



the
gospel
of

JOHN

part two: *can He be trusted?*

PART 2: WEEK 4 READING PLAN

STARVED TO DEATH IN THE LAND OF PLENTY

WEEK OF MONDAY MAY 18TH, 2026
THROUGH SUNDAY MAY 24TH, 2026

JOHN 6:35

SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON AND MEMORIZE THIS WEEK

Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

JOHN 6:35

Spend a few minutes each day reading this verse slowly. Let the words move from information to formation. Ask the Lord to reveal where you have been feeding your soul with temporary bread, and invite Him to satisfy the hunger only He can meet.

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WEEKLY SUMMARY

WEEK OF MONDAY MAY 18TH 2026 THROUGH SUNDAY MAY 24TH 2026

STARVED TO DEATH IN THE LAND OF PLENTY

John 6:25–69 is one of the great turning points in the Gospel of John. The chapter begins with a crowd chasing Jesus because He had fed them when they were hungry. But Jesus refuses to let them reduce Him to a provider of temporary relief. He presses beneath their wants and exposes their deeper need. The crowd wants more bread. Jesus offers Himself. The people are not wrong to be hungry. Human need is not sinful. Daily needs matter. But Jesus knows that a full stomach cannot fill an empty soul. He knows that temporary bread can satisfy an appetite for a moment while leaving the deepest places of a person untouched. So, He redirects them from what they want to what they truly need.

This week is about spiritual hunger. It is about the wants that distract us, the longings that leave us empty, the bread that cannot satisfy us, and the life that can only be found in Jesus. Every person is feeding their soul with something: Approval. Achievement. Comfort. Pleasure. Control. Religion. Distraction. Success.

But John 6 teaches us that temporary bread always creates recurring hunger. The world can feed your appetite, but only Jesus can satisfy your soul.

This week, do not rush through the readings. Let the question search you: Are you pursuing temporary wants at the expense of eternal needs? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the lesser bread you have trusted. Ask Him to awaken your hunger for Christ. Ask Him to lead you beyond religious familiarity into real dependence on the Bread of Life.

MONDAY, MAY 18, 2026

When Wants Become Louder Than Needs

READ

John 6:25-27; Deuteronomy 8:1-3; Isaiah 55:1-3; Matthew 4:1-4

REFLECT

The crowd finds Jesus on the other side of the lake and asks Him when He got there. Their question sounds curious, but Jesus answers the question beneath the question. They are looking for Him not because they understood the sign, but because they ate the loaves and had their fill. The crowd has experienced a miracle but missed its meaning. They received provision, but failed to recognize the Provider. They saw the sign but stopped at the bread. Jesus is not condemning their hunger. He had compassion for their hunger. He fed them. But now he sees their appetites have become their limitation.

This is one of the ways God loves us. He knows what we need matters more than what we want. We often experience our wants with urgency. We want relief. We want answers. We want things fixed. We want the pressure to stop. We want provision, comfort, recognition, security, or control. Some of those desires may be understandable. Some may even be connected to real needs. But our wants can become so loud that they drown out the deeper hunger of the soul.

Israel had to learn this in the wilderness. God humbled them, allowed them to hunger, and then fed them with manna so they would learn that human beings do not live on bread alone. That does not mean bread is unimportant. It means bread is not ultimate. Physical provision can sustain the body, but only the Word of God can sustain the soul.

Jesus quotes that same Scripture when He is tempted in the wilderness. The enemy tempts Him to turn stones into bread, but Jesus refuses to satisfy physical hunger in a way that would compromise spiritual obedience. He shows us that life is not found in feeding every appetite. Life is found in trusting the Father.

Today's question is not whether you have wants. You do. God knows them. The deeper question is whether your wants are leading you toward Jesus or keeping you from recognizing what your soul truly needs.

QUESTIONS

- Where are you asking God for what you want while ignoring what your soul truly needs?
- What lesser thing has been receiving your attention, affection, or energy at the expense of the most important things?

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026

The Restless Heart

READ

John 6:28–34; Exodus 16:1–18; Psalm 78:23–29; Jeremiah 2:11–13

REFLECT

The crowd asks Jesus, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” It sounds spiritual. It sounds sincere. But Jesus does not give them a religious checklist. He says, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

That answer confronts the human instinct to turn life with God into a transaction. We want something we can manage. We want a system we can control. Tell us what to do.

Tell us how to earn it. Tell us how to secure the blessing. Tell us how to guarantee the bread. Jesus calls them to trust. This is difficult because trust means surrender. Trust means admitting we are not the source of our own life. Trust means receiving rather than controlling. Trust means opening our hands instead of tightening our grip.

