



JOHN 13-21  
*Journal*





# WELCOME TO *John*

*John tells us at the end of his gospel: "These things 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." While this may seem elementary for those of us who have already "believed in Jesus" as an entry point into a relationship with Him, John declares that we can never stop growing in our trust in Jesus.*

*In light of John's statement, this journal is simply a tool with two goals that come from our convictions about the Scriptures. First, the journal is designed to help you develop a personal habit of interaction with and meditation on the Scriptures. We have found this habit to be absolutely crucial for maturity in Christ. Second, our hope is that the journal would not just be a study of ideas about Jesus. Instead, we hope the journal will aid you in actually knowing Jesus Himself through the Gospel of John. It is meant to help you understand the amazing tapestry of stories that is the Gospel of John, and that by understanding those stories you would come to a greater personal trust in the person of Jesus. While these goals seem simple, they are only possible by the power of God. And so, our prayer for this journal comes from Psalm 90:16:*

*"Let your work be shown to your servants, and your glorious power to their children."*

*Amen.*

## **-THE ELDERS OF RED MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY CHURCH**

*We would love to help you answer any questions you may have as you go through this journal. Just send a quick email to [info@rmcchurch.org](mailto:info@rmcchurch.org) with your question(s) and one of our pastors will get back to you as quickly as possible.*



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*An Introduction to*  
**THREADS IN THE  
GOSPEL OF JOHN**

You could compare John's gospel to a tapestry: a piece of thick fabric with designs formed by weaving colored threads together. Below you will find a list of eight "threads" that John uses to weave together a picture of Jesus. He briefly introduces each of these in his prologue, and develops each of them in a complex interworking of stories, speeches and debates all pointing to the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

- 1. GOD THE FATHER SENT JESUS BECAUSE HE LOVED THE WORLD.**
- 2. JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.**
- 3. JESUS FULFILLED THE OLD COVENANT AND BROUGHT THE NEW COVENANT.**
- 4. JESUS PROVIDES A WAY OF LIFE THROUGH BELIEF IN HIMSELF.**
- 5. THE WAY IS OPEN TO ALL.**
- 6. THOSE WHO BELIEVE ENTER LIFE NOW.**
- 7. JUST AS THE FATHER SENT JESUS, JESUS SENDS OUT HIS FOLLOWERS.**
- 8. DESPITE THE OVERWHELMING CREDENTIALS OF JESUS AS THE SENT SON OF GOD, HE WAS REJECTED BY MANY OF HIS OWN PEOPLE.**

(For more on the threads found in the Gospel of John, see Appendix One.)





WEEK  
- ONE -  
JOHN 13:1-14:31





## DAY ONE - JOHN 13:1-17

Chapters 13-17 contain what's been called "the Upper Room Discourse" or the "Farewell Discourse." It is Jesus' final instruction to His disciples the night before His crucifixion. His public ministry has come to an end, and His hour is finally at hand. Jesus seeks to explain what is to come and where He must go, answers the disciples' questions and fears, and challenges them to stay the course. The key, all encompassing theme is that God's purposeful plan is continuing exactly as He wants it to and He is accomplishing His mission for all creation.

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1. Read Luke 22:24-30. How does Luke's report help you understand more fully the significance of this act of Jesus as reported by John?

2. How do you think what Jesus knew about Himself helped Him rise to all God had for Him? What things do you need to know and trust about your standing with God that will help you NOT pursue status, authority, control, or position?

3. Read verses 14-15. What are some present-day equivalents of washing someone's feet that you need to do for other Christians?

4. How do you think you would have responded to Jesus washing your feet? What has this story reminded you of when it comes to God's grace?

## DAY TWO - JOHN 13:18-30

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1. This is the story of Jesus exposing Judas' agenda. As you read it what are some of the implications of Judas' lasting presence among the twelve?

2. What do you think are some implications for us in today's church of the other eleven being clueless about Judas' heart?

3. What do you think were some of Judas' impurities that gave Satan this opportunity to "enter into him"?

4. What have you learned from verses 13-30 about how you might be at risk of succumbing to Satan?



## DAY THREE - JOHN 13:31-14:14

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1. Jesus makes quite a statement once Judas has gone to do his devious work (verse 31). What does the entire story of Jesus' betrayal and death tell us about the power of evil and the glory of God? Why is this important to you as you seek to understand the events of your life (both past and present)?

2. Read verse 34. What are some important things Jesus says to His disciples in connection with this command to love one another? See *"On John 13:35"* on page 7.

3. Jesus predicts Peter's denial (verses 36-38). Then He immediately says, "Let not your hearts be troubled" (14:1). What are some of the significant things we should learn because John has linked these two things together?

4. Knowing how names functioned in Hebrew culture (see "On John 17:6" on page 31), what do you think Jesus means by the phrase "in Jesus' name" in verse 13? Do you think we should use this phrase at the end of every prayer?

# On John 13:35

*Jesus says He is giving His disciples a "new" commandment, that they are to love one another as He loved them. What does He mean by saying this command is new, especially since it had been commanded before (see Leviticus 19:18, 34)? He likely means it is new in the sense of the STANDARD of love Jesus clearly calls His followers to: "just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." There would never be a love greater! His people loving to this level of depth would be a new thing He would bring about on Earth.*

*Jesus immediately projects the great impact their obedience to this command will have. Their message will have credibility before "all people." In the lingo of our day, Jesus says that by this love for each other His movement would be "well-branded," internally recognized by all people!*

*As Jesus continues to talk with the eleven He says that those who believe will do what He has done, and they will do "greater works" (14:12). If we understand "greater works" in light of the call to love like Jesus loved, then we can make the following observation: Jesus, the perfect man, loved perfectly. Clearly, He was able to put others above Himself. The amazing thing about His love was not just that He was able to love perfectly, but that, being so able, He chose to love us! But when we look at the human race, we see that it is impossible for fallen people to love each other as Christ did. Therefore, that humans would choose to love in this way and then be able to are both miracles. The fact that Christians have broken through a myriad of boundaries and continue to choose to this day to love each other, albeit imperfectly, is, in the perspective of any human observer, a "greater" work. It is likely astounding to every observer in the spiritual realms as well!*

*Now, clearly we achieve such love because love is the work of Jesus. It is inspired in us by the Holy Spirit and enabled by Him (14:15-17). In the end it will bring Yahweh glory, not us. But Jesus clearly commends the work that would be accomplished by human agents as “greater.” That He does so clearly expresses His fond love for us, valuing us as His children and servants. That such a great work is accomplished by broken people can INDEED only be explained in one way. We are disciples of Jesus, buoyed by His power, obeying His command to love each other. The movement is a powerful witness to King Jesus’ power over the evil kingdom in the midst of which He planted His church!*

## DAY FOUR - JOHN 14:15-14:24

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1. What are the two different terms Jesus uses for the Holy Spirit in verses 15-17 (and also 26)? What do they reveal about the exact nature of the Holy Spirit's work within us and through us?

