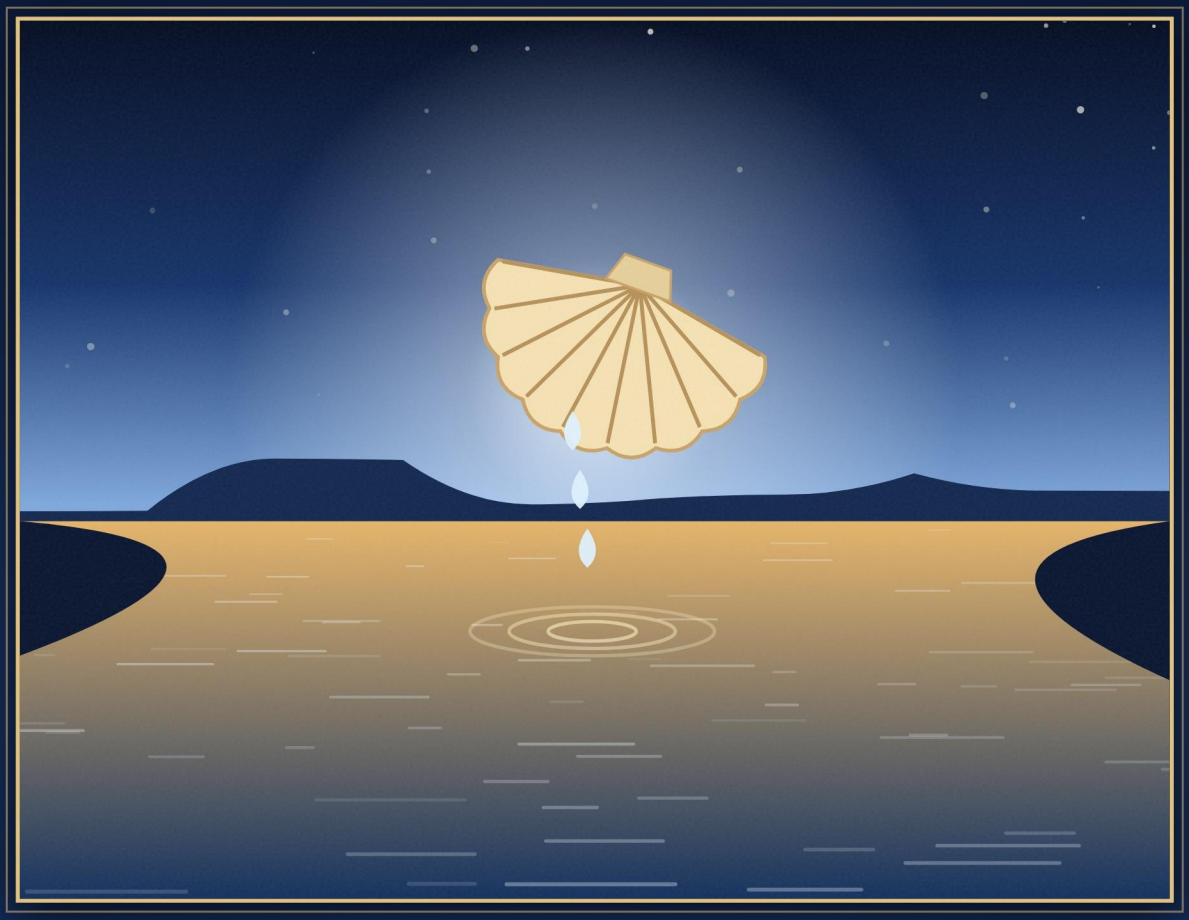
13 WEEKS FOR SMALL GROUPS

John: A Group Study Guide

Companion to the John Bible Study



Thirteen Weeks Through the Gospel of John for Leaders and Members

Andrew Dominguez

Trinfinity Enterprises

John: A Group Study Guide

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Group Study Guides

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Trinfinity Enterprises

John: A Group Study Guide: Thirteen Weeks Through the Gospel of John for Leaders and Members

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A note before you begin. This book is written to teach the Bible and encourage faith. It shares my understanding of Scripture and is offered for study and spiritual growth. It is not counseling, medical, legal, or financial advice. If you are facing a crisis, a health problem, or a legal or money problem, please reach out to a qualified professional as well as your pastor and church family. To the fullest extent the law allows, Andrew Dominguez, Trinfinity Enterprises, and Andrew Dominguez's heirs, estate, successors, and assigns accept no liability for how this material is used.

