

Summer Reading Plan

Dear Wallula,

The first four books of the New Testament we call Gospels. They are named Gospels because the word “gospel” means “good news,” and boy do these books share good news!

A Gospel is a literary work that describes Jesus’ life focusing especially on the last week of His life. This summer I invite you to join us on a journey through the last Gospel written, *John*. *The Gospel of John* is written several decades after the death and resurrection of Jesus. It’s late writing allows for it to have an unique view of His life, ministry and sacrifice. More than any other Gospel John is written through the Church’s eyes.

Join us on this 10 week adventure through Jesus’ life. This reading guide is designed to allow you to spend as little as 5 minutes daily reading about Jesus’ life. There is also the opportunity for you to reflect a little more with some journaling and even a supplement that will lead you through all four Gospels in 10 weeks.

Remember, spiritual training is like physical training in that different “levels” challenge each of us differently. Choose the “level” that challenges you and dive in! Let’s spend the summer with Jesus!

Because of Him,

Lance

All Scripture references are from the NIV translation

Day 1: June 7

Read John 1:1-13

Have you ever been in a dark room when suddenly the lights were turned on? Do you remember how it took a moment or two before you were able to focus well? It was even worse if you happened to be looking directly into the light! That initial jolt of light was distracting and disorienting. It's the same feeling we may have had the first time we were introduced to Jesus. While Jesus is truth and brings great clarity and purpose to life, chasing after Him can also be disorienting because He calls us to a total life transformation!

1. If you've ever had to turn on the lights to a dark room, you've maybe warned folks in that room ahead of time. Building relationships with folks who have yet to meet Jesus is sorta like saying, "Hey everyone, I'm going to turn the lights on now!" Who are you preparing to turn the lights on for? Pray for those folks right now.
2. The opposite to the well lighted room is also true. Walking into darkness can be distracting, but just as we adjust to the light, we adjust to the darkness. What areas of your life are beginning to dim? Pray that God would shine light on those areas today.

Day 2: June 8

Read John 1:14 - 18

"Word" is the greek word *logos*. It has several different meanings but usually referred to the spoken word. When Jesus is described as *logos*, He is being described as the *expression of God*. In other words; No one has seen God, but you have seen Jesus. We have a written record of his actions, relationships and teachings. We've seen God, because we've seen Jesus!

1. All other world religions either talk about a god who can not be obtained or can only be obtained through great personal achievement and sacrifice. How does it make you feel to know that the God of the Bible loves us so much that He did all the hard work in connecting with us? He came into this world in a way that makes sense to us, as a man! Spend a few minutes simply thanking God for Jesus.
2. Jesus life should help us understand God a little better. Talk to God about what you hope to figure out about Him during this study. Ask Him to reveal Himself more to you through the life and ministry of Jesus as recorded in John's Gospel.
3. Pray that Wallula Christian Church would be the Body of Christ in this world.

Day 3: June 9

Read John 1:19-28

Have you ever taken credit for someone else's work? Maybe you turned in a homework assignment as a kid that your parents worked on more than you did, or perhaps you retold a funny story to a friend that you heard from someone else. We've probably all taken credit for something that really wasn't our doing. John the Baptist could have easily taken more credit than he was due. He could have grown his own stature, recognition and power by claiming to be something he wasn't. Instead he gave his life to point towards Jesus.

1. When was the last time you took the credit when God deserved it more than you?
2. What are some ways you can point people toward Jesus this week.
3. Pray that people would see Jesus shining through your words and actions this week.

Day 4: June 10

Read John 1:29-34

These verses seem to point to Jesus baptism (read Matthew 3:13-17 for background). We're not sure exactly what kind of relationship Jesus had with John the Baptist prior to Jesus' baptism. They knew each other because they were cousins. How close they were we don't know... We know that in Matthew John tries to defer to Jesus saying, he should be baptized by Jesus not the other way around. Yet in our text today, John says, I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' How interesting that even John the Baptist needed someone to point him to Jesus.

1. How did you decide to follow Jesus? Did you figure it out yourself or was there someone to help you learn about Him?
2. If even John the Baptist needed someone (God) to point out Jesus to him, how much more do our neighbors, friends, coworkers and family members need someone to point them toward Jesus?
3. Ask God to provide you with opportunities this week to point others toward Jesus.

