

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE | SPRING 2016

LETTER FROM THE ELDERS

Thank you for your commitment to study The Gospel of John with us in community! Other than the preaching of God's Word, we believe community is the most important thing we do at Capstone Church. Community gives us the opportunity to apply the preached Word to our lives and see transformation (life change) take place. So as we continue to walk verse-by-verse together through John and unpack these great truths in our groups, we are praying that many lives are changed!

The Gospel of John is a life and heart-altering story about Jesus Christ. John is telling us about the most pivotal man in all of history and the greatest love story ever told! Just like we find in Genesis 1, John opens his book with three simple words, "In the beginning..." In Genesis, these words mark the start of God's breathtaking act of creation. John's "in the beginning" also speaks to a new creation, but this time it's not stars, planets, or animals that God is making. This time, through the man Jesus Christ, God is making us into new people!

Throughout his book, John uniquely focuses on the true identity of Jesus and what our right response to this truth should be. In fact, near the end of the book he tells us exactly why he wrote it! John writes, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these 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." John doesn't want us to be confused. He wants us to know that Jesus is the Son of God, sent by the Father to make us new, and that the promise of "life in his name" is the promise of eternal life with God! In our world where there is currently a lot of confusion as to what the "gospel" of Jesus actually is, John paints a simple yet profound picture that is truly "good news" for those who would believe.

During these next few months, our desire is that you spend time reading and studying John. We've provided a weekly reading guide based on the weekly sermon text and questions to help you think through the reading. Each week as you read, we would also encourage you to start back at the beginning (John 1:1) and read up to the end of that week's passage. Ask yourself, "What does John want me to know about Jesus here?" "What is John teaching me about life with Jesus?" "Why would God do all of this for me?"

Our prayer for you is that through the preaching of God's Word, the singing of God's Word, the reading and studying of God's Word on your own, and discussing God's Word in community, you might discover the true identity of Jesus and learn what it means to have life in His name!

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE | SPRING 2016

ABOUT THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

WHO: John was one of Jesus' closest disciples. He grew up the son of a fisherman, but left his family and career behind in order to follow Jesus. He was an eyewitness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. He was so close to Jesus that he often referred to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (13:23, 19:26). He was one of Jesus' earliest followers and was at the foot of the cross when Jesus died.

WHEN: Early church historians record that John wrote his letters toward the end of his life. This means John probably wrote his gospel around AD 80-90. His was most likely the last of the four gospel accounts written.

WHAT: The Gospel of John is an eyewitness account to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In one sense, it is sort of like a biography of Jesus' life. However, John boasted that if everything Jesus said and did was written down, the whole world couldn't contain that many books. John chose specific teachings and events to include in his gospel. More than just telling us the story of Jesus, John wants us to understand the significance and meaning of Jesus' life and death.

WHY: To our great benefit, John told us his exact purpose for writing. In John 20:30-31 he wrote, "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John wrote so that we could know the true identity of our Savior. He wrote so that we would know how to experience true life in relationship with our Creator.

Basic Outline:

- I. The Son of God becomes flesh (John 1:1-18)
- II. The mission of Jesus explained (John 1:19-4:54)
- III. Resistance to and rejection of Jesus' offer of life (John 5:1-12:50)
- IV. Jesus prepares his disciples for their mission (John 13:1-17:26)
- V. Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection (John 18:1-21:25)

COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE | SPRING 2016

HOW TO USE THIS COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDE

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and light to my path.

— Psalm 119:103-105

It is absolutely critical for us as a family of believers to study the Word of God together in community. We need to be reading Scripture, meditating on it, memorizing it and praying through it as we live life together and "stir up one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24). Our hope is that this booklet helps guide your groups to grow closer together in the Word and with each other.

Use this study like a travel guide through The Gospel of John as you journey to discover life in Jesus' name. The booklet contains several elements for each week of the sermon series including a reading plan based on the sermon text, a memory verse, and a few questions to help you start a conversation with your kids ("For The Family") about the passage.

When looking at Scripture, do so through the following four-question framework:

- 1. What does this passage say about God, who He is and what He does? (Father, Son & Spirit)
- 2. What does this passage teach me about me?
- 3. What comfort/promise can I take away from this passage?
- 4. How will I respond or live differently because of what I've read?

