

**Joke:** A young boy had just gotten his driver's permit and enquired of his father, if they could discuss his use of the car. His father said, "I'll make a deal with you. You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little, get your hair cut and we'll talk about the car."

Well, the boy thought about that for a moment, and settle for the offer, and they agreed on it. After about six weeks they went in to the study, where his father said, "Son, I've been real proud. You've brought your grades up, and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, and participating a lot more in the Bible study groups. But, I'm real disappointed, since you haven't gotten your hair cut."

The young man paused a moment, and then said, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair and there's even a strong argument that Jesus had long hair also."

To this his father replied, "Did you also notice they all walked everywhere they went?"

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### ***Forerunner, Part 4***

We've been learning from the life of John the Baptist. He's the one who came before Jesus. To prepare the way for Jesus. A Forerunner.

We've learned a bunch about John. And I hope we've learned a ton from John as well.

Six months before the birth of the Messiah, This Forerunner John was born. John wasn't present for Jesus' birth, his death, the resurrection, or the birth of the church. Yet John was a major influence on this movement we call Christianity today.

How has John contributed to Christianity? Glad you asked. . .

We call John, “John the Baptist,” because as we know he helped form the first denomination that still exists today. Right? No that’s not it it’s because his first influence on Christianity was about Baptism. Specifically. . .

Luke 3:3 (NIV): He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

John wasn’t the first to baptize people. But he was the first to use baptism as a way for people to demonstrate their repentance and express their desire to get right with God.

His second and probably most precious contribution had to do with him leading people into knowing that the Messiah is coming or probably better said was He’s already arrived.

Throughout the OT, books the prophets foretold the coming of the Savior.

God told us about it in Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve first sinned.

Moses promised that a prophet like himself would come one day. Isaiah prophesied Messiah’s coming. So did Jeremiah, Daniel, Micah, Zechariah and Malachi.

But after Malachi, the voices of the prophets fell silent. No prophet spoke, and no Biblical books were written between 400 BC and 1 A.D.

It was John who broke the silence. Six months before Jesus started His public ministry, John came on the scene to tell us that Jesus was coming.

Mark 1:7 (NIV): And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.

John spent six months calling people to repentance before Jesus came on the scene.

John’s preaching was so powerful, that Jesus confirmed it in his message.

What was John’s central message:

Matthew 3:1–2 (NIV): In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

And what was Jesus’ first recorded sermon that took place in the town of Nazareth. His message was:

Matthew 4:17 (NIV): From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Today we’re going to be looking at the passage of Scripture that describes John’s most important moment. The one when he fulfilled his purpose the moment, John this forerunner said. . .

John 1:29 (NIV): The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

This was the moment when John introduced the world to Jesus.

Then just a few verses later John makes it even more personal and introduces this Jesus to his first disciples.

John 1:35–36 (NIV): The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

Next week, we’ll conclude our series with the story of how we two can live our life’s in such a way that we can point out the Lamb of God to others.

If we live our lives correctly these next twelve months, you and I are going to have 365 opportunities to introduce people to Jesus, and today John’s going to teach us how to do that.

Let’s look at the story. You can find it in John, chapter 1.

Matthew and Luke tell us the story of Jesus’ birth from earth’s perspective. John gives us the story from heaven’s perspective.

Matthew and Luke start with the conception of the Son of God. John starts with a much different description of the Son of God.

John writes:

John 1:1–2 (NIV): In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning.

How old is Jesus?

- He’s ageless.
- He existed before time.
- He may have born into this world,
- but He always was.
- He is the alpha and omega
- The beginning and the end

Jesus was not only there before the beginning began to begin, He created the beginning.

John continues

John 1:3–5 (NIV): Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Bible scholars call these five verses, “The Prologue to the Book of John.”

It’s the cosmic introduction of Jesus.

At verse 6, John switches from before time, into time.

Specifically, into 29 A.D. He says. . .

John 1:6–7 (NIV): There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe.

John’s purpose for coming was so that all might believe through him.

John the Apostle, the writer of the book of John, now gives us the identity of John the Forerunner. He says:

John 1:8 (NIV): He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

And church we two are called to be salt and light. To bare witness of the Light of the World.

John the writer spends the next 10 verses describing the magnificent mystery of Jesus.

Then, in verse 19, he comes back to John the Forerunner again.

He says. . .

John 1:19–21 (NIV): Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20 He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.” 21 They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.”

Elijah was the OT prophet who never died. 2 Kings records that God took Elijah up to heaven without experiencing death.

2 Kings 2:11 (NIV): As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Now we come to some introductions one of this John who we have been looking at the past several weeks and also about this one they call the Son of God, King of the Jews, and Savior of the world,

Deuteronomy 18:15 (NIV): The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.

