

SAVORING THE PEACE OF JESUS
IN A CHAOTIC WORLD

The Gospel of
JOHN

LEADER
GUIDE

MELISSA SPOELSTRA

LEADER GUIDE

WELCOME! Before you read any further, we want to say how thankful we are for you, the leader. Thank you for your willingness to dive into Scripture, brew the coffee, place the chairs, and set aside the time regularly to meet with other women.

The Gospel of John: Savoring the Peace of Jesus in a Chaotic World is a 7-session, video- and discussion-based Bible study from Melissa Spoelstra.

Our goal for this leader guide is to help you feel equipped to facilitate and guide your Bible study group gatherings in a way that fosters deep conversation, prayer, and spiritual growth for you and the women you're leading.

We want to encourage you to use this study however it works best for you and your group. If you want to follow this leader guide to the letter, do that! If you want to do your own thing, feel free! We want to give you all the tools you might need, but we are certain God has ordained your time with your specific group in your specific setting.

We are grateful for you and praying for you as you lead this study.

Lifeway Women



WEEKLY GROUP MEETING

7 Group Meetings • Meeting Length: 1-1.5 hours

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

SESSION ONE—Introduction: Distribute Bible study books, get to know one another, and watch the Session One video.

SESSION TWO—Watch the Session Two video and discuss the Session Two personal Bible study.

SESSION THREE—Watch the Session Three video and discuss the Session Three personal Bible study.

SESSION FOUR—Watch the Session Four video and discuss the Session Four personal Bible study.

SESSION FIVE—Watch the Session Five video and discuss the Session Five personal Bible study.

SESSION SIX—Watch the Session Six video and discuss the Session Six personal Bible study.

SESSION SEVEN—Watch the Session Seven video and discuss the Session Seven personal Bible study.

HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU LEAD.

VIDEO TEACHING. The videos for this study are available for streaming through the digital access code in the back of each Bible study book. Each video is intended to be viewed after completing the accompanying week of personal study. We strongly recommend you use the teaching videos as a part of this study, but you can still discover truth from Scripture and grow in your walk with God by simply doing the print portion if your setting doesn't allow for video.

GET THE WORD OUT. Be sure to advertise the study early and utilize all methods for getting the word out. Post it on your church's website, send emails to potential attendees, and promote it on all forms of social media. It's best to start advertising the study four to six weeks before it begins. The study is seven weeks long, which means you will meet seven times. Visit lifeway.com/gospelofjohn for free promotional materials to help get the word out about your study.

SCHEDULE. Be sure to make everyone aware of the schedule ahead of time and start promptly each week to honor everyone's time. In your group time, you'll discuss what you're learning. You'll also be encouraged to spend a good bit of time in prayer.

STAY IN TOUCH. Prepare a sign-up sheet with space for names, email addresses, and phone numbers. You may also include information like birthdays, social media handles, and favorite candy so that you can foster community among group members.

GET COZY. Make an effort to create a comfortable environment for group meetings. Arrange chairs in a circle to encourage conversation. If your group is large, you may want to split into smaller groups for the discussion time. If you choose to do so, enlist discussion leaders for each group to keep the conversation moving and focused.

CHILDCARE. Be sure to check with participants to see if childcare is needed and organize leaders and space for the children in advance.

BIBLE STUDY BOOKS. Each participant will need a Bible study book. Make sure you leave plenty of time for all the books to be ordered and received between announcing and starting your Bible study. Consider offering a scholarship or buy-one, give-one option for those who cannot afford a study book on their own.

EARLY PREP. We encourage you to read through the entire leader guide before the first session and evaluate how this will work best for your group. Highlight specific questions from the leader guide you want to cover during your group time. And make it a priority to stay on top of your own personal study between each meeting! Also, make a list of additional talking points and questions you want to pull in from the personal study.

PERSONAL STUDY. Between each meeting, there are five days of personal study to complete in the Bible study book.

PRAYER. Most importantly, be sure to pray for the women who attend the study. And pray for yourself as you prepare to lead. Ask God to draw the women closer as they learn more about Him.

EVALUATE. At the end of each group session, ask: What went well? What could be improved? Did you see women's lives transformed? Did your group grow closer to Christ and to one another? Also, do a final evaluation at the close of the study.

CONNECT. Find ways to interact and stay engaged with each member of your group throughout the study. Make use of social media, email, text messages, and handwritten notes to encourage them. Continue these connections even after the study ends.

We've provided a discussion guide for each session. Remember these are simply suggestions for how to use your time together. We want to empower you as you lead to do what is best for your group!

DISCUSSION GUIDE

SESSION ONE: INTRODUCTION

LEADER: Use this guide to facilitate your group meeting. If your group members are watching the videos on their own, rather than together during your gathering, you'll want to select two or three questions from the days of personal study to add to your discussion time.

