

LISTENING GUIDE



Introductory Session

As we begin a journey that will take us throughout Galilee into Samaria, to Jerusalem, to Ephesus, and to Patmos, let's consider adopting the same invitations for embarkation that John encountered.

Read John 1:35-51.

1. Let's sense Christ asking us the same question: "_____, My child, what do you want?
[Your name]

What are you seeking here and now in this _____ of your life?"

2. Let's be willing to "_____."

3. Consider the unfathomable grace of God that we sometimes "find" Christ when we didn't even know
_____ was the _____ we were _____.

4. We will miss untold treasures if we confuse "_____"
with "_____."

5. Let's begin our journey as a true seeker "in whom there is _____."

6. Wherever we've recently _____, Jesus has _____.

7. As Christ reveals how He has "_____" _____, our eyes are somehow
_____ to "see" _____.

By design, no answers are provided for these blanks.

SESSION 1

Fresh Winds over Galilee

Sometimes we also may have the desire to take our whips and turn over the tables in our worlds: in our children's schools, in our communities, in our churches, etc. We've got to be so careful what we rationalize by Scripture. Before we proceed, we are wise to remember a few important things. We'll make six points today based on the calling of John.

Read Mark 3:13-19 and John 2:12-17.

1. Christ could not sin in His zeal or anger. See Ephesians 4:26-27.

Anger and rage are highly motivational, but they are extremely destructive.

2. Godly indignation is measured by the absence of "self."

3. God looks upon the heart beneath the action. We can even have a wrong heart about a right issue and find ourselves disciplined by God.

4. Paradoxically, we receive our calling as one kind of person but can only fulfill it as another.

See Matthew 18:2-3. "Unless you change and become [your answer], you will never

[your answer] [your answer].

”

5. Though preparation is important, Christ seems to have an affinity for on-the-job training.

6. The kind of change God desires comes one primary way. See Mark 3:14: "that they might be with him and that he might send them out."

SESSION 2

Sights and Insights

Reflect on John 18:15-18,25-27.

1. Few experiences lend more opportunity to be disappointed by someone we've highly esteemed than a traumatic event.
2. Each of us is wise to ask the following question: Who have I given enough power to throw me off course by his or her denial-like actions toward Christ?
3. Sudden uncharacteristic actions do not by themselves render the person or ministry fraudulent.

See 2 Corinthians 11:2-3.

4. Wise is the man or woman who realizes he or she, too, could momentarily deny Christ. May we never withhold from another something that—in due time—we may desperately need.

Read John 18:28-31,38-40; 19:12-16.

1. Chaotic events don't place us suddenly out of control nearly as much as they remind us how little control we had all along. See 2 Thessalonians 2:3.
2. When we feel tremendously out of control in one area, without God's help we will ordinarily transfer a tighter control-grip on another area.
3. We will never develop authentic confidence in God's sovereign control until we let Him see us through seasons when life seems out of control.
4. Keep in mind that Satan's first goal in a believer's life in trauma is to encourage cessation of communication with God.
5. God may not always answer our questions, but He will always answer us.

Psalm 65:5: "You answer us with awesome deeds of righteousness, O God our Savior."

Jeremiah 33:3: " 'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.' ' "

Psalm 69:13: "O God, answer me with your sure salvation."

SESSION 3

Defining Moments

Read Acts 4:23-32.

The Greek word *deesis* refers to a **particular need** for which one prays.

How did God respond to their prayers?

- The place where they were meeting was **shaken**. The Greek word means “to move to and fro, shake ... to put into a state of waving, **rocking**, vibratory motion.”
- They were **all** filled with the Holy Spirit.
- They **all** spoke the Word of God boldly.

1. They neither **denied** nor **minimized** the seriousness of the problem (v. 23).

2. The believers **united** for prayer in a way God highly honors. (The Greek word is *homothumadon*.)

- *Homos* means **one** and the **same**.
- *Thumos* means **temperament**, **mind**. Also, “With one mind, with **unanimous consent**, in one accord, all together.” *Thumos* can also mean **passion** as well as mind or thought.

If God honors His people coming together with ONE MIND and passion, whose mind is right?

Philippians 2:5 (KJV) says, “Let **this mind** be in you, which was also

in **Christ Jesus**.” What kind of mind did He have?

- He made Himself of **no reputation**.
- He took on the **form of a servant**.
- He **humbled** Himself. Proverbs 13:10 says, “Pride only breeds quarrels.”

