



JOHN

JOURNAL

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The book of JOHN (Part 1) study journal.
Northwest Hills Community Church | 2021

WELCOME TO THE JOHN JOURNAL

Together, we are going to embark on a 26-week journey through the Gospel of John. Here, in Part 1 of a two-part journal, we will dive deeper into John chapters 1 – 11. As we study the Gospel of John together, remember to be patient. It can be easy to jump to other sources as we study the Word of God, but as we study together, take your time and think critically about the text. Consider others that you can connect with, maybe your Community Group, to share what God is teaching you throughout this series. Learn more about how to get the most out of this journal in this introduction as we study John's account of Jesus' ministry here on earth as a NWH family.

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WHAT IS IN THIS JOURNAL?

This journal has been put together by NWH to help guide you through the Gospel of John in your own personal study, or as a Community Group. This is not a replacement for the Sunday gathering but rather a supplemental material to help you engage more deeply both with the Bible and spiritual disciplines.

EACH WEEK

As a church, we will be focusing on one chapter from the Gospel of John each week. At the beginning of the week, you are invited to take notes during the Sunday message. Then, Monday through Friday, you are encouraged to meditate on the week's passage using the **H-E-A-R Bible study method**.

H-E-A-R is a great method of Bible reading and journaling. It encourages us to create an atmosphere to hear God speak.

H – HIGHLIGHT

After reading the passage of scripture, highlight each verse that speaks to you by copying it out in your journal.

E – EXPLAIN

Explain what the text means. By asking some simple questions, with the help of the Holy Spirit, you can better understand the meaning of a passage or verse by engaging with the text and wrestling with its meaning.

Consider:

- Why was this written?
- To whom was it originally written?
- How does it fit with the surrounding verses?
- Why did the Holy Spirit inspire John to include this passage in this Gospel?
- What is John intending to communicate through this text?

A – APPLY

Application is at the heart of the process. How can you apply what you learned from today's verse(s) to your life? Is there a command to obey? A sin to confess? Or a promise you can claim? Answer a series of questions to uncover the significance of these verses to you personally:

- How should this passage change me?
- What does this mean today?
- What is God saying to me?

R – RESPOND

Your response to the passage may take on many forms. You may write a call to action. You may describe how you will be different because of what God has said to you through His Word. You may indicate what you are going to do because of what you have learned. You may respond by writing out a prayer to God. For example, you may ask God to help you to be more loving, or to give you a desire to be more generous in your giving. Keep in mind that this is your response to what you have just read.

There will be space for each part of this Bible study method to write out your thoughts and reflections.

Before diving into the Word each day, prayer is an important first step. Ask God to open your eyes to the things that he has for you to learn and grow in as you meditate on the text. Then jump into the passage and see what he unfolds.

EACH MONTH

Each month we, as a church, will be highlighting one spiritual discipline to put into practice.

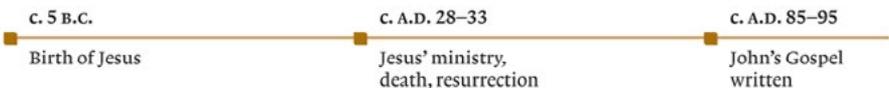
Here at NWH we are committed to engaging in the disciplines and to practice them in such a way that they become a natural part of our life as we grow in our faith and walk with Jesus.

At the beginning of each month, we will focus on one of the disciplines with an article or overview to read. Throughout the month, take time to try and engage with that discipline.

If you have never practiced any of the disciplines, it is okay to take “baby steps” and start small. Commit to creating a cadence to incorporate that discipline into your life that month.

It is our prayer, that as you study the Gospel of John with this journal in hand, you will be transformed by his Spirit, that he would illuminate his Word to you, and that you would fall more deeply in love with Jesus, himself.

