



MARVEL

PART III: JOHN 9-12

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 QUESTIONS

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.

DISCUSSION 1

Jesus gives illustrations (vv. 1 - 6)

1. In the first illustration (vv. 1-3a), it seems as though Jesus is challenging the gatekeepers, who are the religious leaders in Israel. Given this, why does Jesus say they should be opening the gate for him, and why aren't they doing that?
2. Read the second illustration that Jesus gives (vv. 3b-5). Why is it important for the sheep to know the voice of the shepherd? How do the sheep respond to a stranger's voice? What does it say about our hearts if we are listening to other voices more than Jesus's?
3. Why do you think the people did not understand Jesus's illustrations? Why do you think people have trouble with Jesus's message today?

DISCUSSION 2

Jesus gives life (vv. 7-10)

1. To whom was Jesus referring when he said that all who came before him were "thieves and robbers"?
2. What connections can we make between Jesus saying, "I am the door" (v. 10) and saying, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (14:6)?
3. If you are a Christian, how do you live out the full, joyful, and abundant life that you have in Christ? What steps can you take to more fully live in that truth?

DISCUSSION 3

Jesus gives his own life (vv. 11-21)

1. Jesus, as the “Good Shepherd,” contrasts himself to the bad “shepherds of Israel” in Ezekiel 34 who neglected to watch over and care for their flock. In verses 11-14, how does Jesus contrast his shepherding with those who are not real shepherds?
2. How does Jesus describe his relationship to God the Father? How does he relate that to his relationship with his sheep? How does this encourage you?
3. Read the responses of the people in vv. 19-21. What is your response to both Jesus’s authority and his desire to lay his life down for his sheep?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Why do sheep need a shepherd? Why do they need a good shepherd? How are we like sheep?
2. Who is the only person who can save us? How?
3. Why did Jesus have to die for our sins?

APPLICATION

- Our pastors/shepherds are called to reflect the “Good Shepherd” and sacrifice their life for Jesus’s flock. How have you seen the pastors of College Park live out this calling? Take time this week to thank and encourage these leaders for how God is using them in your life.
- Think through what voices you may be listening to that are not in line with Jesus’s. Then, meditate on this and write down some ways that you can grow in knowing your Shepherd’s voice better.

DISCUSSION 1

The Jews (vv. 22-25)

1. In verse 24, the Jews say, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ tell us plainly.” What is ironic about this? How does Jesus respond, and what is the impact of his response?
2. How do we make the same mistakes the Jews made when they asked God to make things plain? What might it reveal about us and our understanding of God and his Word?
3. How does Jesus’s response to the Jews encourage us to study the Scriptures (Consider John 5:46)?

DISCUSSION 2

The sheep and salvation (vv. 26-27)

1. In verse 26, Jesus boldly tells the Jews why they don’t believe in him. Why don’t they believe?
2. What comes first: believing or being one of his sheep? Consider the logic flow in this statement based on the “because,” and consider verse 27.
3. How are we saved? Is there anything we did to become his sheep?
4. How might knowing God’s role in salvation impact your approach to evangelism?

DISCUSSION 3

Jesus and the Father (vv. 28-30)

1. How do verses 28 and 29 explain more specifically the statement in verse 30, “I and the Father are one”?

2. Why do you suppose Jesus wanted us to know that he and the Father are one? How does this truth encourage you?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Why do we need God to save us?
2. What does a shepherd do? How is that similar to the way God cares for us?
3. Whom do you follow? What does it look like to follow Jesus?

APPLICATION

- This week, pay attention to the ways you listen to God's voice throughout your day. Confess the ways you fail to listen to him. Write these down and ask someone hold you accountable to listening for—and obeying— his voice rather than other voices.
- Find a verse or two in this section that you find encouraging. Memorize that verse and use it throughout the week to point you, and others, back to the Lord.

DISCUSSION 1

Lazarus dies (vv. 1-16)

1. What reasons does Jesus give for allowing Lazarus to stay sick, and eventually die? How might his response give us hope for our difficult times?
2. How does Thomas's response show the heart of the disciples when Jesus told them that he was going back to Judea?

DISCUSSION 2

Jesus explains life and death (vv. 17-37)

1. What would you say is the significance of Jesus's phrase, "I am the resurrection and the life"?
2. Even though Mary and Martha stated the same phrase, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (vv. 21, 32), what are some differences in their responses to their brother's death?
3. In verses 33-37, how was Jesus emotionally moved after Mary came to express her sorrow to him? How does Mary's sorrow inform our laments to God?
4. How does Jesus's sadness over the death of Lazarus show us that it is okay to grieve brokenness in the world?

