



I KNOW A GUY



This book belongs to:

Contact:

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I Know A Guy

Jesus is undoubtedly famous. You are likely familiar with some of his teachings, his story and his impact. However, the more you get to know him, the more you realize—there's so much more to know! As a church, we want to spend five weeks not only deepening our knowledge of Jesus but also strengthening our relationship with him. We believe that as we do that, it will open us up to him and to more life-changing friendships with one another.



We hope you'll join us weekly for worship. We've given you space to take notes from each Sunday gathering during this series.



We want you to lean into the habit of meeting with a group of people to share for these five weeks.



We also want you to know Jesus more by spending regular time with him each day.

“Beyond all we can find to say about Jesus and believe about him, he remains always beyond our grasp, except maybe once in a while the hem of his garment. We should never forget that. We can love him, we can learn from him, but **we can come to know him only by following him**—by searching for him in his church, in his Gospels, in each other.”

Frederick Buechner

Group Leaders

Check your email for detailed notes and agenda. If you have questions, email DerekV@wschurch.org.



Want to receive a weekly guide for digging into Sunday's message—either on your own or with others? Our team puts together a simple sermon discussion guide with questions and prompts to reflect and practically apply the teaching. Sign up to receive the guide using the form at wschurch.org/discussionsubscribe.

Small Group Values

Relationships:

While prayer and discussion are important elements of any group, the driving force behind the group is the building of relationships in community.

Authenticity:

The atmosphere of a group encourages openness and transparency among members.

Confidentiality:

For authenticity to occur, members must be able to trust that issues discussed with the group will be treated with care and sensitivity.

Respect:

Group members will avoid saying anything that embarrasses another member of the group.

Priorities:

Group members will make group meetings, weekly worship and daily time with God a priority to be able to participate in conversation.

Schedule & Commitment

The group will meet on the dates and times below:

Week 1 - Date: _____ **Time:** _____ - _____

Week 2 - Date: _____ **Time:** _____ - _____

Week 3 - Date: _____ **Time:** _____ - _____

Week 4 - Date: _____ **Time:** _____ - _____

Week 5 - Date: _____ **Time:** _____ - _____

Covenant

I commit to prioritize being present and engaging with each session. If I cannot attend, I will contact the group leader. I commit to the group values.

Signature: _____

Daily Time With Jesus

During this series, we invite you to set aside time each day (five times a week) to be with Jesus through prayer, scripture reading and reflection. We've provided prompts for each day and space for you to write down your notes.

Text Message Devotions



We are creating simple devotions that complement the reading plan in this book. Opt in to receive text message devotions by using this QR Code.

How to Pray & Read the Bible



Need some more help with how to pray and read the Bible? We have a resource for you!



Day 1



Who is Jesus, and why is he so significant to the Christian faith? During this series, we will read from each of the four books of the Bible that tell the story of Jesus (the Gospels). Let's start by reading the opening of the Gospel of John, which refers to Jesus as "the Word."

Read John 1:1-18.

- How is Jesus described in these verses?

- What is unique about Jesus according to John?

- Is there one characteristic of Jesus in this section that resonates with you?



Prayer: Jesus, we want to know you more. Give us life, help us recognize you and receive your new life.

Day 2



Read today's scripture and use your imagination to step into the story. Notice and imagine the details of what you see, what you hear, even what you might smell or taste, and what emotions are present.

Read John 3:1-21.

- What can you know about Jesus from this interaction with Nicodemus?



Prayer: Jesus, we know God sent you to teach us. Show me more of you and the Father today. Give life to us through your Spirit.

Day 3

Pause and be still. Remember that Jesus is with you in this moment.



In the story of Jesus and Nicodemus, Jesus refers to a story about Moses in the Old Testament. Read that story in the book of Numbers, and then read Jesus' words.

Read Numbers 21:4-9 and then John 3:13-17.

- What is Jesus saying about himself as he uses this story?



Prayer: What do you want to say to Jesus in response? Write a short prayer.

Day 4



Nicodemus and Jesus first met and talked in secret. The next place we see Nicodemus in John's gospel is more public, among his peers.

Read John 7:37-53.

- What does Jesus say about himself?
- What do people say about Jesus?
- What do you notice about Nicodemus?



Prayer: Jesus, today I come to you seeking...

