



LESSON 11 ~ A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

John 11

DISCUSSION STARTER

- What is the sickest you have ever been? Have you ever been afraid that you were going to die?

INTRODUCTION

The incident that John records in Chapter 11, is Jesus' greatest miracle or sign and it becomes the turning point in the life and ministry of Jesus. Each of the seven signs in the Gospel illustrate some specific aspect of Jesus' divine authority, but this one shows his power over the last and most potent enemy of humans – death. This miracle not only demonstrated Jesus' power, it also led to the decision of Jesus' enemies to

deliberately plot his murder. Jesus had pushed the limit of the religious leaders' patience and this was the "straw that broke the camel's back." When Jesus raised the one whom he loved from the dead, he sealed his own death – and he did it knowingly. What love! What he did for Lazarus, he did for each of us when he died in our place on the cross only to rise again so that we, too, might experience resurrection life!

PREPARATION

1. Before you read **John 11**, ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you into all truth (John 16:13). You may want to make the following prayer your own:

Spirit of the Living God, the One who comforts, strengthens and encourages me.

I admit that I cannot understand the truth found in God's Word with only my mind.

I agree that spiritual truth has to be understood with my heart as well as my head.

So I ask You to give me spiritual understanding as I do this lesson.

*I pray that You would enable me to see, hear and understand,
with my spirit, all that You want to teach me.*

I ask this in the powerful Name of Jesus (as if Jesus were asking it).

Amen

2. Read **John 11** slowly and thoughtfully in your own Bible. As you read and reread, **underline or highlight** any verses, phrases or words that are meaningful to you. Put a **question mark** beside anything you don't understand. Put a ✓ beside anything you would like more information about.

You may also want to read this chapter in another translation. The Scripture handouts for these lessons contain the *Amplified Version* of the Bible. It is important, however, that you don't try to answer the questions in the lesson from just the *Amplified Version*. The questions are phrased to be answered from the *New International Version (NIV)*, the *New Living Translation (NLT)*, or something similar. Using **only** the *Amplified Version* may be confusing. It is given only as a supplementary text.

3. Write one question that you have about this chapter that you would like answered as you do this lesson.

QUESTIONS

Read **John 11:1-6**.

1. What kind of relationship did Jesus have with Mary, Martha and Lazarus (**11:1-3**)? What does this reveal about Jesus?
 - ♥ What similarities do you see between the opening of this story and the blind man's story in **John 9:1-5**?
 - ♥ Why do you think John stresses Jesus' love for this family in this story?
2. The sisters saw the situation with their brother as a desperate emergency. How did Jesus view it (**11:4**)?
 - ♥ In what ways, if any, can God be glorified through sickness? Through death?
 - ♥ What difficulty or hard time are you currently experiencing? Could you tell God that you are willing to patiently continue in this trial if it brought glory to God and grew your faith? Why or why not?
3. Do you see Jesus' two day delay (**11:5-6**) as a contradiction to his love for Mary, Martha and Lazarus? Why or why not? What can you learn from this?
 - ♥ When have you felt that God was late in responding to your needs?
 - ♥ What does **11:5-6** imply about the way Jesus scheduled his work? What can you learn from his example (**John 8:28-29**)?

Read **John 11:7-16**.

4. Why wasn't Jesus afraid to return to Judea (**11:7-10**)?
 - ♥ Jesus mentions a *proverb* or *wise saying* in **11:9-10**. What do you think the "day" represents? The "night"? What was Jesus trying to communicate to his disciples?
 - ♥ If you are being obedient by doing God's will in your life, do you think God will protect you from danger and harm? Why or why not? Does **Mark 8:34-35** change your answer at all? How so?
5. Why do you think Jesus used sleep as a figure of speech to mean death in **11:11**? What did he want his disciples to understand?
 - ♥ How will Lazarus' death help the disciples (**11:15**)? Do you think helping others believe in Jesus was worth Lazarus' death? Why or why not?
 - ♥ The disciple Thomas is usually known for his *doubt* (**John 20:24-25**), but in this story he shows his *devotion* and *courage* (**11:16**). If you had to choose between your personal safety and comfort and obeying and following Jesus, which one would you most likely choose? Why?

Read **John 11:17-27**.

6. How were Martha's words of greeting to Jesus an expression of both her disappointment and her faith (11:21-22)? Do you think Jesus was offended?

♥ Would you feel comfortable talking to God this way? Why or why not?

7. What does Jesus mean when he says, *I am the resurrection* (11:25-26)? *I am the life*?

What difference does this make in your life? In your death?

♥ Why do you think John mentions the detail that Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days?

♥ Did Martha give a good answer to Jesus' question (11:26-27)? How would you answer Jesus' question?

♥ On a **scale of 1 to 10**, how confident are you that you will live even though you will physically die (11:25) and that you will never die or perish (11:26)?

Read John **11:28-37**.

8. How is Mary's greeting of Jesus (11:32-33) like, yet unlike, Martha's (11:20-22)? What does this say about each woman's relationship with Jesus?

♥ Which woman, Mary or Martha, best reflects your relationship with Jesus? How so?

9. Since Jesus knew he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead (11:11), why do you think he wept (11:35)? (*Wept* can be literally translated, *burst into tears*.)

♥ How does Jesus' reaction in 11:33 shape your view of Him?

♥ Do you think Jesus is the same today as he was in this story? Does he still cry with you when you grieve or suffer? How would you know?

10. Jesus' reaction in 11:33 and 38 is not so much grief, but anger. What, in this situation, do you think could be the cause of Jesus' anger and indignation?

Read **John 11:38-44**.

11. What two different attitudes did Martha reveal in **11:22** and **39**. What do these statements disclose about her faith? Can you relate? How so?

♥ What connection do you see between *believing* and *seeing the glory of God* (11:40)?

12. What are some things you can learn about prayer from Jesus' example of prayer in **11:41-42**?

♥ What might have happened if Jesus had shouted, "Come out!" instead of "Lazarus, come out?"

♥ In what ways has God raised you from the dead? What are some old "grave clothes" that must be shed for you to feel truly free in Christ?

♥ What miracle do you need to believe God for in your life right now? How will prayer play a part?

Read **John 11:45-57**.

13. What price did Jesus pay when he worked this wonderful miracle so that others would believe (**11:53**)?

♥ How much are you willing to risk so that others might believe in Jesus and receive eternal life?

14. Why do you think people had such opposite reactions to the same event (**11:45-46**)? What are some reasons why people believe and reject Jesus today?

15. What are the chief concerns of the religious leaders (**11:48**)? How do they misunderstand the role of Jesus the Messiah (**11:51-52**)?

♥ Have you ever challenged "company policy" or the *status quo*? What happened? Why?

♥ How have you tried to keep Jesus in line with your religious traditions? Can you trust him now?

response

John 20:31 - But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. What words, events or dialogue in **John 11** would you point to in order to show someone that if they believe in Jesus, they will never die.

Encounter with Jesus

Take a few moments to be still and quiet in the presence of Jesus. Picture yourself with Jesus in a safe and comfortable place. Ask Jesus if he grieves when you grieve and cries with you when you cry? What do you see Jesus doing? What do you hear him saying? How does he want to comfort you in your sorrow?