



One Hope Community Church Suggested Reading Plan & Guide Book of John: Chapter 18

Spiritual transformation happens when we purposefully spend time with God each day. God created you and is waiting to be known by you.

Always begin in prayer, start the conversation with God by asking Him to use His Holy Spirit to reveal whatever wisdom and insights He wants you to learn. Open your Bible, reflect on what you have read, perhaps take notes. The questions below are designed to help you examine the scriptures for both cultural context and personal application, to engage with the Holy Spirit for relational growth with God and to review with your small group if you are in one. This is your space for your time with God, learning and experiencing spiritual transformation. The plan is laid out for five days of reading and reflecting.

We know small groups meet on various days. You may find it helpful to read all of the verses and begin working through the questions before you meet so that you are ready to discuss them with your small group whenever it meets. The discussion with your small group is meant to help you learn from each other and grow deeper in community.

Song for the week: I Surrender - Hillsong

Song links: <https://youtu.be/mpcQjpatsyA?si=6pp9R0qV2-9YaWV2>

Suggested Reading Plan for John 18 (March 17 - March 23)

(click on underlined verses or use your Bible)

Day 1: John 18:1-11

Day 2: John 18:12-18

Day 3: John 18:19-24

Day 4: John 18:25-27

Day 5: John 18:28-40

Lent

A 7th century European monk made bread consisting of only flour, salt, and water and wound it in the form of arms crossed in prayer and called it *bracellae*, Latin for "little arms." He gave these to his students after they completed their lessons. Germans changed the Latin word to 'bretzel. Later when the church forbade meat, dairy, and eggs during Lent, the *bracellae* became a Lenten symbol. Today we call it a pretzel.

Incense is often used during Lent as it is a symbol of prayer. Psalm 141:2 (click on underlined verses to read them) says, "Let my prayer come like incense before you." Incense was used in worshiping God in the temple (Luke 1:9) and was present in John's vision as he wrote in Revelation 5:8, "Each held bowls filled with incense which are the prayers of the holy ones."

Putting it into practice: Consider trying one of these activities:

Cooking is a way we can create something to give away, blessing others. Consider making pretzels this week ([Homemade Pretzels Without Yeast](#)) and sharing them with friends and neighbors, telling them of the folded in prayer arms and how they relate to Lent.

Light a candle, put on praise music. Worship God and pray to Him. Who is He to you in this moment (Father, Savior, Refuge, Provider, Creator...)? Praise Him for this! Consider using the Lords Prayer ([Matthew 6:9-13](#) / [Luke 11:2-4](#)) as a model to pray.

John 18:1-11

Jesus and His disciples crossed the Kidron (Qidron) Valley. The Greek word Qidron is from qadar which means a dusky place. The water running through the valley was discolored from refuse as it was a kind of common sewer in which Jews cast everything that was unclean ([2 Chronicles 29:16](#)).

The water, full of darkness and filth is much like us, full of sin. Some commentaries mention a connection with Jesus crossing the Kidron Valley to [Psalm 110:7](#) which says, "He will drink from a brook along the way, and so he will lift his head high." It was a foreshadowing of Jesus who was sinless ([1 Peter 2:22](#)), bearing the filth of our sins, for His glory and our salvation ([1 Peter 2:24](#)).

The first sin was in the garden of Eden by the first Adam who met the prince of this world. The consequence of sin was the curse of death and a Redeemer promised. On the way to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus, the last Adam, goes through the refuge and unclean to begin His journey to the cross where He will defeat the prince of this world and restore the relationship which was lost ([1 Corinthians 15:45-49](#)).

One of the amazing things about living in the Garden of Eden was walking and talking with a present God. After Jesus redeems, He sends the Holy Spirit who believers can talk to and is ever present with us. The separation caused by sin has been erased. Considering that God is ever present with you, similar to how He was present with Adam and Eve, how does this affect your noticing of God with you? How does this comfort you and how does it embolden you to do the things He calls you to?

