

John – A Devotional Commentary from God's Daily Word Ministries

Chapter 1

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Scripture references for lessons on John: The New King James Version.
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John – Introduction - Lesson #1

There are four gospel accounts of Jesus Christ in the Bible. Of the four, only John was written for a universal audience. Matthew was written mainly for a Jewish audience and presents Jesus as the promised Messiah or King who fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. Mark was written to the Romans and presents Jesus as the Servant who ministers to the needs of the people. Luke was written for the Greeks and presents Jesus as the Perfect Man who came to seek and save the lost. In contrast, John was written for everyone and presents Jesus as the Son of God.

The first three gospels are known as the synoptic gospels because they describe many of the same events in the life of Jesus and are written in a similar style. John is referred to as the supplemental gospel because much of the material is unique and is written with a clear Spiritual purpose.

John 20:31

"But these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

All gospel accounts are useful and equally inspired, but John is ideal for understanding God's plan of Salvation through faith in Jesus. For example, all four gospels give an account of the feeding of 5000 men (and presumably also many women and children) with five loaves and two fish; but only John presents the purpose of that miracle.

The crowd of people had followed Jesus the day after the miraculous feeding; and yet, when Jesus challenged them to believe in Him, they demanded a sign: "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?" (John 6:30). They had just seen over 5000 people fed with five loaves and two fish, but now they wanted more! They wanted bread like the manna their fathers ate in the desert (6:31).

Jesus responds to the crowd by teaching that He is the bread from Heaven: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger" (John 6:35). The purpose of the feeding was not just to provide a free lunch, it was to point to Himself as the bread of life in whom all hunger is satisfied.

So as we begin this devotional study, let's do so with a hungry heart. Let's hunger to know Jesus, and hunger for true life through belief in who He is and all He has done.

Have A Great Day!

John 1:1 - Lesson #2

One mistake made over the years has been to undertake a study of John thinking it to be the "easy" gospel. Nothing could be further from the truth. John intentionally wrote to give more spiritual insight into Jesus Christ, and this will naturally lend itself to some difficult concepts.

John 1:1

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

"In the beginning was..." - this is our first challenging but important concept. As we stretch our human capacity to imagine a time before anything we see came into existence, a place and time we might call "the beginning," someone was already there. This is similar (perhaps intentionally so) to the first verse of the Bible, "In the beginning God..." (Genesis 1:1). In John's Gospel, he identifies the someone without beginning as "the Word," (Greek, Logos).

By using the term Logos, John acknowledged the deep reverence the Jews had for the word of God: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8), "As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is proven" (Psalm 18:30). Time and again, the prophets would state the authority of their message by saying "Hear now the word of the Lord" (eg., Jeremiah 42:15). For the Jew, the word had identity and power, and John was stating that this word always was.

But for the non-Jew, or gentile, the word also had deep meaning. Nearly 600 years before Christ, a Greek philosophy developed which said that all the world was in a constant state of change. And the only thing which kept the world from running completely out of control was the Logos of God. Though the early Greeks did not know the God of the Bible, they were in awe of the Logos which John now identifies as being with God and at the same time being God.

In one short verse, John brings us to that place of unity - before Jew or gentile, before rich or poor - and says, "Here is God! His Word that you revere and honor is with Him and cannot be separated from Him because the two are one. This is where you must begin." And so, this is also where we must begin.

There are many who will spend a lifetime studying and debating the "finer" points of Christian doctrine and yet never give a thought to the point of ultimate beginning. And yet, this truth can be the greatest comfort to our faith. If we can believe that He always was, we can also believe He always will be. And with this starting point we will see that God is in absolute control and has invited us to join Him for all eternity.

John will have much more to say about the Word in the following verses; but for now, the Word always was, the Word was with God, and the Word was God!

Have A Great Day!

John 1:2-5 - Lesson #3

This lesson continues with John's introduction of the One about whom the entire book is written. Verse 1 introduced us to the Word, who will soon be clearly identified as Jesus; "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). The Word always was with God and the Word was God.

John 1:2-5

"He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

The Word is the agent of all creation. This is confirmed in Genesis where creation is accomplished by the word of God; "Then God said...and it was so." Jesus reveals the character and nature of God, and we should understand that His role as Revealer began at creation; "since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made" (Romans 1:20). Creation reveals God! Creation is never to be worshiped, but God made ALL to demonstrate His glory. This ought to fill us with awe, respect, and a sense of responsibility to care for what He has created.

Next we see Jesus being referred to as life and light. This will be a common theme throughout the book. He is the giver of all life. Again, we see this confirmed in Genesis when "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7). Without Him we would still be a lump of dirt - without physical life. But even more important, without Christ we are void of any Spiritual life - a condition referred to as darkness.

If we live in darkness (which is really just existing and not living) we are sure to keep bumping into obstacles without direction or purpose. But when we are made truly alive in Christ, our path becomes clear and filled with hope, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Jesus came shining His light into a Spiritually dark world which did not understand. They could not comprehend who He was because they could not even recognize their need and did not want to turn from the comfort of their darkness; "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). Even the slightest bit of light begins to expose the deeds of a darkened heart; and for most, this is simply too difficult to bear so they keep out the light and therefore never really live.

We must receive Jesus exactly as He is presented. He is the creator of ALL and the giver of real life to those who allow His light to expose the sin which only He can then cleanse. Let's refuse to live another day with even the hint of darkness. Let's open our heart to the light and receive the newness of His life.

Have A Great Day!

John 1:6-9 - Lesson #4

In this lesson we are introduced to a man known as John the Baptist. Luke introduces John the Baptist through the angel Gabriel as he spoke with Mary about the birth of Jesus; "Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age" (Luke 1:36). John was born six months before the birth of Jesus. "So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the desert till the day of his manifestation to Israel" (Luke 1:80). That day came when John the Baptist began to be a witness for Christ.

John 1:6-9

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world."

We don't know anything about John between the time he was born and when he began to preach. Apparently he lived his life in the desert; "clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey" (Mark 1:6). But when he was about thirty years old, "the word of God came to John" (Luke 3:2). The word from God was that the time had come to announce Jesus to the world and to prepare people to receive Him.

John's preaching caused quite a stir in Israel. It had been four hundred years since a prophet had come proclaiming the word of God and now there was John speaking with power and authority. In fact, many began to be followers of John; some even supposed him to be the promised Messiah. It is thought that one of the additional purposes of the Gospel of John - in addition to showing that Jesus was the Son of God - was to show that John the Baptist was NOT the Christ, "he was not that Light."

The Gospel says that John was sent from God with a definite purpose, "to bear witness of the Light." Bearing witness means to testify or give a truthful report. And the purpose of his witnessing was that those who heard his witness would believe - believe in the true or real Light who is Jesus Christ.

All of us believe and are following a light of some kind. We all allow our path to be "illuminated" by something and then set our heart, soul, mind and strength on following that which appears to lead to peace and happiness. But all lights other than Jesus are false and are leading off a cliff of destruction. And our life, without even trying, gives witness to the light we are following. Are we leading others off a cliff?

Let's commit to following the absolute true Light of Christ without any hesitation or reservation. Let's never allow our life or our ministry to be elevated such that others begin to follow us instead of Christ. Rather, let's make certain that every area of our life is a witness which points to Jesus as the way, the truth, and the One and only real Light.

Have A Great Day!

John 1:10-13 - Lesson #5

The long awaited Light and giver of Life had finally arrived. The One who would right all wrongs and make order out of chaos, the One of whom the prophets had written so long ago, was right here in our midst! Should we not have rejoiced and received Him with open arms?

John 1:10-13

"He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

The first portion of this passage is a repeat of what John has already written in the previous verses; "All things were made through Him" (1:3), and "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (1:5). If this message is worth repeating so soon, it must be an amazing truth. Can it be that man is in such a sinful condition that he cannot see light when it shines in darkness? Can it be that the world is so self-consumed that it fails to see the very One who created the world? Can it be? John's answer is a resounding yes!