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN



Author, Date, and Recipients

John the son of Zebedee wrote this Gospel. He was a Palestinian Jew, one of the 12 disciples, and a member of Jesus' inner apostolic circle. He was referred to as the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (13:23). John also wrote 1–3 John and Revelation. He likely wrote his Gospel account between A.D. 70 (the date of the destruction of the temple) and A.D. 100 (the reputed end of John's life). It was likely written from Ephesus in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), one of the most important cities of the Roman Empire at the time. His original audience consisted of Jews and Gentiles living in the larger Greco-Roman world in Ephesus and beyond, toward the close of the first century A.D.

Theme and Purpose

The theme of John's Gospel is that Jesus is the long-awaited, promised Messiah and Son of God. By believing in Jesus, people have eternal life (see 20:30–31).

As evidence that Jesus is the Messiah, John relies on several selected messianic signs performed by Jesus and a series of witnesses to Jesus. These include the Scriptures, John the Baptist, Jesus himself, God the Father, Jesus' miraculous works, the Holy Spirit, and John himself.

Key Themes

- I **Jesus.** Jesus is God, the "I am." He existed before the creation of the world, and he has supernatural knowledge. He fulfills the Jewish festivals and institutions. As the sent Son of God, he reflects the Sender. Signs and witnesses demonstrate that he is the Messiah.
- II. **The Trinity.** Father, Son, and Spirit are united in their work of revelation and redemption.
- III. **Salvation.** God is sovereign in salvation. Jesus' death is the basis of salvation, which is obtained through believing in the living Jesus as the Son of God
- IV. **Eternal Life.** Jesus is the giver of eternal life. Believers can experience some of salvation's benefits during this present evil age.
- V. **Mission.** Believers are called to continue Jesus' mission.

Outline

- I. **Prologue:** The Incarnate Word (1:1–18)
- II. **Signs of the Messiah, with Teaching about Life in Him** (1:19–12:50)
- III. **The Farewell Teaching and the Passion Narrative** (13:1–20:31)
- IV. **Epilogue:** The Roles of Peter and of the Disciple Whom Jesus Loved (21:1–25)

The Setting of John

The events of the Gospel of John take place in Palestine, incorporated into the Roman Empire in 63 B.C. Appointed by the Romans as king over the Jews in 37 B.C., Herod the Great ruled until his death in 4 B.C. The Romans divided his kingdom among his descendants.

Introduction to John." *ESV Bible*", Crossway, www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/introduction-to-john/

HELPFUL RESOURCES WHILE STUDYING JOHN:

- *BibleProject* Videos: bibleproject.com/learn/john
- *John*, by Colin G. Kruse
- *The Gospel According to John*, by D. A. Carson
- *Word Biblical Commentary: John*, by George R. Beasley-Murray
- blueletterbible.org
- biblegateway.com

MARCH

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE: SOLITUDE

SOLITUDE

This month the challenge is to focus on the discipline of **solitude**. While many of us enjoy spending time with others, it is important that we spend time alone, by ourselves, for the very purpose of examining our souls and connecting with God. We are so used to constant information intake that it can be hard to generate any of our own thoughts. However, in solitude, we silence all outside noise and connect with God. Consider some ways that you can spend time connecting with God in solitude this month. Let the following words from Donald Whitney encourage you in the discipline of solitude.

The sort of solitude that refreshes the Christian soul is more than just separation from other people. Scriptural solitude is the biblical practice of temporarily withdrawing to privacy for spiritual purposes. The period of solitude may last only a few minutes or for days. Generally it is sought in order to engage in other spiritual disciplines without the distractions typical in the presence of people...

A mark of those who have experienced the true grace that comes through faith in Jesus Christ is taking pleasure in being alone with God. Solitude provides the opportunity to meditate on Scripture, to pray, and to enjoy worshiping God in private. The Holy Spirit enlivens these experiences for those who have believed the gospel.

Withdrawing from the presence of all but God affords an excellent occasion for focused thinking about gospel truths and realities, freshly applying the gospel to our souls again, and reflecting on the blessings and hopes that are ours through the gospel...

