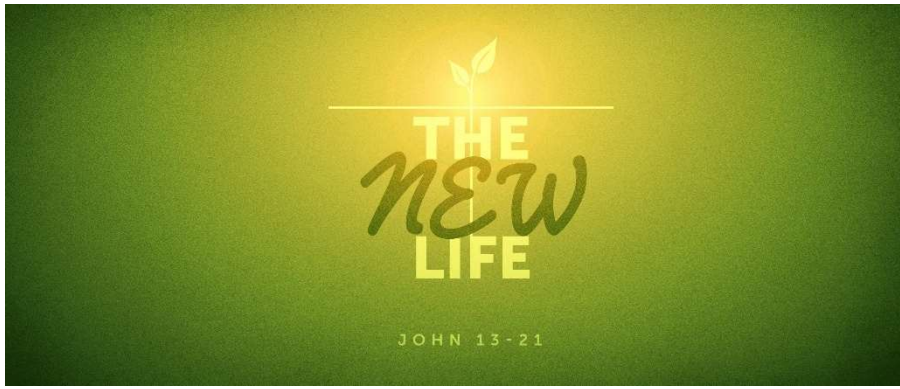




Series Overview and Guides

2025 ANNUAL THEME | SERIES 6

SEPTEMBER - NOVEMBER

Objective

what we hope to see God accomplish in us through this study

We courageously follow Jesus in new life.

STATEMENTS OF THE OBJECTIVE

"I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world."

—John 16:33

"The promise of suffering for the church is a distinction in the history and literature of God's people...Simply stated, believers in the OT suffered *for their lack of faith (or disobedience)*, while believers in the NT are *promised suffering for their obedient faith*...Christian persecution did not cease after the early centuries. Scholarly volumes document persecution and martyrdom throughout the Middle Ages and recent times [with current] estimates exceeding 90,000 Christian deaths per year resulting from persecution. Thus, believers in Jesus today should not think that experiencing persecution suggests their faith is in error. [Rather], such righteous suffering serves as a dramatic avenue for disciples to glorify Christ who suffered on their behalf."

—Cory Marsh

"On Account of My Name"
*Journal of the Evangelical
Theological Society*



Premise

why we are studying this

In many areas of the globe, including America, we are enjoying a remarkable spiritual harvest. People groups who were considered unreachable – from indigenous tribes in the Amazon basin to Gen Z people in big cities – are in great numbers turning to Jesus. Now, these new believers are desperate for wisdom on following Christ. In John 13-21 we gain the resources needed to bless our own lives and theirs.

STATEMENTS OF THE PREMISE

"I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth."

—John 17:15-19 NLT

"Evangelicals can't expect the strategies and structures of the positive and neutral worlds will continue to sustain us in this new era [of the negative world]. This means more emphasis on being countercultural [while] remaining focused on mission."

—Aaron Renn

Life in the Negative World

Theme

what the study is about

John takes us from the Upper Room Discourse through the High Priestly Prayer to Jesus' brutal death, resurrection, and commission. In the process, we meet the Lord who is master of His destiny and provider for ours. Believing in Him, one has life abundantly and eternally. Following Him, one experiences courage, love, fruitfulness, and peace that surpass comprehension.

STATEMENTS OF THE THEME

"As for you, follow me."

—John 21:22

"When Jesus asks Peter, 'What is that to you?' (21:24), He is trying to teach the disciple a valuable lesson: God doesn't deal with us on a comparative basis, but on an individual one. He redeems us individually. He rebukes us individually. He rewards us individually."

'Follow Me!' That's the challenge put to Peter. Not to follow John or the rest of the disciples or the majority, but 'Me!'

If you try to follow Jesus while looking over your shoulder to see what direction other Christians are going, sooner or later you're going to stub your toe or stray into a tree. No, you can only *follow* Him if your eyes are *fixed* on Him – Him and only Him."

—Ken Gire and Charles Swindoll
Beholding Christ, the Lamb of God

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SERIES 6 | SESSION 1

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2025

PAUSE

SCRIPTURE READING

John 13:1-35

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus exemplifies a new way of leadership where authority is expressed in humble service. This kind of surrender glorifies God as Christians choose to love one another. John will become so enamored with this ideal that what he calls "the law of love" will permeate all his writings.