The Light had come first to the Jews (His own) and then to the world, but all were blind - unable to know or receive. Sin had closed our eyes such that we could not even see what Jesus came to give. And yet, John immediately gives a message of hope; "But as many as received Him, to them He gave..." How does this work where the blind can see enough to believe and become children of God? How can sinful man recognize an absolutely Holy God? John doesn't say - at least not yet. And the reason he doesn't say is that the true message of hope is that the Light is here, so believe and receive the right to become a child of God.

John will maintain this focus all through his gospel. He will teach great theological truths, but he will never lose sight of the need to believe and be born of God, "unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Many people become involved in great debates about who can come to God and yet miss the point that the message is to COME! If we will receive, He will give - so receive!!

Through belief in His name, with all His name implies - Creator, Son, Savior, Lord - we receive the right to become His child. But John is quick to point out that becoming His child is not something we can just add on top of our current birth, not simply an improved life. We can only become a child of God through a birth unlike anything we know, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (1:13). Today, all the authority of God has given us the right to be His child through belief in Jesus. Let's receive Him and begin to walk with boldness and an unshakable hope that we are born of God.

Have A Great Day!

John 1:14 - Lesson #6

John established a common ground between Jews and Greeks by defining God as the Word or Logos - that which holds everything together and gives meaning. He continued by identifying the Word as the Creator, the shining Light, and the Giver of Life to those who believe. And while these were slightly new thoughts, they were not large steps for either the Jewish or Greek way of thinking about God. However, this dramatically changed with John's next statement. Here, John would make his stand.

John 1:14

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

This would not be a simple compromise between Jewish and Greek thought; rather, this single verse would forever set Christianity apart and even make it repulsive to many. The thought of a holy God clothing Himself with deteriorating flesh was disgusting and caused some of the first divisions. Some said that Jesus was just a Spirit who we perceived to be a man, but John makes no allowance for this view; "every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God" (1 John 4:3).

God, in the fully human form of Jesus Christ, came to live among us! And John beheld, or saw with his very own eyes, the glory of Christ which was completely filled with grace and truth.

Grace is often defined as receiving favor for something we do not deserve. But this can reduce grace to giving a gift to a stranger on the street. Rather, grace is like loving someone who has just robbed you and beaten your family - it is showing favor to someone who deserves the very opposite; "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). This indeed is the grace of Jesus. We deserve instant death and He gives us eternal life.

On the day Jesus was crucified, Pilate asked, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). This question perhaps best defines our culture today. Truth shifts to what is convenient and changes to fit our current situation. And yet, deep down, we know this cannot be! People all over the world are searching for the truth upon which they can build their life - the foundation which will not be shaken in the storm. This truth is absolute, unchanging, and is found in Christ; "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). And this truth, when embraced with all our heart and used as a guide for every area of our life will break the bonds which entangle and hold us down; "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Our minds may never fully understand the grace and truth of God; but, in Jesus, it is here for us to witness and receive. God stepped across the infinite and is, right now, just a heartbeat away. Let's receive His grace and begin today to live by His truth all the rest of our days.

Have A Great Day!

John 1:15-18 - Lesson #7

John has taken a stand and made the purpose of the gospel absolutely clear. The Word, who was with God in the beginning and who WAS God, came to live with us. The only begotten of the Father, the Light full of grace and truth, came so that those who receive Him may be given the right to become children of God. In one sense, everything that follows in the gospel of John is in support of the first fourteen verses.

John 1:15-18

"John bore witness of Him and cried out saying, 'This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."

We finally see the Word, the Light, the only begotten full of grace and truth, identified as Jesus Christ. John the Baptist was born six months before Jesus (Luke 1:36); but he states that Jesus, who arrived on the ministry scene later than John, should be preferred because He existed before John. John is saying, "Jesus is the one I've been telling you about, the one you should exalt because He was in the beginning!"

The word "fullness" simply means to be completely filled. So "His fullness" is that which completely fills Christ. At the end of this passage we see that Jesus has "declared" God. This can also be translated as explained or made Him known. In Jesus we can see a clear picture of God, "He is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15). Jesus is filled with all that is God, "For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell" (Colossians 1:19). And it is of His fullness that we can now receive.