2. Jesus makes several great promises to us in verses 18-24. Make a list of these.



3. Jesus links loving Him to keeping His commandments several times in the verses you've read this week. What do you make of your own love for Jesus based on this?

4. What's a gap in your obedience to Jesus that He has lately been asking you to close?

## DAY FIVE - JOHN 14:25-31

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1. The Holy Spirit teaches us and helps us remember what Jesus taught (verse 25). If you were teaching this to someone, what would you tell them it DOES/DOESN'T mean? What would you think is important for you to clarify about how the Holy Spirit does this?

2. Jesus promises to impart His peace to us. From what you know of Him, how would you describe the exceptional nature of this peace Jesus had? See *"On John 14:27"* on page 13.

3. Jesus makes an interesting statement in verse 30 about the ruler of this world. Who is this? In what sense was he coming? In what sense was he ruler of this world?

4. Looking back over verses 15-31, what are some things Jesus talked about that you would say you have experienced? Of which things do you need more?

# On John 14:27

*Imagine what might have happened in this moment if Jesus had NOT been a man of deep and powerful inner peace. When He said, "My peace I give to you," they would have all said, "No thanks! We've seen YOUR peace and we aren't interested!"*

*The disciples had SEEN Jesus' peace in the worst of circumstances. Mark reports an astounding moment in their lives (4:35-41) when they were engulfed by a violent storm on the sea of Galilee. Jesus was sleeping through all the turmoil. They awakened Him with their panicked cry, "Don't you care that we are perishing?!?" He awoke, "and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' The wind ceased and there was a great calm." What a moment! Mark says of the disciples that they "were filled with great fear and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'" They realized that the level of peace modeled and commanded by Jesus was humanly impossible. His peace was convincing evidence to them that He was not merely another man.*

*Roughly two years later, as Jesus was spending His last hours with these men, He spoke two times during their last meal of the peace He would give them (John 14:27; 16:33). Then when He arose from the dead and showed Himself to them, His first words on three of those occasions were, "Peace be with you." So, a total of five times in the last events reported by John we read of Jesus speaking of peace that He conveyed to them and to all His people.*

*They had seen it. They had felt it. They pursued it. And His peace began to mark them and their message (2 Peter 1:2; 3:4). Our lack of peace today might be the most telling sign of our need to mature in our faith in Yahweh.*

ON JOHN 14:27







WEEK  
- TWO -  
JOHN 15:1-16:33



## DAY ONE - JOHN 15:1-11

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1. In describing how God works with us to increase our fruitfulness, Jesus says God "prunes." What does this "pruning" look like in your life right now?

2. Read verses 4-10. Abiding in Jesus is critical to our spiritual lives. What are some of the things Jesus means when He says, "Abide in me, and I in you"?

3. In verse 10 Jesus says we abide in His love if we keep His commandments. What does that mean? What happened to grace and who actually has a chance of following through on this?

4. How did the Holy Spirit speak with you as you read these verses? Did they bring joy? Why or why not? What are some questions that remain in your mind?

## DAY TWO - JOHN 15:12-17

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1. When Jesus calls us to love our brothers and sisters in Christ, He sets the standard for how we are to love. What is that standard? What are you aware of in yourself that keeps you from rising to this?

2. We who believe are Jesus' friends. That's amazing! In verse 15, Jesus gives the reason we are not just servants. What is it? Do you feel like you know what God is doing most days? How can you have an even better idea of this?



3. Read verses 16-17. There are three purposes God has for us listed in these verses that are meant to strengthen us. What are these purposes?

4. How has the Holy Spirit sought to "prune" you as you have read Jesus' words this week?

## DAY THREE - JOHN 15:18-16:4

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1. If these things were true of a culture like Israel's, steeped in the Law and tradition, what should be our expectation? What are some things in verses 18-25 that should help us live as we experience hatred?

2. What are some ways the Holy Spirit bears witness to Jesus today? How do you bear witness to Jesus?

3. Read 16:1-4. Jesus does not command us to go out and be hated. He just says we will be. Why aren't we hated more? Do you think you clearly stand for the truth?

4. How might the Holy Spirit want to change you as a witness of Jesus Christ?  
*See "On John 15:18-16:4" on the next page.*

# On John 15:18-16:4

*Jesus had a tough talk with His friends in these verses. An important area of growth for a disciple of Jesus is to be a friend to sinners AND also be a source of truth to them. Jesus did both very well. Just as you would expect from God, Jesus had friends that were pretty rough characters AND He led them to make decisions that transformed their lives. It is too easy to be silent, avoid hard conversations and maintain friendship. It keeps you from becoming a friend that inspires life change. Jesus wants us to be that, whether with believers or unbelievers.*

*An important part of becoming an inspiration in the lives of others is to have Jesus' words in these verses firmly placed in our minds. We MUST have the conviction that until we are praying, investing and working to inspire faith in a friend, we are not in the noble place God has for us. We must sense the urgency of this!*

*In another place, Jesus describes us as the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13). Jesus, by using a metaphor, says our privilege is to enhance and preserve the good in another. But He immediately put a question in front of us for us to ponder. "If salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?" Are we still salty? Have we lost our "taste"? Sometimes we alter the truth to make it "taste" better. We make it more friendly. Jesus says that salt that has lost its taste is not good for anything "except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet." That's not a pretty picture of what we can become if we try to make the truth more palatable.*

*We should not change the truth. We should add salt to it! That's what Jesus did well here. He delivered truth with humble honesty, by conveying personal value, and by adding more truth. Notice He does not soften the reality facing His disciples. The world would hate them. But notice how many good things Jesus mentions that the world's hate can signify for us. He broadens the perspective. It's all rather inspiring!*

## DAY FOUR - JOHN 16:4-15

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1. In what ways is having the Holy Spirit an advantage over having Jesus with us physically?

2. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would convict the world's people regarding three things. Why do you need to be convicted about sin? Why do you need to be convicted about righteousness? Why do you need to be convicted about judgment? See *"On John 16:8" on the next page.*

3. What are some connections that you see between 14:15-17, 25-26, and 16:4-15? List out some of the key teachings about the Holy Spirit from these passages.

4. Of what "untruths" or disingenuous things inside or outside of you has the Holy Spirit been convicting you?



# On John 16:8

*God wants us to be people of conviction, not people of expedience. He has sent the Holy Spirit to live in us to help us become this type of people. He convicts us. It is important to learn that His conviction isn't shameful. It is a privilege above all others to hear from God. Conviction IS deeply personal. It can sting. But it is THE means of great eternal blessing, delivered for our eternal welfare. Remember, God wouldn't speak to you if He didn't love you!*

*The Holy Spirit convicts us in order to develop convictions IN us. Who DOESN'T want to be a person with convictions? He will bring countless thoughts from God into our minds in order to develop in us a staunch persuasion about what we MUST think or do about a particular situation. Sometimes we don't listen until after the fact and He convicts us about what we SHOULD have done. Either way, He seeks to develop convictions in us.*

*Jesus gives this great summary about the Holy Spirit's conviction from within us. He convicts us:*

- 1. Regarding sin- He informs us when we're wrong. He convicts us of our ignorance and distrust of God and all the thoughts and actions spawned by that. He seeks to build in us new convictions about old things into which we fall.*
- 2. Regarding righteousness- He informs us of what is right—what God wants us to do. He introduces convictions to us about new things God has for us and THE conviction to trust God enough to think and do the new things.*



*3. Regarding judgment- He reminds us that we are accountable to God as stewards of all God has given us. So is everyone else. The Holy Spirit, therefore, summons us to be concerned with and burdened for those who are unprepared for judgment. He summons us to establish habits that will help us steward well. He reminds us that God will reward us for trusting Him and being faithful.*

## DAY FIVE - JOHN 16:16-33

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1. In verses 16-24 Jesus likens all that is to come in the lives of these eleven disciples to the pain of giving birth and the joy of the arrival of a child. What significant things would come to them in the wake of the pain of His death? Do you experience these to the degree He would want?

2. Jesus notes that because of His death the relationship of people to Yahweh would change. What does He say will change? What needs to happen inside of you to help you live the new way rather than the old?

3. The disciples state their belief in verse 30, but then Jesus warns of their unbelief. Knowing that hard times are ahead of us, why is this warning good for us?

4. Verse 33 is a really significant and encouraging statement (if you were looking for a tattoo idea). How is that verse helping you today? What can you do with this verse so you see it when you need it?



A hand in a dark sleeve holds a lit lantern in a desert landscape at dusk. The lantern is the central focus, glowing with a warm light. The background shows rolling sand dunes under a darkening sky. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white band across the top half of the image.

WEEK  
- THREE -  
JOHN 17:1-26



## DAY ONE - JOHN 17:1-8

This week you will be meditating on the great prayer Jesus prayed for all of His family, including us, living 2,000 years later. Remember that God the Father certainly said "Yes!" to everything Jesus asked for, and continues saying yes in our present day. That changes our perspective of everything. As you read the entire prayer reflect on all the things Jesus says about Himself, about God the Father and His name (see "On John 17:6" on page 31), about His core followers, and about all of us who have come to believe in Him. Think about the profound nature of the things He asked of God. Let this week be THE week where your prayer life changes. Let it change in terms of what you pray and how you pray.

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1. For Jesus, what all was involved for Him in glorifying God? When you think of yourself glorifying God, what do you think is involved?

2. Jesus defines eternal life in verse 3 in terms of quality, not quantity. What does He say is eternal life? Why do you think we Christians focus more on eternal life as something that happens after you die, and less on the eternal life Jesus describes here?

3. What is said in these verses about the authority of Jesus and why does that matter for us?

4. As fallen people we search for glory. What are some things you have tried in search of affirmation of yourself? What are you letting go of as you learn to trust God enough to seek His glory and leave your own glory in His hands?



# On John 17:6

*When the Hebrews bestowed a name on a child they did not seek to simply supply a "label" by which the child could be distinguished from all others. The name they chose was carefully selected so as to reveal something about that child to others. It was a name appropriate in some way to what they observed of that child during the first week of his or her life. And if someone were to come "in" someone's name or to speak "in" someone's name, it meant that the activity or the speech was representative of the character of the person.*

*You will notice in these words of Jesus to God the Father that He speaks of the Father's "name" four different times (verses 6, 11, 12, 26). The Father had revealed His name to Moses for the Israelites to know (Exodus 3:13-17). God said to Moses that His personal name was "I AM." And so, the name all people are to know God by is "He is." The Hebrew word for "He is" transliterated into English is "Yahweh" (which is what we say today). This name "He is" could also be understood as "He will be." So, Yahweh met Israel in this custom of their culture and gave them His personal name. This act revealed that He desired to be known as more than just "God" to them. He wanted relationship with them and He wanted them to know something about Him.*

*Since names reveal something about character, what does God's name reveal about Him? Here are just a few things: first, He simply is. He exists independent of all other beings and forces. He depends on nothing else for whom He is and what He does. He is unique among all beings in this independence. He simply is and will always be. Second, He transcends time and is not impacted by time. Time is His creation and serves Him.*

