

JESUS SAID

I AM



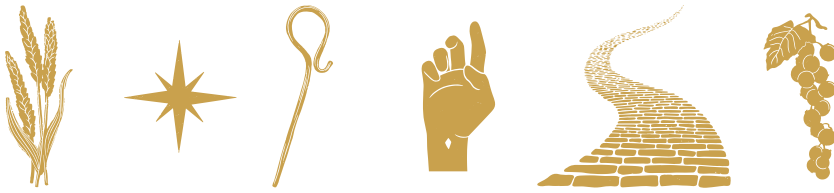
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JESUS SAID

I AM

THE I AM STATEMENTS IN THE BOOK OF JOHN

Jesus said to them,
“Truly, truly I say to you, before
Abraham was born, **I am.**”

JOHN 8:58

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WELCOME

WHO IS JESUS?

Throughout history, there have been many varying opinions and ideas about the person of Jesus and who He is. During His ministry, Jesus often asked the question, “who do you say that I am?” This study of Jesus’s I AM statements in the book of John focuses on what Jesus said about Himself, about His own identity and purpose.

As you explore the person of Jesus in the book of John, this study will guide you to:

CONNECT in authentic community as you and your group share the joys and struggles of life and pray together for big things.

GROW in biblical truth by searching the scripture and actively applying this truth to your life.

ENGAGE in helping people find and follow Jesus by practicing simple disciple-making tools that tune your heart to those who are far from God.

PERSONAL STUDY + PRAYER

God’s word, the Bible, is a unique and wonderful book. It is one of His greatest gifts to us. By reading it regularly, meditating on it, and studying it with others, we begin to hear God’s voice and to know Him more deeply. As we put biblical truth into practice, cooperating with the Holy Spirit, our relationship with God grows. We become more like Jesus, transforming into mature sons and daughters of God.

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.” **James 1:22-25**

Each lesson begins with personal study sections designed for you to walk through the selected passage verse by verse. The Survey in Lesson 1 contains the big picture and background information for the study. Lessons 2-7 focus on the I AM passages in detail. Lesson 8 is the Synthesis, a place to record an overall summary of the things you learned in the study.

In this study, you will practice a basic Bible study method that answers three questions:

Look it Over (Observation): What do I see?

Think it Through (Interpretation): What does it mean?

Make it Real (Application): How does it work?

An overview of this method is summarized in the Bible Study Tools section in the Appendix beginning on page 92.

Prayer Reminders: We need God Himself to illuminate His word to us. As we prayerfully approach the study of His word, God shows up! Pray before, during, and at the end of each lesson for eyes to see and ears to hear the things the Holy Spirit has planned to reveal to you.

MEMORY VERSES

Each lesson suggests a verse to meditate on and memorize if possible. It is amazing to experience God reminding us of His word that we have planted in our hearts.

GROUP DISCUSSION

At the end of every lesson, there is a Group Discussion Guide that provides a balanced plan for the time you spend together as a group - connecting, growing and engaging. Use this guide to plan your group time.

APPENDIX

Leader Helps: This section contains a few helpful ideas for anyone leading others through this study. See pages 90-91.

Bible Study Tools: Each lesson contains descriptions of tools that will help you to observe, interpret, and apply scripture. These are summarized on pages 92-96.

Additional Study Resources: This section contains a list of recommended books and online tools on page 97.

New Testament Chronology: A list of the approximate dates of major events in the New Testament can be found on pages 98-99.

Engage Tools: We are called to partner with God in helping people find and follow Jesus. Some of the basic tools for becoming a disciple maker will be introduced in the lessons and can be found on pages 100-108.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

The Gospel is the good news of how we can be reconciled to God through Jesus.

GOD'S DESIGN

Out of God's great love, He created a world that was good. He made people to enjoy a deeply connected relationship with Him and to represent Him through our lives. (Genesis 1:26-28, 31) As a loving Father, He communicated boundaries to protect us and to allow us to fully enjoy our relationships with Him and with other people (Genesis 2:15-17).

BROKENNESS

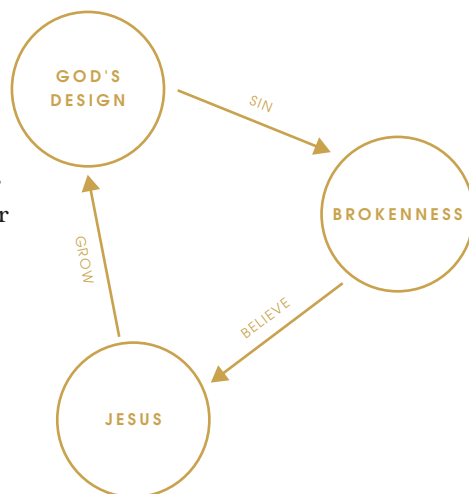
Yet, when we look around our world, brokenness and evil are evident everywhere - war, famine, disease, corruption. If we are honest, we also see brokenness and evil inside ourselves - deceit, hatred, greed, lust.

This is because we have rejected God's design and chosen to follow our own way.

Our rejection of God and His ways is what the Bible calls sin. (Romans 3:23)

Our sin results in separation from God which the Bible calls death. (Romans 6:23a)

Unless our sin is forgiven, we will remain separated from God forever.



JESUS

God does not want to leave us in our sin and brokenness!

God graciously provided a way to forgive our sin and to freely give us eternal life - a life connected to God both now and forever. (Romans 6:23b; John 17:3)

God's only Son Jesus died in our place. He took upon Himself the penalty that we deserve because of our sin. Then, Jesus rose from the dead, and forever defeated the power of sin and death. (Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3-5)

BELIEVE

We respond to Jesus by believing in Him for the forgiveness of our sin.

To believe in Jesus means that you no longer try to earn God's approval through what you do, nor do you deny that you need forgiveness and rescue. Instead, you accept God's free gift of eternal life. Belief or faith is simply being convinced or persuaded that something or someone is trustworthy (John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Everyone who believes in Jesus is forgiven of their sin and receives eternal life. We can now know God personally and experience the life we were designed to live (John 3:16-17).

Which circle or arrow best represents your life right now?

Have you put your trust (believed) in Jesus alone to be reconciled to God?

1

“God reveals Himself.”

Is this a true statement? According to the Bible it is. In fact, the Gospel of John opens by telling us, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” God has always been speaking to His people, since the very beginning of history. He has revealed Himself in tangible ways to those whom He has created. This is one of God’s greatest gifts to humanity, for to truly know God is to have eternal life from Him (see John 17:3). And the reality is that if God had not taken the initiative to reveal Himself, we could not know Him. So what are some of the ways that God makes Himself known?

SURVEY

1. What do these verses tell us about **how** we know who God is and what God is like?

Psalm 19:1-6

Romans 2:14-15

Hebrews 1:1-3

John 1:1-3, 14, 18

1 Corinthians 2:6-13

2 Timothy 3:16-17

REVEALED THROUGH CREATION

Just like the artwork tells you something about the artist, God tells us about Himself through WHAT He has created. We call this general revelation. Observing the created universe and all that is in it, both large and microscopic, tells us certain things about God. God has made it plain to see. Even the fact that we have an innate morality as His image bearers (now tarnished by sin) gives us insight into what God values as right and wrong.

REVEALED THROUGH JESUS

Then God took His self-revelation even further. He sent Jesus (the second person of the Trinity) to live among humanity, teaching and displaying the character and truths of God. Ultimately, Jesus came to lay down His life as a perfect sacrifice for the sins of humanity so that He could offer everyone who believes in Him salvation from the penalty of sin. But He was also God in human flesh, speaking, acting, revealing God's nature. Jesus, in human form, reveals to us God, who is Spirit. (John 4:24)

REVEALED THROUGH SCRIPTURE

If this weren't enough, God gave us the Scriptures, His written Word, to describe Himself and give us insight into His nature and His character. One remarkable aspect of the Bible is the variety of genres in which God communicates to us. The Bible contains history, stories, letters, poems, prophecies and all sorts of figures of speech. God even tells us His name as a way of revealing Himself.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The most significant name for God that appears in the Old Testament is the name Yahweh. This name is the covenantal name of God to the nation of Israel. We learn about it first when God speaks to Moses at the burning bush as He identifies Himself first as Elohim and then as Yahweh.

EXODUS 3:13–15

¹³ Then Moses said to God, “Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say

to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you.’ Now they may say to me,

‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” ¹⁴ And God said to Moses, “I AM

WHO I AM”; and He said, “This is what you shall say to the sons of Israel: ‘I AM has

sent me to you.’” ¹⁵ God furthermore said to Moses, “This is what you shall say to the

sons of Israel: ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of

Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is

the name for all generations to use to call upon Me.

The nation of Israel has been in slavery in Egypt for over 400 years when God commissions Moses to go and free them from Egyptian slavery. In Exodus 3, God calls to Moses from a burning bush. He reveals His identity to an astonished and curious Moses, saying, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” The word “God” here is the Hebrew word Elohim which **functions simply as a title**. Think about it like this; God is essentially saying, of all the ‘gods’ out there, He is the one ‘god’ that called and covenanted with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the one ‘god’ who is relationally connected to Israel (i.e. the

descendants of Jacob). The use of Elohim is similar to calling someone a coach or a doctor. It's a title. That's why His statement to Moses follows the word Elohim with a description of just who this "god" is. He is the God of your father, of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob.

Let's see how Elohim is used in another passage. In Deuteronomy 5, God gives the ten commandments, and He says in verse 6-7, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 'You shall have no other gods before Me.'" Again you see the use of Elohim as a title; God in this passage differentiates Himself from other gods that the people might worship.

But Moses has a question for this 'god' speaking to him from the burning bush.

"Then Moses said to God (Elohim), 'Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?'" (Exodus 3:13)

Moses doesn't only want to know "Who is this God?," but he wants to know His name! And so God gives him the name by which He will come to be known for generation after generation in Israel. God responds to Moses...

"I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"" (Exodus 3:14).

"I AM WHO I AM." This sentence is where we get the name YAHWEH (a Hebrew transliteration). It basically means "I am the one who is and will be." It is a name of self-existence and self-sufficiency. It's a name of no beginning and no end. God is constant, ever-present, never-changing, faithful to His promises, and the standard of truth. What is remarkable is that when we read about Jesus, we see that He also uses this name to describe Himself.

2. Read John 8:48-59. Describe the interaction between Jesus and the religious leaders. In verse 59, why do you think the people interacting with Jesus picked up stones to stone Him?

3. Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus takes this statement, “I AM” and pairs it with descriptive phrases like “the light of the world” and “the bread of life.” As a result, we have some profound statements made by Jesus about exactly who He is and what God is like.

As we begin our study of the I AM statements of Jesus, take a few moments to pray and ask God to give you insight over these incredible words from Jesus.

