

CHURCH.

LESSON 6

1	PRAYER
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Group leader. Pray for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Commit your group and this lesson about church building to the Lord.

2	SHARING (20 minutes) <i>[QUIET TIMES]</i> 1 CORINTHIANS 2 - 5
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Take turns and **share (or read)** from your notes in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times out of the assigned Bible passages (1 Corinthians 2 - 5).

Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares. Take notes.

3	MEMORISATION (5 minutes) <i>[CHRISTIAN CHARACTER]</i> REVIEW SERIES E
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Review two by two the 5 Bible verses of series E. "Christian character".

(1) Christ likeness: 2 Corinthians 3:18. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

(2) Purity: 1 Peter 2:11. Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.

(3) Love: Mark 12:30-31. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.

(4) Faith: Romans 4:20-21. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

(5) Humility: Philippians 2:3-4. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

4	BIBLE STUDY (85 minutes) <i>[THE GOSPEL OF JOHN]</i> JOHN 1:19-51
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Introduce. Make use of the five steps method of Bible study to study John 1:19-51 together. John chapters 1 to 12 relate the public ministry of Jesus Christ. John 1:15 to 2:12 describes how the Word, Jesus Christ, reveals himself to John the Baptist and to his early disciples.

STEP 1. READ.	GOD'S WORD
Read. LET US READ John 1:19-51 together. Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.	

STEP 2. DISCOVER.	OBSERVATIONS
Consider. WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU? Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART? Record. Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook. Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share). Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered. (Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things)	

1:39,46

Discovery 1. Coming and seeing.

When the disciples John and Andrew asked Jesus where he was staying, he did not tell them, but instead invited them by saying "come and see". Jesus *involved* other people into his life and into his home. He gave them an opportunity to get to know him from close by. He wanted them to see his life. Soon his disciples did the same. When Nathanael questioned if Jesus could be the Messiah, because he came from an insignificant place like Nazareth, Philip said to him, "Come and see"! The disciples also wanted other people to know Jesus and to get involved into the life of Jesus. Therefore they invited them to come to Jesus and see for themselves what he was like.

If Christians want other people to know who Jesus is, what Christians are and how they live, then they must *involve* them into their lives and homes. I want to follow the example of the disciples. I too want to involve other people into my life and into my home so that they may be able to see how a Christian lives and get to know Jesus.

1:42

Discovery 2. How to view people.

When Andrew brought his brother, called Simon, to Jesus, Jesus looked him over and looked into his heart. Jesus knew that Simon was a big man with a small heart. He knew that Simon could make big promises, but really was afraid to carry them out. He knew that Simon was an impulsive man. But Jesus is the Great Prophet, who knows not only the present condition of every person, but also the future. He knew that Simon would be transformed and would become a stable, uncompromising and persevering person. Jesus looked at Simon, not just at what he was in the present, but also at what he would become in the future. Jesus predicted how God's grace would change him and what God would accomplish in his life. Therefore, Jesus gave him a new name and called him "Peter", which means *the rock*. Later, in Matthew 16:18, Jesus predicted that he would build his Church on Peter, the rock. And in Acts we read how Jesus used Peter to plant the first church among the Jews, the first church among the Samaritans and the first church among the Gentiles.

I want to be like Jesus. I want to look at people, not only at what they are in the present, but also at *what they can become in the future through the grace of God*. The grace of God can transform every person on earth! I want to inspire hope in people that God's grace can change them. Instead of criticising people and looking at all their faults, I want to encourage people and look at the progress they are making in their Christian growth.

STEP 3. QUESTION.

EXPLANATIONS

Consider. WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP?

Let us try to understand all the truths in John 1:19-51 and ask questions about the things we still do not understand.

Record. Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook.

Share. (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.)

Discuss. (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.)

(The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)

1:21

Question 1. Was John the Baptist "Elijah" or not?

Notes.

Malachi 4:5-6 says, "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the heart of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." Based on their own *literal* interpretation of this prophecy, the Jews expected that the prophet Elijah himself would return to the earth before the Messiah would come.

