

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
JOHN

John wanted his readers to understand that Jesus was both divine and human, and that He is the source of salvation for all humankind. In the first chapter he introduced Jesus as the Word, who was with God in the beginning, who was God, and through whom creation happened (1:1–3). Each chapter of John’s Gospel references Jesus’ deity in some way. While stressing His divinity, John also highlighted Jesus’ humanity (1:14): we see one illustration of this when Jesus’ dear friend Lazarus died. Jesus showed His very human emotional capacity when His grief moved Him to tears (11:35).

John’s Gospel is unlike the three Synoptic Gospels. While there is similarity among the first three, 90 percent of John’s Gospel is unique. Rather than focusing on what Jesus did, John wanted his readers to know what Jesus said and who Jesus was. John recorded long dialogues Jesus had with individuals, lengthy discourses with crowds, and, perhaps most significantly, an extensive recounting of Jesus’ last words to His disciples before He went to the cross (chs. 13–17). John’s Gospel provides details about Jesus’ ministry in Jerusalem and Judea rather than Galilee. Themes of contrast mark this book: light and darkness, life and death, belief and unbelief, love and hate, the eternal and that which perishes.

The four Gospels together describe dozens of miracles Jesus performed. John described only seven of these. He referred to these miracles as *signs* because he wanted his readers to see that they pointed to the reality that Jesus was the Son of God.

At the end of his Gospel, John clearly stated his purpose for writing: to show that Jesus was truly the Christ and the source of human salvation (20:30–31). Once readers realized that Jesus was the Messiah, they could be drawn to belief in Him and have eternal life.

Jesus’ “I am” statements make up another unique element in John’s Gospel. In Moses’ encounter with the burning bush, God revealed himself as “I AM” (Ex. 3:14). Jesus harkened back to the burning bush and revealed aspects of His divinity in seven metaphoric statements. Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life” (6:35, 48); “I am the light of the world” (8:12); “I am the door” (10:7, 9); “I am the good shepherd” (10:11, 14); “I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25); “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6); and “I am the true vine” (15:1, 5). In addition to affirming His divinity, Jesus used these metaphors to indicate ways in which He was the ultimate solution to the human condition.

Jesus often spoke of His divinity in ways that drew deep resistance from the Jewish religious leaders. In chapter 2 John described how Jesus cleared the temple, which set the stage for the conflict with Jewish religious leaders that grew more intense with each encounter. For those who did not believe, Jesus’ claims

of divinity were blasphemous and called for his death. The conflict finally culminated in Jesus' crucifixion. John presented Jesus as the Messiah whose words were clear only to those who believed in Him.

HISTORICAL & LITERARY CONTEXT

This Gospel, like the others, is technically an anonymous work. But in the second century, church father Irenaeus promoted the view that John was the author of the fourth Gospel. Internal evidence supports this view. For example, the author had intimate knowledge of the Jewish feasts and customs. He also described events from an eyewitness perspective and related geographic details about the settings of events. The fact that John's name does not appear in this Gospel when John was one of the three prominent disciples Jesus often took aside for significant experiences (e.g., Mark 5:37) seems to indicate that he was the

author. Note several references to "one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved" (13:23). It seems reasonable that the author might not include his own name in his writing while suggesting that he was the disciple who had this special status with Jesus. John was one of the first disciples Jesus called with the words "Follow Me" (Matt. 4:19). He and his brother, James, were fishermen and identified as sons of Zebedee and called the "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17).

Scholars debate when John wrote this Gospel. The traditional view puts the date of writing between the middle and the end of the first century.

PREPARE

John's Gospel is an invitation to explore how Jesus presented Himself as both divine and human in ways that inspire belief leading to eternal life. As mentioned, much of John's Gospel is a record of extended faith-nurturing conversations Jesus had with individuals and His disciples. As you read, notice how Jesus established rapport with individuals and how He stretched their thinking about theological ideas in ways that fostered growing belief in Him.

For example, in the conversation with Nicodemus the Pharisee, note how Jesus introduced the idea of spiritual birth (3:1–21). Feel the confusion Nicodemus must have felt. As you read about the Samaritan woman at the well (4:1–42), marvel at the theological depth of the conversation Jesus initiated with this woman, and note the transformation that resulted. Pay attention to the conversations that reveal the religious leaders' growing resentment of Jesus (chs. 7–10). Be impressed with the way Jesus interacted with Mary and Martha after their brother, Lazarus, died. Note the faith state-

ments from these sisters (ch. 11). Reflect on the significant postresurrection conversations Jesus had with grieving Mary Magdalene; Thomas, who dared to express his doubt (ch. 20); and Peter, who needed restoration following his denial of Jesus (ch. 21).

Spend extended time in Jesus' last words with His disciples in the Upper Room as they celebrated the Passover before His arrest, trial, and crucifixion (chs. 13–17). Jesus laid foundations in these words that the apostles echoed later in their writings. Think about the following themes in the Upper Room Discourse: love as the mark of the Christian community, the promise and gift of the Holy Spirit, fruitfulness in the life of a follower of Jesus, promised comfort during coming persecution, and the promise of eternal life. Jesus gave His disciples what they needed to live faithfully after He was gone.

As you read and engage with John's Gospel, meet Jesus. Welcome Him. Be prepared to grow in your appreciation of Christ's humanity and divinity in ways that will support your deepening faith.

THE ETERNAL WORD

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. **4** In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. **5** And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

JOHN'S WITNESS: THE TRUE LIGHT

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. **7** This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. **8** He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. **9** That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. **11** He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. **12** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: **13** who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

THE WORD BECOMES FLESH

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'"

16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. **17** For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

19 Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."

21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

And he answered, "No."

22 Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"

23 He said: "I am

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
"Make straight the way of the LORD,"

as the prophet Isaiah said."

24 Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. **25** And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"



JOURNAL

John 1:1–13

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God's presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- How do these verses describe who Jesus is and why He came? What was Jesus' purpose in coming to the earth (see v. 12)? How did people receive Him when He first came (see vv. 11–13)?
- According to verses 6–7, what was John the Baptist's purpose?
- How can you be like John the Baptist and show people the truth about Jesus, the "light of the world" (8:12; 9:5)?



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

John 1:19–27

As the fame of John the Baptist spread, Jewish religious leaders began to question his identity and purposes. John affirmed he was not the Messiah; rather, he was just a man sent to prepare the way for the Messiah (v. 23). John added that he was not worthy of untying that Man's sandals (v. 27).

Evaluate your own attitude toward Christ. Do you elevate Him, or do you seek to elevate yourself? Ask God to give you the same attitude as John. If you need to, confess any pride that this passage might have uncovered.



CONTEMPLATE

John 1:35–51

READ. Read these verses and look for a word, a phrase, or an image that stands out. Consider “What do you seek?” (v. 38) or “Come and see” (vv. 39, 46).

MEDITATE. Ask the Spirit to help you identify the area of your life tied to the word, phrase, or idea you chose. What connection might the Holy Spirit want you to make? Consider how the Lord beckons you to come and learn more about Him. How do you respond?

PRAY. Offer your meditations to the Lord as a form of prayer. Ask Him to meet you in your thoughts. Pray that you may know the Father and Son more (John 17:3).

CONTEMPLATE. Savor the fact that Jesus, the Rabbi, has invited you to come and see, and learn from Him directly.

²⁶John answered them, saying, “I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. ²⁷It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.”

²⁸These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

THE LAMB OF GOD

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ ³¹I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.”

³²And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. ³³I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

³⁵Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. ³⁶And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!”

³⁷The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, “**What do you seek?**”

They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), “where are You staying?”

³⁹He said to them, “**Come and see.**” They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

⁴⁰One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. ⁴¹He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). ⁴²And he brought him to Jesus.

Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “**You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas**” (which is translated, A Stone).

PHILIP AND NATHANAEAL

⁴³The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “**Follow Me.**” ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

⁴⁶And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

⁴⁷Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “**Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!**”

⁴⁸Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?”

Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

⁴⁹ Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

⁵⁰ Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” ⁵¹ And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

WATER TURNED TO WINE

2 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. ³ And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.”

⁴ Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.”

⁵ His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.”

