

ENCOUNTERING  
**JESUS** in the  
GOSPEL OF JOHN



A PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY FROM



# ENCOUNTERING JESUS in the GOSPEL OF JOHN

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## Getting Started

### WAY TO GO!

I want to congratulate you on downloading this resource. If I could, I'd throw a party in your honor. We could have games and prizes and maybe even hire some professional entertainment.

None of that is practical, of course.

However, we want you to know that it's a big deal when a person takes their faith seriously. You deserve to be celebrated! If we were texting, I'd be sending the party hat emoji.

We have created this resource to help you grow closer to God by taking an in-depth journey through the gospel of John.

Each month, we will release a new lesson, and it will cover one or two chapters from the fourth gospel.

This means you'll be spending a lot of time on just a few sections of Scripture. In today's world, THIS ISN'T NORMAL! We live under a constant barrage of oversharing and too much information.

Our media intake capacity is maxed out, and yet we're constantly digesting more pictures, posts, or tweets.

Can you even imagine what it would be like to focus on one or two chapters for an entire month? Unthinkable, we know! But this is exactly why this Bible study was created: to help you slow down and soak up God's Word.

It will be a challenge to focus, but I know you can do it. I know that God has an unbelievable design for your life, and He wants to speak to you. His love is unconditional and His power is boundless. It doesn't matter where you are "at" in your life, God will meet you there and draw you closer to Him.

What follows is a series of reflections, and each one has its own instructions. Work through them at your own pace.

## Reflection 1

### READ and REACT (John 1:1-51)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

The purpose of this reflection is to give you a quick sense of the passage. Rather than going deep, you'll be skimming the surface. Consider this a top-down overview of the GPS map rather than the turn-by-turn directions.

Begin with prayer.

Read the entire passage twice. Make every effort to ensure that you won't be interrupted. If possible, read the passage out loud the second time. Hearing, even when it's your own voice, engages another part of your brain.

As you are reading the second time, make a note of at least one verse or phrase that fits into one of the following categories:

#### ENCOURAGEMENT

What words, phrases, or verses are uplifting or inspiring for me?

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#### CHALLENGE

How is God calling me to think or act differently?

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#### CONFUSION

What words, phrases, or verses don't make sense to me?

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## Reflection 2

### SURVEY and STUDY (John 1:1-18)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

The goal for this reflection is to apply the “2PROAPT” Bible study method to this passage. This method will help dig deeper into the biblical text to hear God speak.

#### PRAY

Write out a prayer to God, asking Him to speak to you clearly.

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#### PREVIEW

Quickly read the passage once. What is one thing that stood out to you?

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#### READ

Slowly read the passage a second time. What is something new that stood out to you?

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**APPLY**

For you personally, how is God calling you to think or act differently?

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**PRAY**

Ask God for the strength to live in obedience to Him.

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**TELL**

Consider one or two people you might see this week. What might you tell them about what you learned in this passage?

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## Reflection 3

### SURVEY and STUDY (John 1:19-34)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

The goal for this reflection is to apply the “2PROAPT” Bible study method to this passage. This method will help dig deeper into the biblical text to hear God speak.

#### PRAY

Write out a prayer to God, asking Him to speak to you clearly.

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#### PREVIEW

Quickly read the passage once. What is one thing that stood out to you?

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#### READ

Slowly read the passage a second time. What is something new that stood out to you?

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**APPLY**

For you personally, how is God calling you to think or act differently?

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**PRAY**

Ask God for the strength to live in obedience to Him.

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**TELL**

Consider one or two people you might see this week. What might you tell them about what you learned in this passage?

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## Reflection 4

### SURVEY and STUDY (John 1:35-51)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

The goal for this reflection is to apply the “2PROAPT” Bible study method to this passage. This method will help dig deeper into the biblical text to hear God speak.

#### PRAY

Write out a prayer to God, asking Him to speak to you clearly.

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#### PREVIEW

Quickly read the passage once. What is one thing that stood out to you?

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#### READ

Slowly read the passage a second time. What is something new that stood out to you?

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**APPLY**

For you personally, how is God calling you to think or act differently?

