

JOHN:

THE ONE JESUS LOVED

DEARLY

10 DEVOTIONS



Day 1: John knew who Jesus was (Who is He?).

In a game of 'Gospel Spot the Difference', the Gospel of John would be the odd one out. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the synoptic gospels because they are very similar to one another in summarising the life of Jesus. John's gospel is different.

John 1:1-5

Matthew and Luke include the genealogy of Jesus (which is a big word for his line of ancestors) and Luke takes it all the way back to Adam. John discusses who Jesus is from a different perspective; he doesn't use heritage or ancestry but describes who he understands Jesus to be. John describes Jesus as the 'Word' through which all things were made and the 'Light' which can never be extinguished. The beginning of John's gospel is poetic because it expresses who John knows Jesus to be - John doesn't just know Jesus because of His family or heritage. He doesn't know who Jesus is simply because he read about Him or because he's really intelligent. John knew who Jesus was because he had a personal relationship with Him.

John knew Jesus was the Light of the World and the Word we should live by because he knew that Jesus was who He said He was. Before John goes on to recount all the incredible stories of who God is and what He does, he starts with who this awesome Jesus is to him. One of the most amazing things about John's description is that it doesn't even use Jesus' name, but from reading it we know exactly who he is describing.

Before we hear about anything Jesus did, before we hear that Jesus heals people, before John tells us any of Jesus' teaching, John describes his friend and this is what he comes up with. It feels to me like, if I could ask John, "Who is Jesus to you?" he'd probably respond with something a lot like this.

Reflection on the passage:

There is nothing wrong with knowing facts about Jesus, in fact, I would actively encourage learning the facts! It's great to know Jesus' heritage because that can teach us a lot about the promise God has for us through Jesus. But knowing the facts is one thing; God wants us to know Him and have a personal relationship with Him too.

John had a personal relationship with Jesus, he knew who Jesus was because he spent time with Him. John didn't depend on those around him to tell him about God, but got stuck in for himself, having his own friendship with Jesus, getting to know Him as his Lord, teacher, friend and much more.

As Christians, we believe we too can have a personal relationship with God; we can have our own friendship with Him and it's so important that we do. It's really important as we start these devotionals on the character of John that we know we can have our own friendship with Jesus and we can have our own personal understanding of who He is.

John was a great guy, but he was no Jesus. Jesus is the one this set of devotionals is really about. Jesus is the Light the darkness can never extinguish, but He's more than that for lots of reasons including, quite simply, Jesus is someone whom you can know personally too.

If someone asked you, "Who is Jesus to you?" I wonder how you would answer. It might not be as poetic as the way John might say it, but that doesn't matter. What does matter is that you can answer that question for yourself.

Questions For Discussion:

1. Who is Jesus to you?
2. How would you describe Jesus to someone who had never heard of Him before?
3. What can you do to help you get to know Jesus better?

Personal Response:

Think about how long you've been following Jesus for; it might be hours, days, months or years. Think about what you've learnt about God in that time. If anything stands out to you, write it down. Tell God who He is to you. Thank Him that He is all of those things to you and ask Him to tell you more about who He is. If you've ever thought anything about God which you know wasn't true, use this as an opportunity to say 'sorry' to God and ask Him to teach you more about who He is.

Group Response:

As a group, describe who you know Jesus to be to each other and then discuss how you can describe Jesus to those you know in all aspects of your life, whether that be at home, school or church. Jump in at the deep end and think of someone you know who doesn't know Jesus and talk them about Him. Don't panic, it can be a really low key conversation.



Day 2: John got on board with Jesus' mission (Mission Possible).

John 3:16 is one of the most famous verses in the bible and it outlines God's mission - to send His son Jesus to die so that all who believe in Him can spend eternity with God. This verse summarises God's plan to save the world.