⁶ Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. ⁷ Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ And He said to them, “Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.” And they took it. ⁹ When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. ¹⁰ And he said to him, “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!”

¹¹ This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

¹² After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.

JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE

¹³ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. ¹⁵ When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers’ money and overturned the tables. ¹⁶ And He said to those who sold doves, “Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!” ¹⁷ Then His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.”

¹⁸ So the Jews answered and said to Him, “What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?”

¹⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

²⁰ Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

John 2:1–12

The first miracle Jesus performed solved a significant problem at an important celebration. At the wedding, the wine ran out, which no doubt embarrassed and worried the party hosts. Jesus’ attention to this issue in the hosts’ time of need revealed His character. Moreover, Jesus also demonstrated His authority over nature. He immediately turned water into wine—excellent wine (v. 10). In this one miracle, we see Jesus’ interest in the normal human problems of life and we see Him as the sovereign God over all creation.

As you pray about the meaning of this story in your life, consider that Jesus’ first miracle points toward the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9).



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John 2:13–22

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God’s presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- What was Jesus referring to when He spoke of destroying the temple and raising it again in three days (see v. 21)? Why did this confuse the religious leaders (see v. 20)?
- How were the religious leaders dishonoring God in the temple (see vv. 14–16)?
- How passionate are you about honoring the Lord in your worship? How might your zeal compare to the way Jesus felt about the temple (see vv. 16–17)?

²¹But He was speaking of the temple of His body. ²²Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

THE DISCERNER OF HEARTS

²³Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. ²⁴But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, ²⁵and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

THE NEW BIRTH

3 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

³Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

⁴Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

⁵Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

⁹Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”

¹⁰Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? ¹¹Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. ¹²If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of Man who is in heaven. ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

¹⁸“He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

John 3:16–21

When Adam and Eve sinned, they hid in shame from God (Gen. 3:8). Jesus raised a similar issue. With His arrival, light had come into the world, but people preferred the darkness because of their sins (v. 19). The fear of being exposed and judged makes it seem easier to stay in hiding.

How can we overcome this universal problem? Jesus addressed it by saying that those who believe in Christ will not be condemned (vv. 16–17). Because of Jesus, we can confess our sins and walk in Jesus’ light without fear of condemnation. As you pray through this Scripture passage, consider whether fear and shame are holding you prisoner in the dark. If so, trust in God’s love and grace. Just ask, and He will purify and restore you (1 John 1:9).

be exposed. ²¹But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

JOHN THE BAPTIST EXALTS CHRIST

²²After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. ²³Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. ²⁴For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

²⁵Then there arose a dispute between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. ²⁶And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"

²⁷John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. ²⁸You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' ²⁹He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. ³⁰He must increase, but I *must* decrease. ³¹He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. ³²And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. ³³He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. ³⁴For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. ³⁵The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. ³⁶He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

A SAMARITAN WOMAN MEETS HER MESSIAH

4 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John ²(though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), ³He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. ⁴But He needed to go through Samaria.

⁵So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

⁷A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." ⁸For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

⁹Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

¹⁰Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."



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John 3:22–36

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God's presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- How did John react to the news that Jesus was also baptizing people (see vv. 27–29)?
- What did John mean when he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (v. 30)? How does this demonstrate John's humility?
- How can you follow John's example in verse 30? Are there areas of your life where you struggle with pride? Confess your prideful attitudes and actions, and ask the Lord for a humble heart.



CONTEMPLATE

John 4:1–26

READ. Consider the kind yet direct way that Jesus approached a Samaritan, whom the Jews considered ceremonially unclean. Note the repeated use of the word *water*. As you read these verses, ask the Holy Spirit to highlight a word, phrase, or verse for you.

MEDITATE. Which word, phrase, or verse stood out to you? Ask the Holy Spirit to provide insight into how it connects to your life. Which part of you is thirsty for revelation from these verses?

PRAY. If the Spirit has revealed a dry area, ask God to restore you there. Confess any sin in this area, including doubt. Ask God to satisfy you with His truth.

CONTEMPLATE. Proverbs 11:25 says, "He who waters will also be watered himself." Make it a point to refresh someone with truth.

¹¹The woman said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? ¹²Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?”

¹³Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

¹⁵The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.”

¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”

¹⁷The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.”

Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’ ¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.”

¹⁹The woman said to Him, “Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”

²¹Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²²You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

²⁵The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.”

²⁶Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am *He*.”



CONTEMPLATE

John 4:31–38

READ. Ask God to reveal Himself through these verses. Then read them and pay attention to details. Take note of any word, phrase, or verse that draws your attention.

MEDITATE. Did the imagery Jesus used connect to anything in your life? What is the connection? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you eyes to see anything that may be relevant but not immediately obvious.

PRAY. After pondering, turn your meditations into prayer. Ask God to show you fields ripe for reaping and opportunities to gather the fruits.

CONTEMPLATE. The Lord commands us as individuals to labor and bear fruit for His kingdom's sake, but we do not have to labor alone. Take some time to think of others you know who will share in the work of advancing God's kingdom and His glory.

THE WHITENED HARVEST

²⁷And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why are You talking with her?”

²⁸The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ²⁹“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” ³⁰Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

³¹In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”

³²But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.”

³³Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?”

³⁴Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. ³⁵Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! ³⁶And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. ³⁷For in this the saying is



ENGAGE THROUGH ART

THE HARVESTERS BY PIETER BRUEGEL THE ELDER

Pieter Bruegel's *The Harvesters*, completed in 1565, brings to life peasants working in a field. Workers engage in different tasks, each one necessary to complete the harvest. One man cuts the wheat, while another lays it in piles. Women tie up the bundles and stand them upright. One exhausted man rests near a tree as a group shares a meal in the shade. Community, labor, rest, nature—these profound themes emerge from this beautiful scene.

Read John 4:27–38. Jesus, comparing people to crops, told His disciples to open their eyes to the surrounding fields, the crops of which were ripe for harvest (see v. 35). He added that some people reap and others sow. Consider whether you are doing the work God has called you to do within your community. Are you sowing and/or reaping?



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Harvesters*, 1565, Oil on Wood
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Rogers Fund, 1919



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John 4:39–42

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God's presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- According to verse 39, why did the Samaritans believe in Jesus?
- Why did many more people believe in Jesus (see vv. 40–42)?
- How does spending time with Jesus increase your faith and trust in Him? How would you rate your desire to spend time with Jesus? What can you let go of in your schedule that will allow you to spend more time with Him daily?



PICTURE IT

John 5:1–17

PREPARE. Quiet yourself and ask God to prepare your heart and guide your imagination.

PICTURE. Imagine you are at the pool of Bethesda under one of the five covered porches. Everywhere you look you see suffering mingled with hope. Near one of the two pools, you see a sick man talking with Jesus. The rumors are that he's been sick for more than thirty-eight years. Suddenly, you see him stand and roll up his bed! What are your first thoughts? Is Jesus still there? Someone next to you exclaims that the man really shouldn't pick up his bed on the Sabbath. How do you respond?

PRAY. Praise Christ that He never stops doing His Father's work! The Jews were distracted by a teaching added on to the law. Ask God to remove similar distraction from you and to increase your own compassion toward others.

true: 'One sows and another reaps.' ³⁸I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."

THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

³⁹And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I *ever* did." ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. ⁴¹And many more believed because of His own word.

⁴²Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world."

WELCOME AT GALILEE

⁴³Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. ⁴⁴For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. ⁴⁵So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.

A NOBLEMAN'S SON HEALED

⁴⁶So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. ⁴⁷When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸Then Jesus said to him, "**Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.**"

⁴⁹The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

⁵⁰Jesus said to him, "**Go your way; your son lives.**" So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. ⁵¹And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told *him*, saying, "Your son lives!"

⁵²Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." ⁵³So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "**Your son lives.**" And he himself believed, and his whole household.

⁵⁴This again *is* the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

A MAN HEALED AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

5 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ²Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. ³In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. ⁴For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. ⁵Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight

years. ⁶When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been *in that condition* a long time, He said to him, **“Do you want to be made well?”**

⁷The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”

⁸Jesus said to him, **“Rise, take up your bed and walk.”** ⁹And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.

And that day was the Sabbath. ¹⁰The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.”