Life-Changing Friendships

We are not meant to follow Jesus alone; we are created to be in relationship with God and with others! Throughout this series, consider the health and specifics of some key relationships. These pages allow you to name specific people in your life and describe how you stay connected to them. As we do this, we look to Jesus as our example.

Start by assessing your current relationships and then begin thinking about ways you'd like to grow.

The Trinity: God in Community



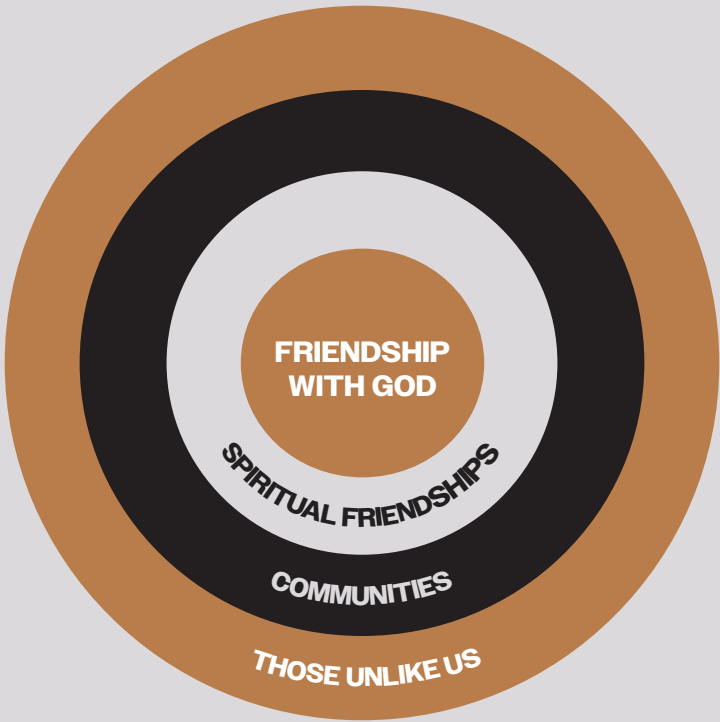
The Trinity shows us God in community—one God in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It's an example of unity and love, and we are invited to follow his example.

“The goal for all of them to become one heart and mind—Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, So they might be one heart and mind with us.”

John 17:21 (Message paraphrase)

“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

2 Corinthians 13:14



- How is God shaping you through each of these communities and individuals?

- How can these communities help you grow in love?

“Jesus was a man with dirty feet.

He spent most of those three years
walking around with people.

He invited folks to become
his intimate followers.

Everywhere he went

great crowds gathered around
to listen to him,

to be with him,

to see what he would do next.

As Jesus led his twelve closest followers
they would walk along the dirt roads together.

They went to parties together.

They ate meals together.

They worked together.

Jesus walked as a human among humans,

Brushed elbows with politicians and outcasts,

went to parties with

sinners and criminals,

and embraced as his own family

those he met on the street.

Jesus floated on no pristine clouds.

Jesus was no aloof elitist.

Jesus was no odd hermit.

He preferred the world of

dirt and friends and handshakes.

He embraced this relational life on earth
more passionately than anyone ever had.”

Don Everts, *Jesus with Dirty Feet*



WEEK 2 | DAILY TIME WITH JESUS



Digging Deeper: Read or listen through the entire book of Matthew this week. Look at the *Digging Deeper* section at the back of this book for additional resources.

Day 1



Jesus was a powerful teacher, and one of his most well-known teachings is in the book of Matthew. It's often called The Sermon on the Mount. Jesus' words in these chapters (Matthew 5-7) describe the way of God—his kingdom—and what it looks like to live within it. This week, we'll spend time taking in the words of Jesus' teaching. The first people who heard it were hungry to hear his words.

Read Matthew 4:23-5:2.

- What can you observe about Jesus in these verses?
- How do people respond to Jesus?
- What emotions and visuals do you imagine in this scene as Jesus gets ready to teach?



Prayer: Jesus, help me be ready to hear your words and to understand your kingdom in new ways.

At that time Jesus prayed this prayer: “O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way!

“My Father has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows the Son except the Father, and no one truly knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”

Then Jesus said, **“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.** Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

Matthew 11:25-30



WEEK 3 | DAILY TIME WITH JESUS



Digging Deeper: Read or listen through the entire book of Mark this week. Look at the *Digging Deeper* section at the back of this book for additional resources.

