
FROM INFORMATION TO ENCOUNTER

JOHN HIMMELBERGER

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INTRODUCTION

John does not begin with Bethlehem, a manger, or a genealogy. He begins before the beginning.

Before creation, before religion, before anyone formed an opinion about God, the Word was already there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. Then John makes an astonishing claim: the eternal Word became flesh and entered the world He created.

John 1 is about more than establishing the identity of Jesus. It introduces the movement at the heart of the entire Gospel. God does not remain distant, abstract, or known only through the testimony of others. He comes near enough to be seen, heard, followed, and known.

The chapter begins with revelation and ends with encounter. John the Baptist points. Andrew follows. Simon receives a new name. Philip is found. Nathanael questions. Each person must move beyond what someone else has said and meet Jesus for himself.

Firsthand faith does not begin when every question has been answered. It begins when we respond to the invitation:

“Come and see.”

THE LENS

Firsthand faith is not merely believing accurate information about Jesus. It is responding to His invitation until what we have heard becomes personally known.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

Am I living from what I have heard about Jesus, or from what I am discovering with Him?

KEY TRUTH

The God who cannot be fully explained has chosen to make Himself known through Jesus.

THE TEACHING FLOW

1. Before We Were Searching, He Was Already There

"In the beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself."

John 1:1 AMP

John begins before human experience. Before our questions, traditions, disappointments, doctrines, and attempts to understand God, Jesus was already there.

This matters because firsthand faith does not begin with us creating an image of God that makes sense to us. It begins with the recognition that God existed before our explanations of Him.

Our experiences influence what we believe about God, but they do not define who God is. Our churches may have represented Him well or poorly. Our families may have taught us truth, fear, performance, grace, or some confusing mixture of all four. But Jesus is not limited by what we were told about Him.

He was there before anyone explained Him to us.

Deeper Insight

John calls Jesus the **Word**, the Logos. Jesus is not simply someone who delivers a message from God. He is God's self-expression. God is not sending us a detached explanation. He is revealing Himself in a Person.

If we want to know what God is like, we look at Jesus.

If our understanding of God contradicts the character revealed in Jesus, our understanding must be reconsidered.

Gold Nugget

Jesus is not one person's opinion about God. He is God revealing Himself.

2. Life Was Not Merely Given by Him. Life Was in Him.

"In Him was life [and the power to bestow life], and the life was the Light of men."
John 1:4 AMP

John does not describe Jesus as someone who possesses helpful spiritual information. Life itself is found in Him.

We can inherit Christian language without experiencing that life. We can know the expected answers, repeat familiar phrases, attend church, read Scripture, and still relate to Jesus primarily as a subject we have studied.

Firsthand faith recognizes that Jesus did not come merely to improve our religious understanding. He came to share His life with us.

The goal is not only to think correctly about Him. The goal is communion with Him.

Deeper Insight

Light in John is not merely additional knowledge. Light reveals reality. It exposes what is false, makes what is hidden visible, and helps us see what has always been present.

Jesus does not only give us better answers. He changes what we are able to see.

Gold Nugget

Information may describe life, but only encounter can awaken us to it.

3. The Light Enters Real Darkness

“The Light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness did not understand it or overpower it or appropriate it or absorb it.”

John 1:5 AMP

John does not pretend the world is uncomplicated. The Light enters darkness.

Firsthand faith is not developed by denying darkness, suppressing doubt, or pretending our wounds do not affect us. Jesus meets people inside actual confusion, disappointment, sin, grief, and resistance.

The Light does not wait for the darkness to become less dark before shining.

Some people hesitate to examine their faith because they fear honest questions will destroy it. But truth does not need darkness to protect it. If Jesus is the Light, honest examination is not His enemy.

We may discover that some things we believed were never true. We may also rediscover truths we abandoned because they had been poorly represented. Either way, Jesus is not threatened by the process.

Deeper Insight

Darkness is not presented as an equal rival to the Light. It resists the Light, but it cannot overcome it.

That means our confusion does not frighten Jesus. Our unanswered questions are not stronger than His ability to reveal Himself.

Gold Nugget

Jesus does not demand that we escape the darkness before meeting Him. He enters it and begins revealing what is true.

4. A Witness Can Point, but a Witness Cannot See for You

“There came a man commissioned and sent from God, whose name was John. This man came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe [in Christ, the Light] through him.”

