



BELIEVE:
WHY JESUS CAME - JOHN 1

DISCUSSION GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

John begins his book differently than any other gospel. While Matthew, Mark, and Luke begin their respective gospels from a genealogical, prophetic, or historical perspective, John begins his book by addressing the root issue: “Who is Jesus Christ?” John begins with a bold declaration to skeptics about the nature of Christ.

From its first words, John’s gospel sets a unique tone. He starts with the most important truth in the universe—that Jesus wasn’t just a man, but the Word of God in the flesh. The word “gospel” means “good news.” Without Jesus, everyone would be left in darkness and sin, deserving God’s wrath and awaiting the final judgment. Instead, God displays His love for us in sending His own Son, the Word of God, as the man, Jesus (John 3:16). The Good News is: God became man, lived a perfect life, died for our sins, and rose again securing all of God’s promises for those who believe, including the hope of eternity with God (2 Cor. 2:20). Throughout John’s gospel, John emphasizes this point—that Jesus is God—by demonstrating His authority over the universe in miraculous signs, statements, and ultimately, in His resurrection from the dead.

John’s introductory prologue outlines theological truths that lay the groundwork for the rest of the book. A few of those foundational statements are:

- Jesus is one with God (1:1-2, 1:14, 1:18)
- The Son of God existed with the Father in the beginning, before the creation of the world (1:1-2)
- The world was created through the Son of God (1:3)
- Life flows from—and is found in—the Son (1:4)
- Jesus is the gracious and merciful Messiah who the Old Testament prophets and saints hoped for (1:6-8, 1:15-16)
- Jesus is the light and hope in a dark and hopeless world (1:4-13)
- Faith in Jesus makes someone a child of God (1:12-13)
- The Eternal God, the Son, dwells with man. (John 1:14, 1:1)
- We are dead in our sins and separated from God. In His mercy, God makes us alive in Him through the resurrecting power of the Spirit (1:13, 1:10, 1:17)
- The glory of God is seen in Jesus (1:14)
- Jesus reveals God to us in terms we can understand (1:18)

The prologue of John begins and ends with clear references to the deity of Christ. Interestingly, right before the book concludes in chapter 21, John records Thomas's clear reference to Jesus being God. Thomas praises Jesus, stating "My Lord, and My God." John creates bookends in his prologue and book that clearly display Jesus as the one true God. In this series, we will discover that God mercifully and graciously displays His love for us through His Son, Jesus Christ, and we can now share this love and good news with others.

This study guide is made up of three weekly sections:

1. DISCUSSIONS

Each week has groupings of questions that fit well together. These groupings are called "discussions." They are designed to help you get into God's Word, apply the sermon, and guide your group discussion. Use the discussions, or questions, that fit best with your group's situation or needs. Beyond your Small Group, these questions can also be used in the context of a Bible study or a discipleship relationship.

2. FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

These questions were created specifically with families in mind and we hope they'll be useful in facilitating family discussion (maybe around the dinner table, or another family devotional time). These questions are applicable for all ages, including young children. We pray these bless you as you disciple your family.

3. APPLICATION

Each week, we've suggested some applications. Whether you use these applications or find other ways to respond, our hope is that you intentionally act on and obey God's Word.

DISCUSSION 1

The Word of God.

1. According to John 1:1-3, who is the Word? What do these verses tell us about the nature of “the Word”?
2. What are some things that these verses teach us about the relationship between the Word and God?
3. We read that the Word created all things. How should this affect the way that we, as creation, view the Word?

DISCUSSION 2

God, the Word.

1. Jesus is the God of Genesis 1:1, revealed to humanity. What is the significance of Jesus being called “the Word”?
2. What are some religions or groups that deny the deity of Jesus? What do they believe about Him? How does John 1 address their claims?
3. Read John 8:24-25 and John 8:58-59. According to John 8:24, why does it matter what someone believes about Jesus?

DISCUSSION 3

Jesus, the Creator.

1. The Bible tells us that all things were created by Jesus. What are some reasons people deny the existence of a creator?
2. Read Romans 1:18-25. Why does the Bible assume that everyone knows that there is a Creator God? Give some examples of God’s character being seen through creation.
3. Have you ever struggled with believing in the existence of God? What are some things that have helped you in these times?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Spend some time discussing the nature of Jesus with your family. Talk specifically about how Jesus is God, and spend time thanking Him for all He has created.