Questions and corrections: andrew@trinfinityenterprises.com

A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Book

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this book direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

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How to Use This Guide

> *but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*
>
> John 20:31 (SLB)

John told us exactly why he wrote his Gospel: "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." There may be no better book of the Bible for a small group to read together. It is simple enough for someone opening a Bible for the first time and deep enough that I have been studying it for years and still find something new.

I have led a good number of Bible study groups over the years. The hardest part was never the Bible. It was the planning. What should we read this week? What questions should I ask? What do I say when someone asks about a verse I am not sure of? This guide is meant to take that weight off your shoulders, so you can spend your time preparing your heart and caring for your people.

What This Guide Covers

This guide takes a group through all 21 chapters of John in 13 weeks. It is the companion to my verse-by-verse John Bible Study, which is free at trinfinityenterprises.com. The study gives the full commentary. This guide gives the plan. You can use the guide without the study, but the leader will find the study helpful for preparation.

Week	Reading	Theme
1	John 1	The Word Became Flesh
2	John 2 and 3	New Wine and a New Birth
3	John 4	Living Water at the Well
4	John 5 and 6	The Son's Authority and the Bread of Life
5	John 7 and 8	Living Water and the Light of the World
6	John 9 and 10	The Man Born Blind and the Good Shepherd
7	John 11 and 12	The Resurrection and the Life
8	John 13	The Servant Who Washed Feet
9	John 14	The Way, the Truth and the Life
10	John 15 and 16	The Vine and the Helper
11	John 17	Jesus Prays for His People
12	John 18 and 19	The Trial and the Cross
13	John 20 and 21	Risen, and Feed My Sheep

What Each Week Includes

- **Before the meeting.** The chapters to read, and the matching chapters in the John Bible Study.
- **Opening question.** An easy question anyone can answer, to get people talking.
- **Discussion questions.** Questions that move from what the passage says, to what it means, to how we live it. You will not have time for all of them every week. Pick the ones that fit your group.
- **Key verse.** One verse to remember from the week.
- **Live it.** One simple step to take before the next meeting.
- **Prayer focus.** A starting point for praying together.
- **Leader note.** A short note on the hard spots in that week's reading, so the leader is not caught off guard.

For Members

Read the chapters before the meeting. If you can, read them twice: once straight through, and once slowly with a pen in hand. Jot your thoughts in the spaces after the questions. Come with your questions too. A good group is not a lecture. It is a conversation around the Word, and your questions help everyone.

For Leaders

You do not have to be a Bible scholar to lead this study. You need to love Jesus, love your people, and prepare. Read the chapters early in the week. Read the leader note. Pray for each person in your group by name. On the night of the meeting, your job is to ask good questions, listen well and keep pointing people back to the text.

A Sample Meeting Plan (about 90 minutes)

Time	What happens
15 minutes	Arrive, snacks, catch up
5 minutes	Open in prayer; ask about last week's Live It step
10 minutes	Opening question
10 minutes	Read a key part of the passage aloud
35 minutes	Discussion questions
15 minutes	Live It, prayer requests, and prayer together

Ground Rules Worth Saying Out Loud

1. What is shared in the group stays in the group.
2. Everyone gets a chance to talk. Nobody has to.

3. We let the Bible have the last word, not the loudest voice.

4. It is all right to say, “I don’t know.” We will find out together.

5. We start and end on time.

Week 1: The Word Became Flesh

John opens his Gospel not in Bethlehem but before the beginning of time. Before he tells us anything Jesus did, he tells us who Jesus is: the eternal Word, who was with God and was God, and who became a man. Then the chapter turns to real people meeting Jesus for the first time: John the Baptist, Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathanael.

Before the Meeting

Read John 1. Leaders, also read the matching chapters in the John Bible Study and the leader note at the end of this week.

Opening Question

Who is someone you met once and never forgot? What made the meeting stick?

Discussion Questions

1. Read John 1:1-5. What do these verses tell us about who the Word is? Why do you think John starts here instead of with Jesus' birth?

   _____

   _____

2. Verse 14 says, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." What does it mean to you that God became a real human being?

   _____

   _____

3. John the Baptist was popular, yet he kept pointing away from himself. What can we learn from the way he talked about Jesus (verses 19-34)?

   _____

   _____

4. John the Baptist called Jesus "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (verse 29). What would that title have meant to Jewish listeners who knew about the Passover and the temple sacrifices?

   _____

_____

5. Look at how Andrew and Philip responded to meeting Jesus (verses 40-46). What did each of them do first?

_____

_____

6. Nathanael was a skeptic: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" How did Jesus win him over?

_____

_____

7. Who first told you about Jesus? Who could you say "Come and see" to this week?

_____

_____

KEY VERSE

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

John 1:14

Live It Andrew went and found his brother. Think of one person you could invite to this group or to church, and invite them this week.

Prayer Focus Thank God that Jesus is fully God and became fully man to make the Father known. Pray for the people you named in question 7.

Leader Note

"The Word was God" (1:1). Some groups, including Jehovah's Witnesses, translate this "the Word was a god." The Greek grammar does not require that reading, and the rest of John makes Jesus' full deity clear (John 8:58; 10:30; 20:28). If someone raises it, stay calm and point to Thomas's words in 20:28: "My Lord and my God!"

“Only begotten” (1:14, 18). This does not mean Jesus had a beginning. It means He is the one and only, unique Son, sharing the Father’s own nature. John 1:1-2 already told us He was there in the beginning.

Week 2: New Wine and a New Birth

Jesus' first sign is at a wedding, turning water into wine. Then He clears the temple, and a respected teacher named Nicodemus comes to Him at night. Their conversation contains the most famous verse in the Bible.

Before the Meeting

Read John 2 and 3. Leaders, also read the matching chapters in the John Bible Study and the leader note at the end of this week.

Opening Question

What is the best wedding you have ever been to? What made it special?

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Jesus chose a wedding for His first sign (2:1-11)? What does it tell you about Him?

   _____

   _____

2. John calls Jesus' miracles "signs" (2:11). What is the difference between a sign and a magic trick?

   _____

   _____

3. Why was Jesus so angry in the temple (2:13-17)? Is there a right kind of anger?

   _____

   _____

4. Nicodemus was religious, educated and respected. Why did he still need to be "born from above" (3:3)?

   _____

   _____

5. Read John 3:16-18. Put the good news of verse 16 into your own words.

_____

_____

6. Verses 19-21 talk about people loving darkness rather than light. Why do people sometimes avoid Jesus even when they are curious about Him?

_____

_____

7. John the Baptist said, "He must increase, but I ***must*** decrease" (3:30). What would it look like for Jesus to increase in your life this week?

_____

_____

KEY VERSE

For God so loved the world, that He gave His Son, the only begotten, so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16

Live It Write John 3:16 from memory, then explain it in your own words to someone who is not in this group.

Prayer Focus Pray for anyone you know who, like Nicodemus, is curious about Jesus but has not yet come to Him.

Leader Note

Water into wine. Someone may ask whether this means Jesus approved of drinking. The Bible condemns drunkenness (Ephesians 5:18) but does not forbid all wine. Be sensitive: someone in your group may be in recovery. The point of the sign is Jesus' glory and the joy of His kingdom, not a lesson about alcohol.

"Born of water and *the* Spirit" (3:5). Christians read this several ways: water as physical birth, water as baptism, or water as the cleansing God promised in Ezekiel 36:25-27, where water and the Spirit appear together. The John Bible Study explains the views. All agree the main point is that we need a new birth only God can give.

Week 3: Living Water at the Well

Jesus breaks every social rule of His day to talk with a Samaritan woman with a messy past. By the end of the day, she has run back to tell her whole town about Him. Then Jesus heals an official's son from a distance.

Before the Meeting

Read John 4. Leaders, also read the matching chapters in the John Bible Study and the leader note at the end of this week.

Opening Question

What is the thirstiest you have ever been? What did that first drink of water feel like?

Discussion Questions

1. Jews and Samaritans avoided each other, and men did not usually speak with women in public. Why do you think Jesus started this conversation (4:7-9)?

   _____

   _____

2. What did Jesus mean by "living water" (4:10-14)? What do people today try to fill their thirst with?

   _____

   _____

3. How did Jesus bring up the woman's past without crushing her (4:16-18)? What does that teach us about how we talk to people?

   _____

   _____

4. The woman tried to change the subject to an argument about where to worship. How did Jesus answer (4:19-24)? What does it mean to worship "in spirit and truth"?

   _____

   _____

5. The woman left her water jar and ran to tell others (4:28-30). What changed in her?

_____

_____

6. Jesus told His disciples the fields were "white for harvest" (4:35). Who around you might be more ready to hear about Jesus than you think?

_____

_____

7. The official believed Jesus' word before he saw his son healed (4:50). Where do you need to trust Jesus' word before you see the answer?

_____

_____

KEY VERSE

but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will certainly never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up into eternal life.

John 4:14

Live It Talk with someone this week you would not normally talk to: a coworker, a neighbor, someone you have avoided. Listen to them.

Prayer Focus Pray for people in your life who are thirsty for something they cannot name. Ask God for open doors.

Leader Note

The Samaritans. Samaritans were descended partly from Israelites and partly from foreigners settled in the land after Assyria conquered the northern kingdom (2 Kings 17:24). They worshiped at Mount Gerizim and accepted only the first five books of the Bible. The bitterness between Jews and Samaritans ran deep.

