

# “That You May Believe”

## A Study through the Gospel of John



John wrote his Gospel so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ and have life in His name. Come study the narratives verse by verse, be equipped with tools for digging into the text, and learn how to follow Jesus and have life to the full.

“Preaching and teaching take on greater dimension and accomplish far more when we come to them already saturated in the text they expound.”

Jen Wilkin, author of [Women of the Word: How to Study the Bible with Both our Hearts and our Minds](#)

Equipping tool: **Listing who, what, where, when, and why**

**Who:** What is said about the person? What does the person say/do?

**What:** What happens to the people? What are the events? (Retell the narrative)

**Where:** Where does it take place?

**When:** When did it take place? (time of year, time of day)

**Why:** Why is this included? Why is it placed here? Why does this person say/do that?

### **John 2:1-11**

**Who:**

- Jesus (“my time has not yet come”, calls mom “dear woman”, asks mom “why do you involve me?”, involved the servants in the miracle, did the miracle behind the scenes, revealed his glory)
- Jesus’ mother (feels responsible to help with the problem, takes the problem to Jesus, “they have no more wine”, tells servants, “Do whatever He tells you”)
- Disciples (put their faith in Jesus after the sign)
- Servants (obedient to Jesus, filled jars with water, filled them to the brim, took transformed wine to master of banquet, knew where the wine came from)
- Master of banquet (didn’t know where the wine came from, impressed with the quality of wine, says “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now”)
- Bridegroom (called aside by the master of the banquet)
- Bride (inferred)
- Wedding guests (inferred)

**What:**

- Jesus attends a wedding
- They run out of wine at the wedding
- Jesus turns 6 stone jars of water into wine
- The disciples put their faith in Jesus
- This is Jesus’ first sign that John records in his gospel.

**Where:** at Cana in Galilee, at a wedding

**When:** “on the third day”, which is two days after Jesus talked to Nathanael. It is also probably the 7<sup>th</sup> day of Jesus’ first week of public ministry. (See John 1)

**Why:**

- The sign revealed Jesus’ glory (His deity)
- The sign showed Jesus as having power over creation
- To show that God values and supports marriage
- To show that God has compassion toward our needs

Equipping Tool: Making charts and comparisons (Examples from John 3)

<b><u>Born of the flesh</u></b>	<b><u>Born of the Spirit</u></b>
Born (physically)	Born again (spiritually)
Cannot understand kingdom of God (3,5)	Can enter and understand kingdom of God (3,5)
Flesh gives birth to flesh (6)	Spirit gives birth to spirit (6)
	Like the wind (8)
Born from mother's womb (4)	Born from above, born of water and the spirit (5)

<b><u>Believe in God's One and Only Son</u></b>	<b><u>Don't believe in God's One and Only Son</u></b>
Eternal life (16)	Perish (16)
Not condemned (18)	Stands condemned already (18)
Lives by truth (21)	Love darkness (19), hate light (20)
Comes into the light (21)	Will not come into the light (20)
No fear that deeds are seen plainly in sight of God (21)	Fear evil deeds will be exposed (20)

<b><u>Bridegroom</u></b>	<b><u>Friend of Bridegroom</u></b>
Comes from heaven, above all (31)	Can receive only what is given him from heaven (27)
Attended to by the friend (29)	Attends to the bridegroom, waits and listens for him (29)
	Full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice (29)
Whom the bride belongs to (29)	Sent ahead of bridegroom (28)
Must become greater (30)	Must become less (30)
Jesus?	John the Baptist?

<b><u>Snake Lifted Up</u></b> <b><u>(Numbers 21:4-9)</u></b>		<b><u>Son Lifted Up</u></b> <b><u>(John 3:14-15)</u></b>
On a pole	"lifted up"	On a cross
Venom of snake, bitten by snake	Cause for death	Venom of sin, "bitten" by sin
Bronze snake on a pole	So people could have something to see and then believe	Jesus on a cross
Look up at the snake on the pole	God's one solution is the only way to live	Look to and believe in Jesus
Serpent	A symbol of death brought healing	Crucifixion