2. Read John 8:24-25 and 8:58-59. According to verse 24, why does it matter what someone believes about Jesus?
3. Since Jesus created all things, all things are for His glory. How can you use your money, time, and relationships for His glory? Give examples of things you want to use better for His glory.

APPLICATION

Individual: Since the Bible tells us that it is important to know who Jesus is, use this month to grow in the area of apologetics. Consider reading:

- *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel
- *Defending Your Faith* by R.C. Sproul
- *The Reason for God* by Tim Keller
- *Grand Central Question* by Abdu Murray

Group: Read through John 1 together. Commit to memorizing some, or all, of this chapter. Pray for opportunities to share this gospel truth with someone this week.

DISCUSSION 1

In Him is life. Life is fundamental to our being, yet we often have trouble knowing how to define and talk about it.

1. What does John mean when he says: “in him was life?” Where did God get His life? What does it mean that God is self-existent?
2. When we say that we have life, what do we mean physically? What do we mean spiritually?
3. How do the ideas of creation (John 1:3) and life (1:4) fit together? How does the idea that life comes from God make a difference in your daily life?

DISCUSSION 2

The relationship between light and life.

1. Verse 4 introduces a new necessity for life: light. What does light have to do with life?
2. Why do we need light? What other Scriptures talk about light in a similar manner?
3. How does the light of God’s life get to humanity? How can we be an agent of light in a dark world?

DISCUSSION 3

The connection between light and darkness is a fascinating illustration of God’s glory.

1. Read verse 5. What promise is given in this verse? How might the truth of this promise impact your life?
2. Light always overcomes the darkness, but what does John mean by “light” and “darkness”? Give some practical examples in your life or in the lives of others?
3. How might darkness win in the battle of darkness and light? How can we prevent it?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Have your children take a flashlight and go into a dark room as a family. Talk about darkness, and then ask your children to turn on the flashlight. Let them take turns trying to push the light beams away. Afterward, discuss the power of light versus the power of darkness.

2. Talk about the light of God in Jesus and His Word. Specifically, discuss some ways the light of Jesus has impacted your family.
3. Have your children see how long they can hold their breath. Ask them how long they think God can hold His breath. Take time to explain the truth that God is self-existent and doesn't need air—or anything else.

APPLICATION

Individual: Read John 8:12 and use the Scripture to continue meditating on the truth that Jesus is the light of the world.

Individual: Spend time in prayer, confessing any sins that the Holy Spirit reveals. Then, ask God to help you live in the light and help others do the same.

Group: Gather with others to discuss some ways you show the light of Christ to the world this week. Perhaps you can volunteer to help a neighbor or pay for someone's coffee. Brainstorm some ideas together and then follow up to see how God's light was revealed through your acts of kindness.



WEEK THREE PREPARING THE WAY

John 1:6-8

DISCUSSION 1

John the Baptizer was a precursor of Jesus. He was a unique individual and was not the Apostle John, the author of this book.

1. Read the following passages to learn more about John the Baptizer (Matt. 3:1, Luke 1:57, Matt. 14:1).
2. In the book of Luke, we see a full account of God's work in John's life, before he was even born. What can we glean from the idea that John the Baptizer was sent from God?
3. How was John faithful to his calling?

DISCUSSION 2

John was a witness. He was not called to talk about himself, but rather to prepare the way for another. Being a witness was his task, calling, and privilege.

1. To what or to whom was John to witness? What is the difference between the words "about the light" and "through Him" (v. 7)?
2. One important word in this passage is "that" (v. 7). Why is it important? What was the purpose of John's witness? Did any believe as a result of his work?
3. What are some responses we could have concerning John's life? How should his example impact the way we live?

DISCUSSION 3

During John's life, many people thought he was the promised Messiah of Israel. While he was clearly not the Messiah, John was an important aspect of God's witness.

1. Read Matt. 11:1-6. Did John ever doubt that Jesus was the Messiah? Does that encourage you?
2. God sent a witness to the world through John. What should our response be to God, in light of that truth? Who was the first witness to tell you about Jesus? Who, in turn, have you witnessed to?
3. How can you be a better witness today?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever played the game Telephone? Play this whisper-messaging game as a family. Then, compare the differences between the final message and the original message. Use this to teach your children how easy it is to witness inaccurately. Pray together that your family will love Jesus well and present Him well to others.
2. Talk about one person your family knows who does not believe in Jesus. Pray for God to present you with opportunities to witness to that person. Pray that God will work in and through that interaction to help bring that person to faith.