¹¹He answered them, “He who made me well said to me, **‘Take up your bed and walk.’**”

¹²Then they asked him, “Who is the Man who said to you, **‘Take up your bed and walk?’**” ¹³But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in *that* place. ¹⁴Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, **“See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.”**

¹⁵The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

HONOR THE FATHER AND THE SON

¹⁶For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷But Jesus answered them, **“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.”**

¹⁸Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. ¹⁹Then Jesus answered and said to them, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. ²⁰For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. ²¹For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them*, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. ²²For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, ²³that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.**

LIFE AND JUDGMENT ARE THROUGH THE SON

²⁴“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. ²⁵Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. ²⁶For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, ²⁷and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. ²⁸Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the



CONTEMPLATE

John 5:19–23

READ. As you read Jesus’ response to the Jews seeking to kill Him, notice the use of repetition. Pay special attention to which aspect of Jesus’ relationship with the Father moves you.

MEDITATE. In this passage Jesus said that He does what the Father has shown Him. With that in mind, how can you come to reflect the example and characteristics of Jesus as described in His Word?

PRAY. Turn your meditation into a prayer, sharing your heart and mind with the Father. Praise Him for our adoptions as sons and daughters, and for Jesus’ unique and eternal relationship with Him.

CONTEMPLATE. We can truly do nothing to advance God’s kingdom and glory if we rely on our own power. Yet we have the promise that we can do anything through Christ, who gives us strength (Phil. 4:13). Seek that strength through prayer and contemplation on His Word.



PRAYING
SCRIPTURE

John 5:24–30

The prophet Isaiah wrote that a critical problem for human beings is that our sins have separated us from a holy God (Is. 59:2). Without access to God, people languish and then perish. While talking with the religious leaders of the day, Jesus solved the problem that Isaiah identified. In love the Father had sent the Son. The Son would offer His life as a sacrifice for our sins, paying the full cost once and for all. Those who believe in the Son have then crossed over the divide, moving from death to life (v. 24).

Thank Jesus for being the bridge to life. Thank Him for being a just and merciful Judge (v. 30). Praise God that through Jesus' sacrifice true life has been made available to all (v. 24).

resurrection of condemnation. ³⁰I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

THE FOURFOLD WITNESS

³¹“If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. ³²There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. ³³You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. ³⁴Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. ³⁵He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. ³⁶But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. ³⁷And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. ³⁸But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. ³⁹You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. ⁴⁰But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

⁴¹“I do not receive honor from men. ⁴²But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. ⁴³I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. ⁴⁴How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that *comes* from the only God? ⁴⁵Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is *one* who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. ⁴⁶For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

6 After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is *the Sea of Tiberias*. ²Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. ³And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

⁴Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. ⁵Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, “*Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?*” ⁶But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

⁷Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.”

⁸One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ⁹“There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?”

¹⁰Then Jesus said, “*Make the people sit down.*” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. ¹¹And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²So when they were filled, He said to

His disciples, **“Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.”**¹³ Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.¹⁴ Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, **“This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”**

JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA

¹⁵ Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

¹⁶ Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷ got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them.¹⁸ Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing.¹⁹ So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid.²⁰ But He said to them, **“It is I; do not be afraid.”**²¹ Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.

THE BREAD FROM HEAVEN

²² On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone—²³ however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks—²⁴ when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.²⁵ And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, **“Rabbi, when did You come here?”**

²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷ Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”**

²⁸ Then they said to Him, **“What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?”**

²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, **“This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”**

³⁰ Therefore they said to Him, **“What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?”**³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, **“He gave them bread from heaven to eat.”**

³² Then Jesus said to them, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”**

³⁴ Then they said to Him, **“Lord, give us this bread always.”**

³⁵ And Jesus said to them, **“I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen Me**



JOURNAL

John 6:15–21

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God's presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- How do these verses illustrate Jesus' power and influence?
- Even though Jesus' power and influence were evident, why do you think He resisted taking an earthly throne (see v. 15)?
- How can you invite Jesus to be King of your life? How can you open yourself up to His power and influence?



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

John 6:22–40

When more and more people discovered that Jesus had been healing the sick and feeding the hungry, they began to follow Him from place to place (vv. 24–25). Jesus called their motives into question. They were looking for Him in order to get free food (v. 26)! Jesus encouraged them to set their sights higher, calling them to look for food that would give them eternal life (v. 27)—namely, the Bread of Life, Himself (v. 35).

What does this interaction between Jesus and the people mean to you? Ask God to reveal your motives for following Him. Ask Him to show you how to better feed on the Bread of Life.

and yet do not believe. ³⁷All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

REJECTED BY HIS OWN

⁴¹The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, “I am the bread which came down from heaven.” ⁴²And they said, “Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, ‘I have come down from heaven’?”

⁴³Jesus therefore answered and said to them, “Do not murmur among yourselves. ⁴⁴No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. ⁴⁶Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. ⁴⁷Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

⁵²The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?”

⁵³Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. ⁵⁶He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. ⁵⁷As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. ⁵⁸This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.”

⁵⁹These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

MANY DISCIPLES TURN AWAY

⁶⁰Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this*, said, “This is a hard saying; who can understand it?”

⁶¹When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶²What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? ⁶³It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life. ⁶⁴But there are some of you who do not believe.” For



CONTEMPLATE

John 6:61–69

READ. Ask God to speak to you through His Word. Read these verses slowly. Take special notice of any phrase or idea that seems particularly important. Reread the verses as necessary.

MEDITATE. Dwell on Peter’s confession: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (v. 69). How would you rephrase it in your own words? How has knowing Christ changed you?

PRAY. Take your thoughts to God in prayer. Feel free to wrestle with Him. What is your response to Jesus’ question in verse 67?

CONTEMPLATE. Even if we don’t understand all of God’s tenets, obedience often brings clarity later. In faith, receive Jesus’ words as spirit and life (v. 63).

Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. ⁶⁵And He said, “**Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.**”

⁶⁶From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. ⁶⁷Then Jesus said to the twelve, “**Do you also want to go away?**”

⁶⁸But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

⁷⁰Jesus answered them, “**Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?**” ⁷¹He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon*, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

JESUS' BROTHERS DISBELIEVE

7 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. ²Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. ³His brothers therefore said to Him, “Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. ⁴For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” ⁵For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

⁶Then Jesus said to them, “**My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. ⁷The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil. ⁸You go up to this feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come.**” ⁹When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.

THE HEAVENLY SCHOLAR

¹⁰But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. ¹¹Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, “Where is He?” ¹²And there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. Some said, “He is good”; others said, “No, on the contrary, He deceives the people.” ¹³However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

¹⁴Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. ¹⁵And the Jews marveled, saying, “How does this Man know letters, having never studied?”

¹⁶Jesus answered them and said, “**My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. ¹⁷If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority. ¹⁸He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him. ¹⁹Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill Me?**”

²⁰The people answered and said, “You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?”

²¹Jesus answered and said to them, “**I did one work, and you all marvel. ²²Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not**



JOURNAL

John 7:10–15

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God's presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- Describe the different opinions people had about Jesus. Why do you think people disagreed so much about Him?
- According to verses 14–15, why did people marvel at Jesus?
- What do you do when people have different opinions about Jesus than you do? Is your tendency to argue, stay quiet, or engage them in a respectful conversation about what God's Word says about Jesus?

that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. ²³If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? ²⁴Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

COULD THIS BE THE CHRIST?

²⁵Now some of them from Jerusalem said, “Is this not He whom they seek to kill? ²⁶But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ? ²⁷However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from.”

²⁸Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, “You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know. ²⁹But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.”

³⁰Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. ³¹And many of the people believed in Him, and said, “When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?”

JESUS AND THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

³²The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. ³³Then Jesus said to them, “I shall be with you a little while longer, and then I go to Him who sent Me. ³⁴You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come.”

³⁵Then the Jews said among themselves, “Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? ³⁶What is this thing that He said, ‘You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come?’”

THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

³⁷On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” ³⁹But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

WHO IS HE?

⁴⁰Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, “Truly this is the Prophet.” ⁴¹Others said, “This is the Christ.”

But some said, “Will the Christ come out of Galilee? ⁴²Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?” ⁴³So there was a division among the people because of Him. ⁴⁴Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.



