



Stewardship in the Second Testament

Lesson 4: The Gospel of John

Overview

This session explores John's vision of Jesus as the revelation of God and invites participants to see stewardship as revealing God's love in the world. Participants will reflect on how their lives and communities can embody healing, love, and abundant life.

Preparation for the Teacher

- Read the texts (found below) ahead of time.
- Watch the video (link below)—it may stimulate additional questions appropriate for your context. Make certain you have tested the equipment necessary for showing the video—it helps to keep the technical gremlins away!
- Do a little homework about your church and community. Where are good works being done that heal and transform life in your area? Are there faith-based counseling agencies that help people who are struggling with grief, depression, marriage therapy, or health recovery-related issues?
 - Does your community have drug- and alcohol-related treatment programs, not only for abusers but also for families impacted by addiction?
 - Is there a shelter for battered women and/or children?
 - Is there a prison re-entry program to assist offenders' transition out of prison and into society?
 - Is there a program for habitual gamblers or their families?
 - Perhaps a low-cost health clinic to help those without medical insurance?
- Where are the "points of light" in your community that are working toward bringing healing and wholeness against those powers that destroy and disrupt freedom and abundant life? How is your church connected or supportive of these ministries through its mission? If it is not involved, how might it understand the need to engage in these actions as stewards of the "in-breaking" Realm of God?

Background

The Gospel of John offers a distinct theological perspective within the New Testament. Unlike the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), which focus more on narrative and parables, John emphasizes the identity of Jesus as the Word made flesh (John 1:14) and the one who reveals God fully to the world.

Scholars often note that John's Gospel is shaped by a community wrestling with questions of identity, belief, and belonging, likely toward the end of the first century. In this context, John presents Jesus not only as teacher or prophet, but as the living presence of God—one through whom divine life, light, and love are made known.

Pray for your students as you prepare this week's lesson.

Facilitating the Lesson

As the class begins, welcome the class and engage in your usual opening exercises (taking attendance, collecting an offering, prayer concerns, other announcements, etc.).

Opening Activity

Ask the class if they believe God is still engaged in the world today.

- If so, how?
- Have them identify ways in which they think God is being revealed in the world today—either in your congregation, the community, or globally.
- Why does that matter?
- Is there something about their life or the activity of their congregation that is one of the ways God is being seen in the world—where heaven is “breaking into” everyday experience?

Scripture Reflection

Read the following texts:

- John 1:1–5, 10–13
- John 3:16–21
- John 13:34–35
- John 14:8–14

Video Segment

Have the class watch the video link on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/dbPeLVPrLU>

Discussion Questions

Invite the class to wrestle with the following:

1. Revealing God's Love

For John, Jesus reveals God and heaven in the midst of the world. Stewards are “mini-revealers.”

- Describe a circumstance in which you can (or have) revealed God's love for a person or community.

2. Loving the World

We in the church are often pretty good at being stewards of love for one another. Yet, John emphasizes that not only does God love Jesus' followers, but God loves the world.

- Name an aspect of the world that you can, as a steward of God's love, join God in loving.

3. The Needs of the Community

Think about your own congregation and John's worldview.

- What does your congregation most need—love, a sense of life, peace, freedom, joy, or a sense of abundant life?

4. Stewarding What Is Already Given

- How can you be a steward of the resources of heaven that are already present to help those qualities become more prevalent in the congregation?

5. Loving What Is Difficult

- What are the things "in the world" that you find hardest to love that, nonetheless, you believe God loves?
- Does it matter if you try to love these things? Why or why not?

Closing

Dismiss the class with prayer.

This is part of a 7-session series on Stewardship in the Second Testament, designed to be used as a Sunday School or small group lesson. Content is provided by Rev. Dr. Ron Allen in partnership with the Center for Faith & Giving (www.centerforfaithandgiving.org).