

A Reading Guide for the Gospel of John

By Joy Schroeder

Helpful Instructions

Don't skip this part!

Find a time and place to meet with God regularly by reading the Bible and praying. Start with 20 minutes a day, four or five days per week.

Read a chapter of the book of John and then answer the questions that go with it. You'll find three types of questions. Some help you **observe or notice** what the passage says—look at the Bible passage and you'll find the answer. Some questions help you **think about or interpret** what the passage means. And some questions help you **apply** the Scripture to your life—to do one of the following: confess a sin, trust a promise, change an attitude or action, obey a command, follow an example or avoid an error, or believe a truth. Always look at the Bible reference in parentheses to inform your answers. You can share your answers with a friend or mentor.

Note: Bible reference numbers refer to chapters and verses to make it easier to find a passage. For example, John 1:12 means chapter one of John and verse 12. You might see more verses listed like this John 1:12-14 which means verses 12 through 14. Sometimes an additional verse is referenced like this John 1:12-14, 17.

The chapter numbers are bigger on the page and the verse numbers are smaller. When your Bible is open, the reference numbers at the top of the two open pages are the first verse on the left page and the last verse on the right page.

Whenever you read the Bible, first, turn your attention to God and tell Him, “Here I am, Lord. Please speak to me from the Bible.” Read **expecting** to discover something about God, life, or yourself. You asked God to speak to you; read expectantly.

Take a moment or so to pray. The following acrostic, PRAY, is a helpful guide. For some of the chapters there is a prayer suggestion which features one or more of these aspects of prayer. Use this acrostic to add whatever else is on your mind.

- **P—Praise Him** for His love and goodness. Thank Him for something in your life.
- **R—Repent** for wrong choices. Receive forgiveness.
- **A—Ask** for what you and others need.
- **Y—Yield** to God. **Listen** to the Holy Spirit's inner voice. **Obey** what you read in the Bible, asking God to help you.

Watch the Bible Project Video for John 1-12

Before you start reading the gospel of John, watch the Bible Project video about the first half of the book: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/john-1-12/>

What stood out to you in the video?

Read John chapter 1

Who is the Word? (Look at John 1:1-5 and verse 14)

Who made all things? (Look at John 1:3)

On what basis do you become a child of God? (John 1:12-13)

What does John (not the author of the book of John) call Jesus? (John 1:29 and 35)

Note: By calling Jesus the Lamb of God, John was proclaiming that Jesus would be the sacrifice that would atone for the sins of the world.

In John 1:32-34, we read that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit. Jesus refers to the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:1-5. More about this is discussed in *Tools for Mentoring* “Baptism with the Holy Spirit” module. Or ask a supportive Christian friend or pastor.

In John 1:35-51 Jesus called some men to follow Him as disciples. Each one said “yes” to Jesus. A disciple is someone who learns from Jesus and follows Him in obedience.

Are you willing to follow Jesus as His disciple? Ask Him to help you. He will.

Read John chapter 2

What was the result of the servants’ obedience to Jesus? (John 2:1-12)

What is something you have done lately to obey Him?

What did Jesus say would happen three days after His death? (John 2:18-22)

Read John chapter 3.

What are the two kinds of birth? (John 3:1-8)

What kind of birth is necessary to enter the Kingdom of God?

How can we be born again by the Holy Spirit? Read John 1:12-13.

How can we keep from perishing and being condemned eternally? (John 3:16-18 and 36)

What do we have if we believe in Jesus? (John 3:16-18 and 36)

Note: “To believe means to trust a statement or promise so as to act upon it. For example, if you believe the house is on fire, you will act. You believe—trust as valid—that Jesus’

death provided the complete payment (atonement) for your wrongs. Therefore, you depend on His sacrifice alone and not on your own good deeds to justify you before God.” (from *Tools for Mentoring Evangelism* module by Joy Schroeder)

Thank Jesus for coming to earth and dying to pay for all your wrongs so you can live forever with Him.

Read John 4

What did Jesus say to the Samaritan woman that revealed He was no ordinary man? (John 4:16-19)

Who did Jesus say He was? (John 4:25-26)

The woman knew about the prophesied Messiah—the Savior of the world—but that day she met Him herself!

What did the woman do? What did she say to the people? (John 4:28-30)

What happened because of her testimony? (John 4:39-43)

The Samaritan woman didn't wait until she was perfect to point others to Jesus. You don't have to wait either.

