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Bethel Gospel Tabernacle



C.A.R.E. SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

C.A.R.E. Study Material

GOSPEL OF JOHN

*And daily in the temple, and in every house,
they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.*
(Acts 5:42 (KJV))



For more information on the C.A.R.E. Ministry
Please email CARE@bgtintl.com or call the Church office
Christ-Like Approach in Reaching Everyone

Table of Contents

	Date to Cover
1. JOHN 1:1-34	_____
2. JOHN 1:35- 2:11	_____
3. JOHN 2:12 - 3:36	_____
4. JOHN 4: 1-42	_____
5. JOHN 4:43-5-15	_____
6. JOHN 5:16-47	_____
7. JOHN 6:1-24	_____
8. JOHN 6:25-71	_____
9. JOHN 7:1-52	_____
10. JOHN 7:53-8:30	_____
11. JOHN 8:31-59	_____
12. JOHN 9:1-44	_____
13. JOHN 10:1-42	_____
14. JOHN 11:1-57	_____
15. JOHN 12:1-19	_____
16. JOHN 12:20-50	_____
17. JOHN 13:1-38	_____

Table of Contents

(Continued)

	Date to Cover
18. JOHN 14:1-31	_____
19. JOHN 15:1-16:4	_____
20. JOHN 16:5-33	_____
21. JOHN 17:1-26	_____
22. JOHN 18:1-27	_____
23. JOHN 18:28-19:16	_____
24. JOHN 19:17-42	_____
25. JOHN 20:1-31	_____
26. JOHN 21:1-25	_____

1. JOHN 1:1-34

When John the Baptist preached beside the Jordan River, many people came to hear him and be baptized. The religious authorities wanted to know who he claimed to be, so they sent people to question him. John was very clear about who he was. He was a messenger of God; he was not the promised Messiah. When God revealed Jesus as the promised Messiah, John gave bold and clear testimony to this fact.

OPEN

1. For what reasons might an important person send a messenger ahead to prepare the way?

EXPLORE

2. What guesses did the priests and Levites have about John's identity? (1:20-21)
3. What Scripture did John use to answer the question of who he was? (1:23)
4. What did John teach about baptism? (1:31-33)
5. What did God reveal to John, to which John then testified? (1:33-34)

GET IT

6. Why would it be important for someone like John to know who he was?
7. What significance has baptism had in your life?
8. How clearly do you understand your mission, or call, in life?
9. What are some ways that believers today can "make the road straight for God"?

APPLY

10. In what concrete way can you point others to Jesus instead of to yourself this coming week?

2. JOHN 1:35- 2:11

After Jesus' baptism, people began to follow him because they thought he was indeed the Messiah. As is the case with all great news, they shared it with one another, encouraging their friends to come and meet Jesus. As Jesus spoke personally with each one, the loyalty of that person to God was cemented. Each encounter with Jesus became a life-changing event.

OPEN

1. When have you experienced the personal attention of an important person? How did you feel?

EXPLORE

2. In what way did John's followers act immediately on his words? (1:35-39)
3. To whom did Andrew go first with the news of Jesus? (1:40-42)
4. How were the responses of the two friends, Philip and Nathanael, different? (1:45-46)
5. How did Jesus reveal a little of his glory to Nathanael in their first encounter? (1:48-51)

GET IT

6. Why is it significant that Jesus dealt with each person as an individual?
7. What kind of person do you find it easy to follow?
8. Why do you think most people desire to be known for who they are?
9. What convinced you to follow Jesus?

APPLY

10. When will you set aside time to let Jesus speak to you so that you can focus on your central mission in life?

3. JOHN 2:12 - 3:36

An important Jewish leader named Nicodemus came to Jesus at night with honest questions that he was unwilling to ask in public. With his straightforward answers, Jesus taught Nicodemus about the importance of being born again in a spiritual sense. He also told Nicodemus that his role as God's Son was to grant eternal life to those who believed in him. Because Nicodemus had asked him, Jesus told him the secrets of salvation.

