

SIMPLY JESUS

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

GENESIS
COMMUNITY CHURCH

purpose of this guide

SIMPLY JESUS – that is what the Gospel of John is all about. Jesus – who is He? Why did He come? What did He accomplish? And what does that all mean for me and the world I live in?

As we journey through this phenomenal gospel story, we will learn - whether for the first time or afresh - that Jesus is the Bread of Life that feeds us and the Light of the World that guides our steps. He is the Gate we enter through for salvation, and Jesus is the Good Shepherd who leads, cares for, and protects. He is the Resurrection and Life – the only way we can know God, both now and forever more. He is the Truth we can trust and the Vine that brings us life to the fullest.

We pray this devotional will be a great blessing. Because when we learn about HE, it transforms ME, so that YOU can see how great HE is.

Each day will be divided into three sections:

1. The "HE" section which gives a truth we can learn about Jesus.
2. The "ME" section that applies that truth to our own lives.
3. The "YOU" section which helps us discover ways we can live out the truths that are changing us.

If you have any questions about this devotional, please contact Pastor of Discipleship, Kendall at **Kendall.Lankford@genesisthejourney.com**.

#SIMPLYJESUS

WEEK ONE

march 1
flipping tables

He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables… But the Jewish leaders demanded, "What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it."
—John 2:15, 18

HE:
Jesus has unlimited authority.

NOTE: Because of Jesus' work, we are now temples (1 Cor. 3:16)

ME:
If you're a temple, what tables need to be flipped?

YOU:
What would a lifestyle of repentance look like to the people around you?

march 2
he raises dead things

"All right," Jesus replied. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."
—John 2:19

HE:
Jesus is the resurrection.

NOTE: If Jesus can resurrect Himself, how much more can He breathe new life into us?

ME:
How are you experiencing the fresh breath of God's grace today? (If you are not sure, please take a moment to consider the grace that the Lord has shown you on this particular day.)

YOU:
Would you consider praying for one lost person throughout the day?

march 3
he has a different vision

"What!" they exclaimed. "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?" But when Jesus said "this temple," he meant his own body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said.
—John 2:20-22

HE:

Jesus is the true and better temple.

NOTE: Jesus was often misunderstood. That is because the people's vision for Jesus did not usually match up with who He really was and what He came to do. For that reason, we have to adopt His vision.

ME:

How do you determine God's vision for your life?
(For help on this topic, visit cru.org/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/how-to-know-gods-will.html)

YOU:

Is your life vision big enough to impact someone else?
If not, is it a Biblical vision?

WEEK TWO

march 6
does he entrust himself to you?

Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.
—John 2:23-25 (NKJV)

HE:
Jesus chooses who He entrusts Himself to.

NOTE: "The words believed in John 2:23 and commit in John 2:24 are the same Greek word. These people believed in Jesus, but He did not believe in them! They were "unsaved believers"! It was one thing to respond to a miracle but quite something else to commit oneself to Jesus Christ and continue in His Word."
—Warren Wiersby: BE Bible Study Series

ME:
How does life look different when Jesus commits Himself to you?

YOU:
Jesus knows inside of all people perfectly.
How does this passage affect the way you will pray and approach your week?

march 7
don't get noticed

There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. "Rabbi," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you."
—John 3:1-2

HE:
Jesus is worth pursuing.

NOTE: The passage tells us that Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, which means he may have been curious to speak with Jesus, but he did not want to be seen with Jesus.

ME:
How comfortable are you living out your faith publicly? How do you currently do this?

YOU:
What new evidences of God's work in your life are you hoping people will see today? (We call these Fresh Stories.)

march 8
new birth

Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?" Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.'"
—John 3:3-7

HE:
New Birth comes from Jesus.

NOTE: New birth entails a new beginning with a past whose consequence is long forgotten.

ME:
Why is it so hard to forget the past and live in the new life Jesus has for us?

YOU:
Do you know a person that needs a new beginning? Would you pray for them throughout the day?

march 9
send the wind

The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."
—John 3:8

HE:

Jesus sends the Spirit.

NOTE: Jesus exposes the gaps in Nicodemus' knowledge. He knows something is going on in the ministry of Jesus—miraculous things are happening—but He has no ability to explain its origin. Jesus is inviting Him to consider that He is the one who will send the wind (i.e. He is the one who will send the Holy Spirit, who is often referred to as the wind or breath of God).

ME:

What does your relationship with the Holy Spirit look like?

