



Bible Study Leader Guide

Jesus Christ Above All Scripture References NIV

Color Code: Black = Study Text and Scriptures; **Red = Answers**

Sidebar:

The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, proclaimed at the opening service of the 2017 LWML Convention: “Jesus shows us a different way. He lays down a sacrifice, a price. ... He knows each one of you by name and loves you to death — death on a cross.” Deaconess Betty Knapp, Bible Study Leader, encouraged attendees to stay “focused on who we are and what we do. We keep [Jesus] Christ above all as we continue to “Serve the Lord with Gladness.”

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord, thank You for Your Word that warns, Your Word that warms, and Your Word that wins our hearts. In the glorious name of Jesus Christ above all. Amen.

Opening Activity — Discussion

Share a time when you did your own thing, took care of yourself, relied on yourself, but still wanted to be called a Child of God. _____ **Answers will vary.** NOTE: Prepare your own example in case it is needed.

A Name NOTE: Suggest that participants mark their place in Isaiah for quick returns there.

In that day seven women will take hold of one man and say, “We will eat our own food and provide our own clothes; only let us be called by your name.” (Isaiah 4:1a NIV)*

Because of God’s judgment upon Israel, husband material was scarce, and women of Zion were trying anything simply to survive. We can see these women say they will take care of themselves, but they want to be called by the man’s name. They want the perks, safety and dignity, without the marriage partnership. It seems they want what his name can provide, even if they don’t want him.

I’ve been through times of self-reliance and frenzied determination, going to church and praying as usual, but not giving God the honor He deserves. I wanted to be called by His Name but was not walking with my Beloved — needing the perks, the protection, the dignity of His Name, but not living whole-heartedly for Him. He wants us and the loving relationship.

Compare the attitude and what the women say in Isaiah 4:1a, “We will eat our own food and provide our own clothes;” with **Matthew 6:11** and **Proverbs 30:7–8**. From where or from whom does our daily bread really come? _____ **We ask God for our daily bread, knowing all good things come from Him.**

Matthew 6:11 Give us today our daily bread.

Proverbs 30:7-8 “Two things I ask of you, O Lord; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread.

Please read **Micah 6:8**, then name a way we can act on it. _____ **Answers will vary, but might include: standing up for what’s right; being merciful and showing compassion by caring for someone or making meals for that person; being kind to service workers; volunteering; forgiving rude drivers; praying for lost souls, etc. Walking humbly first assumes we are walking with God, and that we are obedient to Him and always put Him first. We love God and we love our neighbors.**

Micah 6:8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

A Canopy

Read **Isaiah 4:2–6**.

²In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. ³Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem. ⁴The LORD will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire. ⁵Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. ⁶It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.

This beautiful passage is said to be a prophecy regarding the remnant of Israel and their Messiah. It is a wonderful image meant for us too. A canopy will protect from heat, storms, and rain. Between the canopy and the people is a cloud of smoke by day or a glow of flaming fire by night. They can look up and see the glory of the Lord!

How do **Revelation 7:15-16** and **Psalms 91:4** describe the shelter our Beloved offers? _____

Revelation 7:15-16 Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat.

Psalms 91:4 He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

Discuss whether living under the canopy sounds liberating or restricting. _____ Answers will vary.

Satan will certainly tempt us to come out from beneath the canopy, and he may tempt us to live on the edge — stepping out in self-reliance or true defiance, and ducking back in when things go wrong — but that is uncomfortable and even dangerous! We need the individual boundaries God sets for each of us and our personal relationship with our Lord.

Reread **Isaiah 4:3** [above]. What are the people called? _____ Holy

What do you think it means to be “recorded among the living”? _____ Answers will vary.

What light does **Luke 10:20** shed on that phrase? _____

Besides being physically alive, the people are truly living for God and are bound for heaven. Their names are recorded, written in the Book of Life!

Luke 10:20 “However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

Isaiah 4:4 says: *The Lord will wash away the filth of the women and will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire* before He creates the canopy over His people. We are judged and we are refined by fire in order to be cleansed, and we are **made** holy — not by that refinement, but because the Lord Jesus has washed away **all** our sins in Holy Baptism and assures us of His forgiveness. Choose one or more of these Scriptural references about being refined to read aloud and discuss: **Psalms 66:10; Isaiah 48:10; Daniel 11:35; Daniel 12:10; 1 Peter 1:7.**

Answers will vary.

Psalms 66:10 For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver.

Isaiah 48:10 See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.
Daniel 11:35 Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.
Daniel 12:10 Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.
1 Peter 1:7 These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

In what way does desiring to be refined by the Lord show trust? _____ Answers will vary, but may include: growing through the process of sanctification; going against worldly lifestyles and choices may be uncomfortable; refining may include testing and/or suffering. Non-Christians can make good choices and do good things. However, many in our society don't value purity and holiness: they want to live for themselves, not with faith and not for God. Some in our culture blame others for their circumstances or decisions; others say, "I'm okay the way I am." American culture tends toward "I want it now," while a Christian can say, "I will wait on the Lord." At the same time that we are justified, we as Christians are sanctified; then, the process of sanctification continues.

How does living within God's boundaries result in freedom? _____ Answers will vary, but may include: Children need boundaries to grow healthy and strong, and as God's children, we need the same. Acknowledging, accepting, and even loving those holy boundaries allows us to live a godly life. A Christian's definition of success may not match the world's, and freedom in Christ may not sound like freedom at all to someone with worldly values since welcoming God as Master of our lives opposes the popular view that "I am my own master." Living this way comes from the Gospel.