Sometime this week, write out your testimony. It's easier to edit your story when it's written down on paper. Use this format:

1. A little of your former life
2. How you came into your relationship with Christ
3. Something of what it has meant since then

Pray for a friend that doesn't know Jesus yet. Ask God to give you an opportunity to tell him or her your testimony.

Read John 5

When Jesus found the man He had healed, what did He say to the man? (John 5:14)

How do you think this impacted the man?

Not every sick or disabled person at the pool was in that condition because they sinned. However, when we sin, we always bring some form of destruction onto ourselves and others. This should sober us. What do you think about that?

What did Jesus claim that made the Jewish leaders want to kill Him? (John 5:16-18)

Read John 5:19. How did Jesus know what to do?

“Jesus only did what He saw His Father doing; you can follow His example. Take a minute to ask Him, ‘What are You doing today, Father, and how can I participate with You in it?’

Listen. The Holy Spirit may speak to you in a gentle urging, idea, or impression that comes to your mind now, or sometime later today. If you pay attention during the day, He can show you what He’s doing—whom He wants to love and bless through your life.” (from *Tools for Mentoring* Prayer module by Joy Schroeder)

Read John 6.

What did Jesus call Himself? (John 6:35)

What happens if we believe? (John 6:47-51)

Note: If we believe in Jesus—trust His death and resurrection for forgiveness—we have “eaten.”

What happened in John 6:60-61, 66?

What did Jesus ask His twelve closest disciples? What did Peter answer? (John 6:67-69)

What is a hard or difficult teaching from the Bible that you have encountered?

What will your answer be to Jesus’ question: “You do not want to leave too, do you?”

Talk to Jesus about the last two questions.

Read John 7

What did Jesus claim that angered the Pharisees so that they wanted to arrest Him? (John 7:16-18) Hint: Who sent Jesus into the world?

What attitude will help a person know if Jesus’ teaching is true? (John 7:17)

What happens to the person who believes in Jesus? (John 7:37-39)

Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit so His rivers of living water flow more and more from your life.

Read John 8.

Read John 8:2-11.

What had the woman done to break God’s moral law?

How did the Pharisees respond to her sin? Do you ever respond the same way toward yourself when you sin?

Sometimes you may feel shame or condemnation when you sin, especially in areas you struggle to overcome. These feelings can torment you into a downward spiral of despair and more sin: “I’ll never change. I might as well give up and give in again.” Or “I’ve already gone this far down, I might as well keep going.” Or “I can never forgive myself for what I’ve done.” Condemnation locks you **in** to the spiral and locks you **out** of hope for change.

What, specifically, did Jesus say to the woman? (John 8:10-11) What does He say to you?

Did Jesus acknowledge the fact that she had sinned? Of course He did. But, His **convicting acknowledgement** of her sin flung open the door that the Pharisees’ **condemning acknowledgement** had locked shut. She could change! *“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.” John 8:11*

Condemnation brings despair. Conviction brings hope for change. (from *Tools for Mentoring Repentance* module by Joy Schroeder)

Is there anything you need to repent of? Tell God and ask His forgiveness. Then, make amends if necessary.

Read John 9.

Here’s a little humor. Listen for the formerly blind man’s frustration with the Pharisees.

At first who does the man think Jesus is? (John 9:17)

How did the man respond when Jesus said that He was the “Son of Man”? (John 9:35-38)

Note: “Son of Man” was another name for the promised Messiah.

Notice that Jesus received the man’s worship because He is God.

Read John 10

What is the difference between the thief and Jesus? (John 10:10)

Who is the good shepherd? How does He show His love for the sheep? (John 10:11)

How does this truth help you trust Jesus and follow Him in obedience?

Read John 10:14-15, 27. How do you think getting to know Jesus helps you recognize His voice?

“God can speak to you through what you read in the Bible. He also speaks to you by the inner voice of the Holy Spirit. This can be a thought that drops into your mind, as words that you ‘hear’

in your mind, as an impression or gentle urging to do or say something, or as an impression that you should **not** do or say something.

The more you get to know Jesus, your good Shepherd, and the more you follow (obey) Him, the more easily you will recognize His voice. Listen for His voice with an obedient heart. He knows you. He is able to help you hear Him.” (from *Tools for Mentoring Prayer and Guidance* modules)

What did Jesus claim that made the Jews want to stone Him? (John 10:30-33)

Thank Jesus for laying down His life for you on the cross. Ask Him to help you hear His voice better and follow (obey) Him.

