

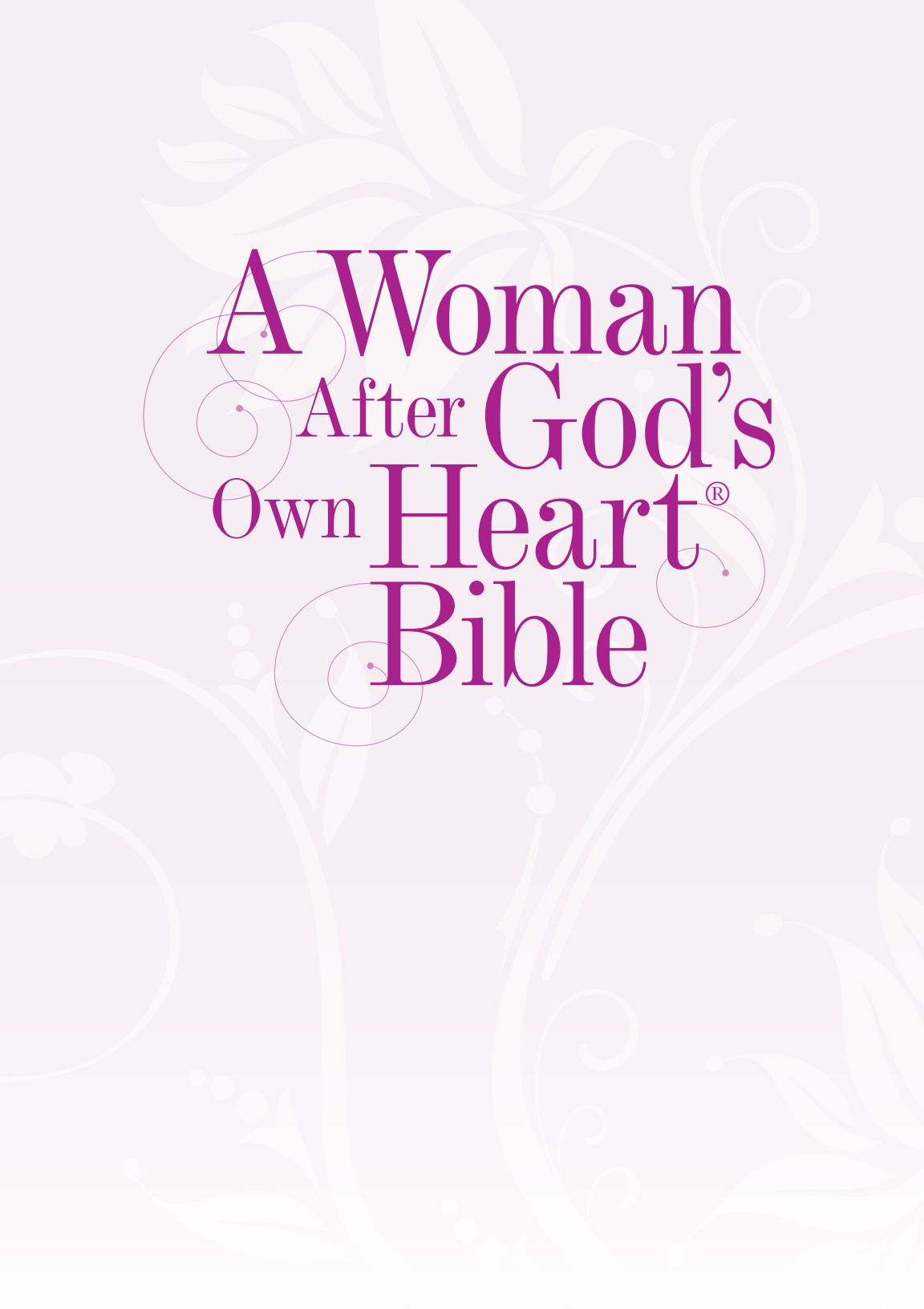
GOSPEL OF JOHN

FREE SAMPLE

A Woman
After God's
Own Heart[®]
Bible

ELIZABETH GEORGE

GENERAL EDITOR



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Own Heart[®]
Bible

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NEW KING JAMES VERSION[®]

