

# John – A Devotional Commentary from God’s Daily Word Ministries

## Chapter 5

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Scripture references for lessons on John: The New King James Version.  
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## John 5:1-6 - Lesson #49

We have seen Jesus minister to "a ruler of the Jews" in Judea (John 3:1), "a woman of Samaria" (John 4:7), and "a certain nobleman" in Galilee (John 4:46). These three recorded times of ministry have covered the widest possible range of physical territory as well as social status. Jesus quickly taught that neither political nor social boundaries should hinder the sharing of His message. These, and many other encounters through the gospel of John, also help us to understand what it means to believe and the maturing nature of our faith.

### John 5:1-6

"After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, 'Do you want to be made well?'"

We're not told which feast was being observed when Jesus went to Jerusalem, but the city would certainly have been extra busy. The portion of scripture about an angel stirring the water is not found in any of the earliest Biblical manuscripts. Although the text was most likely added for clarity hundreds of years after the gospel was written, it accurately reflects the beliefs of the day. This was a very superstitious time and people commonly believed that certain waters held miraculous healing power.

When Jesus approached the "great multitude of sick people," He chose a man who continued to be brought to the pool but had long since given up hope of being cured. Perhaps the main reason for his time at the pool had become social, a place to share with "friends" the sorrows and unfair twists and turns of life. Perhaps the reason had become economical, a place to receive a little food. Or perhaps the man no longer even knew why he was brought to the pool. This had simply become his life, a life without reason or hope.

Jesus stepped into this man's life and, without criticizing his superstitions or futile routines, asked a seemingly ridiculous question - do you want to be made well? But this question was far from ridiculous. It was, and is, the necessary question of all beginnings with Christ. In the broader context the question can be phrased, "Do you really want what Jesus has to offer?" For without desire, our relationship with God cannot begin; and without an on-going desire, our relationship will cease to grow.

Do we really want the life Jesus is offering? Do we really want to leave our zone of relative comfort and follow Him who calls? Life with Him will not be the same, and that can be scary. Let's truly examine each area of our life and learn to trust Him more. He can set us free! But first we must want to be made well.

Have A Great Day!

## John 5:7-9 - Lesson #50

When Jesus went to the pool of Bethesda, He saw "a great multitude of sick people" (John 5:3). But Jesus passed through the multitude and approached a man "who had an infirmity thirty-eight years" (John 5:5) and asked him, "Do you want to be made well?" (John 5:6). Why did Jesus single out this particular man?

John 5:7-9

"The sick man answered Him, 'Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.' Jesus said to him, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk.' And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath."

Everything Jesus did during His ministry was for the purpose of presenting the glory of God and His gospel plan of Salvation. His presentation was often in the form of direct teaching, but He also taught truth through confrontational exchanges and the miracles He chose to perform.

Jesus passed through the multitude and chose one. The man chosen for healing did not show ANY understanding of Jesus. Nicodemus, the woman at the well, and the nobleman from Capernaum all showed some level of understanding, but this man knew nothing! And yet, He was chosen; "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). Praise be to God!

This miracle was a physical healing and says nothing about the Spiritual condition of the man. However, it certainly teaches us many Spiritual truths. The first truth is simply that God does the choosing, not because we deserve to be chosen; "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5). The second truth is seen in the utter hopelessness of the man. He knew he was sick and knew he had no ability to heal himself. There is no room for the Savior of true Salvation while we still believe there is hope in our own ability.

Finally, Jesus healed the man and told him to do what was impossible in his own strength, "stand, pick up, and walk!" The fact that Salvation is a complete gift does not remove our responsibility. We are given the faith to believe and yet told, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 16:31). Those who are in Christ are cleansed of all sin and yet exhorted to, "be holy in all your conduct" (1 Peter 1:15). Our gift of forgiveness is always accompanied with a call to holiness and to a life which would not be possible without Christ.

Jesus continues to call those who have reached the end of themselves - those who recognize their need for a Savior and desire to be saved. He then performs a Spiritual healing through the transformation of our heart and the indwelling Holy Spirit. And with each new creation, He tells us to do what would otherwise not be possible - to stand and begin to walk as a new creation! Let's stop placing our hope in the solutions of man. Let's place our trust in Him alone and begin to walk as one who has been completely healed.

Have A Great Day!

## John 5:10-13 - Lesson #51

We have seen Jesus choose to heal a specific man by the pool of Bethesda; "Rise, take up your bed and walk" (John 5:8). What an incredible story of the power of Christ! This ought to have been a time of rejoicing for the entire community. But when John inserts the phrase, "And that day was the Sabbath" (John 5:9), he is letting us know that the real story has just begun.

