



## ***That you may believe...*** **Leaders Guide for Week 5**

**(Times are approximate)** – start time: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Welcome**

- As your group comes in, you might ask them to think about something they like about winter.
  - Once you are ready to begin, take about 5 minutes to let people share their thoughts.
- (+7 min)

### **Opening prayer**

- Remember: praise God for who He is; thank Him for what He is doing through this study for everyone; request the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and comments as well as those of the group.
- (+2 min)

### **Opening Comments**

- The Jews were persecuting Jesus because He had been healing on the Sabbath.
- However, in response to their frustration and anger towards Him, He shares His own defense by expressing His equality with God in three ways and follows those by giving four witnesses to who He is, the Son of God.
- **5:17** Jesus demonstrates His equality with God in His nature.
- His Father was working and so He was doing likewise.
- He then demonstrated His equality with God in power.
- He shared that He could do nothing of Himself but only what He saw the Father doing.
- He states that the Father loves the Son and just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, He could give life to who He wished.
- If that wasn't enough, He went on to demonstrate He was equal to God in authority.
- He said that if people didn't honor Him, they did not honor God His Father who sent Him.
- He adds that *"whoever hears My Word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life and will not be condemned."* **(5:24)**
- This must have set the religious leaders on their heels.
- They knew that no one had that kind of authority except God alone!
- Jesus even said the dead would hear His voice and live.
- He then shares what will take place on Judgment Day when believers and unbelievers will be separated.
- Jesus said *"By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me."* **(5:30)**
- So in order to support all that He has said to this point, Jesus mentions witnesses to who He is.
- Jesus knew the need for a witness and the one He identifies is John the Baptist.
- However, Jesus is not concerned about man's witness because He states that *"...the witness I receive is not from man, but I say these things that you may be saved."* **(5:34)**
- You see, even when Jesus was being persecuted, He wanted to save those who persecuted Him.
- **(+5 min to this point)** The next witness Jesus speaks of is that of His works.
- He says, *"...for the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me."* **(5:36)**

- So Jesus has mentioned John the Baptist and the works which He, Jesus, has performed at the instruction of His Father.
- Now He speaks of His Father as another who has borne witness of Him.
- But here Jesus gives the explanation why the religious leaders could not believe in Him nor understand who He was.
- Jesus says, *“And you do not have His word abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent.”* (5:38)
- Jesus knew their hearts and they were cold, hardened to the truth, they held to their convictions no matter how wrong they were and when Jesus pointed this out to them they didn’t believe Him.
- The last witness Jesus uses are the Scriptures themselves.
- He says they search the Scriptures and that the Scriptures bear witness to Him.
- Jesus identifies several issues with these leaders.
- They search the Scriptures, have head knowledge of what they say, and yet they won’t come to Jesus.
- Jesus knows their hearts and that they do not have the love of God in themselves.
- He says they will not receive Him even though He comes in His Father’s name.
- He says they can’t believe because they seek glory from man and one another rather than from *“the one and only God?”* (5:44)
- He ends by using a reference to Moses who He says will be their accuser because Moses wrote about Him and they did not believe.
- So Jesus concludes His discussion with them by saying, *“But if you do not believe his (Moses) writings, how will you believe My words?”* (5:47)
- From all this we see that Jesus has equality with God in His nature, His power, and His authority.
- We also have seen that there are four primary witnesses to Jesus Himself; John the Baptist, the works that He (Jesus) did, God the Father is His witness, and the Holy Scriptures.

(+12 min)

### Discussion of the Study Lesson – (~33 min)

**This week’s title: The Divine Son: Belief and Unbelief - John 5: 16-47**

**Highlighted verse:** *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and will not be condemned, he has crossed over from death to life.”* - **John 5: 24**

### Day 1: Read John 5:16-47

1. Read **John 5:16-47** at least once, jotting down initial observations.

- Have people share what the Holy Spirit has revealed to them through these verses.

