

Men's Sunday Night Live

Introduction

The Gospel of John

“Finding Identity and Purpose”

John's theme is Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God. His book deals with the signs Christ gave during His ministry, signs that prove His deity. These signs were seen by dependable witnesses (His disciples and others) and therefore are trustworthy. John wants men to believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and receive new life through His name.

The first three Gospels are called “The Synoptic Gospels” from a Greek word that means “to see together.” Matthew, Mark, and Luke all view the life of Christ in a similar way.

- Matthew pictures Christ as the King of the Jews.
- Mark shows Christ as the Servant, and writes for the Romans.
- Luke views Christ as the Son of Man, writing for the Greeks.
- John presents Christ as the Son of God, and writes for the whole world.

While the first three Gospels deal primarily with the events in Christ's life, John deals with the spiritual meanings of these events. He goes deeper and presents truths that are not emphasized in the other Gospels. For example, all four Gospels record the feeding of the 5,000, but only John gives the great sermon on the Bread of Life that explains the meaning of the miracle. This is why John uses the word “sign” instead of “miracle,” for a “sign” is a miracle that carries a message with it.

Note as you read John's Gospel that these words are repeated: life, believe, light and darkness, truth, witness, world, glory, receive, Father, come, eternal and everlasting. These key words summarize the message of the Gospel. John emphasizes the Person of Christ as well as His work. He reports several sermons in which Christ talks about Himself and explains His mission. Note the seven I AM statements of Christ: I AM the Bread of life (6:35, 41, 48, 51); I AM the Light of the world (8:12; 9:5); I AM the Door of the sheep, (10:7-9); I AM the Good Shepherd (10:11, 14); I AM the Resurrection and the Life (11:25); I AM the way, the truth, and the life (14:6); I AM the true Vine (15:1).

Out of the many miracles that Christ performed, John selected seven to prove His deity. These seven signs are given in a specific order and forms a picture of salvation.

The first three signs show how salvation comes to the sinner:

1. Water into wine (2:1–11) “salvation is by the Word”
2. Healing the nobleman’s son (4:46–54) “salvation is by faith”
3. Healing the paralytic (5:1–9) “salvation is by grace”

The last four signs show the results of salvation in the believer:

4. Feeding the 5,000 (6:1–14) “salvation brings satisfaction”
5. Stilling the storm (6:16–21) “salvation brings peace”
6. Healing the blind man (9:1–7) “salvation brings light”
7. Raising of Lazarus (11:38–45) “salvation brings life”

One major theme of John’s Gospel is the conflict between faith and unbelief. John begins with rejection on the part of Israel, finally concluding with the crucifixion. Throughout the book, you see most of the Jews refusing to accept the evidence, growing harder and harder in their unbelief. On the other hand, you also see a small group of people willing to believe on Christ; the disciples, a nobleman and his family, the Samaritans, a paralytic, a blind man, etc. This same situation exists today. The world at large will not believe on Christ, but here and there you find people who see the evidence and accept Him as the Son of God.

There are three crisis events in John’s Gospel. 1. When the multitudes leave Him after wanting to make Him King; 2. When the people refuse to believe on Him; 3. When they crucify Him. In the first crisis, they want to make Him King, yet they leave Him. Secondly, they hail Him as King. Thirdly, they cry out, “*We have no King but Caesar.*” He is the way, but they will not walk with Him; the truth, but they will not believe Him; the life, but they kill Him.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 1 - John 1:1-51
Finding Identity and Purpose
God is Here

The theme of John's Gospel is that Jesus is the Son of God, and in this first chapter he proves his claim. As you read this wonderful chapter, you cannot help but see that Christ is God's Son because of the names and titles He bears, the works He performs, and the witnesses who knew Him personally and declare who He is.

He is the Word

Just as our words reveal our mind and heart, so Christ reveals the mind and heart of God to men. "*He who has seen Me has seen the Father.*" The Bible is the written Word of God, and Christ is the living, incarnate Word of God.

He is the Light

God's first creative act in Gen. 1 was producing light, for life comes from light. Jesus is the true light, that is, the original light from which all light has its source.

He is the Son of God

It was this claim that aroused the Jews to persecute Christ. Note the seven persons in John's Gospel who called Christ the Son of God: John the Baptist, Nathanael, Peter, the healed blind man, Martha, Thomas and the Apostle John.

He is the Christ

"Christ" means the Messiah, the Anointed One. The Jews were expecting their Messiah to appear, and this is why they questioned John. Even the Samaritans were looking for Him.

He is the Lamb of God

There were many lambs slain in Old Testament history, but Christ is the Lamb of God, the unique one. The blood of lambs slain in the tabernacle or temple merely covered sin, but Christ's blood takes away sin. The lambs offered in the Old Testament days were for Israel alone, but Christ died for the sins of the whole world.

He is the King of Israel

Israel's people were tired of Roman rule and wanted a king. Because Christ fed them, they wanted to make Him King, but He left the crowd. He offered Himself as their King but the chief priests said, "We have no king but Caesar!"

He is the Son of Man

Christ is "God's ladder" between earth and heaven, revealing God to men and taking men to God.

We see the Trinity in this chapter: the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The Spirit identified Christ to John; and we cannot truly see Christ today unless the Spirit opens our eyes.

John uses the word “witness” often in his Gospel. The witnesses of the Bible can be trusted because they had a personal contact with Christ, and they gained nothing from men by witnessing for Christ. In fact, they suffered for it. There is no evidence that they lied; their witness would stand in court today.

Read John 1:1-18 and answer the following questions

1. Who is “the Word” and what does 1:1-2 tell us about Him?
2. What two traits did the Word have according to 1:4-5?
3. How did the world react to “The Light”? (See 1:9-11)
4. What blessing did He give to those who believe on Him? (See 1:12)
5. What did the Word do according to 1:14?
6. What have we received from Jesus? (See 1:16)

Read John 1:19-28 and answer the following questions

7. Who did John the Baptist say he was? Who did he say he wasn't?
8. How did John compare himself to the one to come after him, and what does it mean? How would you describe John the Baptists mission? (See 1:26-27)
9. How are we as believers called to prepare for the Lord's coming? How can we do better at this?

Read John 1:29-42 and answer the following questions

10. How did John describe Jesus in 1:29? Why do you think Jesus is being referred to as a lamb? Note these following verses where Jesus is referred to as a lamb (John 1:36, Isa. 53:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Rev. 5:12).
11. On the next day, who did John again identify Jesus to be? What happen as a result? (See 1:35-37)
12. What name did Jesus give Simon, and what does this name mean? What do you think was the significance of Simon's new name (little rock)? (See 1:42)

Read John 1:43-51 and answer the following questions

13. On the next day, who did Jesus call? What did He say to him? (See 1:43)
14. Who did Philip find, and what did he say regarding Jesus? (See 1:45)
15. Why do you think Jesus said what he did to Nathanael in 1:50-51? How might you have felt if you had been Nathanael hearing these words?

The Seven Signs of John's Gospel

A famous author once said that the key to good writing is not in knowing what to put into a story, but what to leave out. Imagine then, the problem of writing down the story of Jesus, especially if you have been an eyewitness and even a participant in the events. Of all that Jesus said and did, what would you include? What would you leave out?

John solved the problem by determining what he wanted his gospel to accomplish. He wanted his readers to know that "Jesus is the Christ," the Son of God, and that believing they might have life in His name. To the end, he organized his account around seven miracles that Jesus performed, seven "signs" pointing to His divine nature.

1. Turns water into wine	2:1-11	Jesus is the source of life
2. Heals a nobleman's son	4:46-54	Jesus is master over distance
3. Heals the lame man at the pool of Bethesda	5:1-17	Jesus is master over time
4. Feeds 5,000	6:1-14	Jesus is the bread of life
5. Walks on water, stills a storm	6:15-21	Jesus is master over nature
6. Heals a man blind from birth	9:1-41	Jesus is the light of the world
7. Raises Lazarus from the dead	11:17-45	Jesus has power over death

The fact that there are seven sign miracles is significant. In the Jewish view of life the number seven means perfection or completion. Upon closer inspection, each sign turns out to be rooted in the Old Testament understanding of the Messiah. John's point is that Jesus is perfect and complete. His miracles show that He is the Messiah that Israel has been looking for, and that He alone offers eternal life.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 2 - John 2:1-25
Finding Identity and Purpose
The Ministry Begins

Some churches falsely teach that Christ performed miracles when He was a child, but John 2:11 clearly states that the turning of the water into wine was the beginning of His miracles. Keep in mind that John recorded these signs in order to prove that Jesus is God so that people might believe in Him and be saved.

Israel was ignorant of its own Messiah. *“There stands One among you whom you do not know,”* said John the Baptist in 1:26. This wedding feast is a picture of the nation: the wine had run out, the people's supply was emptied, yet their Messiah stood there to help them. The six water pots were used for ceremonial cleansing. The people had external ceremonies, but they had nothing to satisfy them within.

Mary's words should be echoed by all who would serve Christ: *“Whatever He says to you, do it.”* It must have seemed foolish for the servants to fill those water pots, but God uses *“the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise.”* If we are to see men saved, then we must obey Christ and give men the Word of God. It is not entertainment or recreation that saves souls, but the preaching and teaching of the Word. If we do our part, Christ will do the rest.

The servants knew where the wine came from, but the “important people” at the feast did not. When a person serves Christ, he or she learns His secrets. We are Christ's servants and His friends, and He tells us what He is doing. It is better to be a humble servant of Christ and share in His miracles than to sit at the head table at the greatest feast. We should use every opportunity to serve Christ, *“in season and out of season.”* Here we see Jesus bringing glory to God at a wedding feast.

Read John 2:1-12 and answer the following questions

1. What event is taking place, where was it at, and who was present?
2. What problem occurred, and what request did Jesus' mother make?
3. What did Jesus mean when He said, "*My hour has not yet come.*"? (See vs. 4)
4. Why do you think Jesus chose turning water into wine at a wedding feast for His first miracle?
5. What observation did the ruler of the feast make about the wine? (See vs. 10)
6. How is the miracle of changing water into wine significant for you?

Read John 2:13-22 and answer the following questions

7. What do Jesus' words and deeds in 2:13-17 tell you about His character and priorities? What do they tell you about His mission?

8. Does 2:13-17 have any warnings about a believer's priorities? If so, how do these relate to you?

9. What question did the Jews ask Jesus regarding His cleansing of the temple? What response did Jesus give? (See vs. 18-19)

10. What did the Jews think Jesus meant by "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*"?

11. What did Jesus really mean by this statement?

Read John 2:23-25 and answer the following questions

12. In verse 23 we read that Jesus did many signs while at the Passover Feast in Jerusalem. These signs are not described but what impact is seen in the following verses? John 2:23; 3:2; 4:45

13. What might Jesus have seen in the people that caused Him to not commit Himself to them?

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 3 - John 3:1-36
Finding Identity and Purpose
A Matter of Life and Death

This is perhaps the most important chapter in John's Gospel, for it deals with the subject of the new birth. Some religious groups have so confused this subject that many average church members, let alone religious leaders like Nicodemus, have no idea what it means to be born again.