Her five husbands. The text does not say whether she was divorced, widowed or abandoned. Avoid guessing about her character beyond what John tells us. The point is that Jesus knew everything about her and still offered her living water.

Week 4: The Son's Authority and the Bread of Life

Jesus heals a man who had been lame for 38 years, and the religious leaders are furious because it is the Sabbath. Jesus answers by claiming equality with the Father. In chapter 6 He feeds more than five thousand people, walks on the sea, and then says, "I am the bread of life." Many followers walk away.

Before the Meeting

Read John 5 and 6. Leaders, also read the matching chapters in the John Bible Study and the leader note at the end of this week.

Opening Question

What is your favorite comfort food, and why?

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus asked the lame man, "Do you want to become well?" (5:6). Why would Jesus ask that? Are there areas of your life where you are comfortable staying stuck?

   _____

   _____

2. Why were the leaders so upset by what Jesus said about His Father (5:17-18)?

   _____

   _____

3. Read John 5:24. What three things does Jesus promise to the one who hears and believes?

   _____

   _____

4. In 6:1-14, what did the disciples see when they looked at the crowd? What did Jesus see?

   _____

   _____

5. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (6:35). What does bread do for the body? What does Jesus do for the soul?

_____

_____

6. Many disciples left when Jesus' teaching got hard (6:66). Why do people walk away from Jesus today?

_____

_____

7. Peter answered, "Lord, to whom will we go? You have words of eternal life" (6:68). Have you ever stayed with Jesus simply because there was nowhere else to go?

_____

_____

KEY VERSE

*And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. The **one** coming to Me will certainly not hunger, and the **one** believing in Me will certainly not thirst at any time."*

John 6:35

Live It Before each meal this week, take a moment to thank Jesus that He is the bread of life, not just for the food.

Prayer Focus Pray for anyone who has walked away from Jesus, and for anyone in the group going through a season where faith feels hard.

Leader Note

The angel stirring the water (5:3b-4). Your Bible may put this in brackets or a footnote, because some of the oldest manuscripts do not have it. The SLB is translated from the Received Text, which includes it. Either way, notice that the man was healed by Jesus' word, not by the pool.

"Eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood" (6:53). Christians differ on whether this speaks directly of the Lord's Supper. Jesus Himself explains in 6:63 that "the words which I speak to you are spirit and are life." Eating and drinking picture believing in Him and taking Him in completely (compare 6:35, 6:47). The John Bible Study gives more detail.

Week 5: Living Water and the Light of the World

At the Feast of Tabernacles, the crowds are divided over Jesus. On the last day He stands and cries out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.” In chapter 8 He forgives a woman caught in adultery, calls Himself the light of the world, and finally says, “before Abraham came into being, I am.”

Before the Meeting

Read John 7 and 8. Leaders, also read the matching chapters in the John Bible Study and the leader note at the end of this week.

Opening Question

Have you ever been somewhere truly dark, like a cave or the desert at night? What was it like?

Discussion Questions

1. People in chapter 7 had many opinions about Jesus: good man, deceiver, prophet, Christ. Which opinions about Jesus do you hear most often today?

   _____

   _____

2. Jesus promised “rivers of living water” to those who believe (7:37-39). John says He was speaking of the Spirit. How have you seen the Spirit flow out of someone’s life to others?

   _____

   _____

3. In the story of the woman caught in adultery (7:53-8:11), what did the accusers want? What did Jesus give her?

   _____

   _____

4. Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more” (8:11). Why do both halves of that sentence matter?

   _____

   _____

5. What does it mean to you that Jesus is "the light of the world" (8:12)?

_____

_____

6. Read 8:31-36. What does real freedom look like according to Jesus?

_____

_____

7. Why did the crowd pick up stones when Jesus said, "before Abraham came into being, I am" (8:58-59)?

_____

_____

KEY VERSE

Therefore again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. The ***one*** *following Me will certainly not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life."*

John 8:12

Live It Is there someone you have been quick to condemn? This week, find a way to show them grace without excusing sin.

Prayer Focus Pray for anyone in the group who feels trapped. Ask the Son to set them free.

Leader Note

The woman caught in adultery (7:53-8:11). Many Bibles mark this passage, because it is missing from some of the oldest manuscripts. The SLB includes it from the Received Text. Many scholars who doubt it was part of John's original book still believe it is a true account. If someone asks, be honest about the question without letting it swallow the meeting.

"I am" (8:58). Jesus did not say "I was." He used the name God gave Moses at the burning bush, "I AM" (Exodus 3:14). That is why the crowd tried to stone Him for blasphemy. This is one of the clearest claims to deity in the Gospels.