*He is neither enriched by it nor changed in other ways by it. He is eternally who He is. Third, "He is," and "He will be" present in His creation and in the lives of His people. Before giving His name He says of His people's plight on fallen Earth that He sees, He hears, He knows and He delivers (Exodus 3:7-8). It is after saying this that He revealed His name, "I AM." He IS these things to His people. This behavior is part of who He is, who He will always be. And so He can be counted on to be present among them. He emphatically affirms this after giving His name to Moses. He addresses their slavery by saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, and I PROMISE that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt." (Exodus 6:16).*

*When Jesus says in John 17:6, "I have manifested your name to the people you gave me..." He is stating that God has visibly and physically seen, heard, and known the people of creation and come down to deliver them. Through Jesus they have experienced Yahweh's nature in a way never before experienced. In Jesus we find Yahweh's character demonstrated and made visible in flesh and blood. All of Jesus' words and actions faithfully and accurately represent the character of Yahweh.*

*Yahweh's nature could not have been presented more vividly. Through Jesus we have heard Yahweh's teachings and seen them modeled more clearly than ever before. We have seen Yahweh's love demonstrated like never before. We have seen Yahweh's power and strength brought to life in real-life matters like never before. We have seen our own hearts described by Jesus in a way that we have never understood them before. There is so much in the vivid picture Jesus gave us of Yahweh that inspires us and that summons us to live out His calling on our lives!*

## DAY TWO - JOHN 17:9-13

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1. What things do you think God does in your life each day as He answers Jesus' prayer in verse 11 to "keep them in your name"? See *"On John 17:6" on the previous page*.

2. What attitudes and heart-thoughts is God shaping to make you into a person who brings truthful unity rather than truth-less unity or outright division?

3. Jesus asks that His joy might be brought to completion in His followers (verse 13). Do other people know you as a person of joy? What might be keeping you from experiencing the joy of Jesus?

4. What are some things you are being challenged by so far as you have reflected on Jesus' prayer?

## DAY THREE - JOHN 17:14-19

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1. We live in a world hostile to faith in Yahweh. He answers Jesus' prayer and keeps us from the evil one. How have you recently experienced this?

2. In what ways do you feel "not of this world," and in what ways do you feel very much of this world?

3. Read verse 17 carefully. How does the "sanctifying" activity of God come about? How does God answer this prayer in the life of a disciple today?

4. Jesus has sent us into the world as He Himself was sent. To whom is He sending you?

## DAY FOUR - JOHN 17:20-23

Jesus saw people like us and prayed for this great movement. We are on the pages of Scripture in these verses! His prayer focuses on unity, a most elusive thing for humankind. No doubt you have experienced the unity produced by the Spirit. No doubt you have also witnessed and experienced division and schisms. Think about your experience with unity/disunity through the lens of these verses using the questions below.

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1. Two times in these verses Jesus states why unity is critical to the movement of His kingdom. What is the reason? The second time He adds an important idea, a second critical fruit of our unity (see the last eight words of verse 23). What is this tacked-on idea?

2. What "glory" did Jesus have from God that He gave to us so we would have unity?



3. Did Jesus, during His life, seek unity at any and all cost?

4. Must the movement experience division at times? Why (see 1 Corinthians 11:18-19)?

5. What unhealthy things in you can lead to schisms between you and other believers?

## DAY FIVE - JOHN 17:24-26

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1. What is Jesus asking God the Father to grant to His followers in verse 24? Do you think this request (that God has certainly granted) impacts you as much as it should?

2. When Jesus speaks of the world not knowing God as He does in verse 25, what does He mean (see also verse 3)? What does it mean to “know God”?

3. Life in a fallen world impairs our ability to love and be loved. CAREFULLY read verse 26. What level of love does God the Father enable in us? From Jesus' words, HOW is this enabled in us?

4. What are some ways you personally have been strengthened this week as you have thought through the words Jesus prayed? How does your study of this chapter change your prayer life?





WEEK  
-FOUR-  
JOHN 18:1-19:16





## DAY ONE - JOHN 18:1-14

We now move on from the Upper Room Discourse and into the final moments before the crucifixion. Throughout this section, John is careful to show how Scripture is being fulfilled in this momentous event. *For more thoughts, read "On John 18:9" on page 43.*

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1. As the events of Jesus' arrest begin to unfold, what do you see happening in Him that is admirable? What do you make of the mob falling back when He says, "I am he"?

2. Peter makes a bold stand. How do you think Jesus' rebuke of Peter might have shaped Peter's later denial of Jesus?

3. In verse 11 Jesus states His commitment to obey God. In what kinds of circumstances do you need Jesus' words to ring in your ears?

4. What do you think the Holy Spirit wants to stir in you about things like resolve, courage, obedience and even happiness as you read about Jesus, Judas, Peter, and others?



# On John 18:9 (also verse 32)

*In the early writings that became Scripture a remarkable prophet/leader named Moses is placed before the reader. His deeds were among the greatest ever to occur among humans. They are the stuff of movies! But God made a promise to the world through Moses when He said, "I will raise up for them a prophet like you [Moses] from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him" (Deuteronomy 18:18-19). God promised a prophet to the world. The prophet would bring the very word/message of God our Creator to us. The world would be held accountable for obeying that message. This promise by Yahweh/Creator was nothing less than a promise to end evil and the chaos it had brought about. It would turn out that, as great as Moses was, this provided just a small taste of The Prophet who was to come.*

*John subtly presents Jesus as "The Prophet." He presents Jesus as accomplishing for Yahweh's people greater things than Moses (1:17; 3:14; 6:32-33). He reports that the testimony of those who experienced Jesus firsthand was that "The Prophet" spoken of by the Scriptures had arrived (John 1:45; 6:14; 7:40). Six times John reports an event or occasion in which Jesus fulfilled the predictions made in writing by the prophets in the Old Testament. Two times John reports that a projection made by Jesus about Himself was fulfilled. We can clearly see a number of other times when Jesus forecasted events the disciples would witness and John later speaks of them occurring.*

*As you continue to read John's account of the crucifixion and resurrection, you will see several other moments where he points out that a particular moment fulfilled something already discussed in the Old Testament.*

*We can step back from John's words and view the grand message of the author of Scripture, the Holy Spirit. He inspired all the various human authors over centuries, so that the Word of God came to exist in written human language. Throughout, the Holy Spirit predicted "The Prophet" to come and His greatness. Then, through John, the Holy Spirit gave us the affirmation that this "Prophet", whose work would end evil had come on the scene. "The Prophet," the hope of the world, was Jesus Christ!*

ON JOHN 18:9 (ALSO VERSE 32)

## DAY TWO - JOHN 18:15-27

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1. We read about Peter's denial here. John, the "other disciple" mentioned, is related to the high priest and appears in no danger as Jesus' disciple. Do you think Peter denies Jesus to save his own skin, or is something else motivating Peter here?

