

the
gospel
of

JOHN

*what
does He
really
offer?*

PART 3: WEEK 3

APPROVAL RATING

WEEK OF MONDAY, AUGUST 3RD
THROUGH SUNDAY, AUGUST 9TH, 2026

READING PLAN



JOHN 12:37-50

SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON AND MEMORIZE THIS WEEK

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.

*They would not openly
acknowledge their faith for
fear they would be put out
of the synagogue; for they
loved human praise more
than praise from God.*

JOHN 12:43

WEEKLY SUMMARY

WEEK OF MONDAY, AUGUST 3RD THROUGH SUNDAY, AUGUST 9TH, 2026

APPROVAL RATING

JOHN 12:37-50

John 12 ends Jesus' public ministry with a sobering contrast. Some people had witnessed His signs and still refused to believe. Others believed that Jesus was who He claimed to be, but fear kept them from openly identifying with Him. One group resisted the truth. The other recognized the truth but lacked the courage to live by it.

These verses remind us that faith involves more than seeing evidence, agreeing with ideas, or holding private spiritual convictions. Jesus calls us to receive Him, confess Him, and live under His authority.

Our desire for approval can quietly become one of the greatest obstacles to faithful discipleship. The opinions of other people begin to shape our decisions, silence our convictions, and determine what we are willing to obey. We may know what Jesus has said while still allowing fear, acceptance, reputation, or comfort to carry greater weight.

Jesus does not expose this struggle to condemn us. He came to save. His words confront us because they lead to eternal life. He invites resistant hearts to become responsive, fearful believers to become faithful disciples, and those who receive Him as Savior to surrender to Him as Lord.

This week, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal where your heart has become resistant, where fear has weakened your allegiance, and whose approval has gained too much influence over your life. Listen again to the words of Jesus, and ask for the courage to follow Him openly and completely.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN PART 3 READING PLAN WEEK 3

MONDAY AUGUST 3RD 2026

When Evidence is not Enough

READ

John 12:37-38; Ex. 7:8-14; Psalm 95:6-11; Luke 16:27-31; Heb 3:7-13

REFLECT

Even after Jesus had performed many signs in their presence, some people still refused to believe in Him. They had not heard rumors from a distance. They had seen the evidence for themselves. The sick had been healed, the hungry had been fed, the blind had received sight, and Lazarus had walked out of his tomb. Yet they remained unmoved.

We often assume that faith is simply the inevitable result of receiving enough evidence. We tell ourselves that if God performed one undeniable miracle, answered one specific prayer, or explained one painful experience, belief would become easy. Scripture shows that the deeper issue is often not what we have seen, but how we have chosen to respond.

Evidence matters, but evidence cannot force surrender. A resistant heart can explain away almost anything. We can dismiss God's provision as coincidence, reinterpret conviction as discomfort, and treat His patience as permission to continue unchanged.

God may already have shown you more than you realize. He has spoken through Scripture, answered prayers, corrected your path, placed people in your life, and remained faithful through circumstances you did not think you could survive. The question is not only whether God has revealed Himself. The question is whether you are willing to respond.

QUESTION TO CONSIDER

Where am I asking God for more evidence while ignoring the truth He has already made clear?

TUESDAY AUGUST 4TH 2026

The Slow Hardening of the Heart

READ

John 12:39–41; Isaiah 6:8–10; Jer. 6:16–19; Rom. 1:18–25; Heb. 4:6–7

REFLECT

John uses strong language to describe people whose eyes could no longer see and whose hearts could no longer understand. These verses can sound as though God simply decided to prevent people from believing. But throughout Scripture, the hardening of the heart is the result of a continuing pattern of rejecting truth.

A hardened heart rarely forms in a single moment. It develops through repeated resistance. Every time conviction is ignored, disobedience becomes easier. Every time truth is explained away, self-deception becomes more convincing. Every time obedience is postponed, the heart becomes less sensitive to the voice of God.

Spiritual resistance can hide behind respectable language. We may say that we are still thinking, still praying, waiting for the right time, or seeking greater clarity. Those things can be sincere, but they can also become ways of delaying a response we already know God is asking us to make.

The danger is not that God will stop speaking to us or giving us warning signs along the way. The danger is that we turn a deaf ear to His Word and a blind eye to His work. Jesus said the Father was always at work. The question is, are you watching? Are you listening? We must not treat God's patience with indifference. Ask the Holy Spirit to soften the places in you that have become defensive, indifferent, or slow to respond.

QUESTION TO CONSIDER

Where have I become less responsive to something God has repeatedly shown me?

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 5TH 2026

Private Belief and Public Allegiance

READ

John 12:42; Matt. 10:32–39; Mark 8:34–38; Rom. 10:8–13; 2 Tim. 1:7–12

REFLECT

Many leaders believed in Jesus. They had become convinced that His claims were true. Yet they would not openly acknowledge their faith because they feared the consequences. This challenges the idea that faith is merely a private matter. Faith begins within the heart, but genuine allegiance eventually becomes visible. Jesus calls people to follow Him, confess Him, and identify with Him, even when that identification comes at a cost.

Public allegiance does not require us to be argumentative, loud, or unnecessarily confrontational. Some Christians mistake rudeness for boldness. Jesus calls us to speak the truth in love and live with humility. But humility is not the same as hiding. The leaders in John 12 wanted the security of private belief without the cost of public identification. They were persuaded by Jesus but still controlled by the possibility of rejection.

Faithfulness may look different in every setting. It may mean speaking honestly when remaining silent would imply agreement. It may mean refusing to participate in something that violates your convictions. It may mean praying openly, sharing your story, acknowledging that your decisions are shaped by Jesus, or simply refusing to hide that you belong to Him. The gospel is deeply personal, but it is never meant to remain secret. Jesus publicly identified Himself with us at the cross. He now calls us to identify ourselves with Him.

QUESTION TO CONSIDER

Where has fear caused me to conceal, soften, or compromise my allegiance to Jesus?

THURSDAY AUGUST 6TH 2026

The Fear of What Other People Think

READ

John 12:42-43; Prov. 29:25; 1 Sam. 15:17-24; Gal. 1:6-10; 1 Thess. 2:3-6

REFLECT

The leaders in John 12 feared being removed from the synagogue. Their fear was not imaginary. Openly following Jesus could affect their standing, relationships, influence, and place within the community. The cost was real. But John tells us that something deeper was happening: "They loved human praise more than praise from God." Their fear revealed what they valued. They were controlled by the Pharisees because the Pharisees possessed something they wanted: approval.

Proverbs calls the fear of people a trap. It creates a life of constant adjustment. We change depending on the room, measure ourselves against people's reactions, and become anxious when someone seems disappointed in us. King Saul admitted that he had disobeyed God because he feared the people and listened to their voice. Paul presented the opposite example. He understood that he could not make people's approval his goal and still live as a servant of Christ.

The approval of others is not always wrong. Encouragement, wise counsel, and healthy relationships are gifts from God. The danger comes when approval becomes necessary for our security or identity. When we cannot bear to lose someone's praise, that person gains power over us. Freedom does not mean that criticism will no longer hurt. It means criticism no longer gets the final vote. God's voice becomes greater than the crowd, and faithfulness becomes more important than acceptance.

QUESTION TO CONSIDER

Whose approval am I most afraid to lose?

FRIDAY AUGUST 7TH 2026

The Only Praise That Matters

READ

John 12:43; John 5:41-44; Matthew 6:1-6; 1 Corin. 4:1-5; Col. 3:22-24

REFLECT

John describes the leaders as loving human praise more than praise from God. Earlier in the Gospel, Jesus connected the desire for human glory with an inability to believe. When our identity depends on being admired, affirmed, or recognized, receiving truth becomes difficult whenever that truth threatens our reputation or identity.

