



## *That you may believe...* Leaders Guide for Week 6

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

### Welcome

- Welcome everyone and as they come in ask them to think of one thing they have learned, or been challenged by, in this study of John.
- Then let people share for about 7 min.  
(+7 min)

### Opening prayer

- A suggestion only: You might pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance in your discussions, His revealing something new to each of you, and that God will be glorified through your fellowship and discussion.  
(+2 min)

### Opening Comments

- John's writing is selective so he can fulfill the purpose for his writing it, **John 20:31**, "*But 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*"
- He does not record events in Jesus' life that do not help him fulfill his purpose.
- For instance, between the healing of the paralytic (**John 5:1-9**) and the feeding of the 5,000, there are many events which took place in Jesus' life.
- You may find some in **Luke 6:1-9:10** and **Mark 3:1-6:30**.
- During this period Jesus also preached "the Sermon on the Mount" (**Matt. 5-7**) and told parables about the kingdom (**Matt. 13**).
- John did not write in a chronological form but rather he focused on events which would illustrate who Jesus was, why He came, and what one must do to be saved for eternity.
- John records Jesus' miracle of feeding the five thousand, and our study this week focuses somewhat on that very special event.
- An event which is not discussed in our study lesson is that of Jesus walking on water to meet the disciples in their boat (John 6:15-21).
- First, we must understand that according to Matthew, Jesus *sent* the disciples away in their boat.
- Then came a terrible wind storm, "*a strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough*" (6:18).
- James Boice says, "I wonder what the disciples were thinking about as they rowed their boat through the storm, for six or seven dangerous hours. They were worried, no doubt. But did they ever think of Jesus and of His power to help them? Did they realize that even then they were in His care?" <sup>1</sup>
- This is the event where Peter asked if he could come to Jesus and He said "*Come!*" (Matt. 14:28-31).
- What are some lessons we might learn from this experience?
- There are at least three lessons we can learn: first, we can see from this event recorded in three gospels that *Jesus was watching*.
- He knew what they were going through; the storm was not a surprise for Him just as the storms in our lives are not a surprise to Him.
- A second lesson we can learn is, *Jesus helps in times of need*.
- Jesus watches us but not with some kind of serene, unmoved detachment.

- We can see throughout the gospels that *Jesus helps people* from a compassionate, caring, and divine purpose.
  - William Barclay tells the story of a teacher in a little country school in England. She had told this story to the children; and she must have told it well, for the children obviously got the point. Some short time afterward there was a great snowstorm. The teacher had the job of getting the children home. Sometimes she practically had to drag them through the drifts. It was tiring. Finally, when they were nearly exhausted with the struggle, she overheard one of the youngest children say in his best British manner, half to himself, "We could be doing with that chap Jesus here now." Well, we could always be doing with Jesus and we never, no matter how difficult the circumstances, have to do without Him."
  - He is always watching and helping.
  - A third lesson we might learn is that *Jesus is also able to bring us home*, just as He did the disciples.
  - We see in the story that He not only *helped* them but He got them to the place they were going.
  - Whether or not John saw these same lessons in writing this event, we can relate to similar events in our lives today.
  - Not being in a boat and rowing against a high wind, but we do experience stormy seas at times.
  - A stormy sea, a strong wind, a dark night – these we face at times in our lives.
  - And at times we cannot even see where we are headed.
  - But we shall see Jesus one day, and we will see that our lives were being guided by Jesus Himself into port.
  - Another observation which had to be overlooked, in order to keep the study lesson of a reasonable length, was the rejection of Jesus by many of His followers (John 6:60-66).
  - Proverbs says, "*Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed*" (Prov. 16:3).
- (+13 min)

### Discussion of the Study Lesson – (~30 min)

**This week's title: The Bread of Life - John 6**

**Highlighted verse: "*I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.*" - John 6: 35**

### Day 1: Read John 6

1. Read **John 6** at least once, jotting down initial observations.

- Have as many share as time permits.

(+8 min)

### Day 2: Read John 6: 1- 24

1. Why do you think Jesus asked Philip the question he asked in **verse 5** if Jesus already knew what he was going to do?

- Jesus may have been testing Philip.
- Philip's answer shows he can only think at a level of the natural world.

(+2 min)

2. In the previous chapter Jesus stated that Moses wrote about him (**John 5:46**). Read **Exodus 16:4** (read all of **Exodus 16** if time allows). Compare **Exodus 16:4** to the miracle in **John 6:1-15**. How is **Exodus 16** pointing to Jesus?

- The Old Testament often foreshadows Jesus.
- All of the Old Testament points to Jesus.
- The bread that comes from God in Exodus points to Jesus as the great gift and true bread that comes from God.

(+3 min)

### Day 3: Read John 6:25-71

1. Read **John 6:35**. This is the first of seven “I Am” statements within the Gospel of John. Read **Exodus 3:13-14** and **Isaiah 43:3** (if time allows read all of **Isaiah 43** noting the “I am” statements). When Jesus states, “I am”, who is He claiming to be? Why is it impossible for Jesus to be merely a teacher or a philosopher?