Day 5: June 11

Read John 1:35-42

We live in a world where names are changed all the time. Chad Johnson is a football player who was recently given permission to use his new last name, Ocho Cinco, on the back of his uniform. Maybe names don't have great meaning for us today, but in Jesus' day, names were very important. A change in name meant a change in direction and a change in priorities.

1. Jesus changes Simon's name to Peter (the greek) or Cephas (the aramaic) both of which mean "rock." If Jesus changed your name today, what would it be?
2. What changes in direction or priorities do you need to make? Talk to God about what changes He wants to see in your life.

Day 6: June 12

Read John 1:43-50

I lived for a while in a town in Arizona that has been described as the "armpit of America." Some folks in Yuma, had a bit of a chip on their shoulders because of other's attitude about their town. We've all heard the jokes about Dorothy because we're from Kansas or jokes about prison because we're from Leavenworth or Lansing. Nathaniel had a certain prejudice about Jesus' home town of Nazareth. Of course Jesus' real home town wasn't Nazareth and He wasn't limited by people's perception of who He was or where He was from...

1. Do you really believe that God wants to do something big through you? Why? or Why not?
2. What "great" things have you seen God do in your life and the lives of those around you lately? What "great" things do you want Him to do the lives of folks around you?
3. Pray for the three people you've invited or are planning to invite to worship with you at Wallula.

Day 7: June 13

Read John 2:1-11

Scholars divide or outline the Gospel of John in a bunch of different ways. One of the options divides John into two sections. The first 12 chapters make up the book of signs and chapters 13 to 21 make up the book of glory. In other words the first 12 chapters tell stories about different ways Jesus "proved" what He was really here to do; provide us a way to glory! One of those signs or miracles, in fact the first of Jesus' miracles, is recorded here in chapter two.

1. Why do you think Jesus chose a party as a location for His first miracle?
2. I think it is really cool that when Jesus changes water into wine, he doesn't simply change water into wine, but He changes water into the best wine they had tasted at the party (vs 9-10)! Jesus wants to change us too! What do you need to give over to Jesus in order for Him to transform?
3. Mary's instructions to the servants are great instructions for us too. Are you avoiding, "do(ing) whatever he tells you."? Ask God for help in doing this better!

Day 8: June 14

Read John 2:12-24

I've been thinking lately about church as a distraction. Now, don't get me wrong. I love the Church and I believe, absolutely, that attending church is super important. It's just that sometimes, I think we let church distract us. I read one preacher who said, "church used to be a vehicle that takes us to a destination, it helped us reach God. Now, we've made church *the* destination." We ask questions like; what kind of programs does this church have for me? or does this style of teaching, music or coffee suit my tastes? These are the wrong questions. The church isn't for us, it exists for God. God isn't here to serve us, we're here to serve Him! I think this is the principle at the heart of this scene with Jesus in the temple.

1. When was the last time you were really angry about something? What did you do? Do you regret your actions? Why? Why not? Do you think Jesus regretted His actions in the temple? Why? Why not? What, if anything, do you think the difference between your actions and Jesus' actions were?
2. Pray that the Holy Spirit would fuel every word you speak and step you take this week.

Day 9: June 15

Read John 3:1-21

As a kid our games were filled with *do-overs*. Nobody liked the kid who was so competitive that he quickly called *no do-overs*, before the game could begin. In my more adult games we still have *do-overs*, we just call them by more adult names like, *mulligans*. Our games aren't the only area of our lives in need of *do-overs*. Nicodemus was concerned with life's *do-overs* as well.

1. I can't stop thinking about Jesus' statement, "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit." What do you think about this statement?
2. How much time this week have you devoted to the things you can accomplish? How much time have you devoted to know Him & His Spirit more?
3. Pray for God to work through you this week in your conversations and actions.

Day 10: June 16

Read John 3:22-36

My 7 year old daughter, Lacey, is playing softball this summer. She seems to enjoy being around the other girls and it is a great way for Dad to spend some time with his daughter. The scariest time for Lacey during a game is when she comes to bat. She isn't frightened of the ball or especially nervous about getting a hit. Instead, Lacey is simply intimidated by the shouts from the fans, "let's go Lacey!" or "Get a hit, Lacey!"