Week 6: The Man Born Blind and the Good Shepherd

Jesus heals a man born blind, and the religious leaders put the man on trial. The man's simple testimony outshines all their arguments. In chapter 10, Jesus describes Himself as the door of the sheep and the good shepherd who lays down His life.

Before the Meeting

Read John 9 and 10. Leaders, also read the matching chapters in the John Bible Study and the leader note at the end of this week.

Opening Question

Have you ever been around sheep or other animals that knew their owner's voice? What did you notice?

Discussion Questions

1. The disciples asked, "Rabbi, who sinned, this ***man*** or his parents?" (9:2). Why do people still assume suffering must be someone's fault? How did Jesus answer?

   _____

   _____

2. Follow the man's view of Jesus through the chapter (9:11, 9:17, 9:33, 9:38). How does it grow?

   _____

   _____

3. The man said, "one ***thing*** I know, that being blind, now I see" (9:25). What is the "one thing" you know about what Jesus has done for you?

   _____

   _____

4. Who was really blind in chapter 9 (9:39-41)?

   _____

   _____

5. What is the difference between a good shepherd and a hired hand (10:11-13)?

_____

_____

6. Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and may have ***it*** abundantly" (10:10). What does the abundant life look like? What does it not mean?

_____

_____

7. How do you recognize the Shepherd's voice in your life (10:27)?

_____

_____

KEY VERSE

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

John 10:11

Live It Write out your own "one thing I know" in two or three sentences. Share it with one person this week.

Prayer Focus Pray for anyone in the group facing suffering that has no clear explanation. Thank Jesus for being the Good Shepherd who knows His sheep by name.

Leader Note

"No one will snatch them out of My hand" (10:28-29). This passage is often used in the debate over whether a true believer can lose salvation. Sincere Christians hold both views. My studies leave the question open and focus on the comfort Jesus gives here: the Shepherd holds His sheep, and the Father's hand is around His. Do not let the group turn the meeting into a debate. Point to the comfort.

"Abundantly" (10:10). This is not a promise of wealth or an easy life. The same Shepherd lays down His life in the next verse. Abundant life is life with God that overflows, even in hard times.

Week 7: The Resurrection and the Life

Lazarus dies, and Jesus waits two days before coming. At the tomb Jesus weeps, then calls Lazarus out alive. This sign sets the plot to kill Jesus in motion. In chapter 12, Mary anoints Jesus, crowds welcome Him into Jerusalem, and Jesus says His hour has come.

Before the Meeting

Read John 11 and 12. Leaders, also read the matching chapters in the John Bible Study and the leader note at the end of this week.

Opening Question

What is a time when waiting was very hard for you?

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus loved Martha, Mary and Lazarus (11:5), and yet He waited (11:6). How do you make sense of God's delays?

   _____

   _____

2. Martha said, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died" (11:21). Have you ever said something like that to God? How did Jesus respond to her?

   _____

   _____

3. Read 11:25-26. Jesus asked Martha, "Do you believe this?" How would you answer?

   _____

   _____

4. "Jesus wept" (11:35). He knew He was about to raise Lazarus. Why do you think He wept anyway? What does that tell you about how He feels about your grief?

   _____

   _____

5. Some people believed after seeing Lazarus raised, and others plotted to kill Jesus (11:45-53). Why does the same evidence lead people in opposite directions?

_____

_____

6. Mary poured out expensive perfume on Jesus (12:1-8). What would "pouring out" your best for Jesus look like?

_____

_____

7. Jesus said a grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die to bear fruit (12:24). How does that apply to Jesus? How does it apply to us?

_____

_____

KEY VERSE

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The **one** believing in Me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone living and believing in Me will certainly never die. Do you believe this?"*

John 11:25-26

Live It Reach out this week to someone who is grieving. You do not need the right words. Just show up, like Jesus did.

Prayer Focus Pray for anyone in the group who is grieving or waiting on God. Thank Jesus that He is the resurrection and the life.

Leader Note

Why did Jesus wait (11:6, 11:15)? Jesus said He was glad He was not there "for your sake… so that you may believe." Lazarus being dead four days left no doubt that he was truly dead. Be gentle here. Someone in your group may have lost a loved one and asked why Jesus did not come in time.

“He has blinded their eyes” (12:40). John quotes Isaiah 6:10. The people had already seen many signs and refused to believe (12:37). God gave them over to the hardness they chose. The verse is a warning against putting off a response to Jesus.

Week 8: The Servant Who Washed Feet

The night before the cross, Jesus takes a towel and a basin and washes His disciples' feet, including the feet of the man who will betray Him. Then He gives a new commandment: love one another as I have loved you.