Seek at least a few minutes of time alone with God daily, and seek some extended times occasionally, but seek solitude for the sake of your soul...solitude with God won't consistently occur without intentionality. But it's a pursuit worth the discipline. When will you begin?

Whitney, Donald. "The Gospel and the Discipline of Solitude." Lifeway. Com, 14 Jan. 2014, www.lifeway.com/en/articles/spiritual-disciplines-gospel-solitude-donald-whitney.

A – APPLY

How can you apply what you learned from today's verse(s) to your life? Is there a command to obey? A sin to confess? Or a promise you can claim? Record here the thoughts God brought to your mind as you read the passage and/or a plan to live out this verse.

R – RESPOND

Write here your response to God. Your response to the passage may take on many forms. You may indicate what you are going to do because of what you have learned. You may respond by writing out a prayer to God.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

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ADDITIONAL NOTES:

APRIL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE: COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY

This month the challenge is to focus on the discipline of **community**. We are called to belong to one another as the trinity belongs to one another. Think through how you might invest in relationships this month as an intentional practice. You might consider joining a community group if you are not in one. You might consider inviting someone over for a meal, to have a virtual cup of coffee together, or to go on a hike with. Currently, people are more isolated and more lonely than ever, what a perfect time to invest in the discipline of community! Let the following words from Dallas Willard help you think about Christian community and fellowship.

In fellowship we engage in common activities of worship, study, prayer, celebration, and service with other disciples. This may involve assembling ourselves together in a large group or meeting with only a few. Personalities united can contain more of God and sustain the force of his greater presence much better than scattered individuals. The fire of God kindles higher as the brands are heaped together and each is warmed by the other's flame. The members of the body must be in contact if they are to sustain and be sustained by each other. Christian redemption is not devised to be a solitary thing, though each individual of course has a unique and direct relationship with God, and God alone is his or her Lord and Judge. But the Life is one that requires some regular and profound conjunction with others who share it. It is greatly diminished when that is lacking.

The diverse gifts or graces of the Spirit—all of which are needed in some measure by each person from time to time—are distributed among the separate members of the body of Christ, the church. The unity of the body rightly functioning is thus guaranteed by the people reciprocating in needs and ministries. There are no "oughts" or "shoulds" or "won't-you pleases" about this. It is just a matter of how things actually work in the new life:

Each man is given his gift by the Spirit that he may use it for the common good. One man's gift by the Spirit is to speak with wisdom, another's to speak with knowledge. The same Spirit gives to another man faith, to another the ability to heal, to another the power to do great deeds. The same Spirit gives to another man the gift of preaching the word of God, to another the ability to discriminate in spiritual matters, to another speech in different tongues and to yet another the power to interpret the tongues. Behind all these gifts is the operation of the same

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ADDITIONAL NOTES:

MAY

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE: FASTING

FASTING

This month the challenge is to focus on the discipline of **fasting**. When we fast, we refrain from food to remind our bodies and souls that we are deeply dependent on things outside of ourselves, namely God. Think about how you might practice fasting this month, perhaps you might skip one meal or go 24 hours without food one day. Let the following excerpts of the article below help you as you consider fasting this month.

Chances are you are among the massive majority of Christians who rarely or never fast. It's not because we haven't read our Bibles or sat under faithful preaching or heard about the power of fasting, or even that we don't genuinely want to do it. We just never actually get around to putting down the fork.

Part of it may be that we live in a society in which food is so ubiquitous that we eat not only when we don't need to, but sometimes even when we don't want to. We eat to share a meal with others, to build or grow relationships (good reasons), or just as a distraction from responsibility. And of course, there are our own cravings and aches for comfort that keep us from the discomfort of fasting.

Not So Fast

Fasting is voluntarily going without food — or any other regularly enjoyed, good gift from God — for the sake of some spiritual purpose. It is markedly counter-cultural in our consumerist society..

If we are to learn the lost art of fasting and enjoy its fruit, it will not come with our ear to the ground of society, but with Bibles open. Then, the concern will not be whether we fast, but when. Jesus assumes his followers will fast, and even promises it will happen. He doesn't say "if," but "when you fast" (Matthew 6:16). And he doesn't say his followers might fast, but "they will" (Matthew 9:15)...