My middle daughter would prefer to go through the game with out any extra attention. This quality is pretty rare in our world. Most people are hungry for recognition.

1. What comes to mind when you think about John the Baptists statement, "He must become greater; I must become less."?
2. In what ways are you trying to decrease this week and allow Jesus to increase?
3. Pray that in everything we do, Wallula would give all the credit to Jesus!

Day 11: June 17

Read John 4:1-26

It rained the other night. This is not unusual for a night in June, and in itself, is not worth celebrating. That is, unless you have three kids involved in baseball. If you do then every night (nearly) in June is taken up with a game or practice. So, when it rains, it seems like a snow day at school. There is much rejoicing in the form of deep breaths & the chance to relax at home a little. The only problem is that the game will be rescheduled for later in the summer... We often are far too easily satisfied.

1. Why was the woman interested in the water Jesus offered? Why would she be reluctant to draw water from the well?
2. Jesus supprises the woman with His knowledge of her personal life. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus already has a knowledge of all your personal encounters, thoughts, etc?
3. Pray that we would be a people worshipping in spirit & truth. Pray that we would not be satisfied with the minimum required relationship with Jesus. Pray that we would strive to know Him more and more.

Day 12: June 18

Read John 4:27-38

Food is fuel. It provides us with the necessary energy to make it through the day. When we eat too much or eat too little we're not able to work or play at our best. Other things fuel us in the same way. We are all energized by different things. For some of us it's a great game at the ball field or maybe a concert or even an evening with someone close to us, but each of us need these fuel stops. More than the breaks in life like these, we need daily fuelings from God's Word. Hopefully these last several days have served to remind us all of this need to fuel up!

1. What does Jesus mean when He says the fields are "ripe for harvest"?
2. What role does God want you to play in reaping the harvest? Talk to Him about what He wants you to do this week?
3. Pray that WCC and each of us would do everything we can to clearly communicate that Jesus is the Son of God!

Day 13: June 19

Read John 4:39-42

Do you remember who first introduced you to Jesus? Maybe it was your Mom or Dad, a friend or coworker... Most of us learned about Jesus and believed because of the difference He had made in the lives of those closest to us. We might not have described our decision in that way, but their belief led to our belief. As we continue(d) to grow, their belief was “swapped” out for a more personal, more solid belief based on our own relationship with Jesus. Just like the Samaritans, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

1. Thank God for the folks who helped you hear about Jesus.
2. Pray that your relationship with Jesus would continue to grow through this study.
3. Ask God to bring many, many more people than expected to worship at Wallula. Pray that God would use us to introduce others to Jesus.

Day 14: June 20

Read John 4:43-54

Seeing is believing! This concept frustrated Jesus. He desires for us to exercise faith in our lives. Faith is believing with out seeing. It doesn't mean blindly following Jesus. We can, after all, see all that He has done for the important folks around us and even each of us! Faith does mean obeying Him even when we're not sure how it will turn out, just like the royal official from Capernaum did!

1. What steps of faith do you think Jesus may be calling you to take? What is keeping you from following the royal official's example and listening to Jesus call?
2. Ask God to remove the road blocks or to help you navigate your way around those things keeping you from stepping out for Him.
3. Pray that together, Wallula, would always be moving in step with the Savior. Pray that we would act on faith and be willing to take risks for Him!

Day 15: June 21

Read John 5:1-15

It's interesting how one event can look so different to folks based on their perception. Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath and instructed him to pick up his mat and walk. The man didn't worry about rules or anything else, he jumped up and walked! The Pharisees see a man no longer limited to begging from his mat, and can only think of the messiness of the situation. The solution that Jesus provided didn't fit the Pharisee's preconceived notion & was therefore... messy. When we begin to whole-sale grace. When we step in and love people, sometimes it will end up messy.

1. How has Jesus loved you even in the midst of a mess?
2. Ask God to help you love others this week in the same way Jesus did.
3. Pray that Wallula would be a messy church. Pray that WCC would be a place that people would experience the love of God in a powerful and real way!

Day 16: June 22

Read John 5:16-30

Rest is important. God gave us the Sabbath as a way to rest. Even more than that, God gave us the Sabbath as a way to focus on Him! When Jesus healed on the Sabbath he only broke man's rules about the Sabbath. God's big purpose for the Sabbath is for man to see God. Jesus accomplishes this purpose when He performed miracles on the Sabbath. His conversation in this section of scripture high lights how He and the Father are one.

