

PORTRAITS of JESUS

Discovering how Jesus Described Himself in the Gospel by John

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Study Time Suggestions for this series

These lessons are designed for you to use in the way that best fits your own schedule and preferences. Whether you schedule a regular and predictable hour each week or you prefer to have shorter and more spontaneous times to do the lesson is entirely up to you. The important goal is that week by week you find time to focus and concentrate on your relationship with The One Who loves you through pondering His Word. If at all possible, find a quiet, uninterrupted time and place.

Preparing - As you begin your study time, it is always good to be still and to know that HE IS GOD. Put aside the details and distractions of your life. Let the suggested meditation soak into your thoughts and life. Then speak honestly with the Lord, expressing your concerns and the desires of your heart as you open up yourself to receive His love.

Listening - As you read the passage in John's Gospel, remember that this is not simply a book to be analyzed, outlined, or evaluated. Put yourself into the events and conversations. Note especially what Jesus is saying. God's Spirit will enable you to see and hear things from Scripture that are meant just for you. He will give you insight and understanding as you rely on Him.

Pondering – The questions in this section are designed to help you think about the Bible verses that you have just read. There are no "right and wrong" answers to these questions. You can ponder them and come up with your own responses and thoughts. It is sometimes challenging to do this because we are all prone to depend on the insights of teachers and authors but studying for yourself is the very best way to integrate the lessons that God has for you into your own life and to remember what He said directly to you.

Responding – This is a good time to listen carefully to the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit. What does He want you to *remember*? What would Jesus like you to *believe* about who He really is? How will this *impact* your thoughts, decisions and actions

WHO IS JESUS?

Portraits of Jesus - Lesson 1

**So the Word became human and made His home among us.
He was full of unending love (grace) and faithfulness (truth).
And we have seen His glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.** John 1: 14 –NLT

Who was this man named Jesus? People were asking that question when He was walking this earth more than 2000 years ago and they are still asking that same question today. There is probably no clearer or concise answer to that question than what John, His disciple, presents in his book. This gospel is all about Jesus – who He is, what He did, and why He came to live among mankind. Do you want to know Him? Then read on . . .

Preparing – As you quiet your mind and your heart before God, read Hebrews 12: 1 – 3. How well do you know Jesus? Do you want to “run with endurance and joy the race that God has planned for you”? Then make these verses your prayer - an expression of your thanksgiving, your questions, and your requests.

Listening - Read John 1. Read it again and again, using different translations. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight and understanding as you read about Jesus. Feel His presence – He wants you to know Him personally and intimately.

John stated his purpose for writing his biography of Jesus at the end of it – John 20: 31. How do you think the opening chapter begins to achieve his goals and desires.

Pondering the events and conversations -

1. Focus on John 1: 1 - 14. What does John, the author of this Gospel, want you to know and to believe about Jesus?
2. How did John the Baptist prepare the Jewish people for the arrival of Jesus, their Messiah? What did he understand about Jesus' identity and mission? (vs. 15 – 34)
(You can read more about John the Baptist in Luke 1: 57 - 80 and Luke 3: 1 – 19.)

How did he validate Jesus' true identity?
How did he answer the questions of the religious leaders? Why were they sent to him?
3. The religious leaders wanted to know more about John's identity, how did he explain it? John 1:19- 28
(See the prophecy in Isaiah 40: 1 – 8.)
4. What do you learn about Jesus' identity from his encounters with the disciples? Why were they willing to leave everything familiar and follow Him?
5. John the Baptist called Jesus “the Lamb of God” – verses 29 and 36. What do you think he meant by this descriptive phrase?

Responding – As you read John 1: 12, what is your personal response to The One who not only came from God, but was God? To The Lamb of God who was sent to take away your sin? To Jesus Christ, the Messiah? Will you quietly listen to the Holy Spirit, asking your questions and then giving Him your praise and thanksgiving right now?

JESUS - THE MESSIAH

Portraits of Jesus – Lesson 2

The woman said, "I know the Messiah is coming – the one who is called Christ.
When He comes, He will explain everything to us."

Then Jesus told her, "I AM the Messiah!"

John 4: 25 – 26 – NLT

Is there a more beloved musical presentation than The Messiah? In 1741 Handel composed this amazing choral oratorio based on the prophecies in the Old Testament and the fulfillment of them in the person of Jesus. Since that time, people throughout the world have joined together, especially in the Advent season, to sing this music and to rejoice in the truths proclaimed through it. What is your favorite song?

Preparing – Take some time to reflect on the first coming of Jesus into our world. What comes into your consciousness? Then read the words He spoke to Nicodemus in John 3: 16 – 18. What thoughts and feelings begin to stir in your mind and heart as you meditate on God's great love for you demonstrated through the gift of His one and only Son?

Listening – Read John 4: 1 – 42. Read it again using different translations. This is a true story about Jesus!
What are the ideas that capture your attention as you read this story?

Pondering - Portrait #1

1. Jesus introduced Himself to a Samaritan woman. Put yourself in her place. Picture this woman as clearly as you can using descriptive adjectives. (vs. 1 – 30 and 39 - 42)
2. For centuries the Jews had been looking for the Messiah - "the Anointed One" - who would come and set up a new kingdom for them - a king who would reign with justice and righteousness and bring peace on earth. Obviously, this Samaritan woman also knew about a coming Messiah. How does Jesus fit these prophecies?
Psalm 2: 1 - 9
Psalm 45:1 - 6
Isaiah 9: 2 - 7
Isaiah 11: 1 - 3
Isaiah 53: 1 - 12
Isaiah 59: 20
Jeremiah 33: 14 – 16
Daniel 7:13
Micah 5:
Zechariah 9: 9 – 13
3. What information does Jesus give to this woman about Himself, His identity and His mission?
What did Jesus offer to this woman that made her curious and receptive to Him?
4. Why do you think Jesus chose to reveal Himself and His mission to a woman, to a Samaritan, to an outcast?
What was the result of her sharing her testimony?
5. The disciples were curious and inquisitive, weren't they? (Vs. 27 – 34) What did Jesus explain to His disciples about Himself and His mission? Do you think this helped them understand more about Jesus?

Responding – A personal encounter with the Messiah (called Christ) is always a life-changing experience. What is it that He wants you to understand today as you identify with the woman, the disciples, or the village people? Would you agree that Jesus really is "the Savior of the world"? Is so, are you willing to tell your friends? Why or why not? Is it time to talk with Him about your response and to learn from Him what His desires are for you?

JESUS - THE BREAD of LIFE

Portraits of Jesus - Lesson 3

“Then Jesus declared, **‘I am the bread of life.**
He who comes to Me will never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty.’”
John 6: 35 and 48

Did you know that bread is one of the oldest prepared foods known to man? There is evidence that since prehistoric times, humans have been making some form of bread. Through the centuries and in every culture, it has often been considered a staple food. Sometimes the word means the visible loaf, but it can also refer to the basic necessities of life. When Jesus told the Israelites that He was “the bread of life”, they understood that this is a claim with huge ramifications. He is more than the manna that their forefathers received in the wilderness. He is the Living Bread! What does that mean?

Preparing – Song writers can often help us express our thoughts and desires. Make this well-known hymn your prayer.

“Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but Thou are mighty. Hold me with Thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me ‘til I want no more. Feed me ‘til I want no more.”
Isaiah 58: 11 – “The Lord will guide you always. He will satisfy your needs . . .”

Listening - Read John 6: 1 – 59. Try to imagine yourself in the crowd and as one of Jesus’ disciples.
What were they thinking? What were their questions? What word(s) or concepts does Jesus often repeat?