CONTEMPLATE

John 7:37–39

READ. Ask God to speak to you through His Word. Read these verses on the promise of the Holy Spirit. Try to picture as much detail as you can.

MEDITATE. Which details captured your attention? Perhaps you noticed that Jesus “cried out” (v. 37) or that a heart can flow with living water (vv. 37–38).

PRAY. Take your meditations to God. Recount to Him anything about His Son that brings you a sense of wonder. Allow time for Him to respond.

CONTEMPLATE. Hebrews 1:3 tells us that Jesus is the brightness of God’s glory and that He sits “at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Dwell on the thought of Him seated there. Thank Him for pouring living water into you.

REJECTED BY THE AUTHORITIES

⁴⁵Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why have you not brought Him?”

⁴⁶The officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this Man!”

⁴⁷Then the Pharisees answered them, “Are you also deceived? ⁴⁸Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? ⁴⁹But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.”

⁵⁰Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, ⁵¹“Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?”

⁵²They answered and said to him, “Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.”

AN ADULTERESS FACES THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

⁵³And everyone went to his *own* house.

8 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

²Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. ³Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, ⁴they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. ⁵Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?” ⁶This they said, testing Him, that they might have *something* of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with *His* finger, as though He did not hear.

⁷So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, “**He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.**” ⁸And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. ⁹Then those who heard *it*, being convicted by *their* conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest *even* to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. ¹⁰When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “**Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?**”

¹¹She said, “No one, Lord.”

And Jesus said to her, “**Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.**”

¹²Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “**I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.**”

JESUS DEFENDS HIS SELF-WITNESS

¹³The Pharisees therefore said to Him, “You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true.”

¹⁴Jesus answered and said to them, “**Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.** ¹⁵You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. ¹⁶And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I *am* with the Father who sent Me. ¹⁷It is also written in your law that the testimony of two



PICTURE IT

John 8:1–12

PREPARE. Quiet yourself and ask God to prepare your heart and guide your imagination.

PICTURE. Picture Jesus teaching in the temple. As He finishes, a woman caught in the act of adultery is brought before Him. Imagine being there when this happens. What are people saying? How does the crowd react? Imagine the juxtaposition of Jesus ignoring them so that they have to continue to ask (v. 7). How does the woman react? The scribes and Pharisees are interested not in justice or righteousness but rather in trapping Jesus (v. 6). What do Jesus' words in verse 10 sound like? Can you hear the authority behind them?

PRAY. Imagine Jesus saying verse 10 directly to you; then respond to Him in prayer. Try to name and repent of the corporate or individual sins that come to mind. Ask God to bring you into the light (v. 12).



PRAYING
SCRIPTURE

John 8:23–25

Who are you? That was the question the Jews asked Jesus. Jesus told them the truth about His identity: He was from above and not of this world (v. 23). He could forgive their sins, thereby identifying Himself as God (v. 24). Jesus also told the Jews about *their* identity: they were of this world, from below (v. 23). And, He said, they were dead in their sins unless they believed in Him (v. 24).

How would *you* answer the question *Who are you?* Some people define themselves according to ethnicity, profession, family name, education, or talents. But those who have accepted Jesus are God's children (John 1:12). As you pray, thank God for adopting you as His child. Pray that He would help you live each day according to your identity, as Jesus did.

men is true. ¹⁸I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."

¹⁹Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?"

Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

²⁰These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEPARTURE

²¹Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come."

²²So the Jews said, "Will He kill Himself, because He says, 'Where I go you cannot come?'"

²³And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins."

²⁵Then they said to Him, "Who are You?"

And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. ²⁶I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

²⁷They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

²⁸Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. ²⁹And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." ³⁰As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE

³¹Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

³³They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* You say, 'You will be made free?'"

³⁴Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵And a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever. ³⁶Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

ABRAHAM'S SEED AND SATAN'S

³⁷"I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. ³⁸I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father."

³⁹They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father."

Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. ⁴⁰But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. ⁴¹You do the deeds of your father."

Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.”

⁴²Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. ⁴³Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. ⁴⁴You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. ⁴⁵But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. ⁴⁶Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? ⁴⁷He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”

BEFORE ABRAHAM WAS, I AM

⁴⁸Then the Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

⁴⁹Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. ⁵⁰And I do not seek My *own* glory; there is One who seeks and judges. ⁵¹Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”

⁵²Then the Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.’ ⁵³Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?”

⁵⁴Jesus answered, “If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. ⁵⁵Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, ‘I do not know Him,’ I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. ⁵⁶Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.”

⁵⁷Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”

⁵⁸Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

⁵⁹Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

A MAN BORN BLIND RECEIVES SIGHT

9 Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. ²And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

³Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. ⁴I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the night is coming when no one can work.* ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. ⁷And He said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing.



JOURNAL

John 8:42–47

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God’s presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- Even though the Jews claimed God was their father, who did Jesus say was their father (see v. 44)? Why did He say this (see v. 42)? Who did Jesus say is the father of lies (see v. 44)? In verse 45, why did Jesus say the Jews don’t believe Him?
- How can verse 47 help you understand why some people don’t hear God’s words? How does this verse challenge you?



CONTEMPLATE

John 9:1–12

READ. Before you read, take a moment to thank God for His Word. Look for a word, a phrase, or an idea that stands out. Consider “revealed” (v. 3), “I am the light of the world” (v. 5), or “He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay” (v. 6).

MEDITATE. Why did the word, phrase, or idea catch your attention? Can you relate something in your life, your calling, or your culture to your meditation?

PRAY. Take your gleanings to God in prayer. Be encouraged that no detail is too small to talk over with Him.

CONTEMPLATE. Jesus is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). Even now He is willing and able to give sight to the blind. Ask the Lord for eyes to see and ears to hear when you read His Word or listen to it being preached.

⁸ Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, “Is not this he who sat and begged?”

⁹ Some said, “This is he.” Others said, “He is like him.”

He said, “I am *he*.”

¹⁰ Therefore they said to him, “How were your eyes opened?”

¹¹ He answered and said, “A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and I received sight.”

¹² Then they said to him, “Where is He?”

He said, “I do not know.”

THE PHARISEES EXCOMMUNICATE THE HEALED MAN

¹³ They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. ¹⁴ Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see.”

¹⁶ Therefore some of the Pharisees said, “This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.”

Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” And there was a division among them.

¹⁷ They said to the blind man again, “What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?”

He said, “He is a prophet.”

¹⁸ But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. ¹⁹ And they asked them, saying, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?”

²⁰ His parents answered them and said, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹ but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself.” ²² His parents said these *things* because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed *that He was Christ*, he would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”

²⁴ So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, “Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner.”

²⁵ He answered and said, “Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.”

²⁶ Then they said to him again, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?”

²⁷ He answered them, “I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear *it* again? Do you also want to become His disciples?”

²⁸ Then they reviled him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are Moses’ disciples. ²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses; *as for this fellow*, we do not know where He is from.”

³⁰ The man answered and said to them, “Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! ³¹ Now we know that God does not

hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. ³²Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. ³³If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.”

³⁴They answered and said to him, “You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?” And they cast him out.

TRUE VISION AND TRUE BLINDNESS

³⁵Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, “Do you believe in the Son of God?”

³⁶He answered and said, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?”

³⁷And Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.”

³⁸Then he said, “Lord, I believe!” And he worshiped Him.

³⁹And Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.”

⁴⁰Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, “Are we blind also?”

⁴¹Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.

JESUS THE TRUE SHEPHERD

10 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ²But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³To him the door-keeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

JESUS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

⁷Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

¹¹“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹²But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. ¹⁵As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

John 9:35–39

After Jesus healed a blind man, the Pharisees grilled the man about how it could have happened. The man told the truth, but they threw him out of the temple. Jesus found the man (v. 35) and talked to him about faith in God. As the man saw that Jesus was God's Son, he worshiped. Thus the blind man gained both his physical sight and his spiritual sight. The Pharisees, however, remained in spiritual blindness (vv. 39–41).

What does this story of healing and redemption say about the natural state of a human being? Notice that the Pharisees thought their vision was perfect. How can we be sure we are seeing with clear spiritual vision? Ask God to show you any planks that may be clouding your eyesight (Matt. 7:3–5).