I AM the Bread of Life

I AM the Light of the World

I AM the Good Shepherd

I AM the Resurrection and the Life

I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life

I AM the True Vine

MAKE IT REAL

APPLICATION

1. What have been the most significant ways that God has revealed Himself to you personally?

2. Jesus often asked His disciples, “who do you say that I am?” How would you answer this question?

BACKGROUND OF JOHN

Before we dive into our study of the first “I AM” statement, let’s take a look at the background of the Gospel of John to help us set the stage.

The Gospel of John is unique in what it says about Jesus’ life and ministry. Compared to the gospel accounts by Matthew, Mark and Luke (also known as the Synoptic gospels because they are more similar in content), around ninety two percent of the gospel of John is unique and not found in the other gospels. This makes the study of this book particularly fascinating. Scholars generally agree based on internal and external evidence that the author is John, one of the sons of Zebedee, whom we also believe to be the “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (see John 13:23-24; 21:7). Most likely written in John’s old age around A. D. 85-95, this gospel seeks to reveal and demonstrate that Jesus is the true Son of God so that people might believe in Him. John 20:31 tell us, “Therefore, many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

For more background information see Constable’s notes at
<https://netbible.org/bible/John+1>

ENGAGE TOOL

EVERY NEIGHBOR MAP

Jesus noticed and cared for the people around Him. He taught His disciples to do the same. As His followers, we are also called to love our neighbors, the people with whom we live, learn, work and play.

Turn to page 101 and prayerfully fill in your Every Neighbor Map.
Be ready to share it with your group next week.

For more insight, watch the Every Neighbor Map video at grace-bible.org/disciplemaker.

GROUP DISCUSSION

"I AM..." SURVEY

CONNECT

CARE/SHARE (choose from these)

1. Spend a few minutes catching up with each other. Share something you are celebrating or something that disappointed you during the last week.
2. Ask 1-2 people to take 5 minutes and share how they found Jesus and began to follow Him. Set a timer!
3. Gratitude: read a Psalm, make a list of what your group is thankful for, offer short praise prayers.

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Spend a few minutes discussing your group's purpose. Of all the things we could be doing, why are we here? Why is this time important to be present for and to prioritize?

Pray for your time together.

GROW

DISCUSS THE SURVEY LESSON (choose from these)

1. What are some ways that God reveals Himself to us?
2. What did you learn about God's names and their importance?
3. Why was it so amazing for Jesus to use the term "I AM" about Himself?

ENGAGE

APPLY (choose from these)

1. What have been the most significant ways that God has revealed Himself to you personally?
2. Jesus often asked His disciples, "who do you say that I am?" How would you answer this question?

ENGAGE TOOL - Every Neighbor Map (p. 101)

Share your maps with your group or fill them out together now.

GOALS

Choose one person from your Every Neighbor Map to reach out to this week with God's love. Get creative!

PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend some time praying for a friend and neighbor. Pray for opportunities to connect with them this week.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. In the bottom right corner, there is a small, stylized logo consisting of three vertical bars of increasing height, followed by the letters 'A' and 'M' in a bold, sans-serif font.





Jesus said to them, “**I am the bread of life;**
he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who
believes in Me will never thirst.”

JOHN 6:35

Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.

Have you ever been “hangry,” so hungry that you start to feel angry about it? Perhaps you’ve arrived at your favorite restaurant after a long day at work, and been told that you would have to wait an hour to be seated.

Your stomach starts to grumble, and your mood takes a turn for the worse. We’ve all been there, haven’t we?

Our bodies have a way of reminding us that food is important. We need it to stay alive.

Food can also connect us to other people.

We gather with our friends and family to eat, but also to talk and to celebrate. Food is important in every culture, and it was no different during the time of Jesus. During the time period of Christ’s earthly life, food was also relatively scarce. People were deeply aware of their need for food, because nearly everybody lived hand to mouth. That’s why the Lord’s Prayer includes the phrase, “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11) rather than, “Give us enough food for the next week, or the next year.” Every day, Jesus says that we must trust God to provide for our needs.

In the first of Jesus’ I AM statements, He uses the imagery of food to explain that He is the true source of eternal life. When we open the pantry, we’re seeking life. And if we really want to have life that will never end, we need to know Jesus. If we feel spiritually hungry, Jesus is the only One who can satisfy us.

LOOK IT OVER

OBSERVATION

Every time we study the Bible, the first thing to ask is “What do I see?” This is the crucial skill of observation, which lays the groundwork for the rest of your study. Simply read the passage and write one or two observations for each verse. Your observations might identify people, places, and events, point out repeated words or key terms, record important connections between words and sentences. The first few observations have been done for you as an example.

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

JOHN 6:26-40

²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because
People are seeking Jesus

you saw signs, but because you ate some of the loaves and were filled.” ²⁷ Do not work
*Some food perishes.
Some food lasts.*

for the food that perishes, but for the food that lasts for eternal life, which the Son of

Man will give you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal.” ²⁸ Therefore they

said to Him, “What are we to do, so that we may accomplish the works of God?”

²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in

Him whom He has sent.” ³⁰ So they said to Him, “What then are You doing as a

sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work are You performing?” ³¹ Our

fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread out of

heaven to eat.’” ³² Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses

who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the



true bread out of heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ Then they said to Him, “Lord, always give us this bread.”

³⁵ Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me will not be hungry, and the one who believes in Me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have indeed seen Me, and yet you do not believe. ³⁷ Everything that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I certainly will not cast out.

³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of everything that He has given Me I will lose nothing, but will raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

Underline all of the references to food or eating that you see in the passage.

Underline all of the references to direction (e.g. “down,” “up,” “out,” “to,” etc.).

THINK IT THROUGH

INTERPRETATION

1. How does Jesus' teaching here relate to the events described in the first half of this chapter?
(Read John 6:1-25)

2. When Jesus calls Himself the Bread of Life in John 6:35, what is He saying about Himself?

First, think about what it means for us. What is Jesus offering us? (see John 6:47-51)

Second, what does it mean for Jesus? What will it cost Him to provide the Bread of Life? (see John 6:52-58)

3. What does Jesus mean when He says that His followers have to “eat His flesh and drink His blood”? Why does He use such graphic statements to make His point?



IN YOUR WORDS

How would you explain this I AM statement to someone in your own words? Try to capture the meaning of the metaphor and summarize it here.

I AM (the Bread of Life) _____

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Read Exodus 16:1-7, the story of God's gift of manna to the Israelites in the desert. What are the similarities between that generation of Israelites and the crowd listening to Jesus in John 6?

2. Why did Jesus refuse to provide a "sign" in response to the crowd's demand in John 6:30?

3. Why did the crowd choose not to believe in Jesus? (Hint: There are two reasons given in the passage).

MAKE IT REAL

APPLICATION

Our Bible study is only complete once we apply what we've learned. Begin by answering a few reflection questions designed to demonstrate how each passage relates to our own lives. Next, step back and look at the passage as a whole and list potential principles. A principle is simply a fact or command stated or implied in a particular passage that is practically relevant to our lives. A principle is not specific to a particular person or time. Finally, decide on specific action steps that you will begin to take right away to apply the principle in your daily life and consider how the principle impacts the relationships in your life.

3 STEPS TO APPLY -> REFLECT, LIST PRINCIPLES, MAKE A PLAN

1. Consider this statement: "Jesus satisfies all of my needs." From your experience, is this true? Why or why not?
2. What have you "feasted" on in your life that left you dissatisfied? What were you hoping to experience? How can Jesus meet those needs instead?
3. Prayerfully determine the main biblical truth or principle that God revealed to you during your study. A few questions to ask are: Is there a promise for me to claim? Is there a truth for me to believe? Is there a command for me to obey?
4. What specifically will you do this week to begin applying this principle in your daily life? Determine how this truth or principle impacts the relationships in your life where you live, work, and play.



SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

FASTING

Following Jesus involves learning from His teachings, putting into practice His commands, and imitating the rhythms of His life. One such rhythm is fasting, a normal practice for the Jews of Jesus's day. Jesus began His ministry with a forty-day fast and also regularly practiced fasting during His life.

Through fasting, we temporarily deny a physical appetite in order to attune our whole selves to God. The physical awareness of emptiness reveals our personal need to be filled with God and also reminds us of the broken world's need for His restoration. Fasting exposes the things we rely on and teaches us to turn to Jesus who alone can satisfy. (Matthew 4:4)

THIS WEEK:

- Intentionally abstain from a meal, a certain food or drink, social media, entertainment, etc. for a set period of time (one meal or one day). Consider choosing something that you typically run to when feeling restless or empty.
- Keep company with Jesus during the time you would have spent eating or doing that activity.
- Inner Needs: listen to what God is revealing to you about your attachments, cravings and patterns. Confess and bring your desires to Him.
- Outer Needs: pray for people and situations that need God's fullness.
- Write down what your experience of fasting was like and what you learned about yourself and God.

Create a personal goal, expressing how you will actively apply biblical truth in your life.

GROUP DISCUSSION

"I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE..."

CONNECT

CARE/SHARE (choose from these)

1. Spend a few minutes catching up with each other. Share a high or low from the week.
2. Ask 1-2 people to take 5 minutes and share how they found Jesus and began to follow Him. Set a timer!
3. Goals: how did you do on your goal of reaching out to a friend or neighbor this week?

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Ask someone to summarize your group's purpose.

Pray for your time together.

Read or summarize the lesson introduction on page 19.

GROW

DISCUSS OBSERVATION (choose from these)

1. How do we observe scripture? What are we looking for and what questions are we asking?
2. Read John 6:26-40. Share some of your observations.
3. Why is it important to observe first?

DISCUSS INTERPRETATION

Discuss 1-2 questions.

How would you explain this I AM statement to someone in your own words? Share your summary statements for I AM the Bread of Life.

ENGAGE

DISCUSS APPLICATION (choose from these)

1. Discuss the importance of personally applying biblical truth in your life.
2. Consider this statement: "Jesus satisfies all of my needs." From your experience, is this true? Why or why not?
3. What have you "feasted" on in your life that left you dissatisfied? What were you hoping to experience? How can Jesus meet those needs instead?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: **Fasting** (p. 25)

Read over and discuss the practice of fasting and how it relates to this I AM statement.

GOALS

Share your personal or group goals to actively apply biblical truth this week.



PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend some time praying for yourself, for others, and for the group.

[illegible]



Then Jesus again spoke to them,
saying, “**I am the Light of the
world**; the one who follows Me
will not walk in the darkness,
but will have the Light of life.”

JOHN 8:12

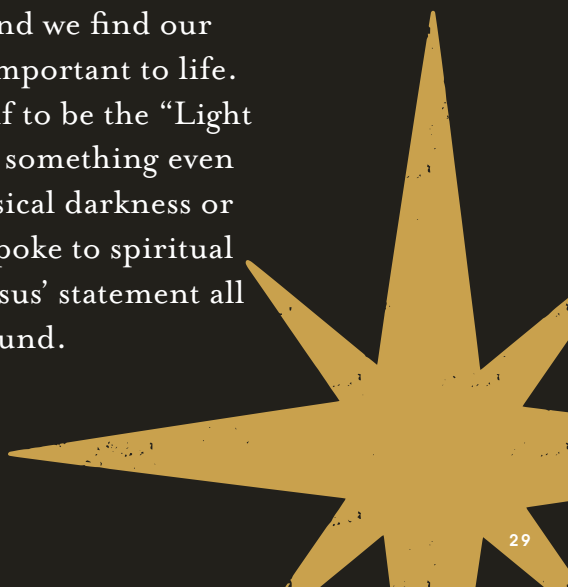
Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.

