



That You May
HAVE LIFE

A STUDY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

women's
BIBLE STUDY



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LESSON *Ten*

Jesus, The Servant



This was the beginning of the end; Jesus' time had come. During His last supper with His disciples, He washed their feet. In this, He demonstrated humility and service in a way no one expected, a subtle way to point to His coming death. Finally, Jesus revealed more about the disciple who would betray Him.

UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE

Chapters 13-17 are called the Upper Room Discourse. Jesus' teaching is now specifically directed at the disciples rather than the people of Israel who have rejected Him. He is anticipating the cross and focuses now on His own.

SHIFT

Up until this point Jesus had been saying, "My time has not yet come." But now, notice the shift in the narrative in verse 1. The reason why He came, to die for the sins of the world, was here.

PASSOVER

Yet again, John marks the timing of the events in this chapter with a feast: Passover. Read Exodus 12 to understand the significance of the symbolism: the True Lamb of God was going to be sacrificed.

Read John 13:1-30 before answering the following questions.

1. Take a minute to think about John 1-12. What were some of the major events and teachings that have led us to this place?

Read John 13:1-17.

2. From verses 1-11, use the following prompts to set the scene.

Who:

What:

When:

Where:

Why they were gathered:

3. Why might the disciples have been surprised by Jesus washing their feet? What character traits does Jesus demonstrate by this action? (See Mark 10:45; 1 Peter 5:5)

4. What was Peter's response to Jesus washing his feet?

Now, put yourself in his shoes. You have walked many miles across a dusty land in broken and tattered sandals. Your feet are dry, dirty, and worn. Then, without warning, Jesus, the Savior of the World, kneels down to wash your dirt covered feet. How would you feel? How would you respond?

5. Jesus' action required much humility. Define humility. How is humility cultivated? (For help, read Colossians 3:12, Ephesians 4:2, and James 4:6; See Appendix: Humility)
6. Jesus acted without regard to the social standards of the day. Instead, He acted in love. From verses 8-15, what lessons was He communicating through washing their feet? How does Titus 3:4-7 add to your understanding of this passage?
7. Think about a time when someone served you well. What characterized this person and his/her service to you? Who can you serve in this way, and what keeps you from serving others like this more often?

BE CAREFUL

Christians today fall into the same trap as Peter, preferring to dictate terms with God. "We need to be careful lest we... treat God like a tool to be used, rather than a King to be obeyed."⁵¹

LOWLY

The washing of feet "was a task normally reserved for the lowliest of menial servants. Peers did not wash one another's feet, except very rarely and as a mark of great love."⁵²

DIG DEEPER

Jesus was establishing His Kingdom and it looked nothing like you would expect. He did not come to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45). For more on this upside-down Kingdom, read Jesus' parables in Matthew 13.

TEACHER

Jesus was an incredible teacher. He often used physical examples of the lessons He was teaching. For example, He fed the 5,000 before claiming to be the bread of life. In this case, He washed His disciples' feet to teach a lesson on humility and service.

“We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed.”

— *Brother Lawrence*⁵³

JOHN

John, the author, calls himself the one whom Jesus loves. While this has been said to have a sense of arrogance, actually it reflects a great sense of awe. John knows who he is in Jesus. Consider if you would call yourself “the one whom Jesus loves.” Remember, you, just like John, are loved by God.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

To better understand the enemy’s role, read Ephesians 6:10-18, 1 Peter 5:8-9, and 2 Thessalonians 3:3. Also, see the Appendix definition for Spiritual Warfare.

LOVE

Verses 26-28 mention Jesus handing Judas a morsel of bread. Many commentators think that this one act was Jesus’ last effort to show Judas His love.⁵⁴

Read John 13:18-30.

8. Write down the details you discover about the one who would betray Jesus. (See also John 3:19, 2 Corinthians 4:4)

9. Jesus continued to love and invest in Judas, and even washed His feet, though He knew Judas would reject Him (verses 2-3, 18-19). How does this impact your understanding of God’s love for unbelievers? What about God’s pursuit of them?

10. Despite Judas’ actions and the fact that he would be held accountable for his rejection of Jesus, God used him in His bigger plan. Read John 17:12 and Acts 1:16-17. How do you feel about God using even unbelievers for His glory and good? (Ex: Does it give you comfort or make you pause?)

11. Read Philippians 2:1-11 and consider Jesus’ example. Now, honestly reflect on your heart for others. What is most often your motivation for serving others? How can you better follow Jesus’ example in your attitude and actions as you serve others?

12. Jesus came so that you may have life. Part of this fullness of life can be found in serving others. Briefly describe a time below when you have been filled up by serving someone else. Why do you think this was life-giving to you? (Ephesians 2:10)

PRAY

Take a moment to pray and ask God to fill you with a greater desire to serve others.

BIG IDEA

What is your biggest takeaway from this week's lesson?

Reflection:

In this study of John, you have reflected on abundant life in Jesus. Take a minute to consider:

Does it ever seem unattainable, like an empty promise, or simply too good to be true?

How can you truly experience this life with Jesus? Write any reflections in the space below.

Notes