(+7 min)

### Day 2: Read John 5: 16-30

Study help: Through this study of John we hope that all participants will grow in their faith and move from not only reading the Scriptures and doing the study lesson, but to *applying* something you learn each day/week to your life. James (1:22) said *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”* Paul warns us when he said (1 Cor. 10:11) *“These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.”* Even the prophet Isaiah (42:23) challenged the people of his day to do what the Lord says by saying *“Which of you will listen*

to this or pay close attention in time to come?" It is clear that James, Paul, and Isaiah were saying that we are to be *doers* of the Word and not just *hearers* of it. That means we are to look for Biblical applications for our own lives. Application begins with **reading** a passage to get a general idea of the story; then, we try to **understand** by knowing what all the words mean, learning the facts, and trying to identify the concepts; then, comes **comprehension** which means finding Biblical principles, what are the timeless truths that God wants to communicate even to our day; follow that with, **applying to self** by putting *me* in the story, identify how Biblical principles apply to *my* life, make timeless truths timely, and see what God wants *me* to do; finally, **action**, by designing an action plan, obeying God, and putting into practice *now* what He has taught you in His Word. We will be including more Bible study hints in future study lessons.

1. What insights do you gain in **verses 19-23** concerning the close relationship between the Father and the Son?

- Some examples : the Son can do nothing by Himself; the Son does what the father does; the Father loves the Son.

(+3 min)

2. According to Jesus in **verses 24-30**, what are the consequences of our response to Him?

- There are only two groups of people: those who have eternal life and those who are condemned.
- Our response leads to either eternal life or eternal separation from the Father.
- There is no "gray" area, there is no fence to sit on, this is a binary choice – eternal life or eternal separation.
- By the way, being non-committal is being committed to separation from the Father.

(+3 min)

### Day 3: Read John 5: 31-47

1. Read **John 5:31-39**. Jesus presented witnesses who attested to His deity. Who or what were they?

- The person John the Baptist
- The works Jesus did
- The Scriptures, God's Word
- Jesus' Father

(+2 min)

2. Jesus states Moses wrote about Him (**5:46**). What did Moses say about Jesus? Consider **Genesis 3:15; Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19**.

- It might be a good idea to let the people know that theologians believe Moses wrote the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
- Be open to other references in the writings of Moses.
- You might use **Genesis 28:10-22** and compare it to **John 1:51**;
- Sacrifice of Isaac in **Genesis 22:1-19**

(+4 min)

### Day 4: Read John 20:31

1. Consider how **John 5:16-47** relates to John's purpose in writing this Gospel. "...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 20:31**). What do we learn about what we are to believe from **John 5:16-47**?

- Some references supporting his purpose: **John 5:24,38,44,46,47**
- (+2 min)

2. What do we learn about Jesus as the Son of God in **John 5:16-47**?

- He has a close relationship to His Father.
- He is deity like His Father.
- He has authority like His Father.

(+2 min)

### Day 5: Read John 5:16-47

1. It possible for a person to spend his or her entire life performing religious duties, yet not have a relationship with Jesus Christ. How have you avoided that situation?

- By holding to the true to **John 20:31**.
- Believing in Jesus and having a relationship with Him

(+4 min)

2. In this passage opposition to Jesus is rising. Have you experienced opposition to Jesus? How could you respond to this opposition? Each of us also needs to be aware of our own opposition to Jesus (we are all still sinners). How do you continue to be in opposition to Jesus? How could you repent of this opposition?

- Note that this is actually 4 questions so be sure to cover all four.

(+6 min)

### Closing Comments

- So going through the study lesson questions we have seen again what was spoken in the opening comments.
- Jesus had demonstrated equality with God in His nature, His power, and His authority.
- Plus He gave four primary witnesses for His claims: John the Baptist, the works that He (Jesus) did, God the Father, and the Holy Scriptures which spoke of Him beginning with Moses.
- So we may ask, "What does it take for people to believe Jesus is who He says He is?"
- Well, there is a fifth witness which speaks louder than all the rest.
- It is found in the book of Acts where Paul is speaking his address to the philosophers at Mars Hill in Athens.
- Paul declared, "In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent" (**Acts 17:30**)
- Paul's method of evangelism is quite different from today's.
- The one essential of modern evangelism is the invitation.
- But notice Paul did not say, "But now God *invites* all men to repent."
- Why do you suppose Paul didn't word it this way?
- Because you can decline an invitation with impunity, but you cannot refuse God's command to repent and still maintain impunity.
- Paul went on to say, "For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead" (**Acts 17:31**)

- Paul brought up the resurrection of Christ from the dead!
- Do we want more testimony or evidence than that?
- We're not going to get it!
- The resurrection was the final witness to Jesus' identity as well as proof of His victory over sin and death for all who will believe Him.
- If you have not made that decision, please don't put it off.
- Please talk with me after we are through.

(+5 min)

### **Closing Prayer**

- Thank Him for this time together and express your hope that what was shared during this time brought Him glory.

(+1 min)