Human approval is unstable. People can celebrate us one day and criticize us the next. Expectations change, opinions shift, and even sincere praise is usually based on an incomplete understanding of who we are. Jesus warns against practicing righteousness primarily to be noticed. Acts of generosity, prayer, and service can be offered to God or performed for an audience. The activity may look identical from the outside, but the heart's motivation is completely different.

Living for God's approval does not mean trying to earn His love. In Christ, we are already loved and received. We obey from acceptance, not for acceptance. Because our identity is secure in Jesus, we are free to serve without recognition, repent without protecting our image, and remain faithful when no one applauds.

Much of the Christian life happens where few people can see it. God sees every quiet act of integrity, every hidden sacrifice, every private prayer, and every costly decision to obey. His praise is enough.

QUESTION TO CONSIDER

What could I do faithfully this week even if no one notices or thanks me?

SATURDAY AUGUST 8TH 2026

Making Jesus Savior and Lord

READ

John 12:44-47; Luke 6:46-49; Acts 2:32-39; Romans 14:7-9

REFLECT

Jesus declares that believing in Him means believing in the Father who sent Him. To see Jesus is to see the character and heart of God. He is not merely a spiritual teacher offering helpful ideas. He is the Son of God who carries the authority of the Father.

Jesus also says that He came to save the world. His purpose is rescue. He welcomes sinners, forgives the guilty, restores the broken, and offers eternal life. We receive salvation as a gift of grace, not as a reward for our performance. Yet receiving Jesus as Savior also means acknowledging Him as Lord. We cannot separate His saving mercy from His rightful authority. Jesus asks why people call Him "Lord" while refusing to do what He says. A profession of faith that never affects our decisions remains incomplete.

Lordship means Jesus receives the right to direct every part of our lives. His authority extends to our relationships, finances, habits, sexuality, ambitions, speech, forgiveness, time, and future. We do not negotiate which parts of His teaching we will accept based on personal comfort or cultural approval. This does not mean disciples obey perfectly. We stumble, repent, learn, and grow. Lordship describes the settled direction of our lives. When Jesus corrects us, we do not permanently defend our resistance. We return to Him and surrender again. Jesus is not trying to take life from us. His commands lead to life. The One who came to save us can be trusted to lead us.

QUESTION TO CONSIDER

Where am I resisting Christ as Lord lately?

SUNDAY AUGUST 9TH 2026

Receive His Words and Respond

READ

John 12:47-50; Deut. 30:11-20; Matt. 7:24-27; James 1:19-25; 1 John 2:3-6

REFLECT

Jesus closes His public ministry by emphasizing the importance of His words. He did not speak on His own authority. The Father who sent Him commanded what He should say, and the Father's command leads to eternal life. Jesus came to save, but salvation still requires a response. We can hear His words and receive them, or hear them and reject them. Neutrality is not a permanent option. The same words that offer life also reveal whether we were willing to trust and obey the One who spoke them.

Moses placed a similar choice before Israel: life and death, blessing and destruction. He urged the people to choose life by loving God and walking in His ways. Jesus describes the wise person as someone who hears His words and puts them into practice. James warns against hearing the Word while deceiving ourselves through inaction. Obedience does not earn eternal life. It reveals the direction of our trust. When we believe that Jesus is Lord, His voice gains authority over our lives.

Look back over this week. Where has the Holy Spirit brought conviction? Perhaps you have recognized an area of spiritual resistance, a relationship whose approval controls you, a place where you have hidden your faith, or an area where you want Jesus as Savior but resist Him as Lord.

Do not allow conviction to become another truth you hear without response. Receive the words of Jesus as the words of life. Confess what needs to be confessed. Release the approval you have been chasing. Take the next step of obedience.

QUESTION TO CONSIDER

What has Jesus shown me this week that now requires a response?