John 1:6–7 AMP

John the Baptist has an important role, but the Gospel carefully defines its limits.

John is not the Light. He bears witness to the Light.

Healthy spiritual leadership does the same. Pastors, parents, teachers, authors, and friends can point toward Jesus. They can tell us what they have seen. They can help us recognize His activity. But they cannot encounter Him on our behalf.

A witness is valuable because a witness directs our attention beyond himself.

The problem begins when someone else's testimony becomes a substitute for our own relationship with Jesus. We may learn to depend upon a leader's certainty, a parent's convictions, an author's language, or a community's approval. We become skilled at repeating what others have seen without learning to look for ourselves.

John refuses to become the destination. He exists to point.

Deeper Insight

John's testimony matters, but testimony is an invitation, not a conclusion.

Firsthand faith often begins through the witness of another person. It becomes our own as we follow where that witness points.

Gold Nugget

A faithful witness does not make people dependent upon the witness. A faithful witness helps people recognize Jesus.

5. The Creator Came Near, but Familiarity Did Not Guarantee Recognition

"He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him."

John 1:10 AMP

It is possible to be surrounded by the activity of God and still fail to recognize Him.

The world was made through Jesus, yet the world did not know Him. He came to His own, yet many did not receive Him.

Proximity is not the same as recognition.

A person can grow up around Scripture, worship, prayer, and church culture while knowing Jesus only through inherited descriptions. Familiarity can even make encounter more difficult because we assume we already know what He will say, how He will act, and whom He will welcome.

We stop looking because we think we have already seen.

Firsthand faith requires enough humility to admit that Jesus may be different from the version of Him we have carried.

Deeper Insight

John does not say the people lacked information about God. Many possessed Scripture, tradition, religious structure, and expectation. Their difficulty was recognizing God when He stood in front of them.

Religious knowledge can prepare us for encounter, but it can also become a filter that prevents us from recognizing anything outside our expectations.

Gold Nugget

Sometimes the greatest obstacle to seeing Jesus is our certainty that we already know exactly what He looks like.

6. Receiving Jesus Creates a New Beginning

“But to as many as did receive and welcome Him, He gave the right [the authority, the privilege] to become children of God, that is, to those who believe in (adhere to, trust in, and rely on) His name.”

John 1:12 AMP

John moves from recognition to reception.

Firsthand faith is not merely agreeing that Jesus exists. It is welcoming Him, trusting Him, and allowing relationship with Him to redefine who we are.

Those who receive Him are given the right to become children of God. This identity is not achieved through ancestry, human effort, religious performance, or someone else's faithfulness. It is received through relationship.

We are not merely people who believe facts about God. We are invited to become His children.

This means firsthand faith is deeply personal, but it is not self-created. We do not invent our identity. We receive it from the One who gives us new life.

Deeper Insight

John removes every source of inherited spiritual status. This birth is not of bloodline, natural descent, human desire, or human decision. No one can pass relationship with God to us biologically or institutionally.

Others can introduce us to Jesus. They cannot receive Him for us.

Gold Nugget

Faith may be introduced to us by others, but becoming a child of God cannot remain secondhand.

7. The Word Became Flesh

"And the Word (Christ) became flesh, and lived among us; and we [actually] saw His glory."

John 1:14 AMP

This is the center of the chapter and one of the central claims of Christianity.

The Word became flesh.

God did not remain a concept. He did not send a theory, a philosophy, or a system of spiritual improvement. He entered human life.

He became visible, touchable, knowable, and present.

John says, in effect, "We saw Him."

This is firsthand testimony. John is not merely presenting conclusions passed down through generations. He is bearing witness to Someone he encountered.

The incarnation also reveals something about how God chooses to be known. He comes near. He enters ordinary life. He walks with people, eats with them, answers their questions, confronts their assumptions, touches their wounds, and allows Himself to be misunderstood.

Deeper Insight

The phrase translated “lived among us” carries the idea of pitching a tent or tabernacling among us. In Israel’s story, the tabernacle represented God dwelling among His people. John declares that the presence of God has now come near in Jesus.

God’s presence is no longer merely associated with a place people must travel toward. In Jesus, God comes looking for humanity.

