

The
God Who
Cares
and Knows You

KAY ARTHUR
PETE DE LACY



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HOW TO GET STARTED...



Reading directions is sometimes difficult and hardly ever enjoyable! Most often you just want to get started. Only if all else fails will you read the instructions. We understand, but please don't approach this study that way. These brief instructions are a vital part of getting started on the right foot! These few pages will help you immensely.

FIRST

As you study the Gospel of John, you will need four things in addition to this book:

1. A Bible that you are willing to mark in. The marking is essential. An ideal Bible for this purpose is *The New Inductive Study Bible (NISB)*. The *NISB* is in a single-column text format with large, easy-to-read type, which is ideal for marking. The margins of the text are wide and blank for note taking.

The *NISB* also has instructions for studying each book of the Bible, but it does not contain any commentary on the text, nor is it compiled from any theological stance. Its purpose is to teach you how to discern truth for yourself through the inductive method of study. (The various charts and maps that you will find in this study guide are taken from the *NISB*.)

Whichever Bible you use, just know you will need to mark in it, which brings us to the second item you will need...

2. A fine-point, four-color ballpoint pen or various colored fine-point pens that you can use to write in your Bible. Office supply stores should have those.

3. Colored pencils or an eight-color leaded Pentel pencil.

4. A composition book or a notebook for working on your assignments or recording your insights.

SECOND

1. As you study John, you will be given specific instructions for each day's study. These should take you between 20 and 30 minutes a day, but if you spend more time than this, you will increase your intimacy with the Word of God and the God of the Word.

If you are doing this study in a class and you find the lessons too heavy, simply do what you can. To do a little is better than to do nothing. Don't be an all-or-nothing person when it comes to Bible study.

Remember, anytime you get into the Word of God, you enter into more intensive warfare with the devil (our enemy). Why? Every piece of the Christian's armor is related to the Word of God. And our one and only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The enemy wants you to have a dull sword. Don't cooperate! You don't have to!

2. As you read each chapter, train yourself to ask the "5 W's and an H": who, what, when, where, why, and how. Asking questions like these helps you see exactly what the Word of God is saying. When you interrogate the text with the 5 W's and an H, you ask questions like these:

- a. **What** is the chapter about?
- b. **Who** are the main characters?
- c. **When** does this event or teaching take place?
- d. **Where** does this happen?
- e. **Why** is this being done or said?
- f. **How** did it happen?


3. Locations are important in a historical or biographical book of the Bible, so marking references to these in a distinguishable way will be helpful to you. I simply underline every reference to a location in green (grass and trees are green!) using my four-color ballpoint pen.

I also look up the locations on maps so I can put myself into context geographically. In the appendix of this book, you will find maps taken from the *NISB* that show you the geographical locations of Jesus' ministry. If you use these until you become familiar with these places, the Bible text will mean so much more to you.

4. You will be given certain key words to mark throughout this study. This is the purpose of the colored pencils and the colored pens. If you will develop the habit of marking your Bible in this way, you will find it will make a significant difference in the effectiveness of your study and in how much you remember.

A **key word** is an important word that the author uses repeatedly in order to convey his message to his readers. Certain key words will show up throughout the Gospel of John; others will be concentrated in specific chapters or segments of John. When you mark a key word, you should also mark its synonyms (words that mean the same thing in the context) and any pronouns (*he, his, she, her, it, we, they, us, our, you, their, them*) in the same way you have marked

the key word. Also, mark each word the same way in all of its forms (such as *worship*, *worshippers*, and *worshipped*). We will give you suggestions for ways to mark key words in your daily assignments.

You can use colors or symbols or a combination of colors and symbols to mark words for easy identification. However, colors are easier to distinguish than symbols. When we use symbols, we keep them very simple. For example, you could draw a red heart around the word *love* and shade the inside of the heart like this: .

When marking key words, mark them in a way that is easy for you to remember.

If you devise a color-coding system for marking key words throughout your Bible, then when you look at the pages of your Bible, you will see instantly where a key word is used.

You might want to make yourself a bookmark listing the words you want to mark along with their colors and/or symbols. We will mention some specific key words to watch for in each chapter of John, but you might consider watching out for these and marking them from the beginning:

Word, Jesus, Jesus Christ, Lamb of God, Son of God, Son of man

the Christ (Jesus is the Christ, but you'll see why we want you to mark this in a different way.)

Father

Spirit

life, live

sign

believe

born, born again

eternal life

love

true, truth

world

sin

5. A JOHN AT A GLANCE chart is included in the appendix. As you complete your study of each chapter, record the main theme of that chapter under the appropriate chapter number. The main theme of a chapter is what the chapter deals with the most. It may be a particular subject or teaching.

If you will fill out the JOHN AT A GLANCE chart as you progress through the study, you will have a complete synopsis of John when you are finished. If you have a *New Inductive Study Bible*, you will find the same chart in your Bible (page 1756). If you record your chapter themes there, you will have them for a ready reference.

6. Always begin your study with prayer. As you do your part to handle the Word of God accurately, you must remember that the Bible is a divinely inspired book. The words that you are reading are truth, given to you by God so you can know Him and His ways more intimately. These truths are divinely revealed.

For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows

the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-11).

Therefore ask God to reveal His truth to you as He leads and guides you into all truth. He will if you will ask.

7. Each day when you finish your lesson, meditate on what you saw. Ask your heavenly Father how you should live in light of the truths you have just studied. At times, depending on how God has spoken to you through His Word, you might even want to write LFL (“Lessons for Life”) in the margin of your Bible and then, as briefly as possible, record the lesson for life that you want to remember.

THIRD

This study is set up so that you have an assignment for every day of the week—so that you are in the Word daily. If you work through your study in this way, you will find it more profitable than doing a week’s study in one sitting. Pacing yourself this way allows time for thinking through what you learn on a daily basis!

The seventh day of each week differs from the other six days. The seventh day is designed to aid group discussion; however, it’s also profitable if you are studying this book individually.

The “seventh” day is whatever day in the week you choose to finish your week’s study. On this day, you will find a verse or two for you to memorize and **STORE IN YOUR HEART**. Then there is a passage to **READ AND DISCUSS**. This will help you focus on a major truth or major truths covered in your study that week.

To assist those using the material in a Sunday school class or a group Bible study, there are **QUESTIONS FOR**

DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY. Even if you are not doing this study with anyone else, answering these questions would be good for you.

If you are in a group, be sure every member of the class, including the teacher, supports his or her answers and insights from the Bible text itself. Then you will be handling the Word of God accurately. As you learn to see what the text says and compare Scripture with Scripture, the Bible explains itself.

Always examine your insights by carefully observing the text to see what it *says*. Then, before you decide what the passage of Scripture *means*, make sure that you interpret it in the light of its context. Scripture will never contradict Scripture. If it ever seems to contradict the rest of the Word of God, you can be certain that something is being taken out of context. If you come to a passage that is difficult to understand, reserve your interpretations for a time when you can study the passage in greater depth.

The purpose of the THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK is to share with you what we consider to be an important element in your week of study. We have included it for your evaluation and, hopefully, for your edification. This section will help you see how to walk in light of what you learned.

Books in the New Inductive Study Series are survey courses. If you want to do a more in-depth study of a particular book of the Bible, we suggest you do a Precept Upon Precept Bible study course on that book. You may obtain more information on these courses by contacting Precept Ministries International at 800-763-8280, visiting our website at www.precept.org, or filling out and mailing the response card in the back of this book.

FINDING PURPOSE AND MEANING IN YOUR LIFE



Are you looking for purpose and meaning in your life? Is your life messed up? Are you trying to discover who you are and where you're going in life? These questions plague many people, so you're not alone if you're searching too. But where do you find answers? Is there a book of answers? An author who knows? Who? So many books by so many authors are available...how do you decide which one is right?

