



# Devotional

Oct. 4 - Dec. 30

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Jesus loves us and recognizes the uniqueness in which we were all made. He shows us that when we are lost and wandering in the wilderness, we are not lost to him. There are likely times in everyone's faith journey where they feel far from God, and as if he may not even see them. Or we may even drift so far that we feel our sins now define us. Jesus welcomes all back, even sinners. Not only does he welcome us back, but he rejoices in our return and repentance. What a feeling to know the joy he feels from the repentance of our sin!

Prayer: Lord you know me, all of me. I remember the love you have for each of us, even your lost sheep who are found again. I ask for your forgiveness of my sin. In your name we pray, amen.

## **WEEK TWO (OCTOBER 11–17)**

### **Day 285: October 11, 2020**

**Full Plan: John 1:1–2:12**

**Abbreviated Plan: John 1:1–18, John 2:1–11**

John 1 is a reboot of Genesis 1: Both open with "In the beginning." God spoke creation into being. (The Word was with God; the Word was God.) God said let there be light. (In him was life, and the life was the light for all people). God separated the waters (Jesus' first sign involved transforming water.) We can be part of God's new creation in the world today.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

### **Day 286: October 12, 2020**

**Full Plan: John 2:13–3:36**

**Abbreviated Plan: John 3:1–36**

The most famous verse in the New Testament (John 3:16) is a response to a man questioning Jesus in the dark (3:2) which itself was a response to Jesus upsetting conventional wisdom (2:13-16). Darkness and doubt aren't fun, but they can be the gateways to new understanding.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

### **Day 287: October 13, 2020**

**Full Plan: John 4:1–54**

**Abbreviated Plan: John 4:1–42**

In John 4, Jesus was physically tired, thirsty, and hungry. But his deeper hunger was satisfied when he shared the good news with someone who was spiritually searching (v 33). Physical food satisfies for a short while. Spiritual food impacts eternity.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 288: October 14, 2020**

**Full Plan: John 5:1–6:21**

**Abbreviated Plan: John 4:43–54, John 8:1–11**

Luke 5-6 has two water miracles: the healing of the paralyzed man by the pool, and the walking on water. In between is the feeding of the 5,000 with a boy's offering. All these stories remind us of the power of baptism and communion, and that Jesus is always present among us.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 289: October 15, 2020**

**Full Plan: John 6:22–7:9**

**Abbreviated Plan: John 11:1–46**

John 6:26-27 is a key verse. We must not make following Jesus about meeting our needs. Worship is not about entertaining us, prayer is not about blessing us, Bible reading is not about feeding us. It's about what we surrender, offer Jesus, and "believe."

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 290: October 16, 2020**

**Full Plan: John 7:10–8:58**

**Abbreviated Plan: John 13:1–38**

John 7-8: People are divided about Jesus: those who believe or don't believe; those who want him arrested or those who are amazed; those who question his authority or those set free by his truth. In John, it's a binary choice: are you with or against Jesus?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

**Day 291: October 17, 2020**

**Full Plan: John 9:1–10:42**

**Abbreviated Plan: John 15:1–27**

Caught in the crosshairs of the squabbling by the Pharisees is a man born blind whom Jesus healed in John 9:13-34. By the end of the story, it's the Pharisees who are the truly blind, and those who believe in Jesus "now can see." (v25) Which group do you identify with more?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

## **October 11–17, 2020: Weekly Devotion by Bernie Lieving**

Welcome to the Gospel of John! It doesn't take reading more than a few verses to know that this 4th Gospel is very different from Matthew, Mark, and Luke. One of my favorite descriptions of this Gospel is Scottish biblical scholar William Barclay's: "For many Christian people the Gospel according to St. John is the most precious book in the New Testament. It is the book on which above all they feed their minds and nourish their hearts, and in which they rest their souls." (The Daily Study Bible Series, Westminster Press, 1975)

Who wrote this Gospel? The answer varies, dependent on the study Bible you are using. My three give answers from "The apostle John" (The NIV Study Bible) to a "disciple of John" (The New Oxford Annotated Bible) and a third says that regardless of the author, the important thing is that the Gospel is clearly the work of an eyewitness. (The CEB Study Bible) The apostle John is not named in the Gospel so if he is the author and wanted to remain unknown that makes sense. Interestingly, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" is mentioned five times so maybe John does appear in the Gospel.

Several things stand out for me in this week's readings: (1) Jesus (the Word) was with God in the beginning and everything came into being through Jesus and then John announces that "the Word became flesh and made his home among us." (2) Jesus' first miracle is turning water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana. Only John tells this story. (3) Jesus' words to Nicodemus: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but will have eternal life." (4)

The feeding of the five thousand made the people see him "as the prophet who is coming into the world." (5) Jesus enters Jerusalem several times in these first chapters. In the other Gospels he is there only once, when he went for the Passover and was ultimately crucified.

To use Barclay's words, what of these first chapters of John fed your mind, nourished your heart, and gave you a place to rest your soul?

Prayer: Pray for all who need to know and accept in their hearts that God loves them so much that God came to live as a human in Jesus who willingly died that they might know God's love for them.

## **WEEK THREE (OCTOBER 18–24)**

**Day 292: October 18, 2020**

**Full Plan: John 11:1–12:50**

**Abbreviated Plan: John 16:1–33**

Jesus spends much of John 11 telling people that Lazarus' death won't be permanent. Yet, when a grieving Mary tells him Lazarus is dead, Jesus weeps. (v35) Why? Not because he believed death won. But so that in Jesus, we have someone who grieves with us. Even after Lazarus was raised from the dead, he still needed to be unbound. Even though we receive new life in Christ, we still need to be daily unbound from our old ways.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life: