "I am"? (Also see Nu 9:15-232; Jn 6:35; 10:11; 15:5).
2. Think of the last time that you walked down a deserted street in the dark. What feelings were associated with that? Do any of those feelings persist, even in the light?
3. Jesus here implicitly calls us to *follow him* so that we will have the "light of life" (see Matt 5:14). Are you following Jesus today?

Day 2 (8:13-18) "You have no idea!"

1. When Jesus says "You have no idea...", he makes a very strong point about the ignorance of the Pharisees, to whom he is speaking. Why do you think that they had "no idea"?
2. As is often the case in the Gospel of John, it is recorded that Jesus acts in unison with, and in obedience to, "the Father". How do you know that you are doing the same? (Romans 8:14)
3. Verses 16-18 is a repetition of what Jesus had recently said (see 7:16,17). If you combine 7:17 with 8:16, what does it reveal about the identity of "the Father"?

Day 3 (8:21-26) "I am not of this world"

1. What is the key question in all of this debate?
2. If you were asked the question: "Who is Jesus?" what would your considered reply be?
3. Speaking to the Pharisees Jesus says, "Where I go you cannot come?" What is required?

Day 4 (8:27-30) Son of Man

1. Why does Jesus point to his crucifixion (v.28) as the event that will prove that he is who he claims to be? (See Rom 10:9; Acts 2:22-36)
2. Jesus here uses the title "Son of Man" of himself as he often does in all of the Gospels. Check out some other occurrences of this phrase – Daniel 8:17; Acts 7:55,56; Rev 1:13.
3. Jesus said that he spoke only what the Father had taught him. Does Jesus speak to us today? How?

**Day 1 (8:31-41) True discipleship and true freedom**

4. Many Jews 'believed' in Jesus, but what did Jesus consider as a true test of a disciple?
5. The Jews disputed their need to be set free as they were Abraham's descendants. According to Jesus, what is the test of whether you are free or not?
6. How does the response of the Jews prove that they are not free at all? Reflect on this statement, "Doing what pleases you is ultimate slavery whereas slavery to Jesus is true freedom". Is this true? How does it compare with what Jesus says in this passage? Compare this with Romans 6:15-23.
7. How are you "holding to" Jesus' teaching?

Day 2 (8:39-47) Children of Abraham?

1. These Jews thought that just because they were Abraham's blood descendants they were alright with God. Are there people today who claim to be okay with God because of their birthright, background or upbringing?
2. In fact the true test of a person is whether they do what their father wants them to do. How do these Jews show that they are not Abraham's or God's children at all?
3. Jesus accuses these Jews of being 'children of the devil'. This is a weighty accusation, but why is he right?
4. Would it be possible for someone to accuse you of being a child of God? What evidence would there be?

Day 3 (8:48-59) Before Abraham, "I AM"

1. Jesus shows himself to be the true Son of the Father God. In what ways is he his Father's Son?
2. On the other hand, the Jews only confirm that their father is the devil. How does their bitter response to Jesus confirm their status?
3. The Jews had an immense privilege in being Abraham's descendants. Yet they used this as a reason for pride and stubborn self-sufficiency. How can we make sure that we avoid their mistake?

Day 4 (8:31, 39, 58)

1. Holding to Jesus' teaching means "remaining in Jesus". Have a look at John 15:1-7 to help you to reflect on what it means to remain in Jesus.
2. Even though we are not Abraham's *blood* descendants, how can we also be Abraham's offspring? (See Romans 4:16-17)
3. What is the significance of Jesus calling himself "I AM" (see Exodus 3:14)? How is it possible for Jesus to be before Abraham (1:1) yet after him as well (1:14)?

Day 5

Reflect on what you have learned this week:

1. What does it mean for you to be truly free?
2. What does it involve for you to truly follow Jesus?
3. What does it look like to reject Jesus?
4. What is Jesus' relationship to his Father and his relationship to you?