

# I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

## We Long for Inclusion and Access

### LESSON 7

*Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”*

**John 14:6**



#### WELCOME

Have you ever had the privilege of having “VIP access” to something or someone (i.e. backstage admission, meeting a political or sports figure, etc.)? If so, what was that experience like? If not, what or who would you like that kind of access to?

#### BACKGROUND

We live in a world where one of the prevailing thoughts is against the idea of absolute truth. Each person is given a green light to believe whatever “truth” they desire. Our culture resembles what is described in the book of Judges: Everyone did what was right in their own eyes (**Judges 21:25**). The Israelites living at that time were in desperate need of the truth and a Savior, and so are we.

Historically, the Israelites were monotheistic people; they believed in just one true God (**Deuteronomy 6:4**).<sup>1</sup> The claims Jesus made when He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” connected to basic concepts of Jewish religion.<sup>2</sup> There were many teachings in the Jewish faith about the ways of God and the way in which people should live.<sup>3</sup> They knew that there was absolute and moral truth.<sup>4</sup> And they knew that they needed to look to God for life.<sup>5</sup> Yet, when Jesus made this statement claiming that all of these concepts found their fulfillment exclusively in Him, the Jewish people were shocked.<sup>6</sup> Even

<sup>1</sup> Barclay, William. *The Gospel of John*. Vol. 2, Westminster Press, 1975. 161

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 157-158

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 157; **Deuteronomy 5:32–33, 31:29; Psalm 27:11; Isaiah 30:21, 35:8**

<sup>4</sup> **Psalm 26:3, 86:11**

<sup>5</sup> **Proverbs 6:23, 10:17; Psalm 16:11**

<sup>6</sup> Barclay, William. *The Gospel of John*. Vol. 2, Westminster Press, 1975. 157-158

today, “when religious pluralism and syncretism are widespread, such claims are never going to be popular.”<sup>7</sup>

1. In your opinion, why is it hard for people in today’s world to accept that there is only one way to God?<sup>8</sup>



## WORD

*As you come to the Word, pause and ask God to make it come alive for you.*

**Context:** The week before Jesus was crucified was Passover week. Jesus and His disciples had traveled to Jerusalem for the occasion. They knew Jerusalem was a dangerous place for Jesus because the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Him (**John 11:8, 16**). On the night of Jesus’ arrest, He and His disciples were having what is now known as the Last Supper. Jesus’ disciples were heavy-hearted and concerned because of the potential danger. They were likely also deeply distressed by the news Jesus had just given them that one of them would betray Him and one would deny Him (**John 13:21, 38**). During this final meal together, Jesus taught His disciples with words that were both powerful and comforting. Enter into His teaching:

### John 14:1–21

<sup>1</sup> “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. <sup>2</sup> There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. <sup>4</sup> And you know the way to where I am going.”

<sup>5</sup> “No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

<sup>6</sup> Jesus told him, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”** <sup>7</sup> If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know

<sup>7</sup> Milne, Bruce. *The Message of John*. InterVarsity, 1993. 212

<sup>8</sup> Matte, Gregg. *I Am Changes Who I Am*. Baker Books, 2014. 185

him and have seen him!”

<sup>8</sup> Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? <sup>10</sup> Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. <sup>11</sup> Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

<sup>12</sup> “I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. <sup>13</sup> You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. <sup>14</sup> Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!

<sup>15</sup> “If you love me, obey my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. <sup>17</sup> He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. <sup>18</sup> No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

<sup>21</sup> Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.”

2. Jesus knew His disciples were greatly troubled, so He offered them comfort. Summarize Jesus’ encouragement in your own words.  
**(John 14:1–4)**

- a. Many of us feel alone in today's world and, perhaps, that we don't belong anywhere. When have you felt lonely or alone?
- b. Jesus states, "*There is more than enough room in my Father's home.*" (**John 14:2**) How do Jesus' words address your desire for inclusion and access?

3. What question did Jesus' words spark for Thomas? (**14:5**)

4. Jesus' answer to Thomas' question is one of His most well-known I AM statements: "*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*" (**14:6**) How do the following Scriptures help clarify the three declarations Jesus made about Himself?

a. I AM the way:

i. **John 3:16**

*For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.*

ii. **John 17:3**

*And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you,<sup>9</sup> the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.*

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<sup>9</sup>The word "know" is *ginōskō* in Greek, meaning to know (absolutely); this verb represents knowledge as the effect of experience. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1097/kjv/tr/0-1/>

iii. **Hebrews 10:20**

*By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place.<sup>10</sup>*

b. I AM the truth:

i. **John 8:31–32**

*Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

ii. **1 John 5:20**

*And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life.*

iii. **John 18:37**

*Pilate said, “So you are a king?”*

*Jesus responded, “You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”*

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<sup>10</sup> The Most Holy Place was the place in the Temple where God’s presence dwelt (**Hebrews 9:1–5**; **1 Kings 8:1–13**). Only the high priest was able to go into the Most Holy Place (**Hebrews 9:7**). Through His death Jesus effectively removed the curtain into the entrance to the Most Holy Place, and now everyone has the opportunity to be in God’s presence.

c. I AM the life:

i. **John 1:3–4** (NIV)

*Through him [Jesus] all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.*

ii. **1 John 5:11–12**

*And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.*

5. The second part of Jesus' I AM statement which says, "No one can come to the Father except through me," is all about the exclusivity of His message (**John 14:6**). However, He already stated that there is enough room for everyone in His Father's house (**John 14:2**). Often, exclusivity and inclusion are thought of as opposites, but Jesus' statement includes both. How do you hold the tension between these two ideas?

While some people are turned off by the exclusivity of this claim, the fact "that there is a way at all is evidence of God's grace and love."<sup>11</sup> What is your response to this statement?

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<sup>11</sup> Barton, Bruce B. *John*. Tyndale House, 2004. 288

6. “[Philip’s] plea in **verse 8** articulates the longing of the heart of humanity across the ages ...”<sup>12</sup> What was Philip’s plea?
- a. What claims did Jesus make about Himself and the Father as He answered Philip’s question in **14:7–10**?
  - b. What are the implications of these claims for believers?
  - c. Describe the Father from what you know about Jesus.
  - d. What response does Jesus expect? (**14:11**)
7. Those who believe in Jesus receive great power. In fact, Jesus made the extraordinary declaration that those who believe in Him will be able to do the same works He has done and even more (**14:12**). What were some of the works Jesus did throughout His life?

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<sup>12</sup> Milne, Bruce. *The Message of John*. InterVarsity, 1993. 213

We have been given access to God and His power. What comes to mind when you think of this declaration and all that it means, both broadly and for you personally?

8. Jesus continued His extraordinary statement about access and power by saying that you can ask for anything in His name and He will do it in order to bring glory to the Father (**John 14:13–14**). How do you think your prayer life would change if you always remembered you have this level of access to God’s power?

9. **John 14:15** shows what it means to live out your choice to follow Jesus exclusively. How does **1 John 5:3** further explain what this means?

*Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome.*

10. Jesus warned His disciples that He would be leaving them. Not only would they need to deeply depend on prayer<sup>13</sup> but they would also need to depend on Holy Spirit. How is Holy Spirit described in **John 14:16–17**?

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<sup>13</sup> **John 14:13–14**



a. What does depending on Holy Spirit look like in your life?

b. How would you like to grow in this area of your relationship with God?

11. What is significant to you about the ways you are included in the “VIP access” to the Triune God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)?  
**(14:17–21)**



## WORSHIP

*Take a moment to enter into a time of worship—both on your own and with your community—to show praise, adoration and love for God.*

“One of the many incredible qualities of Jesus—the Way, the Truth and the Life—is that He is personal. ... Through Christ, our personal relationship with God is possible. God desires relationship, not just spiritual action or morality; He wants to talk with us as friend[s].”<sup>14</sup>

If you were to sit down with God this week over a cup of tea or coffee, what would you talk about with Him?

Consider taking time to grab a beverage and have a conversation with God this week as an act of worship. If that seems uncomfortable or strange to you, start by sharing those feelings with God. Speak to Him as you would a close friend.

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<sup>14</sup> Matte, Gregg. *I Am Changes Who I Am*. Baker Books, 2014. 182



## WITNESS

***Believers are called to reflect Christ in the world. This section will help you engage with how to be a witness—reflecting Christ—this week.***

“The state of human rebellion can be seen in this: We are like people drowning at sea who are graciously thrown a life-saving rope but who respond by insisting that we deserve a choice of several ropes along with the option of swimming to safety if we so choose.”<sup>15</sup> In reality, the exclusivity of Jesus allows those who believe in Him to have inclusive access to Him.

How can we as believers graciously point to the truth that Jesus is the only way? What benefits of His invitation would you highlight to an unbeliever?

Write a few phrases that you could share with someone you know who doesn't yet know Jesus.

Ask Holy Spirit for courage to share what you wrote with someone.

## CONVERSATION PROMPTS

***Consider using one of the conversation prompts this week to begin having a spiritual conversation with someone in your life.***

- Do you think we live in an “anything goes” culture?
- How do you decide what to accept as truth?
- What comes to mind when you think of having exclusive access to something?
- What makes it hard for you to believe that Jesus is the only way to God?
- Where have you felt excluded?

## TAKE-AWAY SUMMARY

As you have worked through this lesson and listened to Holy Spirit, what is your one significant take-away?

Write a brief summary of your take-away on page 102.

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<sup>15</sup> Barton, Bruce B. *John*. Tyndale House, 2004. 289

# SERMON NOTES

## Lesson 7

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