 Kregel
Publications

A Woman After God's Own Heart® Bible
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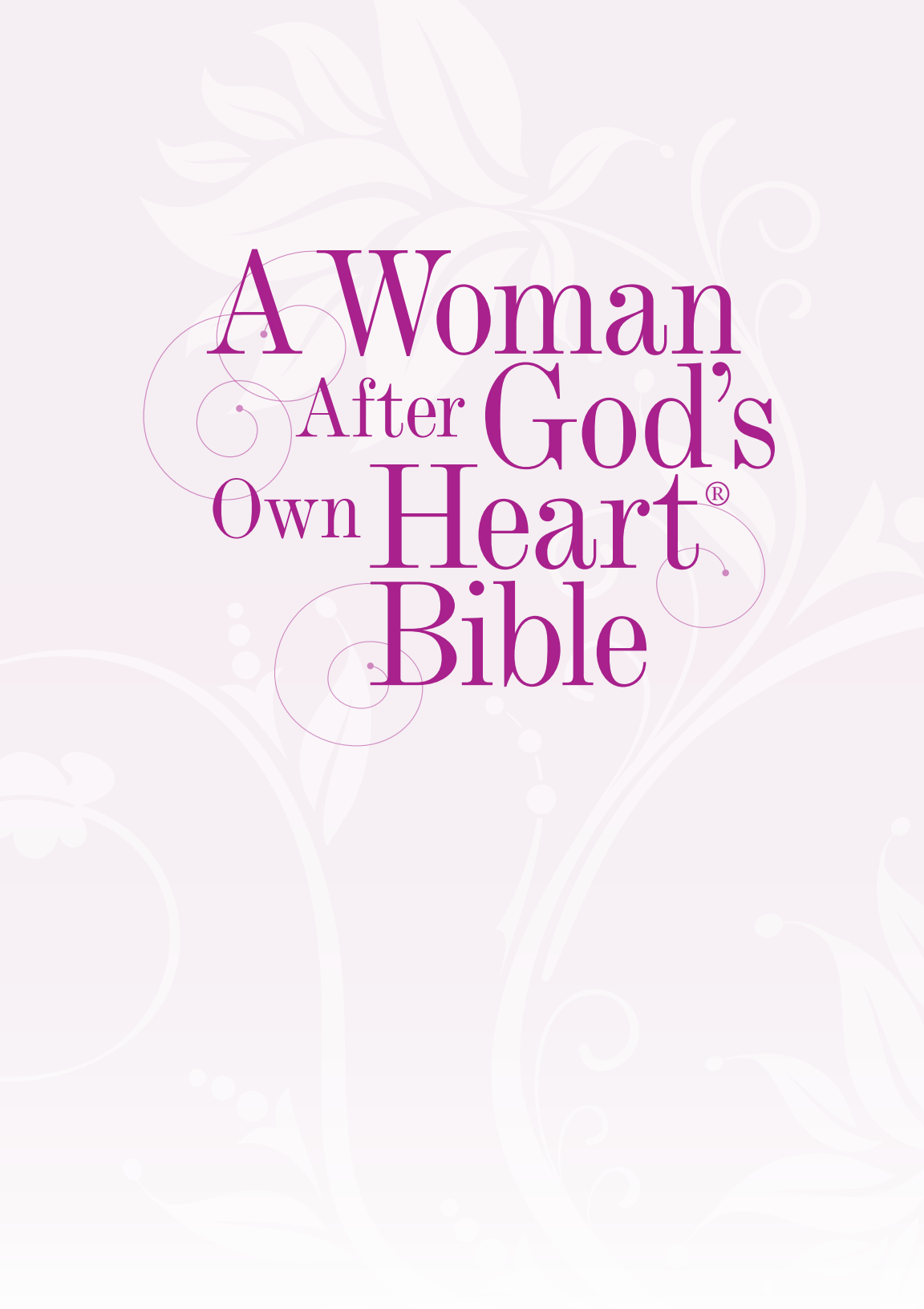
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A Woman
After God's
Own Heart[®]
Bible