3. They corporately **exalted** God. In doing so, they **glorified** Him and reminded themselves to whom **they belonged** (Acts 4:24).

4. They cited **Scripture relevant** to their challenge (vv. 25-26).

5. They reminded themselves that anything God allows to **threaten His own**, He will use to bring about great glory.

6. Then they asked **big things**.

SESSION 4

Beyond the Limits

Part 1: Grasping the Concept of Divinely Inspired Scripture

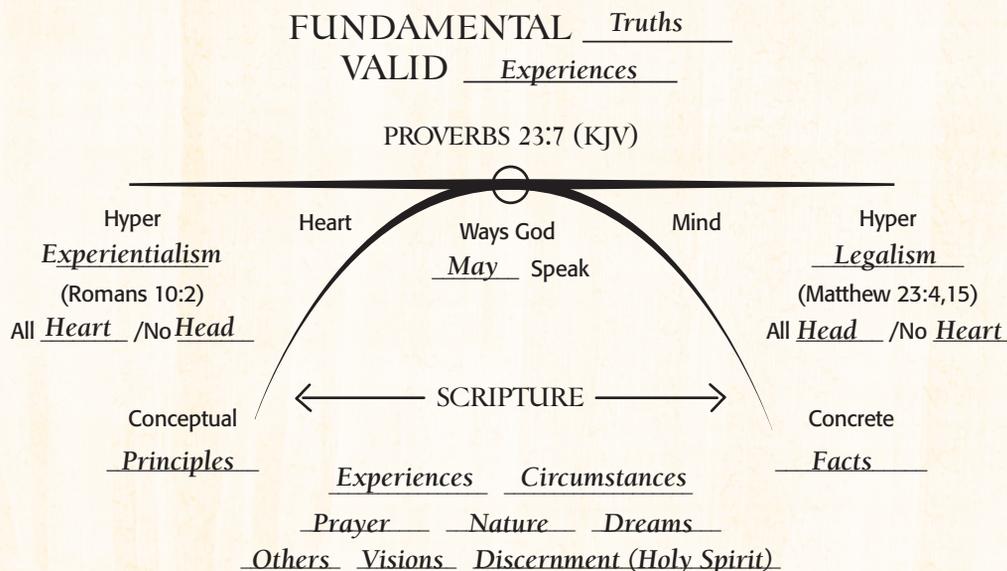
According to 2 Timothy 3:16, “All Scripture is **God breathed**.” The original Greek word is *theopneustos*. *Theo*—God. *Pneustos*—breath or spirit. Consider each of the following Scriptures.

1. Based on a comparison between 2 Peter 1:20-21 and 1 Chronicles 28:19, we might say the men God used to write Scripture served as neither the **author** nor the **ink**. They served as the **quill**. The author is God the Holy Spirit and the ink flowing through that pen is the Holy Spirit, the breath of God that He’s pouring through.
2. The Word is **eternal**, but God chose to give inspiration through **progressive revelation** (see Ps. 119:89).
3. Compare Genesis 2:7. When God breathes, He breathes **life**. Hebrews 4:12 tells us His Word is **alive**.
4. See Luke 1:1-3. We are told that **many** undertook writing accounts of Christ’s life and fulfillment of God’s plan; yet we don’t have “many” of those accounts in the Bible.

Part 2: Grasping God’s Primary Intention Through His Inspiration of John’s Gospel

Read John 1:1.

1. One of the overriding themes in the Gospel of John is presented from the very first verse: Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John wanted his reader to know and recognize the **Word**.
2. The Greek term for *Word* is **Logos**. Basically it refers to the **expression** of God **revealed** to man. God revealed Himself through His **Son** and His **words**.
3. The only way we will ever really know the Word, both the Person and the print, is to know His **words**. Both of these verses employ the Greek word **rhema**.
4. As we learn to receive and apply *rhema*, we are wise to remember that God’s Word is written: **by** God about **God**, **to** others about **others**, **to** us about **us**.



SESSION 5

Receiving His Fullness

See **John 3:5**. One of the most often repeated phrases from the mouth of Christ is “***I tell you the truth.***” In the NIV the phrase appears **77** times in the Gospels.

Jesus used the phrase ...

1. For the sake of ***emphasis***.
2. For clarity on issues of ***profound importance*** like ***life*** and ***death***.
3. For clarity on issues of ***controversy***.

Christ tells us the truth. ***Truth breeds trust.***

Take a good look at Psalm 31:1-5,13-16,21. Camp on the words in verse 14: “I trust in you, O Lord.” What makes a person able to trust God when the circumstances around him are screaming to disbelieve? He has come to trust in the God of truth (v. 5).