Day 1



Read today's scripture and use your imagination to step into each scene. Notice and imagine the details of what you see, what you hear, even what you might smell or taste, and what emotions are present.

Read Mark 8:22-9:1.

- What do you notice about Jesus?

- What do you notice about how people interact with Jesus?



Prayer: What do you want to say to Jesus? Write a short prayer.

Day 5



As Jesus and his disciples approach Jerusalem, he tries to tell them what is about to happen to him, but they have a hard time grasping it. We began this week reading about Jesus healing a blind man, and this section ends with Jesus healing another man, Bartimaeus.

Read Mark 10:32-52.

- What is important to Jesus in these verses?
- What is important to the disciples in these verses?
- How do you answer Jesus' question: "What do you want me to do for you?"



Prayer: Jesus, as we follow you, open our eyes. Help us see you more clearly and follow your example of humility, service and self-sacrifice. Help us not be surprised by suffering but instead see it as a place to be with you.



Look over your notes this week and reflect on these prompts before you meet with your group:

- How did Jesus interact with people?
- How did people interact with Jesus?
- How have I interacted with people this week?

Jesus warned his disciples not to tell anyone who he was. “The Son of Man must suffer many terrible things,” he said. “He will be rejected by the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He will be killed, but on the third day he will be raised from the dead.”

Then he said to the crowd, **“If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.** If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but are yourself lost or destroyed?

Luke 9:21-25



WEEK 4 | DAILY TIME WITH JESUS



Digging Deeper: Read or listen through the entire book of Luke this week. Look at the *Digging Deeper* section at the back of this book for additional resources.

Day 1



This week, we will spend time with Jesus in the days leading up to and following his death and resurrection. These days are so significant to our faith, but they are also deeply relational and personal for Jesus and his followers.

Read today's scripture and use your imagination to step into each scene. Notice and imagine the details of what you see, what you hear, even what you might smell or taste, and what emotions are present.

Read Luke 22:1-46.

- What moment or interaction with Jesus stands out to you? Why?
- How would you describe Jesus' attitude and behavior in these scenes?
- Have you ever been crushed by grief?



Prayer: Father, if you are willing, please take my suffering away. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.

Day 3



As you get ready to read today's scripture, take a moment to pause and remember that Jesus is with you. Keep this awareness that he is near as you read the account of his crucifixion.

Read Luke 23:26-56.

- What moment or interaction with Jesus stands out to you? Why?
- What questions do you have for Jesus about these moments of his life on earth?
- What do you notice about how people talk about and treat Jesus?



Prayer: What do you want to say to Jesus today? Write a short prayer.

Day 4



After Jesus was executed on the cross, his disciples, his followers and the crowd were understandably sad and fearful for their own lives. None of them were prepared for what happened next, and it took them a while to grasp it.

Read Luke 24:1-34.

- What do you notice about Jesus as he walks with Cleopas and the other follower?

- Why do you think that they immediately turned around and went back to Jerusalem (verse 33), a place they were just trying to get away from?

- What else stands out to you in these scenes?



Prayer: Jesus, help us believe what you have promised. We don't want to miss what you're doing! Walk with us and help us understand.

“Jesus, a simple carpenter?”

Yahweh Enfleshed!

Long-Awaited Anointed One.

Daily Sustaining Bread.

Friend of the Outcast.

The Intimate Word of God.

The Eternal Healer of Sickness.

Embracer of Lepers.

Sin Destroyer.

Death Conqueror.

Not a man who started a religion.

The ‘I Am.’

The Messiah.

God come to earth to be seen in detail,
to get his feet dirty working in the grit of life,
to change the world forever.”

Don Everts, *Jesus with Dirty Feet*

WEEK 5 | SMALL GROUP SESSION NOTES

What stood out to you from your group discussion? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through listening and sharing with one another? What do you want to explore more?

Group Leaders

Check your email for detailed notes and agenda. If you have questions, email DerekV@wschurch.org.

Day 3



Today we will read about Jesus interacting with a Samaritan woman. It's important to note that Jews and Samaritans did not often share space, and they had different religious beliefs. There are layers of cultural differences and barriers in this conversation.

Read John 4:1-42.