DISCUSSION 3

Lazarus lives (vv. 38-44)

1. In John 10:17-18, Jesus said he had the authority to lay his life down and raise it back up. Lazarus didn't have this power; he was raised by someone else. How does this show Jesus's resurrection as superior to every other resurrection in the Bible?

2. Why does Jesus continually focus on belief in his conversations with Mary and Martha (vv. 40-42)? How do his questions confront us in our unbelief? What can we do to strengthen our belief in him?
3. What characteristics of Lazarus's resurrection are similar to the resurrection of Jesus?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. What is resurrection?
2. Is it okay to be sad about death? Why or why not?
3. What does the resurrection of Jesus mean for us if we believe in him?

APPLICATION

- The disciples' reactions often help us see how we would naturally respond to situations. Make a list of situations that Jesus might be leading you into that will be costly and will push you to trust him more. Pray for strength in those situations.
- Jesus consistently claims that we must believe he is the resurrection and the life. Christians must believe that we cannot save ourselves from death, and this fits in perfectly with Paul's words in Romans 10:9, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Think of two or three people you know who do not believe that Jesus was raised from the dead. Take them out for coffee and share with them about Jesus's resurrection and why it matters.

DISCUSSION 1

The fear of the Pharisees (vv. 45-53)

1. What do the chief priests and Pharisees fear will happen if Jesus continues performing signs (v. 48)? What similar fears do we have?
2. What is the main purpose in John writing his gospel and including the raising of Lazarus in his gospel (20:30-31)?
3. What familiar passage does it seem Caiaphas is alluding to when he speaks of Jesus dying for his people? Is this significant (Isa. 53:10-12)?

DISCUSSION 2

Jesus's reaction (vv. 45-57)

1. What is one potential reason that Jesus did not walk openly around the Jews anymore? Does this have anything to do with him knowing the correct time he is to be handed over to the Jews (2:3-4)?
2. How does the Jews' plan to kill Jesus relate to the opening prologue of John (1:11; 11:53)?
3. What does this passage show us about the main message of the book of John and John's reason for writing it?

DISCUSSION 3

Mary anoints and worships Jesus (vv. 1-11)

1. What is significant about what Mary does with the perfume and her hair (v. 3)?
2. How do Mary's actions point to her being a servant (Matt. 23:11-12)? How can we be like Mary?

3. How would you describe Judas Iscariot and his view of money (vv. 4-6; 1 Tim. 6:9)? Where was his heart? How can we guard our hearts?
4. How did some of the Jews react to Jesus raising Lazarus (vv. 9-11)?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. What are some things we can do to make Jesus's name well known, rather than our own?
2. What are some ways that we can honor and serve people in the way that Martha served Jesus?
3. What are some things God has done in your life that could lead people to believe in Christ?

APPLICATION

- What are some of the things we may do in service to God, that people may question or think is different? Discuss these things with a friend, family, or your Small Group.
- Encourage a friend by sharing ways you have seen God work in his or her life.

DISCUSSION 1

The one who rightfully deserves praise (vv. 12-13)

1. What are some things that led the crowd to believe that Jesus was the Messiah?
2. According to verse 13, what does it mean that Jesus is the “King of Israel?” How do we, as Gentiles, fit into this reality of Jesus being the King of Israel?
3. We know that people are praising Jesus as King at this point in John, but most of those same people eventually demand his crucifixion. What makes someone who once accepted Jesus as King eventually reject him? Do you know someone who has walked away from Christianity? If so, share about this with the group.

DISCUSSION 2

As it is written (vv. 14-19)

1. Read Zechariah 9:9-13. What does this passage reveal about the Messiah to come?
2. Jesus riding on a donkey highlights his humility. What are some things we can take away from this in our own lives? How are some ways you can humbly serve others?
3. The Pharisees rejected Jesus even though he fulfilled many Scriptures before their eyes. Why were they angry with Jesus, according to verse 19? What are some ways they chose pride instead of humility?

DISCUSSION 3

Death brings life (vv. 20-26)

1. Read verses 20-26. What does Jesus mean when he says that he will be glorified (v. 23)?
2. What does Jesus mean that we must lose our life in order to find it? How have you seen this to be true in your Christian walk?
3. Can someone be a follower of Jesus without obeying his commandments? Why or why not?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures by riding on a donkey. This was a humble act for a king. Talk about humility as a family. What are some ways your family can grow in humility?
2. Jesus says we must lose our life in order to find it. What does this mean? Give an example of something you can give up to grow closer to Jesus.
3. Read verse 26 from this week's passage. What does Jesus say will happen if we serve him? How does this motivate you to serve Jesus in every part of your life?

