



the  
gospel  
of

# JOHN

part two: *can He be trusted?*

## **PART 2: WEEK 8 READING PLAN**

### **THE TRUTH WE RESIST**

**WEEK OF MONDAY, JUNE 15  
THROUGH SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 2026**

**JOHN 8:31–36**

JOHN 8:31-32

# SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON AND MEMORIZE THIS WEEK

JOHN 8:31-32

*Jesus said,  
“If you hold to my  
teaching, you are  
really my disciples.”*

JOHN 8:31-32

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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# JOHN

*can He be trusted?*

# WEEKLY SUMMARY

WEEK OF MONDAY, JUNE 15 THROUGH SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 2026

## THE TRUTH WE RESIST

*WHAT IF THE FREEDOM WE CRAVE IS FOUND IN THE TRUTH WE RESIST?*

### **BOTTOM LINE: FREEDOM BEGINS WHERE SELF-RULE ENDS.**

This week's reading plan centers on Jesus' words in John 8:31-36. He is speaking to people who had begun to believe in Him, but He presses them to go deeper. Interest in Jesus must become abiding with Jesus. Admiration must become surrender. A moment of belief must become a life shaped by His word.

Jesus says those who hold to His teaching are truly His disciples. Then they will know the truth, and the truth will set them free. That means freedom is connected to truth. Our culture often treats freedom as self-rule: define yourself, follow your desires, live your truth, reject whatever feels restrictive. Jesus gives a different vision. He teaches that truth is not something we invent to support the life we want. Truth is reality as God defines it, revealed most fully in Christ.

The people listening to Jesus push back. They insist they are not slaves. Jesus exposes a deeper bondage: sin can enslave the human heart. That is still true. False freedom often begins as comfort, escape, control, relief, pleasure, or identity. Over time, the thing we thought we were using can start using us.

But Jesus does not expose bondage to leave us ashamed. He tells the truth so He can make us free. Self-rule promises freedom, but Jesus gives what self-rule can never deliver. This week, we will ask where desire has edited truth, where comfort has become a chain, and where Jesus is inviting us to surrender what we have learned to live with.

JOHN 8:31-36

# MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2026

## *Abiding Before Freedom*

### READ

John 8:31–36; John 15:1–11; Psalm 1; Colossians 3:16–17

### REFLECT

Jesus speaks to people who had begun to believe in Him, but He immediately calls them to remain in His word. Jesus is not looking for casual interest or temporary inspiration. He invites people to abide.

Abiding means staying. Continuing. Dwelling. Letting His word become the place where your life is formed.

Many people want freedom as a moment. Jesus forms freedom as a life. A worship moment can encourage you. A sermon can awaken you. A prayer can strengthen you. But abiding is what reshapes you over time. We remain with Jesus when His word comforts us, and we remain with Him when His word confronts us. We remain when obedience feels costly. We remain when His truth challenges the version of freedom we were trying to protect.

Psalm 1 describes the blessed person as one who delights in the instruction of the Lord and meditates on it day and night. That person becomes like a tree planted by streams of water. Jesus uses similar imagery in John 15. Fruit comes from abiding. Life comes from remaining connected to Him.

Freedom does not begin with self-rule. Freedom begins with surrender to the word of Jesus.

### QUESTIONS

- Where are you admiring Jesus but resisting His authority?
- What would it look like this week to abide in His word rather than simply visit it?

# TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2026

## *When Desire Edits Truth*

### READ

John 8:31–32; John 14:6; Proverbs 14:12; Romans 1:18–25; 2 Timothy 4:3–4

### REFLECT

Jesus connects freedom to truth. That confronts people in every age, including ours.

We often use “truth” to mean personal perspective, sincere feeling, or preferred identity. Our stories matter. Our pain matters. Our experiences matter. But experience and truth are not the same thing. A person can feel something deeply and still be wrong. A person can desire something sincerely and still be led away from life. A person can tell their story honestly and still need that story brought under the loving authority of Jesus.

Truth is what is real. Truth is what remains true whether we like it, understand it, believe it, or agree with it. In John’s Gospel, truth is revealed fully in Jesus. He is not simply a teacher who gives accurate information. He is the faithful and final revelation of God.

Proverbs warns that there is a way that seems right but leads to death. Romans describes the human tendency to exchange the truth of God for a lie. Paul warns Timothy that people can gather voices that tell them what they want to hear. That is not only an ancient problem. It is a very contemporary problem.

Desire becomes dangerous when it starts demanding editorial control over truth. We begin cutting, softening, rewording, or ignoring whatever confronts the life we want.

Jesus tells the truth because He wants us to live free.

### QUESTIONS

- What truth from Jesus are you editing to fit the life you want?
- Where might desire, fear, pain, or preference be asking for more authority than Jesus?

# WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2026

## *The Lie That Feels Like Relief*

### READ

John 8:33–34; James 1:13–15; Proverbs 5:21–23; Romans 6:12–23; 2 Peter 2:19

### REFLECT

The people listening to Jesus insist they are not slaves. Jesus answers by naming a deeper bondage: sin enslaves.

Sin rarely introduces itself as bondage. It often begins as relief. Something comforts us, numbs us, helps us escape, helps us feel powerful, helps us feel wanted, helps us feel safe, or helps us feel in control. Then, over time, the relief becomes a master.

James describes desire as something that can conceive sin, and sin eventually gives birth to death. Proverbs describes people being held by the cords of their own sin. Paul says we become slaves to whatever we obey. Peter warns that people can promise freedom while they themselves are enslaved.

