# Bible Study Guide – Gospel of John

## 1. Begin in Prayer

- Ask God to open your eyes to the text and shape your heart to receive the Word.
- "Open my eyes…" (Ps 119:18, ESV)
- "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God…" (Jas 1:5, ESV)
- The Spirit "will guide you into all the truth" (Jn 16:13, ESV); "He will teach you all things" (Jn 14:26, ESV).

## 2. Observation — What does the text say?

Read the book through in more than one translation. Work through text slowly. Absorb what you see/read before asking what it means.

**A. Use the 5W1H (Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?)**

- Who is present and how are they related? Example: John, two disciples, Jesus (Jn 1:35–39, ESV: "about the tenth hour").
- What happens? What actions, commands, responses? Example: "Destroy this temple…" (Jn 2:19, ESV).
- When is this happening (time words, feasts, "hour")? Example: "My hour has not yet come." (Jn 2:4, ESV).
- Where (geographic locations, movement)? Example: "He went down to Capernaum…" (Jn 2:12, ESV).
- Why (purpose statements)? Example: "that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." (Jn 3:15, ESV).
- How (means/process)? Example: "These are written so that you may believe…" (Jn 20:31, ESV).

**B. Identify Key Words, Phrases and Themes (repeated terms / big ideas) –** *to get your started*

- Believe / Belief / Unbelief: "that you may believe" (Jn 20:31, ESV).
- Life / Eternal life: "have eternal life" (Jn 3:16, ESV).
- Sign(s): "the first of his signs" (Jn 2:11, ESV).
- Glory / Glorify: "manifested his glory" (Jn 2:11, ESV).
- Hour: "The hour has come" (Jn 12:23, ESV).
- Light / Darkness: "the light has come into the world" (Jn 3:19, ESV).
- Witness / Testify: "bear witness" (Jn 1:7, ESV); "testify" (Jn 15:26, ESV).
- True/Truth: "full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14, ESV).
- "I am" statements: "I am the bread of life" (Jn 6:35, ESV).
- Sent: "him whom he has sent" (Jn 6:29, ESV).

- Know: “you will know the truth” (Jn 8:32, ESV).
- Love: “By this all people will know…” (Jn 13:35, ESV).
- Sin: “Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.” (Jn 5:14, ESV)

*Write key words and phrases on an index card and use as a bookmark, add items as needed*

**C. Develop Lists (in a section or across the whole book)**

- “Signs” in John (confirm as you read): 2:1–11; etc.
- “I AM” statements: 6:35 etc.

**D. Watch for Contrasts & Comparisons**

- Light vs. darkness: “people loved the darkness rather than the light” (Jn 3:19, ESV).
- From above vs. from earth: “He who comes from above is above all” (Jn 3:31, ESV).
- Sight vs. blindness: “that those who see may become blind” (Jn 9:39, ESV).
- Life vs. wrath: “whoever believes… has eternal life… the wrath of God remains” (Jn 3:36, ESV).

**E. Watch for Expressions of Time**

- Specific hour/time: “about the tenth hour” (Jn 1:39, ESV).
- Feasts: Passover (2:13; 6:4; 11:55), Booths (7:2), Dedication (10:22).
- Jesus’s “hour”: “My hour has not yet come.” (Jn 2:4, ESV); “The hour has come” (Jn 12:23, ESV).
- Resurrection morning: “on the first day of the week” (Jn 20:1, ESV).

**F. Terms of Conclusion / Purpose / Result**

- “So that / That” (purpose/result): e.g., Jn 3:16; 20:31 (ESV).
- “Therefore” (inference/consequence): e.g., Jn 9:16; 11:41 (ESV).

*Tip: Use symbols—circle “that/so that,” box “therefore,” clock icon for time, sun/moon for light/darkness, etc.*

## 3. Interpretation — What does it mean?

- Author’s purpose: “These are written so that you may believe… and… have life” (Jn 20:31, ESV).
- Immediate context: What comes before/after? Track commands, reasons, and results.
- Book context: How does this scene develop John’s portrait of Jesus (signs, “I am,” glory, sentness)?
- Historical/cultural: Feasts, temple, titles (“Rabbi” = Teacher, Jn 1:38, ESV).
- Theological lines: Father–Son (Jn 5), Spirit’s witness (Jn 14–16), faith & life (Jn 3; 6; 11).
- Compare Scripture with Scripture: Watch for OT echoes (e.g., “dwelt/tabernacled,” Jn 1:14, ESV; serpent lifted up, Jn 3:14, ESV).

*Suggestion: Use clear passages to understand the less clear; See things from the Jn 20:31 perspective.*

## 4. Application — How should we respond?

- Believe & keep believing: "whoever believes… has eternal life" (Jn 3:36, ESV).
- Follow Jesus's voice: "My sheep… follow me" (Jn 10:27, ESV).
- Obey in love: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (Jn 14:15, ESV).
- Love one another: "By this all people will know…" (Jn 13:35, ESV).
- Bear witness: John "bear witness" (Jn 1:7, ESV); disciples "testify" (Jn 15:27, ESV).

Application prompts: **What does this reveal about who Jesus is?** What verse really hit your heart? What "so that" urges response? **What one change can I make in my life today?**

## 5. Simple Mark-Up Key (Optional, but encouraged)

- Circle or use unique shapes/colors for key words (God, Christ, believe, life, sign, glory, hour, light, truth).
- Underline time markers ("hour," feast names, day/time).
- Arrows (→) for cause/effect or purpose ("so that / that").
- U-Turn arrow to show repentance/turn from sin
- Double-underline contrasts (light/darkness; from above/from earth).
- Brackets [ ] for lists and progressions.
- Star ★ for life-application insights.

## 6. Fill in Your Chart and Create Your Outline

As you study the text, mark items in the margin of the text, start to fill in your chart with the theme, key idea, etc. for each chapter. I use a pencil because I am constantly changing and adding something I didn't initially notice.
After you have competed your second complete read of the book, start to sketch out a rough outline of the Gospel of John. Start with this very basic outline Tony presented and expand and add sections as you go.

Prologue: 1:1-18
Proof of Christ's Divinity – Ministry: 1:19-12:50
Proof of Christ's Divinity – Death, Burial and Resurrection: 13:1-20:31
Epilogue: 21:1-25

## 7. Pray

When you finish your study for day, close with a prayer of thanks and request for God to bless your efforts in the study of the Word.

***Note: Do not assume that the things in this document are TRUE, check and verify everything!***