The Kidron Valley is between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. David, who was a type of Christ, crossed the valley as he fled his son Absalom ([2 Samuel 15:13-23](#)). Just as David was a type of Christ, Absalom represented those who rejected the Messiah and rebelled against Him.

With David, he was a father fleeing his son. With Jesus, He is a Son seeking His Father, to do His will. David's people wept as they crossed the valley. That same anguish was felt on the cross but weeping became joy. How does this parallel strengthen your understanding and your faith?

Putting it into practice: As you begin tending your gardens this spring, and as you walk in or by gardens, take a moment to remember the Garden of Gethsemane and what Jesus chose to go through for you. Thank Him and thank the Father for sending Him so that you might be in right relationship with God, having the Holy Spirit with you every moment.

Follow up with your small group or on your own: Watch [Nazareth Village - The Olive Press and Gethsemane](#). How is Jesus a fulfillment of [Isaiah 11:1](#)? Olive oil is pressed down three times. The first is the "first fruit" and offered to God. How is Jesus the first fruit ([1 Corinthians 15:20-23](#)). The second press of oil is for medicine. What did you learn about Jesus as a healer in the book of John? The third press of oil is for oil to light lamps and for soap. How do these relate to what Jesus taught us in John?

John 18:12-18

Jesus went out to the group of soldiers and officials - they did not have to go to him. He asked that His disciples be let go and He healed Malchus's ear after Peter cut it off. He did not appear to be a threat and yet they bound Him.

What might the disciples have been thinking when Jesus healed Malchus' ear? What might the soldiers and officials thought when Jesus acted with mercy not defense? Why do you think they still bound Him?

Caiaphas was the Jewish high priest in the Jerusalem temple and president of the Sanhedrin. Only Aaron's descendants, called Levites, could be a high priest. It is unknown if Caiaphas was a Levite as he was appointed by the Roman governors and the Jewish people were living under Roman rule. In [John 11:45-53](#), Caiaphas said it was better for one man to die than for all of them to die. He was concerned with Roman rule, whom he answered to, and wanted to silence Jesus. Ironically, God was using him to prophecy the truth: Jesus would die (and rise again) for both Jews and Gentiles, freeing those who believe in Him from eternal death.

Annas had been the high priest but was removed by the Romans. Five of his sons were then high priests, followed by his son in law, Caiaphas. Why do you think the first place that the soldiers and officials brought Jesus was to Annas? How do we know that this beginning was not a fair trial?

Being that Jesus was brought to the high priest first, the questioning began in the name of religion. Perhaps the people did not know they were hypocrites; perhaps they really thought they were doing the right thing that God had called them to. What could they have been telling themselves was the right reason that God would want them to find Jesus guilty?

While women in the Old Testament participated in all of life except for the Temple priesthood, the women of Jesus' time "were separated from men in private, public and religious life ([The Role of Women in the Bible by Jews for Jesus](#))." Peter was questioned first by a servant girl.

How does culture play into how Peter may have felt with this first lie? How does today's culture tempt you to hide your love of Jesus?

Putting it into practice: Peter was defending Jesus when he cut off Malchus's ear. What person or topic makes you feel so defensive that you want to fight? Jesus' response was kindness and healing to Malchus, even though he was arresting Jesus. Spend some time asking God to soften your heart, thoughts and actions, not to become soft to a right cause, but to become kind to those "on the other side" of what you defend. Read [Proverbs 15:1](#) and consider writing it down someplace you will see it often and perhaps memorizing it.

Follow up with your small group or on your own: When in your lifetime can you remember someone or some group doing something, believing it was what God called them to, but it was not? How could this someone or group have known it was not of God?

John 18:19-24

Jesus was first brought to Annas. Annas still had power even though he had not been a high priest for a long while. "According to tradition the palace of Annas was located in the upper city near the palace of Caiaphas and Herod's palace ([bible-history.com](#))."