With the advantage of history on our side, biblical scholars agree that this “prophet” was Jesus.

But in 29 A.D., people weren’t sure if “the prophet” was the same person as the Messiah or not.

So they asked John

John 1:22–23 (NIV): Finally they said, “Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” 23 John replied in the words of Isaiah

the prophet, “I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’ ”

We’ve studied this voice several times in this series so far.

The Voice is prophesied in Isaiah 40:3.

Isaiah 40:3 (NIV): A voice of one calling: “In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Now let’s look at the gospel of John once again. . .

John 1:24–34 (NIV): Now the Pharisees who had been sent 25 questioned him, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” 26 “I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands one you do not know. 27 He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.” 28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Then as the Scripture continues we see John start to testify about Jesus

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ 31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.” 32 Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ 34 I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”

This is a big moment church. Since the time of the Creation of the world, God has been waiting for this moment. It's the moment of the introduction of the Savior of the World to the world He came to save.

John handles it masterfully.

He puts on a clinic if you will on how to introduce someone to Jesus.

Truth is, all of us have friends, neighbors or loved ones who have yet to meet Jesus. If you're looking for a simple and effective outline on how to introduce the Savior to someone who needs to be saved, this is it.

This is a clinic John gives on. . .

### ***How to Introduce people to Jesus:***

And by following John's example, by doing what John did at the River Jordan that day we can learn how to do that very thing.

Let me leave you with 5 things we can learn from John on this subject.

#### ***1. Whet their appetite***

John 1:26–27 (NIV): 26 "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. 27 He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie,

There's an old adage that says, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink."

There's a newer adage which says, "But you can feed him salt."



And that church salt will make them thirsty.

Colossians 4:6 says. . .

Colossians 4:6 (NIV): Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

John whets his friends' appetite the same way once again in verses 26 and 27

John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. 27 He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie

One of the slave's jobs was to carry his master's sandals.

John is saying, "this master is so far above me, I'm not only not worthy to carry his sandals. I'm not worthy of untying them."

As John is saying this, people begin wondering, "Who is this guy he's talking about? I'd like to meet him."

That's salting the conversation, or as a mentioned, whetting people's appetite.

People have to want to know something about Jesus before you tell them about Him, otherwise, it just doesn't have the same impact.

1 John 1:1–4 (NIV): That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so

that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.  
4 We write this to make our joy complete.

John whets their appetites, so that people want to know about Jesus. Once they're ready, then, he tells them about Him.

## **2. Tell them about Him**

He's not pushy about it. If you look carefully, this actually has two-parts in the declaration . The text says he waited for this second part until the next day.

Look at verse 29 again:

John 1:29 (NIV): The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John taps into two needs here. First, he calls Jesus "The Lamb of God." That's an image every Jew understood and was waiting for.

Centuries earlier, as Israel was exiting Egypt, God instituted a ceremony called "Passover," in which every Jewish family brought a lamb into their house and sacrificed the lamb in substitution for their own sins.

Every year, for 1,400 years, Jewish families sacrificed a lamb to take away their sins.

John taps into their longing to have the living, final Lamb come into their house.

So, he also taps into their longing to have sin removed once-for-all. John says, "This isn't just a lamb who takes away the

sin of a single household. It's THE LAMB, who takes away the sin of every person in the world.

He was saying, "This is it! This is the One you've been waiting for!"

If you were a Jewish person, sitting on that river bank that day, you would have chills running down your spine. "This is it!"

John thought very carefully about the words he used to describe Jesus that day.

After telling the people about Jesus, John whets their appetite again, because appetites wear off.

So he resets their hopes by saying:

John 1:30–31 (NIV): This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

What's he doing?... He's describing what Jesus can do for them.

Which brings me to the next point. . .

### **3. Describe what He can do for them**

John 1:32 (NIV): Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.

In the OT, prophets and other special people had the Holy Spirit come upon them temporarily. What sets Jesus apart is that the Holy Spirit didn't depart from Him. He "rested" on Him. He dwelt with Jesus permanently.

He says. . .

John 1:33 (NIV): And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’

And we read about what Jesus said a little later in John. . .

John 14:26 (NIV): But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Then later the apostle Paul tells us,

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NIV): Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Not only is he describing what Jesus can do for them, he’s using a technique that we call “testifying.”

That’s step 4: Testifying is. . .

#### ***4. Tell them about your experience with Him***

People can argue about facts and dates and whether something you say is true or right or not. But one thing people can’t argue with your about is your experience.

John 1:32–33 (NIV): Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

John was saying, “I saw the Spirit descend on Him,” and I heard the Lord say to me, “this is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.”

Who wouldn’t want to be baptized with the Holy Spirit?

Being baptized with the Holy Spirit means having the Spirit of God come and live inside of you.