3

Darkness can be a scary and disorienting experience. Imagine finding ourselves in complete physical darkness. We can't be sure of what's around us, which way we are facing, or where to go. It hinders our ability to move with confidence. It can play tricks on our minds. You can't even follow time when in complete darkness.

Now imagine living in significant “intellectual darkness” where we don't have access to real facts or actual truth. Most things that we would be told are deceptions or fabrications or outright lies. How could we make wise decisions or have any clear understanding of reality? How could we understand ourselves let alone the world in which we live? How could we even have genuine connections with others?

Where there is darkness, there is obscurity and instability. When light pushes back the darkness, we see clearly and we find our footing. Light is crucially important to life. When Jesus declared Himself to be the “Light of the World,” He spoke to something even more devastating than physical darkness or intellectual darkness. He spoke to spiritual darkness, and that makes Jesus' statement all the more profound.



LOOK IT OVER

OBSERVATION

Record your observations in the margin as you read these passages.

JOHN 8:12

¹² Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; the one who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

JOHN 1:4-9

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of mankind. ⁵ And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not grasp it.

⁶ A man came, one sent from God, and his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.

⁹ This was the true Light that, coming into the world, enlightens every person.



1 JOHN 1:5-10

⁵ This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

Highlight repeated words or phrases.



THINK IT THROUGH

INTERPRETATION

1. How does Jesus function as “the light of the world”? (see John 1:9; 12:34-36; 44-46)
2. Why does Jesus say, “He who follows me will not walk in darkness”? (see Matthew 5:14-16; Ephesians 5:8-9)
3. Why might Jesus use the term “light of life”? (see John 8:12; John 1:4-5; Colossians 1:13-14)
4. List the 5 “if...then” statements in 1 John 1:5-10. What does each say about us, God, and our fellowship with Him?



IN YOUR WORDS

How would you explain this I AM statement to someone in your own words? Try to capture the meaning of the metaphor and summarize it here.

I AM (the Light of the World) _____

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Read 2 Corinthians 4:4-6. From these verses, how does the unseen spiritual realm impact people and our world?



MAKE IT REAL

APPLICATION

1. Paul tells us to “walk as children of light.” Why might it be more effective to pursue Christ rather than simply avoid sin? What are some practical ways to stay in the light?

2. Light pushes back darkness. How does confession push back or release us from the “darkness” in our lives? How should confession and accountability function in the body of Christ? How could you establish accountability in your life?

3. Since we are children of light, what are some practical ways that we can bring His light into the lives of people who are in spiritual darkness?



STARTING A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

Turn to page 102 and to learn how to turn conversations toward spiritual things. Also, watch the video on Starting a Spiritual Conversation at grace-bible.org/disciplemaker.

GROUP DISCUSSION

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD..."

CONNECT

CARE/SHARE: (choose from these)

1. How was your week? Did you see God working in any specific ways?
2. Gratitude: read a Psalm, make a list of what your group is thankful for, offer short praise prayers.
3. Goals: how did you do on your goals to apply God's word this week? What was your experience of fasting like?

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Ask someone to share why they prioritize biblical community.

Pray for your time together.

Read or summarize the introduction on page 29.

GROW

DISCUSS OBSERVATION: (choose from these)

1. Read John 8:12 and John 1:4-9. Share some of your observations.
2. What are some of the repeated words or phrases you saw?
3. Read 1 John 1:5-10. Share your observations

DISCUSS INTERPRETATION:

Discuss 1-2 questions.

How would you explain this I AM statement to someone in your own words? Share your summary statements for I AM the Light of the World.

ENGAGE

DISCUSS APPLICATION: (choose from these)

1. Why is it more effective to pursue Christ rather than simply avoid sin? What are some practical ways to "walk as children of the light?"
2. How does confession push back or release us from the "darkness" in our lives? Discuss accountability and confession in your life.
3. What are some practical ways to bring Jesus' light into the lives of people we know who are in spiritual darkness.

ENGAGE TOOL: **Starting a Spiritual Conversation** (p. 102)

Read over and discuss how to start a spiritual conversation and how it relates to this I AM statement. Is there a friend or neighbor you could have a spiritual conversation with this week?

GOALS

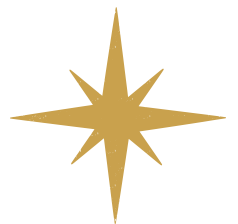
Share your personal or group goals to actively apply biblical truth this week.



PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend some time praying for yourself, for others, and for the group.

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. In the bottom right corner, there is a small, stylized gold starburst or compass rose graphic. The graphic has eight points, with the vertical and horizontal points being longer than the diagonal ones.





"I am the good shepherd;
the good shepherd lays down His life for
the sheep."

JOHN 10:11

Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.

4

Have you ever heard the expression that someone is “a wolf in sheep’s clothing”? This idea actually comes from Matthew 7:15 where Jesus warns His listeners to beware of false prophets who appear safe but who are actually extremely dangerous.

Imagery of sheep and shepherds is frequently used in both the Old and New Testaments to describe people and their relationship with God. Psalm 23 is probably the most well known depiction of God as a shepherd providing for and protecting His people. The imagery is compelling because we can recognize ourselves as needy and vulnerable like sheep, facing this world's dangers and uncertainty. We instinctively look for a guide to show us the way and to meet our needs.

In these next I AM statements, Jesus claims to be both the door of the sheep and their good shepherd. He is the entrance into life-giving pasture and the guide to follow every day.

LOOK IT OVER

OBSERVATION

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

JOHN 10:1-18

¹ “Truly, truly I say to you, the one who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. ² But the one who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep listen to his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he puts all his own sheep outside, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ However, a stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.”

⁶ Jesus told them this figure of speech, but they did not understand what the things which He was saying to them meant.

⁷ So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

⁸ All those who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I

came so that they would have life, and have it abundantly.

¹¹ “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. ¹²

He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees

the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and

scatters the flock. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and does not care about the

sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me, ¹⁵ just

as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they

will listen to My voice; and they will become one flock, with one shepherd. ¹⁷ For

this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it back.

¹⁸ No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own. I have authority

to lay it down, and I have authority to take it back. This commandment I received

from My Father.”

Highlight all of the types of people that interact with the sheep. (Use different colors if possible.)

List all of the contrasts you see in this passage.

Underline all verbs.

THINK IT THROUGH

INTERPRETATION

1. What kind of relationship do sheep have with their shepherd? (see John 10:2-5)
2. According to this passage, why does Jesus have the right to be called a “good” shepherd (multiple reasons are given)? Why is He a good leader to follow?
3. What characterizes thieves, robbers and hirelings? Why did Jesus contrast Himself with them? (see John 10:10-13; Jeremiah 23:1-6; Ezekial 34:1-6, 11-12)
4. What does it mean to be “known” by Jesus? Who can become His “sheep”? (see John 10:14-16; John 1:12-13)

IN YOUR WORDS

How would you explain this I AM statement to someone in your own words? Try to capture the meaning of the metaphor and summarize it here.

I AM (the Good Shepherd) _____

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Read John 10:22-33. What is Jesus saying about Himself? Hint: notice how His audience responds.

2. Is it possible for a genuine believer to lose or give back the gift of eternal life if that believer decides he or she no longer wants to follow Jesus, or worse, decides to no longer believe in Jesus? Why or why not based on the passage above? (see also Romans 8:38-39; Ephesians 1:13-14)

MAKE IT REAL

APPLICATION

1. What or who do you “follow” and why? How does their influence affect you?

2. If you have believed in Jesus, then you are one of His sheep... but sheep can be stubborn! When is it easy for you to hear His voice and to follow Jesus? When is it difficult or challenging? Be specific.

3. Oswald Chambers wrote, “The root of all sin is the suspicion that God is not good.” Have you seen evidence of this principle in your own life? Explain.

4. Prayerfully determine the main biblical truth or principle that God revealed to you during your study. A few questions to ask are: Is there a promise for me to claim? Is there a truth for me to believe? Is there a command for me to obey?

5. What specifically will you do this week to begin applying this principle in your daily life? Determine how this truth or principle impacts the relationships in your life where you live, work, and play.

SOLITUDE AND SILENCE

By contrast, Jesus often went to a solitary place to spend time alone with God the Father. He taught His disciples to do the same in the midst of life's demands and busyness. (Luke 5:15-16)

Incorporate a time of solitude and silence each day:

- Find a quiet place where you can be alone and can actually focus on God.
- Spend a short amount of time (begin with 5 minutes) listening to God in silence. Just be with God in the quiet, giving Him your full attention. Focus on His presence and nearness; receiving from Him love, truth and peace.
- If your mind begins to jump from one thought to another (sometimes called monkey mind!), simply take a deep breath and recenter your heart toward God.
- Write down what your experience of solitude and silence was like and what God revealed about Himself or about you.

GROUP DISCUSSION

"I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD..."

CONNECT

CARE/SHARE: (choose from these)

1. What are you thankful for this week?
2. What are you asking God for currently?
3. Goals: how did you do on your goals this week? Were you able to have any spiritual conversations with friends or neighbors?

WHY ARE WE HERE?

What would happen if we just focused on one of these - Connect, Grow, Engage?

Pray for your time together.

Read or summarize the lesson introduction on page 39.

GROW

DISCUSS OBSERVATION: (choose from these)

1. Read John 10:1-18. Share some of your observations.
2. Who are the people that interact with the sheep in this passage?
3. What contrasts did you see in the passage?

DISCUSS INTERPRETATION:

Discuss 1-2 questions.

How would you explain this I AM statement to someone in your own words? Share your summary statements for I AM the Good Shepherd.

ENGAGE

DISCUSS APPLICATION: (choose from these)

What or who do you "follow" and why? How does their influence affect you?

When is it easy for you to hear Jesus' voice? When is it challenging?

It has been said, "The root of all sin is the suspicion that God is not good." How have you seen evidence of this principle in your life? Explain.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: Solitude and Silence (p.45)

Read over and discuss the practice of solitude and silence and how it relates to this I AM statement.

GOALS

Share your personal or group goals to actively apply biblical truth this week.



PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend some time praying for yourself, for others, and for the group.

[illegible]

Jesus said to her,
“**I am the resurrection and the life;**
the one who believes in Me will live,
even if he dies.”

JOHN 11:25



Meditate on and begin to
memorize this verse.
Pray for God to teach you more
about Himself through His word.

