



MARVEL

PART I: JOHN 4-6

DISCUSSION GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Although John mentions the healing of the official's son as Jesus's second sign, this miracle signals the beginning of Jesus's public ministry. As Jesus ventured out of Samaria and into Galilee, people from all nations marveled at his teachings and miracles. In fact, the word "marvel" occurs six times in the book of John—most frequently in relation to Jesus's public ministry. So, why does John use this word specifically? To "marvel" implies a sense of wonder; this word highlights the awe-inspiring qualities of Jesus's work, character, and teaching.

DIVINE PURPOSE

In John 5, John features two instances of Jesus's healing power to reveal God's divine purpose through the Son. Following the second healing of the lame man, Jesus gives an explanation for his works. He says, "And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will." Jesus's miracles point to a greater miracle that we should marvel at—the defeat of death and sin, and the reconciling of man to God.

DIVINE POWER

In the same speech, Jesus also emphasizes his power. Jesus explicitly speaks of his marvelous power to raise the dead—a power belonging only to God. Furthermore, he claims authority over all things. Therefore, God has given Jesus the authority to judge the living and the dead.

DIVINE PROCLAMATION

Later, John records the account of Jesus teaching during the Feast of Booths—a teaching that amazed the Jews. How could a man with no education be teaching so authoritatively? Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me." In this statement, Jesus declared God's words as his own, thus claiming divine power. Both his teachings and his actions were divine proclamations of the kingdom of God. The Jews could not help but marvel at this man who proclaimed, "Behold I am making all things new" (Rev. 21:5).

These three characteristics of Jesus's words and deeds define his public ministry. John continually demonstrates the divine purpose, power, and proclamation of the Son of God. It is this message that changes our reality forever. Jesus holds the keys to life and death. He has authority in this life and the one to come.

This study guide is made up of three weekly sections:

1. DISCUSSIONS

Each week has groupings of questions that seem to fit well together. These groupings are called "discussions." They are designed to lead you into God's Word, provide sermon application, and guide your group conversation. Feel free to use the discussion questions that best fit your group's situation or needs. Beyond your Small Group, these questions can also be used in the context of a Bible study or discipleship relationship.

2. FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

These questions were created specifically with families in mind and we hope they'll be useful in facilitating family discussion (maybe around the dinner table or at a different family devotional time). These questions are applicable for all ages, including young children. We pray these bless you as you disciple your family.

3. APPLICATION

Each week, we've suggested some next steps. Whether you use these applications or find other ways to respond, our hope is that you intentionally act on and obey God's Word.

THE SECOND SIGN: HEALING AN OFFICIAL'S SON

John 4:46-54

DISCUSSION 1

The second sign

1. Review this week's passage and John 4 in general, with a particular focus on the geography. From where did Jesus come (John 4:1-4), and where was he going? Why did he leave his own country (probably Judea in the south)? Where have we heard of Cana before in John?
2. This is the second miracle John records Jesus doing—the first being when he turned water into wine. Compare and contrast the two. Considering Jesus's actions and attitude during these miracles, what can we learn about him?
3. Was the official's request of Jesus reasonable (v. 47)? Would you have done that? Why or why not?
4. In verse 48, Jesus seems to rebuke the official and others (by using the plural "you") for relying on signs to believe. What in the text helps us see that the official may not have been just a sign seeker, but a believer?

DISCUSSION 2

Faith at work

1. The official then asked Jesus a second time to come down and heal his son. What does this reveal about the official's understanding of the conditions of healing? In his opinion, when and where does it need to happen? Is he right? Do you ever think like that when praying?
2. Why do you think the official's servants went to meet him, rather than waiting until he got home? What can we learn from their actions?
3. The word "believe" is used several times in this passage. Look at the timing and people it references. What can you learn from these instances?

DISCUSSION 3

How should we respond?

1. Do you demand that Jesus does things your way? How can you apply the actions of the official to your prayer life?
2. How do you respond when God answers prayer? While this story has what we would call a “good ending,” how can you believe even when God’s answers are not what you would choose?
3. The official’s faith went beyond just him. Who else believed, and what does this teach us about the effects of our faith as it relates to others?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

1. Act out the story as a family, each person portraying one of the characters (the sick son, the official, Jesus, and the servants). Afterward, discuss the story. Who had the best job?
2. Together, think of some individuals you know who are sick. Take time to pray for them. Remind your children that God’s timing may not be ours and there is healing in the resurrection.
3. Ask your family: Are there times when we get frustrated by Jesus—when he does not seem to listen or give us what we want? How can we overcome our lack of faith? Do we remember God’s answers to prayer? Make a list of recent answers to prayer (like healing from a cold or safety in travel).