OBJECTIVE

We love one another.

HUMBLE SERVICE

"The towel and the basin, not the sword and the crown, mark the authority of Jesus."

—Dallas Willard
The Divine Conspiracy

"Power, no matter how well-intentioned, tends to cause separation. Service, on the other hand, creates community."

—Philip Yancey
What's So Amazing About Grace?

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we humbly serve one another.

Session 1: The New Leadership

1. Read John 13:1-10. By washing the feet of the disciples, Jesus demonstrated a new way of leadership where authority is expressed in humble service.
 - How is God glorified when Christians choose to love one another?
 - Why was Peter reluctant to let Jesus wash his feet? What does his reaction reveal about his understanding and expectations of Jesus' role?
 - How do Jesus' actions contrast with the world's view of leadership?
2. Read John 13:11-20. Jesus teaches his disciples to follow His example of humility.
 - What are "these things" that Jesus says the disciples should know? (verse 17)
 - What are some practical ways can we do "these things" in our service to each other?
3. Read John 13:21-30. In this passage, Jesus predicted His betrayal.
 - What does Jesus' foreknowledge demonstrate about His nature? How does it affect the way we trust God, even in difficult circumstances?
 - Jesus still invited Judas to participate in the meal (verse 26). What does this teach us about God's grace?
4. Read John 13:34-35 and 1 John 2:7-11.
 - What is the new commandment Jesus gives his disciples?
 - How does this command relate to the imagery of light and darkness (or night)?
 - Why do you think John emphasized in verse 20 that "it was night" when Judas betrayed Him?



SERIES 6 | SESSION 2

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2025

PAUSE

SCRIPTURE READING

John 13:36-14:11

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus details a new way. It is telling that the first two centuries of Christians most often described themselves as “followers of The Way.” Jesus here answers a series of questions from His disciples. In the process He details aspects of His way:

- It is beyond mortal humanity, even (and especially?) Peter. (13:36-38)
- It is accessed by belief. (14:1-4) [This appears to have been the text that inspired Bunyan to create *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.]
- It is Jesus – the way, the One with the Father, the doer of miracles. (14:5-11)

OBJECTIVE

We follow The Way.

THE WAY

“Jesus did not say that He would show us the way, teach us the truth, or give us life. He said He *is* the way, the truth, and the life. That is, He is the embodiment of the way to God, the embodiment of God’s truth, and the embodiment of God’s life.”

—John Stott
Basic Christianity

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we follow faithfully after Jesus.

Session 2: The New Way

1. Read John 13:36-38. *The Way is beyond mortal humanity.*

- Jesus said, “You cannot follow now, but you will follow later.” What did He mean by that?
- How is “The Way” beyond mortal humanity?
- Why do you think Jesus chose to reveal Peter’s coming denial in this moment?

2. Read John 14:1-4. *The Way is accessed by belief.*

- What did Jesus mean when he said, “Don’t let your heart be troubled”? What was likely troubling the disciples in that moment?
- What does it mean that Jesus is preparing a place for us?
- How does this promise strengthen your faith?

3. Read John 14:5-11. *The Way is Jesus.*

- What does it mean that Jesus is the way, not a way? How does this impact how we think about eternity and salvation?
- How did Jesus’ words and works reveal the Father to the disciples?
- In what ways does this passage encourage you? How can we remind ourselves and one another to “believe also in Jesus” when life is hard or uncertain?



SERIES 6 | SESSION 3

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2025

PAUSE

SCRIPTURE READING

John 14:12-31

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus reveals a startling new aspect of the New Covenant, something only hinted at in Jeremiah and Isaiah. The Christian can live in Jesus' name; that is, according to His ethos & pathos. Engaging Triune God in Jesus' name changes all of life. It positions one as:

- a minister endowed with heavenly authority
- a family member with the Father, Son, and Spirit
- to enjoy the presence of God
- a recipient of the peace of Christ

OBJECTIVE

We live in Jesus' name.