## Equipping tool: Using Cross References

Let Scripture teach Scripture

### John 3

Moses lifting up a snake

- Numbers 21:6-9

### John 4:1-30

Jacob's well

- Genesis 33:18-19

Samaritans

- 2 Kings 17:24-41
- Ezra 4:1-5

Living Water

- Jeremiah 2:13
- Zechariah 14:8
- John 7:38
- Revelation 7:17

Jesus' other encounters with women

- John 7:53-8:11
- John 11:17-40
- Luke 7:36-50
- Luke 10:38-42

### John 4:31-54

Growth of the early church in Samaria

- Acts 1:8
- Acts 8:4-25

Jesus' food

- Matthew 4:4
- Matthew 6:25
- John 17:4
- Jeremiah 15:16

Sowing, reaping, harvest

- Deuteronomy 16:13-14
- Psalm 126:5-6
- Isaiah 9:3
- Matthew 9:37-38

Galilee (only mentioned a few times in John)

- John 1:43-51
- John 2:1-12
- John 6

Believing without seeing

- John 20:29

## Equipping Tool: Making Lists

- List events or steps in order
- List reasons
- List examples
- List items in a series
- List describing words and phrases

John 5:5-9

### Healing of the invalid:

<sup>5</sup> One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him lying <sup>①</sup> there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

<sup>7</sup> "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."

<sup>8</sup> Then Jesus said to him, <sup>②</sup> "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." <sup>9</sup> At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

John 5:16-23

### Reasons they wanted to kill Jesus:

<sup>16</sup> So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. <sup>17</sup> In his defense Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and <sup>①</sup> I too am working."<sup>18</sup> For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, <sup>②</sup> but he was even calling God his own Father, <sup>③</sup> making himself equal with God.

### Equality between Father and Son:

<sup>19</sup> Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son <sup>①</sup> can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because <sup>②</sup> whatever the Father does the Son also <sup>③</sup> does." <sup>20</sup> For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. <sup>21</sup> For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son <sup>①</sup> gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. <sup>22</sup> Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, <sup>②</sup> that all may <sup>③</sup> honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

### What the Father gives the Son:

- 1 - authority to give life
- 2 - authority to judge
- 3 - honor from people

John 5:31-47

⑤

<sup>31</sup> "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. <sup>32</sup> There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is true.

### Testimonies About Jesus:

- 1 - Father
- 2 - John the Baptist
- 3 - Jesus' works
- 4 - OT Scriptures
- 5 - Jesus Himself?

②

<sup>33</sup> "You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. <sup>34</sup> Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. <sup>35</sup> John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

③

<sup>36</sup> "I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me. <sup>37</sup> And the Father <sup>①</sup> who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, <sup>38</sup> nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. <sup>39</sup> You study <sup>②</sup> the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, <sup>40</sup> yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

④

①

### Reasons people refuse to believe:

<sup>41</sup> "I do not accept glory from human beings, <sup>42</sup> but I know you. I know that you do not <sup>②</sup> have the love of God in your hearts. <sup>43</sup> I have come in my Father's name, and you do not <sup>③</sup> accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. <sup>44</sup> How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

④

<sup>45</sup> "But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. <sup>46</sup> If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. <sup>47</sup> But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"

⑤

Putting all the equipping tools together! 😊

John 6:1-21

Equipping Tool: Adding symbols or pictures

### Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand - 4th Sign in Gospel

- Matt. 14, Mark 6, Luke 9

**Names for Sea:**

Some time after this, Jesus <sup>Where ①</sup> crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that

? Why 2 names?

is, the Sea of Tiberias), <sup>②</sup> and a great <sup>♀♀♀♀ E</sup> crowd of people followed him because they

saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. <sup>+</sup> Then Jesus went up on a

mountainside and sat down with his disciples. <sup>When</sup> The Jewish Passover Festival was

Exodus 12, 14, 16

near.