2. As you have read about Jesus' life, you have seen the irony in that the priests of His day were often opposed to Him. Have you been aware of yourself opposing God at times even as a Christian? What is in us that causes this contradiction?

3. In terms of Peter's personality, what assets did he have that also became liabilities? What assets in you might the Spirit be warning you about that can turn into liabilities?

4. What does the Lord want to strengthen in you to help you rise to moments when He wants you to stand with Him?

## DAY THREE - JOHN 18:28-40

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1. What do you notice that is peculiar about the Jews' behavior as they bring Jesus to Pilate?

2. John records a couple of conversations between Jesus and Pilate. In the first one, why do you think Jesus wanted to focus Pilate on truth? Why do we all need that focus? What do you think Pilate's reply to Jesus reveals?

3. In verse 40, the story of Israel takes yet another sad twist. What have been some previous sad twists you can think of in this story? What is tragic about the crowd's choice and John's comment concerning Barabbas in verse 40?

4. Can you think of a pattern of choices you have been making lately that would suggest God isn't as important to you as He should be? Write a prayer of confession to God about choices you make that reveal He matters less to you than He should.

## DAY FOUR - JOHN 19:1-11

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1. The truth everyone witnessed was that the power of God topples the cruel intent of evil, bringing about a pathway to forgiveness. When does evil tend to unnerve you? How does this story give strength in those moments?

2. Some hardened individuals are seen throughout these events. What are some "first things" that happened in us that we must allow the Spirit to undo, or else they can cause us to become calloused emotionally and spiritually?



3. Pilate is likely a polytheist and becomes afraid of what's being said about Jesus. When does fear of God lead us to good places and when does it stifle our growth?

4. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life." How does this speak to you as you read this story?

## DAY FIVE - JOHN 19:12-16

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1. Pilate shows more fear, objectivity and tenderness than the Jews in certain moments. What do you think kept him from doing what was just? How have you behaved like Pilate at times?

2. Pilate presents Jesus to the Jews as their king. Do you think God speaks to us through people who don't even acknowledge Him?

3. This is a tragic moment for the Jews. What do they tell God in their angry reply to Pilate? What does history show was the result of this decision of theirs?

4. What are some ways in which our communication with God gets messed up? What needs to be happening IN us so that we are in step with Him?



WEEK  
- FIVE -  
JOHN 19:17-42





## DAY ONE - JOHN 19:17-22

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1. Jesus carried His own cross. The place of His crucifixion was “the place of the skull.” Jesus was crucified with two others. Why do you think John wants you to know these three details? How do they add to the story?

2. John provides details concerning the inscription placed above Jesus. Why do you think Pilate wanted this inscription? What were some reasons the chief priests didn't? How did it serve God's purposes well?

3. What are some observations about God you would make from the series of events in Jesus' life so far in Chapters 18-19? Was there one that impacted you more deeply than others?

4. We often want difficult circumstances to change in our lives, but God might actually be orchestrating them for a greater good, as He did with the crucifixion. What details of your life right now would you love to change? How might God wish to use these in the lives of others?



## DAY TWO - JOHN 19:23-27

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1. The soldiers were all business. How does their emotional detachment magnify the work of Christ for humankind?

2. The actions of the soldiers fulfill Scripture. Why was it so critical that God reveal details ahead of time, in writing, about how Christ's death would unfold?

3. John records a personal moment between himself (the disciple Jesus loved), Mary, and Jesus. What would you have felt as a parent of Jesus, such a special child, in this moment? What would you have to sort out with God in the aftermath?

4. Read Romans 5:5-8. Write a short prayer of thanks to Jesus for reaching out to you in your sin.

## DAY THREE - JOHN 19:28-30

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1. Jesus knew how He would die (Matthew 20:17-19) and He lived fully with His end in mind. Thinking back, what kinds of things were obviously on Jesus' "bucket list"? How can you live more with your end in mind? To what will you be giving your time and energy?

2. What were some things that were finished by the life and suffering of Jesus? What are some things in you that can be "finished" because He died for you? Why is "it is finished" such an important declaration? *For further meditation, read Colossians 2:8-15.*

3. Long before Jesus died physically, He died in another way. What was THAT death (see Philippians 2:5-11)?

4. How has the Holy Spirit spoken to you in terms of your level of sacrifice to bring spiritual life to others? How is He leading you to die to yourself?

## DAY FOUR - JOHN 19:31-37

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1. The Jews wanted everything proper for Passover, so they wanted the victims dead and the bodies gone. What is twisted and ironic about this concern to have a proper Passover?

2. Jesus died relatively fast. What did this quick death say to the Roman soldier who witnessed it (see Mark 15:39)? Why do you think this quick death occurred?

3. John affirms the accuracy of the details he has reported about Jesus' death. He does it to help us believe. WHAT is he asking us to believe here?

