

connect 360

BIBLE TEACHING GUIDE

The Beauty of Restoration

THE FINAL DAYS OF JESUS

A STUDY OF JOHN

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The Beauty of Restoration: The Final Days of Jesus (A Study of John)
Connect 360 Bible Teaching Guide

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How to Make the Best Use of This *Teaching Guide*

Leading a class in studying the Bible is a sacred trust. This Teaching Guide has been prepared to help you as you give your best to this important task.

In each lesson, you will find first “Bible Comments” for teachers, to aid you in your study and preparation. The three sections of “Bible Comments” are “Understanding the Context,” “Interpreting the Scriptures,” and “Focusing on the Meaning.” “Understanding the Context” provides a summary overview of the entire background passage that also sets the passage in the context of the Bible book being studied. “Interpreting the Scriptures” provides verse-by-verse comments on the focal passage. “Focusing on the Meaning” offers help with the meaning and application of the focal text.

The second main part of each lesson is “Teaching Plans.” You’ll find two complete teaching plans in this section. The first is called the “Discovery Plan,” which emphasizes discovery learning techniques; and the second is called the “Discussion Plan,” which provides questions and suggestions for dialogue about the Scriptures. Choose the plan that best fits your class and your style of teaching. You may also use and adapt ideas from both. Each plan is intended to be practical, helpful, and immediately useful as you prepare to teach.

The major headings in each teaching plan are intended to help you sequence how you teach so as to follow the flow of how people tend to learn. The first major heading, “Connect with Life,” provides ideas that will help you begin the class session where your class is and draw your class into the study. The second major heading, “Guide Bible Study,” offers suggestions for helping your class engage the Scriptures actively and develop a greater understanding of this portion of the Bible’s message. The third major heading, “Encourage Application,” is meant to help participants focus on how to respond with their lives to this message.

As you begin the study with your class, be sure to find a way to help your class know the date on which each lesson will be studied. You might use one or more of the following methods:

- In the first session of the study, briefly overview the study by identifying for your class the date on which each lesson will be studied. Lead your class to write the date in the table of contents in their *Study Guides* and on the first page of each lesson.
- Make and post a chart that indicates the date on which each lesson will be studied.
- If all of your class has e-mail, send them an e-mail with the dates the lessons will be studied.
- Provide a bookmark with the lesson dates. You may want to include information about your church and then use the bookmark as an outreach tool, too. A model for a bookmark can be downloaded from www.gc2press.org under the “Teacher Helps” tab.
- Develop a sticker with the lesson dates and place it on the table of contents or on the back cover.

Here are some steps you can take to help you prepare well to teach each lesson and save time in doing so:

1. Start early in the week before your class meets.
2. If your church’s adult Bible study teachers meet for lesson overview and preparation, plan to participate. If your church’s adult Bible study teachers don’t have this planning time now, look for ways to begin. You, your fellow teachers, and your church will benefit from this mutual encouragement and preparation.
3. Overview the study in the *Study Guide*. Look at the table of contents and see where this lesson fits in the overall study. Then read or review the study introduction to the book that is being studied.
4. Consider carefully the suggested Main Idea, Question to Explore, and Teaching Aim. These can help you discover the main thrust of this particular lesson.
5. Use your Bible to read and consider prayerfully the Scripture passages for the lesson. Using your Bible in your study and in the class session can provide a positive model to class members to use their own Bibles and give more attention to Bible study themselves. (Each writer of the Bible comments in both the *Teaching Guide* and the *Study Guide* has chosen a favorite translation. You’re free to use the Bible

translation you prefer and compare it with the translations chosen, of course.)