An Invitation to Become a Woman After God's Own Heart

Many women I've met during my ministry have been surprised to learn that I did not grow up in a Christian home. I can only thank and praise God for His marvelous grace and mercy to me.

At twenty-eight years old, I should have been happy. I had a husband who worked hard at a good-paying job, which meant I didn't have to work outside of our home. I had two beautiful young daughters, and we lived in sunny Southern California in our dream home, complete with a swimming pool. What more could I want?

But something was missing. I sought answers in Eastern religions and every kind of church one could find in Los Angeles County (and there were plenty to choose from!). But one day when both of my little girls were distraught, crying, and holding on to my legs, I called out to the ceiling in my kitchen, "There's got to be more to life than this!" It wasn't long after this plea for help that my heart's cry was answered. I found what I was looking for, or more accurately, God found me.

New Beginnings

I didn't know that what I was seeking was Jesus Christ and His salvation, a relationship with Him. And when I found Christ, I willingly surrendered all to possess Him. I was desperate for answers and help with my life, and the first Sunday I was a Christian, I went to a Bible-teaching church. That very same day I purchased my first Bible.

As I stood at the checkout counter waiting to pay for my new Bible, I noticed a glass fishbowl filled with highlighters. I reached in and selected a gold marker, and I thought this prayer: *God, I'm the new kid on the block. I don't know anything about You, so tomorrow I'm going to start reading through my brand-new Bible, and I'm going to mark everything about You, God, in gold!* How was I supposed to know that everything in the Bible is about God? (Faithful to my heart's desire, I read through the entire Bible—and used up six gold markers before I finished with Revelation 22:21!)

Holding the gold marker in one hand, I reached back into the bowl with the other hand and fished out a pink marker. Again I prayed in my heart, *God, I don't know anything about being a Christian woman, a Christian wife, and a Christian mother, so tomorrow as I read in my Bible, I'm going to mark in pink the passages that deal with me and my roles as a Christian woman.* I immediately began to think of these markings as "the pink passages" in the Bible as they guided me to becoming a woman after God's own heart.

Sharing What I Have Learned

For decades, I have been faithfully reading through the Bible, year after year, again and again, marking and making notes as I read. I have worn out three Bibles in my pursuit to know God and His Word. Over the years as I have studied and taught the Bible, Christian publishers have asked me to write about what I've learned. Recently, Kregel Publications asked me if I would consider using my collected notes, markings, and teachings to complement a women's Bible. Some of the Kregel staff had seen one of my well-worn Bibles and thought my "gold markings" and "pink markings" as well as my Bible notes could be helpful to other women. Today I thank God and the people at Kregel Publications for the Bible you are holding in your hands. This book is the result of many years of study and teaching, and includes material from my books as well as original material written specifically for this project.

Gratitude to My Husband

My personal story would not be complete without adding my undying gratitude to my husband, Jim, who has walked side by side with me on my journey as a Christian. When we became a Christian couple, he too began a focused quest to know God. As a result, he resigned his lucrative job, and we sold our home and most of our worldly goods so Jim could go back to school, where he earned master's degrees in Bible and theology. Over the years, Jim has served as a pastor, Bible teacher, dean of a Bible institute, and seminary professor. He too started writing, and many of the technical details on each of the books of the Bible in *A Woman After God's Own Heart*[®] Bible come from my husband's research. From day one of our journey as a Christian couple, Jim has been my greatest human source of encouragement.