4. Read Zechariah 12:1-13:1. In this passage the future regret/submission of Israel toward one they had pierced is projected (highlight 12:10). What future hope does Zechariah project that John recognized was affirmed for us the moment Jesus was pierced by the soldier? *For more, see "On John 19:37" on the next page.*

# On John 19:37

Zechariah prophesied in Israel around 500 BC. Through Zechariah, Yahweh told of a glorious future He had planned for Israel. He also made it clear that the path would be circuitous and filled with self-inflicted tribulations. These would be consequences of the hard-heartedness that Israel always seemed to drift into, rejecting Yahweh's rule. Chapters 12-14 speak of events that would occur that would change all this: the special intervention of Yahweh in world affairs. Here's what you'll read about in those chapters:

- Yahweh would bring "a day" of great reversal in world governments. Those dominating Israel would themselves be dominated.
- Yahweh would bring great victory for the little kingdom of Israel, destroying all their foes.
- Surprisingly, the day would bring great mourning in Israel when they recognized that the one who brought about this great reversal was the very one they pierced—whom John shows to be Jesus.
- Israel would experience a day of great forgiveness from Yahweh for their centuries of treacherous betrayal.
- Earth would witness Israel casting off all the false religious schemes they had embraced.
- BUT this had to happen first: Israel would kill the one appointed by Yahweh as their shepherd/king. They would go through a great period of trouble as a people. The mess would be the sign that the ending was good!
- Yahweh's king would restore to Israel all that had been unjustly taken from them over the centuries.



- *The battle on the day would start out badly for Israel. It would shift in their favor when the one they had pierced appeared dramatically with great power.*
- *The return of the one they had pierced will mark a day unique in Earth's history, when even the geography of Palestine will be changed.*
- *It will mark the day when Yahweh Himself will rule the earth. It will be the end of the age of humanity and the beginning of the day of Yahweh.*
- *It will be a season when Yahweh's will is strictly imposed and enforced on the earth with no resistance allowed, but a time of unprecedented peace and prosperity.*
- *It will begin an era unlike any other when Yahweh will be worshiped and Jesus praised by all peoples.*

## DAY FIVE - JOHN 19:38-42

Jesus is dead. But He said He would rise. That makes His burial important. Questions and objections about a resurrection would arise. Was He really dead? Was He buried? Was the body stolen? Two unlikely characters, perfect for this moment, step up to entomb Jesus. Both were respected members of the party that opposed Jesus. Both had come to believe in Him! The burial would be hasty, but honoring and thorough.

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1. A character is introduced here named Joseph, a disciple of Jesus, "but secretly" so. That seems contradictory! We all have such contradictions. How have you experienced God's grace and truth as you find your own inner contradictions?

2. Another character named Nicodemus re-enters the narrative (see John 3:1-15; 7:45-52). Like Joseph, he was not exactly an "ideal" disciple. What hope do you see from these for your own discipleship? What sense of urgency do their stories inspire in you?

3. What things does John say they did with the body that involved courage and sacrifice but also affirmed that Jesus was certainly dead?

4. This was likely a turning point for Joseph, the time for him to stand up (see Mark 15:43-45). In what area of your walk with Jesus is it time for you to stand up?





WEEK  
-SIX-  
JOHN 20:1-21:25



## DAY ONE - JOHN 20:1-18

We now move from the crucifixion to the glorious resurrection!

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1. Mary Magdalene thought the body of Jesus had been moved. Peter and John ran to look. What do you think it was about the grave cloths that made the idea occur to Peter and John that Christ had risen from the dead?

2. Mary has the first personal contact with the risen Jesus. Knowing what you know about the perception of women in the ancient world, why is this significant and what might this be saying about the new movement?

3. Read Jesus' words in verse 17. What do you notice about the message Jesus tells Mary to communicate to the others? Why would this be important for them to hear?

4. There was a lot the disciples heard but didn't recognize. Is the Holy Spirit prompting you about things you know about God but struggle to recognize, understand, or trust? What are some of those things?



## DAY TWO - JOHN 20:19-29

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1. The disciples were scared. Jesus came to them and said twice, "Peace be with you." Experiencing His peace comes with spiritual maturity. Do you think you are very mature in experiencing His peace? *For further thoughts, go back and read "On John 14:27" on page 13.*

2. Jesus re-affirms to them their mission and links the mission to the work of the Holy Spirit. What are some things you feel sent to do as part of that mission? What are some things you could begin doing to give people a good experience with a Christian?

3. Thomas could boast about not being easily taken in, but Jesus blesses those who believe. Why do you think we admire and mimic skeptics? What has been helpful to you in learning to trust God more?

4. Write down some areas in which you want to grow in your trust of God.

## DAY THREE - JOHN 20:30-21:3

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1. John said Jesus did MANY things that proved He was the Son of God. How would you answer someone who, in conversing with you, objected to your "blind faith"?

2. What is John referring to with the phrase "life in His name"? What are some of the characteristics of that life?

3. What's known and comfortable is often the enemy of faith. What was OK about the disciples going back to their business of fishing? What was risky about it? What can we do to check ourselves at such times when the known seems so right?

4. Given that John's purpose statement for his gospel is 20:30-31, did he accomplish that in you? Do you trust Jesus more and have you experienced life in Jesus' name?

## DAY FOUR - JOHN 21:4-25

Jesus shows up on the fishing trip. What happens is similar to another fishing trip He had with them. That trip was early in their relationship and was reported by Luke (Luke 5:1-11). On this fishing venture John is reporting on, a bad night fishing is about to turn into a fishing frenzy! But, the stranger on the beach calls out to them and asks them to do one thing different, to throw their net into the water on the other side of the boat. It was Jesus, but they didn't know that. A lot was riding on them doing what He asked of them, but they didn't know that either.

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1. Think about Jesus asking them to do this one thing. Why do you think He did that? What might have been some reasons NOT to do it? Do you ever think He wants to open a door for you but asks you to do one thing differently?

2. The size of the catch tells John (the disciple whom Jesus loved) that the stranger is Jesus. Peter forgets the fish and rushes to meet Him. What had Peter learned about Jesus that made this happen? Are you willing to jump?

3. Read verse 12. The breakfast sounds like it started out awkwardly. From what you know of the story of the last few days, what sorts of things needed to be talked about between these men and Jesus?

4. There is one simple phrase that appears in verse 19 and 22. What is it? What does this tell us about the message of John's gospel?

## DAY FIVE - REVIEW

You made it to the end! Take a few minutes to flip back through your answers in this journal and, as you do, ponder the following questions.