6. After reading all the Scripture passages in your Bible, then read the Bible Comments in the *Study Guide*. The Bible comments are intended to be an aid to your study of the Bible. Read also the small articles—“sidebars”—in each lesson. They are intended to provide additional, enrichment information and inspiration and to encourage thought and application. Try to answer for yourself the questions included in each lesson. They’re intended to encourage further thought and application, and you can also use them in the class session itself. Continue your Bible study with the aid of the Bible comments included in this *Teaching Guide*.
7. Review the “Teaching Plans” in this *Teaching Guide*. Consider how these suggestions would help you teach this Bible passage in your class to accomplish the teaching aim.
8. Consider prayerfully the needs of your class and think about how to teach so you can help your class learn best.
9. Develop and follow a lesson plan based on the suggestions in this Teaching Guide, with alterations as needed for your class.
10. Enjoy leading your class in discovering the meaning of the Scripture passages and in applying these passages to their lives.

Teaching Resource Items. These items are available for download for use in your class. These are available for \$10 at www.gc2press.org. Watch for them in the teaching plans for each lesson. These items are selected from the teaching plans. They are provided online to make lesson preparation easier for handouts and similar items. Permission is granted to download these teaching resource items, print them out, and copy them as needed for all classes within your church.

Premium Commentary. Plan to get the additional in-depth Bible Study comments available online. Visit our website, call 1-866-249-1799, or email gc2press@txb.org to order the Premium Commentary. It is available for \$20 in electronic format (PDF) from our website. Permission is granted to download this commentary, print it, and copy them as needed for all classes within your church.

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Introduction to GC2 Press

Welcome to GC2 Press

BWP is now *GC2 Press*. **GC2** is a movement of God's people to share Christ and show love. Our driving passion is to follow the Lord's call to fulfill the Great Commission "to share Christ" and the Great Commandment "to show love." The Great Commission and the Great Commandment form the two "GCs," or GC2.

GC2 Press continues to publish the undated **CONNECT 360** quarterly Bible study curriculum. **Connect 360** has gained a reputation for solid biblical teaching and will continue to be published as an undated quarterly study available in book form and/or digital downloads. **Connect 360** is currently being distributed in 38 states and 16 countries and has been translated into eight different languages.

For more information, please go to our website at www.gc2press.org.



The Beauty of Restoration

The Final Days of Jesus

A Study of John

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lesson 1

Hitting Rock Bottom

MAIN IDEA

We never drift toward holiness; we drift toward unfaithfulness. That is why it is vitally important for us to align our lives with God's Word.

QUESTION TO EXPLORE

Have I ever denied the Lord?

TEACHING AIM

To lead adults to understand that pride is an attitude that causes us to think we are incapable of sin



Bible Comments

Understanding the Context

The Gospel of John was written in a distinctive style as compared to the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The purpose of John's Gospel is to convince its readers that Jesus is indeed the Son of God and that by believing (i.e., trusting) in Him, everyone can experience eternal life (John 20:30-31). Each account of Jesus' life recorded by John points to His Messianic mission to redeem humankind.

The Gospel of John can be divided into two main sections: "The Book of Signs" (Chapters 1–12), and "The Book of Glory" (Chapters 13–21). Chapters 1–12 focus on Jesus' public ministry, which lasted about three years and includes many of His teachings and miracles. Chapters 13–21 record Jesus' private ministry and teachings with His disciples during the last few days of His life. This section includes the Passion narrative of Jesus' arrest, trials, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.

John goes into great detail as he begins to describe Jesus' final night with His disciples. Every word and action of Jesus is filled with purpose and meaning, especially as John wrote his account in view of Jesus' death and resurrection. John 13 includes the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet and the prediction of Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial. John 14–17 consists of Jesus seeking to comfort His disciples as He prepares them for His departure, His promise of the coming Holy Spirit, and His prayers for Himself, His disciples, and all who will place their trust in Him.

Beginning with John 18, the narrative begins to speed up. Jesus and the disciples depart the Upper Room, cross the Kidron Valley, and head to the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas, being familiar with this location, leads a group of soldiers and Jewish religious leaders to Jesus. Peter, perhaps in a move to prove his loyalty to Jesus, strikes the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. Jesus rebukes Peter and is then arrested, bound, and led to Annas, a former high priest and the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was serving as the high priest at that time.