SHARE: Guide each group member to share her name and her favorite ice cream flavor.

WATCH the video "Session One: Savoring the Peace of Jesus in a Chaotic World" together and follow along with the Video Viewer Guide.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

Discuss: From the background information in the introductory video, what is something new or something that caught your attention about the Gospel of John?

1. Turn in your Bibles to the following verses and ask volunteers to read them out loud: John 1:12; 5:24; 7:24; 10:10; 14:27; 20:31; and Philippians 4:6. Encourage participants to share what stood out to them from these passages.

STUDY DISCUSSION

1. *Ask:* How does savoring the peace of Jesus resonate in your life today?
2. Turn to page 7 and read aloud the section titled, "Options for Study." Give women time to consider which level of study they will choose. Then ask women to share which option they marked.
3. *Ask:* What is something you are looking forward to or hoping to learn as we begin studying the Gospel of John?

REVIEW: Remind your group to complete the five days of personal study for "Session Two: Savoring Peace in the Plan of Jesus." Take a moment to highlight the Big Idea for each day. These key points will be important to review at the end of the week of study.

PRAYER: Close your group meeting with a time of prayer. Depending on the size of your group, consider breaking into smaller groups of two or three women and praying for each other. You might have extra time since this is the introductory week.

SESSION TWO: PEACE IN THE PLAN OF JESUS

SHARE: What are some plans coming up on your calendar, like parties, meetings, vacations, and so forth?

WATCH the video “Session Two: Savoring Peace in the Plan of Jesus” together and follow along with the Video Viewer Guide.

MEMORY VERSE: Review John 1:12 and provide time for group members to recite it aloud.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

1. *Ask:* How did the Old Testament references in John 1 give you additional insight into John’s Prologue?
2. *Discuss:* How does reviewing God’s plan in John 1–3 bring you peace today? Share practical examples from your own life.

STUDY DISCUSSION

1. Encourage participants to share responses from their answers to the questions in the Stop and Savor section for Day One on page 17.
2. *Ask:* How do these words of Jesus—*What do you want?* and *Come and see.*—resonate in your life? (p. 19)
3. Call on a volunteer to read aloud John 2:4-12. Ask women to share any fresh insights they discovered from Jesus’s miracle as well as any nudges toward obedience they identified on page 25.
4. Discuss answers to this question on page 30: *How do you think your life would be different if you had more personal time with the Lord each day?*
5. *Ask:* How did you summarize your personal takeaway to the big idea for Day Five: *Seek God-connection over self-protection.* (p. 33)?

REVIEW the Big Idea for each of the five days of study. Ask for final thoughts or questions regarding the study of God’s plan this week.

PRAYER: To provide an opportunity for each woman to be prayed for during the week, lead each member of the group to write a prayer request on a provided note card, then pass that card to the woman on her right.

SESSION THREE: PEACE IN THE POWER OF JESUS

SHARE: What is one of your favorite carbohydrates to eat? (Think: bread, potatoes, etc.)

WATCH the video “Session Three: Savoring Peace in the Power of Jesus” together and follow along with the Video Viewer Guide.

MEMORY VERSE: Review John 5:24 and provide time for group members to recite it aloud.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

1. *Ask:* What reason for not praying mentioned in the video do you best identify with? What has helped increase your consistency and tenacity in prayer?
2. *Discuss:* Which of the following three statements connected to the three signs covered in the video resonated most in your life and why?
 - *Asking and believing are postures of power.*
 - *Spiritual lameness is more crippling than physical lameness.*
 - *Our physical appetites can absorb our attention away from spiritual nourishment.*

STUDY DISCUSSION

1. Encourage participants to share responses from their answers to the questions in the Stop and Savor section for Day One on page 45.
2. Call on a volunteer to read aloud John 4:43-54. Discuss participants’ answers to these two questions on page 47: *What divine intervention are you asking God for today? What could a next step of faith look like as you trust God with His answer?*
3. *Ask:* How have the truths found in this week’s memory verse (John 5:24) shaped your identity? How can this Scripture be used to combat shame or discouragement?
4. Discuss what stood out to you about Jesus’s feeding of the five thousand (John 6:1-15). (You can use the prompts of Noticer, Teacher, Generous Host, Gatherer, Prophet, and King.)
5. *Ask:* What are some ways we can feed our spiritual appetite? (p. 63) Brainstorm together any additional ideas that can be applied this week.

REVIEW the Big Idea for each of the five days of study. Ask for final thoughts or questions regarding the study of God’s power this week.