What if God can give you purpose and meaning even if you or someone else has messed up your life? What if He can show you how to live—regardless of your situation or circumstances? And what if He promised to love and care for you and give you the incomparable gift of eternal life so you can know for certain that the very moment you die, you will find yourself in His presence to live with Him forever as His dear child?

Surely you'd want to know this kind of God and find out how you can have a personal relationship with Him—a God who cares this much about you, whoever you are and wherever you've been—wouldn't you?

Well, my friend, that's what this book is all about. It's designed to help you know and understand the Bible so you can see for yourself what it says about God, what it says

about you, and what it says about becoming a part of God's family.

Are you thirsty for meaning, my friend? Have you found anything that satisfies the deep emptiness and longing within? Has your religion satisfied you? Have you considered coming to Jesus—no matter what?

FROM DEATH TO LIFE



Do you ever feel dead? You know what I mean. You know you're physically alive, but on the inside you feel dead. You feel as if no life is there, and you wish there were. Perhaps you feel absolutely numb—nothing can make you happy, nothing gives you a high, nothing even gives you a low—as if you were in a state of anesthesia.

You can have hope, Beloved. A Light is shining that can lead you out of that deadness and into life.



DAY ONE

Some books of the Bible clearly state why they were written—this one, for example! So let's begin our study by reading John 20:30-31 and recording its purpose.

Now read John 1, noting the main characters. Which two are mentioned most?

You'll see the author emphasize subjects by repeating key words and phrases. You'll be marking many of these words and phrases throughout John, so a good technique is to record them and how you plan to mark them on a 3 x 5 card and use this as a bookmark. Doing this from lesson to lesson will help you mark consistently and save time.

Now read through John 1:1-18 again and mark *Word*. You may want to mark it yellow and add a purple underline and cross like this: Word.

DAY TWO

Now read John 1:1-18 again, marking pronouns referring to the Word the same way you marked *Word*. Read carefully to make sure the pronouns refer to the Word, not someone or something else! (Pronouns substitute for nouns—in this context you’ll see words like *Him, His, He*, and in other places, *it*.)

Read John 1:1-18 again, this time marking synonyms for *Word*. (Synonyms are words that mean the same thing.)

DAY THREE

Today observe the verses in which you marked *Word* and its pronouns and synonyms in John 1:1-18. Make a list of what you learned from the text.

Now let’s relate what we learned so far to John’s purpose (20:30-31), which you read on day one. Has God given any signs to show that Jesus is the Son of God—that is to say, that Jesus is God? What does John 1:1-18 say about Jesus that you can relate to John 20:30-31?

DAY FOUR

Review day one. Who’s the other main character of John 1? Read through John 1:1-18 again, marking this person, if you want, with a squiggly underline like this: John.

Now list everything that you learned about him.

DAY FIVE

Read John 1:19-51 and mark every reference to *Jesus Christ* the same way you marked *Word*. Don't miss pronouns and synonyms like *Lamb of God* and *man*.

Now read John 1:19-51 again and mark every reference to *John*.

DAY SIX

Today, add all you learned in 1:19-51 about Jesus and John to the lists you made from verses 1-18.

Finally, think about all you have seen this week and determine the main subject of this chapter. Write this out as a theme for John 1 and record it on JOHN AT A GLANCE in the appendix.

DAY SEVEN



Store in your heart: John 1:1,14

Read and discuss: John 1:1-27; 20:30-31

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

- ☞ What is the purpose of the Gospel of John?
- ☞ What evidence do you see in John 1:1-18 that Jesus is the Son of God?

- ☞ Discuss how to become a child of God. What is the result of believing?
- ☞ Who is the witness in John 1:1-27? What function does witnessing involve?
- ☞ What's the significance of signs being done in the presence of the disciples (20:30)?
- ☞ What application can you make to your own life? Are you a child of God? How do you know?
- ☞ How does this week's study motivate you to share what you learned with others?