If you own a smartphone, you've almost certainly had it run out of battery power at an inconvenient time. Perhaps you were in the airport and trying to get a ride to your hotel, or out running errands and unable to text your family about where to meet you for dinner. When your phone ran out of power, you probably told somebody, "My phone just died." That's an interesting expression, isn't it? After all, phones aren't actually alive in the first place. But what we're really communicating when we say that our phone died is that it needs to be reconnected to a power source in order to function. When we plug the phone in, its power is restored. Its life derives from the power source.

In John 11, Jesus tells his friend Martha that He is the ultimate power source. If we want to experience true and lasting life, we must be plugged into Jesus. He is the Resurrection and the Life, meaning that everybody connected to Him will never die, at least not permanently.

LOOK IT OVER

OBSERVATION

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

JOHN 11:17-27

¹⁷ So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.

¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about fifteen stadia away; ¹⁹ and many of the

Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them about their brother. ²⁰ So then

Martha, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him, but Mary stayed

in the house. ²¹ Martha then said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother

would not have died. ²² Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will

give You.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise from the dead.” ²⁴ Martha said

to Him, “I know that he will rise in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵ Jesus said to

her, “I am the resurrection and the life; the one who believes in Me will live, even if

he dies, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe

this?” ²⁷ She said to Him, “Yes, Lord; I have come to believe that You are the Christ,

the Son of God, and He who comes into the world.”

Read John 11:1-46. Summarize the plot of this narrative.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

THINK IT THROUGH

INTERPRETATION

1. Why do you think Jesus delayed two extra days before going to Bethany? How did this fit into His plan? (see especially John 11:5-6, 17, 39-40)

2. When Jesus claimed to be the resurrection and the life, what exactly was He saying about Himself? (John 8:48-58)

3. Jesus knew He would raise Lazarus. What do we learn about Jesus from His response in this situation? (John 11:33-38)

4. Why did Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead? What good came out of this event?

IN YOUR WORDS

How would you explain this I AM statement to someone in your own words? Try to capture the meaning of the metaphor and summarize it here.

I AM (the Resurrection and the Life) _____

DIGGING DEEPER

1. When Martha said that Jesus was “the Christ, the son of God,” what do you think she meant by this? Do you think Martha had a full understanding of Jesus’ deity at this point? Why or why not?
2. Read Daniel 12:2-4. What do you think Martha meant when she said that she knew that Lazarus would rise again on the resurrection in the last day? How does this I AM statement relate to Daniel 12?

MAKE IT REAL

APPLICATION

1. Which of the character(s) in the story do you connect with currently and why? (Mary, Martha, Lazarus, the disciples, the Jews). What truths from this story could speak into your current reality?
2. When you face difficult circumstances like grief and loss, how do you typically respond? What helps you in these times? What hurts you?
3. Is there a situation in your life where you can relate to Martha's statement in John 11:21? What does it take to respond like Martha did in 11:22?
4. This week, to whom could you share your story of discovering that Jesus is the resurrection and the life?

6. What specifically will you do this week to begin applying this principle in your daily life? Determine how this truth or principle impacts the relationships in your life where you live, work, and play.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Turn to page 103 and write a simple draft of your faith story. For more insight, watch the Share Your Story video at grace-bible.org/disciplemaker.

GROUP DISCUSSION

"I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE..."

CONNECT

CARE/SHARE: (choose from these)

1. How was your week? Share a highlight or struggle you experienced.
2. Ask 1-2 people to take 5 minutes and share how they found Jesus and began to follow Him. Set a timer!
3. Goals: how did you do on your goals to apply God's word this week? What was your experience of solitude and silence like?

WHY ARE WE HERE?

What are some ways to overcome the temptation to skip group time?

Pray for your time together.

Read or summarize the introduction on page 49.

GROW

DISCUSS OBSERVATION: (choose from these)

1. Have someone summarize the plot of the narrative found in John 11:1-46.
2. Read John 11:17-27. Share some of your observations.

DISCUSS INTERPRETATION:

Discuss 1-2 questions.

How would you explain this I AM statement to someone in your own words? Share your summary statements for I AM the Resurrection and the Life.

ENGAGE

DISCUSS APPLICATION: (choose from these)

1. Which character in the story do you connect with currently and why?
2. How do you typically respond when facing difficult circumstances - grief, loss, etc.?

ENGAGE TOOL: **Sharing Your Story (p.103)**

Read over and discuss how to share your story and how it relates to this I AM statement. To whom could you share your story of finding and following life in Jesus this week?

GOALS

Share your personal or group goals to actively apply biblical truth this week.



PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend some time praying for yourself, for others, and for the group.

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. In the bottom right corner, there is a small, stylized illustration of a right hand in a golden-yellow color. The hand is shown from the wrist up, with the index finger pointing straight up towards the top of the page. The other fingers are slightly curled. The background of the entire page is white.



Jesus said to him, “**I am the way, and the truth, and the life;** no one comes to the Father except through Me.

JOHN 14:6

Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.

6

Have you ever decided that it was time to make some changes in your life and to “get in shape?” Maybe you began to research best practices for diet and exercise only to be quickly overwhelmed with the sheer volume of information available. You might have also discovered, to your dismay, a tremendous amount of conflicting approaches and recommendations; all claiming to be “the way” to reach your goal.

The same issue exists in the spiritual aspect of our lives. Philosophies, religions and self-help gurus throughout time have proposed many ways for people to meet their deep spiritual needs. In the Gospels, we learn from Jesus that what people really need is a restored relationship with the Father.

In this I AM statement, Jesus assures us that He Himself is The Way to the Father. He is not only the entry point to a personal relationship with God, but through Him and the Spirit He sends, we learn to embody His way of life that grounds us in truth and transforms us into His image. Interestingly, early followers of Jesus were known as “People of the Way” (Acts 9:2; 24:22) because their lives clearly reflected their apprenticeship to Jesus.

LOOK IT OVER

OBSERVATION

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

JOHN 14:1-12

¹ “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father’s house are many rooms; if that were not so, I would have told you, because I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, there you also will be. ⁴ And you know the way where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going; how do we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷ If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.” ⁸ Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show



us the Father'?' ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?

The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own, but the Father, as He remains

in Me, does His works. ¹¹ Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me;

otherwise believe because of the works themselves. ¹² Truly, truly I say to you, the one

who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these

he will do; because I am going to the Father.

Circle any key words you see.

List what you learn about the Father from this passage.



THINK IT THROUGH

INTERPRETATION

1. Why are the disciples' hearts "troubled"? (see John 13:33-38)

2. What comfort and hope does Jesus offer to them in verses 2-4? How does Jesus' command to "believe in Me" relate to these promises?

3. What does it mean that Jesus is:

The way (see Hebrews 10:19-20; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5)

The truth (see John 1:14, 17-18; 6:67-69; 8:31-32)

The life (see John 1:4; 11:25-26; 1 John 5:20)



4. Why do you think Jesus connected these three (way, truth, life) into one I AM statement?

5. How do these three (way, truth, life) relate to the statement “No one comes to the Father except through me”?

IN YOUR WORDS

How would you explain this I AM statement to someone in your own words? Try to capture the meaning of the metaphor and summarize it here.

I AM (the Way, the Truth and the Life) _____

DIGGING DEEPER

1. In light of Jesus' imminent departure (death, resurrection, ascension), He spent time comforting the disciples by telling them where He was going and the way to get there. Though they could not follow Jesus yet, Jesus tells them that He will send the Spirit.

Read John 14:16-27. What comfort does the Holy Spirit (Helper) bring in the lives of Jesus' followers as we remain on earth? (see also John 16:6-7)



MAKE IT REAL

APPLICATION

1. What most “troubles” your heart? What fears or anxieties feel most threatening to you? How do the promises of Jesus and this I AM statement in John 14 comfort you?

2. Jesus claims to be THE way. How does this differ from the “ways” offered by other religions or self-actualization practices? In other words, what is unique about Christianity’s answer to the question, “How does a person know God”? (see also John 14:9-11)

3. With whom could you begin to share how trusting in Jesus and walking in His Way has changed your life now and gives you hope for the future?



4. Prayerfully determine the main biblical truth or principle that God revealed to you during your study. A few questions to ask are: Is there a promise for me to claim? Is there a truth for me to believe? Is there a command for me to obey?

5. What specifically will you do this week to begin applying this principle in your daily life? Determine how this truth or principle impacts the relationships in your life where you live, work, and play.

ENGAGE TOOLS

SHARE THE GOSPEL - 3 CIRCLES

As we pray, ask questions and listen to people with a heart of compassion, the Holy Spirit may lead us into sharing with someone how they can turn from trusting in themselves to trusting in Jesus. This simple tool using a diagram of three circles is really helpful to share the good news of the gospel with people.

Turn to page 106 and practice sharing the gospel this week. Pray for opportunities to share with non-believing friends. See a demonstration video at grace-bible.org/disciplemaker.

Create a personal goal, expressing how you will actively apply biblical truth in your life.

GROUP DISCUSSION

"I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE..."

CONNECT

CARE/SHARE: (choose from these)

1. Spend a few minutes catching up with each other. Share something you are celebrating or something that disappointed you during the last week.
2. Goals: how did you do on your goals this week? Were you able to share your story with friends or neighbors?

WHY ARE WE HERE?

What is the main goal of our group?

Pray for your time together.

Read or summarize the lesson introduction on page 59.

GROW

DISCUSS OBSERVATION: (choose from these)

1. Read John 14:1-12. Share some of your observations.
2. Share what you learned about the Father from this passage.

DISCUSS INTERPRETATION:

Discuss 1-2 questions.

How would you explain this I AM statement to someone in your own words? Share your summary statements for I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life.

ENGAGE

DISCUSS APPLICATION: (choose from these)

1. How do Jesus' promises in John 14 comfort you?
2. How does Jesus's "Way" differ from other religions or self-actualization practices?
3. What is unique about Christianity's answer to the question, "How does a person know God"?

ENGAGE TOOL: SHARE THE GOSPEL: 3 Circles (p.106)

Read over and discuss the 3 Circles Gospel tool and how it relates to this I AM statement. Practice sharing it in groups of 2-3.


GOALS

Share your personal or group goals to actively apply biblical truth this week.



PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend some time praying for yourself, for others, and for the group.





I am the vine, you are the branches;
the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit,
for apart from Me you can do nothing.

JOHN 15:5

Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.

If you've ever purchased fresh flowers, there's one thing you can know for certain: no matter how beautiful they are when you buy them, they won't last very long. As soon as fresh flowers are cut from their shrub, they begin to die. Separated from their source of life, they no longer receive the nutrients that they need to continue to thrive and grow. The flower industry depends upon this reality, in fact! If they lasted forever, you'd have no reason to buy more.

Jesus used this same concept to explain the importance of remaining connected to Him. In John 15, He described the spiritual life in terms of a grapevine and its branches. Just as a branch must stay attached to the vine in order to thrive, we must remain connected to Jesus - and to His Spirit - if we want to bear spiritual fruit. The only way we can live in a way that is pleasing to God is if we remain closely attached to Jesus.