PRAYER: Share prayer requests and lead your group to record them on the tops of the starting pages for each day of study for the coming week (Session Four). When they open their books each day, this will prompt them to begin that day of study by praying for the needs of others in their group.

SESSION FOUR: PEACE IN THE PATIENCE OF JESUS

SHARE: How many glasses of water do you typically drink in a day?

WATCH the video “Session Four: Savoring Peace in the Patience of Jesus” together and follow along with the Video Viewer Guide.

MEMORY VERSE: Review John 7:24 and provide time for group members to recite it aloud.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

1. *Ask:* What longings are typically experienced by women (companionship, purpose, looking better physically, etc.)? What does it mean to look beneath the surface of the longings in your life to find God as your source of satisfaction? Is this easy or difficult for you? Explain.
2. *Discuss:* How does the background information regarding the Festival of Tabernacles provide insight into Jesus’s offer of water?

STUDY DISCUSSION

1. *Ask:* Did Jesus’s patience with His family, the crowd, or His critics stand out most to you? Explain.
2. Encourage participants to share responses from their answers to the questions in the Stop and Savor section for Day Two on page 79.
3. Call on a volunteer to read aloud John 8:1-11. Discuss every woman’s battle with shame. Talk about how this story can help us when we are in the trenches of condemnation—whether from others or self-inflicted.
4. *Ask:* As you evaluate your thoughts, your media choices, and your words, what does God’s light of both conviction and hope expose and encourage in your life? (p. 85)
5. Discuss the different lenses that were worn in Day Five and how women can relate to seeing life through criticism, fear, or faith. *Ask:* How do those perspectives impact our peace?

REVIEW the Big Idea for each of the five days of study. Ask for final thoughts or questions regarding the study of God’s patience this week.

PRAYER: Acquire a thirty-second hourglass timer (or use the timer on your phone). Allow women to share one specific prayer request before the sand/time runs out. This will help women gather their thoughts and be succinct. It also leaves more time for actual prayer rather than extended sharing of prayer requests.

SESSION FIVE: PEACE IN THE PURPOSES OF JESUS

SHARE: What music, podcasts, or videos have you been listening to or watching this week?

WATCH the video “Session Five: Savoring Peace in the Purposes of Jesus” together and follow along with the Video Viewer Guide.

MEMORY VERSE: Review John 10:10 and provide time for group members to recite it aloud.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

1. *Ask:* What resonated most as you watched the teaching? Why?
2. *Discuss:* What are some practical ways to let go of controlling behaviors and trust Jesus as your Good Shepherd?

STUDY DISCUSSION

1. Call on a volunteer to read aloud John 10:1-10. Discuss correlations between a shepherd’s role and Jesus’s care for us.
2. *Ask:* What good purposes have come out of waiting seasons in your life? (p. 102)
3. Discuss participants’ answers to the questions in the Stop and Savor section for Day Three on page 110.
4. Call on a volunteer to read aloud John 13:1-5. *Ask:* What are some ways you have served others, and how has that spiritually energized you? (p. 111)
5. *Ask:* What insights about loving one another did you glean from Day Five?

REVIEW the Big Idea for each of the five days of study. Ask for final thoughts or questions regarding the study of God’s purposes this week.

PRAYER: Close with a “popcorn prayer.” Encourage group members to say a word or phrase of praise to God. Then lead women to use a word or brief phrases to express specific requests to the Lord. As the leader, close the prayer time.

SESSION SIX: PEACE IN THE PROMISES OF JESUS

SHARE: What plant have you kept alive the longest? (You don't have to know the name of it. You can just describe it.)

WATCH the video "Session Six: Savoring Peace in the Promises of Jesus" together and follow along with the Video Viewer Guide.

MEMORY VERSE: Review John 14:27 and provide time for group members to recite it aloud.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

1. *Ask:* What is it about the person and work of the Holy Spirit in your life that comforts and encourages you the most?
2. *Discuss:* What are some daily practices that help believers stay connected to Jesus?

STUDY DISCUSSION

1. Call on a volunteer to read aloud John 14:1. *Ask:* How does thinking about where you'll go in the next life brighten your outlook today? (p. 125)
2. Discuss the different roles of the Holy Spirit found in Day Two and ask participants which part of John 14 resonates with them most in their current circumstances.
3. Read aloud John 15:1-8. *Ask:* What spiritual truths about your relationship with God emerge from this gardening illustration? (p. 133)
4. Encourage participants to share and discuss their answers to the questions in the Stop and Savor section for Day Four on page 140?
5. *Ask:* What main theme stood out to you from Jesus's prayer for us? (p. 144) Why?

REVIEW the Big Idea for each of the five days of study. Ask for final thoughts or questions regarding the study of God's promises this week.

