Bible Study: The Gospel of John

- Workbook -

By Madelon Maupin, MTS
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Cover image: “St. John the Evangelist”, El Greco, Madrid


This book belongs to ________________________________
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Madelon has a Master of Arts in Theological Studies (with an emphasis on Biblical Studies) from San Francisco Theological Seminary. She received a certificate from The Balkan Institute, Thessalonica, Greece, for studies in Greek language and culture, and has lectured extensively for Princess Cruises as their ship’s Cultural Historian for cruises to the Middle East as well as Europe and the UK. Madelon closed an active leadership consulting firm based in Southern California in 2011 after twenty wonderful years working with senior executives.

Madelon now enjoys sharing her love of the Bible through talks on a variety of Biblical books and subjects for churches and organizations throughout the world. She does this through her company, Bible Roads, dedicated to providing Biblical education through a wide variety of online courses, workbooks, webinars and CD’s and MP3 versions of talks. Her website (www.BibleRoads.com) also has a number of free resources for Bible Study for both individuals and groups.

Sharing the Bible with young people is a special interest and Madelon has been privileged to provide Bible workshops at Church Youth Summits as well as serving Adventure Unlimited/DiscoveryBound as a member of its Board of Trustees.

She lives in Newport Beach, California, with her husband, George Birdsong, serves on the Faith and Order Commission of Southern California and was a Trustee of the New Theological Seminary of the West. Madelon is also a member of her church’s National Ecumenical Team.
Bible Study Guidelines

Ways to approach Bible study

1. Choose a Bible Book: Select a book (or letter) of the Bible you would like to study, and read it chapter by chapter, perhaps with one member of the group writing questions ahead for each member to answer and share. Or find a Bible Study workbook, such as those Bible Roads produces, that already has study questions for you. Consider how often you will meet and where. I would recommend no more than one chapter per hour of discussion or you might be going too fast to really cover it all. (See “Ways to Approach a Discussion in a Group Setting,” pg. 7)

2. Select a Theme: Take a theme such as found in Luke 24 as Jesus is walking to Emmaus. When he gives the two men a Bible lesson in references to him in the Old Testament, look those up and share your findings with your study group.

3. Study Chronologically: Begin with the various groups of biblical figures that go together, such as the Patriarchs in the Torah; the Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel); the Minor Prophets (Amos, Hosea, etc.); the Kings of Israel, the Kings of Judah, or the fall of each kingdom and deportations; the return to Jerusalem; Paul’s letters; the pastoral letters; etc.

4. Select Characters: Joseph’s life story, David, Jesus, Paul, etc.

5. By a Book or Certain Characteristics: Distinctions between the Gospels; Book of John, women characters, teenagers in the Bible, or words such as light, grace, promise, etc.

Ways to make the Bible your own

1. Memorize a Psalm, or verses regularly.
2. Study in a contemporary or idiomatic translation.
3. Commit to reading four pages a day (or any one year reading program).
5. Use a good atlas, tracing journeys, understanding topography.
Ways to do Bible Study Individually or with a Group

1. After reading a chapter, give it a title.
2. Select your favorite verse from the chapter and/or one that reflects the theme.
3. Identify an idea that is meaningful to you and explain why. Explain how you would “pull it forward”, that is apply that verse to your life today.
4. Make a note of anything that is confusing or not understood clearly.
5. Write a summary of your favorite passage in light of the whole chapter.

Ways to Approach a Bible Study Discussion in a Group Setting

1. After you determine which Bible book your group will study and how often you will meet (1x/month, 2x/month, etc.), select someone as facilitator and possibly rotate that role each time.
2. Use Bible Roads or another workbook to provide study questions chapter by chapter. Send those out ahead to give shape to each person’s study.
3. Read 1-2 verses aloud, going around the circle and announcing from which translation you’re reading. You might want to repeat the verses in another translation if it’s helpful. Share what you learned about these verses or what came to you.
4. Summarize the overall theme of the chapter either at the beginning or the end to give a “30,000-foot” view to capture the big themes.

Bible Organization

Bible: A library of 66 books (‘biblia’ = book); 2 Testaments, both in 4 parts.