PICTURE IT

John 10:1–10

PREPARE. Quiet yourself and ask God to prepare your heart and guide your imagination.

PICTURE. What sort of door do you imagine Jesus being? Is it strong and secure or broken down? Jesus says He is the door that protects His flock from thieves and robbers. He also says that He is the way to the pasture and that His sheep respond when He calls. Picture the safe, bountiful pastures that God has provided for you. What do they look like? Do you feel safe in them? How do you respond when other people talk of other “doors” that lead into the pasture of God's presence?

PRAY. Thank God for His protection and care. Celebrate that only through Jesus can someone be brought into God's family and find abundant life (v. 10).



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

John 10:22–31

At the Feast of Dedication, the Jews questioned Jesus about His identity. Despite His many attempts to show Himself as the Son of God, they continued to reject Him. In this case Jesus told them that He and the Father were one (v. 30). When He identified Himself as God in the flesh, they tried to stone Him.

Why do you think the Jews wanted to kill Him? Reflect on the opposition Jesus faced. As a follower of Christ, such opposition might also be part of your life. Ask God for the faith to face those challenges in a way that brings glory to Him.

17 “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. **18** No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”

19 Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. **20** And many of them said, “He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?”

21 Others said, “These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

THE SHEPHERD KNOWS HIS SHEEP

22 Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. **23** And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon’s porch. **24** Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, “How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.”

25 Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. **26** But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. **27** My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. **28** And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. **29** My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. **30** I and My Father are one.”

RENEWED EFFORTS TO STONE JESUS

31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. **32** Jesus answered them, “Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?”

33 The Jews answered Him, saying, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.”

34 Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, ‘You are gods’?” **35** If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), **36** do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, ‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God?’ **37** If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe



ENGAGE THROUGH ART

THE SHEEPFOLD, MOONLIGHT BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET

Moonlight streams across a flock of sheep as a shepherd guides the animals into a pen. In this oil painting, Jean-François Millet (1814–1875) emphasized the lonely, late-night work of the shepherd. Shown as a faceless silhouette, the shepherd dedicates himself to caring for the sheep. The painting demonstrates Millet’s intimate knowledge of a shepherd’s life. Born in rural France in 1814, he labored with his father on a farm until age eighteen. Although he worked as an artist in Paris, many of his paintings portray nineteenth-century rural life.

Read John 10:1–21. Jesus is our Good Shepherd, laying down His life for us. We find peace and direction by listening to His voice. We can always trust Him, and He cares for us tenderly and faithfully. Even in the dark, His voice will guide us.



Me; ³⁸but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him.” ³⁹Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.

THE BELIEVERS BEYOND JORDAN

⁴⁰And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. ⁴¹Then many came to Him and said, “John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true.” ⁴²And many believed in Him there.

THE DEATH OF LAZARUS

11 Now a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. ²It was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. ³Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.”

⁴When Jesus heard *that*, He said, “**This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.**”

⁵Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was. ⁷Then after this He said to *the* disciples, “**Let us go to Judea again.**”

⁸*The* disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?”

⁹Jesus answered, “**Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.**” ¹¹These things He said, and after that He said to them, “**Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.**”

¹²Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” ¹³However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

¹⁴Then Jesus said to them plainly, “**Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.**”

¹⁶Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

¹⁷So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. ¹⁹And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

²⁰Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. ²¹Now Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”

²³Jesus said to her, “**Your brother will rise again.**”

²⁴Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”



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John 11:17–44

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God’s presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- How do Martha’s statements in verses 21–22 demonstrate her faith in Jesus’ power?
- How do verses 25–26 hint at what Jesus will do in verses 38–44?
- How does Jesus’ statement bring you hope (see vv. 25–26)?
- What difference does believing in the promise of verse 26 make in your life? Write down some ways your life has changed through your belief in eternal life through Jesus.

25 Jesus said to her, **“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”**

27 She said to Him, **“Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”**

JESUS AND DEATH, THE LAST ENEMY

28 And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, **“The Teacher has come and is calling for you.”** **29** As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly and came to Him. **30** Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. **31** Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, **“She is going to the tomb to weep there.”**

32 Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, **“Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”**

33 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. **34** And He said, **“Where have you laid him?”**

They said to Him, **“Lord, come and see.”**

35 Jesus wept. **36** Then the Jews said, **“See how He loved him!”**

37 And some of them said, **“Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?”**

LAZARUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

38 Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. **39** Jesus said, **“Take away the stone.”**

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, **“Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days.”**

40 Jesus said to her, **“Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?”** **41** Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, **“Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42 And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me.”** **43** Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, **“Lazarus, come forth!”** **44** And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, **“Loose him, and let him go.”**

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

45 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. **46** But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. **47** Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, **“What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. 48 If we let Him alone like this, everyone**



PICTURE IT

John 11:35–44

PREPARE. Quiet yourself and ask God to prepare your heart and guide your imagination.

PICTURE. Pause and imagine you can see Jesus weeping. Watch Him cry over the evil of death and the loss of His friend Lazarus. Perhaps as He cries He comforts Mary and their genuine sobs mingle together and affect those watching. As a few in the crowd grumble, they all, Martha included, make their way to the tomb of Lazarus. Now see the scuffle as Jesus has the stone removed. Are you close enough to smell the decay? Imagine watching Jesus pray and command Lazarus to come out. How do you feel as Lazarus actually comes out? Are you brave enough to approach Lazarus to remove his graveclothes?

PRAY. Respond to God in prayer by sharing your thoughts and reactions to the raising of Lazarus. Thank God for His honest sorrow and mastery over death.



CONTEMPLATE

John 11:49–52

READ. Read the high priest's prophetic response to Jesus, whom the Jewish leadership considered a threat and troublemaker. If it's helpful, read the verses aloud to dramatize the event. Look for a word or phrase that captures your attention.

MEDITATE. Which word or phrase stood out to you? Does it spark a connection with your life? Write your reflections on paper, if that's helpful.

PRAY. Quiet your mind and take your meditations and questions to God in prayer. Allow Him time to respond.

CONTEMPLATE. How are you affected by the Pharisees and chief priests' panic about Jesus? Thank Jesus for being brave and self-sacrificing on your behalf.



JOURNAL

John 12:12–19

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God's presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- How does the people's response to the news of Lazarus's resurrection compare to the Pharisees' response (see vv. 17–19)?
- Why do you think the Pharisees didn't want people following Jesus?
- When you hear about God performing a miracle or answering prayer, how do you respond? How can you be more like Lazarus's friends (see v. 17) when you experience or witness a miraculous occurrence?

will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

⁴⁹And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." ⁵¹Now this he did not say on his own *authority*; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵²and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

⁵³Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death. ⁵⁴Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.

⁵⁵And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. ⁵⁶Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?" ⁵⁷Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report *it*, that they might seize Him.

THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY

12 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. ²There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. ³Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

⁴But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, ⁵"Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

⁷But Jesus said, "**Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial.** ⁸**For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always.**"

THE PLOT TO KILL LAZARUS

⁹Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. ¹⁰But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, ¹¹because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

¹²The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:

“Hosanna!
 ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!
 The King of Israel!’”

¹⁴Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

¹⁵“Fear not, daughter of Zion;
 Behold, your King is coming,
 Sitting on a donkey’s colt.”

¹⁶His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him.

¹⁷Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. ¹⁸For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. ¹⁹The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!”

THE FRUITFUL GRAIN OF WHEAT

²⁰Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. ²¹Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”

²²Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

²³But Jesus answered them, saying, “**The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.** ²⁴Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.”

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH ON THE CROSS

²⁷“Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify Your name.”

Then a voice came from heaven, *saying*, “I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again.”

²⁹Therefore the people who stood by and heard *it* said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to Him.”

³⁰Jesus answered and said, “**This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake.** ³¹Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ³²And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself.” ³³This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

³⁴The people answered Him, “We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how *can* You say, ‘**The Son of Man must be lifted up**’? Who is this Son of Man?”

³⁵Then Jesus said to them, “**A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness**



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

John 12:37–40

The people who saw Jesus heal the sick, feed the hungry, and raise the dead also heard Him teach about God's kingdom. Nevertheless many did not believe in Him (v. 37). The rejection of Jesus was willful. The apostle John wrote that the people's willful disbelief gradually made it so they *could not* believe in Jesus (v. 39). John quoted Isaiah to explain that the inability to believe came from a hardened heart (v. 40).

As you pray, invite God to help you maintain a healthy, humble heart. This begins with a willing surrender of your life to the lordship of Jesus. Pray also that God would develop and preserve softhearted people in your workplace, community, and family.

overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?

³⁷But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, ³⁸that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:

"Lord, who has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of the
LORD been revealed?"

³⁹Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

⁴⁰"He has blinded their eyes and
hardened their hearts,
Lest they should see with *their* eyes,
Lest they should understand with
their hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them."

⁴¹These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

WALK IN THE LIGHT

⁴²Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

⁴⁴Then Jesus cried out and said, "**He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.** ⁴⁵**And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.** ⁴⁶**I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.** ⁴⁷**And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.** ⁴⁸**He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.** ⁴⁹**For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.** ⁵⁰**And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.**"

JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET

13 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

²And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray Him, ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to



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John 12:42–50

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God's presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- Why did the rulers who believed in Jesus remain quiet about their belief (see vv. 42–43)?
- In these verses, what claims did Jesus make about Himself? For example, He said He came to save the world, not to judge it (see v. 47).
- Examine your heart. Are you unafraid to let others know you believe in Jesus Christ? Or do you care more about receiving approval from people than pleasing God (see v. 43)? Ask God to reveal His truth to you; then confess and repent if you need to.

God, ⁴rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded. ⁶Then He came to Simon Peter. And *Peter* said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?"

⁷Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."

⁸Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!"

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

⁹Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head!"

¹⁰Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." ¹¹For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

¹²So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. ¹⁴If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. ¹⁷If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

JESUS IDENTIFIES HIS BETRAYER

¹⁸"I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.' ¹⁹Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am *He*. ²⁰Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

²¹When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." ²²Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

²³Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. ²⁴Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

²⁵Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

²⁶Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. ²⁷Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." ²⁸But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. ²⁹For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy *those things* we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.

³⁰Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.



CONTEMPLATE

John 13:2-17

READ. First, read verses 3-5 and allow Jesus' humility to penetrate your heart. Then read verses 2-17. Note Jesus' use of "bathed" (v. 10), "wash" (vv. 8, 10, 12, 14), and "clean" (vv. 10-11).

MEDITATE. How does Jesus differentiate these three words associated with cleansing in relation to our inner lives? What insight does Hebrews 10:22 provide? Does an area of your heart need to be cleansed from an evil conscience?

PRAY. Do you regularly take time to let Jesus wash you of your sin? Spend time letting Him do so now. Ask the Spirit to bring things to mind that you may have overlooked.

CONTEMPLATE. Rest in the love and work of Jesus. Consider how you can extend forgiveness to others as a faithful testimony to Christ, just as you yourself have been forgiven.



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

John 13:31–35

After the Last Supper, Jesus gave the disciples some final instructions. He wanted them to love one another. These were not mere words. Jesus said He wanted them to love one another just as He had loved them (v. 34). He wanted them to *live like Him* in love, not just feel it or talk about it. Moreover, He wanted them to love one another so the world would identify them as His followers (v. 35).

How will people know who you are? According to this passage, Christians should be known for loving others the way that Jesus loves us. As you pray, ask God to transform your character more and more to the likeness of Jesus, who loved us enough to die for us (John 15:13). Ask God to make your heart overflow with Jesus' love for others.



CONTEMPLATE

John 14:1–11

READ. Ask God to reveal Himself in His Word. Read these verses and look for repeated words like “know,” “believe,” and “prepare.” Choose a word or an idea that speaks to you and meditate on it.

MEDITATE. Why is the word or idea important to you? What possible connection does it hold to your life? Does it challenge you, comfort you, or confuse you?

PRAY. Spend time responding to God in prayer. Share your meditations on what it means to be able to be in His presence.

CONTEMPLATE. Reread verses 1–4 as if Jesus were speaking directly to you. Take comfort knowing that there is a place Jesus Himself is preparing just for you. Thank Him not only for preparing a place but also for being the way for you to access His Father's presence.

THE NEW COMMANDMENT

³¹So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. ³²If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately. ³³Little children, I shall be with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come,’ so now I say to you. ³⁴A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL

³⁶Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.”

³⁷Peter said to Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.”

³⁸Jesus answered him, “Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

14 “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

⁵Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

⁶Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

THE FATHER REVEALED

⁷“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”

⁸Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”

⁹Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

THE ANSWERED PRAYER

¹²“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

JESUS PROMISES ANOTHER HELPER

¹⁵“If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

INDWELLING OF THE FATHER AND THE SON

¹⁹“A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. ²¹He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

²²Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”

²³Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.

THE GIFT OF HIS PEACE

²⁵“These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. ²⁶But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. ²⁸You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming *back* to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I.

²⁹“And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe. ³⁰I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. ³¹But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

THE TRUE VINE

15 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

⁵“I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷If you abide in Me,



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John 14:19–24

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God’s presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- When people truly love God, what do they do (see vv. 21, 23)?
- When you keep God’s commandments (see v. 21), what does He promise to do? When you keep God’s Word (see v. 23), what does God promise to do?
- Which of God’s commands are most difficult for you to follow? Spend some time asking God to help and strengthen you in these areas.



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

John 14:25–31

Jesus promised to give His disciples His peace (v. 27) and the Holy Spirit (v. 26). He encouraged them not to be discouraged or afraid. The Holy Spirit, whom He called the Helper (John 14:15), would be with them.

The word *peace* can carry different connotations: the absence of conflict, fear, or anxiety; a deep awareness of God’s love; self-confidence. What kind of peace do you think Jesus promised the disciples? As you pray, assess whether you are experiencing that peace. If this is a struggle, ask Him to show you obstacles that prevent you from feeling His peace. Tell Jesus what is troubling your heart (v. 27) so He can lift your burden (Matt. 11:28–30).



PICTURE IT

John 15:1–8

PREPARE. Quiet yourself and ask God to prepare your heart and guide your imagination.

PICTURE. Picture a field with plants in neat rows. Now imagine coming upon a plant laden with fruit. Notice how just below this plant there is a dry and brittle dead branch. What's this branch good for now? As you ponder this, the farmer goes down another row with his pruning shears. You're amazed as he takes a perfectly lovely looking plant and removes a shocking amount of the foliage and tosses it all into a wheelbarrow. From your point of view this treatment looks harsh and unnatural, but glancing back at the fruit-laden plant near you, you can't argue with his results.

PRAY. Ask God to prune what He needs to in your life. Give Him your trust, and be confident that He knows what needs to stay and what needs to go



CONTEMPLATE

John 15:9–17

READ. Ask God to speak to you through His Word. Then read the verses and note any word or phrase that stands out to you. Consider “abide in My love” (vv. 9–10), “joy” (v. 11), or “friends” (vv. 13–15).

MEDITATE. Dwell on your word or phrase. Search your heart for meaning. Will you give yourself space to grow through Jesus' gentle command? Allow yourself time to steep in His words. What will it mean in your life to love others as Christ has loved you?

PRAY. Turn verses 9–12 into a prayer: *Father, I ask You to help me abide in Jesus' love by keeping His commandments, just as Jesus kept Your commandments.*

and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

LOVE AND JOY PERFECTED

⁹“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

¹¹“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full. ¹²This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. ¹⁴You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷These things I command you, that you love one another.

THE WORLD'S HATRED

¹⁸“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it* hated you. ¹⁹If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ²¹But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. ²²If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³He who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. ²⁵But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, ‘They hated Me without a cause.’

THE COMING REJECTION

²⁶“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. ²⁷And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

16 “These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. ²They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. ³And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. ⁴But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.

“And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

⁵“But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ ⁶But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. ⁷Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹of sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; ¹¹of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

¹²“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. ¹³However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. ¹⁴He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. ¹⁵All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

SORROW WILL TURN TO JOY

¹⁶“A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.”

¹⁷Then *some* of His disciples said among themselves, “What is this that He says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’; and, ‘because I go to the Father?’” ¹⁸They said therefore, “What is this that He says, ‘A little while’? We do not know what He is saying.”