However, in Luke 1:17, an angel of the Lord predicted that John the Baptist would be the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ and that he would do his work "in the spirit and power of Elijah". He would turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous in order to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

In Matthew 17:12-13 also Jesus called John the Baptist "Elijah". Although John the Baptist was *not literally* Elijah, the Angel of God (Jesus in the Old Testament) and Jesus himself (in the New Testament) said that John the Baptist *had fulfilled the prophecy in Malachi 4*. Elijah was "the type", "the shadow" and John the Baptist "the antitype", "the reality" that fulfilled the shadow. Jesus clearly said that Elijah (that is, John the Baptist) had already come and had finished his preparatory work, but that the people of Israel had not recognised him and had killed him instead (Luke 9:9).

1:25

Question 2. Why did John the Baptist baptise people with water?

Notes.

(1) The purification by the priests.

John the Baptist clearly said that he was not the Messiah. Also not the literal "Elijah" that was predicted by Malachi (Malachi 4:5-6). And also not "the Prophet" predicted by Moses (Deuteronomy 18:18-19). The Pharisees asked him why he then baptised with water, a task which belonged only to the Messiah or his ambassador. They expected that only the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet would baptise with water. The Pharisees certainly knew that not just anybody was allowed to administer rites of purification, to which baptism with water belonged (John 3:23-26). In Leviticus 14:1-7, only the priests were allowed *to dip or baptise* the life bird in the water mixed with the blood of the sacrificed bird. Only the priests were allowed *to sprinkle* an infected person seven times with this water mixed with blood.

(2) The promised purification by the Messiah.

Moreover, in the final analysis, the rite of cleansing people was distinctly a messianic act. In Ezekiel 36:25 the sovereign LORD said, “I will *sprinkle* clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols”. In Ezekiel 37:23 he said, “I will save them from all their sinful backsliding and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.”

(3) The purification by John the Baptist.

If John the Baptist was not the Messiah or the kind of forerunner they expected, why then did he baptise with water? It is clear that the Pharisees did not understand who John the Baptist was. They did not understand him when he said that he was the one about whom the prophet Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 40:3, “A voice of one calling: In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our GOD.” Hereby John clearly stated that he was *the forerunner* of the Messiah and that the Messiah was no one less than the LORD (Hebrew: JaHWeH) (God) himself (Mark 1:1-3)!

John said to the Jews that this Messiah was already standing right in their midst and that they did not know him! He warned the Jews that, in their eagerness to expose false messiahs, they were ignoring the true Messiah! In John 1:31, John the Baptist said that the reason why he baptised with water was to reveal (introduce) the true Messiah to Israel. Mark 1:4 says that John the Baptist came preaching “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins”. He preached that the Jews should repent from their sins and prepare their hearts to receive the Messiah. He baptised them with water as a sign of this. The water of baptism symbolised their need of spiritual purification! The baptism of John still belonged to the Old Testament purification rites, which signified the outward and ceremonious purification of people (to approach God). Through his preaching and baptism with water, he focused all Israel’s attention on the Lamb of God, who would take away the sin of the world and who would baptise people with the Holy Spirit (John 1:33). John the Baptist administered only the sign, while the Messiah, Jesus Christ, would administer the reality: that which the sign signified, namely, the inward and spiritual purification and rebirth through the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8; John 3:5; Titus 3:4-6)!

1:29

Question 3. Why is Jesus called “the Lamb of God”?

Notes.

Jesus Christ is called “the Lamb of God”, because he fulfilled the various illustrations (types) of lambs in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament the “lamb” was a shadow (type, illustration) of the future reality, (antitype), namely, the Messiah.

(1) The Passover lamb.

The Passover lamb was slaughtered on the Passover and its blood was applied to the doorposts of believers in Egypt in order to turn away God’s wrath and judgement (doom) on the unrepentant people in Egypt. 1 Corinthians 5:7 calls Jesus Christ: “Our Passover Lamb”. 1 Peter 1:19 says that Christians “have been redeemed from the empty way of life with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect”.