1. Christ will tell us the truth even when we think we’d prefer a lie. Why?

- Because He ***is Truth*** (John 14:6).
- Because only the truth ***sets us free*** (John 8:32).

2. Thankfully, Christ’s truth always comes coupled with His ***grace***.
3. Christ holds His ***church*** and His ***children*** responsible for telling not only

His truth but His ***whole*** truth.

Two extremes in unbalanced teaching or portraying:



God has nothing to do with anything we could ever ***interpret*** as ***negative*** or ***painful*** (2 Tim. 4:3-5).

God is always ***angry***, never ***pleased***, and usually ***out*** to ***get us*** (Luke 4:18).

See **John 16:33**. Christ Jesus came to us as the exact representation of the Father. He taught neither of the above extremes. See **Matthew 18:4-7**.

SESSION 6

Life More Abundantly

Our previous lesson concluded the written focus on the concepts of “more” and “abundance” in the Gospel of John. Today we will pick up and expand on an important principle for the believers life that

was established in week 6, day 5: **identification by association**. No other chapter in all four Gospels has “more” to say about this wonderful principle than the incomparable John 17.

In contrast, man’s natural life principle is: **identification by exaltation**.

“**Identification by association**” is beautifully illustrated in John 17.

1. Between **Father** and **Son**. Read John 17:1-5.

A. Traces of Intimacy

- In **timing** (the time has come ...)
- In the essence of **eternal life**
- In reference to relationship **before** the **world** began

B. Terms of Intercession

- “**Glorify** your **Son**, that your Son may **glorify you**.”
- Identification by association for **glorification**.

2. Between Father, Son, and **those** God **gave Him**. Read John 17:6,20.

A. Traces of Intimacy

- The revelation of the Father received through ...
 - 1) Obedience to His **Word** (*logos*)
 - 2) Acceptance of His **words** (*rhema*)
- Christ’s insistence that **glory** had come to Him through them
- Christ’s passion for the **love** God has for Him

B. Terms of Intercession

- “protect them by the **power** of your **name**.”
- “protect them from the **evil one**”
- “that all of them may be **one** ... brought to **complete unity**”

SESSION 7

Letters from the Heart

Our journey with the Apostle John will take us now over the waters of the Aegean Sea to a small island called Patmos. In week 8, day 1 we will look more closely at John's arrival and the introduction to the Book of Revelation. Today, however, we're going to consider to the best of our understanding the vision of Christ that John recorded in **Revelation 1:9-18**.

While we understand that John received a one-time-only vision of Christ, I believe we can draw some important parallels about becoming the kind of people to whom Christ can reveal Himself.

1. Though a prisoner in exile, John remained spiritually ***keen*** and ***fervent***.

Revelation 1:10, "On the ***Lord's Day*** I was in ***the Spirit***."

2. John was faithful with what he "***heard***," and God invited him to "***see***" (Rev 1:10,12).

The original word for *hear* often used in Scripture is *akouo*, meaning "not only to hear but to ***respond*** and ***obey***."

3. John came to the startling realization that the immortal Christ ***exceeded***

anything he could have ***stretched*** his ***mind*** to imagine (v. 17).

4. John encountered the ***tender familiarity*** wrapped in the complete

unfamiliarity of ***unveiled*** "***God-ness***" (v. 17).

5. Conspicuously ***absent*** in the record of John's staggering encounter with the

immortal Christ is a ***single word*** from the ***disciple's mouth*** (Eccl. 5:1-2).

SESSION 8

Among the Lampstands

In the midst of many symbols and shrouds, the Book of Revelation frames several visions of such startling clarity and detail that we could stand before them for hours and continue to discover something new. **Revelation 7:9-17** encases one of those.

As we study these Scriptures, let your imagination play like a videotape. We'll push the pause button on several different elements in the scene and see what we can glean.

1. A great **multitude** that can't be counted standing before the **throne**
and in front of the **Lamb**.

This multitude is ...

- Every **nation**: *ethnos*—set apart by location, customs, and laws
- Every **tribe**: *phule*—set apart by blood lines tracing to common ancestors
- Every **people**: *laos*—set apart by various common bonds of a society
- Every **language**: *glossa*—set apart by dialects or languages

These four descriptions represent every means of division between the inhabitants of earth.