APPLICATION

Individual: Take an evangelism class to help refresh your desire and equip yourself to share Christ with others. Visit yourchurch.com/howtoshare to register for the our November evangelism class.

Group: Whether in your Small Group or among friends, spend time sharing your testimony of salvation. End your time by thanking God for all He has done to draw you to Himself.



WEEK FOUR REJECTING THE TRUE LIGHT

John 1:9-11

DISCUSSION 1

The True Light came in to the world.

1. The God of the universe, Jesus, came into His own creation. What does this say about the humility of Jesus?
2. Before Jesus came into the world, how did people hear from God? Give examples from the Old Testament.
3. Did Jesus have to come into the world and save humanity? Would God have been righteous and good if He had never saved anyone? Why?

DISCUSSION 2

His own rejected Him.

1. Read John 5:39 and 46. What do these texts tell us about the relationship between the Old Testament and Jesus?
2. Why did so many Jewish people reject Jesus as their Messiah?
3. Read Isaiah 53. What are some things this Scripture tells us about the Messiah and what He would do when He came?

DISCUSSION 3

We rejected Him.

1. At one point, we have all rejected Jesus. What are some things you have given your time and devotion to before you believed in Jesus? If you were young when you first put your faith in Jesus, what were the things that you struggled to put to death early in your faith?
2. What led to you believing in the gospel? Give a short testimony of how you came to believe in Jesus.
3. What is the biggest area of growth in your walk of faith? What are some things you've done to make that progress?

DISCUSSION 4

We are called to carry His light.

1. When was the last time you shared the gospel with someone? Have you ever shared the gospel with someone who became hostile to the message of Christ? Explain.

2. What are some things that keep you from sharing the gospel? Does sharing the gospel give you anxiety? If so, why?
3. What are some of the biggest idols of our culture? How does the gospel speak into these idols?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Tell your family about how you came to know Jesus as your Lord and Savior.
2. Talk about some of the things that make it hard to follow Jesus. Discuss what you can do as a family to encourage each other in your faith.
3. When was the last time you shared the gospel or your testimony with someone? How did that go?

APPLICATION

Individual: Seek out an opportunity to share the gospel with someone this week, either through a formal gospel presentation or through your personal testimony.

Individual: In John 5:39, Jesus said that the Old Testament Scriptures pointed to Him. To better understand this truth, commit to reading through a book in the Old Testament, looking for how it points to the coming Savior. While all of the Old Testament points to Jesus, some specific books to consider are Genesis, Ruth, and Isaiah. As you read, think about how that book points to Jesus. It may be helpful to use a Bible commentary as you read.

Group: Pray that God will grow your passion for those who don't have a relationship with Jesus. Pray for God to send you someone to share the gospel with or to disciple.

DISCUSSION 1

Authentic faith requires receiving and believing.

1. How would you explain the similarities and differences between “receiving Jesus” and “believing in Jesus”?
2. Historically, many Protestants have talked about “faith” as an act of knowledge, assent, and trust. Essentially, they believe faith involves understanding information about something, believing it to be true, and placing your trust in it. Why is each aspect key to faith in Jesus?
3. John’s gospel includes examples of people “believing in Jesus” in a way that is self-centered and spurious (John 2:23-25 or 6:26). How might you discern if your faith is truly receiving and believing in Jesus, or if you are simply using Jesus to get something from Him?
4. In light of this discussion, how would you explain authentic faith to an unbeliever?

DISCUSSION 2

Belief results in becoming a child of God.

1. What are some of the privileges and benefits that we are given as children of God? Try to come up with a list of at least ten (Ephesians 1 is a great place to start).
2. Can you think of a time when knowing you were a child of God brought you comfort? Share as you feel comfortable.
3. What responsibilities come with being God’s child?

DISCUSSION 3

Children of God are reborn.

1. Read 1 Peter 1:3, 23, John 3:1-6, and 2 Cor. 5:17. Explain the concept of being “reborn”— both how it happens and the changes it causes.
2. John introduces the ideas of being God’s child and being reborn, which will show up throughout the rest of John. What are some ways you’ve experienced God’s work in your life that indicate you were made new or were reborn?
3. If you are God’s child and you have been reborn by the Spirit, how should you live differently this week? What is one specific way you can apply this truth this week?

4. How are the biblical concepts of rebirth and adoption similar and yet different? Together, how do they give a fuller picture of what happens at salvation?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Discuss what true faith in Jesus involves and what that looks like for your family. Ask your children to tell you what they know about Jesus and what it means to believe those truths. Talk about how your family can help each other trust God instead of man.
2. Ask your children to share some of the benefits of being in your family. Then ask what some of the benefits of being in God's family are.
3. What are some promises we can claim if we are God's children through Jesus?