Interpreting the Scriptures

Peter's First Denial (18:15-18)

18:15. All of the disciples deserted Jesus after His arrest (Matthew 26:56), but two of them returned to see what would happen to their leader. They followed Jesus to the palace of the high priest. John identifies one of the disciples as Simon Peter but leaves the other one nameless. There has been a good deal of conjecture over the identity of the second disciple, but most scholars agree that it was John the son of Zebedee, the author of this Gospel account. There have also been questions raised about how John, a fisherman from Galilee, would have been known to the high priest. Potential explanations include John bringing salted fish from Galilee to the high priest's court while working in his father's prominent fishing business, or the possibility that John was from priestly descent on his mother's side of the family. The courtyard Jesus entered was likely located between the residences occupied by Annas and Caiphas in the same palace complex.

18:16. John followed Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but the door closed before Peter could enter. The Bible does not comment on the length of time that Peter waited outside but it might be interesting know his thoughts as he waited. Did he consider departing the scene, or contemplate a way to provide aid to Jesus? Eventually, John noticed that Peter was no longer with him and returned to the door. After speaking to the female doorkeeper, Peter was allowed to enter the courtyard. The fact that the doorkeeper was female lends proof to the idea that Jesus' questioning took place in the private residence of the high priest. Women were not allowed in the areas of the Temple where such an interrogation would have taken place.

18:17. As soon as Peter entered the courtyard, he was caught off guard by a question from the servant girl doorkeeper. She asked Peter if he was one of Jesus' disciples. The phrasing of her question anticipated a negative response and she seemed to ask it out of curiosity, with no malice intended. Perhaps Peter felt trapped in the courtyard and was afraid of drawing attention to

himself from the Roman soldiers and others who had comprised the arresting party. His reply of “I am not” stood in stark contrast to two statements that were made earlier in the evening. The first was Peter’s own assertion of fidelity to Jesus, even if his loyalty were to cost him his life (John 13:37). The second statement were the words of Jesus when approached by the soldiers and religious officials in the Garden of Gethsemane. When the crowd told Him they were looking for Jesus of Nazareth, His powerful reply was, “I am he” (John 18:5b). As confident as Peter had been, he was not prepared for this time of testing.

18:18. Spring nights in Jerusalem can be chilly. The city sits at an elevation of 2,500 feet above sea level and the arid region cools down quickly after sunset. The weather was cold on this night so a fire had been built in the courtyard to keep the bystanders warm. Peter joined servants and other officials around the fire, perhaps extending his deception by pretending to be one of Jesus’ captors in an effort not to get noticed by the crowd.

Peter’s Second and Third Denials (18:25-27)

18:25. Peter continued to warm himself with the others around the fire in the courtyard. John breaks up the story by reporting on Jesus’ interrogation by Annas, which took place inside the residence of the high priest (John 18:19-24). The tension in the story is turned up as Peter is once again questioned about his relationship with Jesus. At the very time when Jesus was being questioned by Annas, Peter was warming himself with those who had arrested his Master. The form of the question posed to Peter also pointed toward a negative answer, or at least implied that if Peter were one of Jesus’ followers he would be a fool to be present in the courtyard. Having lied earlier, Peter once again vehemently denied his relationship with Jesus. Peter’s ongoing denial proves that once a lie has been told, it is often followed by other lies until the weight of the deception is too much to bear.

18:26. A little bit later, in the flickering light of the courtyard campfire, one of Peter’s greatest fears came true—he was positively identified. This time the construction of the question, “Didn’t I see you with him in the olive

grove?” expects a positive answer. The man who identified him was a relative of the servant Malchus (John 18:10), whose ear Peter had cut off. Peter’s accuser even mentioned the olive grove (Garden of Gethsemane). The fact that John included the name of the servant and his relationship with Peter’s accuser reveals that John had quite a bit of knowledge about the household of the high priest.