OPEN

1. What question would you like to ask of a famous person if you had the opportunity?

EXPLORE

2. How did Nicodemus demonstrate that he was grappling with the person and message of Jesus? (3:2)
3. What spiritual truth was difficult for Nicodemus to understand? (3:3-10)
4. How was Jesus uniquely qualified to reveal the truth about things on earth and in heaven? (3:12-13)
5. What was God's intent in sending Jesus, and what effect does Jesus have on those who do not believe? (3:16-19)

GET IT

6. Why do human beings need to be born again?
7. Do you think skepticism is a help or hindrance to faith? Why?
8. What wonderful promise does God make to whoever believes in Jesus?
9. In what way are those who do not believe in Jesus judged guilty by their own actions?

APPLY

10. When can you set aside time to thank God for your new birth?

4. JOHN 4: 1-42

Jesus journeyed through Samaria, home of a group of people the Jews shunned because they did not worship God at the Temple in Jerusalem. While in Samaria, Jesus spoke one-on-one with a woman who, besides being a Samaritan, was also clearly a sinner. Because of her openness to him, Jesus told her that he could give her the spiritual life she wanted. In turn, she brought many others to faith in Jesus. Jesus' disciples were surprised because they did not yet understand that his love extended to all who believe, not just the Jews.

OPEN

1. When have you begun a conversation with a stranger?

EXPLORE

2. What mundane interchange began Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman? (4:7-8)
3. What clear spiritual truths did Jesus reveal to this simple woman? (4:13, 24, 26)
4. How did the woman's encounter with Jesus impact her life and the life of her whole town? (4:28-30, 39-41)
5. How did Jesus want his followers to view even their casual, or chance, contacts with people? (4:34-36)

GET IT

6. What social barriers did Jesus cross when he spoke with the Samaritan woman?
7. Why do you think Jesus was able to be so forthright with this woman?
8. When have you been so focused on a spiritual goal that food or sleep became secondary?
9. What fields ready for harvest might we be overlooking because of prejudice to the working of God's Spirit in difficult areas?

APPLY

10. In what way would you like to become more like the Samaritan woman this week?

5. JOHN 4:43-5-15

In Jerusalem, Jesus visited a famous pool that people believed would heal them if they were the first one in the pool when the water stirred. At that pool, Jesus healed a man and pointedly did not use water to do it. Jewish leaders expressed outrage at this miracle, because it occurred on the Sabbath. The Jewish leaders and the people who gathered around that pool were more concerned in adhering to their own beliefs about God than looking for God's work in their midst, in the person of Jesus Christ.

OPEN

1. What spiritual formulas have you encountered in Christian circles?

EXPLORE

2. What method of healing had become the entire focus for the crippled man to whom Jesus spoke? (5:6-7)
3. How did the authority of Jesus override the whole rationale of the pool? (5:8-9)
4. Instead of rejoicing and praising God with him, how did the religious authorities respond to the man who was healed? (5:10-13)
5. What courageous action did the man take when he figured out the identity of his healer? (5:14-15)

GET IT

6. Why do people gravitate toward formulas for achieving a goal?
7. When has your desire for a how-to manual blinded you to what God has been doing in your life?
8. Why is it sometimes difficult to rejoice with someone who has received something wonderful from God?
9. Why do you think Jesus gave a command that subjected the crippled man to persecution?

APPLY IT

10. In what area of your life should you abandon manmade formulas or tradition concerning spirituality and instead seek God with your whole heart?

6. JOHN 5:16-47

Jesus answered his critics by explaining his relationship with God the Father. Jesus had not acted on his own or testified on his own behalf. His mission had come from the mind and heart of God. All of the Jewish Scriptures pointed to his life and mission. If only they would open their hearts and minds to God and believe in him, they would soon realize that he was the Savior of which their Scriptures consistently spoke.