APPLICATION

Individual: Make a list of the privileges, benefits, and promises in Scripture—or find a list online—that apply to us through Jesus as God's beloved children. Highlight a few to memorize during a current season or struggle you're in. Send a text or email to a friend to encourage them with one or more of these truths.

Individual: Spend time in prayer thanking God for all the benefits, privileges, and promises we have as His children.

Group: Pray for an opportunity to share the gospel with someone this week.

DISCUSSION 1

The claim that God took on human form is incredibly miraculous and lays a foundation for the doctrine of atonement. However, this belief also creates great controversy and questions.

1. When Christ took on human form, did this diminish or remove His divine nature? Why or why not? Consider reading Phil. 2:5-8.
2. Why was it necessary for Christ to become flesh in order to rightfully and completely forgive our sins?
3. How does the fact that Christ not only “became flesh,” but also “dwelt among us” for many years bring you hope (particularly in times of temptation)?

DISCUSSION 2

Jesus did not become man only to seek and save sinners, or display His power through miraculous acts. His time on earth also further revealed who God is to humanity.

1. Without Christ physically present on earth, can we experience and see the glory of God today? If so, how?
2. What truths and characteristics of God are uniquely revealed or emphasized through the earthly ministry of Christ?
3. Just as Christ revealed the glory of God, how might we, as Christians, also reveal the glory of God in our lives?

DISCUSSION 3

One of the beautiful realities of Christ’s incarnation is that He came in grace and truth to free the world from condemnation and lies.

1. Although God was gracious to reveal His holiness through the Law, how is the grace revealed through Christ unique and superior to that of the Old Covenant (See Heb. 8:6-13)?
2. Often, grace and truth can be seen as rivaling concepts. How does the grace that Christ displays complement His truth? How does His truth complement His grace?
3. How can we, as Christians, show grace to others without sacrificing truth? How can we show truth without sacrificing grace?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Talk about who Jesus is. Ask your children how Jesus is like them and how He is different than them.
2. Discuss the ways Jesus teaches us about God. What does He teach us?
3. John 1:14 says that Christ is full of grace and truth. How would you describe the word “grace”?

APPLICATION

Individual: Reflect on the significance of Christ’s incarnation as it relates to His ability to live perfectly and accomplish what you could not. Praise God for the work He has graciously achieved through the work of Christ. Consider finding a song that emphasizes this reality and use it to worship and thank the Lord this week.

Group: Discuss some areas in your life where you have failed to balance grace and truth. Consider what you can do this week to better reflect the complementary grace and truth that we see in Christ. Pray for each other as you feel led.



WEEK SEVEN RECEIVING GRACE UPON GRACE

John 1:15-16

DISCUSSION 1

Jesus brings grace.

1. What is one way that God has given you grace this week?
2. What does John the Baptist (or Baptizer) mean when he says Jesus was before him and therefore ranks before/above him? Why is that an important distinction?
3. What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? What does John communicate when he talks about the “fullness” of Christ (Col. 1:19, 2:9)?

DISCUSSION 2

We are given grace upon grace.

1. John the Baptist bore witness about Jesus to pave the way for people to believe in the true light (v. 6-9). How do we, as followers of Christ, bear witness to Jesus? How are we to shine the light of Jesus (Matt. 5:14-16)?
2. What is grace? What does it mean to receive grace upon grace from Jesus?
3. Jesus is the channel through which we receive all of the Father’s material and spiritual blessings. What are some ways that we treat these blessings as if they are based on our efforts instead of God’s grace?

DISCUSSION 3

We give grace because we have received it.

1. Does God show grace to all people in the same way? How does God show grace to all people, and in what ways does He specifically show grace to His family?
2. Give an example of a time when you struggled to give someone grace. Why was this difficult?
3. Since we have received grace upon grace from Jesus, we ought to seek to show that grace to others as well. In what ways do you need to show grace to others this week?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Ask your children how they felt when they last received a gift they really wanted. How did they show they were thankful? Did they want to use the gift? Did they want to show the gift to others? Explain how grace is an even better gift. Talk about how your family can appropriately respond to grace as the wonderful gift that it is.
2. Ask your children why the Bible says we all need grace. Talk about how they can receive the grace of Jesus, according to the Bible.
3. Have your children act out a situation when grace is required (Ex. one child cuts in front of another child in line). Then, discuss what it would look like to show grace in that situation. Pray together that God would help you and your children receive and give grace to others.