PRAYER: Allow each woman to share a prayer request. Then instruct each group member to pray silently and lift up the request of the woman on her right.

SESSION SEVEN: PEACE IN THE PASSION OF JESUS

SHARE: When was the last time you went fishing? What was that experience like? If you've never been fishing, what are the sights, sounds, and smells you imagine come along with it?

WATCH the video "Session Seven: Savoring Peace in the Passion of Jesus" together and follow along with the Video Viewer Guide.

MEMORY VERSE: Review John 20:31 and provide time for group members to recite it aloud.

VIDEO DISCUSSION

1. *Ask:* Which person—Mary, Thomas, or Peter—do you most relate to in this current season of your life? Explain.
2. *Discuss:* What are some practical ways to maintain the habit of stopping and savoring Jesus after this study is over?

STUDY DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the contrast between an earthly kingdom and Jesus's greater kingdom. (p. 153)
Ask: What earthly tasks or situations are currently consuming you? (p. 150)
2. Call on a volunteer to read John 19:28-37. *Ask:* How does reading the details of Jesus's sacrifice bring fresh appreciation for the passionate price of your forgiveness? (p. 158)
3. Encourage participants to share and discuss their answers to the questions in the Stop and Savor section for Day Three on page 163.
4. *Ask:* Where is the Lord challenging you to keep your eyes on Him and away from comparative living? What practices help you to fix your eyes on Christ? (p. 168)
5. Direct each participant to identify one or two key takeaways from their study of the Gospel of John.

REVIEW the Big Idea for each of the five days of study. Ask for final thoughts or questions regarding the study of God's passion this week.

PRAYER: Ask your group to share prayer requests. Then invite a woman who is comfortable praying out loud to open the prayer time. Give time for others to pray as they feel led to close the session.

FINISHING WELL

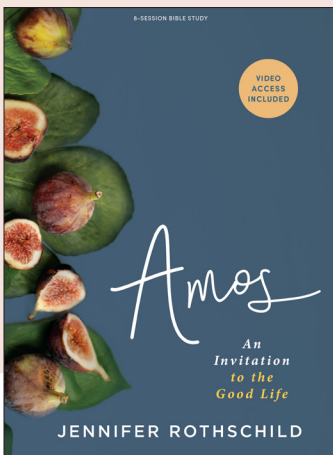
NEXT STEPS Even after the study concludes, follow up and challenge women to stay involved through another Bible study, church opportunity, or anything that will continue their spiritual growth and friendships. Provide several options of ministry opportunities the members can participate in individually or as a group to apply what they have learned through this study.



WHAT'S NEXT?

If you enjoyed this study, check out *Isaiah: Striving Less and Trusting God More* by Melissa Spoelstra.

lifeway.com/isaiah



Or *Amos: An Invitation to the Good Life* by Jennifer Rothschild.

lifeway.com/amos



VIDEO ACCESS STUDY

INTRODUCING BIBLE STUDIES with VIDEO ACCESS INCLUDED!

As trends in media consumption change from DVDs to streaming video, Lifeway made the decision to invest in technology that would allow for Bible studies to be accessed through mobile devices and smart TVs in addition to our website.

The concept of a Bible study book with video access allows us to use the technology to give all participants easier access to teaching videos. This will alleviate a concern we have heard from many group leaders of members who stop coming to their group after they miss a week of study.

How will customers access the videos that come with their Bible study book with video access?

There is a unique access code printed in each Bible study book. They will access their video content at my.lifeway.com or through the Lifeway On Demand app.

How long will they have access to the videos that come with their Bible study book?

There is no expiration date on the video access that comes with their Bible study book. They'll be able to access it as long as it is available through our Lifeway On Demand video apps.

What are the benefits of video access being included in each Bible study book?

- This provides more flexibility for group meeting time. Groups now have the option to have group members watch video sessions outside of group meetings to allow more time for discussion.
- If a group member misses a weekly group meeting due to sickness or travel, they will be able to access the video content on their own and continue in their study.
- Group members can re-watch video sessions that were particularly impactful on their own time.

- This simplifies what a group leader needs to facilitate Bible study. You'll now get everything you need with just the Bible study book.
- Our goal is to provide an affordable option for both individuals and churches who are looking for Bible study options.

What do churches and individuals need to lead a group?

Each group member will need a Bible study book, which will include video access. There is also a DVD option for groups who want a non-streaming viewing option. In addition, select studies provide a Video Streaming - Group option for groups who choose not to use the Bible study books. For the best experience, we recommend each group member have a Bible study book.

When do group leaders need a DVD Set?

Because the Bible study book includes video streaming access, the purchase of the DVD set is optional (not essential) for group leaders. This option is for groups who may not have reliable streaming internet access.