The phrase "grace for grace" means a continual outpouring of grace. This has a special meaning in our walk with Christ as we better understand the extent of His grace. The closer we get to Christ, the more grace we discover we require, "for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). But, thankfully, we also discover that God has more grace than what our failures require.

But the phrase "grace for grace" also has meaning in terms of God's overall plan of restoration. "The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." This should NOT be considered as two opposite extremes. Rather, Jesus is the continuation of increasing grace - grace to its fullness. The law was very gracious in that it taught us about sin and sacrifice; taught us about God's holiness and His desire for a pure relationship; taught us about our need for forgiveness and prepared our hearts for Jesus. The law was gracious, but complete grace and truth came to us in Jesus.

The fullness of grace and truth has come and is waiting to be received. Let's walk with the God which Jesus revealed, live according to His truth, and rejoice that He gives grace for grace.

Have A Great Day!

John 1:19-28 - Lesson #8

The first eighteen verses have been a great prologue where John is proclaiming the fullness of the eternal Christ, the great Revealer of God. Now John transitions from concepts to specifics - more specific than any of the other gospels - regarding the times and locations of the first week of Jesus' earthly ministry.

John 1:19-28

"Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not,' 'Are you the Prophet?' And he answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?' He said, 'I am "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.' Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. And they asked him, saying, 'Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, saying, 'I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.' These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing."

John the Baptist was on a mission, "And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Luke 3:3). Many people were coming to listen to John, and many were being baptized! The Jews would regularly baptize Gentiles who were converting to the Jewish faith, but John was baptizing Jews! How dare he imply that God's chosen people needed to be made clean!

The priests and Levites - the protectors of the faith - were sent to question John. He answered the real intent of their first question, "No, I'm not the promised Messiah." Though the Jews were looking for the coming Messiah, it is doubtful they suspected this promise was being fulfilled in John the Baptist. They were looking for someone who would lead them out of Roman oppression, not someone dressed in camel hair and ranting about repentance. But they needed to know how to classify John so they continued, "Are you Elijah?" (ref. Malachi 4:5-6), "Are you the Prophet?" (ref. Deuteronomy 18:15,18). Each time John said "No!" He was only a voice sent to prepare the way for the Lord (ref. Isaiah 40:3-5).

Only a voice! John says that he is not even worthy of the most menial task - the task performed only by a slave - the task of loosing the sandal strap. Oh, if we could learn to be such a voice. If we could learn that we are not the answer. Our ministry is not the answer. The answer is not found in any particular preacher. The ONLY answer is found in Christ, "He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). Let's be a voice, a true witness which smoothes the road and prepares the way with absolute truth. Let's strip away all hint of self importance and pride, and desire only that others would find the answer by drawing near to God through a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Have A Great Day!

John 1:29-34 - Lesson #9

John the Baptist was called to be a witness for Christ. He even referred to himself as "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the Lord'" (John 1:23). These words speak of one who would announce the coming of the Savior. John now gives the grandest of all announcements.

John 1:29-34

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, "After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me." I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.' And John bore witness, saying, 'I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining in Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.'"

This is the second day as recorded in the gospel of John with the focus clearly on announcing Jesus and His purpose, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" In one respect, the entirety of God's Word is centered around this single statement. But what does the Lamb of God really mean?

When God told Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac innocently asked his father; "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (Genesis 22:7). Though Abraham continued to make preparations to sacrifice Isaac, he confidently replied, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:8). And God did! He provided the sacrifice which took the place of Isaac; "So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son" (Genesis 22:13).

On the night the Israelites were led out of Egypt they were told to kill a lamb and put some of the blood "on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses" (Exodus 12:7). The blood of the lamb identified and protected the children of Israel; "When He sees the blood...the Lord will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer of come into your houses to strike you" (Exodus 12:23). This was the first Passover.

And when God gave the Law, He also instructed on making sacrifices; "One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight...This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations" (Exodus 29:39, 42). This system was to restore the relationship broken by sin, but it was a system which could never fully restore; rather, it taught of our need for a substitute sacrifice.