LOOK IT OVER

OBSERVATION

Record your observations in the margin as you read the passage.

JOHN 15:1-17

¹ “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown away like a branch and dries up; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If you remain in Me, and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. ⁹ Just as the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; remain in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s

commandments and remain in His love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

¹² “This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his

friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call

you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you

friends, because all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to

you. ¹⁶ You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would

go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the

Father in My name He may give to you. ¹⁷ This I command you, that you love one

another.

Underline the commands in this passage.

Circle key words or phrases.

List any themes or big ideas that you see.

THINK IT THROUGH

INTERPRETATION

While looking up a key word in English is helpful, doing so in Greek provides deeper understanding and is surprisingly easy, thanks to online tools such as netbible.org. Simply search for the passage at the top of the screen, and the relevant text will appear. Be sure that “NET2” is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then select the tab for “Greek” on the right side of the screen. Now hovering over any word in English will highlight the corresponding Greek term and reveal its Strong’s definition in the opposite window. For even further study, you can select a word, click the magnifying glass above it, then choose to run a “Word Search,” “Strong’s Search,” or “Word Study.” The first will provide all Biblical references that use the English term. The second will provide all Biblical references that use the Greek term. And the third will provide the full definition and derivatives of the Greek term. What used to take multiple books & many hours now takes one internet browser & a few seconds!

1. Who does Jesus identify as the vinedresser, the vine, and the branches? What do these metaphors indicate about each “person”? What is their relationship with one another?

Vinedresser:

Vine:

Branches:

2. What does it mean to “abide” in this analogy? Look up this keyword. What are the results of abiding? How do you know if you are abiding? (see John 15:9-14)

3. What warnings does Jesus give in verses 2 and 6? Are these addressed to believers? Why or why not?

4. What might the vinedresser's motivation to prune the branches? In what ways does God prune His people, and how does this lead to more fruit?

5. Why does Jesus say that He gave these instructions to His disciples? (John 15:8, 11)

IN YOUR WORDS

How would you explain this I AM statement to someone in your own words? Try to capture the meaning of the metaphor and summarize it here.

I AM (the True Vine) _____

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Explain Jesus's promise in John 15:7. Is this an absolutely unqualified promise (ask for anything at all and you will get it)? Why or why not?

2. What is "joy" in John 15:11? Compare it to happiness.

MAKE IT REAL

APPLICATION

1. Jesus said, “apart from Me you can do nothing.” How have you seen this truth evidenced in your life? What might be the “fruit” God wants to produce in your life as you abide in Christ?

2. What are some counterfeit vines in which you seek to find joy? How can you turn from trusting in counterfeits and abide in the True Vine instead?

3. Can you think of a time in the past or currently when God pruned you – when He used a painful situation or a circumstance to help you grow and produce something so much greater in you? How did you respond?

4. Prayerfully determine the main biblical truth or principle that God revealed to you during your study. A few questions to ask are: Is there a promise for me to claim? Is there a truth for me to believe? Is there a command for me to obey?

5. What specifically will you do this week to begin applying this principle in your daily life? Determine how this truth or principle impacts the relationships in your life where you live, work, and play.

SABBATH

Jesus reminded His followers of the gift of sabbath saying, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” (Mark 2:27)

- Stop your regular work/job and any thoughts or concerns about it.
- Rest in body, mind, and soul in ways that are life-giving to you.
- Delight in God Himself and the good gifts that He has provided for you (nature, food, friends, family, hobbies, play).
- Gathered Worship: connect with God and His body in a local church for a corporate worship service.
- Make a plan and prepare for your time, including any family and friends in the planning.
- Write down what your experience of sabbath was like and what God revealed about Himself or about you.

GROUP DISCUSSION

"I AM THE VINE..."

CONNECT

CARE/SHARE: (choose from these)

1. What are you thankful for this week?
2. What are you asking God for currently?
3. Goals: how did you do on your goals this week? Were you able to share the gospel with any friends or neighbors?

WHY ARE WE HERE?

If a friend asked you why you study the Bible in a group, what would you say?

Pray for your time together.

Read or summarize the lesson introduction on page 69.

GROW

DISCUSS OBSERVATION: (choose from these)

1. Read John 15:1-17. Share some of your observations.
2. What big ideas or themes did you see?
3. What key words or commands did you see in the passage?

DISCUSS INTERPRETATION:

Review how to look up a key words using netbible.org.

Discuss 1-2 questions.

How would you explain this I AM statement to someone in your own words? Share your summary statements for I AM the Vine.

ENGAGE

DISCUSS APPLICATION: (choose from these)

1. How have you experienced the truth that apart from Jesus you can do nothing?
2. What are some "counterfeit vines" you typically turn to rather than abiding in the True vine - Jesus?
3. How did you respond to a time of "pruning" in your life?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: Sabbath (p. 75)

Read over and discuss the practice of sabbath and how it relates to this I AM statement.

GOALS

Share your personal or group goals to actively apply biblical truth this week.



PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend some time praying for yourself, for others, and for the group.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. In the bottom right corner, there is a small, stylized illustration of a bunch of purple grapes hanging from a vine with green leaves. The illustration is positioned near the bottom edge of the page, partially overlapping the last few lines of the ruled area.

For in Him **all the fullness of Deity**
dwells in bodily form.

COLOSSIANS 2:9

Meditate on and begin to memorize this verse.
Pray for God to teach you more about Himself through His word.

8

More has been written about Jesus than any other person in history. The world is fascinated with Him. Who is He, really, and what did He say and do?

To some, He's a counter-cultural revolutionary. To others, He's a great religious teacher. To still others, He was a kind-hearted leader who wholeheartedly accepted anything and anybody. Finally, some believe He is the Son of God and the Savior of the World.

Now that we have explored His "I AM" statements in the book of John, we have a better understanding of who Jesus said He was. In this lesson, we will look at some additional biblical passages to help us understand Him more fully.

LOOK IT OVER

OBSERVATION

What do each of the following passages contribute to your understanding of Jesus?

Isaiah 53:2

John 1:1-2

John 1:14

John 8:58

John 10:30

Philippians 2:5-11

Colossians 1:15-17

Colossians 2:9

Hebrews 1:3

Hebrews 4:14-15

Review and record your summaries of the I AM statements from each lesson.

I AM the (Bread of Life)

I AM the (Light of the World)

I AM the (Good Shepherd)

I AM the (Resurrection and the Life)

I AM the (Way, the Truth, and the Life)

I AM the (True Vine)

THINK IT THROUGH

REFLECTION

1. What aspect of Christ's deity (e.g. preexistence, uncreated nature, equality to the Father) most impacts you? Why?

2. How does Christ's humanity affect your relationship with Him?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. If a friend asked you about the doctrine of the Trinity, how would you explain it to them?

2. How do Jesus' humanity and deity both contribute to our salvation? Why is each one important?

MAKE IT REAL

APPLICATION

1. What has our study of the “I AM” statements of Jesus added to your understanding of who He is?

2. What aspects of Christ’s nature and character do you still struggle to understand? How can you grow in your understanding of Him?

3. What specific steps will you take to know and follow Jesus more closely in the days and weeks to come?

ENGAGE TOOL

DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY

Discovery Bible Study (DBS) is an easy and meaningful way to read the Bible with friends who may not know Jesus or are new to following Him.

Turn to page 108 to learn about the DBS method. Learn more about DBS at grace-bible.org/disciplemaker.

Challenge: take one person through one of the I AM passages using DBS. Consider using one you resonated with the most!!

GROUP DISCUSSION

"I AM..." SYNTHESIS

CONNECT

CARE/SHARE: (choose from these)

1. How was your week? Share a highlight or struggle you experienced.
2. Goals: how did you do on your goals to apply God's word this week? What was your experience of sabbath like?

WHY ARE WE HERE?

Have we accomplished our purpose for this study?

Pray for your time together.

Read or summarize the introduction on page 79.

GROW

DISCUSS OBSERVATION: (choose from these)

1. What are some of the additional insights about Jesus you learned from the passages on p.80?
2. Review your I AM summary statements.

DISCUSS INTERPRETATION:

Discuss 1-2 questions from pages 82-83.

ENGAGE

DISCUSS APPLICATION: (choose from these)

1. What has our study of the I AM statements of Jesus added to your understanding of who He is?
2. What aspects of His nature do you still struggle to understand?
3. What specific steps will you take to know and follow Jesus more closely in the days and weeks to come?

ENGAGE TOOL: **Discovery Bible Study (p.108)**

Read over and discuss the DBS method.

Challenge: take one person through one of the I AM statement passages using DBS. Consider using the one you resonated with the most!

GOALS

Share your personal or group goals to actively apply biblical truth this week.

PRAY

Break into small groups of 2-3 people and spend some time praying for yourself, for others, and for the group.

[illegible]

APPENDIX

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LEADER HELPS

WHOLEHEARTED DEVOTION

The best preparation for leading a Bible study is following Jesus closely yourself.

- Spend time with God daily to keep your relationship with Him fresh and growing! Healthy leadership is ultimately an overflow of your personal relationship with God.
- Spend time in the passage throughout the week.
- Pray regularly with your co-leader for each person in your group.
- Prepare ahead of time and make a plan (see below) for your group time. Discuss with your co-leader.
- As a facilitator of discussion rather than a teacher, you are encouraged to be a co-learner with your group. Your job is not to know “everything.” It is acceptable to leave some questions partially answered or unresolved, trusting for clarity at a later time. Reach out to ministry leaders and pastors at your church for clarification as needed.
- Lead and walk by faith in the Holy Spirit’s work in your life and in the lives of your group members.

LEADING WELL

- Set a regular meeting place and time. Consistency helps avoid obstacles that will keep people from being there and a plan helps people know what to expect.
- Create a welcoming environment! Learn people’s names and make sure everyone is introduced to each other. Possibly have a snack each week, alternating between healthy and “less healthy.” Everyone likes a snack!
- Regularly remind people of the group’s purpose to:
 - CONNECT** Relationally
 - GROW** Biblically
 - ENGAGE** Missionally
- Regularly break up into smaller groups of 2-3, starting from the very first meeting. Smaller groups help people feel known. Keep the groups no bigger than 3. This will pay off in the long run.
- Stress confidentiality about what is shared in the group.
- Try reaching out to different people each week to grab lunch or coffee outside of group time as your schedule allows.

MAKE A PLAN EACH WEEK

Use the Group Discussion Guide (located at the end of each lesson). Divide your time into three relatively equal thirds that focus on **CONNECT**, **GROW**, **ENGAGE**.

7:00

Build community in your group using the **CONNECT** suggestions in the Group Discussion Guide. Depending on your group size, you could get into groups of 2-3 (but no more than 3) with a question to discuss for getting to know one another, to check on how application from last week went and for prayer. Sometimes the question could be for fun and other times more serious. For example: "What was a highlight and lowlight of your week?" or "How did you apply last week's lesson?"