- What do you notice about how Jesus interacts with the Samaritan woman?
- What do you notice about the woman? How does she change as she talks with Jesus?
- What is the impact of this conversation on others?



Prayer: Jesus, I am thirsty for...

Day 5



Read today's scripture and use your imagination to step into each scene. Notice and imagine the details of what you see, what you hear, even what you might smell or taste, and what emotions are present.

Read John 21:1-25.

- What moment or interaction with Jesus stands out to you? Why?



Prayer: Jesus, you invite us again to follow you. Show us one step today that we can take to follow you.



Look over your notes this week and reflect on these prompts before you meet with your group:

- How did Jesus interact with people?
- How did people interact with Jesus?
- How have I interacted with people this week?

Next Steps

Getting Baptized & Following Jesus



If you've been on this journey over the past five weeks and you want to surrender your life to Jesus as your Lord and Savior in baptism, we would love to talk to you about making that decision! Visit wschurch.org/Baptism or scan the QR code to learn more.

Stay Connected

Thanks for leaning in and engaging during this series!

We hope that after experiencing the connection and conversation in your group during this series, you'll want to stay connected to one another. Spiritual friendships take intentionality and work, but they are well worth the effort! If you or your group want to discuss continuing to meet, contact Derek Voorhees at derekv@wschurch.org.



To take a next step, use this QR code or visit wschurch.org/NextSteps to see upcoming opportunities.

Digging Deeper

Want to spend more time in the gospel accounts of Jesus' life and teachings? This section will add some extra background info and point you to additional resources that you can explore.

For Christians, “gospel” is a term that means the “good news” that God’s kingdom has come near to humanity in the person of Jesus, God in the flesh. This gospel is threaded throughout the Bible, yet the four accounts of Jesus (the New Testament books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) inform us about all the amazing realities of Jesus’ life as the God-man, inaugurating God’s kingdom on earth. They also call us to pursue and follow Jesus as Lord and Savior more devotedly, courageously and faithfully.

If you’re willing to dig deeper and read through one or more of the Gospel books, explore the tools in this section to engage before you read.

- You can find an overview of each Gospel on pages 68-71 of this book that highlight some key info and unique features for each Gospel.

- There's a helpful video teaching series on RightNow Media from Ozark Christian College called "Introduction to the Gospels." This 5-session series gives an overview of the Gospels and a video for each one:



- The Bible Project ([bibleproject.com](https://www.bibleproject.com)) has many helpful video resources as you read the Bible. To watch one that gives an overview of how to read the Gospels, go here:



To view videos on RightNow Media, sign up for a **FREE** account through West Side. Visit wschurch.org/RNM or scan the QR code to create an account.

If you have an account, but can't login, reset your password.

TIPS AS YOU READ THE GOSPELS

- Remember these accounts were originally written to real Christian communities in the first century under occupied Roman rule. The Gospels empowered these Jesus followers. Yes, what they contain is true for followers today, but bear in mind that these accounts and words meant something to *them* before they can mean something to *us* today. This should guide you to read and interpret each author's account as they intended.
- Each of these Spirit-inspired authors writes about Jesus through a set of lenses that are unique from the other three. They were never intended to be duplicates of one another but to offer timeless perspectives on the same Jesus from particular viewpoints. Pay attention to what is both harmonious between them and unique to each one.
- Remember what the Gospels are NOT:
 - + They are not neutral biographies. They unapologetically proclaim a message about Jesus.
 - + They are not new beginnings. They describe God's plan realized in Jesus, who fulfills Old Testament themes.
 - + They are not merely informative. They clearly instruct us in the way of Jesus. They are discipleship manuals.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Written: 60-65AD

A Jew employed by Rome to collect taxes (9:9; 10:3)

Worked in Galilee, where he met Jesus

An eyewitness to many of Jesus' teachings and miracles

Jesus is...

- the promised Messiah for all people
- the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham to be a blessing to all nations
- the regal and eternal heir of King David
- a new teacher of God's covenant law (fulfilling the Torah)

Be Sure to Notice

- Each of the 5 major teachings of Jesus (Chapters 5-7, 10, 13, 18, 23-25) conclude with "*When Jesus had finished saying these things...*"
- "*Emmanuel... God who is with us*" (1:18) is echoed in Jesus' concluding commission: "*make disciples of all nations...I will be with you*" (28:19-20).