John 5:10-13

"The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, 'It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.' He answered them, 'He who made me well said to me, "Take up your bed and walk.'" Then they asked him, 'Who is the Man who said to you, "Take up your bed and walk"?' But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place."

One of the major confrontations between Jesus and the Jewish leaders was over the observance of the Sabbath. But we need to understand that Jesus most often initiated the debate. The man by the pool could have been healed on a different day if the intent was a physical healing. But the issue of interpretation and enforcement of Sabbath law was so important that Jesus set out to boldly exposed the hypocrisy.

The original Sabbath law given through Moses was, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). The instruction for the Sabbath was to "do no work," but the rabbinic traditions had defined thirty-nine forbidden categories of work - one of which was carrying loads. These traditions became more than guidelines, they became a new law which defined "proper" observance of the Sabbath.

By the time of Jesus, the focus was on the impossible burden imposed by the multitude of traditional laws, and the true meaning of the original law and the love of the Law Giver had been completely lost. The process of trying to further define the law may have begun with good intentions but it had grown into a system which was stealing the hearts of the people away from God; "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

The evils of this system is exposed when we see that the observance of the man-made law had become more important than a miraculous healing. We see similar problems today when the Spirit of God transforms a heart, yet all we see is method, hairstyle or clothes. A great healing of the spirit takes place and we say, "It's not lawful to dress like that!" God forgive us!!

Let's take a good hard look at what we call proper and make sure we haven't created a barrier to Christ with our man-made commandments - or created false security for those who observe our new law. Let's never become so attached to what we decide is proper that we miss the miraculous power of God. Let's keep our eyes on Jesus and always allow room for God to move any way and at any moment He chooses.

Have A Great Day!

## John 5:14-16 - Lesson #52

The Jewish system of laws had become very legalistic and created an impassible barrier to God. Jesus intentionally confronted this system by healing a man on the Sabbath - something viewed as forbidden.

John 5:14-16

"Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, 'See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.' The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath."

In one sense Jesus simply used this man to create a confrontation with the Jewish legalistic system. However, He still used this healing to teach several truths. First we learn that faith is not necessary for a miracle. Jesus acted independent of the man's faith, showing us the only requirement for a miracle is the power of God. God is never constrained by the actions of man.

Next, we learn that physical healing does not imply Spiritual forgiveness. When Jesus healed the paralytic man, who was lowered through the roof by his friends, He said, "Son, your sins are forgiven you" (Mark 12:5). But no indication of forgiveness is given in this case of the man by the pool. It is possible to be physically healed and yet remain Spiritually dead.

We are also reminded of the sad ungrateful condition of the human heart. The man was sick for thirty-eight years, and yet his total focus appears to be his new life, without any regard for the Giver of life. In fact, he reported Jesus to the Jewish leaders as soon as he learned His identity - perhaps as a way of defending himself against the charge of violating the Sabbath. Was the cost of loyalty too high? Can someone really be so self-centered that they would not give thanks for such a wonderful gift? Well, when was the last time we thanked God for the greatest gift of all - the gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus!?

Finally, we learn that this sickness was due to sin, and that something worse would happen if the man did not stop sinning. We know that not all illness is caused by sin (John 9:1-3), but we also know that many sinful activities can lead directly to terrible sickness. We also know that God can use various forms of suffering to bring about Spiritual repentance. David wrote of physical and emotional suffering after his sin with Bathsheba: "My bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me" (Psalm 32:3-4).

God remains in control and is working His plan through every situation. Let's continually come before Him with a thankful heart and seriously confront the sin in our life. Let's seek out the Healer and be determined to consistently live for Him no matter what the cost.

Have A Great Day!

## John 5:17-20 - Lesson #53

When Jesus healed a man by the pool, a confrontation began regarding the Sabbath; "the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath" (John 5:16). Jesus initiated this confrontation to show how far the interpretation of the law had strayed from the original intent. However, Jesus used the opportunity to teach about His true identity and His relationship with the Father.

John 5:17-20

"But Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.' Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.'"

Jesus began His defense by saying God is always at work. While it's true that God "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done" (Genesis 2:2), that did not mean God stopped working. The work of Creation was complete, but God continues to work through the processes of nature as well as the sovereign guidance of world events and the loving nurture of His children.

If Jesus would have just said we can work because God is still at work, the Jewish leaders would have still been angry. They could have accused Jesus of a misinterpretation of Scripture. But Jesus carefully chose His words and called God, "My Father." His statement implied an exclusive and unique relationship with God - a relationship which placed Him on an equal level as God. This bold assertion sent the leaders into a rage and they wanted Jesus to die all the more.