We ask the same four questions each week to leave discussions both open-ended and structured toward the Gospel and a response to the Gospel.

Take a few minutes during the week to read through the passage. Spend a few minutes in prayer. We've even provided a few suggestions on how you can pray based on each reading.

If you are not in a community group and would like more information or would like us to help you get connected, go to www.capstonechurch.org/next-steps.

Each week, we'll also have a blog post that dives deeper into the passage that we're studying. You'll be able to find those blog posts at http://www.capstonechurchblog.com.

READING PLAN | SPRING SEMESTER, 2016

JANUARY 24 - JANUARY 30, 2016	JOHN 13:1-20
JANUARY 31 - FEBRUARY 6, 2016	JOHN 13:21-30
FEBRUARY 7 - FEBRUARY 13, 2016	JOHN 13:31-38
FEBRUARY 14 - FEBURARY 20, 2016	JOHN 14:1-14
FEBRUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 27, 2016	JOHN 14:15-24
FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 5, 2016	JOHN 14:25-31
MARCH 6 - MARCH 12, 2016	JOHN 15:1-11
MARCH 13 - MARCH 19, 2016	JOHN 15:1-11
MARCH 20 - MARCH 26, 2016	JOHN 15:12-17
MARCH 27 - APRIL 2, 2016	EASTER
APRIL 3 - APRIL 9, 2016	JOHN 15:18-16:4(A)
APRIL 10 - APRIL 16, 2016	JOHN 16:4(B)-15
APRIL 17 - APRIL 23, 2016	JOHN 16:16-24
APRIL 24 - APRIL 30, 2016	JOHN 16:25-33

COMMUNITY GROUP | WEEK OF JANUARY 24 - JANUARY 30, 2016

A) INTRODUCTION

For many of you, this is the first time that your group has gotten back together since Christmas. Take some time to catch back up on what's happened with everybody during the break. How is the New Year going so far? Have you already made and broken any resolutions for 2016?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 13:1-20

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: Philippians 2:1-11

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

- 1. What does this passage say about God, who He is and what He does? (Father, Son & Spirit)
- 2. What does this passage teach me about me?
- 3. What comfort/promise can I take away from this passage?
- 4. How should I respond or live differently because of what I've read?

D) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs. Pray for those needs.

Pray that God would give each of you specific opportunities to serve others in the group, in the church and in the community with the same love that Christ showed when He washed the disciples' feet. Pray that God would tear down any idols of pride that would keep the group from being able to serve with humility. Pray that your group would not resist being washed by Jesus on a daily basis. Pray for your group to be doers of the Word, not just hearers seeking more knowledge.

E) FOR THE FAMILY

This is a great chance to talk about how Jesus showed His love for us by serving us. He did it as an example for us to follow in the future. We should be helping each other at home just like this.

Family Question: What are some ways that we could serve each other this week like Jesus served the disciples?

F) REMEMBER

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.

— John 13:14-15

COMMUNITY GROUP | WEEK OF JANUARY 31 - FEBRUARY 6, 2016

A) INTRODUCTION

Are there times when you act/talk one way around one group of people and act/talk differently around another group? Why is that? Would you say you act differently at church or with "church people" than at work or with people who don't go to church with you?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 13:21-30

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: Psalm 41:9, 1 Timothy 1:12-17, Romans 3:10-20

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

- 1. What does this passage say about God, who He is and what He does? (Father, Son & Spirit)
- 2. What does this passage teach me about me?
- 3. What comfort/promise can I take away from this passage?
- 4. How should I respond or live differently because of what I've read?

D) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs. Pray for those needs.

Pray that God would soften your hearts to hear and respond to the Gospel each day. Pray (like Jesus prayed in Matthew 6:13) that you would not be led into the temptation to sin but would be delivered from evil to see that Jesus is the ultimate, true treasure who should be followed.

E) FOR THE FAMILY

This passage gives you a good opportunity to talk with your family this week about what it means for Jesus to show mercy to His worst enemies. It's also a good opportunity to talk with them about how Jesus knows everything that we're going to do before we do it. He can see our hearts and our motives when we do things.