Nicodemus was a moral, religious man, one of the chief teachers of the Jews, yet he did not understand the truth about the new birth. Being religious and moral does not make a man fit for heaven; he must be born again. He thought in terms of physical birth, while Christ was talking about a spiritual birth. Many things are mysterious but still real. Jesus assures Nicodemus that the new birth is not a fantasy, it is a reality. If a person will but believe Christ's words and receive Him, he or she will discover how real and wonderful the new birth is.

Christ again refers Nicodemus to the Old Testament, this time Numbers 21, the account of the brazen serpent. The serpents were biting the Jews and killing them, and the strange solution to the problem was found when Moses made a serpent of brass! Looking to the serpent in faith brought healing. Christ was made sin for us, for it was sin that was killing us. As we look to Christ by faith, we are saved.

Verse 25 can be translated: "There arose a question between some of John's disciples and *a Jew* concerning ceremonial purification." Could this Jew have been Nicodemus, still searching after truth? Like many people today, Nicodemus was confused about baptism and religious ceremonies. Perhaps he thought "born of water" meant baptism or some Jewish purification rite. Note how John the Baptist pointed this Jew to Christ. If baptism were necessary for salvation, then this is the place for the Bible to say so; but nothing is said. Instead, the emphasis is on believing.

It is evident that Nicodemus came "out of the dark" and finally became a born-again Christian. Here in John 3, we see Nicodemus in the darkness of confusion; in John 7:45–53, we see him in the dawn of conviction, willing to give Christ a fair hearing; and in John 19:38–42, we see Nicodemus in the daylight of confession, openly identifying himself with Christ.

Read John 3:1-36 and answer the following questions

1. What can we learn about Nicodemus from the following verses? John 3:1, 10; 7:45-52; 19:38-42

2. Why do you believe Nicodemus chose to visit Jesus at night? What do you think his purpose was?

3. In your own words, explain Jesus' answer to Nicodemus (See 3:3-8).

4. Who was Jesus referring to when He used the word "We"? (See 3:11)

5. Jesus had barely begun His ministry. According to 3:14-15, what did Jesus already know about His mission?

6. What can we learn about the Father from the fact that He voluntarily gave His Own Son for the corrupt world of humans? What does this act reveal about the meaning of love?

7. Jesus came because of God's love to save and not condemn. Why then, do most people hate Him? (See 3:19-21)

8. How in your life, can you become less and Jesus become more?
9. What might have been the main issue of the argument between the disciples of John the Baptist and the Jews? (See 3:25-26)
10. Why in verse 30 did John say, “*He must increase, but I must decrease.*”?
11. According to John 3:18 and John 3:36 what is the result of believing or not believing in Jesus?
12. What one truth from this chapter would you like to take to heart and act upon? How would you like this truth to affect your life?

The Gospel in a Mixed Society

Jesus’ night time meeting with Nicodemus and His midday encounter with the Samaritan women (4:5-42) show two of the many different ways in which He dealt with people. Whether it had to do with a respected leader like Nicodemus or a hardened, streetwise loner like the woman of Samaria, Jesus approached people on their own terms, as individuals with unique concerns. He modeled for us what it means to live, work and communicate the gospel message in a mixed society.

Nicodemus was an upper-class Jew, a Pharisee from one of the prominent families of Jerusalem. He approached Jesus, alone, at night. The Lord confronted him with his need to be born again, then let him go to think things over. The next time we see him, he is defending Jesus on a procedural issue. Nicodemus, apparently didn't openly identify with Jesus until after the crucifixion, when he helped prepare His body for burial.

The Samaritan woman on the other hand, had lived a scandalous lifestyle with multiple husbands and with a live-in partner. As a result, her community despised her. She also probably came from mixed ancestry for which the Jews despised her. She was spoken to by Jesus in broad daylight, in public, first by herself but later in the company of others. He told her of "living water," and the need to worship in spirit and truth. She responded much more quickly than Nicodemus.

John goes on to record many other ways Jesus dealt with people, and many ways they responded to Him. Some became believers after they were fed, others after they were healed, and others after they had seen the resurrected Christ. Some responded to the Lord's miracles, others to His teaching. There was no one kind of response to Jesus.

We as Believers today must present the hope of the Gospel message in an increasingly mixed world. Like Jesus, we need to use many different approaches. What are some creative ways that you can use to influence friends and coworkers for Christ?

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 4 - John 4:1-54
Finding Identity and Purpose
"Living Water"

There are two sections in this chapter: (1) Christ's ministry to the Samaritan woman (4:1–42); and (2) Christ's miracle for the nobleman (4:43–54). In one sense, both involved miracles; for the transformation of this sinful woman was as wonderful as the "long-distance" healing of the nobleman's son.

The Samaritans were "half-breeds," part Jew and part Gentile. They were considered outcasts and were despised by the Jews. Jesus "needed to go through Samaria" because God had planned for this sinful woman to meet Him and find in Him the water of life.

Having expressed interest in the living water the woman found herself confronted with her sins. Christ's command, "*Go, call your husband!*" was for the purpose of quickening her conscience and forcing her to face her own sin. Note how the woman tried to change the topic of conversation! Like convicted sinners today, she began to argue about differences in religion! "Where should we worship?" "Which religion is right?" Jesus pointed out that the important thing is knowing the Father, and this can be done only through salvation, and salvation is of the Jews.

Next, we see the nobleman's son dying in Capernaum, about twenty miles away from Cana. The man wanted Christ to come with him, for he did not believe that He could cure the boy from a distance. Jesus did not go with the man, but instead spoke the words: "*Go your way; your son lives.*" He believed the Word!

The nobleman apparently stayed in Cana, took care of some business, and then went home the next day. He had "joy and peace in believing" because his trust was in Christ's word alone. He was not surprised when his servants told him, "Your son lives!" He merely asked them when the cure took place and verified that it was the very hour that Christ spoke the word. The result: his whole family trusted Christ. "*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" Romans 10:17

Jesus in verse 48 gives the basic reason why people will not believe: they want to see signs and experience wonders. Keep in mind that Satan is able to perform signs and wonders to deceive. If your salvation is based on feelings, dreams, visions, voices, or any other fleshly evidence, then you are on dangerous ground. It is faith in the Word alone that gives us the assurance of eternal life.

Read John 4:1-45 and answer the following questions

1. In verse 4 we are told that Jesus “needed to” go through Samaria. Most Jews would go out of their way to avoid this area. What do you believe Jesus’ intent was?

2. Why was there such resentment between the Jews and the Samaritans?

3. In verse 7, Jesus asks the woman for some water. In verse 9, John gives us one reason why this was such an unusual request. What is the reason? What are some other reasons it was unusual for Jesus to be talking to this woman?

4. In what ways does Jesus’ attitude toward women seem different from the usual Jewish attitude?

5. How did the woman interpret the words of Jesus in verse 10, “*He would have given you living water*”? What really did Jesus mean? (See Jer. 2:12-13; Zec. 14:7-9; Isa. 44:3-4; Eze. 39:29; Joel 2:28-29; John 7:37-39)

6. How does the Samaritan woman identify Jesus in each of the following verses?

4:9

4:11

4:19

4:29

7. What does Jesus say about “*Living water*”? (See 4:10-14)

8. What do you think it means to worship “*in spirit and in truth*”? (See 4:23-24)

9. What did the disciples learn about Jesus, themselves and their mission from the encounter with the Samaritan woman? (See 4:31-38)

10. What impact should this conversation between the Samaritan woman and Jesus have on us and our witness in the world?

Read John 4:46-54 and answer the following questions

11. What’s surprising about the second miracle of Jesus healing the nobleman’s son?

12. This nobleman showed amazing persistence and faith. How was this seen through his life in a practical way?

The Nobleman's Son

The key to understanding the significance of Jesus' second sign miracle is geography. The Nobleman and his dying son lived in Capernaum, the main city of the Galilee region. But Jesus was 20 miles away at Cana, where Jesus' first sign miracle of turning water into wine had taken place. That means the Nobleman had walked some 40 miles round trip. That works out to be at least a two-day trip by foot to petition Jesus to heal his son. Jesus merely spoke a word that knew nothing of phones, messaging or e-mail. No wonder this miracle produced faith. "*So the Father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household.*" John 4:53

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 5 - John 5:1-47
Finding Identity and Purpose
“Opposition Begins”

Like several other chapters in John, we have here a message based on a miracle. This sign completes the three miracles that show how a person is saved. The first (water to wine) shows that salvation is through the Word of God. The second (healing the nobleman's son) shows that salvation is by faith. This third miracle demonstrates that salvation is by grace. This man was in a miserable condition. If he could get into the water when the angel came, he could be healed; but lacked the power to get there. How like the sinner today: if he could keep God's perfect law, he could be saved, but he is unable to do so.

Here we see the grace of God at work. This man was no more deserving than the others, but God chose him. This is a beautiful picture of salvation, and how it ought to humble us to know that we are chosen “in Him” and not because of our own doing but because of His grace. Healing this man on the Sabbath was contrary to Jewish tradition, so the Jews persecuted Christ as a law-breaker.

There is a spiritual resurrection and takes place when sinners hear the Word and believe. The man Christ healed was really a living dead man. When he heard the Word and believed, he was given new life in his body. Christ has life in Himself, for Christ is “the Life” and can give life to others.

The Old Testament Scriptures are the Father's witness to His Son. The Jews searched the Scriptures, thinking that their studies would save them, but they read with eyes that were spiritually blind. Moses wrote of Christ and would accuse them at the judgment. They refused the Word, they would not come to Him, they had no love for God, they would not receive Him, they sought honor from men and not from God; and they would not listen to His Word. No wonder they could not believe and be saved!

Read John 5:1-15 and answer the following questions

1. Where was Jesus before He went to Jerusalem? What was going on at this time in the city?

2. Why do you think Jesus asked the sick man if he wanted to be healed? What would you think and say if Jesus asked you, “Do you what to get well?”

3. Why do you think the sick man doesn’t answer Jesus question? What does his reply in 5:7 tell you about his situation?

4. Can you think of any areas of your life where you are like this sick man?

5. What lessons can be learned from 5:8-9?

6. Why do you think the Jews asked the previously sick man who it was that healed him? (See 5:12)

Read John 5:16-30 and answer the following questions

7. What reasons are seen in chapter 5 which caused the Jewish leaders opposition to Jesus? (See 5:16, 5:18)

8. In what areas does Jesus claim to be equal with God the Father? (See 5:17-27)

Read John 5:31-47 and answer the following questions

9. With Jesus standing before them, how could the Jewish leaders have failed to see or hear God? (See 5:37-38)

10. List the mistakes made by the unbelieving Jews that Jesus pointed out in the following verses:

5:38

5:40

5:43

5:47

11. For what faults does Jesus rebuke the Pharisees in 5:39-44? List as many as you can.

12. What one truth from chapter five's lesson, can you apply to your own personal life today?

The Man at Bethesda

Jesus' third sign miracle revolves around the issue of time. The man at the pool of Bethesda had lain there for 38 years, his entire life time as a helpless cripple. He probably had been in that spot before even Jesus was born. Imagine the disappointment he must have experienced time after time when the angel stirred the water. The problem was, he would always arrive late to experience that healing. Yet Jesus healed him and immediately he was able to walk. Jesus showed Himself to be the master of time. The question is, was Israel ready for Him? *“For this reason, the Jews persecuted Jesus and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.”* John 5:16

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 6 – John 6:1-71
Finding Identity and Purpose
“The Bread of Life”

The Signs (6:1–21)

The first two signs we see in John, illustrate how one is saved through the Word, by faith, and by grace. The third sign (feeding the 5,000) shows us that salvation satisfies the inner needs of the heart. This miracle also reminds us that, while salvation is of the Lord and received only by grace, God still uses human instruments to take the Gospel message to men. The last four signs in John's Gospel illustrate the results of salvation: Feeding the 5,000 (Salvation brings satisfaction); Stilling the storm (Salvation brings peace); Healing the blind man (Salvation brings light); Raising Lazarus from the dead (Salvation brings life).

The Sermon (6:22–65)

We now see the people, interested in food, following Christ over the sea to Capernaum. He revealed their shallow, carnal motives and their ignorance of what it means to be saved by faith. Just as He graciously fed them the bread, and all they had to do was receive it, so He wanted to give them eternal life, but they instead thought they must work for it. The Jews threw out a challenge to Jesus, “*What sign will you perform now?*” (6:30). They reminded Him of the way Moses brought manna from heaven to feed the Jews; and Jesus used this as the basis for His sermon. Jesus is the Living Word, and He was “made flesh” for us. The Bible is the written Word. Whatever the Bible says about Jesus, it also says about itself. Both are holy, both are Truth, both are Light, both give life, both produce the new birth, both are eternal, both are the power of God.

The Purging (6:66–71)

It is the Word of God, revealing the Person of Christ, that separates the true from the false. The crowd, desiring bread for the body, rejected the Bread of Life for the soul. Peter and ten of the disciples affirmed their faith in Christ. Their faith came by hearing the Word. Judas, however, was a pretender and ultimately would betray Christ.

Read John 6:1-71 and answer the following questions

1. Why did a great multitude follow Jesus? What did Jesus do for them? (See 6:2)
2. What was Jesus' intent by asking the question to Philip, "*Where shall we buy bread that these may eat?*"
3. Approximately how many people do you believe Jesus fed at this gathering? (See 6:10)
4. How many baskets of bread were left over? What do you think this number represents? (See 6:13)
5. What did the crowd want to do to Jesus in 6:15?
6. In verses 22-40 Jesus is referred to as "The Bread from Heaven." What does Jesus mean when He says: "I Am the Bread of Life"? (v. 35). What is He claiming with that "I AM" statement?

7. What was the response from the people to Jesus' "Bread of Life sermon"?
(See 6:60-71)

8. Why did many of Jesus' disciples quit following Him after hearing Jesus' sermon?

9. Why didn't the twelve abandon Jesus? (See 6:67-69)

10. How do you think people would respond to a message like this today?

11. Knowing that Judas was going to betray Him, why did Jesus choose him as one of His Twelve apostles?

12. What truth from this chapter would you like to apply to your own life this week?

The Bread of Life

When Jesus called Himself the “Bread of Life,” He was using as an image more than a staple of the diet. He was drawing on a rich symbol of Jewish life.

Bread played an important role in Israel’s worship. During the celebration of Pentecost, two loaves of leavened bread were offered as sacrifices. In the tabernacle, and later in the temple, the Levites placed twelve loaves of unleavened bread, or bread without yeast before the Lord each week to symbolize God’s presence with the twelve tribes of Israel.

Throughout the Exodus, God miraculously sustained His people by sending manna from heaven each morning. It was this manna that Jesus was recalling when He called Himself “*the True Bread from Heaven*” (John 6:32). Symbolically, Jesus is that heavenly manna.

In the event seen in John chapter 6, Jesus had just fed at least 5,000 people. He was indicating that He was God’s provision for the people’s deepest spiritual needs. Just as God had provided for His people coming out of Egypt, so Jesus had provided physical food for the 5,000 and was ready to provide spiritual nourishment and life to all them as well.

Tragically, the people rejected His teaching. Their hearts were hardened in unbelief. Soon many began to turn away. But those who believed like Peter who declared “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (John 6:69), Jesus gave abundant and eternal life.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 7 - John 7:1-53
Finding Identity and Purpose
"Who is Jesus"

The Jewish leaders have seen Christ's signs and heard His sermons; now they begin to oppose Him. The Feast of Tabernacles was held on the fifteenth day of the seventh month and lasted for eight days. It was a memorial of the time when Israel lived in booths during their wilderness wanderings. It was also a harvest festival, one of the three feasts that all male Jews were required to attend annually. Jesus' "brethren" here are His half-brothers and half-sisters, the children of Mary by Joseph. Jesus was Mary's "firstborn," indicating that she had other children. Christ's brethren did not believe in Him at this time, although Acts 1:14 would indicate that after His resurrection they did receive Him.

Jesus lived according to God's schedule for His life. Unsaved people can come and go as they wish, but the child of God must let the Lord lead. How sad that Christ's brethren left the Savior behind so that they might attend a religious feast! The feeding of the 5,000 and the healing of the paralyzed man had aroused the interest of the crowd. Because Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath, the Jews said He was not from God. They called Him demon-possessed and even talked of killing Him; but God's time was not ready.

The seventh day of the feast was a great day of celebration. Each morning of the feast, at the time of the sacrifice, the priests would draw water in a golden vessel from the Pool of Siloam and carry it to the temple to be poured out. This represented the supply of water God gave the Jews in the wilderness. It doesn't take much imagination to understand what must have happened when Jesus cried out, "*If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink!*" as the priests poured out the water. Christ was the Rock out of which the waters flowed. In the Bible, water for cleansing symbolizes the Word of God; water for drinking represents the Spirit of God. Instead of accepting His gracious invitation to come, the people argued, and there was division among them. Some believed in Him, some rejected. The soldiers could not arrest Him because His word gripped their hearts. Because the Jewish leaders rejected Christ, they shut the door of salvation to others who followed their bad example.

Nicodemus enters the picture again, and this time we see him defending Christ's legal privileges. In John 3, he was experiencing confusion; but here he is experiencing conviction, willing to give Christ a fair chance. Because of this, Nicodemus learned the truth that a willingness to obey the Word is the secret of learning God's truth. Anyone who will read and obey the Word of God will move out of darkness into God's marvelous light.

Read John 7:1-53 and answer the following questions

1. Why did Jesus' brothers want Him to go to Jerusalem?
2. Why did Jesus say the world hates Him? Why do you think the world did not hate his brothers? See 7:7-9
3. What amazed the people about Jesus' teaching? What was Jesus' response to their question? (See 7:14-16)
4. From verses 17-18 how did Jesus state we can distinguish between one who teaches falsely and one who speaks the truth?
5. What work had Jesus done that caused them to marvel? How had this led them to seek to kill Him?

6. Why did some think Jesus could not be the Christ? How did Jesus respond?

7. What did some want to do to Jesus? Why did they fail? (See 7:30)

8. What had convinced many people to believe in Jesus?

9. Where was Jesus going, and why could they not come? (See 7:33-34)

10. What did Jesus say on the last day of the feast?

11. What condition existed among the crowd because of Jesus? What can we learn?

12. Who tried to get Jesus a fair hearing, and what argument did he make?
(See 7:50-51)

Does Anyone Believe You?

Have you ever felt discouraged because family, friends, or coworkers refuse to accept the gospel? Take some comfort from the fact that even Jesus' own brothers did not believe that He was the Christ. Even though they had seen His miracles and listened to His teaching, they still balked at the idea of placing faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

This is important to notice, because it shows that the person who hears the gospel bears responsibility for responding in faith, while the person who shares the gospel bears responsibility for communicating with faithfulness. If we as believers ever start holding ourselves responsible for whether unbelievers accept or reject the message of Christ, we are headed for trouble. That's not to suggest that we can be careless in our witness or ignore our credibility. Notice that Jesus' brothers rejected Him in spite of His works and words. Is that true of us? Or do people dismiss our faith because our lives show little evidence that what we say we believe is true or that it makes any difference to us?

Eventually, at least some of Jesus' brothers did believe in Him. James, probably the oldest, became a leader in the church. He wrote the New Testament letter that bears his name. Likewise, the author of Jude may have been the half-brother of Jesus. Ultimately, both urged Christians to practice and defend their faith.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 8 - John 8:1-59
Finding Identity and Purpose
Contrasts & Conflicts

The Feast of Tabernacles has just ended. Most of the crowds are leaving, but Jesus remains, for He has more to do on this visit. This chapter shows Christ in conflict with the Jewish leaders and presents a series of important contrasts. The scribes and Pharisees brought this woman to Jesus in the court of the women, in the treasury section of the temple. Their motive was to test Him and force Him into a dilemma. If He set the woman free, He violated Moses law, if He had her stoned, He could not claim to be One who forgives sins.

The great "I AM" statement in vs. 12 follows this incident. As the Light of the world, Christ claimed to be God, for God is light. Darkness speaks of death, ignorance, and sin; light speaks of life, knowledge, and holiness. There are two births: from above, being born again by God's Spirit, and from this world, being born of the flesh.

The Jews who believed were challenged to prove their faith by their faithfulness. Faith in Christ makes one a child of God, but abiding in the Word, and knowing and living the truth, makes one a true disciple of the kingdom.

The Bible speaks of three different kinds of "spiritual children." When we reach the age of accountability and deliberately sin, we become children of disobedience. When we put faith in Christ, we become the children of God. But the person who finally rejects the Savior and prefers self-righteousness becomes a child of the devil.

God honors His Son, but self-righteous men dishonor Him. When the bright light of God's Word shines on hearts, men must either accept it and be saved, or reject it and be lost.

The most difficult people to win to Jesus are those who do not realize that they have a need. They are under the conviction of God, yet they trust their religion to save them. They are walking in the darkness and not following the light of life. They are sharing a "living death" because of their bondage to sin; and, in spite of their religious deeds, they are dishonoring the Father and the Son. These are the people who crucified Jesus Christ, and Jesus called them the children of the devil.

Read John 8:1-11 and answer the following questions

1. What is odd about their accusation in John 8:4 against the women caught in adultery? (See Deut. 22:22) Why did they all of a sudden want Jesus' opinion?

2. What did Jesus write on the ground?

3. Who left after hearing, "*He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.*"? Why?

4. What was Jesus' goal for the woman, rather than punishing her as she deserved? What do Jesus' words in this story reveal about His views on sin and judgement?

Read John 8:12-30 and answer the following questions

5. What do you think Jesus means when He calls Himself "*The light of the world*"? (See 8:12, 9:4-5)

6. What does it mean that those who follow Jesus “*shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.*”?

7. What does Jesus mean by what He said in John 8:14?

8. What did Jesus say would be the consequence of not believing in Him?
(See 23-24)

Read John 8:31-47 and answer the following question

9. In John 8:31-32 Jesus is talking to the Jews who believe in Him. What does Jesus say about what it takes to truly be His disciple?

10. Think about truth. What is the difference between Godly truth and worldly truth? What are some things that you know are absolutely true?

Read John 8:48-59 and answer the following questions

11. What claims do the Jews make about Jesus in verse 48? Are they correct about their claims? Why would they even say this about Jesus?

12. What promise does Jesus give to the one who keeps His Word? (See 8:51)

13. What does Jesus say about how He compares to Abraham? How do the Jews respond to His statement, “Before Abraham was, I AM”? (See 8:58-59)

A Double Standard

A Great Word from the Word of Life Study Bible

The women presented to Jesus in John 8:3 must have been utterly humiliated at being dragged into the temple by self-righteous men who were only using her to try to trick the Teacher they hated. According to the law, adultery required capital punishment of both parties (Lev. 20:10). Did the accusers forget to bring the man? Or had they allowed a double standard to creep in? If so, Jesus refrained from challenging their hypocrisy, but He did set a new standard for judgement. Let someone perfect decide the case. Ironically, He was the only one who fit the qualifications, and He did decide the case, declining to condemn the woman, but admonishing her to go and sin no more.

Are there double standards in your moral judgements? Are you eager to point out the speck in someone else’s eye, while ignoring the plank in your own? Or perhaps, like the women, you have experienced the forgiveness of God for grave offenses against His holiness. If so, live in grace and sin no more.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 9 - John 9:1-41
Finding Identity and Purpose
The Blind Man Calls Their Bluff

This chapter presents the sixth of seven special miracles recorded in John's Gospel as witnesses to Christ's deity. The first three signs show how a person is saved: through the Word (water to wine), by faith (healing the nobleman's son), and by grace (healing the paralytic). The last four signs show the results of salvation: satisfaction (feeding the 5,000), peace (stilling the storm), light (healing the blind man), and life (raising Lazarus).

About the only thing a blind man could do in that day was beg, and that is what this man was doing when Jesus passed by. No doubt there were many blind people who would have rejoiced to be healed, but Jesus selected this man. Apparently, the man and his parents were well known in the community. It was on the Sabbath when Jesus healed the man, so that once again He was upsetting and deliberately challenging the religious leaders. The disciples were sure that the man's blindness was caused by sin, either his own or his parents', but Jesus disagreed with them.

The religious leaders had let it be known that anyone who confessed Christ openly would be cast out of the synagogue. This meant, of course, losing friends and family and all the benefits of the Jewish religion. It was this declaration that forced the blind man's parents and neighbors to "beat around the bush" when asked about his amazing cure. They eventually removed the man from the synagogue. It would have been easy for the son to hide his confession and thus avoid controversy, but he fearlessly stood his ground. He knew what a difference Christ had made in his life, and he could not deny it. The man did not realize it then, but the safest place for him was outside the Jewish religion. The Jews cast him out, but Christ took him in! Like Paul, this man "lost his religion" but found salvation and went to heaven.

The same light that leads one person can blind another. The Pharisees admitted that they could see, and therefore they were guilty because they rejected the evidence and would not receive Christ. The Gospel brings about different reactions from different kinds of hearts: the blind sinner receives the truth and sees; the self-righteous religious person rejects the truth and becomes even more blind spiritually. It is a dangerous thing to reject the light.

Read John 9:1-41 and answer the following questions

1. What question did the disciples asked Jesus as they passed by the blind man?
2. How does Jesus answer the question of sin in the blind man's life? What does He say about the reason for this man's blindness?
3. How can this help us to answer questions when people ask us, "Why do good people have to suffer in this world," or "why do bad things happen to good people?"
4. How did Jesus restore the man's sight? When did the healing actually take effect?
5. Why do you think Jesus used dirt and made spit balls to heal the man instead of simply saying, "you are healed"?

6. The Pharisees at first, wanted to know exactly what Jesus did to heal the blind man. Once the blind man identified Jesus as a prophet, how did their tone in questioning change?

7. When the Pharisees questioned the man's parents, they acknowledged that he was born blind, but they did not know how he regained his sight. Why do his parents direct the Pharisees to ask their son instead of answering themselves? (See 9:20-21)

8. When the Pharisees interview the man a second time, what accusation do they make about Jesus? (See 9:24) When this man didn't change his story about how Jesus healed him, how did the Pharisees respond?

9. What did the Pharisees end up doing to the healed blind man? Does something like this happen to those that become believers today? Explain?

10. When Jesus heard that they cast the man out, He found him and asked, "*Do you believe in the Son of Man?*" The man than asked Jesus, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" Jesus responded, "*You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.*" How does the man respond?

11. In verse 39, what does Jesus say about the reason that He came into the world? How does this purpose fit with Jesus statement in John 8:12, 9:15?

Jesus Heals the Blind Man

The sixth sign miracle seen here in John's Gospel reveals Jesus as the light of the world. He was also unique among the prophets in that none of them had cured blindness.

The healing of the blind man speaks to the issue of human suffering. At that time, sickness was often assumed to be divine punishment for someone's sin. Like Job's counselors, Jesus' disciples asked, "Whose sin caused this man's blindness?" Here Jesus replies with a radically new truth. God can use human suffering to reveal His glory. Jesus immediately shows what He was talking about by healing the man's blindness, revealing Himself to be the Son of God.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 10 - John 10:1-42
Finding Identity and Purpose
The Good Shepherd

The events in this chapter are tied together by the symbolism of the shepherd and his sheep. The Middle Eastern sheepfold was very simple: a stone wall, perhaps ten feet high, surrounded it, and an opening served as the door. The shepherd would sleep at the opening of the fold and actually become “the door.” Nothing could enter or leave the fold without passing over the shepherd.

Christ points out that the true shepherd comes through the door, calls his sheep by name, which recognize him, and leads the sheep, which follow. False shepherds and strangers, who are thieves and robbers, try to get into the fold some subtle way, but the sheep will not recognize or follow them. Jesus Christ is the door, and as such He leads the sheep “in and out.” Christ is the Good Shepherd who dies for the sheep. He calls through His Word, and those who believe step through the Door, out of their religious fold, into the true flock of Christ, the church. By faith, they stepped through the Door, out of the Jewish religious fold, and into the liberty and eternal life Christ alone can give.

Sheep flock together, and so do true believers. Sheep are harmless, and Christians should be blameless and harmless. Sheep are given to wandering, and so are we. Sheep need a shepherd for protection, guidance, and food; and we need Christ for spiritual protection, daily guidance, and spiritual food. Sheep are useful and productive; so are true Christians. Finally, sheep were used for sacrifices; and Christians are willing to yield themselves for Christ as “*living sacrifices*.”

The common people continued to seek Jesus, and He continued to minister to them. It is worth noting that John the Baptist's witness was still bearing fruit long after he was dead! His witness to Jesus Christ led many to trust the Savior. John was not a miracle worker, but he was a faithful witness who pointed to Jesus Christ. “*He must increase, but I must decrease*” (John 3:30).

Read John 10:1-42 and answer the following questions

1. What is the shepherd's responsibility? (See 10:3-4)
2. What does Jesus mean when he says: "I Am the door of the sheep"?
3. Do the sheep have any responsibility? What will a "good" sheep do? How can the sheep know who to follow?
4. How can we know the difference between God's voice and the voice of "the wisdom of the world"?
5. Jesus makes two "I AM" statements here in chapter 10. What is He claiming about Himself and His identity by calling Himself: A. The Door (See 10:7-9), B. The Good Shepherd (See 10:11)?
6. What does Jesus mean that He will give abundant life? (See 10:10) How can He give us abundant life?

7. What do verses 11-13 show us about how we need to treat the people under us or that God has given us to care for?

8. What happens to the sheep who know and follow the Good Shepherd's voice? (See 10:3-4, 9-10, 27-29)

9. What is implied by the fact that Jesus and His sheep know each other just as He and His Father know each other? (See 10:14-15)

10. Why is it important that there is only "one flock and one shepherd"?

11. At the Feast of Dedication, what did the religious leaders demand to know about Jesus? What was Jesus answer? (See 10:22-30).

12. What did the Jews want to do to Jesus, and how did He respond? (See 10:31-32, 39)

Jesus, The Good Shepherd

Jesus was called the Good Shepherd because He called Himself the Good Shepherd in the Gospel of John. His claim to this title is not casual by any means. In fact, Jesus' claim to be the Good Shepherd has a meaning that is both deep and wide. Although the title, good Shepherd, is only found in the New Testament, Jesus was intentionally reaching into the Old Testament with His words. When Jesus claimed to be the Good Shepherd, He was speaking to the Pharisees who claimed to know the Scriptures.

The book of Ezekiel is a prophecy regarding shepherds and sheep. The prophecy is regarding shepherds that were overseers for the people of God, and another shepherd that was to come later. The Shepherd to come later was the Messiah that Israel was waiting for. By calling Himself the good shepherd, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah that the Scriptures foretold.

Jesus' claim to be the Good shepherd is just one of seven other declarations regarding who He was. There are seven times Jesus begins a statement with the words "I Am" and claims a title or role. They are commonly called the "I AM" statements. By calling himself the Good Shepherd, Jesus was claiming to be the Almighty God.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 11 - John 11:1-57
Finding Identity and Purpose
Lazarus Raised

In this chapter is the seventh of the miracles John recorded. Here we see salvation pictured as resurrection from the dead. The unsaved person is not just sick; he or she is spiritually dead. When a person is physically dead, they don't respond to such things as food, temperature, or pain. When a person is spiritually dead, there is no response to spiritual things. There's no interest in God, the Bible, Christians, or church until the Holy Spirit begins to work in their heart. What sinner's dead to God's ways need is not education, medicine, morality, or religion; they need new life in Jesus Christ.

There are three resurrections recorded in the Gospels, apart from that of our Lord Himself. Christ raised a twelve-year-old girl who had died, a young man who had been dead several hours, and an older man who had been in the tomb four days. How did Christ give them life? By the power of His word. This is the way He raised all three dead people mentioned above. Why did Christ raise Lazarus? Because He loved him and because it brought glory to God. We deserve to die and go to hell, but because of His great love, He rescued us. Lazarus was bound hand and foot and so could not free himself. The believer is not to be bound by the grave clothes of the old life, but should walk in the freedom of the grace cloths which is the new life.

It is interesting to note that the entire family at Bethany demonstrates what the Christian life is like. Mary is always found at Jesus' feet, listening to His Word. Martha is a picture of service; she is found busily doing something for Christ. Lazarus speaks of testimony, a daily walk that leads others to Christ. These three practices must be in our Christian experience: worship (Mary), work (Martha), and walk (Lazarus).

The Jews hated Lazarus because he convinced others of Christ's deity. Many of the chief priests were Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection, and Lazarus was living proof that the Sadducees were wrong. Had the priests not been overruled by God, they would have put an extra cross on Calvary for Lazarus. Satan always fights a living miracle that testifies on God's behalf.

Read John chapter 11:1-57 and answer the following questions

1. What kind of relationship did Jesus have with Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha? Why, do you think John stresses Jesus' love for Lazarus and his sisters in this account? (See 11:3, 5, 36)

2. Despite His love for Lazarus, why doesn't Jesus go immediately when he learns that he is gravely ill? (See 11:4-6, 14-15, 25-26, 41-42)

3. Jesus' disciples warn Him that going to Bethany, less than 2 miles from Jerusalem is very dangerous. What does Jesus' response tell you about His character and priorities? (See 11:9-11)

4. When Jesus arrives in Bethany, how long had Lazarus been dead? Why is this important?

5. Why do you think Jesus was so deeply moved at the death of Lazarus and wept? (See 11:33-35)

6. When Martha hears that Jesus has arrived, what does she do? What does she say to Jesus? Is she blaming Jesus for his death?

7. The raising of Lazarus is the last and greatest of Jesus' signs before His own resurrection. What does it reveal about:

A. Jesus' character, personality and values? (See 11:14-15, 25-26, 33-35, 40-42)

B. Jesus' identity? (See 11:25-27, 41-44)

C. Jesus' mission?

8. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, how did the people respond? (See 11:45, 53, 57, 12:10)

9. If you were to see a man who had been dead for four days walk out of a tomb, how would you act? Would you believe it?

10. What purposes besides the obvious, did Lazarus' raising from the dead achieve?

11. Why did Jesus go to Ephraim instead of Jerusalem? (See 11:54)

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

It was after the raising of Lazarus from the dead that the chief priests, Pharisees, and the other religious leaders finally determined to put Jesus to death. Until now, the conflict between them and the upstart Rabbi had been little more than a war of words. But the raising of Lazarus was an incredible miracle, witnessed by many. Jesus had raised at least two others, but those events had taken place in faraway Galilee. By contrast, Lazarus' resurrection occurred in Bethany, a suburb of Jerusalem.

Not surprisingly, this miracle caused many to believe in Jesus. It provided undeniable proof that Jesus' bold claim must be true. "*I Am the resurrection and the life,*" and *whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die*" John 11:25. Indeed Lazarus became something of a curiosity drawing numerous onlookers who wanted to see for themselves the man who Jesus had brought back to life.

It was this kind of publicity that the leaders especially feared. Disputes over religious matters were one thing, a rapidly growing movement led by a popular Messiah figure was something else. It was bound to have political repercussions, as the Romans were ever on the lookout for signs of rebellion.

It was Caiaphas the high priest who saw the usefulness of that fact. Why sacrifice the entire nation for the sake of Jesus, when Jesus could be sacrificed for the sake of the nation. The religious leaders now began to scheme how they might bring Jesus before the Romans and hopefully have Him put away on a charge of rebellion. And even though Lazarus had just been brought back from the dead, they plotted to do away with him as well, as he was living evidence of Jesus' power.

The plan succeeded brilliantly except for one detail that Caiaphas and his fellow leaders overlooked or refused to believe. In arranging His death, they handed Him an opportunity to prove once and for all that He had spoken the truth when He said, "*I Am the resurrection and the life*"

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 12 - John 12:1-50
Finding Identity and Purpose
The Hour Comes

While the Jewish leaders were plotting to slay Jesus, His friends were honoring Him at a feast in Bethany. Mark 14:3 indicates it was in the home of Simon, apparently a leper whom Jesus had healed. Martha served the meal. She had learned the secret of letting Him control her life. The ointment Mary used would cost a year's wages for a common laborer. She had saved it to anoint Jesus and show her love and devotion as one that would follow Him.

At Jesus' birth, Gentiles came from the east; now at His death, they returned. Why does John mention them at this point? Because the King has now been rejected by Israel. The Jews had said, "We want to see a sign," but the Gentiles said, "We want to see Jesus." Philip had a Greek name, so the visitors wanting to see Jesus came to him; and he took the matter to Andrew, who also had a Greek name. Jesus had taught His disciples to avoid the Gentiles; but now He says that the Gentiles also will be saved through the cross.

The last words of Jesus' public ministry were a terrible warning against letting the opportunity for salvation pass by. In the verses that follow, the Apostle John explains why He hid Himself and why the Jews were condemned. John presents the conflict between light and darkness. Light symbolizes salvation, holiness, life. Darkness stands for condemnation, sin, death.

In vs. 42–50, John quotes Jesus and shows why many people reject the light. Some reject Him because of the fear of man. In vs. 48, Jesus states that rejecting the Word of God leads to condemnation. Salvation comes through the Word, and the very Bible that men reject today will be part of the evidence against them at the judgment.

This chapter closes John's record of Jesus public ministry. It reminds us again that we dare not neglect spiritual opportunities. The light will not always be shining. One day Jesus will hide Himself from those who have no concern for His salvation or His Word.

Read John 12:1-50 and answer the following questions

1. How do you explain Mary's feelings and actions for what she does in 12:3?
2. What do you think John wants us to learn from the scene in 12:1-8? What point does this scene make about Jesus and how people respond to Him?
3. How did the Jewish leaders react to the reception the crowds gave Jesus?
(See 12:9-11, 19)
4. When the Galileans tried to proclaim Jesus King, He refused. But at this Passover, He chose to ride into Jerusalem on a young donkey. Why do you think He accepted the opportunity now?
5. John never does tell us whether the Greeks got to see Jesus. He only records Jesus' response. What did the coming of the Gentiles prompt Jesus to talk about?
(See 12:20-26).
6. Jesus in verse 24 says, "*Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it produces much grain.*" What kind of dying do you personally need to go through in order to bear much fruit? (See 12:24)

7. Verse 25 says: “*He who love his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.*” What does it mean to love or hate our lives in this world and how is it related to eternal life?

8. According to verse 26, where is Jesus? Where do we need to be in order to be where He is?

9. Why did almost none of the Jewish leaders believe in Jesus, despite His signs that pointed to His identity and purpose? (See 12:37-41).

10. Many of the rulers privately believed that Jesus was the Christ. What kept them from confessing their faith publicly? (See 12:42-43).

11. What were the benefits of believing in Jesus and the consequences of not believing in him as seen in verses 35-50?

12. Note one truth from this chapter that you would like to apply to your own life this week?

Under Authority

John 12:49

Jesus faithfully represented His Father to the world. As believers we are to live under Christ's authority and therefore we are responsible for faithfully representing Christ in our places of work. To do so we must be intimately familiar with Jesus. What He said, what His commands are, and what His purposes might be. That means a serious commitment and continuous study of the Scriptures.

As employees under human authorities, we are responsible for faithfully representing our organizations in general and our superiors in particular to other people. To do so we must be familiar with the values, goals, policies, and procedures of our employers. Neither of these tasks is an easy assignment. It's easy to misrepresent the statements of our Lord or our superiors in fulfilling our own purposes. To hear only what we want to hear.

Are there any checks and balances to guard against this type of temptation? Jesus modeled two for us. First, He asked the question and listened to the answers. For example, with Nicodemus and the women at the well. He was clear about His mission and secure in His position. As a result, He never felt compelled to prove or promote Himself. In this, He differed from many of the leaders of His day who *"Loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."* (John 12:43)

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 13 - John 13:1-38
Finding Identity and Purpose
Love & Betrayal

Jesus' foot-washing was an example of humility and service. In Middle Eastern countries, it was the slaves who washed the feet of guests. Here in chapter 13, Christ took the place of a slave. He makes this clear to His disciples in vs.13-16. If their Lord and Teacher has washed their feet, then they should wash one another's feet and serve each other in humility. This must have been a striking rebuke to the Twelve, for just that evening they had been debating who was to be the greatest. To many Christians today are fighting for recognition and position and need to recall this lesson in humility. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

When the Jewish priests were ordained, they were washed all over, which pictures our once and for all cleansing. God also provided the laver for them to use in the daily washing of their hands and feet. Today, Jesus is cleansing His church through the water of the Word. As we daily read the Word allowing the Spirit to search our hearts, and then confess our sins, we keep our feet clean and walk in the light.

In vs. 21, Jesus openly told the disciples that one of them would betray Him. Actually, this statement was a final warning to Judas. Jesus had washed his feet, quoted the Word to him, and now openly warned him, giving Judas every opportunity to change his mind. Like the Holy Spirit, Satan works in and through human bodies and wills that are surrendered to him.

It is a dangerous thing to be a person like Judas. In Mark 14:21 Jesus said, "*It would of been good for that man if he had never been born!*" Judas pretended to be a Christian. He played with sin and put off salvation. Any person who does these things may end up wishing he or she had never been born. There are some mysteries surrounding Judas, but one thing is clear: Judas made a deliberate choice when he betrayed Jesus. In John 6:66-71, Jesus actually warned Judas and called him "*a devil.*"

After Judas left the room, Jesus warned Peter about his own approaching testing and failures. Peter was anxious to discover another's sin, now he had to face his own sin. "*Judge not, that you be not judged.*" Peter's boast showed his lack of understanding of his own heart. Self-confidence is a dangerous line to cross for the believer.

7. What does the disciples being “*perplexed*” (13:22) when Jesus said, “*One of you will betray Me*” tell us about Judas Iscariot?

8. When did Judas begin to betray Jesus? Are there betrayers of Jesus in the church today? Explain.

9. Knowing what Judas and Peter are about to do, Jesus gives “*a new commandment.*” Compare John 13:34 to Leviticus 19:18. What is new about this commandment? (See 13:34)

10. Why is the command we see in 13:35, so crucial for Christians to keep? Why do you think actively loving other Christians is such an effective way to evangelize non-Christians?

11. What are some examples of this Christian love for one another?

12. Peter’s heart was right but his flesh was weak. What does Jesus mean by, “*The rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.*”? (See 13:37-38)

A Model of Servant-Leadership

When Jesus washed His disciple's feet, He demonstrated a fundamental principle that He regularly stressed to His followers. To lead others, one must serve others. This is true in public life and the business world as well in the church. No number of corporate memos or "that a boy" speeches encouraging workers to commit themselves to an organization or its clients will have as powerful an impact as a person of authority modeling consistently the attitude of a godly servant. Placing others needs before his own, and not expecting any favors or recognition from the people one serves, truly reflects the heart of a godly servant-leader.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 14 - John 14:1-31
Finding Identity and Purpose
Heart Trouble

Why were the disciples' hearts troubled? Christ had told them He was leaving them, that one of them was a traitor, and that Peter would fail Him. This undoubtedly disturbed them all, for they looked to Peter as their leader. In this chapter, Christ sought to comfort the Twelve and quiet their troubled hearts.

Jesus speaks of heaven as a real place, not merely as a state of mind. He pictured heaven as a loving home where the Father dwells. Jesus is building a heavenly home for all who have trusted Him. While He was with the disciples, Jesus supplied their needs. Now that He was returning to heaven, He gives them the privilege of prayer. He promises to answer prayer that the Father might be glorified.

Jesus has much to say about the Spirit in these next chapters. Here He calls Him "*the Comforter*," (The One standing alongside to help you). The Spirit living within the disciples would take the place of the Savior living beside the disciples. He is also called "*the Spirit of Truth*." The Spirit uses the Word to convict sinners and to direct saints.

There is much discussion over what Christ means when He says, "*I will come to you*." This statement probably includes several things: Christ's coming to the apostles after His resurrection; His coming to them in the Person of the Spirit; and His future coming to take them to heaven.

In vs. 21–26, Jesus speaks of a deeper relationship the disciples will have with the Father and the Son through the Spirit. The Christian who spends time learning the Word, then goes out to live the Word, will enjoy a close, satisfying communion with the Father and the Son.

The peace that Christ gives is not that of the world, nor does He give it the way the world gives. The world's peace is shallow, unsatisfying, and temporary, while Christ's peace rests deep in the heart, is always satisfying, and will abide forever.

By dying on the cross and going back to heaven, Jesus defeated Satan, who is the author of confusion. The cross is proof of His love for the Father. He died because the Father commanded it, and Christ came to do the Father's will.

Read John Chapter 14 and answer the following questions

1. Why did Jesus say, “*Let not your heart be troubled*”? What was bothering the disciples?

2. List at least 3 things Jesus told His disciples to calm their troubled hearts? (See 14:2-4)

3. What does it mean when we say that Jesus is:
 - a. The Way? (See 14:6)

 - b. The Truth? (See 14:6)

 - c. The Life? (See 14:6)

4. How does knowing that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life affect your actions and attitude?

5. What does Philip’s question in 14:8 tell you about him?

6. What do you think are the “Greater things the disciples will do”? (See 14:12)

7. Does John 14:14 mean that Jesus will do anything we ask as long as we pray in His name? What is the proper meaning of this?

8. Who did Jesus promise He would send? What is the purpose of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives? (See 14:16-18)

9. What were the 2 things that Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit would do for the disciples? Why were these 2 promises so important? Do they still apply to us today?

10. What blessings are available to those who love Jesus? (See 14:21)

11. What is the difference of the peace mentioned by Jesus given to His disciples, and the peace the world has to offer? (See 14:27)

12. What was Jesus about to do, and how would that show love for His Father? (See 14:31)

Peace in the Chaos of Life

John 14:25-28

We live in a turbulent world. Change is rapid and frequently dramatic. Jesus said that He alone can provide the help and peace we need to live and work with integrity and wholeness. Certainly, our work cannot be depended on for that. No job is engaging enough, no position powerful enough, and no material rewards substantial enough to give us the kind of inner peace and confidence we long for. Only Christ will never leave us nor forsake us.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 15 - John 15:1-27
Finding Identity and Purpose
Relationships & Responsibilities

John 14 closes with, “*Arise, let us go from here!*” which suggests that the next two chapters may have been spoken on the way to the Garden. It is probable that Jesus and His disciples were passing some vineyards, or perhaps the temple with its golden vine decorations, when He gave the analogy of the vine and branches. It is important to remember that not everything in a parable must mean something. The main truth Jesus is teaching in this parable is the importance of abiding in Him in order to bear fruit. To abide in Jesus does not mean to keep ourselves saved. It means to live in His Word and pray, obey His commandments, and keep our lives clean through His Word. The Christian who fails to abide in Jesus becomes like a useless branch, like the salt that loses its taste and is good for nothing. To be a branch in the Vine means we are united to Jesus and share His life. As we abide in Him, His life flows through us and produces fruit.

When Jesus mentions “The world” He means the whole system of society that is opposed to Himself and the Father. It is made up of people and organizations, philosophies and purposes that are anti-Christian. “The world” has a prince in Satan, the enemy of Jesus. While Christians are in the world physically, they are not of the world spiritually. Christians can become worldly, and they do so by degrees. First there is friendship with the world, then love for the world, and finally conformity to the world. Anything in our lives that keeps us from enjoying God’s love and doing God’s will is worldly and should be put away.

In vs. 22–24, Jesus lays down the basic principle that revelation brings responsibility. His words and His works revealed the will of God and the sinfulness of men. Mankind has no excuse. The fact that Jews and Gentiles alike joined together in hating and crucifying Jesus is proof that all people are sinners and guilty before God.

It is the Word that strengthens and encourages us. He also promises them the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit’s work is to testify of Jesus and point to Him. He does this through the Word and through the good works the Christian performs in the Spirit’s power. The Spirit testifies to the Christian, who then witnesses to others.

Read John 15:1-27 and answer the following questions

1. When Jesus says, “*I Am the true vine*” what is He claiming about Himself? Note what else Jesus claimed to be: (John 6:35, 8:12, 10:9-11, 11:25 and 14:6)
2. Who is the vinedresser? What does the vinedresser do to care and provide for the vineyard? (See 15:2)
3. After calling Himself “I Am the true vine” in verse 1, why does Jesus now say, “I Am the vine, you are the branches”? (See 15:5)
4. Read Galatians 5:22-23. What are the fruits of the Spirit? What’s the greatest fruit and why?
5. How many times does Jesus use the word “abide” in this section? (See 15:1-17) What does it look like for someone to abide in Jesus?
6. What does Jesus say about those who choose not to abide in Him? (See 15:6)

7. What does it mean when Jesus says “*love one another as I have loved you*”? (Notice that this love isn’t limited to just Christians) (See 15:12, 17)

8. Jesus commands us to love one another. How do we sometimes let things of this world prevent us from loving one another?

9. Why did the world hate Jesus, His disciples and us today? (See 15:18-25)

10. What impact could we have if we routinely give blessings and respond positively when persecution comes our way?

11. Who is Jesus referring to as “The Helper” and the “Spirit of Truth” in verse 26? What is His purpose?

12. What’s one take away from this lesson that you can apply to your life this week?

The Cost of Following Jesus

Are you prepared to be hated because of your commitment to Jesus? Perhaps you expect to be misunderstood occasionally or even challenged by associates for “going overboard” on religion. But Jesus used strong words in John 15:18-25: “hate” and “persecute.” He indicated that our true commitments will be made clear when they start to cost us something.

What has your faith cost you? A promotion or some other career opportunity? Criticism by coworkers or family members? Legal action? Sooner or later, following Christ has a cost. In fact, if there’s no cost, is there really any genuine commitment? Jesus words suggest not.

However, it’s also possible for our actions or words to cause offence because they are inappropriate. In that case, the hostility we may receive is not persecution. Like Jesus, we are called to be people of truth and grace, not being obnoxious and rude. True persecution involves unmerited hostility for doing good works in the pattern of Jesus. (1 Peter 2:12-21)

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 16 - John 16:1-15
Finding Identity and Purpose
What is the Spirit Doing?

The disciples could not understand why Jesus had to leave them, so He showed them that His return to the Father made possible greater blessings because of the coming of the Spirit. The Christian life cannot be lived in the energy of the flesh. We need the Spirit of God if we are going to live lives that glorify Jesus. Here our Lord described how the Spirit works through the believer.

The world is no friend to the Christian. Jesus warned His own of the coming persecution. Paul, in his unsaved state, is a good picture of the kind of person talked about in vs. 2. The reason Jesus did not tell them this fact sooner was because He was with them to protect them.

He now explained the work the Spirit will do in the world through the church. Keep in mind that the Spirit does not come to the people of the lost world but to the people of God. His Spirit is here, reminding mankind of its awful sin. This is the sin of unbelief.

The disciples must have felt their ignorance of the Word, so Jesus assured them by explaining the teaching ministry of the Spirit. He had mentioned this in 14:26 and 15:26. "*Not speak of Himself*" does not mean that the Spirit never talks about or calls attention to Himself. He wrote the Bible, and there are hundreds of references to the Spirit in its pages! This phrase means that the Spirit will not teach whatever He pleases, but will get His leading from the Father and the Son. The Spirit teaches us truth from the Word, and in so doing, glorifies Jesus.

Any Christian who surrenders to Jesus can be taught by the Spirit. Read Ps. 119:97–104 to see how God can teach the humble Christian. It is not age, experience, or education that counts so much as a willingness to learn and live the Word.

Read John 16:1-15 and answer the following questions

1. What purpose did Jesus have in saying the things He did in 16:1? Explain?
2. How would the disciples be treated, and what would the people who were involved think about it? (See 16:2) Why would people think this way? Does this type of thinking exist today? Give an example.
3. How would Jesus' statements help the disciples in the future? Why do you think Jesus didn't say anything to his disciples till now? (See 16:4)
4. How would it benefit the disciples for Jesus to leave? (See 16:7)
5. What would the Holy Spirit do? In what three areas would He do so? (See 16:8)
6. Define the word "convict." What does it mean that the Holy Spirit would convict the world in each of the three ways noted? (See 16:9-11)

7. Why did Jesus withhold information from the apostles? When would He reveal that information to them? (See 16:12-13)

8. From verses 13-14, list three things Jesus tells the disciples about the Holy Spirit?

9. How does the Holy Spirit speak to you today? What is His purpose?

10. What belonged to Jesus, and what does this tell us about His nature? (See 16:15)

The Work of the Holy Spirit **By Billy Graham**

First, the work of the Holy Spirit is to convict us of our sin. *“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”* He uses a mother’s prayers, or a tragic experience, or a pastor’s sermon, or some other experience to convict us of sin and of our need to run our lives over to Jesus Christ. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. He points to us and says, “You are a sinner. You need to repent.” We don’t like to hear that, but that is the work of the Holy Spirit. Without that work we could never have our sins forgiven, we could never be saved, we could never go to Heaven.

Second, the Holy Spirit gives new life. The Bible says that we are dead in our sins and trespasses. Our spirit within us, made in the image of God, is dead toward God. The Spirit gives us new life in Jesus Christ. Jesus said, *“No one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again.”* You must be born again.

The Holy Spirit is the One who does the work of making you a born-again person. It is a supernatural act. Paul said to Titus, *“not by works of righteousness which we have done”* -not all our good works and all the good things we have done are going to save us- *“but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”* We are saved by the mercy of God, by the grace of God. It is something I didn't earn, something I didn't work for. It is the gift of God, the gift of salvation.

Third, the Holy Spirit indwells us. As you read this, you may realize that you are spiritually dead, *“I will put my Spirit in you. I will come to live in you.”* Your body becomes the temple where God dwells by His Holy Spirit. That is the reason we should never take anything unclean into our bodies. That is the reason we should discipline our bodies. God loves your body. He doesn't want it polluted by fleshly lusts and the things to which you give yourself. The Bible says, *“Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?”*

Fourth, The Holy Spirit gives you power to serve Christ. *“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses.”* I couldn't do the work I am doing without the power of the Holy Spirit. I am a communicator of God's message. He called me and gave me that gift. What counts is the message that according to the Scripture Christ died for our sins, He rose again, He is coming back again, and He is ready to come into your heart by the Holy Spirit and make you a new person.

That is the Gospel.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 17 - John 16:16-33
Finding Identity and Purpose
Let There be Joy

The disciples were greatly disturbed and discouraged because Jesus was going to leave them. They would exchange physical sight for spiritual insight. Today, believers “see Jesus” through the Spirit’s teaching of the Word of God.

Christ compares the events of His suffering to the birth of a child: labor is followed by joy. Isaiah 53:11 states, “*He shall see of the labor of His soul.*” The disciples did weep, but their sorrow was changed to joy. We today have sorrow and suffering; but when Christ returns, it will turn to joy. Christ gives the kind of joy that the world cannot take away.

“*In that day*” refers probably to the day when the Spirit would come and begin His ministry among them. While Jesus was on earth, the disciples were accustomed to taking their questions and needs to Him personally. When Jesus returned to heaven, He sent the Spirit to assist them in their praying (Rom. 8:26–27), and instructed them to pray to the Father personally. The model for Biblical praying is to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. It will not be necessary for Jesus to beg the Father on our behalf, because the Father is willing to answer our requests.

Prayer is a tremendous privilege! Consider these other words of Jesus about prayer: John 14:13–14; 15:7; 15:16. As the believer allows the Spirit to teach him the Word, he grows in his prayer life, for prayer and the Word go together. Jude 20 commands us to “pray in the Holy Spirit.” Too much praying today is in the flesh, asking for things that are not in the will of God (See James 4:1–10). It is wonderful to allow the Holy Spirit to burden us with prayer requests. The Spirit knows the mind of the Father and can lead us to pray for those things God wants to give us. It has been said, that prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance, it is laying hold of His willingness.

The testimony of the disciples must have pleased Jesus’ heart, but He warned them of their coming failure. Even the Father would finally forsake Jesus on the cross! What a blessing to hear the Lord say, “*Be of good cheer!*” (vs. 33) He was about to be arrested and crucified, yet He gives peace and joy to His followers! He promises them His victory: “*I have overcome the world.*” (vs. 33) The Spirit has a special ministry in our lives. Are we allowing Him to have His way?

Read John Chapter 16:16-33 and answer the following questions

1. What did Jesus mean in John 16:16?
2. Why does Jesus refer to the sorrow of a woman in labor? (See 16:21)
3. A woman's labor gives birth to a new life. What does Jesus' death on the cross accomplish?
4. Why will "*no one*" take the joy of Jesus' resurrection from His disciples? (See 16:22)
5. What promise does Jesus give to the disciples? (See 16:23-24)
6. "*Ask and you will receive*" is one of the most abused phrases in the Bible today. Will the Father really give us "whatever" we ask in Jesus' name? (See 16:23)

7. Why do some preach today, “Ask and you shall receive earthly riches.”?

8. What happens to people who believe that? How about the preacher that preaches that?

9. What does Jesus mean by “*Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.*”? (See 16:28)

10. Why shouldn’t Christians be fearful or anxious at the possibility of persecution when Jesus is absent? (See 16:20-24, 32-33)

11. According to 16:33, what does the world have in store for believers? How has Jesus overcome the world?

A Women in Labor

John 16:21-22

An alternative to sorrow is “pain.” There were few options available to first century women for pain relief during labor. Since births took place at home, all of the disciples had probably heard a woman scream out in pain while giving birth.

As in most undeveloped countries today, childbearing in Biblical times was often fatal for the child, the mother, or both. Many pagan women sought help from their false gods, along with special charms, to protect them during pregnancy and delivery.

So, Jesus was using a graphic metaphor by comparing the coming “sorrow” of His followers with that of a woman in labor. He was indicating that their pain could not be avoided. But He did give them a hope. He promised that they would see Him again, and when they did, their joy would be as great as a woman whose healthy baby has been delivered.

Do you live with the hope of seeing Jesus, even as you confront the pain of this world?

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 18 - John 17:1-26
Finding Identity and Purpose
The Lord's Prayer

Someone has rightly termed this chapter “The Holy of Holies of John’s Gospel.” We have the privilege of hearing the Son conversing with the Father. The great theme of these verses is that He has finished the work of salvation. Jesus prays that the Father will give Him again the glory He laid aside when He came to earth to die. The only time that His glory was revealed on earth was on the Mount of Transfiguration.

The key thought here is sanctification. A sanctified Christian is someone who is daily growing in the Word and as a result is separated more and more from the world unto the Father. Jesus asked the Father to keep the disciples (vs. 11). This request does not suggest the possibility that the disciples could lose their salvation. Verse 15 asks that they be kept from the evil one. Jesus was physically with the disciples and was able to keep them together, united in heart and purpose, separated from the world. Now that He was going back to heaven, He asked the Father to keep them.

Christians are not of this world, but they are in the world to witness for Jesus. We keep our lives clean through His Word. Jesus has actually sent us into the world to take His place (vs. 18). What a responsibility we have!

Jesus also prays for the unity of His church (vs. 21). While true Christians belong to different denominations, they are all part of the true church, the body of Christ. It is this spiritual unity in love that convinces the world of the truth of the Gospel. It is possible for Christians to differ on minor matters and still love one another in Christ.

Every Christian who dies goes to heaven because Jesus prayed (vs. 24), and the Father always answers His prayers. In verse 26, Jesus promises further revelations of the Father, which He gave to the apostles through the Spirit. He asks that we might enjoy the love of the Father in our daily lives.

Read John Chapter 17 and Answer the Following Questions

1. What is Jesus doing in verse 1?
2. What do we know about Jesus' prayer in this chapter? Who is He praying for?
3. Does verse 3 simply mean that knowing God exists is enough to have eternal life? How would you define the "know" in this verse?
4. What did Jesus mean in verse 11, "Now I am no longer in the world"?
5. What danger do the disciples face now that Jesus would no longer be with them?
6. In verse 15, Jesus doesn't ask to take them out of the world, but in verse 16 He says they are not of the world. What does this mean?
7. What does it mean to be sanctified? How can we be sanctified? (See 17:17)

8. What is the first request Jesus specifically prays for in verses 20-21? Is unity a problem for believers in the church today? Explain?

9. In what cases should we not be unified with others? How should we treat those we don't agree with?

10. What does Jesus pray for His disciples and for all who will believe in the gospel message as the disciples go out and proclaim the truth? How many times does Jesus use the word "one" in this prayer? (See 17:21-23).

11. As Jesus continues in prayer, what does He say in prayer about the purpose of Christian unity and truth among his followers? (See 17:23)

12. What would happen if the world saw Christians united together standing on the truths of His word? How would that unity affect the church today?

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 19 - John 18:1-40
Finding Identity and Purpose
Guilt and Grace in the Garden

Jesus left the place of prayer for His meeting with His enemies. He deliberately meets Judas and his band, for He knew what was about to happen. Jesus always knew what He would do, for He always knew the will of the Father.

In using the sword, Peter was definitely disobeying Jesus. Jesus does not need our protection; the weapons we are to use to fight Satan are spiritual ones. Peter used the wrong weapon, had the wrong motive, acted under the wrong orders, and accomplished the wrong result!

Much has been written about the illegal aspects of Jesus's trial. It was held at night; the prisoner was assumed to be guilty and treated that way; the court hired false witnesses; the judge permitted the prisoner to be mistreated while bound; the court allowed the accused no defense. After the secret night trial, the crafty religious leaders led Jesus to Pilate for the final death sentence. They would not enter a Gentile's hall, lest they "*should be defiled,*" but they did not hesitate to condemn an innocent man to death! At least seven times Pilate went from the hall to the Jews outside, trying to work out a compromise. Pilate crucified Jesus because he was a coward, "*willing to content the people*" (Mark 15:15). How many sinners will be in hell because they feared people and sought to please them!

Pilate's question, "What is truth?" has been asked by philosophers for ages. In 14:6, Jesus says, "*I am the truth.*" John 17:17 says, "*Your Word is truth.*" First John 5:6 says "*the Spirit is truth.*" The Spirit and the Word point to Jesus, the Truth.

The world makes the wrong choice when it comes to spiritual matters. The mob preferred a murderer to the Prince of Life. They chose the lawbreaker, not the Lawgiver. The Jews rejected their true Messiah, but they one day will accept Satan's false Messiah, the Antichrist. Men reject Jesus for different reasons. Judas rejected Jesus because he listened to the devil; Pilate listened to the world; Herod obeyed the flesh. "*You have a custom,*" said Pilate. How sad that Pilate knew the religious customs, but did not know Jesus! Everyone must make a choice.

Read John 18:1-40 and answer the following questions

1. What was Judas' part in Jesus' betrayal? Why did the priests need someone to betray Jesus?
2. What details about the betrayal by Judas does John leave out of his account? (See Matthew 26:47-49; Mark 14:43-45; Luke 22:47-48)
3. What does the fact that the Romans sent soldiers to help apprehend Jesus show about their involvement?
4. What does verse 4 tell us about the heart of Jesus?
5. When the soldier explained that they are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, what does Jesus tell them?
6. What do you think might have been going through the minds of the mob when Jesus asked them a second time "*Whom are you seeking?*" (See 18:7)

7. Peter takes out his sword and cuts off Malchus' ear. What do you see here about Peter's character?

8. How does Jesus respond to Peter's bold act? (See John 18:11; Luke 22:51; Matthew 26:52-56)

9. What can we learn from Peter's denials? Why do you think Peter denied Christ even though he was committed to Him?

10. What is the Praetorium? Why wouldn't the Jewish leaders enter it? (See 18:28)

11. Why did the Jews not want to judge Jesus themselves? How did this fit into prophecy?

12. What do we learn about Jesus' kingdom from verses 36-37?

13. What do verses 39-40 say about the Jews who called on Pilate?

The Blessing of a Clean Conscience

Would you feel free to welcome others to attempt to assassinate your character? Would you even help them? Jesus did. He had such a clean conscience and a secure trust in God that justice would ultimately prevail, and that His enemies could do no lasting harm, that He actually aided His accusers. He welcomed them, identified Himself for them, and even protected them from retaliation by His own loyalists. Jesus demonstrated grace in the face of hostility.

Jesus' innocence did not protect Him from suffering pain, or death. It actually gave Him a confidence rooted in a larger reality than life on earth. Because He answered to God's judgement, He was free to suffer, even unjustly. He left justice up to God and did not resort to retaliation.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 20 – John 19:1-42
Finding Identity and Purpose
“Even the Death of the Cross”

Pilate perhaps thought that scourging Jesus (which was illegal) would move the hearts of the Jews and that they would want to see Him released. But their hearts were hard, and they were determined to destroy Him. Pilate wrongly permitted the soldiers to ridicule Jesus, presenting Him with a mock crown, robe, and scepter. The Jews accused Jesus of breaking their law because He claimed to be God. Yet in His messages and miracles, Jesus had proved Himself to be God. But the hard-hearted sinners refused to consider the evidence; they were bent on destroying Him.

Why did Jesus not answer Pilate's question in vs. 9? For one thing, Pilate had not obeyed the truth he had already received; and God does not reveal more truth until we obey what He has already given. “*We have no king but Caesar!*” was their cry.

John records three of Jesus' seven statements from the cross. He is careful to note the fulfillment of Scripture in 1. The gambling for the seamless robe, 2. The giving of the vinegar, and 3. The piercing of His side without breaking any bones. Every detail about the crucifixion was carefully worked out by the hand of God. “*I thirst*” spoke both of physical and spiritual agony, for Jesus suffered the penalty for our sins. He thirsted that we might never thirst. “*It is finished!*” “*tetelestai*” is one word in the Greek text.

God had prepared Nicodemus and Joseph, two members of the Sanhedrin, to bury the body of Jesus. Otherwise, His body probably would have been thrown on the garbage heap outside Jerusalem. Isaiah 53:9 promised that His grave would be with the rich. We must not criticize Joseph for being a “hidden disciple,” for we can see how God used him and Nicodemus to accomplish His purposes. Had their faith been known openly, they would have been prevented by the council from caring for the body of Jesus. When Joseph and Nicodemus touched the dead body of Jesus, they defiled themselves for the Passover. But they did not care, for they had come to trust in the Lamb of God Himself. The Lamb of God had given His life for the sins of the world. His work on earth was finished, and He rested on the Sabbath.

Read John 19:1-42 and answer the following questions

1. What was the point of the soldiers putting the crown of thorns and the purple robe on Jesus?
2. How is the soldiers and the Chief Priests treatment of Jesus like the way people continue to treat God?
3. Why do you think that Jesus offered no defense in any of His trials? (See 19:10-11)
4. Why would Pilate sentence Jesus to death even though he knew there was no guilt in Him?
5. Why do you think Jesus would ask John to care for his mother? (See 19:26-27)
What does this request tell us about the heart and character of Jesus?

6. In Luke 23:34 Jesus said, “*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.*” Who was He asking the Father to forgive?

7. What does the phrase “*It is finished!*” mean?

8. What does it mean to you that Jesus “*Gave up His Spirit*” (See 19:30)

9. What else happened at the time of Jesus’ death to show that it was not a normal death? What does verse 34 prove?

10. What were Joseph and Nicodemus risking by asking for Jesus’ body and burying it?

11. Take some time to meditate on Jesus’ death. What strikes you as important? How has His death affected your life?

Seeing Behind Power

Pilate assumed that he had more power than Jesus because he had authority to condemn Him to death. But Jesus knew that all power ultimately comes from God, even the power of the state. Indeed, one of the reasons Jesus could submit to the injustices of His trial was that He was submitting to the will of God. Pilate and those under him were merely exercising limited authority. Meanwhile, God's purposes were being fulfilled.

What type of power do you have? In your work, at home, in your community. Do you recognize that your authority ultimately comes from God, and that you are ultimately accountable to Him for the use of that power?

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 21 - John 20:1-31
Finding Identity and Purpose
The Dawning of a New Day

Jesus had cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene, and she dearly loved Him. In her confusion and disappointment, Mary jumped to conclusions and thought someone had stolen Jesus's body. She ran to tell Peter and John, who in turn visited the tomb. Why did John outrun Peter? There may have been a physical reason: perhaps John was younger than Peter. What did the men see in the tomb? They saw the burial wrappings lying in the shape of the body, but the body was gone!

In verse 22 we are told that Jesus breathed on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Our Lord's breathing upon them reminds us of Gen. 2:7, when God breathed life into Adam. This action was personal and individual, giving them the spiritual power and discernment they would need to fulfill His commission. The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost empowered them for service and witnessing.

The next Lord's Day, when the disciples were together, Jesus appeared to them again and addressed Thomas. What forgiving love Jesus showed him! Thomas saw the Lord and forgot all about his demands for proof. The sight of Jesus's wounds won his heart. Jesus states here that you and I today can have the same assurance and blessing, for we are among those who believe, yet have not seen Him.

As you review these three appearances of Jesus, you can see the different results. With Mary, the issue was her love for Him. She missed Him and wanted to take care of His body. With the disciples, the issue was their hope. All their hope was gone; they were locked in a room, huddling together in fear! With Thomas, the issue was faith: he would not believe unless he saw proof. Because Jesus is alive today, our faith is secure. "*And if Jesus be not raised, your faith is vain*" (1 Cor. 15:17).

In vs. 30–31, John states the purpose of his Gospel: that sinners might believe and have eternal life through Jesus. As we have studied John's Gospel, we have met many people who did believe and received everlasting life: 1. Nathanael (1:50), 2. His disciples (2:11), 3. The Samaritans (4:39); 4. The Nobleman (4:50); 5. The Blind Man (9:38), 6. Martha (11:27), 7. The Jews who saw Lazarus raised from the dead (12:11), 8. Thomas (20:28). All of these gave the same witness, "**I Believe.**"

Read John 20:1-31 and answer the following questions

1. What did Mary Magdalene discover when she went to Jesus's tomb? If you had been Mary what thoughts would have run through your mind when you discovered the tomb was empty?

2. What were the two messages Mary delivered that day to the disciples? How were these messages received by them?

3. What did Peter and John not understand even after they visited Jesus's empty tomb? (See 20:9)

4. Why do you think Mary stayed at the tomb when Peter and John left? Why do you think she looked back into the tomb? (See 20:10-11)

5. That night the disciples had to be discussing what Mary told them about seeing Jesus. Why were the disciples fearful and hiding behind locked doors? (See 20:18-23)

6. Why do you think when Jesus came and stood in the midst of the disciples He showed them His hands and His side? (See 20:20)

7. When Jesus appeared to the disciples, who was missing? What was his reaction and why do you think he responded that way?

8. What did Thomas realize when he saw Jesus? What can we learn from Thomas's experience?

9. What did Jesus mean when He said in verse 29, "*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*"?

10. In what way should the reality of Jesus's resurrection shape your life?

11. Read the following verses. As believers, we too will rise from the dead to eternal life. Be encouraged by the following verses: John 11:25-26, Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 6:14, 15:20-22, 2 Corinthians 5:1-4, 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

Skeptics Welcome

Have you ever struggled with doubts or troubled questions about Jesus, the Christian faith, or the church? Do you sometimes feel that tough questions are not welcome or acceptable among believers?

Thomas was a classic skeptic. Even though he had traveled with Jesus and learned from His teaching for at least three years, he needed time, evidence, and personal convincing before he would accept the resurrection. Jesus would respond to his doubt by inviting him to check it out. He presented Himself for Thomas's inspection and did not rebuke him for wanting to be certain.

Jesus's desire is to honor the mind and heart of every seeker or doubter. He knows that easily developed loyalties often lack staying power. By contrast, many people who probe the corners of their doubts and fears finally reach the truth and that faith in the truth is what Jesus desires. He even promised that the Spirit would help those seek it. The encounter with Thomas welcomes every skeptic to bring their arguments and questions His way.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 22 - John 21:1-25
Finding Identity and Purpose
Transformed to Serve

This final chapter shows Jesus as the Master of our lives and the Friend of sinners. Were it not for this chapter, we would wonder what happened between Peter and the Lord and whether or not his disobedience was really dealt with. Peter acted without orders in returning to his fishing. We need to keep in mind that God blesses us only when we abide in Jesus and obey the Word. “*Without Me you can do nothing.*” Too many Christians enter into well-meaning but unscriptural activities, only to waste time, money, and energy for nothing. It is better to wait on the Lord for directions, and then let Him bless, than to involve ourselves in useless activities.

When Jesus appears on the scene, then the light begins to shine. He instructs them from the shore, and they catch a record amount of fish. Today there are many boats and fishermen at work, but when Jesus returns, we will see the one church and all the redeemed in the one Gospel net.

There are actually several miracles in this chapter, besides the catch of fish. Peter is given miraculous strength to draw up a net that seven men were not able to draw together. Note that Jesus gives Peter a new commission: he is now a shepherd (pastor) besides being a fisher of men. He is now to shepherd the lambs and sheep and feed them the Word of God. All Christians are expected to be fishers of men, but some have been called into the special ministry of shepherding the flock. What good is it to win the lost if there is no church where they might be fed and cared for?

There is a huge difference between sonship (being saved) and discipleship (following the Lord). Not all Christians are disciples. When Peter sinned, he did not lose his sonship, but he did fall away from his discipleship. For this reason, Jesus repeated His call, “Follow Me.” He also confronts Peter with the cross (vs. 18), indicating that Peter would one day be crucified himself. Before we can follow Christ, we must take up the cross.

John closes his Gospel by assuring us that the world itself could not contain all the books that could be written about Jesus' life. The four Gospels are not “lives of Jesus,” but rather four different portraits of Jesus with a different view. It would be impossible, says John, to record His life completely. Jesus blesses and uses those who obey and follow Him.

7. What does it mean to 1. “*Feed My lambs,*” 2. “*Tend My sheep,*” 3. “*Feed My sheep*”?

8. What specifically did Jesus want Peter to do? What changes in his life was Jesus asking Peter to make?

9. Why do you think Peter asked Jesus about John? (See 21:21)

10. Do you sometimes get distracted with what the Lord is doing in someone else’s life instead of focusing on your own life? What are some ways we can put this in proper order?

11. Which characters do you identify with the most from the Gospel of John? Peter, Mary Magdalene, Thomas, John, Martha, Someone else? Why?

12. Share something you have learned about Jesus from this study that has blessed you?

Forgiveness Abounds

John 21:15-23

Do you ever feel hopeless regarding your faith? Do you doubt God's willingness to forgive you over and over again? Peter might easily have felt that way. He had risen to a position of leadership among Jesus' followers. He had even been given the "keys of the kingdom." (Matt. 16:19). He had positioned himself as the defender of Jesus when Roman soldiers came to arrest Him. But when he felt the heat of a national trial, conviction and death, Peter denied three times that he even knew Jesus, and afterward disappeared. What Jesus had predicted about him came true.

So, when Jesus engaged Peter in a conversation on the shore, Peter might easily have felt that he was already disqualified from further service for the Lord. After all, as we would say, three strikes and you're out. But Jesus reconnected with Peter and called him to genuine love and the continuation of His work.

Second and third chances are not often available in families, communities, or work places. All you have to do is fail once too often, and you're gone. But Jesus offers unconditional love and boundless forgiveness to those who own up to their failures and repent. Can we offer anything less to our coworkers, families and friends?

Men's Sunday Night Live
The Gospel of John - Calendar & Outline
"Finding Identity and Purpose"

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
5/1		Men's Breakfast	
5/9	No Study	Mother's Day	
5/16		Intro/ Potluck	
5/23	1	God is Here	John 1:1-51
5/30	No Study	Memorial Day Weekend	
6/5		Men's Breakfast	
6/13	2	The Ministry Begins	John 2:1-25
6/20	No Study	Father's Day	
6/27	3	A Matter of Life and Death	John 3:1-36
7/4	No Study	Independence Day	
7/11	4	Living Water	John 4:1-54
7/18	5	Opposition Begins	John 5:1-47
7/25	6	The Bread of Life	John 6:1-71
8/1	7	Who is Jesus	John 7:1-53
8/7		Men's Breakfast	
8/15	8	Contrasts & Conflicts	John 8:1-59
8/22	9	The Blind Man Calls Their Bluff	John 9:1-41
8/29	10	The Good Shepherd	John 10:1-42
9/5	No Study	Labor Day Weekend	
9/12	11	Lazarus Raised	John 11:1-57

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<u>Date</u>	<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
9/19	12	The Hour Comes	John 12:1-50
9/26	13	Love & Betrayal	John 13:1-38
10/2		Men's Breakfast	
10/10	14	Heart Trouble	John 14:1-31
10/17	15	Relationships & Responsibilities	John 15:1:27
10/24	16	What is the Spirit Doing?	John 16:1-15
10/31	No Study	Harvest Festival	
11/6		Men's Breakfast	
11/14	17	Let There be Joy	John 16:16-33
11/21	18	The Lord's Prayer	John 17:1-26
11/28	No Study	Thanksgiving Break	
12/4		Men's Breakfast	
12/12	19	Guilt and Grace in the Garden	John 18:1-40
12/19	20	Even the Death of the Cross	John 19:1-42
12/26	No Study	Christmas Break	
1/8		Men's Breakfast	
1/16	21	The Dawning of a New Day	John 20:1-31
1/23	22	Transformed to Serve	John 21:1-25