1. When do you feel the most refreshed? What activities fill your physical tank? What activities fill your emotional tank? What activities fill your spiritual tank? How often are you involved in those activities?
2. How many promises do you find in these verses? List them here:
3. Thank God for the life He offers through Jesus.

Day 17: June 23

Read John 5:31-47

We live in an information age. At a press of a button we can find anything from recipes to driving directions. When you research something a must asked question is; can I trust this source? Jesus continues His teaching concerning His relationship with the Father & His purpose.

1. Have you ever trusted someone's testimony about a restaurant or a movie only to be disappointed? How did you feel? Did it change your opinion of the person?
2. Jesus says that He has weightier testimony than John the Baptist's, who do suppose He is talking about?
3. Consider your testimony concerning Jesus, who do you say He is? Who do your friends and family believe Him to be?

Day 18: June 24

Read John 6:1-15

A square deal, a new deal, a chicken for every pot... our political history in the United States is filled with promises. People are quickly swayed by a full stomach, by the promise of prosperity. Sometimes we settle to quickly for a chicken in the pot when we could have so much more. Jesus feeds a huge crowd of people after He had healed the sick and taught the people. The crowds response was to make Him king - as long as He filled their bellies.

1. How has Jesus provided for you?
2. The boy in the story willingly provided all he had even though it was only a few fish & some bread. What are you willing to share with Jesus' ministry?
3. Pray that Wallula would share well. Pray that we would not settle for what the world offers but that we would concentrate on all Jesus offers for eternity.

Day 19: June 25

Read John 6:16-24

It makes me laugh every time. You've witnessed this scene before; a young child is being disobedient, probably even throwing a fit, perhaps even refusing to leave with the parent. So, the parent begins to leave the room...slowly. As they near the door they call out the child's name and say, "I'm leaving, I'll see you later." Everyone, including the kid, knows the parent isn't really leaving. You might even be saying to yourself, "Don't leave that kid here!" I wonder what was going through the disciples' minds as they started rowing from shore with out Jesus? Maybe they had done this before? Perhaps He often said, "I'm spending some time with Dad, you guys go ahead." In any case they were shocked to see Jesus approach their boat in the middle of the lake!

1. When is the last time that Jesus surprised you?
2. Have you ever started out with out Jesus? What happened?
3. Ask God to help Wallula to never rush out with out Jesus. Pray that we would never be surprised to see Jesus working in unexpected ways through us.

Day 20: June 26

Read John 6:25-59

John uses different themes through out his Gospel. One of those themes are Jesus' "I am" statements. There are seven "I am" statements sprinkled through his Gospel and this is the first one. Jesus, after He feeds a huge crowd and walks on water He discovers most of that same crowd on the other side of the lake... hungry again.

1. What did you have for breakfast this morning? How long did that bowl of cereal, piece of fruit or plate of eggs satisfy you?
2. What do you think Jesus means when He claims to be the bread of life?
3. Pray for the important people in your life who have yet to eat from the bread Jesus offers. Pray that they would realize their desperate need for Jesus. If you have yet to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior talk to Him about that decision now.

Day 21: June 27

Read John 6:60-71

We live in a consumer culture. We shop for the best price. We look for the best deal. We will do everything we can to improve our position. Some folks claim that this is a new problem. John 6 teaches us that consumerism has been around for as long as humans have been around. After a few days of intense ministry the crowd following Jesus is drastically decreased. Folks were no longer being "fed." They were offended by the level of commitment. I love Peter's response to Jesus question, "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

1. Have you ever been offended by the level of commitment Jesus has called you to? What did you do?
2. What next step in your ministry, in your service, do you think Jesus is calling you?
3. Pray that we would be a church that constantly seeks to serve Jesus more. Pray that we would have the same attitude as Peter, I know this is hard, but to whom shall we go?

Day 22: June 28

Read John 7:1-13

As a parent sometimes you have to do things you don't really want to do, maybe change a diaper, or listen to your daughter learn to play the violin, or even, discipline your kids. I remember once leaving one of my kid's room and hearing them say, "Dad is mean." Now, I don't really think they believe that statement. I know they were upset because of the penalties enforced due to their behavior. I know that not one of us is really fond of being disciplined and I know that is what motivated their statement. Still, hearing someone I care about so much, say I was mean, hurt. Can you imagine how Jesus felt having this conversation with his, yet to believe, brothers?

1. Have you ever said something that hurt someone's feelings? Have you ever said something to God that probably disappointed Him?

2. Why do you think Jesus decided to attend the feast in secret?
3. What are people whispering about Jesus in our community? What is our role when we hear people whispering?

Day 23: June 29

Read John 7:14-24

I wish I could have heard Jesus preach. I remember the first time I heard my preaching professor in college preach, I was blown away. I'm pretty sure my jaw hit the floor - it was that powerful. This was a sermon preached by a short, soft-spoken, balding, middle aged guy, and it was totally life transforming. Really powerful preaching comes from a relationship with God. How amazing do you suppose Jesus' preaching was?

1. When was the last time you were really changed by God's word?
2. Pray that you would stay connected to God through His word this week. Pray that you would not be more concerned about appearances that you are about relationships.
3. Ask God to center WCC's attention on His word and on a relationship with Him.

Day 24: June 30

Read John 7:25-44

Undecided. I remember being in college and wondering how can so many people be undecided on their major? Don't they want to finish? Don't they want to get busy? There is probably nothing wrong with being "undecided" concerning a major in college when you are 19 years old. So many folks in our community, just like the folks in this section of scripture, are undecided about Jesus. The problem is none of us knows how many years we have to complete this degree.

1. What do you make of the fact that many tried to seize Jesus but no one was able to place a hand on Him?
2. Talk to God about any indecision you have about Him.
3. Pray for folks who have yet to decide to follow Jesus. Lift three of your close friends and family who still may be undecided up by name.

Day 25: July 1

Read John 7:45-53

Have you ever been shocked by how easily people become upset. Think about the things that seem to steam us: waiting too long in the line at Wal-Mart, traffic, the DMV, things we think someone might have said about us. None of those ideas are exactly life changing. The religious leaders in Jesus day were very upset with Jesus' teaching. Have you ever thought, why? Did they really believe that He was a liar or a lunatic? Or

were they afraid of what was pretty clear to so many - there was something dramatically different about Jesus?

1. When is the last time you were truly upset about something? What did you do?
2. Talk to God about the things that bother you during an average day. Pray for patience and an attitude that reflects Christ when you deal with those things.
3. Pray for a boldness that exceeds even Nicodemus to stand up for Jesus in a meaningful way this week.

Day 26: July 2

Read John 8:1-11

When I coach my kids' sports team sometimes you have to correct something. A part of coaching is breaking down a player's fundamentals. Whenever I have to correct something a kid is doing I try to use an encouragement sandwich. I try to say something positive they're doing, followed by the criticism and correction and then end by saying something positive again. I'm not perfect (especially with my own kids) but I really try hard not to be overly critical.

1. Have you ever felt condemned? Do you think you've ever condemned someone else?
2. How can you extend grace even to someone who is disregarding God's direction.
3. Ask God to help make each of us at Wallula a grace wholesaler.

Day 27: July 3

Read John 8:12-30

"I am" statement #2: "I am the light of the world." John uses the imagery of light and dark through his Gospel. When light enters a dark room, the room is instantly changed! When you meet Jesus it can be instantly changed too.

1. Do you remember when you first met Jesus? What was the biggest difference Jesus made right away? What change was most important, but gradual?
2. What areas of your life do you think Jesus needs to bring to light?
3. Talk to God about the areas of your life you are allowing to stay dark. Seek His forgiveness.

Day 28: July 4

Read John 8:31-41

Today we celebrate our nation's independence, our freedom! We are so lucky to have been born in a country where we have never experienced anything but freedom. We can absolutely relate to the disciples' question, "How can you say that we shall be set

free?" Of course Jesus wasn't speaking about political or national freedom but freedom from sin.

1. How does sin enslave you?
2. Ask God to forgive you for your sins this week. Pray that you would be free from sin this next week - that you would throw those chains aside.
3. Thank God for our nation. Pray for our country's leaders and the decisions they face. Pray that God would use Wallula to influence our community in a powerful way!