APPLICATION

- Spend time sharing ways God has answered prayers in your life. Share both the answers you received in joy and those that were difficult to receive.
- Write down at least three prayers you would like God to answer. Begin praying over these requests with desperation, consistency, confidence, and hope. Be sure to track your thoughts throughout this time of prayer by journaling and/or confiding in someone you trust.

DISCUSSION 1

A perspective on suffering and hope

1. What are some notable facts revealed in the first five verses that give light to the situation?
2. Why do you think John mentions that the invalid had been in such a state for thirty-eight years? How might this reality be an encouragement in the midst of struggles?
3. What would you tell someone who was an invalid for thirty-eight years? How would you give them hope?
4. Jesus healed the invalid in this text, but we know that not everyone is healed by Jesus, then or now. What future hope does this text point toward? What other verses come to mind?

DISCUSSION 2

Jesus reveals his authority

1. In verse 5, Jesus asks the man, “Do you want to be healed?” What does this reveal about Jesus? Why does he ask this?
2. Think of a struggle you are either going through or have gone through. Why might it be helpful in those times to ask that question of ourselves?
3. How does our sickness, brokenness, and pain point to a more important reality?
4. What does Jesus reveal about himself in verse 17? Is he making an identity claim?

DISCUSSION 3

The Jews and the law

1. Why were the Jews persecuting Jesus?
2. What fundamental error did they make in their assessment of Jesus's identity?
3. How can we avoid similar errors in our faith? What role does spending time in the Word play in this?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. What does this story tell us about Jesus?
2. How can this story encourage us when we experience sad or hard things?
3. What do the invalid's actions tell us about his faith in Jesus? Together, think through what it might look like for your family to live with that kind of bold faith.

APPLICATION

- Take time to do a self-assessment. What has God saved you from? What has he saved you to? Evaluate how you are doing in following Jesus's command to, "Sin no more."
- In what area(s) of your life do you need healing? Pray to the God who has ultimate authority. Pray for healing, but also ask that he would sustain your faith through the hardship—even if ultimate healing does not occur in this life.

DISCUSSION 1

The relationship between Jesus and the Father

1. What does it mean that Jesus is equal with God?
2. Why does the Father reveal things to the Son?
3. How are these things revealed to us?

DISCUSSION 2

God's greater works

1. Why is the Father showing Jesus "greater works" (v. 20)? Focus on the phrase "so that."
2. Read verses 21-24. How might these verses bring us hope and impact the way we live?
3. Read John 14:12-14. This is the other place John mentions "greater works." If God the Father reveals himself to the Son and that is a "greater work," what might be the "greater works" we are called to do?

DISCUSSION 3

Eternal hope

1. Read John 10:25-30. How does this passage relate to this week's passage in John 5? Discuss the similarities and differences.
2. In light of John 10:25-30, what can we learn about the nature of salvation?
3. According to John 5:24 and 29, what does it mean to not believe in the Son of God?

4. What are Jesus's miracles meant to point us toward? Consider verses 28-29.
5. How does this reality give us hope? What does it look like to live in light of that hope?
6. Are there areas in your life where the hope of eternal life is missing? If so, why?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. What are some examples of God's greater works in our lives today? How can we be a part of God's greater works?
2. What is the relationship between Jesus and God the Father? How often does Jesus do what the Father says? Ask your children: "What does that mean for you and your relationship with your parents?"
3. Read verses 28-29. What are Jesus's miracles supposed to show us?

APPLICATION

- Reread the introduction of this Discussion Guide. Then, read chapters 5-12 of John, focusing specifically on Jesus's divine purpose, power, and proclamation. Think of ways to deeply root these truths in your life.
- Together, discuss practical ways that your group can be a part of Jesus's greater works (John 5:20; 14:12).

DISCUSSION 1

Jesus—the Messiah

1. Throughout his earthly ministry, whose will did Jesus ultimately follow (v. 30)?
2. According to verses 31-35, who was it that bore witness to Jesus's ministry? How did this person do so? (See Matt. 3)
3. What are some of the works Jesus performed throughout his ministry that prove that he is the Messiah? (See Luke 7:18-23; John 4:46-54; 2:6-11)
4. Read Isaiah 7:10-16 and chapter 53. What do these passages reveal about the forthcoming Messiah?

DISCUSSION 2

Jesus—the justifier and judge

1. Why is it significant that Jesus said he was sent by God—not by man?
2. According to verse 38, as well as John 3:8 and 15:6, can someone be a believer in God and refuse to accept Jesus as their savior? Why or why not?
3. If someone were to ask you what Scripture ultimately points to, how would you answer them? (See John 3:16; 5:39-40; Gen. 3:15)

DISCUSSION 3

Jesus—the Son of God

1. How have people responded to Jesus's claims about who he is? In John 1:11 and 5:18, how does John characterize those particular people and their responses?

