



JOHN

That You May Believe



daily devos
RADIATE STUDENTS

WELCOME!

Dear Students,

Thank you for joining us for our sixth series of Daily Devos! Our team is so excited that you've jumped in with us to go deeper with God and study his Word. We're proud to offer series on James, 1 Corinthians, Proverbs, Colossians, and now John. If you missed any of those and are interested in studying those books of the Bible, you can visit our website and download those today.

The purpose of the Daily Devos is to get into the habit of spending time with God daily. We pray that you would also learn to continuously talk with God throughout your day and enjoy getting to know him deeper.

When you download (or print) your Daily Devos, here's what to expect:

- 1. Start by Praying:** "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:9). Ask God to speak to you through his Word. Talk to him. After all, it's a relationship!
- 2. Read:** This is the scripture passage your Devo will focus on for the day.
- 3. Reflect:** This is an explanation of the biblical passage for the day. It may include some teaching and illustrations, but it is meant to go deeper and get you thinking!
- 4. Respond:** This section has questions that you will want to answer. Don't just think about them, but really take the time to answer.
- 5. Real Life:** This involves taking your Daily Devos outside of your personal alone time and into your daily interactions with other people, through a missional moment or action step to really live out what we talked about.

This series is a little different. As you may know, in LifeGroups we are walking through how familiar Old Testament stories connect to the Gospel, and so we decided to somewhat pair this series with what you're learning in LifeGroups right now. We have also used the book *Creative Bible Lessons in John* for some of the content in this study. Feel free to check that out on your own.

This content will really be about what you take the time to put into it. Enjoy taking your time digesting the Bible. We are praying for you, and we love you. Let us know what you think!

Love,
The RADIATE Staff

WEEK 1 | DAY 1

READ: John 21:20-25

REFLECT:

Peter turned back to see who...what is the phrase that this man is called? _____

While John technically didn't out himself as "John", certain scenes in the book include "the disciple whom Jesus loved". Then in verse 25, he says, "This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things" aka that's the narrator. And in other parts of the New Testament that disciple is realized to be John himself.

More Evidence:

This isn't just John being conceited; on the contrary, he was most likely remaining humble by not naming himself and appreciating the love Jesus had for his friend and disciple. The writing style of this book is also very similar to the three letters (1st, 2nd, and 3rd John) and the book of the Revelation, which John wrote.

This Daily Devo series will pull out several encounters that Jesus had with various individuals and crowds throughout his ministry. John 20:31 says, "but these are written **so that you may believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." So, it's as if that's his thesis statement, and this is the title of our series.

John spends his book sharing the signs of why Jesus is God and why belief in him is the best way. The other three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) focus on what Jesus did while he was on this earth. The other Gospels highlight Jesus's outward actions and humanity; this Gospel focuses on his inward life and divinity. Matthew prophesied to the Jews that Jesus is King. Mark wrote specifically to the Romans about the obedient servant, Jesus. Luke presented the Greeks with the perfect man, God incarnate. And John wrote to all people that Jesus is the Son of God - he is God!

John wrote his Gospel account all about the ministry of Jesus. It's hard to say you are a follower of someone, a disciple to a belief system, or even a convert to a religion, without knowing nothing about its founder. The name "Christ" is found in the name "Christian". Do you know Christ? Really know him? We want to encourage you over the next two weeks to really jump in with learning all you can about Jesus. If you say you follow him, learn as much as you possibly can about how awesome he is.

WEEK 1 | DAY 2

READ: John 1:29-34

REFLECT:

What two names is Jesus called in verse 29 and verse 34?

1. **Lamb of God:** sacrifice of sin on our behalf. Instead of a sacrificial lamb to be offered to God regularly in the temple, Jesus died once and for all so that his death could count as a sacrifice for sin for those who believe.
2. **Son of God:** Jesus is both God and man. He is God's son, the beloved and chosen one. He is divine in nature and also a totally real human that walked around on this earth.

Jesus is not only the Lamb and Son of God, he also claimed to be equal with God by use of "I am" statements. This would have been particularly noticed by a Jewish reader from the first century, because in Exodus 3:14, God told Moses that his name was "I AM". Seven times in the Gospel of John, Jesus made "I am" statements...