John came to announce that Jesus Christ is the One true sacrifice. He is the only way for our sin to be removed and the relationship with God restored. Let's allow our lives to be a witness that Christ lives in us, has forgiven and fully restored us to the Father, and is truly the Lamb of God.

Have A Great Day!

John 1:35-39 - Lesson #10

Much of the New Testament is devoted to coming to Jesus and bringing others to Him. How do we approach the Savior of the world and how do we properly witness so others will be brought close to His side? These will be the topics of our next few lessons.

John 1:35-39

"Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, 'What do you seek?' They said to Him, 'Rabbi' (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), 'where are You staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour)."

Though John the Baptist had a clearly defined ministry and devoted followers, he never hesitated to point others away from himself and closer to Christ. John never felt threatened or insecure when someone walked away. His disciples knew the message of repentance and had prepared their heart to receive the Savior. John must have felt like a proud father when his "kids" left to follow Jesus.

The two disciples were a little tentative, maybe even scared, because they followed Jesus at a distance. Perhaps they were shy, lacking self confidence - perhaps even their faith was weak - but Jesus, as is the case all through scripture, became the great initiator and took the first step. This is a very humbling truth to understand. We think we have made so many wise decisions and traveled so far in our approach to God, but one day we will discover He made all the moves and crossed the infinite divide to stand right in front of us and ask, "What do you seek?"

It's important we ask this question during our initial approach to God and also as we continue our journey. What do we really seek? Are we looking for social acceptance or quick fixes for our problems? Are we seeking financial blessings or protection from potential curses? If this is our motivation, we will never find Jesus. But if, as is the case with the disciples, we simply want to know where He is so we can be with Him and learn from Him, Jesus will smile and say "Come and see!" "Come, let's spend some time together and you will find what you are seeking." The disciples spent the rest of the day with Jesus (the tenth hour is 4:00 in the afternoon). Oh, what a life changing day that must have been!

Jesus has been standing on the road calling our name for much longer than we realize. Since the beginning of time His desire has been to call us to His side. Let's spend time in His house and learn from the One who is calling. Let's introduce others to the true Savior, and never hold them back or cause them to stumble, so they too can hear the blessed words, "Come and see!"

Have A Great Day!

John 1:40-42 - Lesson #11

Two of John's disciples had heard him refer to Jesus as the Lamb of God. Their hearts had been prepared through the teaching of John the Baptist and now Jesus invited them to follow. These two disciples left John and spent the rest of the day with Jesus.

John 1:40-42

"One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, 'You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas' (which is translated, A Stone)."

The designation, "Andrew, Simon Peter's brother," gives the impression that Andrew had grown up in the shadow of his brother - so much so that people needed to associate him with Simon to even remember who he was. But Andrew had spent time with Jesus and his first desire was to go tell his brother.

Many come to faith in Jesus and immediately desire to go tell their family. However, many also report great discouragement as their family reject and even ridicule their new-found faith - our family remembers and has a hard time seeing through our past. Even Jesus encountered this problem; "Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house'" (Matthew 13:57).

We can learn from Andrew by noting he first spent an extended time with Jesus. He had already been living a life of repentance and had now spent the entire evening with the Son of God. His was a faith which went deep into his heart. He then had to search out his brother, find him in his environment, and humbly report; "We have found the Messiah." The simple use of the word "we" is so non-threatening, so inviting, so void of arrogance. Andrew then took his brother to Jesus, implying walking by his side.

When Andrew brought Simon to Jesus, he was given a new name; "You shall be called Cephas." Cephas is a Hebrew name with a Greek translation of Petros (Peter), meaning stone or rock. Wow, what an honor! Jesus was going to do a mighty work through Andrew's brother. Here was an opportunity for a little jealousy, envy, even resentment. After all, Andrew was first! He was the one who found and brought his brother. But I believe scripture shows Andrew had nothing but joy and a Godly pride in his brother - his heart was pure and desired nothing more than seeing his brother close to Christ.

