



DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Fourth Gospel – Part 1

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Main Idea – The Gospel of John is often received as one of the most intimate books of the Bible. It was written by someone who experienced Jesus at a very personal level. It is a useful book to help us keep focused on what is important in life, and to continue to experience closeness with our Creator.

The Gospel of John and the importance of prayer and worship

- Sometimes in life we get distracted, burned out, and off course by how society has organized itself. Our activities – determined by our personal calendars and sense of obligation – tend to draw us away from what we know is more important.
- We may have seasons in life where we feel enslaved by earthly systems that are not part of God's Kingdom on earth.
- The Gospel of John is most helpful in getting us connected back to what is important.

Prayer, worship, and the Word are essential to staying connected to God

- **John 1:1 – In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**
- **John 17 records a prayer of Jesus. In this prayer He prayed for Himself, His disciples at that time, and those who would later come to faith through the work of the original disciples.**
- We will experience life in abundance when we stay connected to God – as one – as Jesus prayed in John 17.
- **John 10:10 – The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**

The three places of abundance

1. An abundant life connects *upward* to God the Father. We experience God's love *for* us.
2. An abundant life connects God's human family *inward* with each other. We experience God's love *in* us.
3. An abundant life connects God's children *outward* toward others. We repurpose our passion and existence in a mission to the world. God gives His love *through* us.

God's love for us – the upward experience of abundance

- Regardless of how Jesus was treated by others, He never stopped loving. “When we do what Jesus did, we will get what Jesus got.”
- When we love others, there will be evidence of that love. **John 15:8 – By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.**
- How we live – how we appear to others – will be the fruit of our abundance. This fruit will draw others to us.

To be loved by God means :

1. We are befriended. Jesus regards us as His friends. Because we are His friends, we have benefits. **John 15: 13-15 – Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.**
2. We are blessed. We have received an inheritance, as children receive from their parents. **John 1: 12, 18 – But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: . . . No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.**
3. We are beloved. Jesus loved the gospel writer John. When we read the words in the Gospel of John, we experience that special relationship with Jesus in the same way. **John 13: 23 – Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.**

No strings attached

- When we put ourselves in a position of being close to Jesus, we give ourselves the opportunity to hear directly from God.
- There are no strings attached to this opportunity.
- In effect, Jesus said, “Here; take My life and I will take yours.” **Romans 8: 3-4 – For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**
- Jesus became like us so that we can become like Him.
- He experienced what we experience. He also offers us what He received from God the Father.
- The Gospel of John is an invitation to have a closer relationship with God.

Reflective Questions for The Fourth Gospel – Part 1

1. Share one or two examples of how the “requirements of life” – living in the earthly systems - have occasionally distracted you from the most important things.
2. The first result of getting connected back to God through prayer, worship, and the Word is an *upward* experience of abundance. What did Pastor Stephen mean by this upward experience?
3. Before sharing God’s love with other Christians - and with others outside the faith - why is it necessary to first experience God’s love for us? (See “To be loved by God means:” in the notes above.)
4. What do you think Pastor Stephen meant when he said, “When we do what Jesus did, we will get what Jesus got.”?