**Crowd:**

- v. 2 - followed b/c they saw
- v. 10 - <sup>signs</sup> Jesus had them sit down, 5000 men +
- v. 12 - hungry, had enough to eat
- v. 15 - wanted to make Jesus king by force

**? Why wasn't Jesus in Jerusalem for Passover?**

**Steps in miracle:**

<sup>①</sup> When Jesus looked up and saw a great <sup>Who ♀♀♀♀</sup> crowd coming toward him, he said to

Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" <sup>②</sup> He asked this only to

**test** him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. "stretch Philip's faith" (MSG)

→ to try, to assess, to determine quality or genuineness to undergo a trial

Who "200 denarii" (ESV)  
 7 Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough

 bread for each one to have a bite!"  
 ♀♀♀♀

? What happened to the boy? Follow Jesus? Follow the crowd?

Who  
 8 Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy who

? Do 5 and 2 mean anything?

with five small barley  and two small fish, but how far will they go among so

many?"

Responses to getting food for the crowd		
Philip	No way! (v. 7)	- practical - impossible
Andrew	Maybe. (v. 8)	- helpful - doubtful
boy	Yes! (v. 8)	- childlike faith - willing to share

Ps. 23  
 10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place,  
 ♀♀♀♀

and they sat down (about five thousand  were there).<sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the

 (4)  (5) gave thanks, and  (6)  distributed to those who were seated as  much as they

wanted. He did the same with the fish.  
 ♀

↳ passed out, delivered, divided up, scattered, dealt out  
 ♀

? What is the significance of Jesus giving thanks?

<sup>0000</sup>  
†††† C → E  
12 When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces (NKJV)

He wanted what was broken

"fragments"

that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." 13 So they gathered them and filled

twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had

eaten. ? Did they take the 12 baskets with them in the boat!?

<sup>0000</sup>  
†††† C → E  
14 After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, "Surely this

is the Prophet who is to come into the world." 15 Jesus, knowing that they intended  
Deut. 18:15-18

to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

- by strength/power
- by coercion \*
- by control

- where
- planned
  - designed
  - purposed \*

# Jesus Walks on the Water

- Matt. 14, Mark 6, No Luke

→ 5<sup>th</sup> Sign in Gospel (?)

? Why did they go  
• to Capernaum?

<sup>16</sup> When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, <sup>17</sup> where they got into a

boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had

not yet joined them. <sup>18</sup> A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. <sup>19</sup> When they had rowed about three or four miles, <sup>20</sup> they saw Jesus

approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. <sup>20</sup> But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." <sup>21</sup> Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

How big is the lake?  
"scared senseless" (MSG)  
"eager" (NLT)

without delay  
at once  
no time lapse  
instantly

## How to Study the Bible

### Interpretation: What does it mean?

- We want to be doers of the Word and not just hearers of the Word.
- Thorough observation → Accurate interpretation → Correct application
- We are called to love God with our minds. Be prepared: This is going to take work and effort.

### General interpretation principles:

- The Bible is unified by a Story. Context is key.
  - Look at the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, book, and then entire council of God's Word.
  - Scripture will never contradict Scripture.
  - Do not base your doctrine on an obscure passage of Scripture.
  - Every smaller narrative/story fits into God's bigger story.

### God's Story

- Pavi shared this outline at e4 many years ago:

God began	creation
God started over	from Eden to Babel
God promised	the Fathers of Israel
God delivered	the exodus
God sealed	Sinai
God gave	the promised land
God accommodated	from Joshua to Solomon
God wrestled	from the Kings to the Exile
God preserved	exile and restoration

God with us	Jesus
God in us	Holy Spirit and early church
God for us	Paul and other letter writers

- NT Wright organizes the drama of God's story into five acts, like a play: 1) Creation  
2) Fall  
3) Israel  
4) Jesus  
5) The Church
- The Bible is written for us, but it was not written to us.
  - What did it mean to the original audience in the 1<sup>st</sup> century?
  - It can't mean for us what it never meant for them.
- A passage can only have ONE true interpretation (but many applications).
  - It only had one meaning to the original writer.
  - We study to try to figure out that one interpretation.
  - Barriers to be aware of:
    - Language barriers
    - Cultural barriers

- Geographic barriers
- Interpret Scripture literally, whenever possible.
  - God wants to reveal Himself to us.
- Consider the author's purpose for writing and the type of literature he is writing.
- Compare your interpretation with other scholars/believers.
  - Be wary if you interpret something in a way that no one else in 2,000 years of church history ever has before!
- There is great joy in discovery!
  - Never skip over reading and studying the Bible yourself to read what other people have to say about it in books.