That is how false freedom works. It promises to serve us, then begins to rule us. This can happen with obvious sins, but it can also happen with more respectable chains: control, approval, resentment, productivity, image, comfort, comparison, worry, or the need to be right. The chain may not look dramatic, but it still weigh us down and keeps us bound.

Jesus does not expose our slavery to sin to humiliate us, condemn us, or make us feel bad about ourselves. He discloses the truth about who He is and that truth is still making captives free

### QUESTIONS

- Is there something in your life that began as comfort, escape, or control, but slowly became a chain?
- Is there anything in your life that you turned to for relief that has now become a master?

# THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2026

## *The Exhaustion of Self-Rule*

### READ

Matthew 16:24–26; Luke 9:23–25; Romans 7:15–25; Galatians 5:16–25; Titus 3:3–7

### REFLECT

Self-rule sounds freeing at first. I define myself. I defend myself. I decide what is true for me. I answer to myself. I follow my desires. I control my life. But self-rule eventually becomes exhausting because the self has to carry a weight it was never meant to carry.

I have to justify myself.  
I have to protect myself.  
I have to curate myself.  
I have to heal myself.  
I have to prove myself.  
I have to save myself.

Jesus calls people to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him. That sounds offensive to a culture built on self-expression. But Jesus knows the self cannot rescue the self from the bondage the self keeps choosing.

Paul describes the inner conflict of wanting what is good and still finding sin at work within him. Galatians describes the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit. Titus reminds us that we were once enslaved by passions and pleasures, but God saved us by His mercy.

Freedom begins where self-rule ends because self-rule will never be strong enough to save us.

### QUESTIONS

- Where has self-rule made you tired or overwhelmed?
- What would surrender to Jesus look like in that specific area?

# FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 2026

## *The Freedom Jesus Gives*

### READ

John 8:35–36; Luke 4:18–19; Isaiah 61:1–3; Romans 8:1–4; Colossians 1:13–14

### REFLECT

Jesus does not only say we are in bondage. He also promised to give freedom. In John 8, Jesus uses household language. In ancient times, the world was carved up between the free and the enslaved. Jesus uses this powerful word picture of bondage and liberation to define His mission. A slave may be in the house, but a slave does not have the security of belonging. Jesus points to a freedom that is deeper than religious heritage, moral effort, or personal resolve. Jesus is the Great Liberator, come to free us from the invisible chains to keep us bound to a life less than His design for us.

Luke 4 shows Jesus announcing freedom for prisoners. Isaiah 61 gives the prophetic background of good news, healing, release, comfort, beauty, and restoration. Romans 8 declares freedom from condemnation and the law of sin and death. Colossians says God has rescued us from darkness and brought us into the kingdom of His beloved Son. This is the freedom self-rule only promises.

Jesus frees us from sin's mastery.

Jesus frees us from shame's identity.

Jesus frees us from condemnation's sentence.

Jesus frees us from the exhaustion of self-justification.

Jesus frees us from the lie that we have can save ourselves.

He does not help us decorate our prison cells. He destroys the chains that hold us down so we can live free.

### QUESTIONS

- What have you learned to live with that Jesus is inviting you to surrender?
- Where are you trying to manage what Jesus wants to set free?

# SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 2026

## *Truth That Brings Hidden Things Into the Light*

### **READ**

John 3:19–21; Psalm 139:23–24; Ephesians 5:8–14; 1 John 1:5–10; Hebrews 4:12–16

### **REFLECT**

Truth can feel threatening when we have learned to hide. But the truth of Jesus is never cruel, never careless, and never meant to crush those who come to Him.

John 3 says people can love darkness because their deeds are evil, yet whoever lives by the truth comes into the light. Psalm 139 gives us language for inviting God to search us. Ephesians calls believers to live as children of light. First John reminds us that walking in the light brings fellowship and cleansing. Hebrews tells us God's word exposes the heart, and then immediately invites us to draw near to the throne of grace.

Do you see the pattern here? God exposes what He wants to heal. God reveals so He can restore us and rebuild us. God brings hidden things into the light so they no longer rule us in the dark.

The enemy uses exposure to accuse. Jesus uses truth to liberate.

This is why we can pray courageously. We do not have to protect every hidden place from God. He already knows us, and He invites us to participate in the freedom He offers.

### **QUESTIONS**

- What hidden thing in your life needs to come into the light before Jesus?
- Where do you need courage to name a chain you have been calling freedom?

# SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 2026

## *Free Indeed*

### **READ**

John 8:31-36; Galatians 5:1; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Romans 6:1-14; Psalm 119:41-48

### **REFLECT**

This week ends where the week began: Jesus connects abiding, truth, and freedom.

Galatians says Christ has set us free, so we should stand firm and refuse to return to bondage. Second Corinthians says where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Romans 6 says we are no longer slaves to sin, and Psalm 119 describes a life that walks in freedom because it seeks God's ways.

Christian freedom is not the absence of all authority. It is life under the right authority. Everyone serves something. Appetite. Approval. Fear. Image. Pleasure. Resentment. Control. Self. Jesus invites us under His authority because His authority is truthful, loving, holy, and good for us.

The freedom we crave is found in the truth we resist.

That truth may confront us, but it will not destroy us. That truth may expose chains, but only so Jesus can break them. That truth calls us to surrender, but surrender to Jesus is where freedom truly begins. Freedom begins where self-rule ends.

### **QUESTIONS**

- What truth from this week do you need to stop resisting?
- What is one act of surrender you can take today as a step toward freedom in Jesus?