APPLICATION

- Jesus says that we are called to lose our lives in order to find them. This happens at the beginning of our faith, but it is also a daily choice of every believer. This week, pray about areas in your life that you need to give up or change in order to grow in your relationship with Jesus. Find someone to hold you accountable.
- Consider reading *Gospel Deeps* by Jared Wilson to grow your understanding of the gospel.

DISCUSSION 1

The humanity of Jesus (v. 27)

1. Why was Jesus's soul troubled? If Jesus is God and all powerful, how is it that he was afraid?
2. Read Matthew 26:36-39. Jesus, despite being afraid, chose to trust the Father's will for his life. How can this comfort us when we are suffering?
3. Has there ever been a time in your life when you suffered? What are some things that helped you trust God during this time? If you are willing, share this experience with the group.

DISCUSSION 2

He must be lifted up (vv. 28-36)

1. Read verses 28-36. According to these verses, what are some things Jesus accomplished by dying on the cross? Explain their significance.
2. Read Daniel 7:13-14. What are some similarities between these two passages regarding the Son of Man?
3. Jesus's death was meant to reach the nations, that all people groups would come to him. How should this affect the way we view cross-cultural missions? What are some ways you can be involved in missions this year?

DISCUSSION 3

The unbelief of people (vv. 37-50)

1. Read verses 37-50. According to these verses, does seeing miracles guarantee that someone will believe in Jesus?

2. According to the passages quoted from Isaiah (12:38-40), why does anyone believe in Jesus? Is it a work of God or man? How should this affect evangelism?
3. According to verses 47-48, what will be the result of those who don't believe in Jesus? What can we do as believers to keep from falling into unbelief?

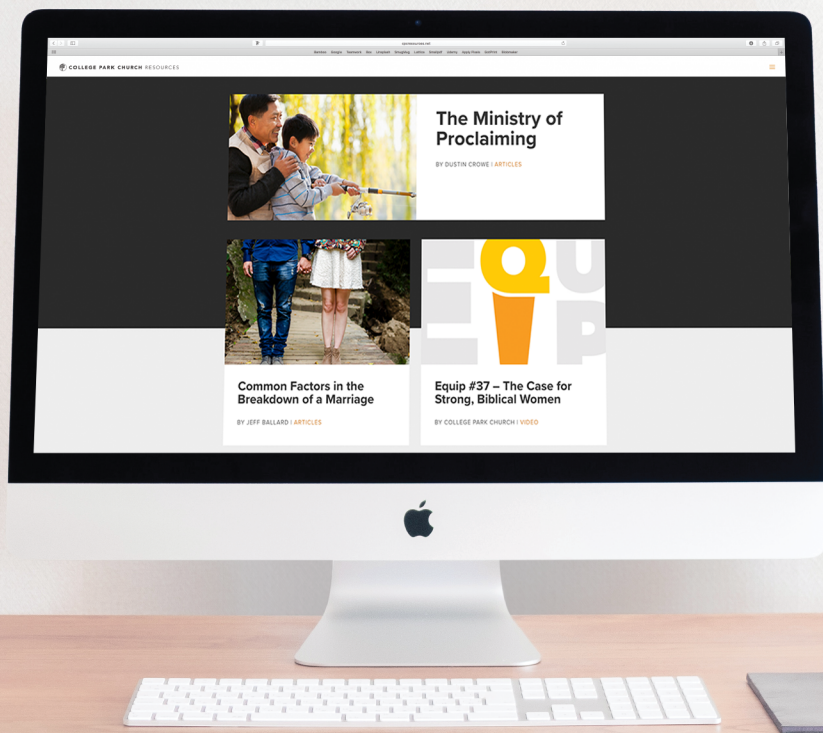
FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. Reread verses 32-33. Jesus will draw people to himself from all over the world. Take some time as a family to discuss global missions and why it is important.
2. What does it mean to not believe in something? What will happen to everyone who doesn't believe in Jesus?
3. Take some time as a family to discuss how to share the gospel effectively. Consider role-playing in order to ensure your family knows the basics of how to share the gospel.

APPLICATION

- Pray that God would open up a door for you to share the gospel with someone this week. As he does, be bold in obeying his lead. As a second step, consider going out with your Small Group this month to share your faith as a group with people you've never met.
- Ask the Lord how he might be calling you to be involved in Global Outreach, if you are not already. Pray about this and visit yourchurch.com/global to learn how you can get involved.
- Consider reading *A Holy Ambition* by John Piper to grow your understanding in global missions.

For more resources like this, visit
cpcresources.net



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