There was a fear that Jesus' teachings or Jesus Himself would cause a revolt against Roman rule, affecting the high priest put there by the Romans as well as the people under Roman rule. When questioned, Jesus said He spoke openly with nothing in secret. As they were asking Jesus to testify, Jesus suggested they find their answers by asking those who had heard Him.

Adam and Even walked and talked with God. The disciples and others walked and talked with Jesus. As believers in Jesus, you can walk and talk with God as you have the Holy Spirit with you. The Bible is full of God's teachings and what Jesus said. By reading through the book of John, what questions have been answered for you? What do you want to commit to memory from the Bible so that you will have an answer when someone asks you to testify for Jesus?

Those questioning Jesus did not ask Him about his miracles. Why did Jesus do miracles (see [John 10:37-38](#))? How do His miracles prove His testimony?

Putting it into practice: Often we read quickly over hard parts and do not picture what is happening, what people would have seen, heard or felt. Read [John 18:21-23](#) again. Jesus was hit in the face. It might have left a red welt on His face. It might have stung His eyes and brought tears to them. How does this make you feel? Take a moment and talk with Him about this. It was the beginning of the pain He would endure to pay the price for your sin. Thank Him for what He did for you.

Follow up with your small group or on your own: Annas still had power long after his term of high priest was up. His voice continued to live on in his sons and son in law. He was to be for the Jewish people, head of their nation, yet he answered to Rome, not to God. Where do we see this same kind of power in our society? Read [Proverbs 21:1 in the NIV](#) and - [Proverbs 21:1 in the RSV](#). What can God do? Knowing God can do this, take time to pray for the leaders of our church, our communities, our state and our country. Whether you agree with them or not, ask God to direct their steps, turn their hearts to His will. Do not take time to debate as a group, we all have different positions. This is a time to be unified in prayer for God's will to be done, not for our agendas to be met.

John 18:25-27

Peter was warming himself nearby where Jesus was being questioned. While others fled, Peter and one other disciple stayed near.

Previously, when the people tried to throw Jesus off a cliff to kill him, Jesus walked away ([Luke 4:28-30](#)). Yet when John the Baptist was arrested, he was beheaded ([Matthew 14:1-12](#)).

This time Jesus was not just pursued to a cliff, He was arrested. How might Peter have been thinking and feeling?

Peter either followed Jesus from Annas's home to Caiaphas' home, or their homes were so near in the court that Peter did not need to follow (some scholars think that they may have been in the same residence). Either way, Peter chose to remain as close as he could to Jesus while he sought earthly comfort from the fire.

It can be easy to focus on Peter denying knowing Jesus. But pause for a moment. When the soldiers came, who wanted to fight to protect Jesus? When the others fled, who was still near Jesus? If you stop the story here, how would you describe Peter? How might he have felt if he saw Jesus slapped?

We also seek earthly comforts, like warmth from a fire. There is no wrong in that but where should you seek for our heart's comforts (read 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)? What can you learn from Peter up to this point?

Peter was there in the court to be near Jesus, so close, not fleeing, yet for some reason he denied being a disciple of Jesus a second time. The third time the question changed to "Didn't I see you?... (John 18:26).” This man saw Peter cut off his relative's ear. That was dramatic so he certainly remembers! Yet Peter denies again. Jesus looked at Peter when Peter denied Him. (Luke 22:61)

What might Peter have been feeling or thinking that led him to deny knowing Jesus? Jesus looked at Peter and Peter remembered what Jesus had said. How might he have felt when Jesus looked at him? Based on who we know Jesus to be from studying Him in the book of John, what do you think Peter saw in Jesus' look?

Putting it into practice: Have you ever felt betrayed by a friend, small group or the church? If you still have unresolved feelings or bitterness, talk with God about it, ask the Holy Spirit to help you process and forgive, just as Jesus forgave those who betrayed Him (Colossians 3:13). Remember that forgiveness sometimes is a process and takes time, the Holy Spirit will guide you through this process as you invite Him to. Consider having the difficult conversations to reconcile if it is safe to do so.