Pray in the small groups. (Prayer at the beginning is a good way to help make it an emphasis.) Suggest something for them to pray for as a group- that is bigger than themselves and the group. Some ideas: For our community and people who do not know Jesus; family members, friends, and classmates who they would like to point to Jesus; a missionary; a country/people group in need of the gospel.

7:30

Gather back as one group and have one person pray for the time. Discuss the passage using the **GROW** section questions in the Group Discussion Guide. Summarize or read aloud the passage together.

8:00

Discuss the **ENGAGE** tool or spiritual practice in the lesson. Reflect on the biblical truth God revealed to you this week. Create a plan of action to apply what you have learned. Gather in small groups (of 2-3) again. Discuss your plan of action and pray for one another.

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

OBSERVE

Every time we study the Bible, the first thing to ask is, “What do I see?” This is the crucial skill of observation, which lays the groundwork for the rest of our study. Here are four tasks involved in observation which should be performed in the order below. All examples are taken from the book of Galatians.

OBSERVATION TASK 1

Mark up the passage by visually identifying the following specific elements:

Underline all verbs. A verb is a word or group of words used to indicate either that an action is taking place (“we will reign with Him”) or that a state or condition exists (“we are faithless”). Verbs are often the most significant indicators of the author’s flow of thought.

Circle key words or phrases. These are words or short phrases that are important theologically (like “gospel” in 1:6) or thematically (they set the theme or main idea for the passage, such as “approved” and “works of the law” in 3:2,5,10).

Highlight repeated words or phrases. Also, include words and phrases that are closely related even if not exact duplicates (such as “suffer hardship” and “endure suffering”). You’ll also want to highlight things that are repeated from previous passages (such as “son” in 4:23 and 4:30)

Box connecting words. These important words indicate the logical connection between words, phrases, and clauses. Here are eight types of common connecting words to look for:

1. Comparison either points out similarities between two or more related ideas or simply joins like ideas. Comparison words include: and, like, as, just as, also, so also, even so (e.g., “like the Gentiles” in 2:14).
2. Contrast points out dissimilarities between ideas. Contrast words include: but, rather, yet, however (e.g., “No longer I... but Christ” in 2:20).
3. Purpose indicates the intended goal of an idea or action, whether or not it was realized. Purpose words include: that, so that, in order that (e.g., “Christ redeemed us... in order that in Christ Jesus...” in 3:13-14).
4. Result is similar to “purpose,” but indicates the actual consequence, whether or not it was intended. Result words include: that, so that, as a result, with the result that (e.g., “The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.” in 2:13).
5. Cause expresses the basis or cause of an action. Cause words include: because, since, and sometimes for. (e.g., “Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions” in 3:19)
6. Explanation is what follows further explains the previous idea, giving reasons why it is true, why it occurred, or simply adding additional information. Look for the key word “for.” (e.g., “For prior to the coming of certain men from James” in 2:12).
7. Inference provides a logical consequence, conclusion, or summary to the previous discussion. Inference words include: therefore, for this reason. (e.g., “Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.” in 3:7)
8. Condition presents a condition that must occur before a certain action or conclusion can occur. The statement may or may not reflect reality (i.e., it could be hypothetical). Key word is “if.” (e.g., “For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise...” in 3:18)

OBSERVATION TASK 2

List 2-3 primary themes you see in the passage each week.
A primary theme is the big idea, the central truth, or command that the passage focuses on, such as “humility” in 5:16-26. After reading the passage, write your themes as single words or short phrases. Identifying these themes at the beginning of your study will help you develop a good overall grasp of the passage.

OBSERVATION TASK 3

Write two or more observations per verse.
Our observations might identify people, places, or events, point out repeated words or key terms, record important connections between words and sentences, or even point out something missing that we expected to see.

OBSERVATION TASK 4

Ask your own interpretive questions.

Here are a few examples:

WHO IS...	WHAT IS THE...	WHY DID THE AUTHOR...	HOW...
Paul talking about? accomplishing the action? benefiting from the action?	meaning of this word? significance of this phrase? implication of this statement? relationship between these phrases?	choose this word? include this phrase, statement, or command? not say _____ ?	was this action accomplished? will this situation occur?

INTERPRET

Our observation of a passage should stir interesting yet challenging questions, leading us to the second stage of our Bible study: interpretation. Fortunately, we do not have to run to a commentary or study Bible for answers (though these are helpful tools to check our conclusions). Use the following six methods, as needed, to tackle a variety of questions. Also, make sure to familiarize yourself with the three “Principles of Interpretation” that appear in the Appendix at the end of this study.

INTERPRETATION METHODS

Interpretation Method 1 | Use the context.

Look for important clues in the sentences and paragraphs that come before and after the verse in question. Try to follow the author’s flow of thought through the whole chapter. This may take you to the previous lesson, so have it handy as a review. You may need to read ahead in the book for clues.

Interpretation Method 2 | Study cross-references.

Cross references are simply other passages in any book of the Bible that are somehow related to the verses you are studying. They often prove incredibly helpful as you seek to understand your passage. A few such cross references can be found in the margins of most English Bibles, but more can be found by visiting online tool such as netbible.org. Simply search for the passage at the top of the screen, and the relevant text will appear. Be sure that “NET2” is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then select the tab for “Greek” on the right side of the screen.

Now hovering over any word in English will highlight the corresponding Greek term and reveal its Strong's definition in the opposite window. Then, you can select a word, click the magnifying glass above it, and choose to run a "Word Search" that will provide all Biblical references that use the English term.

Interpretation Method 3 | Look up key words.

While looking up a key word in English is helpful, doing so in Greek provides deeper understanding and is surprisingly easy, thanks to online tools such as net.bible.org. Simply search for the passage at the top of the screen, and the relevant text will appear. Be sure that "NET2" is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then select the tab for "Greek" on the right side of the screen. Now hovering over any word in English will highlight the corresponding Greek term and reveal its Strong's definition in the opposite window. For even further study, you can select a word, click the magnifying glass above it, then choose to run a "Word Search," "Strong's Search," or "Word Study." The first will provide all Biblical references that use the English term. The second will provide all Biblical references that use the Greek term. And the third will provide the full definition and derivatives of the Greek term. What used to take multiple books & many hours now takes one internet browser & a few seconds!

Interpretation Method 4 | Look up background information.

You can find helpful insights by looking up confusing names or words in a Bible dictionary or by looking up the particular verses you are studying in a background commentary. One of the best dictionaries is *The New Bible Dictionary* by Wood & Marshall. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary* by Craig Keener is another excellent example of a verse-by-verse background commentary. Background information can be found by visiting the online reference netbible.org. Simply search for the passage at the top of the screen, and the relevant text will appear. Be sure that "NET2" is your selected Bible in the drop down box, and then select the tab for "Notes" on the right side of the screen. Now, anytime you select one of the numbered annotations above particular words or verses, you can immediately see the relevant Biblical or historical context for that term or passage. This is a great tool for answering tough questions!

Interpretation Method 5 | Tackle tough questions step-by-step.

When trying to answer the most challenging questions, follow this four-step process:

1. List all the options. Always start by brainstorming every possible answer to your question.
2. List pros and cons for each option. See all the evidence you can find that either argues for or against a particular option. This evidence comes from your study of key words, the grammar of the sentence, the context of surrounding verses and the book as a whole, cross references to other books, and comparison with your overall understanding of Christian theology.
3. Choose the most likely option. Look at your evidence for each option. Typically, evidence from the immediate context is most important, followed closely by evidence from the book as a whole. Evidence from other books of the Bible, or from Christian theology as a whole, does not carry quite as much weight unless the solution contradicts a clear passage elsewhere or a major tenant of Christian doctrine. In that case, since Scripture never lies and God cannot contradict Himself, you must eliminate that option.
4. Decide on your certainty level. Once you have chosen the best solution, step back for a second and humbly gauge how certain you are of its accuracy (90% = I am very sure this is correct ... 60% = This solution is just a bit more likely than the others!). Finally, talk with others and check commentaries or reference books to see what solutions they have chosen and why.

Interpretation Method 6 | Compare multiple translations.

This packet uses the New American Standard (NASB) translation. You can often find helpful interpretive clues by comparing this translation with other translations. The New King James Version (NKJV), like the NASB, is a fairly word-for-word translation of the Greek text. The New International Version (NIV) and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) are excellent phrase-to-phrase translations of the Greek and thus often easier to read. Another excellent phrase-to-phrase Bible, which includes extensive translation notes, is the New English Translation (NET) available online for free at netbible.org. You can find and compare numerous translations of any Bible passage at www.biblestudytools.com.

INTERPRETATION PRINCIPLES

There are three fundamental principles of interpretation that help us to use our interpretive skills accurately.

Interpretation Principle 1 | Discern the author's intended meaning.

Your goal is to discern the author's intended meaning to the original audience. Unfortunately, most people begin their Bible study by asking, "What does this passage mean to me?" While there may be multiple possible applications to my life, there is only one meaning, the author's intended meaning; and we must first seek this out. This involves three important steps:

1. Always start your study with prayer, asking the same God who composed Scripture through these ancient authors to give you insight to understand His intended meaning.
2. Avoid inserting your 21st century circumstances and theological issues into the text as they can skew understanding.
3. Work diligently to see the text from the point of view of the original readers. To do this: (a) dig into the historical and cultural background using Bible dictionaries and commentaries, and (b) spend a few moments thinking about the original audience's religious understanding by asking, "What books of the Bible did they have access to? What did they know about God? About Jesus? About salvation? etc."

Interpretation Principle 2 | Assume a "Normal" Use of Language

The Bible was given to us because God desired to communicate with us, not to hide Himself from us. Therefore, we should not be looking for "hidden" meanings as we study. Instead, we should use the "normal" techniques we would use to understand any piece of literature:

1. Study the grammar. Pay attention to nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. Think through any figures of speech. Observe how phrases and clauses are connected into sentences and how sentences are linked together into paragraphs.
2. Remember that chapter divisions came later. When Paul wrote Corinthians or Luke wrote the book of Acts, they wrote single, unified stories without verse or chapter divisions. These books were meant to be read just like you would read a letter or a novel. Always keep the overall story in mind as you study each passage.

Interpretation Principle 3 | Let Scripture Interpret Scripture

This is the third and last principle of interpretation. Because God is unchangingly truthful and always consistent (John 17:17; Hebrews 3:6; James 1:17), we can, and should, expect the same of His Word. This has two practical applications:

1. Check your conclusions. Always compare your conclusions with the teachings of scripture

as a whole. If you find your interpretation of a passage contradicts the clear teaching of scripture elsewhere, you probably need to revise your conclusions.

2. Allow clear passages to illuminate ambiguous passages. Whenever you encounter a passage that is confusing or open to multiple possible interpretations, use clearer passages of scripture to guide you to the correct interpretation.

One last caution: remember that God revealed scripture progressively, not all at once. Therefore, we should not be surprised by differences between how people related to and understood God at different times in the history of scripture. For example, while Abraham needed only believe that God was faithful in order to be justified (Genesis 15:6), in the New Testament era, we must believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus to be saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-7).

APPLY

Our Bible study is not over until we apply what we have learned to our everyday lives. And lest we underestimate the value of this last step, remember that in God's eyes it is the person who does not just know His Word, but also obeys His Word that truly loves Him (see John 14:21). So how do we apply a passage to our lives? Application involves the following two tasks:

APPLICATION TASK 1

List potential principles from your passage.

A "principle" is simply a fact or command stated or implied in a particular passage that is practically relevant to our lives. Legitimate principles are not specific to a particular person (e.g., 1 Timothy 5:23 is just for Timothy) nor a particular time (e.g., "do not leave Jerusalem" in Acts 1:4). It is often helpful when listing principles to consider the following questions:

Is there something to worship or thank God for?

Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?

Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?

Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?

Is there any relationship I need to work on?

APPLICATION TASK 2

Choose one principle, and create a plan to apply it to your life this week.

Once you complete your principle list, prayerfully choose the one principle you most need to work on (Do not just choose the easiest to apply!). If you felt deeply convicted about one in particular, that is probably the principle God is leading you to apply. Once you have chosen a specific principle, answer these two questions:

1. What exactly will you do differently this week to apply this principle to your life? Be specific.

2. Whom, other than the Lord, will you ask to help you follow through with this application?

ADDITIONAL STUDY RESOURCES

ONLINE RESOURCES

netbible.org | cross references, word studies
biblestudytools.net | word studies
blueletterbible.org | word studies
planobiblechapel.org/soniclight | commentary
bestcommentaries.com | commentary database

Grace Bible Church does not always agree with the views of these commentaries. These are good tools to help understand hard passages, but the particular theological views reflect the author of the commentary and not those of Grace Bible Church.

DISCIPLESHIP/BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES

Living By the Book by Howard Hendricks and Charles Swindoll
A more in-depth book on how to study the Bible using the tools discussed in this packet.

The Master Plan of Evangelism by Robert Coleman
A highly motivational analysis of Jesus' own principles of evangelism and discipleship.

The Lost Art of Disciple Making by Leroy Eims
This practical resource will give you a detailed structure to follow and great content to cover as you begin to disciple a new believer.

A Survey of Bible Doctrine by Charles Ryrie
An easy-to-read, relatively short systematic theology primer that you can walk a new believer through to ground them in the faith.

Rooted by Grace Bible Church, College Station, TX
Nine conversations that establish a new believer with foundational truths and practices to follow Jesus for a lifetime. <https://www.grace-bible.org/resources/bible-study/46/rooted>

NEW TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY

EVENT	APPROXIMATE DATE
Crucifixion of Jesus	April 33
Pentecost (Acts 2)	May 33
Paul's conversion (Acts 9)	Summer 35
Paul in Jerusalem, 1st visit (Acts 9:26-29; Gal. 1:18-20)	35-43
Paul to Antioch (Acts 11:25-26)	Spring 43
Epistle of James written	45
Paul in Jerusalem, relief visit (Acts 11:30; Gal. 2:1-10)	Autumn 47
Paul to Antioch (Acts 12:25-13:1)	Autumn 47 – Spring 48
Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 13-14)	April 48 – September 49
Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-16)	Autumn 49
Galatians written from Antioch	Autumn 49
Paul in Jerusalem, Jerusalem council (Acts 15)	Autumn 49
Paul in Antioch (Acts 15:30-35)	Winter 49/50
Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 15:36-18:22)	April 50 – September 52
1 & 2 Thessalonians written	Spring – Summer 51
Paul in Jerusalem and Antioch	End of September 52; Winter 52/53
Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 18:23-21:16)	Spring 53 – May 57
1 & 2 Corinthians written	Spring – Fall 56
Romans written	Winter 56/57
Ephesian elders visit Paul at Miletus (Acts 20)	May 57
Paul in Jerusalem	Eve of Pentecost, May 27, 57
Paul's arrest and trial before Felix (Acts 21:26-24:22)	June 57
Paul's appearance before Felix ^Drusilla (Acts 24:24-26)	June 57
Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea (Acts 24:27)	June 57 – Aug 59
Paul's trial before Festus (Acts 25:7-12) & Agrippa (Acts 26)	July 59; Aug 59
Paul's voyage to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:29)	Aug 59 – Feb 60
Paul's first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28:30)	Feb 60 – Mar 62
Luke written	60

Acts Written	60
Ephesians written	Autumn 60
Colossians and Philemon written	Autumn 61
Philippians written	Spring 62
Paul's release	Spring 62
Mark Written	62
Paul in Ephesus and Colossae	Spring – Autumn 62
Peter in Rome	62
Paul in Macedonia	Summer 62 – Winter 62/63
1 Timothy Written	Autumn 62
Paul in Asia Minor	Spring 62 –
Peter martyred	Summer 64 (67?)
Paul in Spain and Crete	Spring 64 – Spring 66; Summer 66
Titus written	Summer 66
Paul arrested and taken to Rome	Autumn 67
2 Timothy written	Autumn 67
Paul's death	Spring 68
Matthew written	60's
Hebrews written	60's
Destruction of Jerusalem	September 2, 70
Jude written	60's or 70's
John written	80's or 90's
1,2,3 John written	80's or 90's
Revelation written	Early 90's

Adapted from Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ, Harold H. Hoehner, Zondervan, 1978.

ENGAGE TOOLS

Because God loves all people, He is constantly working to draw men and women to Himself. He invites believers to partner with Him in this great mission of redemption and restoration. We do this by helping people find and follow Jesus — this is disciple-making. Jesus summarized this calling in Matthew 28:18-20.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying,

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

On the following pages are some foundational tools, practices, and resources to engage in helping people find and follow Jesus.

Visit grace-bible.org/disciplemaker for more resources.

EVERY NEIGHBOR MAP

Just as Jesus entered into a specific time and place, God has placed each of us into a unique context in which to share His love and to represent Him. Our context includes anyone that we commonly encounter on a regular basis which gives us the ability to have influence in their lives. Think about the people in your spheres of influence; the people with whom you live, learn, work, and play who are near to you but might be far from God.

Also, think about people that are just beyond your normal spheres. Perhaps there is an acquaintance that you don't know well, or a neighbor who is different from you ethnically or socio-economically, or a community member that the Holy Spirit has put in your path but is more a stranger than friend. Be creative and think outside the box!

Pray Big - diligently pray for these friends to find and follow Jesus.

Map - write down at least three names in each of these spheres.

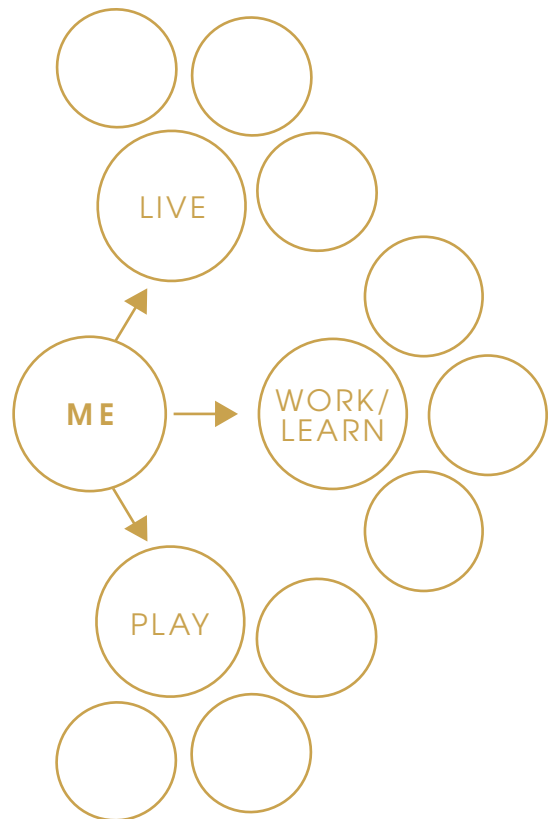
Ask God:

Who might be seeking Him or is asking hard questions about life?

Who needs acts of love and concern shown to them?

How to serve and share the love of Christ with them?

For opportunities to share your story and the gospel.



STARTING A SPIRITUAL CONVERSATION

During His life on earth, Jesus told stories using illustrations from everyday life that created an interest in His Kingdom. Jesus made His message accessible to those who would hear. Sadly, we have become conditioned to put on a filter and not speak of Jesus because we imagine that it is awkward, pushy, or politically incorrect. What would it be like to take off this filter and grow in boldness and love as we share stories about who He is and what He is about?

Marking ourselves as a “spiritual” person can help us gauge whether others are interested in God and His message. Some people will “lean in” as you speak about such topics, asking additional questions, sharing their own beliefs, telling about their own journey. Some will not; they will “lean back” and change the topic, become silent, or shut down altogether.

Allow the Holy Spirit to prompt you as you initiate and let Him do the work of speaking to a person’s soul.

Practice talking about two or three of the following “interest creating” topics:

Recently, God/Jesus has been teaching me that...

I am realizing more and more that God has blessed me by...

I used to struggle with (insert fear, stronghold, idolatry) but now I see God wants me to believe...

I decided to follow Jesus because...

I’ve really been learning to pray more lately. Do you have anything in your life that I can commit to pray for?

Think of common topics that come up as you meet people, for example: career, living situation, family history, educational background. Pick one of these and tell how God changed your path in the past, or how He is guiding you in the present.

As you practice talking about these things, try to end with a learning question such as:

Have you ever considered God in this way before?

Do you think God is teaching/blessing/asking you to believe anything right now?

Do you consider yourself on a spiritual journey? What is that like?

What does your tradition say about Jesus?

Your questions are to gauge a response and to allow space for them to interact with your story.

Now, be prayerful and alert as to who God brings across your path!

SHARING YOUR STORY

You have a unique story of how you came to know and follow Jesus. Your story is one of the most powerful tools you have for helping other people find and follow Jesus as well. As you begin to let people know that you are following Jesus, simply ask, “Can I share with you the story of my spiritual journey?” Those who are interested in spiritual things are likely to demonstrate their interest in one way or another (asking questions, making a comment) and that often provides an open door to share your story.

HOW TO BEGIN

Write out your thoughts on the following topics and questions. These ideas will help you share the story of your spiritual journey, sometimes called your “testimony.”

MY LIFE BEFORE JESUS

My life revolved around _____, and I found my identity, happiness and security from _____. Use an example from your personal life here. For instance, did your security come from money, your relationships, etc.?

How did this disappoint me? How was this unfulfilling? How did I come to realize this?

What was I struggling with (if anything) just before I believed in Jesus?

Note: Some people trusted Jesus when they were very young, and don't have clear memories of the time before they knew Him. If that is you, simply share this as part of your story.

HOW I FIRST BELIEVED IN JESUS

This part of your story is where you came to a transition in your life.

When and how did I first hear about Jesus?

What did I learn about the life He offers all who believe in Him?

When and why did my perspective about Jesus begin to change?