Gold Nugget

The Christian story is not humanity finding its way to a distant God. It is God coming near enough to be known.

8. Grace and Truth Are Not Competing Qualities

“For the Law was given through Moses, but grace [the unearned, undeserved favor of God] and truth came through Jesus Christ.”

John 1:17 AMP

Many people have inherited a divided picture of Jesus.

Some were taught truth without grace. God appeared severe, disappointed, and primarily concerned with identifying failure.

Others were given grace without truth. God appeared affirming but unable to challenge, transform, or lead them beyond what was harming them.

John does not divide the two. Jesus is full of grace and truth.

Truth reveals what is real. Grace makes it possible to face what is real without being destroyed by shame.

Firsthand encounter with Jesus does not leave us hidden, but neither does it leave us condemned. He tells the truth in a way that restores relationship and opens the possibility of transformation.

Deeper Insight

Grace and truth do not merely represent two attributes that Jesus balances. John says they came through Him. They are revealed personally.

We understand both grace and truth by watching how Jesus relates to people.

Gold Nugget

Grace does not protect us from truth. Grace gives us the safety to encounter truth and become free.

9. Jesus Makes the Unseen God Known

“No one has seen God at any time; the one and only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him and interpreted and revealed the awesome wonder of the Father.”

John 1:18 AMP

John acknowledges the difficulty directly: no one has seen God.

Human beings have always tried to explain Him. We construct images from nature, power, fear, authority, family experience, religious systems, and personal longing. Some of those images contain truth. Others distort Him.

Jesus comes to reveal the Father.

This gives us a vital standard for evaluating what we have inherited. We do not decide what God is like primarily from our fears, painful experiences, or religious assumptions. We allow Jesus to interpret the Father.

When Jesus welcomes the rejected, we see the Father.

When Jesus confronts exploitation, we see the Father.

When Jesus touches the unclean, forgives sinners, restores failures, weeps with grieving friends, and lays down His life, we see the Father.

Deeper Insight

Jesus does not merely tell us information about the Father. He interprets and reveals Him through His own life.

Everything John shows us about Jesus is also teaching us what God is like.

Gold Nugget

Jesus is not the kinder alternative to the Father. Jesus reveals the Father.

10. John Knows Who He Is Because He Knows Who He Is Not

"He confessed [truthfully] and did not deny that he was only a man, but acknowledged, 'I am not the Christ.'"

John 1:20 AMP

When religious leaders question John, they want a label.

Are you the Christ? Elijah? The Prophet?

John answers with clarity. He does not exaggerate his role, borrow someone else's identity, or use people's expectations to increase his importance.

He knows he is a voice.

Firsthand faith produces this kind of security. When we know ourselves in relationship with God, we no longer need to become central to every story. We can faithfully occupy our place without pretending it is someone else's.

John's identity is not built around being noticed. His joy is found in pointing beyond himself.

Deeper Insight

John defines himself by assignment rather than applause. He is not the Word. He is a voice serving the Word.

A voice is temporary. The message it carries is greater than the voice itself.

Gold Nugget

Secure identity is not thinking more highly of ourselves. It is knowing our place without needing it to be someone else's.

11. Revelation Often Begins With Paying Attention

"The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, 'Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

John 1:29 AMP

John sees Jesus and tells others to look.

This is one of the foundational movements of firsthand faith: paying attention.

Many people are waiting for God to become more obvious while overlooking the ways He is already present. We expect revelation to arrive dramatically, but John's Gospel repeatedly shows Jesus entering ordinary conversations, meals, weddings, questions, grief, work, and friendship.

"Look" is not merely an announcement. It is an invitation to redirect attention.

What we continually look toward shapes what we learn to recognize.

Deeper Insight

John identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God before the disciples fully understand what that means. Revelation sometimes arrives before comprehension.

We may recognize something true about Jesus long before we understand its full implications.

Gold Nugget

Firsthand faith begins when borrowed attention becomes personal attention. Someone may point, but eventually we must look.

12. John's Confidence Grew Through What God Showed Him

"I did not recognize Him [as the Messiah]; but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this One is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'"

John 1:33 AMP

John makes a remarkable admission twice: "I did not recognize Him."

His role did not mean he automatically understood everything. His confidence emerged through revelation and confirmation.

This protects firsthand faith from pretending.

