

The Bread of Life

John 6 presents what is typically called the Bread of Life Discourse. It offers a very significant teaching of Jesus that has many important applications for understanding theology and how to live as a Christian. Using the skills you have learned, use the space at the bottom of the sheet to answer the question below that has been assigned to you by your teacher. You will be giving an explanation for your answer to the other groups in class, so include verse references in your answer and provide a one-sentence answer as a summary.

1. How is the main metaphor used in the passage, and what do we learn from the metaphor and its connection to the manna?
2. Why did some of Jesus's disciples stop following Him?
3. Who are the different audiences in this passage, and how does each group respond to the words of Jesus?
4. What do we learn from the idea repeated in verses 37–40, 43–47, and 61–65?

The Bread of Life Answer Key

Print one *The Bread of Life* worksheet for each group. Keep the answer key for your use.

- 1. How is the main metaphor used in the passage, and what do we learn from the metaphor and its connection to the manna?** *Jesus compared Himself to bread as He said, "I am the bread of life." He also said He had come down from heaven. This drew a very clear analogy in the minds of His hearers to the manna that God had provided for their ancestors while they were wandering in the wilderness (Exodus 16). God had met their physical needs by providing the manna—bread from heaven—every day for forty years. Jesus knew they did not chase Him across the sea for anything other than seeing more miracles and getting fed for free (verses 26–27). Contrary to popular opinion, Jesus actually confronted the crowd which appears to be seeking Him with a fairly sharp message that exposed their motives as false. Jesus repeatedly called them to understand and accept the spiritual truth of the bread of life metaphor that He used. Trusting in Christ is the spiritual food that does not perish but offers eternal life. His flesh was given on the Cross as His blood was poured out—these we eat and drink to sustain us spiritually. This is also demonstrated in the communion of the Lord's Supper. Jesus used this metaphor to relate physical life and the need for food and drink to the spiritual truth of depending on Him alone for spiritual life. Key Idea: Jesus is the bread of life who offers spiritual life to all who look to Him alone for sustenance.*
- 2. Why did some of Jesus's disciples stop following Him?** *In the scope of this passage, there are multiple reasons. Some were simply looking for someone to feed them, and some were not able to accept His hard teachings. Jesus revealed that the ultimate reason that they could not accept the words He spoke in spirit and truth (verse 63) is that it had not been granted by the Father (verse 65). These disciples had been following Jesus to fulfill their fleshly desires, and the words had not been received by the Holy Spirit's working (verse 63, cf. John 3:5–8) and had not been learned from the Father (verse 45). This passage reminds us of the divine work in the heart of the hearer that must accompany hearing the truth in order that there may be true belief and salvation (verse 64). Key Idea: Many disciples stopped following Jesus because they had not been granted by the Father to believe (6:65).*
- 3. Who are the different audiences in this passage, and how did each group respond to the words of Jesus?** *There seem to be three overlapping audiences in this passage. 1) The crowd that followed Him across the sea after the feeding on the previous day is mixed with those from the area of Capernaum where they had all gathered in the synagogue to talk to and hear from Jesus. They are collectively referred to as the Jews (verses 25–26, 41, 52). These rejected the teachings of Jesus about the bread of life and eating His flesh (verses 41 and 52). 2) Within that group was a smaller group identified in verse 60 as disciples of Jesus who had been following Him for some time. After hearing all Jesus had said, the teaching was too hard for them to accept (verses 60–61), and they abandoned Him (verse 66). 3) Among those disciples were also the core of the twelve disciples (verse 67). These twelve responded by continuing with Jesus (verses 68–69). Peter acknowledged, representing the twelve, that Jesus is the Son of God who has the words of life. Key Idea: People respond differently to the words of truth.*
- 4. What do we learn from the idea repeated in verses 37–40, 43–47, and 61–65?** *Each of these sections describes the divine role in salvation. While there is some mystery in the supernatural process of salvation, there can be no doubt from these verses that the Father must draw sinners to the Son through the work of the Spirit and that all those who are drawn to the Son will be raised to eternal life in the last day. Those who believe in Jesus as the Savior recognize His words as "spirit and truth" unto eternal life. John 1:12–13 reinforces this idea, noting that salvation comes to those who receive Christ—those who have been born again of God and not the will of the flesh. Key Idea: Salvation is a supernatural act of drawing by the Father to believe in the Son through the power of the Spirit, not a simple act of the will of the flesh of man.*