1. *"I am the bread of life."* (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51) Bread sustains physical life, and Christ sustains (and also offers) spiritual and eternal life.
2. *"I am the light of the world."* (John 8:12) Jesus is the guiding light for those of us in such a dark world, and he uses us to be his light as well.
3. *"I am the door of the sheep."* (John 10:7, 9) Jesus will protect His followers as shepherds protect their flocks from anyone trying to harm them.
4. *"I am the resurrection and the life."* (John 11:25) For those who follow Jesus, death isn't it. It's just the start of your life forever and ever.
5. *"I am the good shepherd."* (John 10:11, 14) Jesus protects his sheep, like we learned earlier, but he also guides and loves them. He proved that he would even give his life for them.
6. *"I am the way, the truth, and the life."* (John 14:6) Pretty self-explanatory, yet amazing! This statement distinguishes him from other religious leaders, teachers, prophets, etc.
7. *"I am the true vine."* (John 15:1, 5) When we are connected with Jesus, we will have life and produce fruit.

WEEK 1 | DAY 3

READ: John 1:43-51

REFLECT:

If you met a stranger that knew every single thing about you, how would that make you feel?

Obviously this man was interested in knowing more about Jesus, but he had some questions. See how this encounter could reflect how someone comes to know Jesus.

1. Nathanael's friend believed first (verse 43).
2. Nathanael's friend told him about Jesus (verse 45).
3. Nathanael was skeptical (verse 46).
4. Nathanael's friend still invited him to learn more (verse 46).
5. Nathanael decided to investigate (verses 47 and 48).
6. Nathanael found Jesus to prove himself (verse 48).
7. Nathanael committed to Jesus (verse 49).
8. Nathanael was challenged by Jesus to keep learning (verses 50 and 51).

Why is it that so many times, when we have questions for or about God, we shy away from asking them? For some reason it has been either directly or indirectly ingrained in us NOT to ask. Maybe you were made to feel shame or embarrassed for not knowing the answer to one of your questions one time, and you thought, welp I'm never asking a question about that again. Maybe you were made to feel that having questions means a lack of faith. Maybe you've never found a safe, godly person that you feel like you could ask your Bible questions to. Maybe someone outright said you shouldn't ask questions, or maybe their body language said all you needed to know.

Jesus is more than happy to make himself available to anyone who is searching for him. He knew in this encounter exactly what Nathanael needed, and he is not afraid of your skepticism either. God will not frown on us for having questions. Think about it: it is normal, and in fact healthy, to investigate the things we have been told. Investigating allows us to make intelligent decisions.

WEEK 1 | DAY 4

READ: John 2:13-25

REFLECT:

Describe a time, good or bad, when God used your circumstances to get your attention.

Here we go. Today's passage includes a fairly controversial story in Scripture. If you grew up in church, you may have seen Jesus on a poster with long, flowy hair, a lamb in his arms, and a knowing soft smile on his face. This story reveals an angry Jesus flipping tables.

Hold Up:

Isn't it wrong to get angry? I thought Jesus never sinned? That's right. Those two truths must be able to co-exist: Jesus never sinned; Jesus got angry. This means that anger is not necessarily sin (See Ephesians 4:26). It is an emotion that OFTEN leads to sin. But it doesn't have to. When you read something in the Bible that seems to contradict what you have heard it say elsewhere, try this: a) find exactly what the Bible says about both things, b) think about how they can co-exist, c) go to God and ask his help understanding. We will read in a couple of days about how you have access to the Holy Spirit, whose job it is to guide you in all truth!

Today we're going to talk about the respect that God deserves. Jesus was mad, because people at the Temple were being cheated and duped and made to feel guilty when they came to offer their sin sacrifices to God. We're going to think about all the "tables" in your life, and see where Jesus is honored or ignored. Which ones he would flip, and which ones he would gladly sit with you at.

1. **Kitchen Table:** interaction with my family (at home, in the car, etc.)
2. **Pool Table:** recreational activities (sports, hobbies, etc.)
3. **Cafeteria Table:** interactions with friends at school (or during school hours, if you're virtual)
4. **Table of Contents:** things you read, listen to, and watch
5. **Multiplication tables:** classes and homework
6. **Timetable:** things you do in your free time

WEEK 1 | DAY 5

READ: Colossians 2:1-7

REFLECT:

Why do you think Nicodemus waited until night to approach Jesus?

Not to get too graphic, but think about the parallel between physical birth and spiritual birth. Physical birth brings a brand-new life, a whole new person, and changes the lives of those around it. Spiritual birth brings a brand-new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17), a whole new experience for a vital relationship with God, and it should change your life.

Random Facts:

The greatest number of children officially born to one woman was 69. She was a peasant from Shuya, which is 150 miles east of Moscow. Included in that total were 16 sets of twins, 7 sets of triplets, and four quadruplets. Taken from the Guinness Book of World Records in 1995.