Old Testament (39 books)
- The Law, or Pentateuch - (1st 5 books, Genesis to Deuteronomy)
- History – (12, Joshua to Esther)
- Poetry, Wisdom - (5, Job to Song of Solomon)
- Prophesy – (17, Isaiah to Malachi)

New Testament (27 books)
- Gospels (4 books, Matthew to John)
- History (1 book, Acts)
- Letters (21 books, Romans to Jude)
- Revelation (1 book, Revelation)
Bible Translations - Brief Descriptions

Amplified Bible — By using synonyms and definitions in this translation, a word is amplified by placing the extended meanings in parentheses. This allows readers to gain a fuller sense of the meaning of each verse. It is one of the few translations done by a woman, Frances Siewert (1881-1967) and published by The Lockman Foundation in 1987. Sample from John 11:25 — Jesus said to her, “I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in (adheres to, trusts in, and relies on) Me, [as Savior] will live even if he dies.”

The Common English Bible (CEB) - A bold new translation designed to meet the needs of a broad range of people and written at a 7th grade reading level, thus known for its accessibility. It was prepared by a robust cross section of translators from 24 denominations in 2010. Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die.

The King James Version (KJV) — Translated in 1611 by 47 male scholars using the Byzantine family of manuscripts, Textus Receptus. This remains as a beloved version of the Bible due to its majestic language and sweeping poetry and prose. It has been the most reliable translation for over three centuries, but its Elizabethan style Old English is difficult for modern readers, especially youth. More contemporary translations have addressed the KJV’s mistranslation due to increases in scholarship and awareness of early manuscripts after the 20th century discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Nag Hammadi finds. Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live.

The New King James Version (NKJV) — 130 translators, commissioned by Thomas Nelson Publishers, produced this version from the Byzantine family (Textus Receptus) in 1982. This is a revision of the King James version, updated to modern English with minor translation corrections and retention of traditional phraseology, but with an effort to have more inclusive gender references. Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live.

The Message Bible – This popular and paraphrased translation by Eugene Peterson, himself both a Hebrew and Greek language scholar, was written to help this former pastor communicate the vitality and directness of Scripture he felt parishioners were missing. Peterson explains: “Writing straight from the original text, I began to attempt to bring into English the rhythms and idioms of the original language.” Published in 2002 by NavPress, The Message is popular with every educational level. “You don’t have to wait for the End. I am, right now, Resurrection and Life. The one who believes in me, even though he or she dies, will live. And everyone who lives believing in me does not ultimately die at all. Do you believe this?”
The New International Version (NIV) — Over 100 translators completed this work in 1978 which was composed from Kittle’s, Nestle’s and United Bible Society’s texts, which include the Alexandrian Family codices. This is considered an “open” style translation. It is a good, easy to read version often favored by evangelical Christians.  Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;

The New Living Translation (NLT) - Their translators faced the challenge to create a text that would make the same impact in the life of modern readers that the original text had for original readers. In the New Living Translation, this is accomplished by translating entire thoughts (rather than just words) into natural, everyday English. The end result is a translation that is easy to read and understand and that accurately communicates the meaning of the original text. Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying."

The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) – The most widely ‘authorized’ by Protestant churches, the NRSV was published in 1989 and stands out among many translations. It is highly recommended for use in most Christian seminaries and college classes today because of its scholarship. Its translation committee consists of 30 men and women among America’s top scholars, representing a broad range of Protestant denominations as well as Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Jewish scholars. The Harper Collins Study Bible Edition is known for its outstanding study notes, including excerpts from the recently discovered Dead Sea Scrolls. Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live.

J.B. Phillips New Testament—J.B. Phillips (1906-1982) was a well-known Anglican who was committed to making the message of truth relevant to today’s world. This translation was originally begun for his youth group within the Church of England and later published because of popular demand. Published by HarperCollins 1962.  I myself am the resurrection and the life,” Jesus told her. “The man who believes in me will live even though he dies, and anyone who is alive and believes in me will never die at all. Can you believe that?”

