

ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

HOW DID JESUS MINISTER TO INDIVIDUALS?

**WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM JESUS FOR OUR OWN
MINISTRY TO OTHERS?**



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Introduction

Throughout the Gospel of John we read stories of Jesus ministering to individual people as well as to the crowds. These encounters with Jesus were powerful and often life changing. This study series looks more closely at why and how Jesus ministered to individuals so that we can learn:

- how we may receive ministry from Jesus *and*
- how Jesus may want to use us to minister to others.

What is Ministry?

To minister to someone simply means to serve them. Some other words in the dictionary definition of 'ministry' include: to look after, help, take care of and wait on. 'Ministry' derives from the Latin word 'minister' which means servant. In English, the noun 'minister' also carries the meaning of someone under authority – such as a minister of the church, or a government minister. As Christians we are all servants of Christ and serve under his authority.

Jesus' death and resurrection were the ultimate service to all humankind, winning salvation for everyone who calls on him in faith and opening a way for a restored relationship with God. Jesus also, during his life on earth, ministered to many individual people and each encounter was unique. Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Father and he still intercedes for you and me¹. Jesus still cares for us and wants to minister to us as individuals in very personal ways, just as he did when he walked on earth. He often does this directly by the Holy Spirit through our conversations with him in prayer and our engagement with his written word. Jesus also ministers to us through other people. We are all his servants and he chooses to use us to bless others.

How did Jesus Minister to Individuals while on earth?

There are many ways in which Jesus ministered to individuals while he was on earth. However, it is important to explain that these studies rest on the premise that *Jesus, while he was living on earth, relied on the power of the Holy Spirit, just like we do*. Jesus' own ministry did not begin until the Holy Spirit had rested on him at his baptism². He spent hours alone in prayer to the Father and said, "I only do what I see the Father doing³". Jesus emptied himself of his divine power⁴ and so ministered on earth as a human being reliant on the Holy Spirit. It is tempting to think, "Jesus could do anything because he was God. I can't minister to others like Jesus did". And yet that is exactly what Jesus asked his disciples to do. Jesus sent them out to heal the sick and deliver from demonic oppression just like he did⁵. He said they would do 'even greater things' than he had done⁶. Before he ascended into heaven he told the disciples to "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the

¹ Romans 8 v 34

² John 1 v 33-34

³ John 5 v 19-20

⁴ Philippians 2 v 6-7

⁵ Matthew 10 v 1

⁶ John 14 v 12

very end of the age”⁷. The word “Christian” literally means “little Christ”. It is God’s intention that we should become like Christ and minister to others as Christ did. Like Jesus we need the power of the Holy Spirit to do this. Jesus told the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit to come before attempting to carry out his instructions⁸. We too, need to receive Christ’s ministry to us, through the Holy Spirit, before we minister to others⁹.

Receiving Ministry

While on earth, *Jesus also received ministry from others* (eg John 12 v 1-8). He set us an important example in this. As we learn how to receive ministry from Jesus and to offer ministry to others, let us also be open to receiving ministry from each other.

How to Use these Studies

Some of Jesus’ encounters with individuals in the gospel of John are listed on the next page. You may wish to go through these in the order they are presented in the Gospel or choose certain ones to study according to your own wishes. It is not necessary to study them all.

Each study in this series uses the same set of questions outlined on the next page, apart from the last study, which has different questions. There are three basic parts to the studies:

- How and why did Jesus minister?
- Have I received this kind of ministry from Him or from others?
- Can I minister to others like that?

There is also an opportunity to consider *how Jesus used the gifts of the Spirit in his ministry and how we might do the same.*

The Gifts of the Spirit

St Paul explains that there are specific gifts of the Holy Spirit that we can use to minister to others. These are outlined in 1 Corinthians Chapter 12:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of **wisdom**, and to another the utterance of **knowledge** according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another gifts of **healing** by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of **miracles**, to another **prophecy**, to another the **discernment of spirits**, to another various kinds of **tongues**, to another the **interpretation of tongues**. ¹¹ All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. (NRSV).

⁷ Matthew 24 v 18-20

⁸ Acts 1 v 8

⁹ Acts 2 v 38

These gifts are given to us by the Holy Spirit and we are not all given the same gifts. However, Paul does encourage us to 'eagerly desire spiritual gifts' (1 Corinthians 12 v 31). Let's take the opportunity to ask for more of the gifts of the Spirit in our ministry to others as we go through these studies.

Taking Notes

It is recommended that you use a notebook to write down your answers to the questions for each study and look for patterns and common themes as you go through them. Taking notes also makes it more likely that you will remember what you have learned, as well provide the opportunity to review your ideas.

Putting it into Practice

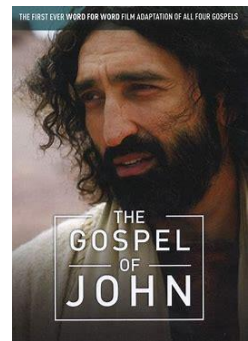
Try to take what you are learning into prayer. Allow the Lord to minister to you and pray for opportunities to minister to others like Jesus did. Pray to become more in love with Christ and more Christlike.

Supporting Audio-Visual Resources

Lumo

You hear and see the Gospel of John acted out in the Lumo Series which can be accessed on DVD or online via You Tube

www.youtube.com/watch?v=PK_u1b4N1MY



The Chosen



Some of the encounters in these studies are portrayed in the TV series The Chosen. You may wish to watch the relevant episode alongside your study. The Chosen Series 1 and 2 are available on DVD or can be streamed through The Chosen App, or You Tube:

www.youtube.com/c/TheChosenSeries/videos.

Studies

	Jesus ministers to ...	Bible Reference	Episode of the Chosen
1	Andrew, Peter and Nathanael	John 1 v 29-50	Series 2 Episode 2 (Nathanael)
2	The Wedding Hosts	John 2 v 1-11	Series 1 Episode 5
3	Nicodemus	John 3 v 1-21	Series 1 Episode 7
4	The Samaritan Woman	John 4 v 1-42	Series 1 Episode 8
5	The Man at the Pool	John 5 v 1-15	Series 2 Episode 4
6	The Blind Man	John 9 v 1 -41	
7	Lazarus, Mary and Martha	John 11 v 1-45	
8	The Disciples	John 13 v 1-17	
9	Thomas	John 20 v 24-30	
10	Peter	John 21 v 1-25	

	Jesus receives ministry from	Bible Reference	Episode of the Chosen
11	Mary	John 12 v 1-11	

Questions for Studies 1-10

1. Who did Jesus minister to and why? What do you know about these people and the context of this story?
2. What did Jesus do for each person?
3. How did he do it? Did he use particular words or actions? What spiritual gifts did he use (eg prophecy, healing, faith . .)?
4. What was the outcome for that person (as far as you can tell from the passage or from other Bible passages you know)?
5. Have I received this kind of ministry from Jesus? Would I like to? How can I receive it?
6. What can I learn from Jesus as I minister to others?

Questions for Study 11

1. Who ministered to Jesus? How and why?
2. How did Jesus receive that ministry?
3. Have I ever received ministry like this from others?
4. What can I learn from Jesus as I receive ministry from others?