If you have ever denied God, at work, around friends, in certain situations where it seems like you will be judged for your belief, talk with Him about it. Your thoughts, feelings and actions are not a surprise to Jesus. Just as Jesus saw Peter, He sees us (Hebrews 4:13). When we confess, He is faithful to forgive us (1 John 1:9). After you have talked with God, accept His forgiveness and thank Him for it. Remember He is compassionate, gracious, loving and faithful (Psalms 86:15).

Follow up with your small group or on your own: Consider the times and places where you may be tempted to either deny being a Christ follower or where you may choose to hide it. What is happening in these times and places that causes that temptation? Read Matthew 5:16, Joshua 1:9 and Jeremiah 17:7. What do they tell you? How can they help you when you are tempted to hide your belief in Jesus?

John 18:28-40

The Passover Festival was mentioned in John 13:1. Passover is both a day and a festival. Jesus and His disciples had participated in the Passover meal the night before; Jews were still celebrating the Passover Festival as it lasted 7 days (Numbers 28:16-17). The Jewish people had already purified themselves for Passover. Entering the palace, a heathen home, could defile the Jews, making it so that they could not participate in the Festival. Killing an innocent man would also defile them, make them unclean. So they took Jesus to the Roman governor to have Jesus' blood on Pilate and Rome.

The Jewish leaders had created many additional laws to help them be clean. What ironies do you find in the things that they are avoiding to remain clean? We sometimes do the same thing, creating additional rules for things we encounter in our culture that God never asked of us. Additionally, sometimes the scandal of an act concerns us more than the sin. What are some examples of either additional rules or scandal that have us focusing more on the rules or scandal than on the sin itself? We are also in need of purification. How are we made clean?

Pilate said “Take Him yourselves and judge Him by your own law (John 18:31).” If the Jewish leaders had judged Jesus by their law, He would have been stoned, not crucified. However, they said they had no right to execute Jesus, handing Him over to the Gentiles fulfilled Jesus' prophecy in Luke 18:31-33.

Pilate questioned Jesus, who answered the same as He has throughout John. Why did Jesus come into the world?

Putting it into practice: Pilate asked “What is truth?” How did Jesus answer that earlier in John? What choices are you making with your actions and words to reflect God's truth? Where you are stumbling, ask the Holy Spirit to help you align your life with His ways.

Follow up with your small group or on your own: A common thought today is expressed by author Steven Law, “According to the relativist, people who speak simply of what's ‘true’ are naïve. ‘Whose truth?’ asks the relativist. ‘No claim is ever true, period. What's true is always true for someone. It's true relative to a particular person or culture. There's no such thing as the absolute truth on any issue.” This is part of the culture we live in which sounds like Pilate's question. If asked to defend Jesus' words on truth, what would you say? What happens in a culture when there is no absolute truth? How would you define God's truth?

Consider:

We have a King of our lives who wants to lead and guide us. What can you surrender and invite Jesus to lead for you today? Can you surrender again tomorrow? We were not created to do any part of life on our own. Jesus is King - is He your King? Surrender takes practice. It is a daily giving over control, trust and inviting your Creator to show you His Majesty! - Shannon Swift

The truth is, we live in a world full of hurt and pain. Jesus Himself told us that it would be that way. But He also told us that He would be with us, He would be in us...think of a time when you were struggling or hurt...try and see Jesus in that moment. Once you have captured that feeling, I want to encourage each of you to spend at least 10 minutes every day this week with the closeness that you had with Jesus in that moment. When we begin to recognize those times when Jesus has been close to us in the past, it helps us feel Him during all those other times we need Him in the future. - Frank Vandy

Putting it into practice: Set an alarm for 2:42pm. When your alarm goes off, pray something like this: Jesus, thank you for being my King who I can trust to follow. Please help me to see your leading and guiding today. Help me to give up the things that distract me from you. Thank you for always being with me, in every struggle, never leaving me alone. Amen