2. According to verse 46, why did Jesus mention Moses when he spoke to the Jews about his identity?
3. What does this passage show us about the main message of the book of John and John's reason for writing it?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. As you go through this week's passage, review chapter 4. In chapter 4, who did Jesus claim to be?
2. With all the claims Jesus made, do you see people today reject the idea that he is, in fact, the Son of God? Why would people reject him?
3. What are some of the ways that the Bible points to Jesus's identity as the true Son of God?

APPLICATION

- Spend time discussing ways you have seen God's Word help you trust in Jesus for your salvation and your earthly needs.
- In light of this passage, how might you guide or counsel a friend or family member who is struggling with the truth of Jesus being the Son of God? This week, make plans to visit with someone who may be struggling in this way. Use John 5 as you pray and prepare.

FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND & WALKING ON WATER

John 6:1-21

DISCUSSION 1

Jesus—the miracle worker

1. In verse 2, we read that a great crowd followed Jesus because of the signs he performed. Is it sufficient to follow Jesus because of his signs and wonders? Why or why not?
2. What are some things that initially draw people to follow Jesus, but may not sustain them?
3. We live in a sin-cursed world where physical sickness is ever-present. As Christians, how should we view healing?

DISCUSSION 2

The testing of faith

1. Read verses 5-6. Why do you think Jesus tested his disciples at this moment? What would have been a proper response from the disciples? Can you think of a time when your faith was tested? What was your response?
2. Read Exodus 12:1-14. Why is it significant that Jesus fed the multitude during the traditional Jewish Passover feast?
3. Why was this such a profound miracle? Why is our current culture so skeptical of miracles?

DISCUSSION 3

Jesus reveals himself

1. In verse 15, Jesus withdrew from the crowd that sought to make him king. However, he displayed his glory to his disciples shortly afterward when he exhibited his authority over nature (vv. 19-20). Why do you think Jesus did this?

2. Read John 20:30-31. What was the purpose of the signs that Jesus performed? Does God still perform miracles today?
3. Reread this week's passage. What are some things from this section of Scripture that can encourage you in your current season of life?

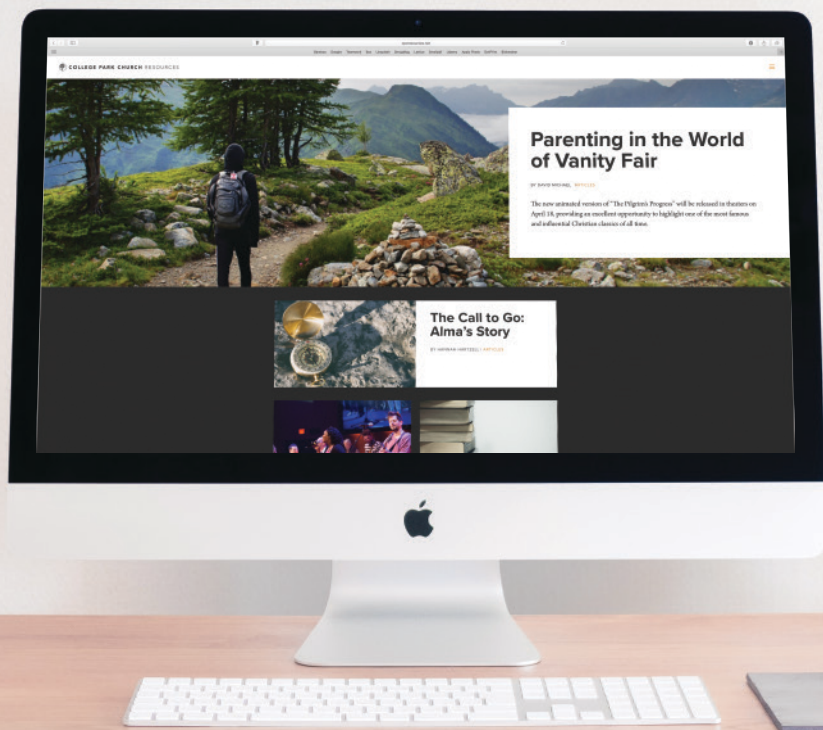
FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. What is a miracle? Spend time discussing with your family the significance of the two signs Jesus performed in this passage.
2. Read verses 5-6. Why do you think Jesus tested his disciples' faith?
3. How was Jesus able to perform these miracles? Together, discuss the nature of who Jesus is.

APPLICATION

- Many of us struggle to believe that God will do wonders in order to bring about his kingdom in the world. However, Scripture clearly shows us that there is no limit to what God can do. In light of that, commit to praying for God to miraculously bring people to faith. Specifically, consider praying for an unreached people group.
- God can provide specific situations and open doors that reveal his will and guide us. Pray to this effect! Pray that God would open doors for you specifically to welcome people into his kingdom.

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