18:27. Peter once again denied being one of Jesus’ followers and then a rooster began to crow, thus confirming Jesus’ prediction of Peter’s unfaithfulness, “I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times” (John 13:38). It is likely that the timing of Peter’s final denial (and the rooster crowing) occurred between 3:00—5:00 a.m. In a tragic coincidence, at the very time that Jesus faced intense scrutiny and questioning from Annas, without denying anything about His disciples or His teaching, Peter could not bring himself to admit he was one of Jesus’ disciples.

Focusing on the Meaning

Peter’s denials are devastating to read. How could one of Jesus’ disciples, who left everything to follow his Master, betray Him at such a crucial time? One of the clues we have is Peter’s pride. We see it evidenced when he made the bold statement that he would sacrifice his life for Jesus if needed (John 13:37-38). We catch another glimpse of Peter’s hubris when he rebuked Jesus for informing the disciples of His impending suffering, death, and resurrection (Matthew 16:22). Peter’s experience also reveals the progressive nature of sin, especially lying. Once Peter denied knowing Jesus, he had to continue the lie when he was questioned twice more. His fear overwhelmed his devotion to the Lord.

When was the last time you denied Jesus? It is a painful question, but one we need to consider. We can deny Jesus by not living in a manner that is consistent with His teachings, or maybe we let fear silence us at times when we should speak up for the Lord. Perhaps our pride (disguised as fear) convinces us that our reputation will suffer if we speak up at work or in our

community about our Christian faith—a fear of being canceled or labeled as “intolerant.” Comparison is also a trap we need to avoid. We cannot let our pride convince us that “at least we aren’t as bad as those other people.” If we are honest with ourselves, we know we are capable of sin and of suffering its devastating consequences.

Thankfully, because of the grace and mercy of Jesus, our spiritual failures do not have to be final. Restoration is as close as our confession (1 John 1:9), and we can renew our faith commitment. We have access to the power of God that will enable us to tell the truth about ourselves and the truth about Jesus. We have the gift of God’s Word, but we must be intentional about reading and applying it in our lives. Studying the Bible, individually and in Christian community, is one of the best weapons we have to battle spiritual drift and indifference.

Helpful Resources

Bruce Barton, Philip Comfort, Grant Osborne, Linda K. Taylor, and Dave Veerman. *Life Application New Testament Commentary*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2001.

Gary M. Burge. *The NIV Application Commentary—John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000.

Robert H. Mounce. *Expositor’s Bible Commentary—John*, Tremper Longmann III and David E. Garland General Editors, Volume 10, Luke—Acts. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, electronic edition, 2007.

Charles R. Swindoll. *Swindoll’s New Testament Insights: Insights on John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.

Teaching Plans

DISCOVERY PLAN

Connect With Life

1. Share a brief introduction to the Gospel of John. Refer to the *Teaching Guide* and *Study Guide* for information to help you with this introduction. Share with members that this will not be a study of the entire book but will focus on the last days of Christ's life on earth.
2. Write the following statements on strips of paper and distribute them to class members to read aloud when called upon:
 - a. I come in contact with many people of other religions, and I try to be careful not to offend them with comments about my faith.
 - b. I am afraid to let people know I am a Christian because of the bad reputation that Christianity and the church have in our day.
 - c. I have some very good friendships with non-Christians and don't want to lose those friendships by sharing a witness with them.
 - d. I am a fairly good Christian, so I try to witness with my life rather than my words.
 - e. It is not that I am afraid to witness, I just don't know any people who are not saved.

(A copy of this assignment is available in "Teaching Resource Items" for this study at www.gc2press.org.)

3. After the readings of these statements, ask members to summarize the common problem they all present. (These are different ways to deny Christ.)

Guide Bible Study

4. Before reading the entire focal passage, divide the class into three groups and ask them to listen for the following:
 - a. Group 1—How is this another example of a denial of Christ?
 - b. Group 2—What could possibly have caused Peter to deny Christ in this way? (He was afraid and confused.)
 - c. Group 3—In what way are fear and confusion apparent in the five statements just read?

