

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

GROUP GUIDE: WEEK 1

CONVERSATION STARTER

If there was a movie about your life, what genre would it be (comedy, action, drama, romance, horror, etc.) and which actor or actress would you cast to play you?

THE PROLOGUE

John 1:1-18

Surprisingly, John's Gospel doesn't feature a ton of stories about Jesus' life. Instead, John selected a handful of stories to include in his Gospel, meaning there were many stories about Jesus left on the table (see John 20:30). John's goal in writing wasn't to give us a complete history of Jesus' life but to illustrate who Jesus is and what Jesus came to do. "But these are written **that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name**" (John 20:31). John doesn't want us to simply *believe* in Jesus, he wants us to believe *so we can be transformed*. Only then can we truly experience the abundant life God promises us and become who we were made to be.

John's Prologue acts as an introduction to these handpicked stories, a poetic way of teasing the themes and big ideas to come in the rest of the Gospel. Read John 1:1-18 together as a group. What keywords or images stick out to you?

THE WORD

"In the beginning was the Word."

In Jesus' day, Greek philosophers used *logos* ("word" in Greek) to describe the concept of a timeless and unchanging reality that existed apart from god. *Logos* was a universal source of wisdom humans could turn to as a guide for how to live. We're no strangers to this idea. Many people still view reason or rational thought as a separate entity that exists outside of religion, an unchanging governing force for the universe. They believe reason is the only reliable source of wisdom—it is to science and logic we can turn to for answers about the world.

But John puts forward a different claim. Reason is not a separate force existing above God; *True* wisdom comes from the God who ordered the universe. And John says it is Jesus himself, the *logos*, that embodies God's wisdom for us on earth. This doesn't mean that we no longer trust

science or that reason isn't still a gift to us. It just means we cannot view reason as completely separate from God. It is Jesus who serves as the trustworthy and unchanging foundation upon which we can order our lives.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. For the ancient Greeks, reason and rational thought were the primary ways they made sense of the world. How do you see this same tendency playing out in our culture? What are the lenses you use to make sense of the world, apart from God?
2. How do you define wisdom? Where are the primary places you turn to for wisdom in your life?
3. Twice in the prologue, John the Baptist acts as a witness to who Jesus is. What does it look like for us to be people who bring others closer to Jesus, both as individuals and as a community?
4. John writes that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). The Message says, "The Word... moved into the neighborhood." What does this look like for us today? Are there certain moments or situations where you become more aware of God's presence with you than others?

WEEKLY PRACTICE

Similar to what John did with Jesus, if you were going to compile an account of your life that revealed who you were and what you were about, what five stories would you include? What stories would you leave out? What message would you want to leave for those who came after you? Once you have your stories picked out, think about the following questions:

- What do the stories you choose tell you about the things you value and prioritize most?
- What would be the point of your story?
- As you reflect on what you choose, are you happy with the story that's being written?