¹⁹Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, “Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’? ²⁰Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. ²¹A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. ²²Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

²³“And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. ²⁴Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

JESUS CHRIST HAS OVERCOME THE WORLD

²⁵“These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. ²⁶In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; ²⁷for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. ²⁸I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.”

Thank You for fullness of joy as I remain in Jesus.

CONTEMPLATE. Write out verses 16 and 17 and personalize them with your own name where appropriate.



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

John 16:1–4

In the middle of hardships and suffering, we often wrongly conclude that God has abandoned us. We imagine that God will give us idyllic lives, and when that doesn't occur, we think God has not fulfilled His promises. In this passage Jesus told His disciples that they would be excluded from the synagogue, treated as outcasts, and persecuted (v. 2). He told them ahead of time so they wouldn't stumble in their faith due to false expectations (v. 1).

What do you expect from God? Do your expectations align with God's promises in the Scriptures? As you pray, ask God to give you courage to stand firm in the faith during times of suffering and loss. He promised to never abandon us (Matt. 28:20), and He promised that nothing could separate us from His love (Rom. 8:31–39). These are the promises we should expect to see the Lord fulfill.



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John 16:16–24

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God's presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- How did Jesus confuse the disciples with His words? To which future event was He referring?

- Why did Jesus' return to the Father establish our ability to use Jesus' name in prayer?
- Jesus instructed His disciples to ask their requests of God in Jesus' name (see vv. 23–24). They would be continuing Jesus' work on His behalf after He was gone. When you pray and ask in Jesus' name, what are you asking God? For your will—or His?



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

John 17:1–8

After you read through Jesus' prayers for Himself and for His disciples, consider putting those words into prayers of your own. Glorify God by recognizing Jesus' authority and kingship (vv. 1–2). Humbly recognize and rejoice that you've been counted among those who have been offered eternal life (v. 3). Ask God for the strength to manifest Jesus' name to people you know (v. 6). Ask God to grow obedience and love in your heart and in the people with whom you fellowship (v. 6). Affirm your belief in Jesus as the Son of God, and praise Him (v. 8).



CONTEMPLATE

John 17:9–19

READ. Jesus prayed for Himself, the disciples, and future believers before His betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane. Hear Jesus' heart for the world, His final prayer, before the crucifixion. Which word, phrase, or verse stands out to you personally in these verses?

MEDITATE. Meditate on your word, phrase, or verse in its context. Why might the Holy Spirit be bringing it to your attention?

²⁹His disciples said to Him, “See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! ³⁰Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God.”

³¹Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? ³²Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. ³³These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF

17 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, ²as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. ³And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. ⁴I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. ⁵And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

⁶“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ⁷Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. ⁸For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

⁹“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. ¹⁰And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. ¹²While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL BELIEVERS

²⁰“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹that they all may be

one, as You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²²And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

²⁴“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. ²⁶And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

BETRAYAL AND ARREST IN GETHSEMANE

18 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. ²And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. ³Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. ⁴Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, “Whom are you seeking?”

⁵They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Jesus said to them, “I am He.” And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. ⁶Now when He said to them, “I am He,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

⁷Then He asked them again, “Whom are you seeking?” And they said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

⁸Jesus answered, “I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,” ⁹that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, “Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.”

¹⁰Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus.

¹¹So Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?”

BEFORE THE HIGH PRIEST

¹²Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. ¹³And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. ¹⁴Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

PETER DENIES JESUS

¹⁵And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so *did* another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. ¹⁶But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who

PRAY. Take your meditations to the Father in prayer. Allow Him time to respond. Think of someone you can encourage with any newfound understanding.

CONTEMPLATE. Be still and know that the Father honors the Son’s prayer to keep you in His name (v. 12).



JOURNAL

John 17:20–26

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God’s presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- Whom was Jesus praying for in verse 20? How does this make you feel?
- Why was unity so important to Jesus (see v. 21)?
- How can you work toward better unity with others?



CONTEMPLATE

John 18:4–6

READ. The Lord asked the officers and troops whom they were seeking (v. 4). Read what happened next, and pay attention to anything that stands out to you.

MEDITATE. Note the simplicity of Jesus’ response. When He spoke, why do you think they fell back?

PRAY. Take your thoughts on these verses to God in prayer.

CONTEMPLATE. Rest in the supremacy of the Son, His power, His humility, and His gentleness.



ENGAGE THROUGH ART

THE TAKING OF CHRIST BY MICHELANGELO MERISI DA CARAVAGGIO

Caravaggio's depiction of Jesus' arrest includes, from left to right, John, Jesus, Judas, three soldiers, and a man holding a lantern. Caravaggio shows John fleeing the scene in fear, perhaps based on Mark 14:50, which describes the disciples quickly deserting Jesus. The arresting officer in the center wears highly polished armor on his arm. Franco Mormando, associate professor of Italian studies at Boston College, suggested that the artist may have been "inviting his viewers to see themselves reflected in the behavior of Judas and the other tormentors of Christ."

Read John 18:1–12. Jesus knew of Judas's greed-motivated betrayal beforehand (see Mark 14:17–20). Jesus remained in control, fulfilling the eternal will of the Father (see John 18:11). Judas's sin fractured his relationship with Jesus and left him in despair. Do you need to confess any sin that is keeping you from experiencing deep communion with God?



Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *The Taking of Christ*, 1602, Oil on Canvas

kept the door, and brought Peter in. ¹⁷Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, “You are not also *one* of this Man’s disciples, are you?”

He said, “I am not.”

¹⁸Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.

JESUS QUESTIONED BY THE HIGH PRIEST

¹⁹The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.

²⁰Jesus answered him, “**I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing.** ²¹**Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.**”

²²And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, “Do You answer the high priest like that?”

²³Jesus answered him, “**If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?**”

²⁴Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

PETER DENIES TWICE MORE

²⁵Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, “You are not also *one* of His disciples, are you?”

He denied *it* and said, “I am not!”

²⁶One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of *him* whose ear Peter cut off, said, “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?” ²⁷Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed.

IN PILATE’S COURT

²⁸Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. ²⁹Pilate then went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?”

³⁰They answered and said to him, “If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.”

³¹Then Pilate said to them, “You take Him and judge Him according to your law.”

Therefore the Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,” ³²that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.

³³Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

³⁴Jesus answered him, “**Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?**”

³⁵Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?”

³⁶Jesus answered, “**My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that**



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

John 18:12–27

Roman soldiers brought Jesus into the courtyard of Annas, the father-in-law of the high priest (v. 12). Peter followed Jesus into the courtyard, but not into the house where Jesus met with Annas. Peter knew that the religious and political authorities were against Jesus. Identifying himself as a follower could have led to his arrest also. As this chapter shows, Peter denied knowing Jesus three times.

Jesus said that the world would hate His followers (John 17:14). Because the world is corrupt and God is holy, your following Jesus might put you at odds with the culture in which you work and live. This happened to Peter. Pray that God would make you wise and bold when opposition comes. Also ask God to help you serve Him as a positive influence for Christ.



JOURNAL

John 18:33–38

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God’s presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- Why did Pilate ask Jesus so many questions?

- What does Pilate seem unable to find or determine (see v. 38)? Why does Pilate decide to let Jesus go?
- How does Jesus' kingship impact you personally? How are you honoring your King with your actions, thoughts, attitudes, and relationships? How are you serving Him and His kingdom?

I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

³⁷Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?"

Jesus answered, "**You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."**

³⁸Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.

TAKING THE PLACE OF BARABBAS

³⁹"But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

⁴⁰Then they all cried again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

THE SOLDIERS MOCK JESUS

19 So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged *Him*. ²And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put *it* on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. ³Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him with their hands.

⁴Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him."

PILATE'S DECISION

⁵Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And *Pilate* said to them, "Behold the Man!"

⁶Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "**Crucify *Him*, crucify *Him*!**"

Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify *Him*, for I find no fault in Him."

⁷The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."

⁸Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, ⁹and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.

¹⁰Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"

¹¹Jesus answered, "**You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."**

¹²From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."