OPEN

1. What are some characteristics of a good employer?

EXPLORE

2. What statement did Jesus make about the source of the power he displayed? (5:19, 30)
3. What amazing gift can people receive from God the Father and God the Son? (5:21, 26)
4. In what way can study of the Scriptures lead to eternal life? (5:39)
5. What enables people to believe in Jesus? (5:44)

GET IT

6. What does it mean to hear Jesus' words and believe in the One who sent him?
7. What does this passage explain about the salvation of those who lived and died before Jesus entered history?
8. What attitudes among the Jews prevented them from recognizing Jesus for who he really was?
9. What attitudes prevent you from a fuller realization of the power of God in your daily life?

APPLY

10. When can you devote some time this week to reading God's Word and praying that God would teach you from it?

7. JOHN 6:1-24

Everywhere Jesus went, multitudes of people followed, attracted by the miracles he performed. When a large crowd followed him out of the towns, his disciples were faced with the challenge of feeding them. Believing it to be impossible, they probably expected Jesus to send the crowds away, but instead he took the ridiculously little bit of food they had and turned it into bounty.

OPEN

I. What successes and failures have you had in planning a meal for a large group?

EXPLORE

2. When presented with the challenge of feeding so many, how did Philip and Andrew respond? (6:5-9)

3. What was the starting point for Jesus' miracle? (6:11)

4. How did Jesus' command to pick up the leftovers help to demonstrate God's character? (6:12-13)

5. How did the crowds react to what Jesus had done? (6:14-15)

GET IT

6. Whether cynical or not, in what way was Andrew's response to the problem more helpful than Philip's?

7. Are you a person who tends to see a glass half empty or half full? How has your Christian faith affected this tendency?

8. What are some other instances of God's bounty, when he has provided more than enough?

9. Why do you think that meeting people's basic needs is such a powerful attention-getter for the gospel?

APPLY

10. By what act of generosity could you express your thankfulness for God's gracious gifts in your life?

8. JOHN 6:25-71

After he fed more than five thousand people, the crowds continued to hound Jesus, focused on the possibility of more free food. They demanded even more spectacular miracles in order to believe. Jesus made it clear that he was talking about the bread of eternal life that is given to all whom the Father draws to belief in Jesus. His words amazed his disciples and became stumbling blocks for many who could not see with spiritual eyes.

OPEN

1. How much of your time, energy and income would you estimate go into providing food for yourself and your family?

EXPLORE

2. What did the people ask for when Jesus challenged them to believe? (6:30)
3. Where did Jesus say the people could find the bread that gives life? (6:35, 48)
4. What problem did people have with Jesus' claim that he came down from heaven? (6:41-42)
5. According to Jesus, what is the means of eternal life? (6:53-56)

GET IT

6. What other examples of people's fickleness and thirst for the spectacular does this story call to mind?
7. What reasons do people give today for doubting that Jesus is God's Son?
8. In what ways do you find it a challenge to get your eyes off of physical food and focus your energies on the bread of life?
9. How do Jesus' claims about his body and blood strike you as hard teachings?

APPLY

10. What passage of Scripture will you study to help yourself focus on the bread of heaven instead of being consumed with the pursuit of physical food?

9. JOHN 7:1-52

Jesus was a controversial figure. His remarkable miracles attracted many followers; his authoritative teachings sparked intense debate. Many individuals believed he could be the Christ, but the religious authorities were threatened by this and wanted to kill him. Repeatedly, God's timing was not yet fulfilled. Again and again Jesus confronted them all with the choice of listening to God instead of getting hung up on human traditions and teachings.

OPEN

1. What makes someone a controversial figure in public life?

EXPLORE

2. Why was the debate about Jesus' identity among Jesus' disciples and not in public? (7:12-13)
3. What common knowledge about Jesus' background made some people sure he was not the Christ? (7:25-29, 40-42)
4. Which of Jesus' claims about his divinity confused the Jews? (7:33-36)
5. How did the leading priests treat those who began to hear Jesus with spiritual ears? (7:45-52)

GET IT

6. What aspects of Jesus' biography serve as excuses for unbelief today?
7. In what circles do you find it particularly difficult to proclaim Jesus as the Christ?
8. Whom do you know who has his or her mind made up against the divinity of Jesus?
9. How can we strengthen ourselves as Christians to endure ridicule and persecution?