Before the Meeting

Read John 13. Leaders, also read the matching chapters in the John Bible Study and the leader note at the end of this week.

Opening Question

What is the humblest job you have ever had?

Discussion Questions

1. Read 13:1-5. What did Jesus know about Himself before He picked up the towel? Why does that matter?

   _____

   _____

2. Why did Peter refuse at first (13:6-8)? Is it ever hard for you to let others serve you?

   _____

   _____

3. Jesus washed Judas's feet too. What does that tell you about how Jesus treats people who will hurt Him?

   _____

   _____

4. What did Jesus mean when He said, "you also ought to wash one another's feet" (13:14-15)? What would that look like in your home, workplace or church?

   _____

   _____

5. Jesus' commandment was to love "even as I have loved you" (13:34). How is that different from just being nice?

_____

_____

6. According to 13:35, how will the world know we are His disciples? How are we doing as a church?

_____

_____

7. Peter promised to lay down his life for Jesus, and Jesus predicted his denial (13:37-38). Have you ever promised God more than you delivered? What did you learn?

_____

_____

KEY VERSE

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love among one another.

John 13:34-35

Live It Do one humble, hidden act of service for someone this week, ideally someone who cannot pay you back. Do not tell anyone.

Prayer Focus Pray for humble hearts. Pray for any relationship in the group where love is hard right now.

Leader Note

Should churches practice foot washing? A few church families observe foot washing as an ordinance. Most see Jesus' example as a call to humble service of every kind rather than a ritual. Either way, the heart of the passage is serving one another.

Judas. Someone may ask whether Judas had a choice. John shows both God's plan (13:18) and Judas's own responsibility (13:2, 13:27). Scripture holds both together without explaining every detail. Keep the focus on Jesus' love even for His betrayer.

Week 9: The Way, the Truth and the Life

In the upper room, the disciples are troubled. Jesus comforts them: He is going to prepare a place, He is coming back, He is the only way to the Father, and He will send the Holy Spirit to be with them forever.

Before the Meeting

Read John 14. Leaders, also read the matching chapters in the John Bible Study and the leader note at the end of this week.

Opening Question

When you were a child, what helped you feel safe when you were afraid?

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus said, "Let your heart not be troubled" (14:1). What troubles your heart these days?

   _____

   _____

2. What do verses 2-3 tell us about heaven and about Jesus' return? Which part comforts you most?

   _____

   _____

3. Thomas said, "we do not know where You are going" (14:5). How did Jesus answer? Why is 14:6 one of the most important verses in the Bible?

   _____

   _____

4. Many people today say all religions lead to God. How would you lovingly explain 14:6 to a friend who believes that?

   _____

   _____

5. Philip asked to see the Father (14:8-9). What did Jesus mean by "the one who has seen Me has seen the Father"?

_____

_____

6. What does Jesus promise about prayer in 14:13-14? What does it mean to ask "in My name"?

_____

_____

7. How is the peace Jesus gives different from the peace the world gives (14:27)?

_____

_____

KEY VERSE

Jesus says to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

John 14:6

Live It When worry comes this week, stop and say John 14:27 out loud, then give that worry to Jesus in prayer.

Prayer Focus Pray for anyone in the group who is troubled or afraid. Thank Jesus for the place He is preparing and His promise to come again.

Leader Note

"No one comes to the Father except through Me" (14:6). This is an exclusive claim, and some in your group may find it uncomfortable. Help them see that it is also an open door: anyone may come through Him. Encourage gentleness when sharing it (1 Peter 3:15).

"Whatever you ask in My name" (14:13). This is not a blank check or a magic phrase. To ask in Jesus' name is to ask as He would ask, for what fits His character and brings glory to the Father. Compare 1 John 5:14.

“I am coming again” (14:3). My studies hold that Jesus will come for His church before the time of great tribulation (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). The group does not need to agree on timelines to share the comfort of this promise.

Week 10: The Vine and the Helper

On the way to the garden, Jesus teaches about the vine and the branches, warns that the world will hate His followers, and promises the Holy Spirit, the Helper, who will guide them into all truth. He ends with a promise: “take courage, I have overcome the world.”

Before the Meeting

Read John 15 and 16. Leaders, also read the matching chapters in the John Bible Study and the leader note at the end of this week.

Opening Question

Have you ever grown a garden or a fruit tree? What did it take to get good fruit?

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to “remain” in Jesus (15:4-5)? What does that look like on an ordinary Tuesday?

   _____

   _____

2. Jesus said, “apart from Me you are not able to do anything” (15:5). Where do you most often try to do life apart from Him?