Family Question: How can we be kind to others and show mercy this week like Jesus showed to us?

F) REMEMBER

After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me."

- John 13:21

COMMUNITY GROUP | WEEK OF FEBRUARY 7 - FEBRUARY 13, 2016

A) INTRODUCTION

Has there ever been a time in your life when you made a big promise to God that you didn't keep? How did that make you feel? Do you think God was surprised by that?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 13:31-38

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: 1 Corinthians 13; 1

John 4:7-21

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

- 1. What does this passage say about God, who He is and what He does? (Father, Son & Spirit)
- 2. What does this passage teach me about me?
- 3. What comfort/promise can I take away from this passage?
- 4. How should I respond or live differently because of what I've read?

D) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs. Pray for those needs.

Pray that God would fill your hearts with His love, kindness and peace that passes all understanding. Ask God to fill you with love and show you practical ways to show that love to your community group, in the church and to the community. Also, pray for God to guard your heart from anything that would make you turn away from Him.

E) FOR THE FAMILY

This passage gives you a great opportunity to talk with your family this week about how much God loves us and the command from Christ to love others with that same kind of love.

Family Question: What are some ways that we can show each other love like Jesus shows to us?

F) REMEMBER

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

— John 13:34-35

COMMUNITY GROUP | WEEK OF FEBRUARY 14 - FEBRUARY 20, 2016

A) INTRODUCTION

What are some things that trouble you on a regular basis? Your job? Your family? What are some of the things that keep you up at night? How do you cope with the things that trouble you?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 14:1-14

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: John 6:67, John 10:7, Acts 4:12, 1 John 2:12, Hebrews 1:2-3,

Colossians 1:15-20

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

- 1. What does this passage say about God, who He is and what He does? (Father, Son & Spirit)
- 2. What does this passage teach me about me?
- 3. What comfort/promise can I take away from this passage?
- 4. How should I respond or live differently because of what I've read?

D) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs. Pray for those needs.

Pray that God would help you grow in your faith to trust Christ more with the things that are troubling. Pray that God would quiet your heart with His love (Zephaniah 3:17). Pray that your group would be a shining light in a dark world to show that Jesus is the only way, the only truth and the only life.

E) FOR THE FAMILY

This passage is a great opportunity to talk to your family about what it means to trust in Christ when you are scared or feeling troubled.

Family Activity: What are some of the things that scare you or trouble you? Spend some time this week praying with your family that Jesus would be a strong defender and a mighty shelter when things happen that are scary.

F) REMEMBER

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

— John 14:6

COMMUNITY GROUP | WEEK OF FEBRUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 27, 2016

A) INTRODUCTION

If you are married, why do you do things for your spouse when they ask you to do them? Is it because you need them to get off your back or something greater than that?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 14:15-24

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: 1 John 2:1-6, 1 John

3:4-10

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

- 1. What does this passage say about God, who He is and what He does? (Father, Son & Spirit)
- 2. What does this passage teach me about me?
- 3. What comfort/promise can I take away from this passage?
- 4. How should I respond or live differently because of what I've read?

D) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs. Pray for those needs.

Pray that the Holy Spirit would increase the love that we have in our hearts for Christ. Pray that God would empower us to obey His commands. Pray that God would continue to cause the group to grow closer together. Pray for courage to turn our backs on sin and embrace the treasure of Christ.

E) FOR THE FAMILY

This passage is a great chance to talk with the family about what it means to love Jesus with more than words. We love Jesus when we obey what He says in His Word.

Family Question: What are some ways this week that we could show love to Jesus and to our parents by obeying what they say?

F) REMEMBER

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

— John 14:21

COMMUNITY GROUP | WEEK OF FEBRUARY 28 - MARCH 5, 2016

A) INTRODUCTION

What kinds of things in the world are supposed to bring us peace, comfort and security? Are those things actually able to do that?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 14:25-31

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: Philippians 4:6-7

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

- 1. What does this passage say about God, who He is and what He does? (Father, Son & Spirit)
- 2. What does this passage teach me about me?
- 3. What comfort/promise can I take away from this passage?
- 4. How should I respond or live differently because of what I've read?

D) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs. Pray for those needs.

Pray that God would continue to let the things of this world grow dim in the light of who Christ is and what He offers. Pray that God would give us His peace that does not fade away. Pray that God would destroy any idol in our lives that promises permanent peace or permanent security. Pray that we could find rest in Christ alone.

E) FOR THE FAMILY

This passage is a great chance to talk with your family about how Jesus gives us peace when we are scared or troubled. It is also a great chance to talk with them about how the peace that Christ gives differs from what the world wants to give them.

Family Question: Does God know everything, and is He in control of everything? Of course! So, we can pray this week for Jesus to give us His peace when we are scared.

Family Question: Have you ever asked and asked and asked for a toy that you thought would make you happy forever? What happened when you got it? Did it make you as happy as you thought it would? How long did that happiness last before you were bored and moved on to something else?

F) REMEMBER

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

— John 14:27

COMMUNITY GROUP | WEEK OF MARCH 6 - MARCH 19, 2016

NOTE

Since we'll be studying John 15:1-11 for two weeks, this week's guide will cover both weeks.

A) INTRODUCTION

Have you ever had a garden before? What types of things did you have to do to get the vegetables or the fruit trees to grow? What happens if you didn't do those things?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 15:1-11

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: Galatians 5:22-23;

Hebrews 12:5-6

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

- 1. What does this passage say about God, who He is and what He does? (Father, Son & Spirit)
- 2. What does this passage teach me about me?
- 3. What comfort/promise can I take away from this passage?
- 4. How should I respond or live differently because of what I've read?

D) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs. Pray for those needs.

"Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him / How I've proved Him o'er and o'er / Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus / Oh for grace to trust Him more."

Pray for God to empower your group to be able to continue to abide in Christ. Pray that God would give your group the courage and endurance to endure discipline and pruning. Pray that God would tear away anything that would keep the group from producing more fruit. Pray that God would provide clear opportunities for the group to produce fruit that would bring glory to God.

E) FOR THE FAMILY

If you've ever tried to grow a plant in the house or plant a small garden, your kids have seen how plants grow and many of the things it takes to keep a plant alive and thriving. As you are reading this passage with them, take some time to talk through what it looks like for Jesus to be the "vine," our source of life.

Family Activity: For most of us, we aren't farmers or heavy gardeners. So, the analogy of the vine could be confusing to us. Take some time to see if there's a more modern analogy that would still ring true to explain how Christ is the source of life for us.

Example: If we're a cell phone, Jesus could be the power that runs the phone. What happens without power? The phone is a paperweight, useless for anything good.

F) REMEMBER

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

— John 15:5

COMMUNITY GROUP | WEEK OF MARCH 20 - MARCH 26, 2016

A) INTRODUCTION

Have you ever had a situation at work where a boss or supervisor became your friend? How did your work and the relationship with the boss change after he became your friend?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 15:12-17

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: James 2:23; Exodus

23:11

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

- 1. What does this passage say about God, who He is and what He does? (Father, Son & Spirit)
- 2. What does this passage teach me about me?
- 3. What comfort/promise can I take away from this passage?
- 4. How should I respond or live differently because of what I've read?

D) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs. Pray for those needs.

Pray for God to open specific doors for the group to love each other as Christ loves. Pray for God to provide opportunities to love the church and the community as Christ loves. Take some time to thank God for making a way for the group to become friends of God!

E) FOR THE FAMILY

This passage gives you a great opportunity to compare the friendships we have with each other with the friendship that Christ offers us.

Family Question: Is there anybody that you've been trying to make friends with for a while? How did it make you feel when they finally became your friend? Think about this... Jesus wanted to be our friend before we wanted to be His friend. We didn't have to work to make friends with Him. He did all the work, so we could be His friend forever.

F) REMEMBER

No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

— John 15:15

COMMUNITY GROUP | WEEK OF APRIL 3 - APRIL 9, 2016

A) INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been hated by someone before? What does that feel like? How did you respond to the hatred?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 15:18-16:4(A)

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: Acts 5:41; Hebrews 11:32-38; 1 Peter 3:13-17; 1 Peter 4:12-19

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

- 1. What does this passage say about God, who He is and what He does? (Father, Son & Spirit)
- 2. What does this passage teach me about me?
- 3. What comfort/promise can I take away from this passage?
- 4. How should I respond or live differently because of what I've read?

D) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs. Pray for those needs.

Take some time as a group to pray for the persecuted church around the world. Pray that God would use the persecution to advance the Gospel around the world. Pray that God would provide opportunities for your group to be a comfort to believers that are suffering.

E) FOR THE FAMILY

This passage gives you a chance to talk with your kids about how to react when other kids are mean.

Family Question: Has anyone ever been mean to you because you were trying to do the right thing? How should we respond to that? How can we show Jesus' love to others even when they don't like us?

F) REMEMBER

Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.

— John 15:20

COMMUNITY GROUP | WEEK OF APRIL 10 - APRIL 16, 2016

A) INTRODUCTION

If you haven't done it already as a group, take some time and tell some of your testimony of how you came to faith in Christ. When did you first feel the conviction of the Holy Spirit that drew you toward following Christ?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 16:4(B)-15

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: Ephesians 1:13; John

14:25-31

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

- 1. What does this passage say about God, who He is and what He does? (Father, Son & Spirit)
- 2. What does this passage teach me about me?
- 3. What comfort/promise can I take away from this passage?
- 4. How should I respond or live differently because of what I've read?

D) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs. Pray for those needs.

Take some time to thank God for sending the Holy Spirit to convict and save! Pray that God would continue to guide the group into the truth that comes from His Word. Pray that God would give the group a fresh love for the Word and for hearing the truth of the Gospel.

E) FOR THE FAMILY

This passage is a great opportunity to talk to your kids about their conscience and about how the Holy Spirit helps us to do the right things and repent for the wrong things.

Family Question: Have you ever done something bad and felt really bad about it? Did you feel like you needed to tell God that you were sorry for doing wrong?

F) REMEMBER

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

— John 16:13

COMMUNITY GROUP | WEEK OF APRIL 17 - APRIL 23, 2016

A) INTRODUCTION

For the women in the group who have had children, how quickly (at least initally) does the pain of childbirth get forgotten after you see your new baby?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 16:16-24

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: 1 Peter 1:3-9; 1

Corinthians 15:54-58

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

- 1. What does this passage say about God, who He is and what He does? (Father, Son & Spirit)
- 2. What does this passage teach me about me?
- 3. What comfort/promise can I take away from this passage?
- 4. How should I respond or live differently because of what I've read?

D) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs. Pray for those needs.

Take some time to thank God for giving us joy in Him that cannot be taken away. Pray for God to continually remind the group of that joy when painful situations come up. Thank God for conquering sin and death for us and making a way for us to see Him and for all things to be made new!

E) FOR THE FAMILY

Family Question: What are some things we can pray for this week that will bring God glory?

F) REMEMBER

So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

— John 16:22

COMMUNITY GROUP | WEEK OF APRIL 24 - APRIL 30, 2016

A) INTRODUCTION

Have you ever questioned God on why a trial or trouble happened to you? Were you surprised when it happened to you?

B) READ THE PASSAGE(S)

MAIN PASSAGE: John 16:25-33

SUPPLEMENTAL PASSAGES: Colossians 2:13-15;

Romans 8:18; Romans 8:35-39

C) EXAMINE AND APPLY

- 1. What does this passage say about God, who He is and what He does? (Father, Son & Spirit)
- 2. What does this passage teach me about me?
- 3. What comfort/promise can I take away from this passage?
- 4. How should I respond or live differently because of what I've read?

D) PRAYER

Go around the group and ask about specific prayer needs. Pray for those needs.

Take some time to thank God for being with your group in the middle of troubles and trials. Thank Him for not abandoning you and for overcoming the world! Pray for God to give you clear opportunities to comfort those in the group, in the church and in the community that are going through trouble.

E) FOR THE FAMILY

Family Question: Take some time this week to read Romans 8:18 and 8:35-39 with your family. Will God ever abandon us? Will He ever stop loving us? Can anything separate us from the love of God, even if we are going through hard times?

F) REMEMBER

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

— John 16:33