John then boldly proclaims: “This is the one I’m telling you about...?”

John 1:34 (NIV): I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.”

Now, because John the Gospel Writer compresses this event into just a page or so of dialogue, it seems like it all happened in one conversation. But look at this.

The story starts in verse 19 with. . .

John 1:19–21 (NIV): Now this was John’s testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20 He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.” 21 They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.”

This was John’s testimony when the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, “Who are you?”

That’s when he whets their appetites. – in verses 19-28.

Verse 29 says. . .The next day

That’s when John tells them about Jesus. – Verses 29-34.

Verse 35 says. . .The next day

And verse 43 guess what it says. . .The next day. . .

This is a conversation that happens over 4 consecutive days.

John doesn't rush it. He doesn't push people to accept Jesus. But he does move the conversation along, day after day after day.

On day three, the text says:

John 1:35–36 (NIV): The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

John is continuing to introduce people to Jesus. But now that they know who Jesus is, John is calling for a commitment.

How do I know that? Because look at the response of the disciples:

John 1:37–39 (NIV): When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?” 39 “Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”

Which brings me to point number five. On the third day, John. . .

### ***5. Encourages them to become a follower***

So, that's the fifth step in introducing people to Jesus:

Here's the process. You have a friend you care about. In order to fulfill their purpose in life and God's intentions for their eternity, they need a relationship with Jesus.

***So we introduce them to Jesus by:***

- 1. Whetting their appetite***
- 2. Telling them about Him***
- 3. Describing what He can do for them***
- 4. Telling them about your experience with Him***
- 5. Encourage them to become a follower***

You can do this! How do I know that, because Scripture tells us. . .

Acts 1:8 (NIV): But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

What would it look like if you did? What could you say that would whet a friend’s appetite to hear about Jesus?

**Note:** Tell story about piano tattoo from car salesman. . .

Once you’ve piqued their curiosity, what words could you use to describe Jesus that would send chills down their spine?

Maybe something like this:

“You know that weight you’re carrying these days?”

And hear this church, That weight could be from guilt, or regret, or sin or pressure. It could be from sorrow from losing a loved one, or discouragement from some sort of failure. It could be a weight of debt. There are so many things that could be causing their weight but all you may need to say is. . .

“You know that weight you’re carrying these days? Jesus can lift that weight and give you your joy back, your hope back.”

Isaiah 40:28–31 (NIV): Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. 29 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. 30 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; 31 but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Matthew 11:28–30 (NIV): Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Everybody wants that!

The principle is this: Just before you tell your friend about Jesus, Think carefully about your friend’s current need or greatest longing. Everybody has them, and only God can fulfill them.

How can I be so sure of that because Ecclesiastes 3:11 says. . .

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV): He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

Inside of every person you have ever locked eyes on has a need that only God can fill.

You can help them with it. You might be the only real Christian they know.

- **Whet** their appetite for hearing.
- Then **tell** them about Jesus.



- **Describe** something or a bunch of somethings He could do for them that no human can do for them.
- Give them **proof** of this by sharing with them something Jesus has done for you.
- Then, **encourage** them to become His follower, by inviting Him into their life.

This could all happening naturally in one conversation. Or, it could happen over a series of conversations.

Here's what I know for sure. . .

1 Corinthians 3:6–9 (NIV): I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. 9 For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building

I love this one. . .

Ecclesiastes 11:6 (NIV): Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let your hands not be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well.

And Mark tells us who the sower is. . .

Mark 4:13–20 (NIV): Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? 14 The farmer sows the word. 15 Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. 16 Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 17 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When

trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. 20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

Let's conclude the story. John introduces the crowd to Jesus.

Then he introduces some of his disciples to Jesus.

Verse 38 says. . .

John 1:38–39 (NIV): Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?” 39 “Come,” he replied, “and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

Then look what happens:

John 1:40–41 (NIV): Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ).

The first thing Andrew did was reached out to his brother, Simon.

John 1:42 (NIV): 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter).

It continues. . .

John 1:43–51 (NIV): The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.” 44 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” 46 “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip. 47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.” 48 “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.” 49 Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.” 50 Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.” 51 He then added, “Very truly I tell you, you will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on’ the Son of Man.”

John is trying to show us two things here.

First, each one reached one,

And second, if you’ll introduce people to Jesus, Jesus will take it from there.

When the woman at the well had an encounter with Jesus it changed a whole village.

Your story, your experience, your testimony can impact a life, a block, a community, a city, a state, a nation, a world.

Don’t hesitate, open the floodgate and emulate and the Holy Spirit will help you navigate and there will be no need to speculate, because he will help you articulate, so that others will not procrastinate but will also put on the breastplate.

If you haven't yet today is the best day of your life to become a follower of Jesus. . . .

If you already are then go out and whet some appetites! In Jesus name!