Many people try to attack the true identity of Jesus. One such attack says Jesus never claimed to be God. Those who make such a statement have not considered the complete meaning of scripture. We may be uncertain about what Jesus meant in saying "My Father," but the Jewish leaders who heard His words knew exactly what He meant - Jesus was "making Himself equal with God."

Although Jesus clearly claimed equality with God, He also explained the unique relationship. Jesus was equal with God and yet completely dependent on God for His actions. He had all the power of the universe and yet walked with complete submission to His Father. The Father revealed and the Son accomplished all things.

Jesus claimed to be God, and His claim is either true or He is a liar. Scripture does not allow for Jesus to be just a good and moral teacher. It is inconsistent to call Jesus just an example to follow. If we believe Jesus to be a man of integrity, then we must also give Him our life and believe that He is God.

Have A Great Day!

## John 5:21-24 - Lesson #54

Jesus answered the charge of violated the Sabbath by stating He was doing what His Father was doing. His word choice made it clear He was not just claiming a right to work on the Sabbath, He was claiming equality with God (John 5:18). Jesus continued by making even bolder claims which cannot be ignored.

John 5:21-24

"For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life."

Jesus again claims equality with God by saying He is the giver of life. He is not simply an instrument through whom God works - such as Elijah and Elisha when they raised people from the dead. Jesus gives life by His sovereign will! Again, the Jewish leaders knew exactly what Jesus was implying, for only the One True God was the giver of life. Jesus would demonstrate His command over physical life when He raised Lazarus; "Lazarus, come forth!" (John 11:43), but He also held authority over Spiritual, eternal life.

The unique relationship between Father and Son is further explained through transfer of the authority and responsibility of judgment. Abraham referred to God as "The Judge of all the earth" (Genesis 18:25), but Jesus claimed that this title had been given to Him. Why? So that all the world would honor Jesus as they would honor God, and in doing so bring glory to the Father; "that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:11).

Honoring Jesus honors the Father. The two cannot be separated! One implies the other, and rejection of one is a rejection of both: "Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also" (1 John 2:23). Jesus is much more than a great teacher.

We need to understand how Jesus is Judge and not as the one who condemns; "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17). Jesus grants life through His word which reveals the hopeless condemnation without the grace of forgiveness. Judgment comes by clearly revealing the truth and granting everlasting life to those who believe: "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:11-12).

Jesus is to be honored as Judge and giver of life. Without Him we are dead in our sin, but with Him we have passed from death to life everlasting. Jesus is much more! Let's make Him much more in our life today.

Have A Great Day!

## John 5:25-29 - Lesson #55

When we take the time to study the claims of Jesus, we begin to understand why the Jewish leaders became so angry and "sought to kill Him" (John 5:16). In some of the clearest words recorded in any of the gospels, Jesus sets Himself on an equal level with God.

John 5:25-29

"Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."

Jesus draws special attention by emphasizing the truthfulness of His words and then states the dual nature of His truth. The hour has now come for life to be granted; and yet, the hour of resurrected life is yet to come.

The gift of eternal life begins the moment we believe. This is a Spiritual resurrection from the dead; "he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24). Before the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we were Spiritually dead - eternally separated from God. But when we truly believe we pass from death to life; "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1). Spiritual resurrection is something which has occurred right now for those who believe because of the life we have in Christ.

Jesus is claiming to have the same life in Him which is in the Father; "in Him was life" (John 1:4). This is the life which make us a "new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17) and frees us from condemnation; "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Judgment has been executed and we have been set eternally free.

Notice that the authority to judge is given because Jesus is the Son of Man, not because He is the Son of God. It is in His humanity that Jesus becomes our substitute on the cross. The judgment of condemnation is executed on all who fail to believe in His sacrifice because their penalty has not been paid.

And yet there remains a physical resurrection - the resurrection which is to come - in which ALL will hear His voice and be raised. Those who are in Christ will be raised with glorified bodies; "raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:52). Those who are not in Christ will be raised for the purpose of final judgment; "anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15). Let's be certain we have heard the voice of the Giver of resurrected eternal life.

Have A Great Day!

## John 5:30-35 - Lesson #56

While speaking with the Jewish leaders, Jesus made it clear He was on an equal level with God; "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself" (John 5:26). And yet, Jesus consistently submitted Himself to the authority of the Father.

### John 5:30-35

"I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light."

Jesus, "who being in the form of God" (Philippians 2:6), sought only the will of the Father. He would later speak about unity; "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30), but here His focus is on dependence. Jesus never acts alone. His judgment is righteous because it is perfectly aligned with the judgment of the Father.