(2) The lambs for the daily burnt offerings.

According to Numbers 28:4, the priests had to slaughter a lamb every morning and every evening. According to Leviticus 1, the lamb had to be without defect, symbolising that Jesus was sinless. The priest had to lay his hand on the head of the lamb, symbolising that the sin of the person was laid on Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, “the burnt offering” was accepted on behalf of this person to make atonement for his sin. Likewise, in the New Testament, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross is the only effective way of making atonement for believers (Romans 3:25).

(3) The lamb prophesied in Isaiah 53.

Isaiah 53:6-7,10 says, “We all, like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He ...was led like a lamb to the slaughter...It was the Lord’s will ...to cause him to suffer ... and to make his life a guilt offering. He will see his offspring...” Leviticus 5:14-16 teaches that “the guilt offering” was brought in order to make restitution for what a person had failed to do in regard to things that God required him to do. The guilt offering made atonement; that is, it took away God’s holy anger against his sin.

Thus we conclude that all three lambs in the Old Testament are *illustrations (types)*, which find their *fulfillments (antitypes)* in Jesus Christ in the New Testament!

1:32

Question 4. Why was it necessary for Jesus Christ to receive the Holy Spirit visibly?

Notes.

The writer of the Gospel of John takes for granted that his readers are acquainted with the other three Gospels, which relate the baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan. At that time, the Holy Spirit came down in the visible form of a dove and remained on Jesus. Although the Holy Spirit has no body and therefore cannot be seen with the physical eyes, God allowed Jesus and John the Baptist to see the Holy Spirit under the symbolism of a dove. God chose the form of a dove,

probably because a dove is *the symbol of purity, gentleness and peace* and these are the characteristics of the Holy Spirit in an infinite degree. The Holy Spirit is *pure* and therefore according to Ephesians 4:30, all kinds of sin grieves the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is *gentle*, because according to John 16:8,13, he does not force people into the truth, but gently convinces people of sin, of righteousness and of judgement. The Holy Spirit is *peace*, because according to Romans 14:17-20, he does not do anything that would cause people to stumble, but only does whatever builds them up. The Holy Spirit remained visibly on Jesus for some time. The voice of God the Father from heaven clearly said that this was the Son of God, whom the Father loved and with whom he was very pleased (Matthew 3:16-17). Here we see how “the Triune God” (the Trinity) manifests himself to us as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

But why was it necessary for Jesus Christ to receive the Holy Spirit? The Son of God *according to his divine nature* is the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17), but *according to his human nature* he received the Spirit. When Jesus received the Holy Spirit at his baptism with water, he received it *in his human nature*. By receiving the Holy Spirit in his human nature, Jesus was *anointed* with the Holy Spirit, that is, he was *ordained* (publicly appointed) by God for his specific task as Mediator between God and man, and he was *equipped* with the Holy Spirit to carry out this task. In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus himself teaches that the prophecy in Isaiah 61:1-2 had been fulfilled in him. It says, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” And in John 3:34, John says that God has given the Spirit to Jesus without limit! This means the same as what Paul says in Colossians 2:9, “In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.”

1:47

[Question 5. Why does Jesus call Nathanael “an Israelite in whom there is nothing false”?](#)

Notes.

The reference in verse 51 to the stairway with angels descending and ascending shows that Jesus had the patriarch Jacob in mind when he addressed Nathanael. In Genesis 27:35-36, Isaac says to Esau that his brother Jacob had come *deceitfully* and had taken Esau’s blessing as the firstborn from him. Esau said that his brother was rightly named “Jacob”, which means “deceiver”. However, this use of trickery for selfish advantage not only characterised Jacob. It also characterised the sons of Jacob, the Jews. In Genesis 34, they *deceitfully tricked* the men of a city, killed them and robbed them of all their possessions.