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**PRAY**

Ask God for the strength to live in obedience to Him.

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**TELL**

Consider one or two people you might see this week. What might you tell them about what you learned in this passage?

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## Reflection 5

### UNDERSTANDING and TRANSFORMATION (John 1:1-18)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

This reflection is divided into two sections. The first part, called UNDERSTANDING, puts the spotlight on the text. The goal of these questions is to help you dig into the details of the passage so that you might discover the timeless principles God wants to teach you. The second part is called TRANSFORMATION, and the goal of these questions is to help you listen to how the Holy Spirit wants you to apply the principles to your life.

Work through the questions at your own pace. They are intended to be an on-ramp, not a parking spot. If one doesn't make sense, skip it. If your reflections move in a direction away from the questions, excellent! Our prayer is that you will grow in your understanding of God's Word and be transformed by His power.

#### UNDERSTANDING

Read John 1:1-18.

Re-read this passage and make a list of the attributes and actions of the Word, Light, and Jesus.

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In the list you just made, which attribute or action was most surprising for you?

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Why do you think Jesus is called the Word? In your opinion, why did John use this imagery?

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How is John different than Jesus? How is he similar?

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What did John the Baptist mean when he said that Jesus came both after and before him (verse 15)?  
What was his point?

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How does a person become a child of God?

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Write a definition of the following words: law, grace, and truth.

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Re-read verse 18. How has Jesus made God the Father known?

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## TRANSFORMATION

John writes, “The world did not recognize him . . . his own did not receive him” (vv. 10-11). Based on your experience, why do many people ignore Jesus? Why would people ignore the Creator who is the light shining in the darkness?

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Incarnation means “God becomes flesh.” Why did “the Word become flesh”? How is the incarnation personally meaningful for you?

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Notice a pattern in this passage, Jesus makes the Father known, John made Jesus known. How could this play out in your life? How can you make God known to others?

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No one has ever seen God the Father, and we haven’t seen Jesus. How is it that we can believe in Him? Why do you believe in Jesus even though you’ve never seen Him?

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For you personally, in what kinds of situations is it difficult for you to believe? What tests your faith?

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## Reflection 6

### UNDERSTANDING and TRANSFORMATION (John 1:19-34)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

For guidance, look back at the previous reflection.

#### UNDERSTANDING

Read John 1:19-34.

Describe the attitude of the Jewish leaders. What specific clues from the text reveal their intentions?

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How did John answer their questions?

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John said, in verse 23, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" This was a quote from Isaiah 40:3, written hundreds of years before John's lifetime. Read Isaiah 40:1-5. One theme of this passage is God's comfort for His people. Based on what John said about Jesus, how is Jesus a comfort to the world?

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John said that Jesus was greater than him: "A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me" (John 1:30). What does this statement say about Jesus? Why is Jesus greater than John?

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What role does the Spirit play in this passage?

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Based on this text, what was the purpose of John's ministry?

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**TRANSFORMATION**

Jesus came to take away the sins of the world. For you personally, how has Jesus made a difference in your life? As a believer, what blessings have you experienced?

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Many people believe that Jesus was simply a great person, an amazing teacher and leader. However, the Bible doesn't leave this option to us. Jesus is human, but He is also God. He was with God in the beginning (1:1-2), He created all things (1:3), He became flesh (1:14), and He's the only one who has seen God the Father (1:18). Why is it important that Jesus was more than a person?

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John had a testimony about Jesus, meaning he had a clear message that pointed others to Jesus.

- John knew his purpose: to be the voice calling out in the desert.
- John knew Jesus' mission: to take away the sins of the world.
- John knew humility: Jesus was greater.

To shape your testimony, consider your own experience with Jesus. Imagine if someone asked you about Jesus. What would you say? Write out your answer below.

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John had a specific ministry: in the wilderness he preached, baptized, disciplined others, and pointed people to Jesus. In what ways has God called you to be on mission and serve others? If you are serving in a ministry, what is God teaching you through that experience?

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## Reflection 7

### UNDERSTANDING and TRANSFORMATION (John 1:35-51)

#### INSTRUCTIONS

For guidance, look back at the previous reflection.