¹³When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called *The Pavement*, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. ¹⁴Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"

¹⁵But they cried out, "Away with *Him*, away with *Him*! Crucify Him!"



CONTEMPLATE

John 19:13–22

READ. Ask God to speak to you through His Word, and ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts. Read the verses and pay attention to any word or idea that stands out to you. Consider "Behold your King!" (v. 14) or "What I have written, I have written" (v. 22).

MEDITATE. Meditate on your chosen word or idea in the context of Christ's crucifixion. How does reading about this moment in the life of Jesus affect you?

PRAY. Share your meditations with God in prayer. Journal them as you let the Holy Spirit continue to speak to you.

CONTEMPLATE. Christ was mocked during His last hours on earth, but a time is coming when all people will reverently acknowledge Him as the King of kings. Try to imagine what this scene will be like. What thoughts and emotions fill you as you do so?

Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?”

The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar!”

¹⁶Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led *Him* away.

THE KING ON A CROSS

¹⁷And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called *the Place of a Skull*, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, ¹⁸where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. ¹⁹Now Pilate wrote a title and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

²⁰Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

²¹Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘He said, “I am the King of the Jews.””

²²Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

²³Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. ²⁴They said therefore among themselves, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,” that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says:

“They divided My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots.”

Therefore the soldiers did these things.

BEHOLD YOUR MOTHER

²⁵Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “**Woman, behold your son!**” ²⁷Then He said to the disciple, “**Behold your mother!**” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*.

IT IS FINISHED

²⁸After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “**I thirst!**” ²⁹Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put *it* on hyssop, and put *it* to His mouth. ³⁰So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “**It is finished!**” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

JESUS’ SIDE IS PIERCED

³¹Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day*, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.



JOURNAL

John 19:23–37

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God’s presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- Why did John point out how certain events came true—or were *fulfilled*—that were prophesied in the Old Testament (vv. 24, 28, 36)? Why does this matter?
- Why was it important for Jesus to fulfill Scripture (see v. 28)?
- How does knowing that Jesus fulfilled every prophecy about the Messiah increase your faith and strengthen your decision to follow Him?

³²Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. ³⁴But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. ³⁵And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. ³⁶For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, “Not *one* of His bones shall be broken.” ³⁷And again another Scripture says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”

JESUS BURIED IN JOSEPH'S TOMB

³⁸After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave *him* permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. ³⁹And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. ⁴⁰Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. ⁴¹Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴²So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation *Day*, for the tomb was nearby.



PRAYING SCRIPTURE

John 20:3–10

Scholars debate what the disciple who outran Peter (v. 4) instinctively believed when he arrived at the tomb: either that Jesus' body had been removed or that Jesus had risen (v. 8). Regardless, later there would be no confusion or doubt. He was risen! What have you seen that has caused you to believe in the risen Christ? How has He changed you? Share your thoughts with God. Ask Him to help you shine His light so others may also believe in our risen Savior (Matt. 5:14–16).

THE EMPTY TOMB

20 Now the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ²Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”

³Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. ⁴So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. ⁵And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there*; yet he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there*, ⁷and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place



ENGAGE THROUGH ART

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS BY REMBRANDT VAN RIJN

This Rembrandt painting (1634) depicts the careful lowering of Jesus' body from the cross. A single lamp illuminates the night scene. Two men on a ladder remove the nail from Jesus' left hand, still pinned to the cross, as a man strains to support His body. A small crowd has gathered, some of them mourning.

Read John 19:30–37. Remember that Christ endured death and rose again to life so that we could become like Him. If you had been standing at the foot of the cross, how would you have been changed? Will you allow Jesus to change you today?



by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. ⁹For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

MARY MAGDALENE SEES THE RISEN LORD

¹¹But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb. ¹²And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³Then they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?”

She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”

¹⁴Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, “**Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?**”

She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”

¹⁶Jesus said to her, “**Mary!**”

She turned and said to Him, “Rabboni!” (which is to say, Teacher).

¹⁷Jesus said to her, “**Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’**”

¹⁸Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* He had spoken these things to her.



CONTEMPLATE

John 20:19–23

READ. Ask God to reveal Himself through His Word. As you read, note anything that sparks your imagination. Which phrase or idea is particularly compelling? In verses 21–23, note that Jesus commissioned the disciples, released the Holy Spirit into them, and gave them instruction on the forgiveness of sins.

MEDITATE. Consider your phrase or idea in the context of your own life. Does it instruct you, comfort you, or warn you? In what ways are you compelled to action?

PRAY. Invite God to speak to you as you pray through your meditations.

CONTEMPLATE. Pause a moment to marvel that Jesus, sent by the Father, sends us out as priests in the power of the Holy Spirit to minister to the world about the forgiveness of sins (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

THE APOSTLES COMMISSIONED

¹⁹Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “**Peace be with you.**” ²⁰When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

²¹So Jesus said to them again, “**Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.**” ²²And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, “**Receive the Holy Spirit.** ²³**If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.**”

SEEING AND BELIEVING

²⁴Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.”

So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

²⁶And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “**Peace to you!**” ²⁷Then He said to Thomas, “**Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.**”

28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

29 Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed.”

THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

BREAKFAST BY THE SEA

21 After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed *Himself*: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the *sons* of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.”

They said to him, “We are going with you also.” They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. 4 But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Then Jesus said to them, “Children, have you any food?”

They answered Him, “No.”

6 And He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find *some*.” So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on *his* outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. 9 Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, “Bring *some* of the fish which you have just caught.”

11 Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. 12 Jesus said to them, “Come *and* eat breakfast.” Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, “Who are You?”—knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.

14 This *is* now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

JESUS RESTORES PETER

15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, *son of Jonah*, do you love Me more than these?”

He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”

He said to him, “Feed My lambs.”

16 He said to him again a second time, “Simon, *son of Jonah*, do you love Me?”

He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”



JOURNAL

John 20:24–31

PREPARE YOUR HEART.

Open yourself to God’s presence. Ask God to speak to you and to reveal Himself through His Word. Then read the passage.

REFLECT AND WRITE.

- Why did Thomas refuse to believe that Jesus was alive (see vv. 24–25)?
- According to Thomas’s response in verse 28, how do you think he felt when Jesus appeared to him?
- Whom does Jesus call “blessed” (v. 29)? How does 2 Corinthians 5:7 support Jesus’ statement? Do you find it difficult to believe without seeing? Why?



PICTURE IT

John 21:1–14

PREPARE. Quiet yourself and ask God to prepare your heart and guide your imagination.

PICTURE. Place yourself in the text. Feel the boat sway, and look around you. The sun is coming up, but there’s nothing to show for it. The others reel in their nets. A man shouts, and your stomach rumbles as you all reply. Next thing you know, your friends are obeying the mystery man and casting their nets back into the water. Suddenly Peter dives out of the boat, but you’re distracted by the strain on the ropes. The boat pitches and rolls as you drag the nets to shore. You look up and see Jesus cooking breakfast over the flames.

PRAY. Having directed the fisherman to catch fish, Jesus yet again revealed His power and supremacy. Ask God to direct your own efforts as you walk in obedience to Jesus.



CONTEMPLATE

John 21:15–19

READ. Begin by putting aside any distractions. Read the verses and note any word or verse that stands out to you. Consider the concept of restorative love as you read.

MEDITATE. How does the word or verse speak to your life? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you insight and clarity as you meditate on the word or verse.

PRAY. Take your meditations to the Lord in prayer. Invite Him to speak to your thoughts and reflections. If you need restoration through forgiveness, He will receive you and make you clean, just as 1 John 1:9 says: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

CONTEMPLATE. Contemplate the question Jesus asked Peter. Considering your own forgiveness of sins, let Jesus ask you the same question. He loves you.

He said to him, “**Tend My sheep.**”

¹⁷He said to him the third time, “**Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?**” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “**Do you love Me?**”

And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.”

Jesus said to him, “**Feed My sheep.** ¹⁸**Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.**” ¹⁹This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “**Follow Me.**”

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE AND HIS BOOK

²⁰Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, “Lord, who is the one who betrays You?”

²¹Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, “But Lord, what *about* this man?”

²²Jesus said to him, “**If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me.**”

²³Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, “**If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you?**”

²⁴This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.

²⁵And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.