A real and honest Israelite, a Jew without deceitfulness, had become such an exception that when Jesus met Nathanael he immediately exclaimed, “Here is a true Israelite in whom there is nothing false.” Deceitful trickery is probably a characteristic of people in all nations. In John 2:24-25 we read that Jesus knew all men and he also knew what was in a man. Jesus knows me and knows everything that is in me. He knows my thoughts, motives and attitudes. He also knows when I tend to be deceitful. Therefore it is important that I allow the Holy Spirit to transform my mind, my motives and my attitudes.

1:51

[Question 6. What is the meaning of seeing the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man?](#)

Notes.

In Genesis 28, Jacob saw in his dream a stairway between earth and heaven and he saw the angels of God ascending and descending on it. The Lord himself stood at the top of the stairway, blessing Jacob. He promised Jacob saying, “Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go... I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” (Genesis 28:14-15).

Now here in the Gospel of John Jesus points out that this illustration (type) finds its fulfilment (antitype) in Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ himself is the link between heaven and earth! He is the only Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5)! By his sacrifice on the cross, he reconciles God with sinners and sinners with God.

Jesus told Nathanael that he would see much greater things. What are these “greater things”? The disciples observed that Jesus had sovereign and penetrating knowledge of people and that he looked right into the heart of Nathanael. From now on the disciples would learn *more divine attributes of Jesus*. They would particularly see his crucifixion and how, by the cross, heaven is thrown wide-open and God draws near to man and people from all nations in the world are drawn to God and are reconciled to God (John 8:28; 12:32). And finally they would see Jesus on the final judgement day, invested with universal power and authority to judge and afterwards to rule on the new heaven and new earth (Daniel 7:13-14).

STEP 4. APPLY.

APPLICATIONS

Consider. WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

Share and record. Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from John 1:19-51.

Consider. WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

Record. Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application. (Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

1. Examples of possible applications from John 1:19-51.

- 1:22-23. When asked, give to people a clear understanding of your task or calling in life.
- 1:29. Point people away from yourself to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Introduce people to Jesus Christ.
- 1:33. The single “baptism with the Holy Spirit” is best explained in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, John 3:3-8 and Titus 3:4-8. “The repeated filling with the Holy Spirit” is taught in Ephesians 5:18-21.
- 1:39. Involve people in the lives and meetings of Christians. Tell them, “Come and see!” (cf. verse 46)
- 1:42. Bring your family members to Jesus Christ.
- 1:42. Look at people, not only at what they are, but also at what they could become through Jesus Christ.
- 1:43. Jesus calls us, not only to admire him, but also to follow him, that is, to become his disciple.
- 1:44. Tell your friends about Jesus Christ. The prophets in the Old Testament already wrote about him.
- 1:47. Appreciate people when appreciation is due.
- 1:49. Think, “What is your confession concerning Jesus Christ?”

2. Examples of personal applications from John 1:19-51.

Because it is so important “to go and see”, I regularly participate in Christian meetings, so that I will be able to see who Christians are and what they do. I want to know Jesus better and that is why I have joined a Christian Bible study group (discipleship group).

Jesus looked at Peter, not only at what he was in the present, but also at what he would become in the future. This encourages me very much, because Jesus also looks at me what I can become and by his grace will become. That is why I expect Jesus Christ to change me to become the person he intends me to be.

STEP 5. PRAY.

RESPONSE

LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in John 1:19-51.

(Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

5

PRAYER (8 minutes)

[INTERCESSION]
PRAY FOR OTHERS

Continue to pray in groups of two’s or three’s. Pray with one another for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

6

PREPARATION (2 minutes)

[ASSIGNMENT]
FOR NEXT LESSON

(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. Commitment. Be committed to make disciples and build Christ’s Church.
2. Preach, teach or study the Bible study of John 1:19-51 together with another person or group of people.
3. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time from half a chapter of 1 Corinthians 6 – 8 each day. Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
4. Memorisation. Meditate and memorise the new Bible verse, (1) John 1:14. Daily review the last 5 memorised Bible verses.
5. Prayer. Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
6. Update your notebook on building Christ’s Church. Include your notes on quiet time, your memorisation notes, your Bible study notes and this preparation.