



WEEKLY STUDY

Week Two

We continued our year-long look at the gospel of John. We can learn about our own identity and purpose by witnessing how John the Baptist fielded questions about his own identity.

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional question at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture, follow the daily prayer prompt, and then pray this or your own prayer.

*Jesus, Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,
When others ask me who I am,
May I point to you.
When others ask me what I'm all about,
May it be clear that I'm all about you.
Amen.*

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: JOHN 1.19-21

Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. ²⁰ He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

²¹ They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

- It can be difficult to answer the question, *Who are you?* How do you typically respond? By name? Family? Occupation? John begins with who he is not. Then those questioning him offer more possibilities. But he continues to answer in the negative. He refused to accept an identity that was not his to claim. Have you ever just rolled with an assumed identity that was clearly beyond who you are?
- *God, thank you for the integrity of John the Baptist to point to your world-changing work in Jesus. Help me to do the same.*

TUESDAY: JOHN 1.22-27

Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?”

²³ John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’”

²⁴ Now the Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵ questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

²⁶ “I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷ He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”

- Those who were sent to inquire of John were just doing their job. In an attempt to get a satisfactory answer to the question, “Who are you?” they asked him, “What do you say about yourself?” Notice that he doesn’t use the typical ways of defining himself. Instead, he shares his purpose. He is the one who prepares the way for the Lord. It’s rare for someone who draws large crowds to maintain such a perspective. He refocuses the attention on the One who is to come.
- *Lord, may my life today be filled with humility and yet confidence in who you are..*

WEDNESDAY: JOHN 1.29-34

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ ³¹ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”

³² Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³ And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”

- John has a fresh memory of the Spirit of God coming down on Jesus. It was clear to him that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Now he has a testimony and words with which he can identify Jesus to others around him.
- *God, fill me with words today to tell others who Jesus is and what he has done for them.*

THURSDAY: 1 PETER 2.9-10

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

- Our identity is an “out of” identity. Once you were in a bad place, but Jesus has ushered you *out of* darkness and *into* a new place, into the wonderful light of Christ. Your chosenness and your role as one who offers Christ is at the core of who you are and what you are called to do with your life in Christ.
- *Jesus, you have chosen me to shine your light. Today, I declare your praise.*

FRIDAY: EXODUS 9.13-16

'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me,¹⁴ or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth.¹⁵ For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth.¹⁶ But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

- This is God's word to Pharaoh. God's purpose can be worked out even through those who intend evil. This is true today as well. We can choose to work in concert with God's purpose and experience the blessings of being one of his children.
- *God, I want to be counted among those who hear and obey. May my life honor you today.*

SATURDAY: MATTHEW 28.18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- These often quoted words of Jesus are at the core of what it means to be a disciple. The command is to share the good news of Jesus that offers forgiveness of sins and a new life lived in the light. This is the identity and purpose of a disciple. And best of all, Jesus is with us through it all!
- *Jesus, thank you for your promise to remain with us. Give me courage to pour myself into your purpose for me.*

- See reverse for Small Group Discussion -

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- When are we likely to sit in the seat of savior? Do you ever feel like you have to save someone or something?
- How do you answer the question, “Who are you?” How would you like to answer this question?
- How do you understand your purpose? What are you here for?