Read John 11

Who did Jesus say He is? What choice is needed to access resurrection life? (John 11:25-26)

Who did Martha say Jesus is? (John 11:27)

What is needed to see God’s glory? (John 11:40)

What stood out to you in this chapter?

Ask God to intervene and show His glory in whatever situation that concerns you.

Read John 12.

When Mary poured perfume on Jesus, what did He predict again? (John 12:7)

What happens if a seed dies? (John 12:23-24)

Jesus uses this illustration to describe the power of His death. What truth does He go on to teach? (John 12:25)

If you “love” your life, motivated primarily by personal gain and self-interest, you will actually lose your life—God’s purpose for you. To “hate” your life is to “die” to having your own way and surrender yourself to God. You will gain everything of eternal value.

If you want to serve Jesus, what does He require of you? (John 12:26)

What did Jesus mean by “lifted up”? (John 12:32-33)

What in your life needs to be surrendered in order to more freely serve and follow Jesus?

Ask God to help you lay aside the things that make it harder to follow Him fully. Thank Him for loving you and staying near you as you are in the process of changing.

Watch the Bible Project Video for John 13-21

Please watch this video about the last half of the book of John. <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/john-13-21/>

What stood out to you in the video?

Read John 13

In John 13:3, what does it say that Jesus knew?

Knowing these things, what did Jesus do? (John 13:4-17)

In John 13:12-17, what was the example Jesus set for His disciples (i.e. followers)?

Jesus, who has all power and authority, did the task of the lowest household servant. He showed His love by serving His disciples. Look for someone you can serve today.

Note: In John 13:23, the “disciple Jesus loved” refers to John, the Holy Spirit-inspired author of this book of the Bible.

What is Jesus’ command to His followers? What is the standard for what our love should be for one another as Christians? (John 13:34)

What is the identifying mark of a disciple of Jesus? (John 13:35)

Today or this week, how will you show love to another believer following Jesus’ example?

Ask Jesus to help you love as He has loved you.

Read John 14.

There’s quite a bit here so you may want to split this chapter between 2 days.

What does Jesus promise He will do? (John 14:3)

What does Jesus say is the only way a person can come to God? (John 14:6)

According to this passage, will any religion or belief lead a person to God?

How can you know what our heavenly Father is like? (John 14:9)

From what you know about Jesus so far, what is your heavenly Father like?

God is not like our biological fathers. He is perfect.

What does Jesus say about prayer? (John 14:13-14)

Do you think this passage means that we get everything we ask Him for? Read 1 John 5:14-15—John's letter near the end of the Bible. What does this passage say?

How do we show our love for Jesus? (John 14:15, 21, 23-24)

Why do you think loving Jesus helps you obey Him?

Right now, ask Jesus to help you love Him more today. Ask Him to help you obey Him today. Then pay attention to the Holy Spirit's nudge when you are tempted.

Who will Jesus and the Father send to be with us? (John 14:16, 17, 26)

From these verses, list what the Holy Spirit will do.

Note: God is a Trinity, one God in three Persons: Father, Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit.

Read John 15

Who is the vine and who are the branches? How can you bear fruit? (John 15:4-5)

When a branch remains connected to the vine, it bears fruit. When you remain connected to Jesus you will bear fruit—doing good actions and becoming good in character. You will do and be like Jesus if you remain connected to Him.

How much does Jesus love you? (John 15:9-10)

Jesus says to remain in His love. How can you remain connected to Jesus' love? (John 15:9-10)

From this passage, what do you think happens when you disobey Jesus?

In what area of your life is it hard to obey Jesus?

If you know you have disobeyed Jesus in some way, take time right now to repent. Ask Him to help you change. When you repent, He forgives you and your connection with Him is restored.

What attitude can you expect from the world (those who are not followers of Jesus)? (John 15:18-19)

Note: The "world" here refers to the selfish human system fueled by Satan that opposes God's Kingdom purpose. As a follower of Jesus, you belong to His Kingdom.

In what ways have you experienced persecution because of following Jesus? Maybe rejection, exclusion, harsh words, etc. Ask Jesus for His help and comfort.

Read John 16

Why did Jesus warn His disciples, and you, about persecution? (John 16:1)

Why was it necessary for Jesus to go away? (John 16:7)

What are the things the Holy Spirit will do? (John 16:13-15)

In what ways would these affect your life?