APPLY

10. With what other Christian will you covenant to pray for greater boldness in proclaiming that Jesus is God's Son?

10. JOHN 7:53-8:30

The Pharisees gleefully brought a tough issue for Jesus' judgment, hoping to trick him into some kind of self-incrimination. They asked whether they should stone a woman they had caught in adultery, as demanded by the law of Moses. First by silence, and then by a few well-chosen words, Jesus forced them to turn the eye of judgment upon themselves first and the woman second. Then he spoke to the terrified woman, forgiving her and exhorting her to sin no more.

OPEN

1. How does it feel to be in a position of judging or deciding someone else's fate?

EXPLORE

2. What was Jesus doing when he was confronted by the Pharisees? (8:1-2)
3. Of what sin was the woman guilty who was brought before Jesus? (8:3)
4. When hounded to make a statement about the woman, what did Jesus say to the Pharisees and the crowd? (8:6-8)
5. What became of the woman who had been publicly charged? (8:9-11)

GET IT

6. Why were the Pharisees so sure they could cause Jesus to incriminate himself by presenting the woman caught in adultery?
7. How did the Pharisees' treatment and Jesus' treatment of the woman differ?
8. Why do you think the older men walked away sooner than the younger ones?
9. To what sorts of people should Christians today be showing God's mercy and issuing the challenge to "go, but do not sin anymore"?

APPLY

10. How will you resolve to react the next time you are confronted by gossip about someone else's sin?

11. JOHN 8:31-59

As Jesus continued to teach, he made strong claims about himself and his relationship with the Father. His insights also cut to the hearts of the people gathered around him. Some, especially those who found their identity in their Jewish tradition and lineage, were unable to hear with spiritual ears. Then and now, Jesus separates the true children of God from pretenders.

OPEN

1. Of what aspect of your family tree or heritage are you most proud?

EXPLORE

2. Whom did the Jews claim as their father? (8:33, 38, 41)
3. According to Jesus, how did they demonstrate that they were children of the devil? (8:37, 40-41, 44-45)
4. What promises did Jesus make to those who believed in him? (8:31-32, 51)
5. How did Jesus use Abraham's name to make a claim about himself that separated believers from unbelievers? (8:56-59)

GET IT

6. What kinds of spiritual pride tempt people today to a false security that prevents true dependence on Jesus?
7. In what sense did you have to humble yourself in order to accept Jesus as Savior?
8. Since becoming a Christian, what is an instance in which God's truth has made you free?
9. How can we explain to nonbelievers the importance of the divinity of Christ?

APPLY

10. When will you ask God to show you an area where you have depended on your spiritual family tree instead of fostering your personal dependence on God's grace?

12. JOHN 9:1-44

Jesus encountered a man who had been born blind and, in healing him, demonstrated unheard-of powers. With this miracle, Jesus generated great controversy as people tried to come to terms with the source of his miracles. In the midst of all the stir, the man who was healed gave clear testimony to his experience and began praising God. The formerly blind man saw clearly the source of Jesus' power, while the Pharisees were blinded by their sin and pride.

OPEN

1. Which of your physical senses would you find it most difficult to live without? Why?

EXPLORE

2. How did the blind man respond to people's initial questions after his healing? (9:8-12)
3. How did the man's parents respond to the scrutiny and pressure of the unbelieving authorities? (9:18-21)
4. Why did the Pharisee's questions not make sense to the man who had been healed? (9:30-32)
5. How did the man respond when Jesus revealed himself as the Son of God? (9:35-38)

GET IT

6. In what way were you spiritually blind before you met Jesus?
7. Why did Jesus judge the Pharisees guilty?
8. How do you think you would have responded to the intense pressure the authorities put on the man who was formerly blind?
9. What sorts of status or peer acceptance might you have to be willing to give up in order to be true to Jesus?

APPLY

10. When can you pray this week to ask God to help you give the same unashamed testimony that the blind man did in this story?