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1. What is the most significant area in which your trust in Jesus and His truth needs to increase? What do you think you need to make this happen or do you just need to do it?

2. What are two or three questions you still have as you try to understand what the Gospel of John is saying?



3. In 21:25, John gives stirring words about the MANY things Jesus did to enable us to trust. How has this journey through John's book strengthened your trust in Jesus? What stories helped you see Jesus in a new or refreshing way?





APPENDIX  
- ONE -

# THREADS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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## 1. JOHN WANTS US TO KNOW THAT GOD THE FATHER SENT JESUS BECAUSE HE LOVED THE WORLD .

- 1:9, 18; 3:16, 34; 4:34; 5:19; 7:29; 8:26; 14:31.
- God the Father is mentioned over 100 times and is the initiator of salvation, the one who designed it and the one who is chiefly glorified by it (17:1-5).
- God loves His creation deeply and John shows that it is not humans reaching up to God, but rather God coming to them (15:13).
- God loves the entire world, not just Israel. We will see a huge concern for the nations all over the place (4:42; 8:12; 12:20-26), which coincides with God's plan in His covenant with Abraham, who would be a blessing to all nations.
- God sent Jesus who was "with God." Jesus does only what the Father does or wants to do.

## 2. JOHN WANTS US TO KNOW THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.

- 1:1, 14; 20:3.
- In 20:31, John tells us this is his main goal.
- Jesus is the expected Jewish Messiah ("Christ"). He is the king who is to come and restore the nation of Israel (Genesis 17:8; 2 Samuel 7:13). This is good news for the Jewish people who have been under political oppression for over 600 years, and have been under spiritual oppression since Adam and Eve.
- Jesus is divine, He wasn't just some human king (1:1; 5:18; 8:58; 17:5; use of the "I am"). Thomas got this right in his exclamation: "My Lord and my God!" (20:28).
- John used "signs" to show who Jesus was. Some of these are named as signs (2:1-11; 4:46-54; 6:1-14; 12:18) while others are probably assumed (5:1-9; 6:16-21; 9:1-7). While not specifically mentioned by John, note that there are seven signs. However, John ends his gospel saying that "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book" (20:30).

### **3. JOHN WANTS US TO KNOW THAT JESUS FULFILLED THE OLD COVENANT AND BROUGHT THE NEW COVENANT.**

- 1:14, 17.
- John's huge purpose is to demonstrate that the promises made in the Old Testament are now coming to pass (for example, Isaiah 35:6 and John 5:1-9; Ezekiel 47 and John 7:37-39; Ezekiel 34:1-24 and John 10:11). Jesus is the fulfiller of each major feast in the Jewish calendar: Tabernacles, Dedication and the Passover.

### **4. JOHN WANTS US TO KNOW THAT JESUS PROVIDED A WAY OF LIFE THROUGH BELIEF IN HIMSELF.**

- 1:4, 12-13.
- In His death and resurrection Jesus powerfully made available a new way of life. John declares that Jesus took away the sin of the world (1:29), He is the bread of life for the world (6:51) and He laid down His life for His sheep (10:11). Jesus gave up His life in place of others so that others could have life.
- Receiving this new life comes only by putting your trust in Jesus and by believing in Him, for He alone is the way, the truth and the life (14:6).
- For John, belief is not just a mental knowledge but rather an active trust. He only uses the verb form for "belief" (98 times), which is captured best in our word "trust." So, in John 4:49-50, it was only because the royal official trusted in Jesus that his son was healed. In John 9:7 and 38, it was only because the blind man trusted in Jesus that he went and washed in the pool of Siloam.

## **5. JOHN WANTS US TO KNOW THAT THE WAY IS OPEN TO ALL.**

- 1:4, 13; 4:42; 8:12; 12:20-26.
- Again, God loves the whole world. His plan includes not just Israel, but the nations. At various points in the story, John points out individuals and groups that are outside of Israel, yet still embrace belief in Jesus.
- This is easy to say now, because there are a lot of Gentiles in the church, but in the first century this was a huge claim.

## **6. JOHN WANTS US TO KNOW THAT THOSE WHO BELIEVE ENTER LIFE NOW.**

- 1:12, 16, 18.
- The terms "life" and "eternal life" are basically synonymous in John.
- When we hear the term "eternal life," we often think quantity, but John wants us to focus on a certain quality of life. While John does include the idea of future life to come (6:40, 54), he places great emphasis on the fact that Jesus changes life in the present. In John 10:10, Jesus announces that he came to give a certain quality of life. It's a changed life that begins at the moment of belief. In other words, our "salvation" from sin isn't just something that happens when we say a certain prayer or when we die and go to heaven. Salvation happens now and continually in this life. It is a radical reorientation of thoughts and actions. We, as followers of Jesus, live a different kind of life, life as it's meant to be lived.
- In addition to a relationship with the Godhead (4:21; 14:23), several benefits exist now for those who believe in Jesus: freedom (8:31-34), the Holy Spirit (7:37-38; 14:17, 26; 16:33), peace (14:26-17), love (3:16; 13:34-35; 15:12; 17:26), and joy (15:11, 17:13). All of this shows that life with Jesus is a satisfying life, which leaves no deep longings (10:10).
- New life, a radical reorientation, produces fruit (15:1-10) and certain responsibilities for believers: sanctification (17:15), mission (see theme seven), and sacrificial love (14:12, 23; 15:13).
- Of course, there is still one problem—sin is not fully defeated in this life. While eternal life is tasted now, it will come in full at the return of Jesus (13:33-14:3).