IN HIS NAME

"Praying in Jesus' name means coming to the Father in prayer as Jesus' representative. Jesus introduced the idea of representing Him in verse. When we pray in Jesus' name, we claim to be acting for Him. Someone who prays that way will always ask only what is God's will or what is subject to God's will since that is always how Jesus related to His Father. It is impossible to pray in Jesus' name and to ask something contrary to God's will."

—Thomas L. Constable
Constable's Notes on John

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we are fully engaged with Jesus.

Session 3: The New Engagement

1. In verse 12, Jesus says believers will "do greater works than these."
 - What does He mean by "greater works"? (e.g. greater in Number? Scope? Impact?)
 - What would "greater works" look like in our church today?
 - Why is it important that He first "goes to the Father"?
2. Verses 13-14 promise that whatever believers ask "in His name" will be done.
 - What does this mean?
 - Are there any limits on this promise? (Consider the Thomas Constable quote in the sidebar.)
3. Read John 14:16-21. The Greek word for Counselor (*paraklete*) means called to one's side, to plead one's case before a judge.
 - Who is the "other paraklete" promised by Jesus?
 - How does Jesus' resurrection life ("because I live, you also will live") give meaning to the disciples' future and to ours?
 - How is Jesus' promise of not leaving them as orphans fulfilled through the Spirit?
4. Read John 14:27-31.
 - What is the difference between the peace that Jesus gives versus the peace that the world gives?
 - Jesus tells His disciples, "Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." Why might they have been troubled or afraid in this moment?
 - What are some things that trouble your heart? How does this passage comfort you?



SERIES 6 | SESSION 4

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2025

PAUSE

SCRIPTURE READING

John 15:1-25

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus reveals the richness of Christian experience through abiding in Christ. Dwelling in Him, we can bear fruit. By obeying Him, we can enjoy friendship with Jesus and each other. By keeping His word, we overcome the hatred of the world.

OBJECTIVE

We enjoy friendship with Jesus.

ABIDE

"These two verses (vv. 4-5) seem to encapsulate what Jesus meant by 'abide.' For the grape branch, attachment to the vine gives life and enables the natural production of fruit. The attachment is not glue or magnetic or mechanical adhesion, but interwoven, living connection. Life flows from the vine to the branches and the branches are made part of the life of the vine. Implied in this is utter, complete dependence on God working through Messiah Jesus."

—Martin MacDonald

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we bear fruit and remain in Him.

Session 4: The New Relationships

1. Read John 15:1-11. *We relate to Jesus.*

- Jesus uses the word "abide" multiple times in this passage. What does it mean to abide in Jesus? How is this different from merely believing in Him?
- What aspects of our world or flesh make it difficult to abide in Him?
- According to verse 8, how is the Father glorified?
- In verse 2, the Greek word for remove (*airei*) means to elevate or lift from the ground. How does this help you understand the role of the vinedresser and your relationship to the Father?

2. Read John 15:12-17. *We relate to our brethren.*

- How does Jesus' love for us (v. 12) set the standard for how we love others?
- What does it mean to be called Jesus' friend? How does this differ from merely being a follower or servant? (vv. 14-15)
- How can we cultivate friendships that reflect Jesus' sacrificial love?

3. Read John 15:18-25. *We relate to the world.*

- Why was Jesus hated by the world? How did He respond to those who persecuted Him?
- Should believers expect to experience persecution from the world? Why? (vv. 20-21)
- Have you ever experienced rejection, ridicule, or hostility because of your faith? How did you respond?



SERIES 6 | SESSION 5

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2025

PAUSE

SCRIPTURE READING

John 15:26-16:33

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus stresses memory in this dialogue, specifically the kind of hearing/known/remembering that is inherent in the great Sch^ema of Deuteronomy 6. Just as that passage described the unity of YHWH, this shows the trinity of God. After the Son's ascension, the believer will have direct access to the Holy Spirit and the Father.

OBJECTIVE

We utilize our divine resources.