The Voice— Step into the Story of Scripture — This new translation is a dynamic equivalent one, similar to The Message. It is intended to be read like a story, yet with all the wisdom of God’s Word. The Voice works to invite the reader into the whole story of God and creation. While it encourages readers to have a knowledge of God, The Voice is more about developing a personal relationship with God. This translation is intended for those new to the Scriptures with the intention that the idioms used in translation will make the entrance into the Bible more seamless. “I am the resurrection and the source of all life; those who believe in Me will live even in death.”
You will discover as you study this Gospel that it is quite distinct from Matthew, Mark and Luke (also referred to as the synoptic Gospels, because of their similarity with one another). While the first three Gospels focus on what Jesus said and did, the Gospel of John is more concerned with Christ Jesus’ identity, who he IS. Also this Gospel shows Jesus’ ministry to be three years, while the Synoptic Gospels collapse his activity into a single year.

This Gospel is divided into two parts:
A) The Book of Signs (John 1:19 —12:50)
B) The Book of Glory (13:1 — 20:31)

The first part of John illustrates the theme from the Prologue in 1:11: “To his own he came; yet his own did not accept him.” While there is a focus on the different types of people that come to believe in Jesus (“believe” is a key word throughout this Gospel), the reader also sees the hatred and resistance by “the Jews”. In this first section Jesus’ identity is starting to be revealed as the Lamb of God, the Son of God, “one sent by God”, etc. Watch for those hints throughout the first twelve chapters.

The term “signs” is used throughout John as another term for “miracle”. There are seven distinct signs that further identify the “far greater things” that Jesus, as the Son of Man (which he calls himself) will do.

This Gospel also uses a series of long dialogues to make its theological and narrative points, such as the first one of Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night. (See 3:1-21). Themes are developed in multiple consecutive chapters such as chapters 5—10 about light and Ch. 8—10 about life.

The Gospel author helps the reader by a pattern of miracle followed by dialogue (to help explain the ‘miracle’.) An example is the healing of the lame man on the sabbath in John 5:1-47, followed by a dialogue that challenges theological tradition. Jesus continually refers to God as his Father, claiming a level of divinity that engenders hatred from religious leaders.

Closing the first Book of Signs, is the raising of Lazarus, acting as a bridge text to Jesus’ own glorification which comes in the final section, the Book of Glory. The irony is that this demonstration of life is the very thing that makes the Sanhedrin (Jewish leaders) decide to kill Jesus.

John 13:1 not only opens the second book but tells its theme: “Jesus knew that his hour had come.” He knew he had to depart those he had so loved in this world and the five chapters describing the Last Supper in this portion of the Gospel testify to Jesus’ deep love for his own. Rather than words at the Eucharist meal of bread and wine, as in the synoptic Gospels, Jesus teaches with his actions of washing the disciples’ feet. He will indeed “love them to the end.” (13:1)
Absolute “I AM” sayings without a predicate nominative:

4:26 Jesus said to her, “I AM, the one who is speaking to you.”
6:20 But he said to them, “I AM; do not be afraid.”
8:24 “I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I AM.”
8:28 “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I AM, and I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me.”
8:58 “Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I AM.”
13:19 “I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I AM.”
18:5, 7 Jesus replied, “I AM.” When he said to them, “I am,” they stepped back and fell to the ground.

“I AM” sayings with a predicate nominative:

6:35 “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”
6:51 “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.”
8:12 “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”
9:5 “I am the light of the world.”
10:7, 9 “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.”
10:11, 14 “I am the good shepherd.”
11:25–6 “I am the resurrection and the life.”
14:6 “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”
15:1, 5 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower.”

Chapter 1 - Questions

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (1:1)

1. How would you summarize the Prologue of this Gospel (vs. 1—18)?

2. What does John mean by the “Word”?

3. How does this Gospel’s beginning differ from the other 3 (Matthew, Mark and Luke)?

4. What is the relationship between the Logos and the concept of ‘believe’?

5. How and where do you see one of this gospel’s underlying themes of ‘eternal life’ beginning to develop right from the beginning of this Gospel?
“Adoration of the Children”
Gerard (Gerrit) van Honthorst
(1590-1656)
Chapter 2 - Questions

“His mother said to the servants, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’ (2:5)

1. What title would you give this chapter in terms of an overarching theme?

2. What was John’s purpose for this story of the water turned into wine, especially since it is only in this Gospel, and particularly as the first ‘sign’?