John 3:16-17

John got on board with Jesus' mission and then shouted it loud enough for the whole world to hear it! Jesus came to save the world, not condemn it; He came to rescue and keep the world safe, not blame, attack or criticise it. Jesus invited His disciples onto this mission to save the world and they jumped on board. John spent three years with Jesus, following His mission plan, seeing amazing things and then, after Jesus' death on the cross, John spent the rest of his life with the Holy Spirit, continuing Jesus' mission to save the world by telling and showing everyone the Jesus he knew.

The great thing is that, when Jesus died on the cross, He wins! Through Jesus' death and resurrection, darkness is defeated and Jesus is shown as the Light that can never be extinguished. But even though Jesus had already won, John knew that, whilst being on the winning team, there was still more work to be done because everyone should have the opportunity to hear the good news of Jesus and get on board with His mission to save the world.

I'm sure that, sometimes, John found being on Jesus' mission scary or daunting, and at times he was unpopular because of it. But John must have believed what he wrote in (what is probably) the most commonly used and famous verse in the bible, John 3:16-17.

John believed in God's plan to save the world and he got on board with a mission that, to some, would have seemed impossible; but to John, Jesus' mission was completely possible.

Reflection on the passage:

John 3:16 is repeated so many times that I wonder whether we really believe it.

God loves you so much He sent His one and only Son, so that if you choose Him you don't need to die but can live with God for eternity! This is God's plan to save the world and it's a pretty great plan at that! It's the plan that John believed in and it's the plan he got on board with.

You are invited onto God's team and invited to take part in God's mission to save the world, just like John was. That might feel a little bit nerve-racking or scary, but Jesus didn't come to earth to tell us off and point out all our failures. He didn't come to earth to condemn you but to save you. And you get the choice; God is giving you an invitation and an opportunity to be on His team and you can choose whether to take it or not.

John chose to take it! He jumped in and got on board with the mission in John 3:16-17. In Matthew 4:22, we are told John and his brother James left their father and boat behind to follow Jesus. They were so on board with Jesus' mission that they left their lives behind. As a follower of Jesus, John saw God's love and power at work in the world around him. When we choose to follow Jesus, there may be times we need to leave things behind but, in following Jesus' plan, we can see that same love and power in our churches, schools and homes.

Just like John, you are invited onto the winning team; the question is - are you on board with Jesus' mission to save the world?

Questions For Discussion:

1. What do you think it means to be on a mission?
2. Is there anything that worries you about being on God's mission?
3. Is there anything that makes you excited to be on God's mission?

Personal Response:

Spend some time thanking God for sending Jesus to save the world. God is inviting you to join His mission, use this time to answer His invitation. Are you on board with God's mission?

Group Response:

Part of God's mission means loving people! Take some time in the next week to spend time, walking or talking with someone whom you don't spend much time with. If you want to, you could even buy them a chocolate bar to make them feel really loved!

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You have just enjoyed reading a 2-day sample of a 10-day devotion exploring John's personal relationship with Jesus; Like John, we need to know the significance of who Jesus is within our own lives.

Why not take the time to order your full copy of this devotion and spend time with Jesus and draw closer to Him.

John didn't depend on those around him to tell him about God. Instead, he searched, growing his own friendship with Jesus, getting to know Him as his Lord, his teacher, and his friend.

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Emma is passionate about seeing the Kingdom of Heaven invade her generation. The author of a popular Christian youth blog and an activist for social justice, Emma keenly follows politics, current affairs and enjoys a good debate. She is also a talented musician and superhero enthusiast.



As a writer for Missional Generation, Emma has created this set of devotions looking at the character of John and his relationship with Jesus.

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As Christians we believe that we too can have a personal relationship with God; we can have our own friendship with Him and it's so important that we do. This devotional series will encourage you, stretch you and help deepen your identity in God.

Find Emma's blog 'More than a Conqueror: The lifestyle of a Conqueror following Jesus' Battle Plan' at morethanaconqueror.blogspot.co.uk

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