



Week 12: John 10-12

Study Guide for the week of March 16-22

Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, dwell on John 10:1-16, Jesus' teaching on the Good Shepherd.

Go through this passage in your Bible and circle or highlight the word "voice". Can you pick up the phone and recognize the voice of close friends or family members? Can you recognize Jesus' voice? What are the characteristics of Jesus' voice? How can you become more attuned to Jesus' voice?

Now reread the passage again and draw a box around or highlight in a different color all the words that speak to the shepherd's (Jesus') actions (call, lead, gather, walk ahead, sacrifice, etc). Can you see these actions of Jesus in your life? Do you need to decrease some distractions or increase your awareness to be more sensitive to his actions in your life? How can you become more attuned to Jesus' actions?

Finally, reread the passage once more and underline or highlight in a different color all the words that speak to the sheep's (your) response to the shepherd (Jesus) (follow, recognize, listen, etc). In what ways are you responding to the voice and the actions of Jesus? Do you need to improve your listening skills? Your willingness to trust and follow? Ask God for the strength, determination, and perseverance to continually listen for Jesus' voice calling your name, to watch for his actions in your life, and to increase your ability to respond in faith to Jesus' leading.

Discussion starters

1. In John's Gospel, we first meet Thomas of doubting fame in John 11:16. Here we see Thomas as a fatalist, assuming that if Jesus returns to the town of his enemies, he'll be killed. When do you tend to have a fatalistic view of life? Thomas, in spite of his fatalism, is also loyal – at least he's willing to accompany Jesus and die with him! When are you most loyal to Jesus? Have you ever considered the cost of being loyal to Jesus? Has it ever cost you to remain loyal? Was your loyalty worth the cost?
2. We encounter Martha again here in John 11. How has she changed and matured – compare Luke 10:40 and John 11:20-27. Pay attention to the names and titles she gives Jesus. How are you doing with putting aside distractions in your life? It is often said that those whom Satan cannot make bad, he makes busy! Are you seeing growth in your faith as you clear life's clutter and focus more and more on Jesus?
3. Reread John 11:37. Have you ever had similar feelings? How can anyone understand God is a God of love with suffering and injustice in the world? What is God's answer to those who cannot imagine God is a God of love? (Hint, skip ahead and read John 13:33-35 and 1 John 4:11-12).
4. Imagine being Lazarus, raised from the dead only to face death again. How do you think he felt? How do you think he lived in the time between his two deaths? How would you live today if you had already experienced death and it was no longer a great unknown? Read Rom 6:1-5. Did you know you've already died the only death that counts when you are baptized? How does that change your life?
5. In John 12:16, the disciples realized hindsight is 20-20. Looking back on your life, where do you realize God was present? God was guiding you? God was protecting you?

Bible verse to memorize: John 10:10-11