

ENC OUN TERS

WITH JESUS.



WEEK 2 DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

BREIEL BLVD. CHURCH OF GOD

ENCOUNTERS

WITH JESUS

The Gospel of John is the incredible story of the life of Jesus Christ. John reports Jesus saying that He came so that we could have life and have it to the full (see John 10:10). During this series, we will learn how to grab hold of and experience the life He came to offer from those who encountered Him personally. Each week, we will focus on a different encounter from John's Gospel as we journey through it together:

Week 1: Encounters With Jesus

Week 2: Encounters With Jesus - The Living Word (John 1)

Week 3: Encounters With Jesus - The Lamb of God (John 1)

Week 4: Encounters With Jesus - The Wedding at Cana (John 2)

Week 5: Encounters With Jesus - Nicodemus (John 3)

Week 6: Encounters With Jesus - John the Baptist (John 3)

Week 7: Encounters With Jesus - The Woman at the Well (John 4)

Week 8: Encounters With Jesus - The Healing at Bethsaida (John 5)

Week 9: Encounters With Jesus - The Bread of Life (John 6)

Week 10: Encounters With Jesus - The Festival (John 7)

Week 11: Encounters With Jesus - The Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8)

Week 12: Encounters With Jesus - The Blind Man (John 9)

Through this series, we hope that you will have your own life-changing encounter with Jesus!

HOW TO USE THIS DEVO:

THIS IS A GUIDED DEVOTION:

Each day you will begin by reading the selected passages for that day. As the week goes on, we will bring out and consider different aspects of the passages we are studying that week. There are guided questions, activities, and prayer exercises. Please don't skip over these. They serve to add to devotional experience. Feel free to write on this devotional as much as you like.

CATCH-UP DAYS:

You will notice that each week only has five days of devotional content. Ideally, you will begin each week by listening to the message during the Sunday morning worship service and then you will begin your devotional time on Monday mornings. This helps you to personalize and apply what God is speaking to our church on Sundays. It also gives you the opportunity to have a couple of catch-up days if you fall behind.

MEMORY VERSES:

On the first page of each week, you will find a weekly memory verse. These verses are tied to the main content of that week's devotions. Hiding scripture in your heart by memorizing it is one of the most beneficial things you can do for your spiritual life. If you have never tried to memorize scripture before, this will be a great first step for you. We have included most verses in the NIV but please feel free to use whatever translation is most comfortable for you.

WEEK 2:

THE LIVING WORD.



MEMORY VERSE:

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

(John 1:14 | NIV)

day 1:

The Living Word

Today's Verse:

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

(John 1:14 | NIV)

Scripture Exercise:

- Read through John 1:1-14 in your Bible and, in the box below, write down everything you learn about "the Word".

Devotional Thought:

As you probably discovered, the phrase "the Word" is significant to the opening verses of John's Gospel. In fact, John uses the moniker "the Word" four times in his introduction. The question we need to answer is: what does John mean by "the Word"?

For the first-century person, "the Word" is a term loaded with a ton of meaning. It comes from the Greek word *logos*. From *logos*, we get our English word "logic," and that's a perfect way to understand it. Greek philosophers adopted this term to describe the apparent logic that causes the universe to obey natural laws like science, mathematics, and morality. For the first-century thinker, the *logos* is the reason two plus two equals four. *Logos* is why gravity pulls you back down to the ground when you jump. It is also the governing principle behind morality and conscience. The ancient world believed the entire universe would fall into utter chaos if it were not for this impersonal and mysterious *logos*.

What is John telling us by referring to Jesus as the Word? He's saying that Jesus reveals to us the God who is behind all history, creation, logic, and purpose. We make sense of our universe and our purpose in it through the person and work of Jesus because Jesus is the Living Word of God. This week, as encounter the Living Word, we will be given the opportunity to know God personally. The universe's governing principle is not some mysterious *logos*; it is a personal God named Jesus Christ.

day 2:

The Living Word is eternal.

Today's Verse:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

(John 1:1 | NIV)

Scripture Exercise:

- Read the scripture above and circle the three things John says about the Word.

Devotional Thought:

The first verse of John's Gospel is jam-packed with theological meaning. In this singular verse, we find a complete disclosure of the divinity of Jesus Christ. For those who would tell you that the Bible never says Jesus was God, simply point them to this verse. We learn three truths about Jesus' divinity in this passage.

#1) The Living Word was "in the beginning."

Martin Luther believed this verse could better be rendered, "in the beginning; the Word was already existing." John is telling us that Jesus does not have a birthday. He is eternal. Jesus existed before the world began. He lived before there was time.

#2) The Living Word was "with God."

That word "with" literally means He was *face-to-face* with God, the Father. John means for us to see that Jesus experienced an intimacy with God, the Father that existed before time began. Jesus is one with God the Father, and yet they are two uniquely distinct beings. This is the mystery of the Trinity. We believe God exists in three separate yet completely unified persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Here's the amazing thing: Jesus is inviting you and me to share God's love with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

#3) The Living Word "was God."