A genuine relationship with God does not require us to claim certainty we do not possess. John can say both, "I did not know," and, "I have seen."

Healthy faith makes room for that movement.

Some beliefs may begin as things we were taught. Over time, prayer, Scripture, experience, obedience, and the work of the Holy Spirit deepen them into convictions we have personally tested and recognized.

Deeper Insight

The Spirit did not merely descend upon Jesus. The Spirit remained.

John sees in Jesus a sustained union with the Spirit. Jesus does not occasionally access God's presence. He lives in continual relationship with the Spirit.

Gold Nugget

Firsthand faith is not the refusal to say, "I don't know." It is the willingness to keep looking until we can honestly say, "I have seen."

13. Testimony Should Awaken Movement

"Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as He walked along, and said, 'Look! The Lamb of God!' The two disciples

heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.”

John 1:35–37 AMP

John’s disciples hear his testimony, but they do not remain with John discussing it. They follow Jesus.

That is the proper movement from secondhand testimony to firsthand faith:

Someone speaks. We hear. We turn. We follow.

Good teaching should produce more than admiration for the teacher. It should awaken movement toward Jesus.

At some point, the disciples must leave the safety of standing beside someone who knows and begin following the One they want to know.

Deeper Insight

John does not resist losing disciples to Jesus. His ministry succeeds when people no longer need to remain centered around him.

Spiritual leadership is not proven by how many people remain dependent upon the leader. It is proven by whether people learn to recognize and follow Jesus.

Gold Nugget

The purpose of testimony is not to end the conversation. It is to begin the pursuit.

14. Jesus’ First Question Is About Desire

“And Jesus turned and saw them following, and asked them, ‘What are you looking for?’”

John 1:38 AMP

These are the first recorded words of Jesus in John’s Gospel:

“What are you looking for?”

Before Jesus gives these disciples instruction, He asks them to examine desire.

Why are they following?

What do they expect to find?

What hunger has brought them here?

This question reaches beneath religious behavior. Two people may perform the same outward actions while searching for entirely different things. One may want truth. Another may want certainty, control, belonging, approval, relief, success, or an identity.

Jesus is not threatened by mixed motives. But He brings them into the light.

Firsthand faith requires honesty about what we are actually seeking.

Deeper Insight

The disciples respond by asking where Jesus is staying. They are not merely requesting information. They want proximity. They want enough time with Him to discover who He is.

Gold Nugget

Jesus does not begin by asking what we know. He asks what we are looking for.

15. "Come and See" Is an Invitation Into Experience

"He said to them, 'Come, and you will see.' So they went with Him and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day."

John 1:39 AMP

Jesus could have given them an address. Instead, He offers an invitation.

Come.

See.

Stay.

Firsthand faith grows through proximity. The disciples do not receive a complete theological system that afternoon. They spend time with Jesus.

Something happens during that time that John does not describe in detail. Whatever they experienced was enough for Andrew to leave saying, "We have found the Messiah."

There are parts of relationship that cannot be reduced to explanation. We can describe them, testify about them, and invite others toward them, but eventually they must be experienced.

Deeper Insight

Jesus does not demand complete understanding before allowing the disciples to come near. Their curiosity is enough to begin.

We often imagine that certainty is the doorway to relationship. In John 1, willingness is the doorway.

Gold Nugget

You do not need complete certainty to come. Sometimes clarity is found by staying.

16. Andrew Shares Discovery, Not Mere Theory

"He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah.'"

John 1:41 AMP

Andrew's witness is simple: "We have found."

He does not present himself as an expert. He speaks from discovery.

This is one of the most natural expressions of firsthand faith. When something becomes real to us, we want the people we love to encounter it too.

Andrew does not attempt to manufacture Simon's experience. He brings Simon to Jesus.

This becomes Andrew's recurring pattern in John. He notices people and possibilities, then brings them near enough for Jesus to act.

Deeper Insight

Firsthand faith does not eliminate testimony. It transforms testimony.

Instead of merely repeating what we have been told, we begin sharing what we are discovering.

Gold Nugget

The most compelling witness is often not "I can explain everything," but "I have found Someone you need to meet."

17. Jesus Sees More Than Simon Can Yet See

"Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas,' which is translated Peter."

John 1:42 AMP

Simon has barely entered the story when Jesus speaks to his identity.