Ask your small group leader, mentor, or a friend to talk about the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Refer to the Baptism with the Holy Spirit module in *Tools for Mentoring*.

Read again John 16:16 and 22. What does Jesus promise He will do?

How does the Father feel toward you? (John 16:23-27)

Ask the Father to help you know Him like this.

Read John 16:33. What will you experience in the world? What will Jesus give you?

Read John 17.

In this chapter, Jesus prays for His followers and for you. For each of the following verses, write a short note about what Jesus prays.

John 17:11 _____

John 17:15 _____

John 17:20 _____

John 17:21 _____

John 17:22-23 _____

Repetition is a way of emphasizing something. What words are repeated in these verses?

What level of importance does God place on our relationships with each other?

For people to be one with each other—be in unity—means to be in right relationship with each other. For example, to encourage one another, be kind to each other, correct each other, reconcile with each other, pray for each other, and so on.

What are some ways you can build your relationship with another believer this week?

Do you have something against another person? Forgive them.

Does someone have something against you? Set up a time to try to make things right between you.

Ask God to help you love people with His love.

Read John 18.

How many times did Peter deny that he knew Jesus? (John 18:15-27)

How do you think Peter felt afterwards? Read Luke 22:54-62 to find out.

In John 18:36-37, how does Jesus describe His Kingdom?

What happened when Jesus came near people? That's what the Kingdom of God looks like.

If you yield to Jesus as the King and ruler of your life—obey Him—then His character is being formed in you and His priorities are being expressed in your actions. Wherever you go, the Kingdom of God has come near people.

How might that knowledge affect how you think and act around people today?

Ask Jesus to help you become more like Him. Ask Him to help you do good to the people in your life. Then obey the next thing He tells you to do.

Read John 19.

What are some passages that impact you in this chapter? How do they impact you?

Why did the Jews want Jesus dead? (John 19:7-9)

Why do you think Jesus' claim to be the Son of God made Pilate afraid?

You may have observed how John repeatedly refers to the events as fulfilling the Scriptures. Read these prophecies from the Old Testament that were fulfilled by Jesus. These are a few of over 300 Old Testament prophecies fulfilled by Jesus' life on earth.

Note: The Old Testament is the part of the Bible that God gave the Jews before Jesus came to earth. The Old Testament prepares the way for Jesus, the promised Messiah who would be the final, complete sacrifice for all people's sins.

Read John 19:23-24 and Psalms 22:18.

Read John 19:28-30 and Psalm 69:21.

Read John 19:33, 36 and Psalms 34:20.

Read John 19:34, 37 and Zechariah 12:10.

How do these fulfilled prophecies impact your faith?

Read John 20.

What is significant about having eye-witnesses to Jesus' resurrection from the dead?

Read John 20:21. What does Jesus say in this passage?

What have you noticed that Jesus did to fulfill His mission on the earth? For example, testifying to the truth, teaching His followers, ... What else did He do?

We as Jesus' followers have been sent with the same mission. What do you think about that?

In verse 22, what did Jesus do for the disciples?

Jesus gave the disciples the Holy Spirit to live within them. When you become a believer in Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live within you, too. Then you can ask for the baptism with the Holy Spirit for greater power to participate in His mission. Read Luke 24:45-53 and Acts 1:1-10.

How did Jesus help Thomas with his doubts? (John 20:24-29 Notice especially verses 25 and 27.)

What does this show you about Jesus?

When Thomas believes, what does he call Jesus? (verse 28)

What is significant about Jesus receiving Thomas's worship?

Note: By receiving worship, Jesus is claiming to be God.

Why was the gospel of John written? (John 20:31)

How do these eye-witness accounts of Jesus' death and resurrection impact your faith that Jesus is Who He says He is?

Note: Jesus claimed to be God and the only way for salvation.

What questions or struggles do you have about Jesus or how to follow Him? Ask Jesus for help and ask a supportive Christian friend.

Read John 21.

What important question did Jesus ask Peter? (John 21:15-17)

What did Jesus tell him to do?

Whatever good you do at work, school, or home, do it as an expression of your love for Jesus. That way, if you are affirmed, you stay free from pride. If you are overlooked, you stay free from offense. Either way, you are free.

Every day “What are You doing today, Father, and how can I participate with You in it?” Then, do the good in front of you to do as an expression of love for Jesus.