## Interpretation

### Equipping Tool: Using Bible Dictionaries

- Organized alphabetically, Bible Dictionaries give explanations of people, places, events, and terms in the Bible.
- I like them because they give facts and information about culture, language, geography, and traditions, but they don't interpret for you.

### Printed resources:

(Use discernment!)

1. [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary](#)
2. [The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary](#)
3. [Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary](#)
4. [Tyndale Bible Dictionary](#)
5. [Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible](#)

### Online resources:

(Use discernment!)

1. Study Light  
<http://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/>
2. Bible Study Tools  
<http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/>
3. Blue Letter Bible  
[www.blueletterbible.org/search/Dictionary](http://www.blueletterbible.org/search/Dictionary)

Suggested terms to look up in a Bible Dictionary as you are reading John 8:

- Mount of Olives
- Temple
- Pharisees
- Samaritan
- Abraham
- Light

Also, consider looking up: Kingdom of God

## Equipping Tool: Bible Handbooks

It's like an almanac or an encyclopedia for the Bible!

They are organized by books of the Bible.

They may include some or all of the following:

- important details on each book, including each book's author, date, original audience, and themes
- summary of the book
- concise commentary on the book
- original setting of the book and what was going on in the world at that time
- background information about people and places
- how the book fits into God's redemptive story as a whole
- historical background information
- cultural traditions
- archaeological evidence
- church history
- timelines
- charts
- maps
- photographs

Recommended Resources:

- Halley's Bible Handbook
- What the Bible is All About: Bible Handbook by Henrietta Mears
- Holman Illustrated Bible Handbook
- The Eerdmans Companion to the Bible by Fee and Hubbard
- The Unger's Bible Handbook

## Equipping Tool: Pulling out Principles

A principle is a spiritual truth about God and/or people.  
It is true for all people in all cultures at all times.  
It captures the main truth(s) that the passage teaches.

Basic questions to ask:

- What do we learn about God?
- What do we learn about man?

More questions to ask:

- What attributes of God's character are displayed in this passage?
- What do I learn about God's heart for people?
- What does God want us to know from this passage?
- What truths are revealed about people's relationship with God?
- What truths are revealed about people's relationships with others?
- How does this passage point to the person and work of Jesus Christ?
- What does this passage reveal about people's complete need for a Savior?
- What warnings are included in this passage?
- What commands are included in this passage?
- What encouragements or promises are in this passage?
- Is there an example to follow? Is there an example not to follow?

Examples of principles from John 10:

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, faced evil and overcame it by laying down his life.

Jesus is the gate; the only way to enter life with God.

Jesus laid down His life to provide eternal life for His people.

Jesus came so people could be set free and have life to the full.

Jesus has authority and power over life and death.

Jesus' death actually enlarged His flock.

Jesus is the Messiah for the whole world.

Jesus is the Shepherd King.

Jesus calls His people by name and invites them to follow Him.

Jesus' people know and listen to His voice and follow Him.

Jesus' people are eternally secure because of the union between the Father and Son.

## Equipping Tool: Reading Commentaries

### What is a commentary?

- A Bible commentary contains explanations and interpretations of Scripture. Commentaries can provide deeper understanding and insight into the text.
- Many times, scholars have done the work of looking at Bible concordances, Bible dictionaries, and Bible handbooks and compiled all of their learning over their lifetime into a commentary.
- Commentaries can analyze the entire Bible or just an individual book of the Bible. They usually go through the text, chapter by chapter and verse by verse.