13. JOHN 10:1-42

Jesus told a story about a shepherd and his sheep—a familiar sight in the Israel of his day—in order to warn his listeners about false teachers. He compared those who would try to dissuade sincere believers from their faith to thieves and robbers. Jesus, the true Shepherd, was the only One willing to give his life for his sheep.

OPEN

1. Of what person or persons do you feel especially protective? Why?

EXPLORE

2. How did Jesus describe the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep? (10:14-15)
3. What is the intention of a thief or robber? (10:10)
4. How does a hired worker react in a crisis? (10:12-13)
5. What is the ultimate proof of the shepherd's love? (10:17-18)

GET IT

6. How were the Jewish leaders trying to "kill and destroy" Jesus' sheep?
7. With what aspects of the shepherd analogy do you identify in your life with Jesus?
8. What kind of relationship did the shepherd have with his sheep?
9. Why was it important that Jesus purposely laid down his life?

APPLY

10. How can you cultivate your love for and loyalty to Jesus, your Shepherd, today?

14. JOHN 11:1-57

When Jesus heard that his friend Lazarus was sick, he knew that the time had come to demonstrate God's power over death. He waited two days before going to Bethany, and when he arrived Lazarus was already dead. Both of his sisters expressed their faith in Jesus, but neither expected to have their brother returned to them immediately. When Lazarus came out of the tomb, the glory of God was indeed revealed.

OPEN

1. Do you consider yourself a hopeful person? Why or why not?

EXPLORE

2. What surprising declaration did Jesus make when he found out that his good friend was ill? (11:4)
3. How did Martha and Mary express their faith in Jesus when he came? (11:21-22, 32)
4. How did Jesus respond to the deep pain and grief around him? (11:33, 35, 38)
5. What did Jesus want his disciples to gain from witnessing this miracle? (11:42)

GET IT

6. When has it felt as if God was not listening or responding to your requests?
7. Why is it hard or easy for you to expect a miracle when you pray to God about a difficult situation?
8. When have you had an experience of the glory of God?
9. In what area of your life would you like to experience Jesus' deep empathy and compassion?

APPLY

10. In what prayer concern will you resolve to expect more from your powerful God?

15. JOHN 12:1-19

After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, Jesus went away from Jerusalem for a while. But in preparation for the Passover, he came back. Large crowds gathered to see him because they had heard of his great miracles. Jesus entered Jerusalem to the loud shouts of the people, who declared that he was the promised Messiah, the king of Israel. Ironically within a week, the people of Jerusalem would cry for Jesus' execution.

OPEN

1. What are your memories of a reunion dinner with old friends?

EXPLORE

2. What did Mary do for Jesus at the dinner in his honor? (12:3)
3. Why did Jesus judge her actions appropriate in spite of Judas' objection? (12:7)
4. Why did the leading priests make plans to kill Lazarus? (12:9-11)
5. What Scriptures were fulfilled when Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey? (12:13-15)

GET IT

6. What place is there for extravagant displays in Christian worship? Why?
7. What thoughts and feelings do you think Jesus and his friends might have shared in those moments of respite from the crowds and violent opposition?
8. In what way could those who receive much from God today be vulnerable to the opposition of God's enemies as Lazarus was in his day?
9. Why do you think Jesus' friends did not understand the significance of his entry into Jerusalem until after the fact?

APPLY

10. What step can you take to grow in your resolve to stand with Jesus in good times and bad?

16. JOHN 12:20-50

Jesus began to talk openly about the fact that he would soon die. He likened his sacrifice to a grain of wheat falling into the ground before it produces many more. He refused to ask God to spare him the suffering because his chief desire was to glorify God's name. God spoke in a voice that sounded to many like thunder to encourage his followers to believe and stay faithful, becoming "children of light."

OPEN

1. How do you react when someone talks about his or her own death? Why?

EXPLORE

2. Why was suffering and death part of the purpose of the Messiah? (12:24, 27, 28)
3. How are believers to imitate Jesus' attitude about life and death? (12:25-26)
4. What good things did Jesus promise would happen after he was crucified? (12:31-32)
5. Why was it urgent for Jesus' hearers to make a decision to believe at this time? (12:35-36)

GET IT

6. In what ways do Christians today show that they want spiritual victory without the battle?
7. What are the ways in which we are constantly prone to love ourselves rather than lose ourselves for Jesus' sake?
8. Why is it difficult for us to accept the idea that glory can come through suffering?
9. How do you think Jesus' words would have struck you if you did not have the advantage of knowing the end of the story, Jesus' resurrection?