Allow 3-5 minutes for each group to share their findings. Be prepared to share additional information from the *Study Guide* as needed.

(A copy of this assignment is available in “Teaching Resource Items” for this study at www.gc2press.org.)

5. Ask members the following question: *In what ways did Christ try to prepare Peter and the disciples for this day?* (Read Matthew 16:21-23.)
6. Enlist someone to read the following monologue:

My name is Peter. I am one of the disciples who came to the courtyard of the high priest to see what they would do with Jesus. John was the other disciple who came and because he knew the high priest, I was allowed to enter the courtyard area. I had no idea what I was going to do but felt that I needed to be there. I loved Jesus and needed to see what the religious leaders would do to Him. I had no idea I would end up denying I knew Christ. How could God ever forgive me for denying my Christ?

(A copy of this assignment is available in “Teaching Resource Items” for this study at www.gc2press.org.)

Encourage Application

7. Remind members of the five statements shared and discussed at the beginning of this study. Divide the class into groups of two and ask them

to share with each other any personal experience they have had with at least one of these statements.

8. After 3-5 minutes call the class back together and ask them to respond to the following statement: "All of us have been guilty of denying Christ as Lord in vital areas of our lives."
9. Close with a time of silent prayer asking members to confess their sin of denial and asking for God's help as they try to remain bold in their opportunities to take a stand for Christ.

DISCUSSION PLAN

Connect With Life

1. Share with members this experience of the Study Guide writer. "I was privileged to take a trip to the Holy Land several years ago. Among the many places we went, one in particular stands out to me. We were standing in the courtyard outside the house of Caiaphas, remembering Peter's time of denial, when a rooster crowed in a nearby neighborhood. I remember asking myself, how could Peter have denied Christ?"
2. Share with members that it will be the goal of this study to find answers to this question and apply these to our own times of denial.

Guide Bible Study

3. Read the entire focal passage to remind members of just what happened that day in the courtyard of Caiaphas. Then read Acts 5:27-32 and ask members what had happened in the life of Peter to help him witness at the risk of losing his life? Write their responses on a marker board. Their suggestions may include the following:
 - a. He was now acting in the power of the Holy Spirit rather than in his own strength. (He had no fear as he did in the courtyard.)

- b. He had witnessed the resurrection of Christ and understood the true nature of the kingdom. (He was no longer confused about what was happening to Christ.)
4. Read Matthew's version of Peter's denial as found in Matthew 26:69-75. If time allows also read Mark 14:66-72 and Luke 22:54-62 and ask members what impresses them most about these accounts of the denial of Christ? For example:
- a. The Gospel writers seemed to know that each of us would need to hear about this denial to help us with our own experiences of denial.
 - b. The depth of Peter's denial.
 - c. Peter's great sorrow when he realized what he had done.
 - d. The great need for Christ's forgiveness, which Peter later receives.
 - e. All of the Gospels record the fact that Peter denied Christ three times before the rooster crowed, thus fulfilling Christ's words to Peter about his time of denial.
5. Share background information about Caiaphas, Annas, and the religious leaders who were so determined to have Christ crucified. (The first denial was outside the home of Annas. The next two denials were in the courtyard outside the house of Caiaphas. Caiaphas' compound was large, and these two priests must have lived close to each other.) Refer to the *Teaching Guide* and *Study Guide* for additional background information.

Encourage Application

6. Ask members to determine some ways Christians can deny Christ in our day. Write these on the board as they are suggested. For example:
- a. Failure to witness for fear of what others might think about us.
 - b. Failure to witness for fear of persecution.
 - c. Failure to witness out of confusion about who needs a witness.

- d. Failure to witness because we are too busy to make new friendships.
- 7. Close with a challenge for members to identify any of these fears in their lives and a time of prayer for empowerment from the Holy Spirit to witness without fear or confusion.