Birth is a miracle, both physical birth and spiritual birth. You can't take any credit for your physical birth. It occurred because of the actions of someone else, and you just showed up on the scene. It's not like little baby you had any control over that situation. (Side note: maybe you needed to hear that today! Whatever the circumstances surrounding your birth, whether it was sin, unplanned pregnancy, etc., you are not responsible for the actions of your parents. You can be thankful that God chose to bring you into the world, and it was on purpose!)

In the same way, we can't receive spiritual new birth and take credit for it. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." Your salvation is 100% to God's credit. It's not about anything you did or didn't do. It's not that your saving was more important than someone else's. It was a gift so that you couldn't even pretend to take credit for it. You don't thank yourself for presents on your birthday; you thank the giver. The Giver of the ultimate gift, his own son's life to save yours, is something that we thank God for, not ourselves.

WEEK 1 | DAY 6

READ: John 4:43-5:15

REFLECT:

The following question is genuine, not sarcastic. Answer for yourself, not for other people. Which is more risky: to trust Jesus or hope for the best? Why?

You can trust Jesus with your difficult issues and circumstances. A lot of times we think he may be too busy to help, that we don't want to be an inconvenience, or that there are bigger problems he needs to be focused on. But God is ready and willing to be your biggest hero and number one fan. You are not a bother to him. He can handle even your most petty worries all the way down to your darkest thoughts. He can focus on you and others simultaneously. Don't let the enemy tell you that God doesn't care.

Break it Down:

Looking at the stories of two guys back-to-back that needed healing, let's look at some similarities and differences in their accounts.

Similarities:

- Both faced problems they couldn't solve on their own
- Both admitted they needed help
- Both had to take Jesus at his word
- Both received help from Jesus

Differences:

- One was respected, the other disrespected
- Parents supported one, the other was alone
- One ran into problems recently, the other had them for a long time
- Jesus used different methods with each

You may relate to one guy and not the other, or you may see how God has come through for you reflected in both stories.

WEEK 1 | DAY 7

READ: John 6:46-60

REFLECT:

This particular encounter that Jesus had with a crowd involves conversation about bread, blood, bodies, etc. The disciples summed it up well in verse 60 when they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” If you heard someone saying the things Jesus said in John 6, you may be scared and think they are cannibalistic! But in verse 48, he says, “I am the bread of life.” So let’s back up a little.

Look up Exodus 16:4-8. What did God rain down from heaven? _____

History Lesson:

Back in Exodus 16, the people of God, the Israelites, were in the wilderness for forty years. And God provided their food. He sent a heavenly bread-like substance every morning called “manna”, which means, “what is it”. The people were instructed to gather only what they needed for that particular day, and then the day before the Sabbath gather twice as much so that they don’t have to gather on the Sabbath. If they tried to hoard some, it would go bad.

God provided the people with just exactly what they needed every day. He was their sustainer. And in John 6:49, Jesus is referring to this food that the Israelites ate. They ate it, and the next day they needed some more. This bread could not keep them from dying. But Jesus is the only sustenance that can give someone eternal life. He offers spiritual bread: himself. This is very similar to his encounter with the woman at the well, where he told her that water from the well will cause you to thirst again, but the living water Jesus offers will satisfy forever.

So we’ve got the bread and body part out of the way. Why is Jesus talking about drinking blood?! Leviticus 17 forbid the Jews from consuming blood, plus that’s just gross. He’s talking in symbolic terms about his own blood, about a person needing his blood coursing through their veins. Accepting Christ as Savior means you accept his life as your own.

And here’s the good news: the bread that sustains and the blood that saves can be accepted by anyone. Jesus freely offers eternal life and complete satisfaction to anyone who believes. It’s only by accepting his bloody sacrifice can we be right with God and live forever with him.

WEEK 2 | DAY 1

READ: John 9:1-41

REFLECT:

What does Jesus call himself in verse 5? _____

Because Jesus is God, he is able to heal a blind man. Because Jesus is the light of the world, he can cause people's physical and spiritual eyes to open. This man, who was "blind from birth" was given the gift of sight! Jesus sought out this man to heal, because he knew "that the works of God might be displayed in him", and he would go around telling people it was Jesus (verse 11).

Symbol Explained:

All of us are spiritually blind before we meet Jesus. Acts 9:18 says, "immediately something like scales fell from his eyes," when Paul experienced his conversion. This has become somewhat of a symbol over time of Christian conversion: when you meet Jesus, you will be able to see spiritually. The scales will fall from your eyes, and you will have fresh eyes.