3. What is the role of Mary in the story and what are you learning about her (from this Gospel) so far?

4. Where is the cleansing of the Temple story in any of the other Gospels? If it is different from where John has placed it, what do you think is the author’s intention for doing so?

5. What is the relation between belief and seeing ‘signs’?
Chapter 3 - Questions

“The one who comes from heaven is above all.” (3:31)

Take note of key words and phrases in this chapter. Make a list and start defining them: verily, verily; born again; kingdom of God; born of water and the spirit; Son of Man; eternal life; Son of God. Share with your group.

1. Who does Nicodemus represent in terms of the Temple’s population?

2. Why did Nicodemus fail to understand Jesus? What are examples of modern day Nicodemus’s?

3. Compare John 3:14-15 with Numbers 21:4-9. What happened to those who looked upon the serpent on the pole? How can Jesus be ‘lifted up’ in the way the serpent was lifted up?

4. John 3:16 has been called ‘the Gospel in miniature” and is perhaps the most well known Christian scripture. How would you explain what it means to you to a fellow Christian?

5. What is the importance of John the Baptist’s statement in 3:30 historically?
1. What is the geography of the main story and how does it relate to the overall theology of John’s Gospel? (i.e. what point is Jesus trying to make here?)

2. How does the main character in this story (vs. 1—42) relate to the criteria for discipleship set forth in Chapters 1 and 2?

3. What is the problem between Jews and Samaritans? What would be an equivalent ‘scandal’ Jesus might have initiated today if he was here?

4. How can you specifically apply this story to your life today — your contacts, interactions, etc.?

5. What are the similarities and differences between the two ‘signs’ of this chapter?
Chapter 4 - Notes

“The Water of Life Discourse between Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at the Well”
Angelika Kauffmann (1741-1807)
Note: Watch for this pattern throughout John: a healing followed by a discourse that brings out the theological implications of the healing.

1. Where does this chapter divide, given what the note above says? Describe both, and the theological point Jesus is making.

2. What do you think was Jesus’ reasoning for asking the paralytic the question he did initially? Is there symbolism in this story John might be pointing to through some of the details the author shares with the reader? What would that be?

3. What are the two parallel conversations going on in verses 10-16? Who are the players and what are they discussing? How does this clarity underscore the point of the chapter?

4. What do the Pharisees truly hate in Jesus? Which ‘direction’ are the Pharisees faced? Which ‘direction’ is Jesus facing? Is this part of the conflict and if so, how does it inform YOUR life?

5. What is the theme (or themes) in Jesus’ response to the Jews who questioned him in the latter half of this chapter? How does it (or these) relate to prior themes we’ve seen John emphasize?
“John 5:2-9”
William Hole
(1846-1917). Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C.
Chapter 6 - Questions

“It is I; do not be afraid.” (6:20)

1. What two ‘miracle’ stories open this chapter which begins the second section of the Gospel? Do you see any comparison to the ‘miracle’ that opens the first cycle (i.e. John 2:1-12)? (Hint: Think about the Last Supper.). What does all this tee up?

2. In the feeding of the 5000 story, note a pattern in John of ‘miracle/dialogue/discourse’. Break this out by verses and identify the key point in each section.

3. In the feeding of the 5000 story, how would you describe how Philip and Andrew each solve problems? What can you learn from their example? What is Jesus trying to have them learn?

4. Unlike the synoptic gospels, John does not set up Jesus’ walking on the water as a story of Jesus’ power over nature. Instead it is more of a revealing of his identity. Look up the Greek words for “It is I”. What do you find? What are these words intended to remind us of and why?
Chapter 6 - Notes

“The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes”
James Tissot
(1836-1902)
Brooklyn Museum
Chapter 7 - Questions

“How does this man have such learning, when he has never been taught?” (7:15)

1. Look for the pattern throughout this chapter of “words of conflict and Jesus’ teaching and response”. Where do you see it? Identify specific parts of the text throughout the chapter into these two areas.

2. How does the theme throughout John’s Gospel of Jesus’ identity as the one sent from God, play out in these scenes?

3. What is the purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles and how does that relate to the themes John is establishing in this Gospel?

4. What are you learning about Jesus’ use of time in this chapter? How can that guide our lives with so many demands?

5. In a chapter filled with resistance, misunderstandings and conflict, what are people reacting to the most? How does that support the theology in this Gospel to which John keeps calling our attention?
Chapter 7 - Notes
Chapter 8 - Questions

“Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” (8:7)

1. Based on what you’ve learned so far, how would you explain the adulterous woman story as one trying to entrap Jesus, rather than an effort to learn Jesus’ interpretation of Mosaic Law?

2. How does Jesus treat both the woman and the scribes and Pharisees as equal ‘conversation partners’ and what is he trying to get both of them to do?

3. Explain this statement: “Light is the central image for the presence of the Word in the world.” How does the term ‘follow’ relate to discipleship in this context?

4. What, in this chapter, is the next way Jesus describes himself? What earlier image or images did he use in a similar way? Knowing what you learned before about John’s structure, what could you expect to read next in the Gospel?

5. In the final section (8:39-59), what is the fundamental debate and disagreement between Judaism and Christianity?
“Christ and the woman taken in adultery”
Rembrandt van Rijn
Chapter 9 - Questions

“Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him.” (9:3)

1. In this opening healing, how does the word ‘works’ (erga in Greek) illustrate its two meanings: 1) what Jesus does as God’s representative, and 2) belief in Jesus.

2. Research the background of the word, ‘spittle,’ and why that was interpreted by the Pharisees as breaking the Sabbath.

3. Note the two time levels on which John’s Gospel is written: what occurred in Jesus’ own day and what was happening within the Johannine community vis a vis the Jews toward the end of the 1st century. How does the interrogation scene shed light on the latter?

4. While the healed man says he is a ‘disciple of Jesus’ (v. 27), the Pharisees defend themselves as ‘disciples of Moses’ (v. 28), implying one cannot be both. What is the irony of the Pharisees claiming Moses’ superiority based on their belief that God spoke to Moses? (Hint: Note how this Gospel opens!)

5. How would you articulate the shift in the final scene (verses 39-41): from the healing to ________________?
"Christ Healing the Blind" (detail)
Lucas van Leyden (1494–1533)
The Hermitage Museum
St. Petersburg, Russia
Chapter 10 - Questions

“I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.” (10:9)

1. What does it mean that Jesus would enter by the gate, that is, have authorized access versus how thieves and robbers would get to the sheep? Explain the meaning of this metaphor in your own words.

2. Read Ezekiel 34:11-16 (which is a companion text to this metaphor Jesus uses and to which he was no doubt familiar). Then make a list of what being the Good Shepherd means for his sheep, based on that passage and these verses in John.

3. How is Jesus simultaneously both the Good Shepherd and the Gate? Explain these two metaphors for how they impact your life.

4. Which verses in this chapter cite examples of each of the four witnesses to which Jesus appealed earlier and again here: a) his works; b) God; c) Scripture; and d) John the Baptist.

5. What idea can you take and apply from this chapter in terms of what really resonates for you at this point in your spiritual development?
Chapter 11 - Questions

“...He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’” (11:9)

1. How does this chapter tee up the Passion Week for the reader? That is, how does this chapter act as a bridge between Jesus’ ministry and the Passion story?

2. Review the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42. What are the characteristics of the sisters? What are their individual views on resurrection? How does that speak to our own expression of discipleship?

3. List all the things you are learning about Christ Jesus in this story, such as “he would not be pressured”. See if you can identify at least five.

4. Where does the story of Lazarus fit with the seven ways Jesus identifies himself? Is there any logic in the order?

5. What is the irony between the way this chapter opens and the way it closes? Do you think that was intentional by the writer?
Chapter 11 - Notes

“Christ in the House of Martha and Mary”
Jan Brueghel the Younger (1601–1678) and
Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640)
Chapter 12 - Questions

“You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.” (12:8)

1. What is the linkage between Mary’s anointing of Jesus and the Master’s foot washing of his disciples?

2. In terms of discipleship, contrast Mary and Judas. What qualities do they each express? How does that inform YOUR discipleship?

3. What symbols are used in Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, that is, palm fronds, the donkey, etc. What do those symbols mean in this case?

4. What is the importance of Greeks coming to worship in 12:20? What does it point to in terms of Christ Jesus’ larger ministry?

