

REFLECTION GUIDE

JOHN 6:22-35, 48-59 | WHERE TRUE LIFE IS FOUND

KEY TERMS

Son of Man - This title is one of Jesus' favorite ways to refer to himself. It draws on imagery from the Old Testament book of Daniel which foretells the coming of a divine figure who will come alongside God (identified as "The Ancient of Days" in Daniel) to usher in God's kingdom.

Manna - The miraculous bread given by God to the Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus 16). Jesus contrasts this temporary provision with the eternal life he offers (vv. 49-51).

DID YOU KNOW?

Interestingly, the town of Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, literally means "House of Bread" in Hebrew (*Bet Lechem*). This etymology makes it especially fitting that Jesus, who is claiming to be the "bread of life" who nourishes and gives life, was born there.

Eat my flesh/drink my blood - Jesus uses these phrases metaphorically to refer to his upcoming sacrificial death, where his body and blood will be given for salvation. The practice of communion (also called The Lord's Supper) is a physical practice that points to this spiritual reality.

SYNOPSIS

After miraculously feeding the five thousand, Jesus confronts the crowds who seek him because they seek him not because they understand the sign, but because they want more food (v. 26). Jesus' point seems to be that it's fitting for them to seek him, but only if they understand the sign he did is pointing to his identity as Messiah and evidence that he is God himself. He instead redirects their focus from temporary, perishable bread to himself, the true *bread of life* (vv. 27, 35). Jesus explains that belief in him is the "work" God desires (v. 29) and that he provides a deeper sustenance than the manna their ancestors ate in the wilderness (vv. 30-33).

Later, in verses 48-59, Jesus expands on this teaching, making a bold claim that those who *eat [his] flesh* and *drink [his] blood* will have eternal life (vv. 53-54). His words are confusing for the original audience because they fail to see them metaphorically and have yet to understand that Jesus is going to sacrificially die for them. One of Jesus' main points throughout this discourse is that just as physical food nourishes the body, Jesus nourishes the soul. He offers a life to those who trust in him that is the best life there is now and is also life that stretches on forever. Jesus also implies that this life is experienced by "ingesting" his life into our lives and allowing him to be the driving force in our lives, in the same way bread nourishes and sustains physical life.

GOING DEEPER

Read Isaiah 55:1-2, which was written over 2,500 years ago, and Revelation 22:17, which is written about the end of history when Jesus returns. Why do you think food and drink imagery is so often used to refer to human beings lacking or finding satisfaction? How is Jesus a fulfillment of what Isaiah wrote about so long ago? How will our satisfaction in Jesus be different when Jesus returns?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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LEARNING THE WORD

1. Read John 6:22-35. Why were the crowds seeking Jesus after the feeding of the 5,000? How does Jesus challenge their motives in verse 26?
2. Jesus contrasts "food that perishes" with "food that endures to eternal life" (v. 27). What does he mean by these two types of food?
3. In verse 29, Jesus says, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." How does this statement challenge the crowd's expectations (see their original question in v. 28)?
4. Read John 6:48-59. What stands out to you about Jesus' language? What does this imagery say about Jesus' death and about its importance for us?

LIVING THE WORD

5. What are some examples of "food that perishes" that people chase after today? How have you experienced the insufficiency of these things to satisfy you?
6. Jesus says that true life is found in trusting him rather than striving or achieving. How does this challenge the way you think about faith and life with God?
7. Jesus calls us to "feast" on him—to make him our source of life. What does this practically look like in daily life? Are there areas where you tend to "snack" on Jesus instead?
8. How does the gospel free us from the need for more—materially, spiritually, or otherwise? What would it look like for you to rest in Jesus this week knowing that you have all you need in him?