Unique to Matthew

- Begins with a Jewish genealogy, moving from Abraham through King David concluding with Joseph
- A birth narrative that includes the wisemen and an emphasis on Jesus as "Emmanuel"
- Special emphasis on Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament scriptures and history
- Sermon on the Mount (Ch. 5-7)
- Peter walking on water to Jesus (Ch. 14)
- The Parable of the Wheat and Weeds (Ch. 13)
- The Parable of the Hidden Treasure (Ch. 13)
- The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Ch. 18)
- The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (Ch. 20)
- The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Ch. 25)

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Written: 55-65AD

Son of a Jewish-Christian family in Jerusalem (Acts 12; 1 Peter 5:12-13)

Involved with the Church from the start

Cousin of Barnabas (Col 4:10)

Traveled briefly with Paul, spreading the gospel (Acts 12:25; 15:37, 39)

Jesus is...

- the authoritative Son of God
- accessible, expressed in personal ways and confrontational ways
- The Suffering Servant

Be Sure to Notice

A thematic pivot occurs in 8:29, when Peter confesses, “*You are the Christ.*” That pivot climaxes at 10:45, when Jesus says, “*the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many.*”

Unique to Mark

- Written with non-Jewish readers in mind (Mark explains the Jewish customs he includes.)
- Shows Jesus as “always on the move,” more focused on Jesus’ works and deeds than his words and teachings
- Leaves out material other Gospels include (Jesus’ birth, Old Testament prophecies, etc.)
- Likely basing his Gospel on the teachings and testimony of Peter
- Jesus brings the power of his Kingdom upon forces of this world (reinforced by 15 miracle stories)
- Likely used by Matthew and Luke as a source

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Written: 60AD

Values accuracy, relying on eyewitness testimony and careful investigation (1:1-4)

Traveling companion of the apostle Paul

A physician (Col. 4:14), using medical language throughout the book

The only non-Jewish author in the New Testament

Jesus is...

- an accessible Savior to all
- a Savior who suffers for all

Be Sure to Notice

- Luke emphasizes that all people have a place in Jesus' plan, paying special attention to women, the poor, sinners, social outcasts and Romans.
- This Gospel is the first part of a two-volume work. The book of Luke (part 1) focuses on Jesus' *bringing* the good news, and the book of Acts (part 2) focuses on the Holy Spirit *spreading* the good news.

Unique to Luke

- The longest gospel by word count (Luke and Acts total 27.5% of the words in the New Testament.)
- Jesus' birth and childhood narrative, with special attention given to Mary (Ch. 1-2)
- Emphasis on Jesus praying, especially at major junctures of his life and ministry
- 18 unique parables not found in the other gospels
- 10 unique table meals with Jesus
- 2 unique statements to His Father from the cross (Ch. 23)
- Encounter with two followers on the road to Emmaus (Ch. 24)

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Written: 85-90AD

Jewish fisherman by trade

Among the inner circle of Jesus' closest disciples; brother to James, another close disciple of Jesus

Author of 1, 2, 3 John and Revelation

Jesus is...

- Fully God (the Divine Word, one with the Father, before Abraham, etc.) and fully human (weary, thirsty, sad, troubled, burdened, etc.)
- The Son of God, in whom believers have eternal life

Be Sure to Notice

- John introduces themes in his introduction that (1:1-18) play out in the rest of his Gospel (e.g. light, testimony, grace, truth, glory).
- John could be outlined by the two halves introduced in John 1:5:
 - + "The Light shines in the darkness": Chapters 1-11
 - + "and the darkness did not comprehend it": Chapters 12-20
- John could also be outlined by the three parts of his introduction:
 - + Revealing – 1:1-4 (Chapters 1-6)
 - + Rejecting – 1:6-11 (Chapters 7-12)
 - + Receiving – 1:12-18 (Chapters 13-21)

Unique to John

- Especially interested in Jesus' identity, including more titles for Jesus than other Gospels
- Uses the verb *believe* more than any other Gospel; never uses the noun form (i.e. faith, belief)
- Raising Lazarus from the dead (Ch. 11)
- Thomas' doubting (Ch. 20)
- Peter's restoration (Ch. 21)
- Sets of 7 (a number that signifies completion) used to underscore the divinity of Jesus (7 signs, 7 I AM identity statements, etc.)



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