   _____

   _____

3. Why does the Father prune branches that are already bearing fruit (15:2)? Have you been through a season of pruning?

   _____

   _____

4. Jesus calls His disciples friends (15:13-15). What is the difference between a servant and a friend?

   _____

   _____

5. Why will the world hate followers of Jesus (15:18-21)? Have you experienced any of that?

_____

_____

6. Jesus said it was good for the disciples that He go away, so the Helper would come (16:7). What does the Holy Spirit do, according to 16:8-15?

_____

_____

7. Read 16:33. Jesus promised both trouble and peace. How do both fit in your life right now?

_____

_____

KEY VERSE

*I am the vine; you **are** the branches. The **one** remaining in Me and I in him, this **one** bears much fruit; for apart from Me you are not able to do anything.*

John 15:5

Live It Pick one regular habit that keeps you connected to the Vine, such as Bible reading, prayer, or time with believers, and practice it every day this week.

Prayer Focus Pray for fruit in each person's life. Pray for believers around the world who face hatred for following Jesus.

Leader Note

The branches that are burned (15:6). This verse is part of the debate over whether a believer can be lost. Some read it as people who were never truly joined to Christ. Others read it as a real warning to believers. My studies leave this question open. All agree that Jesus calls us to remain in Him and that real disciples bear fruit.

"You will ask whatever you wish" (15:7). The promise is tied to remaining in Him and His declarations remaining in us. A branch that remains in the Vine starts wanting what the Vine wants.

Week 11: Jesus Prays for His People

This chapter is the longest prayer of Jesus recorded in the Bible. He prays for Himself, for His disciples, and for everyone who will believe through their message, which includes us.

Before the Meeting

Read John 17. Leaders, also read the matching chapters in the John Bible Study and the leader note at the end of this week.

Opening Question

Has anyone ever told you, "I have been praying for you"? How did that feel?

Discussion Questions

1. Read 17:3. How does Jesus define eternal life? Why is that different from how most people think of it?

   _____

   _____

2. What did Jesus pray for Himself (17:1-5)?

   _____

   _____

3. Jesus prayed that the Father would "keep" His disciples (17:11-15). What did He ask them to be kept from? What did He not ask?

   _____

   _____

4. What does it mean to be "in" the world but not "of" the world (17:14-16)? Where is that line hard for you?

   _____

   _____

5. Jesus prayed for "those who will believe in Me through their word" (17:20). That includes you. How does it feel to know Jesus prayed for you by name, long before you were born?

_____

_____

6. Jesus prayed that His people would be one (17:21-23). Why does our unity matter to the watching world? What divides believers today?

_____

_____

7. What is one thing in Jesus' prayer that you want to start praying for yourself and this group?

_____

_____

KEY VERSE

And this is the eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You sent.

John 17:3

Live It Use John 17 as a model this week. Pray for yourself, for the people closest to you, and for the people who will come to Christ through them.

Prayer Focus Pray for unity in this group and in your church. Pray for believers who live in hard places.

Leader Note

"The son of destruction" (17:12). This refers to Judas. Jesus says Judas was lost "so that the Scripture might be fulfilled" (see Psalm 41:9). Judas still made his own choice. Some readers also bring up this verse in the debate about eternal security. My studies leave that question open.

Unity. Jesus is not praying for one big organization. He prays for a unity like the Father and the Son share, a unity of truth and love. Be careful not to suggest that doctrine does not matter. Jesus prays in the same chapter, "Your word is truth" (17:17).

Week 12: The Trial and the Cross

Jesus is arrested in the garden, tried before Annas, Caiaphas and Pilate, denied by Peter, mocked, beaten and crucified. From the cross He cares for His mother and cries out, “It has been finished.”

Before the Meeting

Read John 18 and 19. Leaders, also read the matching chapters in the John Bible Study and the leader note at the end of this week.

Opening Question

Read through 18:1-19:42 together, or ask each person to share one moment from the reading that stood out to them and why.

Discussion Questions

1. In the garden, the soldiers fell back when Jesus said, “I am” (18:4-6). What does that tell you about who was really in control?

   _____

   _____

2. Compare Peter’s denials (18:15-27) with Jesus’ courage in the same hours. Where are you most tempted to deny Jesus?

   _____

   _____

3. Pilate asked, “What is truth?” (18:38). How do people ask that question today?

   _____

   _____

4. Jesus told Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world” (18:36). What does that mean? What does it not mean?

   _____

   _____

5. Pilate tried to free Jesus but gave in to the crowd (19:12-16). Have you ever known what was right and gone along with the crowd anyway?