One side-effect of spiritual blindness is thinking we are sufficient to handle life on our own. You may have given your life to Jesus, but that old way of thinking creeps back in sometimes. I can do this. I can handle this myself. Often, it's not until we realize we are totally in over our heads that we turn around and start looking for his help. Why did I try to do this on my own? We are in desperate need of Jesus, whether we like to admit it or not.

And sometimes he bends down, spits in the dirt, and starts to make mud in the palms of his hands. What in the world? I'd be squirming and resist any sort of contact for sure. But sometimes God's methods don't make sense. He comes to us with a proposition that seems a little out there. Then he sent the man to wash in the pool called Sent. He sent this man out to tell

everyone what he had done in his life. We are likewise sent out to share how Jesus made the scales fall from our eyes and restore our sight, so that we can look to God, the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2)

There is nothing wrong with having friends, being physically attractive, or having intelligence; but each of those things only bring temporary satisfaction. How would your life be different if you had your eyes fixed on Jesus rather than your circumstances?

WEEK 2 | DAY 2

READ: John 11:1-44

REFLECT:

List every single expression, phrase, or word you can think of that describes the word “dead”.

That’s how dead Lazarus was. He was dead, gone, lifeless, and cold. For four days. And at just the exact right time, Jesus caused Lazarus to rise from the dead!

Back Up:

Why did Jesus wait until Lazarus died to deal with the problem? “...when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was” (verse 6). Why? He knew Lazarus was sick, but he waited until he died to go to him. Let’s explore that...

Jesus intentionally waited until Lazarus was dead to go. We may hear this and think, wow that’s sort of heartless. He let a friend die. Well, yes – but, no. Yes, he waited until Lazarus died. No, he was not heartless and cruel. In verse three, Lazarus is described as “he whom you love.” Jesus loved him. In verse 11, Jesus calls him “our friend.” And in verse 35, the famous verse known as the shortest verse in the Bible, “Jesus wept”. He grieved the death of his friend.

Look at his friends’ reactions: they were mad! They reference the healing of the blind man that we looked at yesterday. In verse 37, “some said, ‘This man healed a blind man. Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?’” From the outside looking in, Jesus just healed a blind man, then didn’t heal a sick friend. Why?

He was waiting until Lazarus died, so that he could teach his friends the truth about death. He also would have been claiming to be God, or at least like God, by raising someone from the dead. But the truth about death is that God (Jesus) has power even over death. Even the most final and irreversible thing about humanity, Jesus looks at and says, even that thing obeys me.

WEEK 2 | DAY 3

READ: John 11:57-12:11

REFLECT:

List all the differences you can think of between Mary and Judas in this passage.

Quick Facts:

The median yearly household income in the state of Georgia in 2018 was about \$55,000. Imagine a gift worth that much by today's standards! It's a luxury car, 2,750 haircuts, a fancy tiny house, two-to-three average weddings, half of a small plane, ten sets of braces, a solid crystal chandelier, or 1,100 pairs of crocs.

Now let's look at Judas's response: he asked a great question that made him seem super spiritual. But in all reality, he was being selfish. We have to search out the motivations of our hearts. We may say or do something that seems godly, right, and pure, knowing full well we are doing it for recognition, to seem a certain way, or out of bitterness like our friend Judas here.

Mary understood that Jesus was worthy of her love and devotion. She gladly offered him her most valuable possession. Judas refused to fully trust Jesus. He was looking out for himself, just in case Jesus did not come through for him. For Mary, investing her life and possessions in pleasing Jesus gave her lasting satisfaction. For Judas, investing his life and possessions in serving himself gave him only temporary satisfaction.

Let's make some Eternity Investments. How can you use these things in your life to invest in the Gospel?

1. Talents, abilities, and interests
2. Friendships, relationships, and other people
3. Money, possessions, job, and other responsibilities

WEEK 2 | DAY 4

READ: John 13:36-38; 15:18-16:4; 18:12-27

REFLECT:

Do you think Peter was expecting this kind of opposition when he agreed to start following Jesus? Why or why not?

John 16:33

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

The reality is, when you decide to follow Jesus, you WILL face opposition. “You will have trouble.” What are some negative feelings associated with opposition? Loneliness, rejection, defeat, sadness, rebellion, annoyance. This is exactly why Jesus followed up the “you will” with “but I”. Yes, you will feel these things, or at least you will want to...but I’ve got you. You will feel disappointed and alone...but I will never disappoint you or leave you. You will...but I!