Israel struggled with this in the wilderness. They had been delivered from Egypt, but when hunger came, they began to grumble. Their bodies were free, but their appetites still remembered slavery. Egypt had wounded them, enslaved them, and crushed them, but in their hunger, they began to remember Egypt as a place of food. That is what disordered desire does. It can make bondage look safe when trust feels difficult. God gave manna in the wilderness not simply to fill their stomachs, but to form their dependence. They were to gather enough for each day. They could not stockpile their way to peace and security. Every morning, they had to receive mercy again.

In the same way, Jesus now stands before a crowd that sees him as a Moses-like figure, who had led them in the wilderness. Jesus sees people hungry for what bread alone could never satisfy, and redirects their restless striving. The invitation is to believe. The invitation is to trust. The source of life is not another achievement, another religious performance, or another temporary provision. The source of life is the One the Father has sent.

QUESTIONS

- Where are you trying to satisfy your hunger through control, performance, or striving rather than through trust?
- What has promised fullness but left you empty?

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026

The Bread That Gives Life

READ

John 6:35–40; Psalm 63:1–8; Psalm 36:7–9; Colossians 3:1–4

REFLECT

When Jesus says, “I am the bread of life,” He is not offering a religious idea. He is revealing His identity. He does not say, “I can give you bread.” He does not say, “I know where bread is found.” He says, “I am the bread.”

That statement would have carried enormous weight for His listeners. Bread was not a side item in the ancient world. Bread was survival. Bread was life. Grain was one of the basic measures of whether a community was stable or desperate. When harvests failed, families suffered. When bread disappeared, famine followed. Bread represented daily provision, economic survival, and the mercy of God.

The Old Testament is full of stories about bread. Manna in the wilderness was bread from heaven. The bread of the Presence in the tabernacle pointed to covenant fellowship with God. Bethlehem, the town from which David came and where the Messiah would be born, means House of Bread. Bread was never merely bread. It carried the memory of dependence, provision, and life. So, when Jesus says, “I am the bread of life,” He is making an astonishing claim. He is saying that what manna pointed toward, He fulfills. What Israel needed daily in the wilderness, the soul needs eternally in Him. What bread is to the body, Christ is to the deepest places of the human person.

That means the life you are searching for is not found by endlessly feeding your appetites. It is found in a relationship with Christ. The life you were created for is not hidden in the next achievement, the next purchase, the next event, the next season, the next escape, or the next version of yourself. It is found in Christ. The hunger you have is not the enemy. Hunger is a clue. It points us toward the One who made us for Himself.

QUESTIONS

- What longing in your life might actually be pointing you toward a closer relationship with Jesus?
- When are you most tempted to treat Jesus as a supplement to your life instead of the source of your life?

THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2026

No Bread in the House of Bread

READ

Ruth 1:1–6; Micah 5:2; John 6:41–51; Matthew 6:9–13

REFLECT

The book of Ruth begins with a famine in Bethlehem. That detail is easy to pass over, but it is loaded with meaning. Bethlehem means House of Bread. The story opens with no bread in the house of bread. That is far more than an unfortunate agricultural detail. It's a picture of emptiness in the place that should have been full. People are starving in a town named after bread. The place of plenty is now empty.

There is a spiritual warning here. It is possible to hear Scripture, sing songs, attend church services, participate in church programs, and observe religious rhythms while keeping Christ at arm's length. It is possible to be near bread and still remain hungry. That may help explain some of the spiritual disillusionment people carry today. Sometimes, people do not walk away because they hate Jesus. Sometimes, people walk away because they never meaningfully encountered the Bread of Life in the first place. They found a performance instead of His presence. They encountered religion without relationship. Religious activity without intimacy. Information without transformation. They came hungry and found no bread in the house of bread.

Micah promised that from Bethlehem would come a ruler whose origins are from ancient times. In the fullness of time, the Bread of Life would come from the House of Bread. God answers famine not merely with grain, but with Christ. Yes, we need bread for the body, but we also need Christ for the soul. We need provision, but we need His presence more deeply. We need daily mercy like we need daily bread. And we need the life that comes from the Bread of Heaven.

QUESTIONS

- What are you doing to feed yourself spiritually daily and weekly?
- How can you make sure you're not substituting religious activity for spiritual growth?

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2026

His Life Given for the Life of the World

READ

John 6:51–59; Leviticus 17:10–14; Luke 22:14–20; 1 Corinthians 10:16–17

REFLECT

Jesus says, “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” If we hear those words without context, they can sound strange, even offensive. They were offensive to the original audience, too, but for reasons rooted in the Scriptures. Blood was sacred in Israel. Leviticus teaches that the life of a creature is in its blood, and the people of God were forbidden to consume blood. Blood represented life, atonement, and sacrifice.