Jesus made some bold claims and then built a case for why His claims should be believed. First, He acknowledged the Jewish law that self testimony is not valid; "by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established" (Deuteronomy 19:15). The words and claims of Jesus were true, but they could not be considered as sufficient testimony of truth. Other forms of testimony were required.

When Jesus said, "there is another..." He was referring to the Father. It is not His will nor His testimony, but the will and testimony of the Father which Jesus holds as true. However, He immediately transitioned to the popular testimony of John the Baptist. This was a witness which the Jewish leaders could not ignore.

John the Baptist preached a message of repentance to prepare people for the message of Jesus: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness; Make straight the way of the Lord" (John 1:23). He described Jesus as, "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) and with great clarity as, "the Son of God" (John 1:34). The Jewish leaders had received the testimony of John and even rejoiced in his message for a short time. But when the full extent of his testimony was revealed in the message and life of Jesus, they were not willing to believe.

Jesus Christ came with a message of hope and truth; "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). He used many methods to teach His truth. In the case with these Jewish leaders, Jesus appealed to their sense of legal truth through the testimony of multiple witnesses. But no matter what the method, the message was always the same - Jesus Christ came so that you may be saved.

Have A Great Day!

## John 5:36-40 - Lesson #57

Jesus built a defense for His position along side God the Father because He was concerned for the eternal soul of His listeners; "I say these things that you may be saved" (John 5:34). As He talked to the Jewish leaders, He appealed to their sense of legal proof in the testimony of multiply witnesses. Jesus pointed to the testimony of John the Baptist, "this is the Son of God" (John 1:34), and then supplied additional evidence.

John 5:36-40

"But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish - the very works that I do - bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."

Jesus identified His many miracles as the works which testified of Him. Each miracle Jesus performed was for the purpose of giving glory to God and pointing to Himself as God's "only begotten Son" (John 3:16). Peter would use this same appeal when speaking to those gathered on the Day of Pentecost: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst" (Acts 2:22).

Miracles were never the focus of His ministry, but Jesus knew His works were an important part of who He was. When John the Baptist sent disciples to Jesus to confirm He was "the Coming One" (Matthew 11:3), Jesus responded by saying: "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:4-5). Likewise, our actions (or lack of actions) become a testimony of what we really believe; "those who believe in God should be careful to maintain good works" (Titus 3:8).

The final witness Jesus called in His defense was the very Word of God which the Jewish leaders held so dear. But in calling this witness, Jesus also made some biting accusations. God had given the written Word as a record of His mighty Hand working through all history, as well as His plan for the restoration of a relationship broken by sin. The Jewish leaders loved the Word and studied with great diligence, but they failed to see the true message; "they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge" (Romans 10:2).

All Scripture points to Jesus; "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27). Let's make sure that in our study of great truths we don't miss the greatest truth of all. God's plan, as testified to by multiple witnesses, is that Jesus Christ - the Son of God - came to set us free from sin and bring us back to the arms of a loving Father for all eternity.

Have A Great Day!

## John 5:41-47 - Lesson #58

In building His case for being equal with God, Jesus called upon the testimonies of God the Father, John the Baptist, His own miracles, and, as final evidence, the testimony of the Word of God; "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39). Jesus concluded with a pointed attack against "the Jews {who} sought all the more to kill Him" (John 5:18).

John 5:41-47

"I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you - Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

Jesus could see directly into the heart of His accusers; "He knew what was in man" (John 2:25), and He knew that although they had the Scriptures they did not have the true love of God. Through various testimonies, Jesus showed He was sent from the Father, and yet He was not received. But there were several others during the time of Christ - and more during the following century - who would claim to be the Anointed One and were received with open arms. These self appointed messiahs promised victory over their Roman oppressors and one by one were proven to be false.

The promised message of a Spiritual victory for all eternity had been sadly missed because those who studied the Scripture did so to build their own standing; "for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43). They had forgotten that the only purpose of Scripture is to reveal God and His wonderful plan of salvation. The message of Jesus was new, but it was also a message which had long been revealed: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17).

The Jews had the writings of Moses; and Jesus made it clear that those very writings were the ones that now accused them; "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead" (Luke 16:31). If they truly believed the writings they had already been given, they would also believe the One sent in fulfillment of those writings.

We are all held accountable to the truth we receive. Jesus will never accuse us before the Father. But if we fail to believe the now complete Scripture - which we have all been blessed to hold in our hands - we already stand accused. The plan of Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ has been clearly revealed. He is the Son of God sent as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin. Now is the time to believe and receive.

Have A Great Day!