Pondering – Portrait #2

1. Read John 6: 25 – 59 again. The people have just spent time listening to Jesus and witnessing some miracles, but they want to hear more. Find the six questions that Jesus answers and write them down. Then try to summarize His answer to each question. (The story of the “manna” – God’s provision for their physical needs is in Exodus 16.)
2. What do you think Jesus is trying to help these people understand about who He is?
How did using the visual example of bread help them to understand more about Him?
3. This is not the first time that Jesus has introduced the concept of “eternal or everlasting life”. Why is this so important? What do they need to grasp from the One who “has come down from heaven and gives life to the world”?
4. What does Jesus mean in John 6: 53 - 58? Try to explain this simply and clearly.
John 4: 14 John 6: 27 John 6: 35 John 6: 48 – 51
5. There seems to be an open invitation for anyone and everyone to believe in Jesus. How do you reconcile this truth with Jesus’ comment in John 6: 37 and 44 - 45?

Responding – Jesus evidently wanted his disciples and the crowds to understand that by believing in Him they would receive the gift of eternal life. They would live forever or have everlasting life. Underscore those ideas in your Bible. Does this promise make a difference in your life today? In what ways does it bring you confidence and hope?

JESUS - THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Portraits of Jesus - Lesson 4

“When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, **‘I AM the light of the world.** Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.’” John 8: 12

Light and darkness. Day and night. These were God’s very first acts of creation and He called the light good. Then on the fourth day He created the sun, the moon, and the stars in the expanse of His universe that is beyond the capabilities of man to grasp. Think about the impact of the sun and then consider the night sky and the wonders of the constellations and galaxies which extend far beyond our imagination. What is the difference between taking a walk in the dark and a walk when it is light outside? Why would you want to carry a flashlight when it is dark?

Preparing – Too often people are satisfied with knowing that there will be “a light at the end of the tunnel”. Do you agree with that idea or do you think that Jesus just might mean that He would like to give you His light when you are in a tunnel of sadness, confusion, or distress? Take some time and let Jesus reassure you from His words in John 8:12.

Listening - Read John 7: 1 - 8: 30. Try to read these stories in various translations or paraphrases of the Bible.

As a news reporter, sum up the events of this important week when the Jews came together to celebrate the Feast of the Tabernacles. What is the mood of Jesus, the disciples, the people, and the Jewish leaders? What are the various reactions to Jesus that are described in these scenarios?

Pondering – Portrait #3 –

1. Jesus often referred to **light** as He explained Himself and His Father in heaven. How do these verses help you understand that concept?
John 1: 4 – 9

John 3: 19 -21

John 9: 5

John 12: 35 – 36 and 46
2. This idea is also used by the writers of the epistles. Why?
II Corinthians 4: 5 – 7
I John 1: 5 - 7

Ephesians 5: 8 – 14
I John 2: 7 - 11

Colossians 1: 11 - 12
3. There were many levels of disbelief – from doubt and questions to anger, resentment and threats. What did Jesus do to dispel this opposition? What made Him so secure and confident? What helped other people to “put their faith in Him”?
4. Jesus also described or called Himself the “Son of Man” (John 8: 27) as He talked to the Pharisees and validated His relationship to His Father. Why do you think it was important for Him to clearly bring both His deity and His humanity to their attention?

Responding - Jesus said, “I am the world’s light. No one who follows Me stumbles around in the darkness. I provide plenty of light to live in.” (The Message) If you honestly admitted to the Lord a place in your life where there is discouragement, anxiety, fear, uncertainty or even guilt, where would it be? What keeps you from trusting God to shine His light into those places and giving you His peace, His joy and His protection?

JESUS – THE GATE FOR THE SHEEP and THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Portraits of Jesus - Lesson 5

“Therefore Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth, **I AM the gate for the sheep.**
I AM the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture.”
John 10: 7 and 9

“**I AM the good shepherd.** The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

“**I AM the good shepherd;** I know my sheep and my sheep know me.” John 10: 11 and 14

With demanding voices and accusatory questions, many of the people were seeking to disprove the claims that Jesus was making about Himself. The Pharisees were eager to protect their own positions and authority. So how does Jesus respond? He performs a miracle and then He gives them a word picture to help them understand who He is and what He is going to do for them. Can you think of an illustration that would be more meaningful than the one that He used? Why would the picture of a gate for the sheep and a shepherd be so helpful then and throughout the centuries?

Preparing – As you think about this lesson and the things that you already know about a shepherd, quiet your heart and focus your mind on **Your** shepherd by reading Psalm 23. Phrase by phrase – give Him your praise and thanksgiving.

Listening - Read John 9: 1 - 10: 21. Read it again out loud to feel the impact of the blind man’s story – chapter 9. Then form a picture in your mind of Jesus as He described Himself to the Pharisees in John 10: 1 – 21.

Pondering – Portraits #4 and #5 (John 10: 1 – 21)

1. What do people have in common with sheep? How do these characteristics of a gate for the sheep and a shepherd illustrate Jesus’ identity and His mission?
2. In the Old Testament the Jewish people were very familiar with the picture of God as Israel’s Shepherd. What did they know and experience and what prophecies did they have?
Jacob’s blessings - Genesis 48:15 and 49: 24

Prophecies Isaiah 40: 10 – 11
 Jeremiah 31: 10
 Ezekiel 34
 Micah 5: 4
3. Who do think Jesus is referring to in John 10:16? How does Jesus feel about a “lost sheep”? Luke 15: 1 - 7
4. Other New Testament writers picture the Good Shepherd in additional way. What does He continue to do for His sheep? What do these verses add to your understanding?
Hebrews 13:20

I Peter 2: 24 – 25

I Peter 5:4

Revelation 7: 17

Responding – Jesus longs for you and me to “know Him and to listen to His voice.” He willingly came to take our sin, to bring us forgiveness and to open the way for us to belong to Him – now and forever. “Be still! Know that He is Your Shepherd!” Listen for His voice. What is He telling you? How does He want to reassure you of His loving care? Are you listening?

JESUS - THE SON OF GOD

Portraits of Jesus - Lesson 6

"Jesus said, 'I and My Father are One.'" John 10: 30

"Jesus said, '**I am the Son of God.**'" John 10: 36

"Jesus, the Son of God, is co-equal, co-eternal & co-essential with the Father." - Bible Dictionary

A few months before Jesus had been at the Temple for the Feast of Tabernacles – John 7. Now he is there again for the Feast of Dedication, which we know today as Hanukkah. The desperation to know if Jesus is really who He claims to be is increasing, but so is His willingness to be very clear. How many miracles does it take? What moves someone to believe the truth?

Preparing – Just think about it for a little while – "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son. . ." Pause. Don't hurry. Look at each word and give thanks. Do you believe it?

Listening - Read John 10: 22 - 42

What is the mood of the people who have gathered around Jesus in the temple area?
How does Jesus respond to them?

Pondering – Portrait #6

- How important is it to Jesus that the people recognize Him as the Son of God?
 - Jesus is first introduced as the Son of God in Luke 1: 26 – 37
 - John the Baptist testified to Jesus' identity in John 1: 18, 29 - 34.
 - Satan used the title in his temptations of Jesus in Luke 4: 1 – 12
 - Jesus has already identified Himself as the Son of God.

John 3: 16 - 18	John 6:40
John 5: 19 - 30	John 8: 28 - 29, 54 – 56
- What miracles have you already read about in the Book of John? (The other Gospels record many more.) Why do you think there were such varied reactions to these events?
- What do you think caused some people to follow Jesus and to believe in Him?
- The book of I John uses this title often. If you can, read the whole book and note each reference to the Father and the Son. (It takes about 10 - 15 minutes to read it.) Now look back and give some thought to what you have read. What seems important to you?
- Every major religious movement considers Jesus to be an important religious figure – teacher, prophet, miracle worker. A distinguishing tenet of the Christian faith as declared in the Nicene Creed is "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. Jesus Christ, the, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, through Whom all things were made. . ." What do you believe? How important is this doctrine to you? Why?

Responding – Would you be willing to write a "psalm" of praise, the words to a song, or a thank you note as your response! How could you verbally or artistically express your thoughts to the triune God? To God the Father and His only Son, Jesus?

"To God Be the Glory – great things He hath done! So loved He the world that He gave us His Son."

JESUS - THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

Portraits of Jesus - Lesson 7

“Jesus said to her, **‘I am the Resurrection and the Life.**
He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies;
and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?’” John 11: 25 - 26

What’s your viewpoint? We all look at life through the lens of our past experiences, our training, our age, and our present circumstances, don’t we? Most of us place a high priority on comfort, security, convenience, and the ability to be in control. What do you think most greatly influenced the choices that Jesus made as He traveled and responded to people and events?

Preparing – How would you describe your mood right now? How are you feeling about life and relationships? Would you say you are sad or disappointed or discouraged? Or is this a time of joy and contentment, tranquility and equilibrium for you? Probably you have mixed emotions! Is there a miracle, a big surprise, that God is waiting to perform for you? Are you looking?

Listening - Read John 11: 1 - 48. If this is a familiar story, read it with new eyes for the details and the nuances. Notice the varied emotions of the disciples. How was Martha feeling? How about Mary and her friends? Does it surprise you that Jesus wept? What made Him do that?

Pondering – Portrait #7

1. Jesus explained to his disciples why he delayed going to visit Lazarus even though he knew that his dear friend was sick. What were His reasons and how did this delay affect this home?
2. Martha and Mary both greet Jesus with the same comment, “If only You . . .” What was His response to Martha? What was His response to Mary? How did each of them react?
3. This was the final miracle recorded by John for us before Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the events of that final week before His crucifixion. What did He want the people to believe about Him? Why would this be so important?
4. When Jesus tells Martha that “He is the resurrection and the life”, what was He explaining to her?
5. The theme of life and the gift eternal life is a major focus in John and in all of Scripture. It is the hope of every Christian – everyone who believes in Jesus. What do these verses tell you about it?

John 3: 16

Titus 1: 1 – 3

Romans 6: 23

Titus 3: 3 – 7

Ephesians 2: 4 - 9

I Peter 1: 3 – 9

I Timothy 1: 15 - 16

I John 5: 11 – 13

I Timothy 6: 11 - 12

Jude 1: 20 – 21

6. Many of the Jews believed at this time, while others reported the event to the Pharisees – John 11: 45 – 48. Why? What was their greatest concern? Is there anything for us to learn from their attitudes?

Responding – Jesus returned to the home of His friends just before the Passover – John 12: 1 – 3. He was honored. He was served. Mary anointed His head, an act of honor, and His feet, a display of devotion. How do you express your devotion, your praise and your love to Jesus, The Son of God?

JESUS - TEACHER and LORD

Portraits of Jesus - Lesson 8

Jesus said, "You call Me 'Teacher' & 'Lord'; and rightly so, for that is what I AM."

John 13:13

It was true then and it is still true today. Some people choose to believe the claims of Jesus, while others choose, probably for a variety of reasons, to disregard or to deny them. How much does "loving the praise of men more than the praise from God" (John 12: 43) influence the choice that people make in both having faith and then confessing their faith before other people? How much does it affect you?

Preparing – How do you know that someone loves you? Is it through the words they say? Is it through the way they treat you or the things they do for you? How has God shown His love to you? Read Romans 5: 8 and let that truth reach into your heart and mind.

Listening - Read John 13: 1 - 35. All four Gospels describe the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. While the other authors tell us about various events leading up to the celebration of the Passover, John goes immediately to that important and intimate evening with His disciples. What are the predominate things on Jesus' mind?

Pondering – Portrait #8

1. What was it like for Jesus that evening as He realized that "His time had come"? What did He understand and know?
John 12: 23 – 36

John 13: 1
2. Why did Jesus want to wash the feet of His disciples that evening? What did He accomplish?
3. How was Jesus different from the rabbis who would have been called both "Teacher" and "Lord" in those days? What was the implication of each of these titles at that time? Did this change after the resurrection?
4. What indication do you have that Jesus really loved Judas even though He knew what was in his heart and what he was planning to do? How and when do you think Judas' betrayal began?
5. Jesus often talked about His relationship with His Father. Why was this so important to Him? How would understanding this relationship help His disciples?
6. At the same time that Jesus is informing the disciples about some things that are about to happen to Him, He is telling them about how they are to live. What are His instructions to them? In what way is His new commandment new?

Responding – As you think about Jesus' words to His disciples about serving and loving, what do you think He would like you to understand? Does the way that Jesus demonstrated "the full extent of His love" motivate and strengthen you? How?

JESUS - THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE

Portraits of Jesus - Lesson 9

“Jesus answered, **‘I Am THE WAY and THE TRUTH and THE LIFE’.**

No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

John 14:6

There are often tender and intimate moments at the bedside of someone who is still alert and able to communicate but who knows that the end of their life is very close. The family gathers and there are precious and memorable words spoken. Each one wants to remember clearly the expressions of love and to respond to the heartfelt desires that might be expressed during those hours or days. In the best of circumstances, the family already knows this information, but the impact of those final words can have a lifelong impact on the ones who will experience the loss. What memories does this bring to your mind?

Preparing – Can you hear Jesus calling you, “my child”? He is. He called His disciples “My children” on that final night and He continues to think of us as one of His own – John 1: 12 – 13. He is waiting for you to sit quietly with Him so that you can ask Him some questions and listen and feel His loving arms around you.

Listening - Read John 13: 31 - 14: 31 - Jesus wants to “share His heart” with His disciples. In chapters 14 - 17, John has recorded the last conversation and final prayer of Jesus before His arrest. It is a solemn time, a sacred time and an intimate time. Jesus has just finished washing the disciples’ feet and telling them about His coming betrayal. We are privileged to listen in on what is being said. Tiptoe in quietly and take some notes, so that you can remember clearly what you hear.

Pondering – Portrait #9

1. What is the pertinent information that Jesus wants His disciples to remember about who He is and what is going to happen? Try to summarize each section.
John 14: 1 – 7

John 14: 8 – 14

John 14: 15 – 24

John 14: 25 – 31
2. As you think about the words that Jesus used to describe Himself, what is He saying?
I Am The Way –

I Am The Truth –

I Am The Life –
3. What did Jesus teach them about the Holy Spirit? Who is He and why is He going to come to them?
How would these ideas be a comfort to the disciples as they try to figure out what Jesus is saying to them?
4. The theme of Jesus’ going away and coming back is repeated in this chapter. What do you suppose the disciples understood? What do you understand about the sequence of these events?
5. Jesus told His disciples that those who have faith in Him will do even greater things than He has done because He will be with His Father. (John 14: 12 –14) What do you think He means by this promise?

Responding – Jesus told His dear disciples, “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you.” He assured them of His love and care for them in the future. What reassurance do you need from the Savior today? His promises are His gift to you every day. Will you receive them? Will you trust Him?

“Because He lives, I can face tomorrow. Because He lives, all fear is gone.
Because I know He holds the future, and life is worth the living just because He lives.”

JESUS – THE TRUE VINE

Portraits of Jesus - Lesson 10

**"I AM the true vine and My Father is the gardener.
I AM the vine; you are the branches."**

John 15:1 & 5

Have you ever cared for a vineyard? It's hard work. Every winter, during the dormant season, a gardener has to spend hours using his pruning shears. "Pruning focuses the growth of the vine where you want it and determines how much fruit a vine will have. Each vineyard is different, with the variety of grape, location, fertility of the soil and climate all playing a role in the decision on how best to prune." (Steve Dutton of Dutton Ranch) The removal of deadwood and cutting back or removal of some branches to shape the plant will mean a healthy vine that produces the quality and quantity of grapes that will satisfy the gardener. Who is the gardener that decides what to prune in your life?

Preparing – As you quietly bow before the Lord, let the prayer that Paul expressed for his dear friends in Colossae become a personal prayer for yourself - Colossians 1: 9 – 12. What does he ask God to do? What would you like the Lord to do for you?

Listening - Read John 15: 1 - 16: 4 (Or go on to 16:33) There is so much that Jesus wants to share with His disciples. It is probably getting late now and soon they will be on their way to Gethsemane where Jesus will spend time praying to His Heavenly Father before He is betrayed by Judas and arrested. Jesus has already talked with them about what to expect and the coming of the Holy Spirit, but he goes on now . . .

What is the theme or focus of each paragraph? How would you explain what Jesus is teaching in your own words?

Pondering – Portrait #10

1. What do you think Jesus is explaining to them through this word picture of the vine and the branches?
2. It is an amazing concept that Christ actually lives in us. Would you agree that it is a truth that takes a lifetime to fully grasp and experience? Jesus wanted to prepare His disciples for this reality. How do the writers of the epistles explain it?

John 14: 16 - 20	Philippians 2: 12 – 13
John 17: 20 - 23	Colossians 1: 25 – 28
Romans 8: 9 - 11	II Thessalonians 1: 11 – 12
I Corinthians 3: 16	I John 4: 4
I Corinthians 6: 19	
3. What do you believe is the fruit that the branches are to bear?

Galatians 5: 22 - 25	Colossians 1: 9 – 14
Ephesians 5: 8 - 11	James 3: 17
Philippians 1: 9 - 11	
4. Are there other important ideas which Jesus also explained to them during these sacred minutes together? What are they? Why did He take the time to encourage the disciples in this way?

Responding – Jesus said, "If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish . . ." (14: 7)

Jesus also said, "I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy . . ." (14: 11)

As you quietly consider these promises, let the Spirit of God speak His reassurance into your heart and mind. Have you found them to be true for you? Why or why not? It's a good time to be honest and open with Your Savior!

JESUS – “I Am He -JESUS OF NAZARETH”

Portraits of Jesus - Lesson 11

Jesus asked them, “Who is it you want?” “**Jesus of Nazareth,**” they replied.

“**I am He,**” Jesus said.

John 18:4-5 and 7-8

It happened at late at night which was a predictable time for such a plan. They arrested Him without a formal charge, but then anger and excitement often drive a crowd to act without reason. Think about it. They wanted one man but they came armed with not only a detachment of soldiers but with some religious officials. Peter was ready to resist but that was not Jesus’ plan. What did He know that His disciples had not yet grasped?

Preparing – As you read John 17, join with Jesus’ disciples as they listened to Him pray for Himself, for them and finally for all believers throughout the centuries, including you and me. What did Jesus ask His Father to do for them and for you?

Listening - Read John 18: 1 – 27 Try to imagine the scene. Where would you be standing? What would you be doing?

Pondering – Portrait #11

1. Why do you think the soldiers and officials asked for “Jesus of Nazareth” rather than other titles or descriptions?
2. Now compare John 18: 1 - 12 with the similar passages that are in other 3 Gospels. What new information can you find? (Put a marker in each of these Gospels so that you can find the answers to the next questions, too)
Matthew 26: 36 - 57
Mark 14: 32 - 51
Luke 22: 39 - 53

As the Son of God and the Son of Man, why do you think that Jesus wanted to pray and to talk with His Father? What happened to the disciples during these hours?

3. Why did Peter, dear Peter, make some very poor choices that evening? John 18: 15 – 18 and 25 – 27
Matthew 26: 69 - 75
Mark 14: 27 – 31 and 66 - 72
Luke 22: 54 - 62

What do you think about this quote: “Many think their being in grief and distress will excuse them if they are hasty or hot with those around them.” What do you think?

4. As you read John 18: 12 – 13, 19 – 24 and 28, try to picture Jesus before these hostile leaders. What indignities did he endure? What kind of a man was Caiaphas? How did Jesus respond to their questions? What additional information and insights do the other Gospels add?
Matthew 26: 57, 59 - 68
Mark 14: 53 - 65
Luke 22: 54, 63 - 71
5. Why do you think Jesus was willing to come? To become “Jesus of Nazareth”? To do what His Father asked Him to do? (You might want to refer back to Jesus’ prayer in John 17.)

Responding – Jesus prayed that “the world would know that the Father sent His Son” and that “His love would be visible through those who believe by their unity” – John 17: 23 – 26. Do these requests that Jesus made to God, His Father, stir your heart? Let Him show you some ways that you can cooperate with His goals and desires for you.

JESUS - THE KING

Portraits of Jesus – Lesson 12

Jesus answered, “You are right in saying, **I am a king.**”

John 18: 37

The Jews were not willing to be satisfied with simply a Jewish trial because Roman law did not allow them to impose capital punishment. They wanted execution! The Jewish method of execution would have been stoning, but Jesus had already predicted that His death would be by crucifixion. This was considered the most painful and degrading form of capital punishment in the Roman Empire. It was so horrible that it was used by the Romans only for slaves and the lowest types of criminals. What would make the Jewish leaders prefer to proclaim a heathen emperor as their king over Jesus?

Preparing – “He left His Father’s throne above. So free, so infinite His grace!
Emptied Himself of all but love and bled for Adam’s helpless race!
It is mercy all, immense and free, for, O my God, it found out me.
Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, should die for me?” (“And Can It Be?” by Charles Wesley)

Listening - Read John 18: 28 - 19: 30 It is a story worth reading every day – morning and evening!

The parallel passages are found in Matthew 27: 11 - 56

Mark 15: 1 - 41

Luke 23: 1 - 49

What were the charges or accusations that the Jews were making against Jesus?

Pondering – Portrait #12

1. What do you notice about Pilate’s reaction to the Jews and to Jesus? Do you think he was a weak or a strong leader? How would you describe Pilate as a person and as an official?
2. The “kingdom of God” and the “kingdom of heaven” are terms that Jesus often used. The Jews, based on the prophecies in the Old Testament, were looking for the Messiah to come and to release them from the rule of Rome. They expected One who would set up His Kingdom on earth, but what had Jesus been teaching them?

Matthew 3: 1 - 3	Matthew 13 (Parables)
Matthew 4: 17	Matthew 18: 1 – 5
Matthew 9: 35	Mark 1: 14 – 15
Matthew 12: 28	John 1: 41 and 49
3. Why do you think Pilate had “JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS” written in 3 languages on the cross for all to see? Why did this trouble the chief priests?
4. “It is finished.” - John 19: 30 – What did Jesus mean? Write out your explanation of this sentence based on your study of what Jesus had been teaching and demonstrating to the crowds and to His disciples.
5. If this was the end of the story, life then and life now would be meaningless. If you can, enter into a conversation with the 3 women who stood near the cross or with John. What did they remember? Did they have hope? Where do you think the disciples have gone? What would they be talking about and doing do you suppose?

Responding - What does the term “King of My Life, I Crown Thee Now” mean to you? The song writer goes on to write: “Lest I forget Gethsemane, lest I forget Thine agony, lest I forget Thy love for me, lead me to Calvary.” For you and for me, He left heaven’s glory. For you and for me He willingly suffered and was crucified. Stop there! Let these realities soak in and saturate your mind and heart.

JESUS – THE RISEN CHRIST

Portraits of Jesus – Lesson 13

“Then Jesus opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”

Luke 24: 45 – 47

How long is a sleepless night? It’s a very long time, isn’t it? It feels much longer than six or eight hours. How many of the disciples slept that Saturday night, do you think? They had falling asleep in the garden while Jesus prayed and now going to sleep probably seemed impossible. How many of the women slept? Maybe for a few restless hours, but as soon as that first light began to appear, we know that they were on their way to the tomb. What a big surprise was in store for them!

Preparing – You already know the rest of the story - THE RESURRECTION. The world’s greatest miracle took place that morning. How has it impacted your life? Make a list, a long list, and give God your praise.

Listening - As you read through the Scriptural accounts of that great morning when victory over sin and death was accomplished, let God’s love for you be absorbed into your mind and heart.

John 19: 31 - 20: 31

Matthew 27: 57 - 28: 20

Mark 15: 42 - 16: 20

Luke 23: 50 - 24: 53

Pondering - Finish the following sentence with as many possibilities as you can.

BECAUSE HE LIVES, I . . .

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Responding – The Risen Christ

Today some people believe.

Today some people believe and go to tell their friends.

Today some people are still wondering.

Today some people meet Christ on the road of life, their hearts burn within and they come to understand.

Today some people need proof. They are doubters. Today some people are skeptics or procrastinators.

Today some people still have never heard.

And sadly, today, some people still deny the reality or chose to walk away from truth – and He forces no one.

Which sentence describes you and why?

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 20: 31