REMINDER

"When you compare John 14:26 with 16:13, you see the wonderful way that God arranged for the writing of the New Testament Scriptures. The Spirit would remind them of what Jesus had taught them; this gives us the four gospels. The Spirit would also 'guide' them into all truth, and this would result in the Epistles. 'He will show you things to come' refers to the prophetic Scriptures, especially the book of Revelation."

—Warren W. Wiersbe
Be Transformed (John 13-21)

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we listen to and follow the guidance of the Counselor.

Session 5: The New Resources

1. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9. This passage is often called the Sch^ema or Great Commandment.
 - What is the commandment given in this passage?
 - What does it mean that the "Lord is One?"
2. Read John 15:26-27. Just as the Sch^ema proclaims the unity of YHWH, Jesus reveals the trinity of God.
 - Who is the Counselor that Jesus promises to send? Who is the Counselor from?
 - What is the role of the Counselor?
3. Read John 16:1-4. Jesus told His disciples they would face persecution.
 - What kinds of persecution and suffering does Jesus describe? From whom is the persecution coming?
 - Why does Jesus reveal this to His disciples at this time?
4. Read John 16:5-15, and John 14:25-26.
 - How do the disciples benefit by Jesus going away?
 - In what ways will the Counselor guide the disciples?
5. Read John 16:16-24. Jesus uses a metaphor of childbirth to describe pain transformed into joy.
 - How might this image reflect the process of remembering God's promises through suffering?
 - Jesus tells the disciples they will endure sorrow now, but joy awaits. What is the joy that awaits them?
6. How does this passage provide hope or comfort to you?



SERIES 6 | SESSION 6

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2025

PAUSE

SCRIPTURE READING

John 17:1-26

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus prays what has become known as “the high priestly prayer.” His recorded petition to the Father is packed with theological wisdom. It:

1. Demonstrates the basis of Jesus’ glory in merit and authority.
2. Defines eternal life as a relationship with the Father.
3. Shows a ‘behind the curtain’ view of election.
4. Exposes the believers’ position to be in the world, not of it.
5. Describes progressive sanctification from a divine perspective.
6. Indicates past, present, and future preservation of the saints.
7. Lays out the unity and evangelical mission of the invisible Church.

OBJECTIVE

We are in the world yet not of it.

UNION WITH CHRIST

“The relationship of God to men, perfectly exemplified in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, is both the highest expression of His consciousness of His relation to God and the fullest attainment that man can reach through union with Him.”

— Merrill C. Tenney
Topics from the Gospel of John,
Bibliotheca Sacra

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we live in unity with Christ.

Session 6: The New Position

1. Read John 17:1-2.

- What connection do you see between Jesus’ obedience and His glory?
- What authority did Jesus receive from the Father?
- How does this authority reveal both His divinity and His submission?

2. Read John 17:3-10.

- How does Jesus define eternal life? (v. 3)
- What does this prayer reveal about the work of the Father and the Son in divine election? (vv. 4-5, 9-10)
- In what way does Jesus affirm both divine sovereignty and human responsibility? (vv. 7-8)

3. Read John 17:11-16.

- What does Jesus mean by saying His followers are “in the world” but “not of the world”?
- What are some practical challenges of living “in” the world but not being “of” the world? How does this tension affect you?

4. Read John 17:17-19. Progressive sanctification is the process of growing in holiness through the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.

- What does this passage reveal the progressive nature of salvation?
- How does this passage help you understand that sanctification is both a divine work and a personal discipline?

5. Read John 17:20-26.

- How does this passage describe the unity and mission of the invisible church? (*The invisible church is the true church seen only by God, comprised of those redeemed and sealed by God.*)
- How does this unity serve as a testimony to the world?



SERIES 6 | SESSION 7

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2025

PAUSE

SCRIPTURE READING

John 18:1-40

KEY IDEAS

THEME

John presents a startling series of choices that occur in rapid succession. Each was foreshadowed or predicted earlier in the gospel, but the results are nonetheless striking. Peter chooses denial, Annas positions for power, Pilate chooses moralistic relativism, and the crowd selects a murder over Messiah. Jesus alone chooses well, fulfilling His mandate and surrendering Himself by His own choice.

