

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

*A womans' class study to open up John's  
perspective on our Lord and Saviour.*

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## Introduction

An interdependent, mutually accountable, intimate, loving community of believers can begin in this class, with these women. You can be the force of love and joy and truth that sets your congregation on fire for the Lord and brings countless lost in your community to Jesus. This will not be because of anything written by the author in these pages, but because of the power of the Word of God and your own commitment to that Word. Devote yourselves to one another and the Father and remember that the purpose of this class is not to create paperwork but to inspire real work.

May God bless your efforts!

*Note: This book deals almost exclusively with the perspective of John's gospel on Jesus' ministry. For that reason, most scripture references cite only chapter and verse. Also, this book contains only twelve chapters, so that classroom discussions will not be rushed and the full course can be completed, even when gospel meetings or other obligations intervene.*

*This book is not intended as a commentary on John's gospel, but as an outline to focus and generate discussion that will open that unique perspective that can only be found in a woman's heart. The Scriptures definitely speak to the student of languages, word studies, and history. Each of these perspectives adds richness to the message God has preserved for us. Likewise the viewpoint and application between men and women are often different. It is in the hope of bringing out the latter that this study is presented.*

**Chapter One**

**That All May Believe**

**J**ohn is unique in his approach to the gospel; his primary purpose is not the historical recounting of Jesus' life addressing a particular group of people, as did Matthew to the Jew, Mark to the Roman, and Luke to the Greek. Rather, John's purpose is to illuminate the intimate nature of the relationship between the divine and the devoted, to prove without question the divinity of Jesus, and to address some of Jesus' greatest spiritual discourses. John's message is for all people, regardless of race, gender, social or spiritual condition.

**Family**

John emphasizes the deeply real, personal nature of the relationship between God and believer and likewise the relationship among believers. The author himself refers not to John by name, but only by the relationship which he shares with Jesus – “the beloved disciple.” John also uses the term Father to refer to God more times than any other book in the New Testament. In the gospel of John, the community of believers is a true family, loving, free, and interdependent. The focus is not on your past, your social position, or even your spiritual condition. The focus is on your future, and the message which Jesus gives to all people, everywhere: “Repent!” Regardless of your circumstances, you can change your heart, change your life, and become a part of a real, active, growing family which needs your whole self and likewise supplies every need, a family diverse in every aspect but for their love and obedience for their mutual Father. In order to truly comprehend this church which Jesus established, we must first understand Jesus himself, his mission, and his attitude toward us and toward his Father.

**Purpose**

The first eighteen verses of John deserve to stand alone and are essential to an understanding of the book as a whole. Often considered poetry or song, these verses take us back to the dawn of time and carry us through the fulfillment of Jesus' purpose on earth. Jesus – the Word – is God and was with God in the beginning. He was not the created but the Creator and the origin of human life. The life which originated in him is that which illuminates the life of every person; in every person is that image of God, the soul, the vouchsafe of the incorruptible. Every person on this earth has been touched by the Light of God. Every person has value; every person has promise. For too many the promise is unfulfilled. But God sees whom he has created both as who she is and as who he desires her to be. We must learn to regard others with the same illuminated vision. Rather than condemning or vilifying those around us, we can speak to them as Jesus would have done: Go, and sin no more! We can see them as who they are meant to be and so uplift them rather than degrade them. In so doing we bring hope to them, joy to ourselves, and strength to the church.

**Sacrifice**

Jesus the Light created the world, came into the world, and finally gave his life for the world, but the world, preferring darkness, denied its own maker and only hope as well. Jesus came first to those whom he had best prepared for his coming, the Jews, and lived among them, demonstrating by every sign and the fulfillment of every prophecy that he was the one for whom they had been looking, yet they denounced him. Likewise there will be those who denounce the disciples who proclaim his word today. Not every sheep we seek will want to be found, and the wolves are real and dangerous. We must recognize that disappointments, discouragements, and heartbreak will come. We will have to make sacrifices for which we will not always see a return, sacrifices that seem far too great or even in vain. So it could have seemed to Jesus when he was so continually rejected by the very ones whom he had been shepherding and caring for and delivering throughout the centuries, the very ones whom he had told so many times of his coming. Jesus even knew that those who would choose to follow him would be few, that most of those for whom he would make the ultimate sacrifice would simply scoff and turn

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away. Yet he did not allow that to sway him from his eternal purpose. We, too, have an eternal purpose: to love and serve our God, and to love our fellow man. We too must not be swayed.

**Servant**

In verse 12 John offers his readers great hope, promising that as many as receive him and believe on his name, have the right to become the sons – and daughters - of God. Jesus came first to the Jews but not only to the Jews; any who are willing to embrace Light and flee the darkness are called to come. Jesus is acknowledged as the only begotten of the Father and described as “full of grace and truth.” John further states that “of his fullness have we all received, and grace for grace,” contrasting the law of Moses with the grace and truth which Jesus brought. To receive the fullness of Jesus is also to accept the role which he embraced while on this earth, the role of the humble servant, who being greater than all, was willing to be debased by all in order to serve all. If we through faith are blessed to become the daughters of God, how can we serve him any less than did his only begotten Son? We too must strive to be full of grace and truth; we too must devote our lives to our Father’s will.

**Saved**

Finally, in verse eighteen, the writer makes plain the principle which is reiterated throughout the New Testament: that the only approach to the Father is through the Son. On the one hand, this declaration is restrictive; without the Son, who can see the Father? On the other hand, however, it is a statement of hope and promise, for although none have seen the Father, the Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has declared him to us, so that we may see with eyes of faith that to which the eyes of flesh are blind. We have been saved; we have been delivered through the mercy and selfless sacrifice of the Son! As the Father has been declared unto us, so we ought to declare him unto others. This gospel, perhaps more than the other three, will emphasize the justice and impartiality of our Father, qualities for which we must strive, however unnaturally they may come to us. As the Creator of every person, Jesus shared the vision of the Father without regard to the superficial differences or standards we often assign. So we too must humbly reach out

into our communities and beyond, recognizing the need of every soul for God and the hopeless condition in which each of us would still remain, if it were not for some one that once taught us.

**Questions for Chapter One**

1. In verses 1-18, what are the various descriptions and names given to the character first named as “the Word?”
2. Using verses 1-4, how would you prove the deity of Jesus Christ to someone who believes in God but not in the deity of Jesus?
3. Describe the relationship between the Light and man, giving special attention to verse 9.
4. Using these passages, can you refute the arguments of those who deny that Jesus was also human?
5. Who have the right to become children of God?

