



Studies on the Go: John

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1. LETTING GOD SHINE

John 1:1-34



Overview: The first 18 verses of the Gospel of John are a bit like the beginning of a musical, where the orchestra plays an overture of the songs will be heard throughout the show. Here John introduces the themes of his Gospel, and he will explain and emphasize each theme as the Gospel progresses. The first theme to unfold is the role of John the Baptist.

We find perhaps the best synopsis of John's ministry in verse 7: "He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that *through* him all men might believe" (emphasis added). Many Israelites believed *in* John and his ministry, but instead he led them to believe *through* him—so that they directed their belief toward Christ.

John the Baptist is the prime model of a witness to all believers—setting the example that *through* us we always point people *to* Jesus. This session will reveal how.

SHARE**Warm-Up Qs** (use one or more as needed depending on your group)

1. What do an understudy, best man, and maid of honor have in common?
2. Have you ever been second place? Was the experience good or bad? Why?
3. Have you ever had a good friend who was better than you at something? Without naming names, how did (does) it affect your friendship?

OBSERVE**Observation Qs**

4. Read John 1:1-9. How is Jesus introduced in this passage? How is John introduced? What is the difference between them?
5. What was John's purpose for coming to this earth? (v. 7) Who sent him? (v. 6)
6. Read vv. 15-28. What does John say about Jesus in v. 15? What does he say about himself?
7. What does John the Baptist say to the priests and Levites in v. 20? What do they ask him next? How does John finally respond in v. 23?

THINK**Interpretation Qs**

8. Read vv. 8, 15, and 20. Based on these verses, do you think people believe that John is greater than Jesus? Why or why not?
9. Look at vv. 19-27. Which of the following words best describes John the Baptist? *Strong Weak Humble Conceited Strange Insecure* What ideas in the passage led you to choose the word(s) you did?
10. Look ahead at John 3:28-30. Based on what you've read in chapter 1 so far, why do you think John uses the illustration in

this passage to describe his relationship to Jesus and role in the gospel story?

11. How do you think John felt about his role? Do you think he envied Jesus? Why or why not?

APPLY

Application Qs

12. How is John the Baptist a role model for us? What do we learn from him?
13. On a scale of 1–10, how good are you at letting other people shine? Can you be happy for others, or are you bothered when others get attention?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Bothered by others' success Happy for others' success
14. How good are you at letting God shine? Do you feel like you point people to God with the things you say and do? Why or why not?
15. What's one thing you can do this week to point someone to God?

DO

Optional Activity: In this session John the Baptist is a signpost, pointing people to God. While he attracts attention with his words and life, he leads people to turn their attention to Jesus. If you made a sign that represented you as a Christian, what would it look like? Would it be big and obvious? Small and subtle? What words would be on it? Any pictures? Draw a sign that best describes you as a Christian and share it with your group.

Day 1: John 1:1-5

1. What word or phrase stands out to you from this passage? Why?
2. How is this passage similar to Genesis 1:1? How is it different?
3. Spend time today thinking about how you have experienced life and/or light in your relationship with Christ.

Day 2: John 1:6-9

1. What word or phrase stands out to you from this passage? Why?
2. What was John's purpose here on earth? How is it similar to ours?
3. Spend time today thinking about how you have been a witness to the light of Christ.

Day 3: John 1:10-14

1. What word or phrase stands out to you from this passage? Why?
2. According to this passage, how do we become children of God? Have you become a child of God?
3. Spend time today thinking about being God's child and what it means to you.

Day 4: John 1:15-18

1. What word or phrase stands out to you from this passage? Why?
2. How could Jesus have come before John if Jesus was born after John? What do you think this means?
3. Spend time today thinking about what we learn about God (and how we view God) through Jesus.

Day 5: John 1:19-28

1. What word or phrase stands out to you from this passage? Why?
2. Who do people think John is? Who does John say he is?
3. Spend time today thinking about John's resolve to carry out his mission, and how it's an example to us.

Day 6: John 1:29-34

1. What word or phrase stands out to you from this passage? Why?
2. What does John call Jesus? Why do you think he refers to Jesus in this way?
3. Spend time today thinking about how Jesus takes away your sin and gives you new life.

Day 7: John 1:1-34

Read through the whole passage and write out the verse that spoke to you the most this week. Meditate on that verse today—and for an extra challenge, memorize it!

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