
READING THROUGH THE GOSPELS:

John

CALVARY WOMEN

A NOTE FROM CHRISTY SPADER, MINISTER OF WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Welcome to our Calvary Women Gospel Reading Plan!

As fall approaches, we're excited to invite all Calvary women to join us in something special: a 4-month journey through the Gospels designed just for you. Written by different Calvary women, in each monthly booklet, you'll find a roadmap through one of the Gospels, touching on key themes, memory verses, and thought-provoking challenges. Plus, we've got an awesome playlist of weekly audio devotionals by that month's author.

If you are anything like me, with the start of the fall, I have a new wave of spiritual ambition. I buy a book. I make a plan. I start strong, but as life happens, my grand faith goals link arms with guilt and shame when what I hoped to be true of my spiritual rhythms has suffered a steep decline.

While I want God's love to be the ultimate driving force behind my spiritual practices, I've learned that God, in his grace, provides other motivators to help me. I've seen that some extra support can make a world of difference. And that's where our faith community steps in. So, this fall, we're inviting every woman at Calvary to join us in exploring the Gospels together.

Our mission is simple: through this booklet we want women to **Know** the love of God, **Grow** in our love of God, and **Show** the love of God. When it comes to **Knowing the Love of God**, each week we'll dive into a theme to keep your eyes out for as you read the text, a spot where we see the character of God on display. To **Grow in the Love of God**, there's a reading plan waiting for you. Each month our approach will vary. We might read the Gospel chronologically, thematically, or simply chapter-by-chapter and every week you'll get to hear from some women at Calvary dive a bit deeper through short audio devotionals on our Calvary Women Spotify/Apple Music playlist. There's more too! It's not just about personal growth; it's about **Showing the Love of God** too. The booklet will wrap up with a simple action and prayer prompt to put those insights into practice.

No matter who you are, or your capacity to be involved in other Women's Ministry offerings, this booklet is for YOU. There is power in God's Word and there is power in reading it alongside a community of faith. We want to be women of the Word together. Let's make this reading plan not just a thing we do, but a way we live – connected, empowered, and radiating God's love.

So, open this booklet and let's dive into the Gospel of John this month, together!

MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14:1-6

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN

By Bj Slusarczyk and Laura Dennis

The Gospel of John stands apart from the other synoptical gospels. The exact date of origin is debated with most scholars agreeing it to be the latest gospel, written around 85-90 AD. Authored by the apostle John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, it strays away from repeating the content of Luke, Matthew, or Mark. 90% of this book is unique.

John had one purpose in mind as he stated: "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John 20:30-31

With this goal in mind, he makes sure readers understand that Jesus was not a teacher, a good man, prophet, or gifted leader; he was God himself; the Word through which everything was created, the Son of God. To achieve this, John is extremely selective of his content choices. Out of the “many miracles” performed by Jesus, he chooses only seven and identifies them as signs: turning water into wine (Ch. 2), healing an official’s son (Ch. 4), healing a lame man at Bethesda (Ch. 5), the feeding of 5,000 (Ch. 6), walking on water (Ch. 6), healing a blind man (Ch. 9), and raising Lazarus from the dead (Ch. 11).

He also highlights Jesus’s seven “I am” statements that bring into mind the revelation of JHWH in the burning bush in the Old Testament.

- “I am the bread of life.” (John 6:35)
- “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12)
- “I am the gate.” (John 10:9)
- “I am the good shepherd.” (John 10:11)
- “I am the resurrection and the life.” (John 11:25)
- “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6)
- “I am the true grapevine.” (John 15:1)

Not surprisingly, John mentions only seven women in the Gospel of John. So, as you read through this book, we want you to pay particular attention to the women mentioned by John: Mary, the mother of Jesus (Ch. 3), the Samaritan woman (Ch. 4), a woman accused of adultery (Ch. 8), Martha and Mary, sisters of Lazarus (Ch. 11 & 12), Mary, sister of Jesus’ mother (Ch. 20), and Mary Magdalene (Ch. 20). If John, led by the Holy Spirit, chose these women to make sure believers know and understand them, they must be remarkable and their encounters with Jesus monumental.

So, let’s get started! Our prayer is that you immerse yourself in this unique book of the Bible. Read it, listen to it, meditate on it. As John would say: abide in it.

WEEK 1

*Our mission is to **Know** the love of God,
Grow in our love of God, and **Show** the love of God.*

KNOW

In this first week of reading the Gospel of John, a prominent theme emerges – testifying. Everything that has ever been made in this world testifies about Jesus. John the Baptist testifies about what he has seen and that Jesus is the Son of God. Miracles, too, serve as compelling testimony in these chapters of John. We also learn the testimony of a Samaritan Woman. Her story begins as we find her gathering water in the scorching heat of the day because she was ashamed to be among the other women. But Jesus went to her; Jesus spoke to her. And when Jesus engages her, he exposes the source of her shame, yet he doesn't dwell on it. Jesus touches her heart with compassion and it is this embrace of love and acceptance, the Samaritan woman comes to know Christ and testifies that He is the Messiah.