Anytime you identify yourself with Jesus publicly, you are automatically a natural enemy to the popular culture. You can simply expect this to be the case. Why is that? We mentioned in the Colossians Daily Devos that the Gospel is offensive. You are admitting you need Jesus to forgive you of your sins. You are admitting you are not in charge of your own life. Many people don’t like to think about Jesus or the Gospel, because he reminds them of their own sin. It’s just not comfortable to be faced with your own mistakes.

Peter most likely didn’t think through all the ways his faith may be put to the test when he said yes to Jesus. He couldn’t have anticipated the many times Jesus took him on the wild and thrilling ride called following him. He witnessed numerous miracles, walked on water with Jesus, and benefitted from his teachings firsthand. The same is true for us: we don’t know where God will take us. But we do know that it won’t be easy. It will be thrilling, exciting, so incredibly satisfying, and beautiful. But there will be opposition. Thinking through this is what’s called the “cost of discipleship”, thinking through what you are willing to give up to be discipled by Jesus. Is it everything?

WEEK 2 | DAY 5

READ: John 15:5-17

REFLECT:

Do you think it is possible for a person to muster up the strength to obey Christ's commands? (Hint: see verse 5.)

Galatians 5:22-25

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."

Fruit can also be prayer, as found in today's reading. And 2 Peter 1:5-8 also lists adding to your faith the following fruit: goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection, and love. God wants to produce good fruit in your life. He is in your corner, and he wants you to grow up in maturity.

But just like branches on a tree, we do not have any power to produce godly characteristics by ourselves. If that branch is not connected to the tree, the source, it will not produce fruit, and it will eventually die. As long as we stay connected to Jesus, God will produce fruit in our lives.

When you walk around with a phone charger plugged in to a phone, but not plugged in to the wall, it's useless. If you mounted a TV, but didn't plug it in, hitting that remote over and over will be a waste of time. A lamp that requires batteries is just a hunk of material without those AAA's; it won't bring any light without the power source. We are the same way. And the power source is Jesus. Are you ready to stop trying to find power in your own strength? Surrender.

WEEK 2 | DAY 6

READ: John 14:15-27; 16:5-16

REFLECT:

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word “spirit”?

Summary:

Jesus is making a special point here to tell his disciples that he's not abandoning them when he is no longer walking the earth, but really out of his great love for them he leaves the Holy Spirit in his place to always be with them...and now with us two thousand years later! This is an amazing mystery and beautiful truth. So who is the Holy Spirit? Let's see what the Bible says!

2 Corinthians 3:17 “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

Romans 8:26 “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”

Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Acts 2:38 “And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Isaiah 11:12 “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.”

Ezekiel 36:26-27 “And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”

...and from today's reading in John 14 and 16: Helper, Teacher, sent in Jesus's name, Spirit of Truth, the world can't receive him, dwells in Jesus's followers, he will glorify God.

WEEK 2 | DAY 7

READ: John 19:25; 20:1, 11-18

REFLECT:

Where was Mary Magdalene in John 19:25? What about in John 20:11?

Comeback Story:

“George Foreman became the heavyweight boxing champion of the world at age 25 by defeating Joe Frazier. He lost his title shortly thereafter to Muhammed Ali. Many boxing fans felt Foreman was foolish when he decided to attempt a comeback twenty years later. But at the age of 45, George Foreman shocked the sports world by knocking out the reigning champion. He became the oldest heavyweight champion in the history of boxing.” - 1995 Guinness Book of World Records

Here’s what’s fascinating about all the places Mary Magdalene found herself: she was always wanting to be right in the presence of Jesus. It was important for her to be close to where he was. And even after he died, she didn’t abandon him but was nearby.

Mary had her own comeback story. Luke 8 tells the story of her own conversion experience, where she was demon possessed. She became a follower (literally) of Jesus, travelling with the little group that had formed around him, including the disciples and some other women. Jesus had healed her from literal demons, and now she was the one at the tomb Sunday morning that Jesus appeared to first. That’s a pretty sweet comeback story.

Jesus is the ultimate comeback story! We can have confidence that Jesus rose from the dead. Several eyewitnesses gave testimony of seeing him, and there are several places in the New Testament where eyewitnesses were mentioned that were alive and available to answer questions at the time that those statements were written. Including Mary Magdalene.

The resurrection of Christ overshadowed all of the horrible, terrible sorrow that preceded it. It immediately gave Mary overwhelming joy. It demonstrated victory over the most impossible situation. It renewed her hope. It can be life changing news to anyone willing to accept it. It caused her to spread the news! How do you react to this news?