Jesus sees who Simon is, but He also sees who Simon is becoming.

At this point, Simon has not demonstrated the stability suggested by the name Peter, meaning rock. He will be impulsive, overconfident, fearful, and inconsistent. Yet Jesus names him according to a future that relationship will form within him.

Firsthand encounter with Jesus does more than give us new information about God. It reveals something true about us.

We have all been named by experiences, failures, families, successes, fears, and other people's expectations. Jesus meets us inside those identities, but He is not confined by them.

Deeper Insight

Jesus does not deny Simon's present reality. He says, "You are Simon," and then, "You shall be called Cephas."

Grace does not pretend we are already fully formed. It sees both who we are and who we are becoming.

Gold Nugget

Jesus sees us truthfully in the present without losing sight of who love will form us to become.

18. Philip Is Found Before He Becomes a Finder

"The next day Jesus decided to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, 'Follow Me.'"

John 1:43 AMP

The text does not initially say Philip found Jesus. It says Jesus found Philip.

This corrects the subtle pride that can enter our spiritual stories. We may speak about finding truth, rebuilding faith, or discovering Jesus as though everything depended upon our search.

But beneath our searching is a God who has already moved toward us.

Philip's story begins with being found. Only then does he go looking for Nathanael.

We can invite others because we have first been invited. We can recognize them because we are learning what it means to be seen.

Deeper Insight

"Follow Me" is relational language. Jesus does not first ask Philip to master a belief system. He invites Philip to walk with Him.

Understanding will grow along the road.

Gold Nugget

Our search for God may be real, but it is always preceded by the God who comes looking for us.

19. Honest Skepticism Is Not Rejected

“Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip replied, ‘Come and see.’”

John 1:46 AMP

Nathanael is skeptical.

Philip does not shame him, argue with him, or demand immediate agreement. He offers the same invitation Jesus gave:

“Come and see.”

This is an important model for engaging honest questions. Philip trusts that Jesus can withstand Nathanael’s examination.

Faith becomes unhealthy when questions are treated as threats. Sometimes questioning is not rebellion. It is the beginning of refusing to live through someone else’s certainty.

Nathanael’s assumption about Nazareth is wrong, but Jesus does not reject him for beginning in the wrong place.

Deeper Insight

Philip does not possess all the answers. He even describes Jesus as the son of Joseph, which is incomplete. Yet his limited understanding does not prevent him from making a meaningful invitation.

We do not need perfect theology before pointing someone toward Jesus. We do need the humility to let Jesus reveal Himself beyond our explanations.

Gold Nugget

When we cannot answer every objection, we can still make room for encounter.

20. Jesus Sees Nathanael Before Nathanael Recognizes Jesus

"Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, 'Here is an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit nor duplicity!' Nathanael said to Jesus, 'How do You know these things about me?'"

John 1:47–48 AMP

Nathanael approaches Jesus with skepticism, but Jesus receives him with recognition.

Jesus sees the honesty beneath his question.

Nathanael may be dismissive, but he is not pretending. He says what he actually thinks. Jesus honors the absence of deceit.

This shows us that firsthand faith can begin with unpolished honesty. Jesus would rather meet the real person asking a difficult question than the religious version of that person performing certainty.

Nathanael's question shifts quickly. He begins by asking whether anything good can come from Nazareth. Now he asks Jesus, "How do You know me?"

The discussion moves from abstract judgment to personal encounter.

Deeper Insight

Before Nathanael sees Jesus clearly, he discovers that Jesus has already seen him.

This is often the turning point in encounter. We realize we are not examining Jesus from a safe distance. We are standing before Someone who knows us.

Gold Nugget

Firsthand faith becomes possible when we stop presenting the person we think God wants and allow ourselves to be genuinely known.

21. Encounter Opens a Larger World

"Jesus answered him, 'Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.'"

John 1:50 AMP

Nathanael's encounter is real, but it is only the beginning.

Jesus does not criticize his early belief. He expands its horizon.

"You will see greater things."

Firsthand faith is not built upon one frozen experience. It is a continuing life of discovery. Yesterday's revelation may begin our journey, but it cannot replace today's relationship.

We are always in danger of building a permanent structure around a moment when Jesus intended the moment to invite us farther.