OBJECTIVE

We choose Jesus.

MORAL TRUTHS

"...our culture and politics are suffused with eager condemnations, often of genuine wrongs, but there is less appetite to build a morally coherent alternative, which would entail honesty about the compromises and sins of one's own side. The answer to moralistic relativism is not even louder, more performative emotionalism from the other side, but the arduous work of articulating and living out genuine moral truths."

—Nathanael Blake
Moralistic Relativism, WORLD Opinions

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we discern and live out moral truths.

Session 7: The Choices

1. Read John 18:1-14. *Jesus chooses to surrender.*
 - Why did Jesus choose to surrender? See also John 10:17-18.
 - What is the 'cup' that Jesus chooses to drink? (v. 11)
2. Read John 18:15-18 and 25-27. *Peter chooses denial.*
 - What pressures led Peter to deny Jesus?
 - Compare Peter's denial of Jesus in these verses with his defense of Jesus in verse 10. What changed?
 - What does Peter's failure teach us about relying on our own strength versus God's?
3. Read John 18:19-24. *Annas positions for power.*
 - What seems to motivate Annas' questioning of Jesus? Was he seeking truth, or seeking an accusation?
 - What was Annas hoping the trial would accomplish? (see also v 31)
4. Read John 18:28-38. *Pilate chooses moralistic relativism.*
 - Why did Jesus say, "Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice" (v. 37)?
 - How does Pilate's response (v.38) reflect moral relativism?
5. Read John 18:38-40. *The crowd selects a murderer over Messiah.*
 - Why do you think the crowd preferred Barabbas over Jesus?
 - What does the crowd's choice reveal about the human heart's response to truth and holiness?



SERIES 6 | SESSION 8

GROUP DISCUSSION



ANNUAL THEME 2025

PAUSE

SCRIPTURE READING

John 19:1-42

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Jesus endures the single worst experience in all history. The God-Man willingly accepts torture and rejection. He lays his life down to fulfill His plan and to complete scripture. Along the way, Jesus shows the face of courage. He also reveals the source of courage in God's currently-invisible kingdom.

OBJECTIVE

We find courage in our bad days.

THE PROMISE OF SUFFERING

"The promise of suffering for the church is a distinction in the history and literature of God's people...Simply stated, believers in the OT suffered *for their lack of faith (or disobedience)*, while believers in the NT are *promised suffering for their obedient faith*...Christian persecution did not cease after the early centuries... Thus, believers in Jesus today should not think that experiencing persecution suggests their faith is in error. [Rather], such righteous suffering serves as a dramatic avenue for disciples to glorify Christ who suffered on their behalf."

—Cory Marsh

'On Account of My Name' in *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we find peace and courage in the face of tribulation.

Session 8: The Worst Day

1. Read Matthew 27:11-14, 15-18, 19-26, and John 19:1-3. Jesus showed courage in the face of torment and beating.
 - Why did He not answer the charges against Him?
 - Was that part of willingly laying down His life to fulfill His plan?
2. Read John 19:4-7, and Leviticus 24:10-16.
 - Discuss Pilate's attempts to find a just claim against Jesus.
 - Discuss the crowd's vehemence fueled by the religious leaders' accusation of blasphemy.
3. Read John 19:8-16.
 - Why was Pilate afraid when he heard that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God?
 - How did Jesus compare Pilate's authority with the authority 'from above'?
4. Read John 19:17-30 and Psalm 22:1-2, 6-8, 11-18; Isaiah 53:3-4 and 12.
 - Compare the Old Testament predictions of Jesus' crucifixion and death with the details revealed in John's gospel.
 - The last sip of sour wine was to moisten Jesus' mouth so He could utter "It is finished." What was finished?
5. Read John 19:31-42; Isaiah 53:5 and 9; Zechariah 12:10; Psalm 34:20; Exodus 12:43-46 and John 16:33.
 - Discuss how the intricate details of Scripture were fulfilled.
 - According to John 16:33, why should we follow Jesus courageously?