"Was God" is one of the most crucial phrases in the entire New Testament. It is such a simple statement that contains such a profound, deep truth. Jesus, the Living Word, is God in a body. In other words, all that God is, is in the Word, Jesus. He shares His nature and being with God. He is of the same character and quality of God. What does that mean? Everything that can be said about God can be said about Jesus Christ. In Jesus, the Living Word, dwells all the wisdom, glory, power, love, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth of God the Father.

Question to Journal Through:

- Of the three truths that you just learned about the divinity of the Living Word, Jesus, which one stood out to you the most? Why?

day 3:

The Living Word is the Creator.

Today's Verse:

He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

(John 1:2-3 | NIV)

Scripture Exercise:

- You may have noticed that **John 1:1-3** reads very similarly to **Genesis 1:1-3**. The Apostle John did that intentionally. With **John 1:1-3** in mind, read **Genesis 1:1-3** and, in the box below, write down any similarities you see in the words, phrasing and style of these two passages,

Devotional Thought:

For the Biblical thinker, the Bible has two categories into which everything is separated: Creator and creation. There is the Maker, and then, there is that which is made. The question John is trying to answer is: what category does Jesus fit in? And His answer is crystal clear: Jesus is the Creator.

The point John is making is that everything and everyone comes from Jesus. This important for you to understand: you are not here on accident. Nor are you here for nothing and headed nowhere. You are here on account of Jesus and, you were made to know Jesus. The Apostle Paul says it this way:

*15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created.... all things have been created **through him and for him**.*

(Colossians 1:15-16 | NIV)

Friend, God, through Christ, made you, and He made you for a purpose. That purpose was that you might know Him. You will only find your meaning in relationship to your Maker. Knowing Him produces life.

day 4:

The Living Word gives life.

Today's Verse:

In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

(John 1:4-5 | NIV)

Devotional Thought:

At last, John tells us the two main reasons the Living Word has come to earth: to bring life and light. This is such a power-packed passage of scripture. Let's look at a few key phrases together.

#1) "In him was life..."

Life is one of the key themes in the Gospel of John. As you study it, you should underline and memorize every reference to the kind of life Jesus wants to give you. Here are a few verses to get you started: John 3:16; John 5:21; John 6:33; John 10:10; John 17:3.

A favorite scripture from that small sampling listed above is John 10:10, which says:

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

(John 10:10 | NIV)

Isn't that a fantastic thought? You see, the word John commonly uses for life is the Greek word *zoe*. It means fullness of life, vitality, or life as God intended us to live it. John is telling us that Jesus came to give us a rich, meaningful, purposeful, and impactful life.

#2) "...and that life was the light of all mankind..."

Here's what John is saying: The life that God produces in you is not just for you. God wants His life to flow through you to those around you. He will so fill you with fullness in Christ that the presence of Jesus in you will light up every place you walk into. Friends, our world is a dark place. It is dark spiritually, politically, and relationally just to name a few. Where does the light come from? It comes from the Living Word giving bright-shining life to you to share with the world.

#3) "The light shine in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

The word "overcome" in that passage could better be understood as "extinguish." John is telling us that no amount of darkness can extinguish even the smallest light. We know this to be true. All the darkness in the world could not put out the light of just a single match.

Christian, what the Living Word wants to do in your life is something so real, so powerful, and so new that the world's darkness has no power to put out.

day 5:

Let the Living Word live in you.

Today's Verse:

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...

(John 1:9-12 |NIV)

Questions to Journal Through:

- According to the passage above, what was the world's response to the Living Word's arrival?
- Not everyone rejected Jesus. According to verse 12, what was given to those who received Him?
- What are some of the benefits and privileges of being God's child?

Devotional Thought:

The word "receive" is an important one for this passage. Let's get a good working definition of how that word is used biblically:

lambanō (λαμβάνω) "to receive," "to accept," "to hold to oneself"

In the literal sense, the term means to accept what has been offered. When used of a person, "to receive" is to welcome personal connection, as when a man or woman receives a partner for marriage, or when a host receives a houseguest.

See John 1:12, 16; 5:43; 13:20.

Here's what John is saying: The Living Word has come to this world, knocking on the doors of people's hearts. He is looking for hearts that will allow Him to move in as a permanent houseguest. Some have rejected Him because they did not recognize Him.

Some, however, have welcomed Him in. Some have invited Him to live in their hearts by faith. They have said to Jesus, "Make my heart your home. Re-arrange the furniture of my life, Lord. Get rid of the junk that you know is no good for me. I want you to produce your life in me." It was to those who allowed the Living Word to live in them that got to experience the privilege of being called children of God. They are children full of a life and light that the darkness cannot overcome.

The same choice is given to you and me today? Will we receive Jesus as the Living Word? Will we allow God's Living Word to live in us? I pray you will.