So Jesus’ language would have been shocking. He is not inviting people into something pagan or grotesque. He is using the strongest possible language of dependence, participation, and covenant life. Food is not helpful if merely admired from a distance. Aroma alone cannot satisfy hunger pangs! Food must be eaten in order to nourish us. When consumed, it sustains us from within. Jesus is saying that He must not remain external to us. He is not simply a teacher to be studied, a miracle worker to be appreciated, or a provider to be used. He is the life we must receive. His life must become our life.

These verses point forward to the cross. Jesus says the bread He will give is His flesh, which He will give for the life of the world. That is sacrificial language. His body will be broken. His blood will be poured out. The Bread of Life will be given so that starving souls may live. Paul says the cup and bread are a participation in the blood and body of Christ. This passage confronts casual Christianity. Jesus is not asking to be sampled. He is not offering religious inspiration in small doses. He is calling us to receive Him as life itself. Not to use Him. Not to keep Him at a comfortable distance. Not to add Him to an already built life. To receive Him. To depend on Him. To fully embrace the life He wants to give us.

QUESTIONS

- Are you keeping Jesus at a safe distance, or are you fully receiving him into every area of your life?
- How does the sacrifice of Christ shape what it means to be a fully devoted follower of Jesus?

SATURDAY, MAY 23, 2026

When Jesus Becomes Hard to Follow

READ

John 6:60–66; Matthew 13:18–23; Hebrews 3:12–15; James 1:22–25

REFLECT

John 6:66 is one of the saddest verses in Scripture. “From this time, many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.”

Not many of His enemies. Not many of His critics. Many of His disciples. These were people who had followed Him, listened to Him, watched Him, and eaten the bread He provided. They had been close enough to be associated with Him. They were interested. They were engaged. They were part of the crowd moving with Him. But when His teaching became hard, they walked away. This is a sobering reminder that interest in Jesus is not the same as surrender to Jesus. Being inspired by Jesus is not the same as following Jesus. Receiving benefits from Jesus is not the same as belonging to Jesus. The crowd liked Him when He multiplied bread. They struggled when He confronted their expectations and called them into deeper dependence.

Jesus does not chase them by softening the truth. That should get our attention. He is not careless with people. He is full of grace and truth. But He will not let his disciples live by their appetites alone. And, He will not allow them to define Him by what they want from Him. He reveals Himself as the Bread of Life, and that revelation forces a decision. The parable of the sower helps us understand this. Some receive the word with joy but have no root. Some are choked by worries, wealth, and desires for other things. The issue is not always open hostility. Sometimes the issue is divided hunger. The heart wants Jesus, but it also wants comfort, control, approval, and ease. When the word confronts those desires, the heart must decide what it truly loves.

James says we must not merely listen to the word and deceive ourselves. We must do what it says. John 6 presses the same question. Will we follow Jesus only when He feeds what we already want, or will we follow Him when He speaks words that confront, reorder, and form us? The hard words of Jesus are not meant to harm us. They are meant to heal us.

QUESTIONS

- Have you allowed Jesus to confront your expectations or assumptions about him?
- Is there any area where you have been hearing His word but resisting obedience?

SUNDAY, MAY 24, 2026

To Whom Shall We Go?

READ

John 6:67-69; Psalm 73:23-28; Philippians 3:7-14; Colossians 3:1-4

REFLECT

After many disciples turn back, Jesus turns to the Twelve and asks, "You do not want to leave too, do you?" It is a haunting question. Jesus does not manipulate them. He does not lower the cost. He does not beg them to stay. He places the question before them.

Peter answers with one of the greatest confessions in Scripture: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Peter does not say he understands everything. He does not say the teaching is easy. He does not say he has no questions. He does not say everything makes perfect sense. He says, "To whom shall we go?" That is the confession of a soul that has discovered where life is found. The crowd wanted bread. Jesus offered Himself. Many walked away. Peter stayed because he knew that the life they were created for could only be found in Jesus.

Psalm 73 carries the same kind of surrender. The psalmist wrestles with confusion and envy, but eventually says, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you." That is not the language of someone who has no earthly desires. It is the language of someone whose desires have been reordered by God. Paul says the same thing in Philippians. Whatever was gain to him, he now considers loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ. He is not saying that nothing else has value. He is saying nothing else is ultimate. Christ has become the center. Christ has become the treasure. Christ has become life. This is the invitation as you gather for worship today. Bring your hunger. Bring your restlessness. Bring your disappointment with lesser bread. Bring your divided desires. Bring the parts of you that have been trying to live on what cannot satisfy. And then hear Jesus say again, "I am the bread of life." The life you were created for is found only in Him.

QUESTIONS

- Where are you tempted to look for a meaningful life apart from Jesus?
- What would it mean today to pray Peter's words honestly: "Lord, to whom shall we go?"