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Perhaps you're unhappy and feel trapped by circumstances in your life. Nothing in life excites you. You just feel dead. And the thing is, you may actually *be* spiritually dead. You need to know that being spiritually dead in this life is like hell because you keep looking for something that's going to make you happy, something that's going to touch you, something that's going to make you come alive. But you don't realize that it's some One.

Maybe you've gone to psychologists or even psychiatrists seeking answers but haven't found them. Maybe you've tried killing the numbness with pills, alcohol, or drugs. But even these don't take away the deadness, the feeling of no answers, no hope.

John says he wrote his Gospel so that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and that believing we might have life in His name. That life is the only life with true hope. When you and I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, we get life. Before this, if we feel dead, it's because we are. We were all spiritually still-

born because of trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). So if you haven't been made alive in Christ, feeling dead is legitimate. And if you have been made alive but still feel dead, Jesus says there's more to the life you have; there's abundant life (John 10:10). Whatever's missing, leaving us feeling dead, He supplies.

To achieve his purpose, John is going to show us signs that Jesus performed in the presence of His disciples. Not every sign, but the signs that the world needs to see in order to know that Jesus is the Christ.

John 1:1 tells us that the Word has always been—He was in the beginning. We also learn that He was with God—so we know He's distinct in some way from God. And what else is He? The Lamb of God, according to verse 29. And there we learn His name—Jesus.

And He is life. So if you feel dead, where do you find life? In Jesus Christ. And what is that life? It's the Light that enlightens every man. In other words, everyone is born with some sort of a hope for eternal life. People know somebody is "out there" apart from them—some source of light and life. They know they need to bow to someone. You say, "Not me! I don't believe in a God. I believe *I'm* god!" Then you do believe there's a god, and that god is you—and that will cause trouble.

So to review, we see that Jesus is the Light. We see that He's life. We see that He had a witness named John the Baptist. Jesus was born a Jew and came to Jews who did not receive Him, who did not believe. But is that the end of the story?

No! He gives the right to become children of God to those who believe in His name—anyone who believes, including you and me.

John's purpose is to declare that if we believe in His name, we are going to have life. If we believe that Jesus is the

Christ, if we believe that He's the Son of God, we're going to have life in His name. Some people ask, if Jesus is God, why doesn't everybody believe in Him? If Jesus is the Savior of the world, why doesn't everybody receive Him? The reason is that even though the Light shines in the darkness, the darkness does not comprehend it.

How does John describe the ones who receive the true Light? We read that they are born not of blood, not of will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. But what does this mean? It means you aren't naturally born a Christian. You become one when you're born *again*. When you're born the first time, you're physically alive but spiritually dead. But you come alive spiritually in Jesus when you receive Him. You receive eternal life, and He gives you truth, which sets you free. Truth gives you life because Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

Jesus once turned around and asked His disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" People had diverse opinions about Him then as they do today, but Jesus always asks, "Who do *you* say that I am?" Other people's opinions about Jesus Christ really don't matter; what God says is what counts. Some say He's a great teacher, "the man upstairs," a great philosopher, or a good man, but they don't believe He is God. But if He is just a man and teaches that He's God, then He's a bad teacher. But the Bible teaches that He is the Son of God in a way that no one else is or ever could be.

If you have Christ, you have everything you'll ever need. Why? Because Jesus is in you, and He is the Light, He is life, He is God, and He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

The key is that the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us—He was given to us and sacrificed for us so that we might live. So here is the Word of God. Here is the One

that has life. John introduces this Jesus in his first chapter. No mention of signs yet—he simply lays down that this is Jesus, the Son of God. He is the One on whom angels of God descend (verse 51) because He is also the Son of Man. And you can thank Him for becoming flesh because He did so to take away the sins of the world.

Are you loaded with guilt? Do you feel dead on the inside, my friend? Oh, listen very, very carefully. Help and hope are available for you.