## **7. JOHN WANTS US TO KNOW THAT JUST AS THE FATHER SENT JESUS, JESUS SENDS OUT HIS FOLLOWERS.**

- 1:6-7, 14; 7:37-39, 17:18; 20:21.
- We are to bring the message of life to the dark world as it flows out of us to those around us (7:37-39). The mission started with Jesus and continues with His followers. Here are some examples of how that happens:
  - Teaching: Just as Jesus taught people about God, so do His disciples (18:20).
  - Works: Just as Jesus used works to minister, so do His disciples (14:12).
  - Words: Just as Jesus used words with works, so do His disciples (4:35).
  - Rejection: Just as Jesus experienced hatred and rejection from the world, so do His disciples for their testimony (15:18-19; 15:27-16:2).
  - Unity: Just as Jesus is one with the Father, so the disciples are to live in unity with one another (17:21-23).
  - Forgiveness: Just as Jesus brought forgiveness to many, so His disciples are to forgive others (20:23).
  - Shepherd: Just as Jesus was the Good Shepherd, so His disciples are to care for His sheep (21:5-7).
- This is quite a mission. In fact, it's impossible. Thankfully, Jesus promises to hear our prayer (14:12-14) and the Holy Spirit will help (16:7-16). He will bring about prayers that are in line with the character and desires of Jesus Himself.

## **8. DESPITE THE OVERWHELMING CREDENTIALS OF JESUS AS THE SENT SON OF GOD, HE WAS REJECTED BY MANY OF HIS OWN PEOPLE (1:11-12).**

- Rejection: 1:11; 2:18; 5:16; 6:66; 7:30, 44; 8:48; 9:40, 10:31; 11:53; 12:37.
- Belief: 1:12; 2:11; 6:68-69; 7:43; 8:30; 11:45; 19:25-26; 20:28.
- Much of John's gospel seems like the people are putting Jesus on trial. Yet, many others did believe in Jesus, which creates an intriguing interplay of rejection and belief in almost every story.





APPENDIX  
- TWO -



## JOHN 15:2 “EVERY BRANCH IN ME THAT DOES NOT BEAR FRUIT . . .”

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What exactly does God do with every branch in Jesus that does not bear fruit? That’s a pretty important question, especially since all of us can pass through seasons in which our walk with Jesus falters. Do we have to be concerned that Jesus will cut us off in these moments of faltering?

Almost every major English version of the Bible says in John 15:2 that God “takes away” branches that are not bearing fruit. That sounds pretty scary! The NIV is even scarier. It says that God “cuts off” such branches. Because of this translation, some suggest God ends the physical lives of people not bearing fruit. Others suggest God rejects the fruitless people and sends them to hell. Most of these interpretations create tension and conflict with what other Bible passages clearly teach about our salvation and transformation (see Romans 8:28-30 for example). The most common view on these verses is that when Jesus says “every branch in me” He does not refer to people who have actually placed their faith in Him, but those who simply claim to be Christians. This is a reasonable explanation, but it is also problematic because it uncomfortably goes against the plain sense of what “in me” would mean. Now, hopefully, we all want the truth, no matter how scary or uncomfortable it is. Just because “takes away” makes us feel uncomfortable doesn’t mean we should change it. However, how best do we resolve what appears to be a contradiction? Is John 15 saying that Christians can lose their salvation? Is it saying they were never Christians in the first place?

Over the past 20 years, an alternate reading of this verse has surfaced that makes the verse more understandable. Instead of translating the word as “takes away” you could translate it as “raises up.” Reading John 15:2 in this way provides a very simple solution, so simple that one cannot help but wonder why it was not suggested much earlier. As you will see, this reading has legitimate support from John’s own usage of the Greek word. It also has strong support in terms of vineyards and how grapes are grown.

To explain this alternative reading, we have to get into the Greek words, which is the original language of the New Testament. In 15:2, John used the Greek word *airo*, a word that can commonly mean either “take away” or “lift up.” In most English translations of John 15:2, *airo* is rendered by the phrase “takes away.” To be sure, there are passages in John in which he uses *airo* to express the thought “take away” (1:29; 2:16; 11:48). But there are other passages in which John uses this exact same word to express the thought “lift up” (5:8 “lift up your bed”; 8:59 “they lifted up stones”). So, it IS legitimate to render this word as most of the English versions have: “Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He takes away.” However, it is equally legitimate to render this verse in THIS way: “Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He lifts up.” Since John uses *airo* in both ways, what does he mean by its use in this particular passage?

To help with this decision, it’s helpful to consider the context of the passage, which uses the metaphor of vineyards. Most of us have visited vineyards. If we have not, we have at least driven past them or seen them in movies. We can immediately recall that branches in a typical vineyard grow on a wire trellis four to five feet above the ground instead of just growing on the ground. For centuries, vine growers have known that the production of grapes is enhanced by this practice of trellising. When lifted up, the branches get more sunlight. When lifted up, the grapes do not lie on the ground and become lost to spoilage. When lifted up, more fruit is produced and brought to maturity. Research has indicated that the method of trellising was cruder in first century Palestine, but the practice of lifting branches up was still occurring.

Given this context of vineyard cultivation, it is likely that those in Jesus’ immediate audience knew exactly what He was talking about here. Even if they were not growers, they lived in an agrarian society, acquainted enough with agricultural practices to know that Jesus used *airo* referring to the practice of “lifting up” the branches to help them produce grapes.

Though most of us today have never produced grapes, once we know that this Greek word can legitimately be understood as “He lifts up,” we know enough about vineyards to understand what Jesus was communicating to us. Jesus’ point in the metaphor is that remaining in Him is key for producing fruit. As we are in Him, and not producing fruit, He lifts us up so as to bear fruit and bring fruit to maturity. He provides people, events and circumstances that lift us. His Spirit leads us to establish habits and routines that lift us above what we would naturally become. As His image-bearers, we have capacity for so much that would not occur to us were it not for His relentless effort to make us more fruitful as we remain in Him.

When you read John 15:2, it’s helpful to read it like this: “Every branch in me that does not bear fruit He lifts up, and every branch that bears fruit He prunes so that it will bear more fruit.” Then, watch for His lifting/pruning of you as you remain in Him. Seize the opportunity to be transformed by responding to God’s work in your life.





# SURVEY

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Thanks for journaling through the book of John. Please take a few minutes and let us know what you thought about our John series by answering the questions below. When finished, you can tear along the dotted line and place your completed survey in the offering bag:

1. Did this journal actually aid you in your journey through John? How so?

2. What was your favorite aspect of the journal?

3. What suggestions do you have for future journals?









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