_____

_____

6. Even on the cross, Jesus cared for His mother (19:26-27). What does that teach us?

_____

_____

7. "It has been finished" (19:30). What was finished? Why does that word bring such peace to a believer?

_____

_____

KEY VERSE

Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It has been finished."
*And having bowed **His** head, He delivered up the spirit.*
John 19:30

Live It Take time this week, alone, to read John 19 slowly. Then write a short prayer of thanks to Jesus for what He finished on the cross.

Prayer Focus Thank Jesus for the cross. Pray for anyone in the group who struggles to believe that His work is enough for them.

Leader Note

Who killed Jesus? The Gospels show Jewish leaders, Pilate and Roman soldiers all taking part. Christians must never blame the Jewish people as a whole. Jesus said that He laid down His life on His own (10:17-18). In the deepest sense, our sins put Him there, and He went willingly.

The timing of the Passover. John's timeline (18:28; 19:14) and the other Gospels' timeline of the Last Supper have been discussed for centuries. Several reasonable explanations exist. The John Bible Study covers them. Do not let it take over the meeting.

Week 13: Risen, and Feed My Sheep

The tomb is empty. Mary Magdalene meets the risen Jesus in the garden. Thomas doubts, then worships. In chapter 21, Jesus cooks breakfast by the sea and restores Peter, who had denied Him three times.

Before the Meeting

Read John 20 and 21. Leaders, also read the matching chapters in the John Bible Study and the leader note at the end of this week.

Opening Question

What is the best surprise you have ever received?

Discussion Questions

1. How did Mary recognize Jesus (20:14-16)? What does it mean to you that He knows your name?

   _____

   _____

2. Thomas said he would not believe without seeing (20:25). Why do you think Jesus met his doubt instead of scolding him? What did Thomas confess in 20:28?

   _____

   _____

3. Read 20:30-31. Why did John write his Gospel? Has it done that for you?

   _____

   _____

4. In chapter 21, the disciples went back to fishing. Why do you think they did? Where do you go when you are unsure what comes next?

   _____

   _____

5. Jesus asked Peter three times, "do you love Me?" Why three times? How do you think Peter felt (21:15-17)?

_____

_____

6. After each answer Jesus gave Peter a job: feed My lambs, shepherd My sheep. What does that tell us about how Jesus restores people who have failed?

_____

_____

7. Peter asked about John, and Jesus said, "You follow Me" (21:22). Where are you comparing your path to someone else's? What is the next step for you in following Jesus after this study?

_____

_____

KEY VERSE

but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

John 20:31

Live It Share with the group, or with one person, what has changed for you over these 13 weeks. Then decide on your next step: another study, a place to serve, or inviting someone to the next group.

Prayer Focus Thank God for what He has done in the group. Pray for each person by name and for their next step.

Leader Note

Two words for love (21:15-17). In Greek, Jesus' first two questions use agapao and Peter answers with phileo. The third time Jesus uses phileo. The SLB shows this by translating phileo as "love dearly." Some teachers make a great deal of the difference, and others think John used the words almost the same way. Either way, the point is clear: Jesus restored Peter three times for three denials.

"If you forgive the sins of any" (20:23). This does not mean the apostles could forgive sins on their own authority. As they preached the gospel, those who believed would be told with confidence that their sins were forgiven, and those who refused would be told plainly that they were not. Only God forgives sin (Mark 2:7).

A Closing Word

> *Jesus says to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what **is that** to you? You follow Me."*
>
> John 21:22 (SLB)

You have walked through the whole Gospel of John together. You have met the Word who became flesh, the Lamb of God, the bread of life, the light of the world, the good shepherd, the resurrection and the life, the way and the truth and the life, the true vine, and the risen Lord who cooked breakfast for His friends.

John wrote so that we would believe and have life in His name. My prayer is that this study has done that for every person in your group. Some may have believed for the first time. Others have come to know Jesus better than they did before.

Do not let the group end with the last page. Celebrate together. Then talk about what comes next. You might study another book, serve together, or split into two groups and invite new people. Whatever you do, keep following Him.

Group Sign-Up and Prayer Page

Use this page to keep track of your group. Leaders, it helps to pray through this list each week.

Name	Phone or email	Prayer request

About This Book

John: A Group Study Guide is a 13-week plan for a small group studying the Gospel of John. It is the companion to the verse-by-verse John Bible Study.

Each week includes what to read before the meeting, an opening question, discussion questions, a key verse, a Live It step, a prayer focus and a short leader note on the hard spots in that week's reading. A sample meeting plan and ground rules are at the front.

For more help leading a group, see Leading a Small Group, free at trinfinityenterprises.com.

All Scripture quotations come from the Steadfast Literal Bible, which is free to read at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb.