

A Children's Study of the Gospel of John

By HM Coker

A note to parents:

I am a homeschool mom and the Bible is our favorite subject every day. We are currently working through the Gospel of John. We have been enjoying it so much that I wanted to share our first lesson with you. If you would be interested in seeing future lessons, please let me know. Please keep in mind, this is a homeschool lesson written specifically for my children who are in K5 and 1st grade, but I do believe it could reach a wider grade range. If you do this lesson with your children, please let me know what grade they are in and how they responded to the material.

I would also like to note that before beginning our study of John, we read through the entire book as a family during our nightly family worship. I recommend doing this because it gave our children a framework of the entire book before they started studying it verse by verse. If you would like to learn more about how to study the Bible for yourself, I have written a quick summary of my personal approach and would love to share that with you. That summary can be found at surpassing-worth.com.

I am praying for you and your children as you study, and I praise God for the changes it will cause in your lives.

-Heather

Lesson 1:

We are going to study the book of John together. John is the fourth gospel in the Bible. The word gospel means "good news." The book of John teaches us the good news of Jesus Christ. And we know that this testimony is true because it was written by one of Jesus' own disciples, John (John 21:24). John describes himself throughout the book as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." He walked closely with Jesus throughout His ministry and watched and learned from Him. Later, he wrote this book so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name (John 20:31).

As we study John, we are going to ask questions and then find the answers to those questions in the Bible. The Bible is the only source of perfect truth. We can learn a lot from teachers and books, but they will make mistakes. So it is important for us to learn how to go straight to the source of truth and find the answers for ourselves in the Bible. Sometimes when we read the Bible it can be hard to know what questions to ask. So here is a good place to start: Always ask the text, "Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?"

Let's try it. First open your Bible and read aloud John 1:1-5.

Now Let's observe the text by asking questions. Remember to look for your answers in the text and always use the words of scripture.

1. What words did you see repeated over and over (we call these key words)?
2. When was the Word?
3. Where was the Word?
4. Who was the Word?
5. How did all things come into being?
6. What is found in the Word?
7. What is the life?
8. What does the light do?
9. How did the darkness respond to the Light?
10. So far in this passage we've learned two descriptions of this Person who was in the beginning with God, who is also God, and who all things came into being through, what are those two descriptions? (A: The Word, The Light)
11. We are going to learn so much about this Man during our study and so many more of His characteristics, but for now do you have an idea of who this Man is? If not, then don't worry, you will find out soon enough in the text of scripture.

You are doing such a great job!

The Bible tells us to meditate on His Word day and night (Psalm 1:2). The Word is our weapon against the struggles of life, it is even sharper than a two-edged sword (Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12). So, we hide His Word in our hearts, that we might not sin against God when we face life's battles (Psalm 119:11). What is a soldier without a weapon? In trouble, that's what. So let's be sure to take our spiritual swords with us everywhere we go by memorizing the Bible. Read John 1:1 three times. Then write it on a card and read it again every time you eat until you know it well. You could also make up a song to help you remember the words.

John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Let's review what we've learned. One of the reasons teachers give us tests in school is to see what we know and what areas we still need to work on. But another reason is because recall is a great learning tool. When we learn something new and it sits in our minds unused, we are likely to forget it. But when we must pull the information back out and use it, it becomes even more firmly rooted in our memories. So let's take a quiz. Hand write each of the questions and your answers into an empty notebook (another great learning tool is to write things by hand). We are going to use this notebook throughout our study, so keep it handy. I have included my answers to help you, but remember, my words will not be perfect, only the words of the Bible are perfect, so use the Bible as your ultimate answer key.

1. When you read the Bible, what six questions should you ask?
 - Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?
2. Where do you find the book of John in the Bible
 - In the New Testament, the fourth gospel
3. What does the word gospel mean?
 - Good News
4. Who wrote the Gospel of John?
 - John the disciple Jesus loved (John 21:20-24)
5. Why did he write the book?
 - So that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name (John 20:31)
6. When was the Word?
 - In the beginning (John 1:1)
7. Where was the Word
 - With God (John 1:1)
8. Who was the Word?
 - The Word was God (John 1:1)
9. How did all things come into being?
 - Through Him i.e. the Word (John 1:3)
10. What is found in the Word?
 - Life (John 1:4)
11. What is the life?
 - The Light of man (John 1:4)
12. What does the light do?
 - Shines in the darkness (John 1:5)
13. How did the darkness respond to the Light?
 - The darkness did not comprehend/overcome/overpower it (see ESV translation and NASB1995) (John 1:5).

14. So far in this passage we've learned two descriptions of this person who was in the beginning with God, who is also God, and who all things came into being through. What are those two descriptions?

- The Word
- The Light

How has what you have learned today changed you? How should it change you? How does it affect the way you think? How can it affect the way you act?

Over the next few days go through all the questions in your notebook. I like to cover the answers with an index card and go down the list checking off the questions I get correct. Then I go through the list again until every question has a check mark. Also, spend time memorizing John 1:1. If you memorize John 1:1 before you have mastered your list, then go ahead and add verse 2, but don't move on to the next lesson until you can answer each question on your list easily. We all learn at different speeds and the goal here is not to move through lessons at any particular speed. The goal is to spend daily time in the Word and to really learn the material so that we can meditate on it and watch as God uses it to change us into the image of His Son.

The last thing I want you to do today is to go tell someone what you have learned.

*All Bible quotations are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted.

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-H.M. Coker