If our heart is pure, it will always desire to see others brought close to God through faith in Jesus. But if we are to be used in this process, especially with members of our family, we must commit to spending consistent time in His presence, set aside all forms of pride, seek them out, and humbly walk by their side. Let's commit to loving our Savior and bringing others into His presence through a consistent life of faith.

Have A Great Day!

John 1:43-46 - Lesson #12

The first followers of Jesus had an understanding of what they had found. They didn't yet understand the full plan for Christ: "they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again" (Matthew 20:18-19), but they understood He was the one promised throughout scripture - and they couldn't keep the news to themselves.

John 1:43-46

"The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow Me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' And Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.'"

In the first few days of Jesus' ministry, we see four different people who begin to follow. Andrew came to Jesus after hearing John the Baptist proclaim He was the Lamb of God. Simon Peter was brought to Jesus by his brother. Philip began to follow after Jesus found him and made a direct call, and Nathanael was brought by a close friend. Notice the intentional lack of "formula" or method in coming to Christ. The focus is always on responding in faith to His call, never on the method of invitation.

We sometimes forget that Jesus has always been in God's plan. His coming was foretold in scripture and the Jewish people were anxiously awaiting His arrival. After Jesus was crucified and rose from the tomb, He met two men on the road to Emmaus and used scripture to explain who He was; "beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27). This is why Philip told Nathanael that Jesus was the One written about in scripture.

But Nathanael knew the scripture and knew it said nothing about the promised one coming from Nazareth. The prophet Micah wrote about a king coming out of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), but nothing was written about that contemptable town of Nazareth. Nathanael had formed a few preconceived ideas about Nazareth and its people - and these views formed an initial barrier in coming to Jesus. But rather than debate with his friend, Philip wisely replied "Come and see!"

Many people have formed barriers to Christ - prejudices and ideas which make it difficult to draw close to the Savior. But rather than debate with all the "correct" answers, it's best to live a consistent life of faith, fully experience His love and then lovingly encourage a commitment to "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8). Let's fully experience His love by surrendering each and every moment into His hands; and let's encourage others, by all possible means, to take the step - to come, taste, and see - and receive all He desires to give.

Have A Great Day!

John 1:47-51 - Lesson #13

When Philip was called by Jesus, he knew he was called by one worth following. Philip believed Jesus was the One promised in the law and by the prophets, and he couldn't wait to go tell Nathanael; "We have found Him..." (John 1:45).

Philip had just made an outrageous claim. The One written about in the law and prophets was to be the Messiah - the Savior, Redeemer of Israel - the One people longed to see for hundreds of years. There must have been urgency, sincerity and conviction in Philip's tone that day; he must have had a history of honesty and compassion. For although Nathanael was understandably skeptical, he followed when Philip said "Come and see" (John 1:46).

John 1:47-51

"Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!' Nathanael said to Him, 'How do You know me?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.' Nathanael answered and said to Him, 'Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Because I said to you, "I saw you under the fig tree," do you believe? You will see greater things than these.' And He said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'"

When Jesus saw Nathanael, He greeted him with much more than a polite complement - He identified Nathanael as an Israelite without deceit. With this one simple statement, Jesus told Nathanael He saw directly into his heart: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind" (Jeremiah 17:9-10). Jesus saw into Nathanael's heart and saw purity - someone who was earnestly seeking truth.

Nathanael KNEW Jesus was looking into his heart. He WAS seeking the truth; he was trying to live pure and without deceit. Nathanael knew this was One who could truly see; "the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). When Jesus stated He could also see Nathanael's physical location, Nathanael knew He was the Son of God.

Do we really understand that God is looking deep within our heart? We seem to spend a great deal of time on the outward appearance of religion and far too little on the heartfelt desire for a relationship with God. If we want to see heaven open with access to the Father, then we must understand that communion comes only through Jesus; and it is only given by grace to those who come with a heart willing to be exposed, examined, and then cleansed. Let's place our full trust in Him today! He truly sees ALL - and yet He loves enough to wipe it all clean, if we will simply come and believe.

Have A Great Day!