2. Those who have come out of (the) **great tribulation** (v. 14).

Carefully note that scholars are divided about the exact meaning of this phrase. Some believe the masses of people pictured have come out of “great tribulation” (as may be implied in the KJV and could simply imply Acts 14:22), while others believe they have come out of “*the* great tribulation” (as *may* be implied in the NIV and NASB). *If* Scripture means *the* great tribulation, this gathering suggests that the most profound evangelical movement in church history will occur during the most dreadful days of human history.

Compare Revelation 6:9-11. Many scholars believe these martyrs are among those gathered in Revelation 7:9.

3. The consummation of **perfect unity** in glorious **diversity**. Please don't miss the fact that these “nations, tribes, and peoples” are gathered as one, but—at least in this vision
and for this time—retain some level of distinction.
4. The **worship** of the **angels** (vv. 11-12). “Amen!”
5. The **tent** of God (vv. 15-17)

SESSION 9

From a Throne's Eye View

Read Revelation 12:7-12. Revelation 12:9 calls the enemy of our souls by five names:

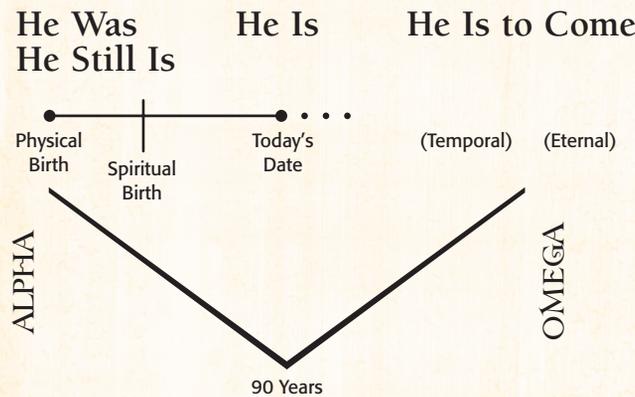
- The great dragon
- That ancient serpent
- The devil
- Satan
- Accuser

Primary defenses against the accuser:

1. "By the blood of the Lamb." Once we are covered by the blood of the Lamb,

Satan can do nothing to "uncover" us. So what's a devil to do? Try to make us "feel" uncovered.

2. "By the word of their testimony"



THE ACCUSER'S FORMULA

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{Your } \underline{\text{Is}} \\
 - \text{Your } \underline{\text{Was}} \\
 + \text{Your } \underline{\text{Is-to-Come}} \\
 \hline
 \text{Incomplete}
 \end{array}$$

GOD'S FORMULA

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \underline{\text{Redeemed}} \text{ was} \\
 + \underline{\text{Cleansed}} \text{ is} \\
 \hline
 \text{Powerful Is-to-Come}
 \end{array}$$

SESSION 10

Blessed Benediction

1. The one-word call to worship probably has great significance (v. 7). The word *hallelujah* (NIV) or *alleluia* (KJV) comes from the original Hebrew *halelu*, meaning to **praise**, and *Yah*, the shortened form of **Yahweh** or **Jehovah**. With one exception (Ps. 135:3), *allelouia* is always found at the beginning or end of psalms, suggesting that it was a **standardized** call to praise in the **temple worship**. This may suggest that, although every nation, tribe, and tongue will be part of this glorious wedding, the ceremony itself may be decidedly **Jewish**.

In ancient Hebrew tradition ...

2. The actual wedding arrangements were the responsibility of the **groom** and **his father**. (See Judg. 14:10-11.)

3. The chief responsibility of the bride was to **prepare herself** (v. 7):

- The bride prioritized **purity**.
- The bride took special baths of **clean water** and **fragrant oils**.
- The bride chose **fine** jewelry to wear on her wedding day.

4. During the ceremony, held under the **wedding canopy** or *huppah*, the bride traditionally **circled** the groom (Jer. 31:22).

5. **Seven blessings** were pronounced during the ceremony (Rev. 21:1-3,22-23).

6. Although deep repentance and personal cleansing took place in preparation, the actual wedding day was marked by great **gladness** of **heart** (Song of Songs 3:11).

- Custom prohibited anyone from **mourning** or **fasting** on the day of the wedding (Rev. 19:7).
- The original word for “be glad” is *agalliao*, which means “to **exult**, rejoice with exuberance; often to **leap** for **joy**, show one’s joy by **leaping**, **skipping**, or **dancing**, denoting **excessive** or ecstatic joy and delight.”

Personalize Isaiah 62:5: “As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will [my] **God rejoice** over **[me]**.”