Why did I decide to believe in Jesus?

Note: Some of us may be able to point to specific times or circumstances regarding how or when we believed. For others of us, we can only point to a time period or gradual understanding. Both are great. Everyone's story is significant and the biggest point is that you now believe in Jesus.

MY LIFE SINCE I FIRST BELIEVED IN JESUS

How is my life different now? List some specific changes in your character, attitude, and perspective on life.

How am I motivated differently now? What do I live for now?

How do I experience God now?

BRING IT ALL TOGETHER

Think about your answers to the questions above, and ask yourself the following:

Is this a continuous story that makes sense?

Are there any consistent themes in my story?

Can I share my story in 3–4 minutes?

Was I clear about what I believed about Jesus?

SHARING THE GOSPEL: THE BRIDGE

In the Christian faith, the word “gospel” simply means the “good news” about Jesus - His life, death and resurrection. The message that through belief in Jesus we can enter into a loving relationship with God, experiencing forgiveness and receiving the gift of eternal life, is good news, indeed!

Let’s look at a concise and understandable way to communicate the gospel to your friends and family who do not yet know Jesus.

PEOPLE



GOD



God created people to enjoy a relationship with Him and represent Him through our lives. (Genesis 1:26-28, 31) As a loving Father, He communicated boundaries that protect and allow us to enjoy our relationship with Him and with other people. (Genesis 2:15-16)

PEOPLE



SINFUL

GOD

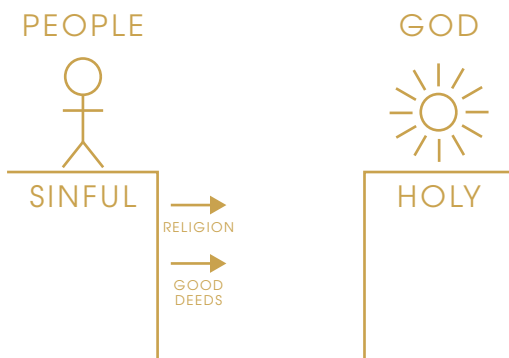


HOLY

Everyone has fallen short of God’s standards. The Bible calls that “sin.” Our sin results in our separation from God. Unless our sin is forgiven, we deserve eternal punishment, separated from God forever.

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23

“For the wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23a

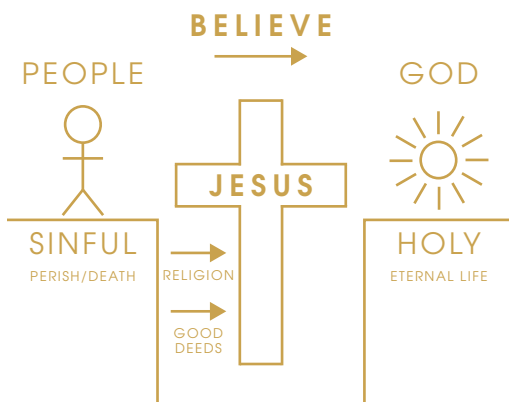
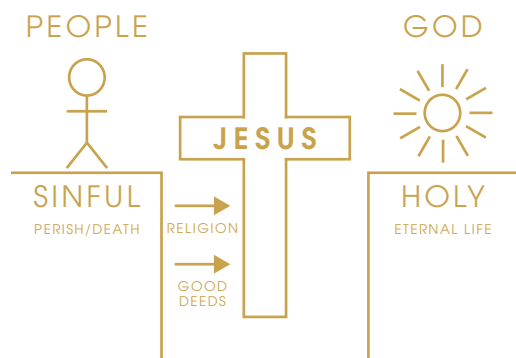


Some try to reach God through religion or by trying to be a good person. But the Bible tells us that there is only one way to God and that is through belief in His Son, Jesus Christ.

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.’” John 14:6

God graciously provided a way to forgive our sin and freely give us eternal life. God’s only Son Jesus died in our place. He took on Himself the punishment that our sin deserves. Then, Jesus rose from the dead. He conquered sin and death forever.

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8



Everyone who believes in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins receives eternal life. To believe in Jesus means that you no longer try to earn God’s approval through what you do, nor do you deny that you need forgiveness and salvation. Instead, you accept God’s free gift of eternal life.

“Very truly I tell you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.” John 5:24

SHARING THE GOSPEL: THREE CIRCLES

In Christianity, the word “gospel” simply means the “good news” about Jesus - His life, death and resurrection. The message that through belief in Jesus we can enter into a loving relationship with God, experiencing forgiveness and receiving the gift of eternal life, is good news, indeed! Let’s look at a concise and understandable way to communicate the gospel to your friends and family who do not yet know Jesus.

These three circles help us explain the gospel according to the Bible.

Read each section and the scripture verses that follow.

GOD’S DESIGN

Out of God’s great love, He created a world that was good. He made people to enjoy a deeply connected relationship with Him and to represent Him through our lives. (Genesis 1:26-28, 31) As a loving Father, He communicated boundaries to protect us and to allow us to fully enjoy our relationships with Him and with other people (Genesis 2:15-17).

BROKENNESS

Yet, when we look around our world, brokenness and evil are evident everywhere - war, famine, disease, corruption. If we are honest, we also see brokenness and evil inside ourselves - deceit, hatred, greed, lust. This is because we have rejected God’s design and chosen to follow our own way. Our rejection of God and His ways is what the Bible calls sin. (Romans 3:23) Our sin results in separation from God which the Bible calls death. (Romans 6:23a) Unless our sin is forgiven, we will remain separated from God forever.

JESUS

God does not want to leave us in our sin and brokenness!

God graciously provided a way to forgive our sin and to freely give us eternal life - a life connected to God both now and forever. (Romans 6:23b; John 17:3)

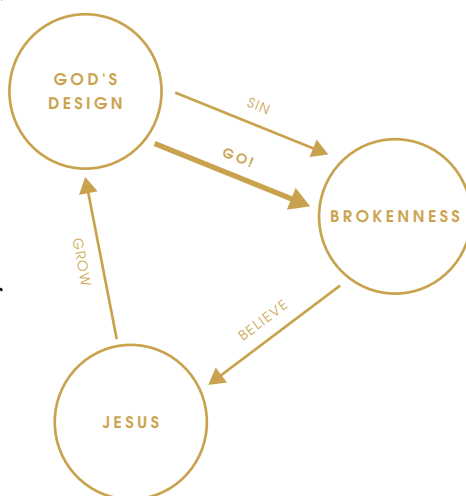
God’s only Son Jesus died in our place. He took upon Himself the penalty that we deserve because of our sin. Then, Jesus rose from the dead, and forever defeated the power of sin and death. (Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3-5)

BELIEVE

We respond to Jesus by believing in Him for the forgiveness of our sin.

To believe in Jesus means that you no longer try to earn God’s approval through what you do, nor do you deny that you need forgiveness and rescue. Instead, you accept God’s free gift of eternal life. Belief or faith is simply being convinced or persuaded that something or someone is trustworthy (John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Everyone who believes in Jesus is forgiven of their sin and receives eternal life. We can now know God personally and experience the life we were designed to live (John 3:16-17).



Which circle or arrow in the diagram best represents your life right now? Have you put your trust (believed) in Jesus alone to be reconciled to God?

POSSIBLE ANSWERS AND NEXT STEPS:

“Yes.”

Ask: “Tell me about that. When and how did that happen for you?”

Try to discern if the person is trusting in anything other than Christ alone.

Move to Grow and Go

“No, but I want to.”

Affirm their decision to believe and help them to tell God in prayer of their belief in Jesus.

Example: “Thank you God for loving me by sending your Son Jesus to die for me. I believe in His life, death and resurrection to rescue me from my sin and spiritual death. Thank you for forgiving my sins and giving me the free gift of eternal life.”

Welcome them to the Family of God!

“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.” 1 John 5:13

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

Move to Grow and Go

“Not Sure” / “Not Yet” / “No.”

Ask: “What is keeping you from trusting in Jesus?”

Try to discern their willingness or unwillingness to believe.

For those willing, help answer their questions if possible.

For those unwilling, offer to pray for them and talk further at another time.

GROW

Everyone who believes in Jesus should then grow in their relationship with God. We grow by knowing God more deeply and living more like Him personally.

We begin to know Him and we become like Him by following His way of living (Ephesians 4:15).

GO

Followers of Jesus have the great calling and opportunity to go into the broken world to share the love of God and the good news of the gospel message (Matthew 28:19-20).

DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDY

Discovery Bible Study is an easy and meaningful way to read the Bible with friends in your life who do not know Jesus. The simple practice consists of reading a section of scripture and answering five basic questions. The goal is to facilitate an encounter between God's truth and your friend's heart. Be praying for God to reveal Himself to your friend through His Word.

Choose a passage of scripture, read it aloud (1-2 times).

Ask someone to retell it in their own words.

Answer these five questions:

1. What does this passage teach about God?
2. What does this passage teach about people or myself?
3. What stands out most in this passage?
4. Since God's word is true, how should I change as a result? What will I do in response to this passage?

Consider the following:

Is there an example for me to follow?

Is there a sin for me to avoid?

Is there a command for me to obey?

Is there a promise for me to claim?

Is there a challenge for me to face?

5. With whom am I going to share this passage and what I am learning from the Bible?

Suggested Passages

Read through these 4 Core Passages about Jesus:

John 3:1-21 (You must be born again)

Mark 2:1-12 (Jesus has authority to forgive)

Luke 7:36-50 (Forgive much/Love much)

Luke 18:7-14 (Self-righteous/irreligious)

Read through the book of John.

Creation to Christ

Read through these passages for bigger picture of the Biblical narrative.

- ☐ Genesis 1:1-25
- ☐ Genesis 2:4-24
- ☐ Genesis 3:1-13
- ☐ Genesis 3:14-24
- ☐ Genesis 6:5-8
- ☐ Genesis 6:9-8:14
- ☐ Genesis 8:15-9:17
- ☐ Genesis 12:1-8, 15:1-6, 17:1-7
- ☐ Genesis 22:1-19
- ☐ Exodus 12:1-28
- ☐ Exodus 20:1-21
- ☐ Leviticus 4:1-35
- ☐ Isaiah 53
- ☐ Luke 1:26-38, 2:1-20
- ☐ Matthew 3; John 1:29-34
- ☐ Matthew 4:1-11
- ☐ John 3:1-21
- ☐ John 4:1-26, 39-42
- ☐ Luke 5:17-26
- ☐ Mark 4:35-41
- ☐ Mark 5:1-20
- ☐ John 11:1-44
- ☐ Matthew 26:17-30
- ☐ John 18:1-19:16
- ☐ Luke 23:32-56
- ☐ Luke 24:1-35
- ☐ Luke 24:36-53
- ☐ John 3:1-21

FIND MORE RESOURCES AT **GRACE-BIBLE.ORG**

But there are also many other things
which **Jesus** did, which, if they were written in detail,
I expect that even the world itself would not contain
the books that would be written.

JOHN 21:25