5. What does Jesus’ glorification mean in John? How does John use those terms, “glory” and “glorification”?

6. Is there a new idea that has emerged from this very familiar story, knowing what you now understand about this Gospel?
Chapter 12 - Notes

“The Ointment of the Magdalene”
James Tissot (1836-1902)
Chapter 13 - Questions

“So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” (13:14)

1. What title would you give this chapter in terms of an overarching theme?

2. What is missing in John’s account of the Last Supper that is so dominant in the synoptic Gospels? Why?

3. The order of events at the Last Supper is remarkably similar to the synoptics with the exception of #2 above. What does John substitute instead and why? How does this relate to the whole of this Gospel as you’ve come to understand some of John’s key themes?

4. What do the first three verses of Chapter 13 have to do with setting up the story so that the reader will understand its deeper meaning?

5. Describe in your own words Jesus’ farewell address to his disciples. Was it sorrowful or hopeful? (Note: Although it begins in 13:31, it continues into chapter 14.)

Extra: Be prepared to share with another person in the group a personal experience of both humility and service you have had.
“Jesus washes his disciples’ feet”
St. Matthäus church,
Alfter, Germany
Chapter 14 - Questions

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit...will teach you everything.” (14:26)

1. As you move through this chapter, identify the FUNCTIONS of the ‘Advocate’ or Paraclete.

2. This chapter uses some of the key words in this Gospel. How would you explain their importance since you are more than halfway through this Gospel? “Coming” and “going”? “Believe”? “Know”? “See”? “love”?

3. Work with the first verse and the Greek word translated “troubled’. It’s used only three other times in this Gospel and means ‘distressed’. How do you interpret Jesus’ imperatives to his disciples here in a non-sentimental way? What is he trying to communicate?

4. What does Jesus (or the author of John) mean by “peace”? What does Jesus mean when he gives the disciples the gift of peace?

5. John 14:6-7 is considered the high point of this Gospel theologically. How would you interpret it in your own words? How does it inform your life as a Christ-follower?
I will not leave you comfortless:
I will come to you.

John 14:18
Chapter 15 - Questions

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower.” (15:1)

1. How does this metaphor lend insight into the life of a church? How does the metaphor challenge Western ideas of individualism and autonomy?

2. What are you learning about agricultural husbandry that makes Jesus’ speech in 15:1-17 so powerful about the vine and its branches?

3. How does this metaphor (above) apply to your life? Try to think of it in fresh, new ways if it’s quite familiar.

4. How might the promise in 15:26 comfort Jesus’ disciples, facing severe opposition? Do you see a significant difference between this passage and John 14:16? Be thinking of how you can, in the coming weeks and months, do more to “testify” of Christ (15:26). How does the “Comforter” testify of Christ?

5. What are examples today of followers of Christ being persecuted? If you live in the US where Christianity is the dominant religion, does that mean Jesus’ words are no longer true? How does it show up in your life and how can you be alert to it?
Chapter 16 - Questions

“If you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.” (16:23)

1. Identify the NEW function(s) of the ‘Advocate’ or Paraclete, a similar question to what you were asked in chapter 14 but look for what is new here. Especially note John 16:7-15.

2. This chapter closes Jesus’ farewell discourse to his disciples started in John 14 where the idea of the disciples continuing without Jesus occurred. Now there is a shift that is a larger look at the future. How would you describe this message of the Master?

3. Read John 16:8 in at least three different translations. What does ‘reprove’ mean and what other words are used for it? In the context of John’s Gospel, what is the basic sin? What does this verse mean to you?

4. In John 16:14, how does Jesus glorify the Father? How will the Comforter glorify the Son?

5. If you had to assign a title to this chapter, what would it be?
Chapter 16 - Notes

The Lord’s Prayer
(Le "Pater Noster")
James Tissot
(1836-1902)
1. This chapter is called “Jesus’ Farewell Prayer”. Is this the prayer of a dying man? How would you characterize it?

2. What is the significant shift in this chapter that happens early on and has to do with its focus? Why is this important?

3. How would you explain the idea of preexistence, which Jesus addresses in this prayer, to a friend who may be a new Christian?