- He is claiming to be God.
- CS Lewis quote: *“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”*<sup>2</sup>

(+5 min)

2. What does it mean that Jesus is “the bread of life?” When answering this question look for information within **Chapter 6**. (*Note: when studying the Bible we should seek to discover the meaning of the Scriptural passage and avoid reading our own idea into the passage.*)

- He is from above: **6:38,41, 42**
- He gives life to the world: **6:33**
- He satisfies our hunger and thirst: **6:35**
- He gives eternal life: **6:51,54**
- Leaders: Please listen to answers.
- One can be very creative in thinking what “bread of life” may mean, but are the comments found within the passage?
- All of us read our own ideas into a passage.
- Be gentle with your comments but help people avoid reading their own thoughts into the passage.
- We all need to discipline ourselves, accept what comes out of the passage, and avoid reading our own thoughts into the passage.

(+3 min)

### Day 4: Read John 20:31

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**).

1. What is the "work of God" (**John 6:28-29**) and how is the "work of God" connected to John's purpose in writing this Gospel?

- People asked the question, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"
- We all are born with a desire to be right with God by our own righteousness.
- All of us are constantly being pulled back to a works righteousness way of thinking.
- What work do we need to do to be right with God?
- The work that God requires is to *believe in Jesus*.
- Justification is by faith **alone**. (Reformation Latin phrase: Sola Fide).

(+2 min)

2. Read **John 20: 30-31**. Note that "these" in verse 31 refers to miraculous signs from **verse 30**. The Gospel of John includes seven signs. **Chapter 6** includes the fourth and fifth signs, what are these two signs? According to **John 20:30-31** what is the reason John is writing about these signs?

- Signs point us to who Jesus is (the Son of God) so that we may believe.

(+2 min)

### Day 5: Read John 6

1. After many people turned back and no longer followed Jesus, Jesus asked the disciples, "You do not want to leave too, do you?" (**6:67**) Imagine Jesus is asking you this question. Write your response in a few sentences. Compare your response to Peter's response (**John 6:68**).

(+3 min)

2. Where are you really looking for lasting satisfaction? What are some ways we can encourage one another to find satisfaction from what truly satisfies?

(+2 min)

### Closing Comments

- What Jesus said to the people was not difficult to understand, but it was difficult to accept once it was understood.
- Some of the things they stumbled over are still stumbled over today.
- They stumbled over the fact that He claimed to come down from heaven.
- They stumbled over the idea that they had to eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to be saved.
- If they stumble over those things, how would they handle His resurrection and ascension to heaven?
- Jesus made it clear that the Spirit gives life, and flesh profits nothing. (**6:63**)
- How then do we "eat His flesh" and "drink His blood" today?
- **Through the Word, the Holy Scriptures!**
- Jesus said, "the words I have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (**6:63b**).
- **John 1:1**, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
- **John 1:14**, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us..."
- The result of Jesus' message was the loss of most of His disciples.
- They went back to the old life, the old religion, and the old hopeless situation.
- Jesus then asked the twelve He had asked to follow Him, if they were going to desert Him too.

- Good ol' Peter gave a perfect response, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.*"
  - So who do you say that Jesus is?
  - Lee Strobel, in his quest to prove the Christianity was a false hope, that Jesus couldn't be who He said He was, met with Dr. Gary R. Collins, PH. D..
  - Dr. Collins has a masters degree in psychology from University of Toronto, a doctorate in clinical psychology from Purdue University, and had been studying and writing about human behavior for thirty-five years.
  - After Mr. Strobel questioned Dr. Collins about whether or not Jesus had psychological problems, this is what the doctor said about Jesus Christ, "He was loving but didn't let His compassion immobilize Him; He didn't have a bloated ego, even though He was often surrounded by adoring crowds; He maintained balance despite an often demanding lifestyle; He always knew what He was doing and where He was going; He cared deeply about people, including women and children who weren't seen as being important back then; He was able to accept people while not merely winking at their sin; He responded to individuals based on where they were at and what they uniquely needed.
  - Mr. Strobel then said, "So, Doctor --- your diagnosis?"
  - Dr. Collins said, "All in all, I just don't see signs that Jesus was suffering from any known mental illness, 'he concluded, adding with a smile, "He was much healthier than anyone else I know --- including me.'"<sup>3</sup>
  - How would you describe the Jesus you know?
- (+7 min)

### Closing Prayer

- Again, you might want to associate a portion of your prayer to some of the comments the group shared in your discussion.
- (+1 min)

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<sup>1</sup> James Montgomery Boice, "*The Gospel of John Volume 2,*" Baker Publishing, pg. 458, ISBN 0-8010-1073-X

<sup>2</sup> C. S. Lewis, "*Mere Christianity,*" Random House Publishing, February 2001, pg. 52

<sup>3</sup> Lee Strobel, "*The Case for Christ,*" Zondervan Publishing, 1998, pg. 147