APPLICATION

Individual: God shows us His grace in a new way every single day. Take time to acknowledge His grace this week. Each day, set aside time to answer the following question: “How has God shown me His grace today?”

Group: Meet up with one or two others this week to read and pray through Matt. 18:21-35.

WEEK EIGHT BETTER THAN MOSES

John 1:17

DISCUSSION 1

Jesus is better than Moses.

1. What are some similarities between Jesus and Moses? What are some differences?
2. Why do you think God gave us images (i.e. individuals) in the Old Testament to show us what Christ would be like?
3. Can you think of other individuals in the Old Testament who foreshadowed, or pointed to, Jesus? How did they do that?
4. Read Heb. 3:1-6. In light of these verses, how is Jesus better than Moses? How is that encouraging to us in our daily lives?

DISCUSSION 2

God created The Law for our good. However, our sin made it impossible to keep The Law.

1. Read v. 17. Why do you think John makes this distinction between “The Law” and “grace and truth?” Is one bad and the other good?
2. How is the law of God a gracious gift to man?
3. Do God’s laws still apply today? How are they still a gracious gift to us?

DISCUSSION 3

Jesus brings “Grace and truth”.

1. Read vv. 16-17 of this week’s passage. How does v. 16 help us understand v.17?
2. How do the grace and truth of Jesus build on, replace, or finalize The Law?
3. Who are some people in the Bible who were touched by the grace and truth of Jesus? How did it impact their lives?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Read Exodus 2 as a family and compare Moses and Jesus. How were they similar? How were they different?
2. Read Heb. 3:1-6. Talk about how a house is built. Ask your children why the builder of a house is more important than the house itself. Then, talk about how God is the builder of all things.

3. How do we know what is bad (i.e. sinful)? What did God do to solve our sin problem? What are we supposed to do about the bad things we do?

APPLICATION

Individual: Pray and pursue a gospel opportunity this week. Ask God to bring someone across your path who does not trust in Him. Use the law/grace approach to explain the nature of sin, God's demands, our sinfulness, and the redemptive work on the cross.

Group: Consider Psalm 1 and Psalm 19. Read them in small groups and commit to meditating on and memorizing one of them this week.

WEEK NINE UNSEEN GOD NOW MADE KNOWN

John 1:18

DISCUSSION 1

God is three person in one essence: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

1. How do the three parts of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) relate to each other (Read: Gen. 1:26, John 5:19, 8:28, 4:24, 14:9, 6:63, and 14:16)?
2. Will we ever see God the Father? Why or why not? How do we have a relationship with God the Father (Read: John 1:18, Ex. 33:17-20, and Col. 1:15)?
3. Why is it important that God the Father and God the Son are one rather than two separate beings, as some have claimed? Discuss some logical, rational, or scriptural issues this would cause?

DISCUSSION 2

God the Son.

1. Who is the One seated at the right hand of the Father (Luke 22:69)? What is John claiming in v. 18 about this person?
2. In what ways does Jesus make the Father known?
3. We are called to imitate Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). Why did God create us in His image? What was Satan's lie? What is the hope that we have (Read Gen. 1:26, 3:5, and 1 John 3:2)?
4. What are some concrete steps you can take to imitate Christ this week?

DISCUSSION 3

God the Holy Spirit.

1. How does Jesus make the Father known in a personal and saving way (John 3:5-8)?
2. If the Spirit plays the primary role in salvation, how does this give us confidence and boldness in being able to share our faith (1 Cor. 3:6)?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Take a family walk together. As you do, discuss the different ways you can see God—in nature and in other ways.
2. Ask your children to tell you about Jesus. What are some things that Jesus does that we should do too?

3. Spend time talking to your children about the Holy Spirit. Ask them if they have had a time when they've sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit. Talk about a time you have sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit. Pray together and ask God to continue to teach your family more about who He is: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

APPLICATION

Individual: This week, commit to a short time of prayer in which you listen for the Holy Spirit to speak into your day. Whether it's five minutes or 50, try to spend the time listening instead of speaking.

Group: Grab coffee or get together with someone and have a conversation about ways you both could be more like Christ. Put an action plan together and ask that person to hold you accountable.

Group: Find some specific traits or callings that you have as an image-bearer of God the Father and of Christ. Spend time in prayer with your group, family, or friends, asking God to empower you to image God in those ways.

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