### What is the best way to use a commentary?

- Study the Scripture for yourself first, trusting the Holy Spirit to help you observe and interpret the text. Then, use commentaries to confirm, correct, and enhance your study. Resist the urge to by-pass the Bible and go straight for the commentary!
- There are so many commentaries out there! Use discernment as you read and study.
- Interesting thought: “The best commentators are those who have written upon only one book. Few men can comment eminently well upon the whole Bible.” (Spurgeon)

### Commentaries I've enjoyed:

- “For Everyone” series by NT Wright (e.g., John for Everyone)
- Bible Knowledge Commentary by John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck
- **The MacArthur Bible Commentary by John MacArthur**
- IVP Bible Background Commentary
- Zondervan Bible Commentary

These websites offer a wide range of free online Bible commentaries:

- BibleStudyTools.com
- Bible Gateway
- Bible Hub
- Blue Letter Bible
- StudyLight.org

Bible software programs

- E-sword
- Accordance
- Logos

## Equipping Tool: Praying God's Word

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 - <sup>4</sup>*The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.* <sup>5</sup>*We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

- Two of the “divine weapons” we have are God's Word and prayer

- Imagine their power if we put them together!

Ephesians 6:17-18 - *Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.<sup>18</sup> And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

- The armor of God includes using the sword of the Spirit (the Word of God) and praying in the Spirit in order to be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power (Eph. 6:10).
- Praying God's Word is speaking His language. It's talking to Him using His Words. When you pray Scripture, you know your prayers are being heard because your prayers are aligned with His Will.

### Ideas for Praying God's Word:

1. **Restate God's truth, affirming your faith:** *Lord, thank you that you prune me, not to hurt me, but to make me even more fruitful, so that I will look even more like my true self. (John 15:2)*
2. **Talk to God about passages you don't understand:** *Your Word says that those who do not remain in you are like branches that will be thrown into the fire and burned. (John 15:6). How can a loving, redeeming God let this happen? Help me to understand salvation, Your will, and human choice.*
3. **Ask God for what you need:** *Father, as I live in this world, help me not look like the world. Please remind me that you have chosen me out of the world, to be different and set apart for you. (John 15:19)*
4. **Confess sin and ask God to change your life:** *Father, I am not doing well at loving people. I am impatient and judgmental. Please help me to remain in you so that your love can flow through me to other believers around me. (John 15:12)*
5. **Praise God with your paraphrase of Scripture:** *I praise You, Jesus, for you the true vine (John 15:1). You are the giver of life and you produce the fruit of righteousness.*

Adapted from: Living Free by Beth Moore.

### Equipping Tool: Asking Application Questions

*"The Word of God does not bear fruit when it is understood, only when it is applied."  
- Howard Hendricks, Dallas Theological Seminary*

*"Interpretation is one; application is many. That is, there is only one ultimate interpretation of a passage of Scripture. But that passage can be applied in different ways to different situations. The truth of God's Word is adaptable, in that the same truth addresses a variety of circumstances. The truth doesn't change; the circumstances do."*

-From Living by the Book by Howard Hendricks, p. 329

James 1:22-25 -- <sup>22</sup> Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. <sup>23</sup> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror <sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. <sup>25</sup> But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

- Applications move the truths of the Scripture from the mind to the heart.
- Applications help you apply your learning to your life.
- Applications are practical.
- Applications cause evaluation and reflection of your present life and often motivate making a change going forward.

Questions to ask yourself to determine applications from a passage of Scripture:

1. What might God want to change in the way I think and act?
2. Is there an example for me to follow?
3. Is there a truth to believe?
4. Is there a sin to avoid?
5. Is there a promise to claim?
6. Is there a prayer to repeat?
7. Is there a command to obey?
8. Is there a warning to heed?
9. Is there an attitude/action to confess?
10. Is there a step to take?

- Applications can be written as questions.
  - Ask questions of yourself that require more than a “yes” or “no” response.
  - Start questions with Who, What, Where, When, or How.
    - For example, not “Am I compromising to please people?” but “**In what area am I most likely to compromise to make things easier?**” (From John 19:1, 15-16)
- Or Applications can be written as statements.
  - Application statements can start with, “I will...” or “When \_\_\_\_\_, I will....”
    - For example, “**When I have my evaluation this week, I will respect my earthly authority, my boss, by listening humbly rather than speaking defensively.**” (From John 19:9)
  - Avoid vague or general statements, such as, “I will be kind.”
  - Avoid unattainable statements, such as, “I will always obey.”

Remember, our goal is not accumulation of knowledge but life transformation!  
We don't just want to know about Jesus, we want to become like Jesus!