



LESSON 6 ~ BREAD FROM HEAVEN

John 6

DISCUSSION STARTER

- What is the most interesting, unusual or beautiful picnic you have ever had?

INTRODUCTION

Imagine life without bread! Some kind of bread has been the staple of life and the ultimate comfort food in most every culture since history began. It is a well accepted truism that humans need bread to live. We are reminded of this every time we pray the Lord's Prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread."

Jesus uses the universal symbol of bread to communicate how vitally important to us is the life he gives. In John 6, Jesus speaks of himself

and the "true bread" that came down from heaven and "gives life to the world." As the *Bread of Life*, Christ pictured himself as the one on whom spiritual life depends. "I tell you the truth," Jesus said, "he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life . . . If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever."

Chapter 6 is the longest chapter in the Gospel of John. We will cover **6:1-40** in this lesson.

PREPARATION

1. Before you read **John 6**, 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 6** 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 6:1-15**.

1. Why did the crowds follow Jesus instead of going to Jerusalem for Passover (**6:2**)?
 - ♥ Would you have been in this crowd? Why or why not?
 - ♥ For what reasons do people follow Jesus today? What makes *you* want to follow Jesus?
2. What are some things we learn about Jesus as a person in **6:5-6**?

- ♥ Is he the same today? What does this mean for you?
3. In what way was Jesus' question to Philip a test (**6:5-6**)?

What "grade" would you give Philip on his test (**6:7**)? Why?

- ♥ How do you usually respond to an "impossible" situation in your life that doesn't seem to have a solution? Stoically? Fear/Anxiety? Nonchalance? Avoidance? Realistically? Doubt? Trust/Faith?
4. Did Andrew show any greater faith and understanding than Philip (**6:8-9**)? Why or why not?
 - ♥ Jesus was using this experience to teach his disciples. If any of the disciples had been strong and mature in their faith at this time, how would they have answered Jesus' question, "Were shall we buy bread for these people to eat?"
 - ♥ When did God last test your faith? (The opposite of *faith* is *doubt*.) Do you feel like you "passed" the test? What did you learn from the experience?
 5. Jesus' actions in **6:11** serve as a model of what to do in impossible situations where we feel inadequate to meet the needs and demands that are put upon us. Following Jesus' example, what can *we do* and what can we expect *God to do* in these situations?
 - ♥ How much food did each person get (**5:11-12**)? What does this say about Jesus' provision for our needs?
 - ♥ When has God stretched your limited resources (physically or emotionally) far beyond what you could have imagined? In what way do you need to trust him to do so now?

6. A *sign* points to something or reveals some truth. What do you think are some reasons why Jesus performed this miraculous sign of *feeding the five thousand*?

- ♥ What can we learn from Jesus withdrawing from the place of success to be by himself (6:15)?
- ♥ When might be a good time for you to withdraw from people?
- ♥ What are some spiritual benefits of being alone?

Read **John 6:16-24**.

7. What are some specific truths Jesus wants us to know and understand about him from the miracle of the storm on the lake and Jesus walking on the water?

- ♥ What do you sometimes forget about Jesus that could help you in a tough situation if only you remembered?

Both the miraculous signs of *feeding the five thousand* and *Jesus walking on the water*, happened close to the festival of Passover. Passover was the celebration of the Hebrew people being freed from Egyptian slavery by their prophet and savior, Moses. Among Moses' many miracles, two were especially remembered and commemorated: 1) The parting of and taking people through the Red Sea, and 2) the miraculous feeding of the people with manna for forty years in the desert. Both these miracles had become powerful symbols of God caring for his people by rescuing and sustaining them.

- ♥ With that background, what was Jesus communicating about himself to his disciples and the Jewish people when he performed these two miracles around the time of Passover?

Read **John 6:25-40**.

8. Food is necessary for life. What are some differences between *physical* food and *spiritual* food (6:26-27)?

- ♥ Where does one get spiritual food (6:27)? Is there any other way to get it?
- ♥ Do you look for Jesus because of who he is or because of what he does?
- ♥ Which receives the most attention and effort in your life – spiritual success or material success? Which one will last forever?

9. What is the "work" of God – the thing God is most interested in you doing (6:29)?

How do you do this work?

- ♥ Does belief seem like work to you (6:29)? Why or why not? How hard do you work at believing?

- ♥ Considering that Jesus had just fed five thousand people from five small loaves and two small fish, the question the crowd asked in **6:30** almost makes us laugh! Yet, what are some ways we often do the very same thing in our relationship with God?
10. The Jews considered *manna* to be bread from heaven. How did Jesus define *bread from heaven* (**6:32-35**)?

- ♥ Consider Jesus' words in **6:35-40** about the *bread of life*. How do we eat this bread? Is this something we only do once?
 - ♥ How would you describe your daily spiritual diet? Junk food? Frozen food? Baby food? Microwave dinners? Leftovers? Meat and potatoes? Bread and wine?
11. What promises does Jesus make to the one who comes to him and believes on him?

Verse	Promise
6:37 -	
6:39 -	
6:39 -	
6:40 -	

- ♥ What are some words that describe how these promises make you feel?
- ♥ According to **6:35-40**, how sure can a person be of what will happen to them after physical death?
- ♥ What kind of changes would you see in your life if you lived wholeheartedly the way Jesus did (**6:38**)?

Response

We sometimes think that we, at some point in our life and for some reason, decide to "check Jesus out" and then we decide to come to him and believe in him. According to **John 6:44**, however, this is not the case. Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him . . ." We come to Jesus because God the Father has drawn us with loving-kindness (**Jeremiah 31:3**). We never come to Jesus by our own initiative. As God draws us, our part is only to say yes or no.

Spend some time reflecting on the events and circumstances of your life. How do you see that God the Father has drawn you to himself? What people did he use? What circumstances? What situations? How did he work in your heart? *Spend some time thanking your heavenly Father for the way he has drawn you to him with great loving-kindness. How can you best express your gratitude?*

Encounter with Jesus

What physical, emotional or spiritual need do you have in your life right now? From what you see in **John 6:1-21**, does Jesus want to fulfill your need? Is he able to fulfill it? Does he need anything from you in order to give you what you need? What is your faith level for Jesus meeting this need? (Faith is *choosing* to believe God's promises to us regardless of our feelings or circumstances).

Take a few moments to be still and quiet in the presence of Jesus. Hear Jesus call you by name and ask you, "**What do you need?**" *On the back of this page, tell him what is on your heart as you answer his question.*

Do you hear Jesus saying anything back? What thoughts came to mind? Do you see him doing anything? Are you reminded of any Scripture? Write down any words or impressions that come to you. Spend some time with Jesus, listening and then thanking him for what he has shown you.