WEEK 1 READING PLAN

December 4 John 1:1-51

December 5 John 2:1-25

December 6 John 3:1-36

December 7 John 4:1-54

December 8 John 5:1-47

GROW

To listen to an audio devotional for John Week 1 check out: calvarymemorial.com/women or search for the “Calvary Women” playlist by Calvary Memorial Church on Spotify or Apple Music.

SHOW

Challenge: It only takes 25 minutes to listen to Chapters 1-5 in John. Take time this week to listen to the Gospel story testifying to Christ. Following her transformative encounter with Jesus, the Samaritan woman boldly testifies about him to her entire community. Let's be inspired by her example and strive to testify to the love of Christ with someone in our lives this week.

Pray: Thank you Lord for your Word. You reach into our hearts and give us hope.

WEEK 2

*Our mission is to **Know** the love of God,
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KNOW

Jesus's fame as an extraordinary teacher and miracle worker spread. However, the crowds following him were fickle – when he miraculously fed them, they wanted to make him a king. When he explained His divine origin from the Father, they said he was demon-possessed and tried to seize him. Even the disciples struggled with Jesus's proclamation as the “bread of life” and invitation to “eat His flesh”. The religious leaders (often called Jews by John) were the only consistent in their attitudes towards Jesus. They listened to Jesus not to know him, but to confirm their preconceived idea about him. Amidst this tumultuous backdrop, a woman (in Ch. 8) finds herself trapped. The religious leaders sought to exploit her to discredit him. They made her stand in front of the crowd - her sin exposed, reputation ruined, life in shambles. She was caught in the act of adultery. According to the law, she deserved to be stoned. Jesus must take a side. If He is the Son of God, He must condemn her to death. Does he? Did he?

WEEK 2 READING PLAN

December 11	John 6:1-71
December 12	John 7:1-53
December 13	John 8:1-59
December 14	John 9:1-41
December 15	John 10:1-42

GROW

To listen to an audio devotional for John Week 2 check out: calvarymemorial.com/women or search for the “Calvary Women” playlist by Calvary Memorial Church on Spotify or Apple Music.

SHOW

Challenge: Jesus saw the Samaritan Woman’s shame and loved her. This week, practice showing yourself and others the same compassion and grace Jesus offered in the midst of failure or sin.

Pray: Jesus thank you for covering our shame and embracing us despite our brokenness.

WEEK 3

*Our mission is to **Know** the love of God,
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KNOW

This week's readings kick off with Mary and Martha urgently seeking Jesus's presence for their dying brother, Lazarus. But Jesus is too late; Lazarus has died. The grieving sisters are still filled with faith in Jesus, but overwhelmed with feeling the loss of their brother. In a poignant moment, Jesus, moved with compassion for the grieving crowd, calls out to Lazarus, and life is restored. Our Lord and our God called out to Lazarus and he went from death to life. The significance of this miracle extends beyond mere resuscitation—it serves as a powerful testament to Jesus's identity; Jesus wanted the crowds to believe. Jesus was angry at the tomb of Lazarus because death was not God's original plan. Death is a part of our human experience, but it is not the end for believers.

WEEK 3 READING PLAN

December 18 John 11:1-57

December 19 John 12:1-50

December 20 John 13:1-38

December 21 John 14 and 15

December 22 John 16 and 17

GROW

To listen to an audio devotional for John Week 3 check out: calvarymemorial.com/women or search for the “Calvary Women” playlist by Calvary Memorial Church on Spotify or Apple Music.

SHOW

Challenge: Jesus wanted the crowds to hear him praying to His Father before He had Lazarus emerge from the grave. This week, we encourage you to invite others to hear you pursue the Father this week. While it can be uncomfortable, these moments are another way we remind one another that our dependence is on God alone.

Pray: May the Lord open our eyes to opportunities that lead towards helping others believe. May we be faithful in praying for the body of believers.

WEEK 4

*Our mission is to **Know** the love of God,
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KNOW

In our concluding week of readings, we encounter the theme of "finding Jesus." Jesus will now travel from the Kidron Valley and move towards the Garden of Gethsemane and ultimately the cross. This intentional move on Jesus' part, makes it very easy for His enemies to find Him. Judas knows that this location has been a common meeting place of the disciples and leads the soldiers, Pharisees, and officials to find and apprehend Jesus. Later in our readings, another person goes to "find Jesus". This person is Mary Magdalene. Mary anticipates further grieving at the tomb over a dead Jesus, but instead Mary finds a very living Christ. As we celebrate His birth this week, take time to enjoy "finding Jesus".

WEEK 4 READING PLAN

December 25	Merry Christmas!
December 26	John 18:1-40
December 27	John 19:1-42
December 28	John 20:1-31
December 29	John 21:1-25

GROW

To listen to an audio devotional for John Week 4 check out: calvarymemorial.com/women or search for the “Calvary Women” playlist by Calvary Memorial Church on Spotify or Apple Music.

SHOW

Challenge: Mary Magdalene was in pain as she approached the tomb of Jesus. Sometimes even in our moving towards things that are difficult we find the presence and love of Christ. This week might surface good or hard memories. As you potentially move towards even those difficult memories or relationships, ask for the presence and love of God to meet you there.

Pray: Jesus, thank you for your active part in our lives. You move towards us in many ways. May the example of Mary Magdalene inspire us to find You even when we don't expect a blessing.