APPLY

10. In what concrete way do you need to be willing to "lose your life" today?

17. JOHN 13:1-38

As his death approached, Jesus clearly understood what was about to happen, who were the true believers, and who would betray him. He taught his followers by actions as well as words, humbling himself to the role of a servant and washing their feet. Then he exhorted them to do likewise—to be willing to serve others at all times.

OPEN

1. What would you be sure to do if you knew you would die soon?

EXPLORE

2. What knowledge enabled Jesus to put aside all of his privileges? (13:3)
3. Why did Peter object to being served by Jesus? (13:5-8)
4. What would it have meant if Peter had continued to refuse the foot washing? (13:8-9)
5. What was Jesus trying to model for his followers by washing their feet? (13:12-17)

GET IT

6. How can our knowledge of our standing as children of the King help us to behave as humble servants?
7. Why must Christians be humble rather than self-important in presenting the gospel?
8. Whose servant actions have you declined when perhaps, like Peter, you should have accepted?
9. What roles and relationships in your life provide opportunities for you to imitate Jesus' servant attitude?

APPLY

10. How can you remind yourself to be a servant to someone in need this week?

18. JOHN 14:1-31

As he prepared to leave them, Jesus offered words of comfort to his followers. He assured them that they indeed knew God because of their intimate relationship with him. When he left, they would be empowered to continue in his love because he would send the Holy Spirit to them. And he promised to come back in glory to take them to be with him forever.

OPEN

1. Do you find a good-bye difficult? If so, why?

EXPLORE

2. What did Jesus explain about his departure? (14:1-4, 18)
3. How did Thomas and Philip show limited understanding of Jesus after all the time they had spent with him? (14:5-11).
4. How does the Holy Spirit work in the lives of believers? (14:16-17, 26-27)
5. To whom does Jesus show himself and unify with the Father? (14:21)

GET IT

6. How does the hope of Jesus' triumphant return empower Christians through the difficulties of this life?
7. What are some ways in which we make proper and improper use of the name of Jesus?
8. How could your faith be strengthened by focusing on the work of the Holy Spirit?
9. In what sense was Jesus' physical departure good news for the church?

APPLY

10. How will you obey Jesus this week in order to demonstrate your love for him?

19. JOHN 15:1-16:4

Jesus made it clear that the sides had been clearly drawn in the spiritual battle for souls. His followers would be treated just as he had been treated by the enemies of God. Once Jesus had come and demonstrated God's love among us, those who refused to believe declared themselves guilty. In this fierce battle, Jesus promised a supernatural Helper in the person of the Holy Spirit.

OPEN

1. What sorts of people tend to have many enemies?

EXPLORE

2. Why is the world so opposed to believers? (15:18-19)
3. How does the teaching of the gospel separate people into two groups? (15:20)
4. How did Jesus' coming leave unbelievers without an excuse? (15:22-25)
5. What supernatural ally do Jesus' followers have as they testify about him? (15:26-27)

GET IT

6. What makes us afraid to alienate others by our words or actions?
7. What constitutes "the world" in your daily experience?
8. How does it encourage you to realize that people are not rejecting you as a person but Jesus whom you represent?
9. What difference can it make to remind yourself that you are working alongside the Holy Spirit?

APPLY

10. How can you and a friend agree to encourage one another in the face of the world's opposition to Jesus Christ?

20. JOHN 16:5-33

As Jesus prepared to return to God the Father, he realized that his followers were experiencing both sadness and confusion. He told them it was to their advantage for him to go so the Holy Spirit could come. The Spirit's role was to remind people of God's truth. Jesus realized that they could not fully understand how, but he assured them that he would continue to teach them through the Spirit.