#### UNDERSTANDING

In this passage, we see the group of 12 disciples, Jesus' closest followers, starting to form. When a passage is packed full of historical details, it can be tempting to read it quickly and move on to more "meaningful" passages. If you are inclined in this way, resist! This passage is rich with meaning for our lives today, but we have to look diligently for it!

Read John 1:35-51.

How many disciples appear in this passage? What are their names?

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What do others say about Jesus in this passage? Make a note of the "title" and the verse reference. For example:

- Lamb of God (v. 36)

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When learning where Jesus came from, Nathanael said, "Nazareth, can anything good come from there?" (v. 46). Nazareth was in a region known for having a high population of Gentiles (non-Jews). What does this comment tell you about Nathanael's character and/or attitude toward Jesus?

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## UNDERSTANDING

In this passage, a powerful statement is used twice: “Come and see.” It’s an invitation for people interested in Jesus to discover who He really is. When did you first become convinced that Jesus was a great teacher and the Savior of the world? For you personally, what made the difference?

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Two of John’s disciples left him to follow Jesus. We can assume that John didn’t feel jealous or betrayed based on his attitude toward Jesus. John knew that Jesus was the Lamb of God (v. 36) and that Jesus was greater than him (v. 30). Later in this gospel, John would say, “[Jesus] must become greater, and I must become less” (John 3:30). In your life, when you lose power or control, what is your first response? Why is it so easy for a person to be jealous or feel betrayed?

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In this passage, the disciples came to Jesus in four ways. The first two, Andrew and the unnamed disciple, decided to follow Jesus on their own. Peter was brought to Jesus by his brother Andrew. Jesus called out to Phillip. Finally, Nathanael, a skeptic, was invited by Phillip. Consider the following three questions: (1) Which of these four best describe how you first came to Jesus and why? (2) What does this tell you about how people come to Jesus? (3) In your life, who needs to be “brought” or “invited” to meet Jesus? Make a commitment to consistently pray for them and for God to give you an opportunity to speak up.

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Nathanael was known for being a man of truth, “in whom there is no deceit.” What is a defining characteristic of who you are? If truthfulness was Nathanael’s thing, what’s yours?

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Jesus promised Nathanael, and presumably the rest of the disciples, “you will see greater things” (v. 50). God is always at work in our lives and in the world, but we need to take the time to stop and consider the great things he is doing. Where do you see God moving in your life?

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## Reflection 8

### PAUSE and PRAY

Use the ACTS method for an extended time of prayer. Incorporate your learnings from this study into your prayer.

#### ADORATION

How can I specifically praise God for who he is?

How can I acknowledge God's presence in my life?

#### CONFESSION

What do I need to confess to God?

What do I need to confess to others?

Who do I need to forgive for what they've done to me?

#### THANKSGIVING

How have I been blessed? What am I thankful for?

What am I hearing from God? What is He showing me?

#### SUPPLICATION

Where do I need help from God?

What do I need to surrender to God?

How can I pray for my family?  
Friends? Church? Unbelieving  
friends? Community?

How is God calling me to encourage  
others?

What Scripture or truth do I need to  
reflect on?

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### MEDITATE and MEMORIZE

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Psalm 119 says, “I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. . . . I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes” (Ps. 119:11, 99).

Biblical meditation is focused thinking on God’s Word. If you know how to worry, you know how to meditate. Worry never helped anyone, but meditation has infinite value. When we have God’s Word, we are positioned to sin less and gain more insight. Holiness and wisdom are the rewards for meditating and memorizing God’s Word.

Choose one of the verses below (or pick your own from the readings) and write it on a 3-by-5 card so that you can easily read it several times a day. Consider its meaning for your life: how is God speaking to you through this Scripture?

Additionally, take some time to commit the verse to memory. When you are tempted, God can’t bring a verse to mind if you haven’t taken the time to “hide” his Word in your heart!

#### SUGGESTED SCRIPTURES

**John 1:1-3** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

**John 1:12-13** “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”

**John 1:14** “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

**John 1:29** “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

**John 1:34** “I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”

**Isaiah 40:25-25** “To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.”