How to Start Fasting

Fasting is hard. It sounds much easier in concept than it proves to be in practice. It can be surprising how on-edge we feel when we miss a meal. Many an idealistic new fast-er has decided to miss a meal and only found our belly drove us to make up for it long before the next mealtime came.

Fasting sounds so simple, and yet the world, our flesh, and the devil conspire to introduce all sorts of complications that keep it from happening. In view of helping you start down the slow path

to good fasting, here are three simple pieces of advice. These suggestions might seem pedantic, but the hope is that such basic counsel can serve those who are new at fasting or have never seriously tried it.

Start small.

Don't go from no fasting to attempting a week long fast. Start with one meal; maybe fast one meal a week for several weeks. Then try two meals, and work your way up to a day long fast...

Plan what you'll do instead of eating.

Fasting isn't merely an act of self-deprivation, but a spiritual discipline for seeking more of God's fullness. Which means we should have a plan for what positive pursuit to undertake in the time it normally takes to eat. We spend a good portion of our day with food in front of us. One significant part of fasting is the time it creates for prayer and meditation on God's word or some act of love for others...

Fast from something other than food.

Fasting from food is not necessarily for everyone. Some health conditions keep even the most devout from the traditional course. However, fasting is not limited to abstaining from food. As Martyn Lloyd-Jones said, "Fasting should really be made to include abstinence from anything which is legitimate in and of itself for the sake of some special spiritual purpose."

Christian fasting turns its attention to Jesus or some great cause of his in the world. Christian fasting seeks to take the pains of hunger and transpose them into the key of some eternal anthem...

Mathis, David. "A Guide to Christian Fasting." Desiring God, 26 Aug. 2015, www.desiringgod.org/articles/fasting-for-beginners.

Apply & Make a Plan

What are one or two ways that you want to engage in this discipline throughout this month? Write out a plan to practice these this month.

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ADDITIONAL NOTES:

JUNE

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE: FEASTING & CELEBRATION

FEASTING & CELEBRATION

This month the challenge is to focus on the discipline of **feasting and celebration**. As you think through this month think about how you might go out of your way to celebrate God's goodness and provision. This might be through a lavish meal with your family, it might include inviting over some close friends who also love God. At this meal, bring prepared thoughts of thankfulness and celebration to give honor to God, who lavishly loves us. During COVID, we might need to get creative here! Let the following words of Richard Foster in his son's book encourage you in your celebration efforts.

The spiritual discipline of celebration leads us into a perpetual jubilee of the Spirit. We are rejoicing in the goodness and the greatness of God. As Saint Augustine said, "The Christian should be an alleluia from head to foot."

Celebration comes to us as the result of all the spiritual disciplines having done their work in our lives. The desired goal of the spiritual disciplines is to produce in us a deep character formation. The fruit of the Spirit is the "holy habits" of a truly formed life. In greater and deeper measure our life is being penetrated throughout by "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

This deep-rooted character formation brings balance to our lives. Anger, bitterness, resentment, rancor, hostility, deceit—these things simply do not have the same control over us that they once did. We feel the impact of this in all our relationships: with our spouse, with our children, with our co-workers, with our neighbors, with our friends. Even with our enemies.

When the substance of our life is formed and conformed and transformed into Christ-likeness, then celebration becomes possible. No longer do we undermine or sabotage the good work of God. We can simply and joyfully celebrate the goodness of God in us and in those around us. Celebration is made possible as the common ventures of life are redeemed.

Joy is at the heart of celebration. Indeed, I rather imagine it's the engine that keeps the entire operation going. "The joy of the LORD is your strength," declared Nehemiah. And so it is. Without joy penetrating all the disciplines, they will quickly deteriorate into another set of soul-killing legalisms.

Perhaps the most important benefit of celebration is that it saves us from taking our-selves too seriously. It is an occupational hazard

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