Becoming a Woman After God's Own Heart

I'm often asked, "Where did the title *A Woman After God's Own Heart*[®] come from?" Take a look at Acts 13:22:

And when He [God] had removed him [Saul], He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will."

As I read this verse for the very first time many years ago, I exclaimed out loud, "That's it! That's the kind of woman I want to be. I want to be a woman who will do all God's will, a woman after God's own heart." I would like to say it's been easy, but as you know, the Christian life is not easy. God knows that you are going to occasionally stumble and fall. But, like David, you must ask for God's forgiveness and get up and continue on your Christian journey.

How do you know what God's will is? This is where God's Word is absolutely essential. You see, the Bible is the greatest of all books! It contains everything God wants you to know about Himself and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When you read your Bible, a supernatural transaction takes place. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to transform you into a godly woman, as you are obedient to apply what you are reading. My prayer is that you will cherish your journey to becoming a woman after God's own heart.

In His everlasting love,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Elizabeth George". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Elizabeth George

Features You Will Find in A Woman After God's Own Heart® Bible

A *Woman After God's Own Heart® Bible* is written especially for you, a woman who desires a deeper knowledge of God's Word and a closer walk with Him. With faithfulness to the original languages, the New King James Version retains the beauty of the King James text in modern language. No matter how old you are or how long you've been a believer in Christ, you'll find fresh insights for your everyday concerns in this Bible and its exciting features.

This Bible's features are meant to *inform and instruct* you, *inspire and edify* you, and *encourage and help* you. Throughout, you will find practical insights and powerful life-changing wisdom God has graciously used to guide my life. It is my honor to be by your side as you read and study God's Word, and to guide you in the highest aspiration you can have in life—to become a woman after God's own heart.

A Bible That Informs and Instructs

Introductions to the Books of the Bible

Each introduction to every book of the Bible includes information about the context of the book. The "Where to Find It" section helps you quickly locate key people, stories, and events. And "Finding God's Heart" highlights key ideas and details that will move you toward personal application.



Truths for You from John

- Jesus is God in the flesh, and is the way, the truth, and the life.
- In order to experience God, you must have a relationship with Jesus as your Lord and Savior.
- You become a daughter of God when you receive Jesus.
- Although at times you may fail, Jesus extends forgiveness and longs to have you back.
- Restoration turns uselessness into usefulness.
- Your ability to love others is related to your understanding of God's love for you.
- The four Gospels were written for you so that "you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31).
- "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).
- Jesus spoke with everyday people, such as the woman at the well, because He came to save everyday people from all nations.
- Jesus's prayer is that you would be sanctified and unified with Him so that you may be a witness who attracts others to belief in Christ.

Truths for You

A list of main teachings that will impact your life appears at the end of each book.

Biographies of Prominent Women of the Bible

Two-page biographies give you important history, facts, and information about the most significant character qualities of 50 women of the Bible. You will learn the successes and shortcomings of each unique woman. "Straight to Your Heart" contains life lessons that speak directly to your heart as a woman.

The Samaritan Woman
An Open-Hearted Witness

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."
JOHN 4:3

Notable Accomplishment: Vocal witness of Jesus's messiahship
Healing of Name: Uncured
Main Text: John 4:3-26

A LITTLE HISTORY
As Jesus's popularity in and around Jerusalem grew, the religious leaders were upset by His influence. To avoid trouble, Jesus decided to leave Judea and travel north to Galilee. The shortest route was through Samaria, a region with a mixed race of Jews and Gentiles which the Jews normally avoided. Jesus and His disciples stopped outside the city of Samaria. While the disciples went into the town to obtain food, Jesus encountered a woman who came to the well for water.

HER STORY
Her contact with Jesus—John 4:7-9
Normally women went to the community well early in the morning, but this woman came at noontime, probably because of her public shame (Le 18:18). For a Jewish man and teacher to talk to a woman, let alone a socially inferior woman, was a great breach of rigid social custom. Jesus, however, opened communication with the Samaritan woman by asking her for a cup of water.

