

John: The Story of Christmas Restores Our Relationship

Opener: Describe a relationship you enjoy. What makes it good?

Scripture: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:1-14

Discussion Questions

1. It's generally believed that the Apostle John wrote this gospel—and what a gospel it is! Right out of the gate he clearly states that Jesus is the Word and the Creator, and in Him is life that is the light of all mankind. Then he says that even though Jesus created the world, the world didn't recognize Him, and "his own" didn't receive Him. Who is He referring to as His own? John 1:1-11
2. Key verbs in John 1:12 explain how we can have a relationship with Jesus: Believe + Receive = Become. How does that reveal what it takes to go beyond mental assent to Jesus' deity and enter into an ongoing relationship with Him?
3. What's the difference between believing in a "higher power" and having a relationship with Jesus?
4. How is a relationship with another person similar to, and different from, a relationship with Jesus?
5. How do our expectations of what God should do poison our relationship with Him? Could that be why "His own" didn't receive Him? What else can rob us of a genuine relationship with God?
6. John 1:14 takes us into the heart of the Christmas story as it reminds us that the Word, God's Son, became flesh and lived on earth. How did relationships He had with his disciples, friends, family and adversaries demonstrate what a relationship with God could be like?
7. What's the difference between joining a church and having a relationship with Jesus?

Wrap Up: What do the atheist and devout believer have in common? They both need Jesus. The shocking truth of the Gospel is that those who accept Jesus get the same approval and love God the Father gives His Son. But the decision to believe in and receive Him is ours. He won't try to manipulate us into choosing Him, and whether we choose Him or not, He always loves us.