4. Pull out three ideas or themes from Jesus’ longest prayer that are especially meaningful to you.

5. What does his prayer say about his belief in others? What can you and I take from this in regards to our relationships with friends and family?
“Jesus giving the Farewell Discourse to his eleven remaining disciples after the Last Supper” the Maestà by Duccio c. 1310.
Chapter 18 - Questions

“Are you the King of the Jews?
My kingdom is not from this world.” (18:33,36)

1. A tradition dating back to the fourth century included a reading of the Passion accounts during Holy Week (prior to Easter). Matthew’s account was read on Palm Sunday, Mark’s on Tuesday, Luke’s on Thursday and John’s on Good Friday. Please review the passion stories and identify what John did differently in his account.
   Matthew 26: 47-56
   Mark 14: 22-52

2. Explain this scholar’s statement: “‘Passion’ refers to Jesus’ suffering, and in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus is not presented as the one who suffers. Rather Jesus’ death is the hour of his exaltation and glorification.”

3. What does it mean to you to drink the cup?

Bonus: If you love music, try listening to Bach’s “Passion According to St. John”. Part 1 is the scene in the garden and may bring fresh insights to a familiar story. Bach’s rendition of John 18 is legendary.
Chapter 18 - Notes

“The Supper at Emmaus”
1648
Rembrandt van Rijn
Chapter 19 - Questions

“…”(19:13)

1. What is Pilate’s attitude toward Jesus? How would you describe his role in the Crucifixion? What is John’s judgment of Pilate?

2. Describe this unfolding drama by the two physical “stages” on which it is played: one outside Pilate’s command post and one inside. Who is involved on each stage and how does the drama address the interplay of politics and religion in the 1st century of Judea?

3. What are both the religious and political reasons that the chief priests want to get Jesus killed?

4. What is the significance of Jesus’ words to his mother and the beloved disciple?

Bonus: If you are studying John in a group, consider acting out this chapter’s drama. Participants select one of the characters in the story, i.e. Pilate, the Chief Priests, a soldier, Jesus’ mother, one of the women, etc. Others could be reporters for The Jerusalem Times. Interview them. What are you learning? (This is a way to ‘feel’ the story at a level we possibly haven’t before.)
Chapter 19 - Notes

Ecce Homo
("Behold the Man"),
Antonio Ciseri'
Chapter 20 - Questions

“Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” (20:15)

1. Write down what you know about Mary Magdalene in terms of her background, why she went to the tomb, what she saw, how she might have felt. How does John use her in the story and what is the nature of her grief? Be sure and distinguish what the Gospel says versus the traditional portrait of her without basis in fact.

2. How does the detail of the grave clothes compare to the Lazarus account in 11:44? What might this illumine of John’s theology about Jesus, called “Christology”? See John 10:18 for clues as well as Mary’s assumption that the body had been taken away.

3. What is the significance of the angels and their purpose in 20:11-18? Why do you think Mary didn’t recognize Jesus initially and what might that say to Christ-followers today?

4. What does “the beloved disciple’s” response to the empty tomb mean to you and how does it tie in with the rest of the Gospel of John?

5. How does the Bible use these terms, “ascend” and “ascension” and what do they mean? How does the idea of ascension apply to you today?
“Messengers of the Resurrection”
Nikolai Ge
Tretyakov Gallery
Moscow
Chapter 21 - Questions

“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” (21:lf15)

1. Many scholars believe John 21 was added later, noting that John 20:30-31 brings the Gospel to a close. What is the focus of Chapter 21 and why do you think it might have been added?

2. How would you compare this last healing moment of Jesus’ ministry (the large catch of fish), with the first healing at the wedding of Cana? They act as bookends to the Gospel. What might they have in common?

3. What event triggered John’s proclamation: “It is the Lord” (v. 7)? Why might the order of these events be important?

4. Contrast the behavior of “the beloved disciple” and Peter in this chapter. It builds on similar differences in behavior in chapter 20. How would you describe each of them based on these two chapters?

5. How does the questioning back and forth between Christ Jesus and Peter point us forward to the life of discipleship?
“Christ eating with his disciples”
James Tissot
(1836-1902)
Your Insights about John

“All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.” (II Tim. 3:16)

While your insights are fresh, take a moment to record them here. The alternative is to use this space for chapter by chapter insights. Either way, read the II Timothy quote above and see how this study of John has blessed you.

What are one or two insights that have been the most meaningful for you?