Her conclusion—John 4:10-15
When Jesus offered the woman "living water" that would quench all thirst and bring us into "eternating life," the baffled Jesus was talking about physical water. Of course, the woman wanted the water so she could avoid these unpleasant trips to Jacob's well.

Her confirmation—John 4:16-24
Jesus, God's Son, both demonstrated His knowledge of things that confounding the women with having had five husbands, and now living with a man who was not her husband. She wanted to change the subject away from her old and closed religious worship to 199, and then stated that a time was coming when her worship would no longer rest on the area but rather the life, who that, God must be worshiped in spirit and in truth!

Her conversion—John 4:22-24
The woman understood that the Messiah of the Jews was coming and would give her people understanding of spiritual things. Jesus of Nazareth and saying that he was the Messiah because of His perfect and living relationship with the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Father's Word.

1. "An He" Her conversion is better to Jesus as the Messiah is implied in John 4, verse 29:28.

Her witness—John 4:27-30
When the disciples returned to the well, the Samaritan woman left her water jar, returned to the city, and told the people Jesus, asking and saying that he was for her. Because of her witness, "many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him" (v. 39).

STRAIGHT TO YOUR HEART
You can be saved. After speaking with Jesus, the woman drank of the water Jesus offered her, bringing upon her an understanding of life. Jesus made the same living water to you. Her position, "I will give them eternal life, and they shall not perish" (John 10:28).

Your testimony is a powerful tool. The Samaritan woman offers a great role model for witnessing by sharing your testimony. This woman told the well how Jesus had changed her life. The God of our lives, you, Jesus, has given you the living water of eternal life. Make sure to do your part to spread the good news that Jesus is offering that same living water to your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. Speak up and share your testimony.

The Woman Caught in Adultery

This woman did something very wrong—she committed adultery. As Romans 3:23 tells us, "All have sinned." This means we have all done wrong, including you. Your sin might not be the same as this woman's, but sin is sin. Whatever the sin, the law has condemned you and there's no way out—except through Jesus. Jesus is the only way out. He does not excuse you, but He does offer to take your sin on Himself, having paid the price for it through His death. Accept Jesus's offer of salvation and forgiveness, and be free of sin's bondage.

Read more about the woman caught in adultery in John 8:1-12.

Snapshots of Lesser-Known Women of the Bible
More than 90 condensed biographies provide valuable information and wise advice based on the lives of lesser-known women of the Bible.

A Bible That Inspires and Edifies
God's Wisdom on Life's Challenges
Each of these 25 full-page reflections offers practical advice and calm assurance for facing the challenges of being a woman after God's own heart.

Relationships and Forgiveness

...meaning that the best of us is not always what it's thought. people disappoint us more than they encourage us. We can become jaded in our view of others. And why not? They are human, not perfect. But we can't see that. However, we can build walls around our hearts that make it difficult to respond in the right way—difficult to be in the people and situations we encounter. Our human nature generally wants retaliation when we're harmed. It's common to think, "You hurt me, so I'm going to hurt you." This kind of response is the normal pattern of the world.

Jesus took the concepts of love and generosity to a whole new level. He taught that generosity applies not only to those who are kind and loving toward us, but also to our enemies. We are to love others specifically our enemies—effortfully (instead of resenting or withholding), we must love, pray for, and, most importantly, forgive our enemies. Indeed, by His cross and blood, we are forgiven. For we do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

When the woman came, she also struck us all.

- **Love your enemies.** Love your enemies as the Father of Christ, who has "loved your enemies, who are opposed to those who hate you" (Luke 6:27).
- **Pray for the unrighteous.** Pray for those who are persecuting you with this passage. Use your heart for prayer, not hatred (Matt. 5:44).
- **Forgive.** "Let us always love each other" (Matt. 10:22). Forgiveness has no limits. We're to forgive no matter the number of times someone has sinned against us (Matt. 18:21-22).
- **Follow the Golden Rule.** At all times, strive to be your life by Jesus's command, "Whatever you wish men to do to you, do that to them" (Matt. 7:12).