OPEN

1. Do you consider yourself skeptical or trusting? Why?

EXPLORE

2. How were Jesus' followers responding to his announcement that he was soon going to leave? (16:5-6)
3. What did Jesus say could not happen until he went away? (16:7)
4. What specific truths would the Helper prove to people? (16:8-11)
5. How did Jesus promise to keep communicating with his followers? (16:12-15)

GET IT

6. How would you summarize the Christian message about sin, being right with God, and judgment?
7. Why is the essence of sin found in unbelief in Jesus?
8. Why could Jesus' followers not understand everything he had to say before he died?
9. Why is the Holy Spirit such a valuable gift to a Christian?

APPLY

10. When can you set aside some time to pray that the Holy Spirit might give you the opportunity to tell a friend about the truth of Christ?

21. JOHN 17:1-26

Before he faced arrest and crucifixion, Jesus prayed in the hearing of his followers. From these prayers we learn a great deal about what he desires for us as we live in the hope of his coming again, sustained by the power of the Spirit. We can take comfort in our trials, knowing that we belong to Jesus and he unifies us with the Father.

OPEN

1. What sorts of prayers do you pray for the people you love the most?

EXPLORE

2. What are the characteristics of the people God the Father gave to Jesus? (17:6-8)
3. From what danger did Jesus ask the Father to protect the followers he was leaving in the world? (17:11-12)
4. How did Jesus prepare the way for us to serve God? (17:18-19)
5. How is God glorified in all those who believe through the generations? (17:20-23)

GET IT

6. How does it make you feel to realize that Jesus prayed for your protection and your joy?
7. How does the Evil One seek to attack the church today?
8. What is a concrete way you have demonstrated that you do not belong to this world?
9. In what way is God glorified through the unity of believers?

APPLY

10. What challenge will you face with greater courage this week, knowing that you are protected by God?

22. JOHN 18:1-27

When Jesus was alone with his disciples in the garden, Judas brought the Jewish authorities to arrest him. At first their armed servants were in awe of him, even though Jesus did not raise his hand to resist them. Jesus even rebuked Peter for trying to use force against the group. Peter followed as they led Jesus to the high priest. But when asked in the high priest's courtyard whether he knew Jesus, he emphatically denied that he knew Jesus. Jesus' prediction was fulfilled on that dark night. Peter denied him three times.

OPEN

1. Do you take any steps to protect yourself from potential attackers? If so, what are they?

EXPLORE

2. Why did Judas choose to bring the guards to the garden to find Jesus? (18:1-3)
3. What was the source of Jesus' calm and acceptance? (18:4)
4. How did Peter respond to each person who thought they had seen him with Jesus? (18:17, 25-26)
5. How did Jesus respond when the high priest wanted to know what he was teaching? (18:20-21)

GET IT

6. Why do you think the guards fell back the first time Jesus identified himself?
7. What might have motivated Peter to attack the high priest's servant?
8. What do you think you would have done if you had been in Peter's sandals after the arrest?
9. How can Christians learn to be calm in the face of adversity?

APPLY

10. How can Jesus' calm in the face of betrayal, false accusations, and persecution encourage you in the struggles you face in your life today?

23. JOHN 18:28-19:16

Because they were under foreign domination, the Jewish religious leaders had to bring Jesus before the Roman governor Pilate for his execution. Pilate initially saw no reason to do so. Traditionally, the Romans released one Jewish prisoner at Passover, and Pilate offered to release Jesus. The leaders stirred up the crowds to call for Jesus' crucifixion. Finally, the bitter political enemies forced one another's hand. Pilate did what they asked against his better judgment, and the Jews declared loyalty to Caesar in order to get what they wanted.

OPEN

1. How does it feel to need a favor from someone you dislike or distrust?

EXPLORE

2. Why did the Jewish leaders need Pilate in order to implement the punishment of Jesus? (19:31)
3. What was Pilate's assessment after questioning Jesus? (18:39; 19:4, 6)
4. How did the Jews keep Pilate from letting Jesus go? (19:12)
5. How did Pilate make the Jews pay for pressuring him? (19:14-16)

GET IT

6. What aspects of human nature figured into the condemnation of the innocent Jesus?
7. When have you been successful in overcoming intense pressure to do wrong?
8. What experiences have helped you understand that Jesus' kingdom is "from another place"?
9. How do you think the crowds that hailed Jesus a few days earlier could have been convinced to call for his death?