Jesus Christ above all

In **Philippians 2:9-11**, what actions are expected in response to Jesus' name? _____ Bow and confess. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Our American culture reveres self-sufficiency, but our Christian faith reveres the Lord and His provision. We still work hard and take care of ourselves and our family, but our God centers our hearts in Him. Our speaking "only let us be called by your name" is not a cry of arrogance or desperation as it seemed to be for the women of Zion, but the true cry of the bride's heart to her glorious Groom. Being called by His Name is a fantastic honor, a responsibility to act in ways that bring glory to the Name He gives us, and a commitment to being the Bride of Christ.

Look at **Isaiah 4:6** one more time. What a peaceful, fearless place it is under His canopy — a glorious shelter and shade from the heat, a refuge (see **Isaiah 25:4**), and *hiding place*. Can you picture yourself there — the bride eager to serve and live life with her Groom, eternally safe under His canopy of love? Yes or no.

Isaiah 4:6 It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.

Isaiah 25:4 You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in his distress, a shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat.

Discuss: How do you feel there? _____

Answers will vary, but may include: safe, loved, protected, peaceful, joyful. We don't have to fear the storms of life there; we can hide safely there when the rain pours down; we are spared the searing sun of the wicked world; our spirits would be truly safe under His glory, under His canopy. Answers may also include that daily life can sometimes be a struggle and less than peaceful. Faith is more than feelings, so in those days, we take comfort in God's presence with us and His promises to us in His Word.

How do you act there? _____

Answers will vary, but may include: confident; empowered; unafraid; loving; giving; living surrendered to God, putting Him first; actively serving in big or small ways; putting others before ourselves; openly loving the Lord and one another; teaching and sharing our faith; living peaceful and humble lives. We are confined, but free — the result of God's work in us!

Here are some things to remember. (Please note: This could be a marathon Bible search, so you may want to look at the first reference as a group and encourage each other to study the complete set in depth at home. All verses are printed in the Leader's Guide [available on line], and there are many other fitting Scriptures not listed. If you decide you are even more of a sprinter, just read the list itself.)

- We are called by His Name and He calls us by name. (**Isaiah 43:1 and 7; John 20:31; Revelation 3:5**)

Isaiah 43:1 and 7 But now, this is what the LORD says — he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have **summoned you by name**; you are mine." and ⁷"...**everyone who is called by my name**, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

John 20:31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Revelation 3:5 He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

- We move deep inside and don't dance on the edge. (**1 Kings 8:23; Matthew 6:24**)

1 Kings 8:23 ... "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below — you who keep your covenant of love with your servants **who continue wholeheartedly** in your way."

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."

- We recognize the boundaries and stay connected to God. (**Deuteronomy 7:9–11; Matthew 22:36–40; Galatians 5:24–25**)

Deuteronomy 7:9-11 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; **he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.** But those who hate him he will repay to their face by destruction; he will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate him. Therefore, take care to follow the commands, decrees and laws I give you today.

Matthew 22:36-40 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Galatians 5:24-25 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

- We realize holy fruit is expected of us. (**John 15:3–5; Luke 12:48b; Galatians 5:22–23**)

John 15:3-5 “You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. **If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit**; apart from me you can do nothing.”

Luke 12:48b From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

- We are responsible for living holy lives. (**1 Thessalonians 4:7; Leviticus 19:2; Romans 3:23–24**)

1 Thessalonians 4:7 **For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.**

Leviticus 19:2 “Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.’”

Romans 3:23-24 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

- We are guided. (**Psalms 119:105; Proverbs 16:9; Ephesians 5:1–2**)

Psalms 119:105 **Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.**

Proverbs 16:9 In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.

Ephesians 5:1-2 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

- Our spirit is guarded, so we can be useful in His Kingdom. (**Romans 8:9a; 2 Timothy 1:13–14; 2 Timothy 2:20–21**)

Romans 8:9a You, however, are **controlled** not by the sinful nature but **by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you.**

2 Timothy 1:13-14 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you — guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

2 Timothy 2:20-21 In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

- We are sheltered by God. (**Psalms 32:7; Psalm 73:28; Mark 4:39–40**)

Psalm 32:7 You are **my hiding place; you will protect me** from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

Psalm 73:28 But as for me, it is good to be near God. I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge; I will tell of all your deeds.

Mark 4:39-40 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

- What comes from us under the canopy, our hearts joined with His, is the work of the Holy Spirit — what God has done for us in Christ! (**Ephesians 5:8–9; 1 Peter 4:11**)

Ephesians 5:8-9 For you were once darkness, but **now you are light in the LORD**. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)

1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

- All glory is His! (**1 Chronicles 29:11; Romans 11:36; Hebrews 13:20–21**)

1 Chronicles 29:11 **Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory** and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.

Romans 11:36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Hebrews 13:20-21 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

NOTE: And we all say ... AMEN!

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, please show us our errors, refine us, make us fruitful and holy. Create in us a clean heart and record us among Your living people. Thank You for opening the way for us to live under Your glorious canopy. We want to be called by Your Name, Jesus, and reflect Your light into our world for Your glory. We pray in the Holy Name above all names, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Closing Hymn

Sing or say together one or more verses of “How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds” (*LSB #524; LW #279; TLH #364*).

*Scripture quotes in NIV