The chapter ends with an open heaven and the Son of Man standing as the meeting place between heaven and earth. Jesus is not merely showing Nathanael something impressive. He is revealing that access to God is found in Him.

Deeper Insight

Nathanael begins with a narrow question about Nazareth. Jesus ends by opening heaven.

Encounter expands the world we thought we understood.

Gold Nugget

Jesus meets us inside our present questions, but He does not intend to leave our vision confined to them.

WHAT JOHN 1 IS REALLY DOING

John 1 is moving us through a progression:

1. **The Word already exists before our explanations.**
2. **The Word becomes flesh and comes near.**
3. **A witness points toward the Light.**
4. **People hear the testimony and begin following.**
5. **Jesus asks what they are seeking.**
6. **He invites them to come, see, and stay.**
7. **Encounter becomes personal conviction.**
8. **Those who encounter Him invite others.**
9. **Jesus sees and names what people cannot yet see in themselves.**
10. **Every encounter becomes an invitation into something greater.**

The chapter begins with the eternal identity of Jesus and ends with ordinary people beginning to recognize Him.

John is showing us that revelation is not complete when truth has been announced. Truth must be encountered, received, and followed.

SECONDHAND FAITH AND FIRSTHAND FAITH

Secondhand faith

- Knows what others say about Jesus
- Depends upon someone else's certainty
- Repeats inherited language
- Fears questions may destroy faith
- Confuses familiarity with recognition
- Treats leaders as spiritual destinations
- Requires certainty before approaching
- Hides doubt behind religious performance
- Defines itself through past labels
- Builds around a former experience

Firsthand faith

- Responds personally to Jesus
- Develops rooted trust through relationship
- Learns to speak honestly from discovery

- Trusts Jesus enough to examine what is true
- Continues looking for Jesus beyond assumptions
- Receives their witness as an invitation
- Comes with curiosity and willingness
- Brings honest questions into encounter
- Allows Jesus to reveal identity
- Remains open to seeing greater things

Firsthand faith does not mean isolated faith. We still need Scripture, community, teachers, and the witness of others. It means those gifts lead us into relationship with Jesus rather than becoming substitutes for it.

DEEP ACTIVATION

Take time with these questions without rushing toward the expected answer.

What have I inherited?

What beliefs about God came primarily from my family, church background, painful experiences, or the expectations of others?

What have I personally encountered?

Which truths about Jesus have become real through Scripture, prayer, obedience, suffering, healing, correction, or relationship?

What may need to be examined?

Are there things I believe about God that do not resemble the Father revealed through Jesus?

What am I actually looking for?

When I approach Jesus, am I seeking relationship, reassurance, control, answers, approval, relief, or transformation?

Where am I being invited to come and see?

Is there an area where Jesus may be asking me to move beyond observation and begin following?

What question have I been afraid to ask?

Can I bring that question honestly to Jesus rather than hiding it behind acceptable religious language?

What name have I accepted?

Have I allowed failure, fear, family history, or someone else's judgment to define me? What might Jesus see that I cannot yet see?

Who helped me look toward Jesus?

Did their witness become an invitation into personal relationship, or have I remained dependent upon their experience?

What have I seen that I can honestly share?

Not what do I think I should say, but what have I genuinely discovered about Jesus?

DECLARATION

I will not settle for knowing Jesus only through the experiences of others.

I receive the witness of Scripture, the wisdom of community, and the testimony of those who have walked before me, but I will allow each one to direct me toward Jesus Himself.

I am not afraid of honest questions because Jesus is not threatened by truth.

The Word has become flesh. God has come near. The Light continues to shine.

I will come.

I will see.

I will stay.

I will follow.

I am known by Jesus, invited by Jesus, and being formed through relationship with Jesus.

What I have heard is becoming what I know.

FINAL THOUGHT

John 1 does not ask us to reject everything we have received from others. It asks us to follow where their witness points.

John points to Jesus. Andrew brings Simon. Philip invites Nathanael. Each person begins with someone else's testimony, but none is meant to stop there.

The invitation is not, "Accept my experience as enough."

The invitation is:

"Come and see."

Firsthand faith begins when we accept that invitation. It deepens as we remain. And it becomes a witness when we can honestly say, not merely because someone told us, but because we are learning to know Him for ourselves:

We have found the One we were looking for.