APPLY

10. How can you strengthen your loyalty to the kingdom of God and make yourself less susceptible to the influence of the kingdoms of this world?

24. JOHN 19:17-42

Jesus was sentenced to a criminal's death, one that was agonizing and humiliating. Yet a sign reading "King of the Jews" communicated more truth than anyone could comprehend at the time. In all the particulars of Jesus' death, the prophecies of Scripture were fulfilled. After his death, Jesus' fearful followers buried him quickly and quietly because of the approaching Sabbath. The apostle John recorded all the details with great care in order that future generations might believe.

OPEN

1. Why do you think people are hungry for all the details of the latest news story?

EXPLORE

2. Why was Jesus crucified under a sign reading "the King of the Jews"? (19:19-22)
3. Why was the manner in which Jesus' clothes were divided a significant fact for John to record? (19:23-24)
4. What was discovered about the manner of Jesus' death when the soldiers came to hurry the process by breaking the legs of the condemned men? (19:31-36)
5. Why was Jesus' burial secretive and done in haste? (19:38-42)

GET IT

6. What details of Jesus' dying day are most significant for you? Why?
7. How can the New Testament fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies help us convince people of Jesus' deity?
8. What words can you use to describe Jesus' experience of separation from God the Father when he died?
9. What fears hold you back from identifying yourself as a follower of Jesus?

APPLY

10. With whom can you share the crucifixion story in order to encourage their faith in God's saving love?

25. JOHN 20:1-31

Following the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb, only to find it empty. She called Peter and John, who ran to see for themselves. The risen Jesus appeared to Mary first, then to the fearful followers gathered behind locked doors. He even appeared to the doubtful Thomas, proving to him that he was alive. Then Jesus spoke of generations of believers who would not have the benefit of seeing him. Those believers would be truly blessed.

OPEN

1. Have you ever been so afraid that you locked yourself in a building?

EXPLORE

2. In her interchange with the risen Jesus, what finally enabled Mary to recognize him? (20:14-16)
3. How was the mood of Jesus' followers transformed when he entered their locked room? (20:19-20)
4. What condition did Thomas set for believing what his friends told him about the risen Jesus? (20:25-28)
5. What opportunity do we have, generations later, to be truly happy? (20:29-31)

GET IT

6. What do you imagine Jesus' followers were thinking and feeling after his burial?
7. How have you responded when you encountered something "too wonderful to be true"?
8. Why is it difficult to believe something important based on someone else's testimony rather than firsthand experience?
9. In what ways have you seen Jesus in your life?

APPLY

10. What step can you take this week to strengthen your faith in the risen Christ?

26. JOHN 21:1-25

Jesus appeared another time to a group of his followers, this time while they were fishing on the Lake of Galilee. He called out to them to cast their nets on the other side of their boat. Their obedience was rewarded with an abundant catch of fish. Jesus sat down to enjoy a meal with them. During this meal, he spoke to Peter about what a life of faith entails.

OPEN

1. Which relationships in your life put you in the role of a caregiver?

EXPLORE

2. What emotions did Jesus' followers have when he appeared to them at the Lake of Galilee? (21:7, 12)
3. How did Jesus ask Peter to demonstrate his love? (21:15-17)
4. What kind of price did Jesus say Peter would pay for his faithful witness? (21:18-19)
5. How did Jesus respond to Peter's desire to know what Jesus would require of John? (21:21-23)

GET IT

6. When have you had an experience of joy mixed with awe?
7. What does it mean for us today to feed Jesus' sheep?
8. How do you think you will respond if you are asked to suffer for your faith?
9. Why do we sometimes become obsessed with fairness and what God is doing in the lives of others?

APPLY

10. How will you show your love for Jesus by feeding his sheep?