YOU:

What gifts has the Spirit given you to serve His Church?
(If you would like help finding out your gifts, try taking a spiritual gifts inventory at lifeway.com/lwc/files/lwcF_MYCS_030526_Spiritual_Gifts_Survey.pdf)

march 10
look to jesus

Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things? I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won't believe our testimony. But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.
—John 3:10-15 (Read Numbers 21:6-9 for context.)

HE:

Jesus heals those who orient their lives toward Him.

NOTE: The theological point of this passage is that we will be healed ultimately when He is lifted up (crucifixion and resurrection) AND temporally as we learn to orient our lives toward Him.

ME:

Why do you think it is important that we orient our life towards Jesus?

YOU:

Why do you think it is hard for people to orient their lives toward Jesus? What kinds of things get in their way?

march 11
without conditions

*Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to **trust** in him. But Jesus didn't **trust** them, because he knew all about people. No one needed to tell him about human nature, for he knew what was in each person's heart… [emphasis added]*

*"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who **believes** in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. [emphasis added]*
–John 2:23-25; 3:16-17

HE:

Jesus demands unconditional love.

NOTE: The highlighted words above are all the same word in Greek. Our trust in Jesus is based on the work He did while on the earth, not on supernatural hoops we ask Him to jump through now. If we truly believe He is who He said He was, did what He said He did, and will do what He said He will do, we will have an unconditional love for Him and His people.

ME:

Have you ever experienced conditional love? How does that feel? Are there any conditions you have with Jesus?

(i.e. don't make me give up this, don't make me go there, etc.)

YOU:

Who needs your unconditional love?

WEEK THREE

march 13
don't close your fist

Then Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem and went into the Judean countryside. Jesus spent some time with them there, baptizing people. At this time John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon, near Salim, because there was plenty of water there; and people kept coming to him for baptism. (This was before John was thrown into prison.) A debate broke out between John's disciples and a certain Jew over ceremonial cleansing. So John's disciples came to him and said, "Rabbi, the man you met on the other side of the Jordan River, the one you identified as the Messiah, is also baptizing people. And everybody is going to him instead of coming to us."
—John 3:22-26

HE:

Jesus must become greater than the good things we are doing for God.

NOTE: When we walk with God, He will give us assignments. Some assignments, like loving Him, are lifetime assignments. Others, like a volunteer role, may be seasonal. The key is to never hold our seasonal assignments from God with the same white-knuckling intensity that we hold our lifelong assignments from God. We have to be open for God to take us in a different direction. We cannot close our fists.

ME:

How do you identify where God is at work in your life?
Is it harder to obey lifetime assignments or seasonal ones?

YOU:

How do you identify where God is at work in the life of others?
Is it easier to have them join you or for you to join them?

march 14
no other gifts

John replied, "No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven."
—John 3:27

HE:
Everything we have comes from God.

ME:
What is your most treasured possession? Who gave it to you? Have you ever considered that it was actually from the Lord?

YOU:
What are your most treasured relationships? Why is it hard to give those people back to God? How might that improve the relationship?

march 15
your only job

"You yourselves know how plainly I told you, 'I am not the Messiah.
I am only here to prepare the way for him.'"
—John 3:28

HE:
Our only job is to point people to Him.

NOTE: John makes it abundantly clear - his only job on planet earth was to prepare the way for Christ. That job is something we get to do as well. We get to enjoy the Savior who has taken up residence in our hearts, and we get to help prepare the way for others to hear and know about Him.

ME:
How did John understand his whole life purpose?
What does this teach us about ours?

YOU:
If preparing the way for Christ is the most basic and primary job we have been given, then how do we do that job while we are doing other things?

march 16
supporting jesus' mission

It is the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the bridegroom's friend is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows. Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success. He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.
—John 3:29-30

HE:
We are invited to support Him.

NOTE: Sometimes the Bible uses beautiful imagery to describe who we are. As Christians, we are the bride of Christ who will one day share limitless intimacy with Him forever. While on this earth, however, we also get the opportunity of standing beside Him and supporting Him on His mission. Jesus does not exist to support our mission. We stand alongside of Him in support of His.

ME:
What are the life missions you are currently spending time on? Are these Jesus' missions He has asked you to join, or your missions you're praying He will join?

YOU:
Where is God at work around you? (This may be a person or a place.) How can you join Jesus there?

march 17
greater

"He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else. He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true. For he is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. The Father loves his Son and has put everything into his hands. And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment."
—John 3:31-36

HE:
Jesus is Greater.

ME:
How does John's perspective protect him from jealousy and self-pity? How does Jesus want to become greater in and through your life?

YOU:
Take a moment to pray for humility and for opportunities today to demonstrate that Jesus is greater.

WEEK FOUR

march 20
a necessary detour

Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John (though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did). So he left Judea and returned to Galilee. He had to go through Samaria on the way.
—John 4:1-4

HE:
Jesus seeks out people who are out of the way to everyone else.

ME:
How did Jesus go out of the way to find you?

YOU:
Who are the "out-of-the-way" people in your life? How would Jesus pursue them?

march 21
unworthy

Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food. The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"
—John 4:1-4

HE:
Jesus pursued people who felt unworthy
of being pursued.

NOTE: Two facts underline how shocking this passage was then. First, the Jews and the Samaritans hated each other so much that they avoided all interactions. Second, men - especially Jewish rabbis - never spoke one-on-one with a woman that was not their wife. For Jesus to speak to a Samaritan woman, would have utterly shocked her. But Jesus is also making a shocking statement during that time about the value of the person. No one, regardless of their race or sex, is automatically disqualified by Jesus. Societies have had this wrong since the dawn of time, but Jesus still pursues those who society has deemed unworthy to pursue.

ME:
How have I felt like this woman?
(Unworthy? Unqualified? Not worth pursuing?)

YOU:
What types of people in our society are like this woman?
How would Jesus pursue them?

march 22
never runs out

Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water." "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water? And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them ***eternal life****." [emphasis added]*
—John 4:10-14

HE:

Jesus gives a never-ending source of life.

NOTE: Unfortunately, many translators have rendered this as "eternal life", which makes most people think of heaven. What Jesus is promising, however, is a never-ending, life-giving, thirst-quenching relationship with Him that brings the taste of heaven down to earth. Jesus is not saying that you will have to wait to be satisfied. He is saying that every day you live on earth can be satisfying if you drink from Him.

ME:

Are you spiritually satisfied? If not, why do you think that is?

YOU:

We live in a world full of spiritually thirsty people. What do you think is the most effective way to get them to Jesus' well? How are you doing at this?

march 23
off balance

"Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water." "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her. "I don't have a husband," the woman replied. Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband— for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!" "Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet. So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?" Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. But the time is coming— indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. The woman said, "I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus told her, "I am the Messiah!"
—John 4:15-26

HE:

Jesus is not interested in where we are, but in where He needs to take us.

NOTE: This woman clearly has some misconceptions about life and God. Instead of addressing them directly, Jesus throws her off balance. She begins by possibly mocking him, asking him to give her this kind of water. But instead of defining what "living water" was, he changes the subject and asks about her husband. Instead of addressing which mountain had best historic merit, He shows her what God is doing today. At every turn, Jesus throws this woman off balance so that He can get her to the point where He wants to get her, namely, that He is the messiah.

ME:
Why do you think this woman needed to be thrown off balance? How does Jesus correct you when you have misconceptions?

YOU:
Why is it hard to communicate like Jesus?
How would this improve the way you relate with others?

march 24
can’t stop, won’t stop

Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, “What do you want with her?” or “Why are you talking to her?” The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone, “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?” So the people came streaming from the village to see him.
—John 4:27-30

HE:
When a person sees Jesus for who He really is they cannot stop talking about it.

NOTE: This woman came to the well at the hot part of the day to avoid people. At the end of this encounter, however, she left her water and ran to make sure everyone heard her testimony. Jesus flipped her script so much that she forgot she was trying to avoid people. She became a witness.

ME:
Everyone whose eyes are opened to see Jesus as He really is ends up radically changed. Have you had this kind of encounter with Him? If not, how will this inform your prayers?

YOU:
What person are you praying for that they would encounter Jesus in this way?

march 25
hungry but still full

Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, "Rabbi, eat something." But Jesus replied, "I have a kind of food you know nothing about." "Did someone bring him food while we were gone?" the disciples asked each other. Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. You know the saying, 'Four months between planting and harvest.' But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! You know the saying, 'One plants and another harvests.' And it's true. I sent you to harvest where you didn't plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest."
—John 4:31-38

HE:
Doing God's will is spiritual food.

NOTE: The point of these passages is spiritual sustenance. Jesus offers "living water" and now has had a spiritual meal from serving His Father. The disciples don't get it. In the same way, many come to church to be fed their only spiritual meal while starving throughout the week. But Jesus is saying that knowing Him will bring streams of living water; serving Him will feed our souls.

ME:
Have you ever struggled allowing someone else to serve you? Could that be spiritual food for them?

YOU:
Do you have the same experience (being filled up) serving others that Jesus had?

WEEK FIVE

march 27
don’t take it from me!

Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, “He told me everything I ever did!” When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days, long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world.”
—John 4:39-42

HE:
God expects us to point people to Him.

ME:
How did you come to know God? How did He use others? On looking back, how was His voice the loudest voice in your conversion?

YOU:
How will people around me come to hear Jesus’ message? How might I point them to Him without getting in the way of Him?others that Jesus had?

march 28
hometown dishonor

At the end of the two days, Jesus went on to Galilee. He himself had said that a prophet is not honored in his own hometown.
—John 4:43-44

HE:
Jesus was not honored in His hometown.

NOTE: Jesus was absolutely perfect in every way. But, the people who saw Him in diapers still doubted Him. How much more is this true of us today? Are the people who have known us the longest the slowest to get on board when we start walking with God?

ME:
Why do you think the people who have known us the longest are the most critical of us?

YOU:
Why is it hard to accept change from people we have known for a long time? Is there someone in your life who might need you to offer them a fresh look?

march 29
news travels fast

*Yet the Galileans **welcomed him**, for they had been in Jerusalem at the **Passover celebration** and had **seen everything** he did there. As he traveled through Galilee, he came to Cana, where he had turned the water into wine. There was a government official in nearby Capernaum whose son was very sick. When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged Jesus to come to Capernaum to heal his son, who was about to die. [emphasis added]*
—John 4:45-47

HE:
Jesus heals unlikely people.

NOTE: Jesus was beginning to get a name for Himself throughout Israel. After He turned the water into wine (supernatural miracle) and flipped over the tables in the temple, people were beginning to look to Him for signs and wonders from God. In this passage, a Gentile official hears about Jesus and comes. Isn't it beautiful that Jesus cleaned out the temple so that it would be a light to the Gentiles and is being a light again in this passage? At first, to the Samaritan woman, and now to a Gentile man.

ME:
Why does it often take a sickness or bad circumstances to seek Jesus? How has the Lord used this in your life to get you searching for Him?

YOU:
Who around you might be struggling? How might God use you to love them? How might God use your love to point them to Jesus?

march 30
oh no he didn't!

Jesus asked, "Will you never believe in me unless you see miraculous signs and wonders?" The official pleaded, "Lord, please come now before my little boy dies."Then Jesus told him, "Go back home. Your son will live!" And the man believed what Jesus said and started home.
—John 4:48-50

HE:
Jesus wants us to ask with a believing heart that is rooted in His character.

NOTE: On the surface, this man is doing what Jesus is challenging. He is asking for a miracle. But the difference is that he is not asking for a miracle to PROVE who Jesus is, He is asking for a miracle BECAUSE he knows who Jesus is! He leaves and goes home, not because he saw the miracle happen, but because He knew Jesus could be trusted. What an example of faith!

ME:
How was this man's request honorable to Jesus? What can we learn from this in regards to praying? What are some ways that some take this verse too far? (name it / claim it theology)

YOU:
Who are the people you might ask Jesus to heal? How might you have confidence in Jesus to do the work that you cannot do?

march 31
coincidence?

While the man was on his way, some of his servants met him with the news that his son was alive and well. He asked them when the boy had begun to get better, and they replied, "Yesterday afternoon at one o'clock his fever suddenly disappeared!" Then the father realized that that was the very time Jesus had told him, "Your son will live." And he and his entire household believed in Jesus. This was the second miraculous sign Jesus did in Galilee after coming from Judea.
—John 4:51-54

HE:
Jesus continues to reveal Himself so that we will respond and receive new life in His name.

NOTE: If you are keeping track, this is the second miraculous sign that John has listed. Like everything John does, He has a plan to reveal more of who Jesus is, even in the way he lists out miracles. In John's gospel, this is one of seven miracles, that culminates at the cross of Christ (the greatest miracle). John's purpose is to REVEAL who Jesus is, so that men and women will RESPOND and RECEIVE new life in His name. This sign is intentional; definitely not a coincidence.

ME:
What does this second sign reveal about Jesus?

YOU:
Are there ways you can see Jesus performing signs in your friends' lives? Ask God for opportunities to walk with your friends toward interpreting these signs.

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