A spiritually mature woman realizes God is at work in her life through people—with all their goals and intentions, all their shortcomings and sinful behavior. No one can make you forgive another person's sin. Forgiveness must come from inside and work its way out into an active response.

Remember that the Bible does not expect us to be perfect. It is to be a good witness, even if we are called by great pain inflicted by others, but you also possess the strength and power to forgive—will it cost more in love than that? Christ forgive you!

For study and reflection: Proverbs 19:6; Matthew 4:12; John 12:24-25

God's Whispers of Wisdom

Revolving around the themes of daily life, family life, and spiritual life, 400 brief readings will inspire and stimulate greater knowledge and application. In these short paragraphs, you'll find encouragement on topics that cover everything from managing your daily schedule, to reinforcing relationships with your parents and in-laws, to enhancing your spiritual growth.

For Your Heart and Mind

BE PREPARED

As you pursue a heart of excellence, realize that preparation is important to God and He will guide your planning. His very name is Jehovah-jireh, "God will provide"! You have the opportunity to mirror this aspect of God's character when you plan and prepare in order to provide for your loved ones. Blessed by your farsighted preparations and God's promised care, your loved ones are indeed doubly blessed!

A Bible That Encourages and Helps

Daily Devotional Readings

In 365 devotional readings, I present a new message and a prayer for each day, along with a daily plan to read through your Bible in one year.

Day
304

THE WILL TO LOVE John 3:16

Love is often misunderstood. It is not nearly as sentimental as we would like to make it. It's really a choice. An act of your heart and your will. You are about to leave the office and a client calls with a problem. Or you have just spent the day taking care of aging parents and your daughter is devastated over a broken date. Not exactly a time when you want to invest in someone. Yet that's when you are called to put your will in gear and show love to another. Christian love—God's kind of love—is a deliberate effort, and God gives you the grace to make it happen, starting right in your own home first.

John 3:16 brings you back to the most important act of love ever: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." This love went beyond human expectation. It wasn't expressed out of emotion—it was an act of God's will!

God, You are the source of love. When I am too tired, too agitated, or too self-focused to extend kindness and compassion to my family members—both little ones and big ones—Your Word and Your leading guide me back to the priority of love. Always love. Amen.

Read the Bible in one year: John 1-3 Next devotional: p. 11

Favorite Verses

Throughout the Bible, you will find 250 highlighted verses that strengthened and directed me on my quest to becoming a woman after God's own heart. I hope and pray these verses will strengthen and guide you, too, on your personal quest.

Dear reader, your transformation into a woman after God's own heart is, in actuality, the work of God. The goal of *A Woman After God's Own Heart*® Bible is to accompany and encourage you step-by-step along that journey, and to provide study materials, godly advice, and wisdom you can apply to your own unique life. I pray that this Bible, its tools, and the teachings from my heart to yours will bless you personally . . . and eternally.



John

Theme: The Son of God

Date written: A.D. 80–90

Author: John, the disciple whom Jesus loved

Setting: Palestine

It has now been fifty years since John witnessed the earthly life of Jesus. A lot has happened. The Christian faith has flourished and spread throughout the known world. But with growth has come great persecution by the Roman government. All Christ's apostles have died or been martyred except for John. Now an old man, John provides a supplement to what has already been written about Jesus in the first three gospel accounts. John's account of Jesus presents the most powerful and direct case for the deity and humanity of the incarnate Son of God. Taken together with the accounts by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, John's gospel gives readers an accurate portrait of Jesus, the God-man. In Jesus, perfect humanity and deity are fused, making Him the only possible sacrifice for the sins of mankind.

WHERE TO FIND IT

The Seven "I Ams" of Jesus

- I Am the bread of life John 6:35, 48
- I Am the light of the world. John 8:12; 9:5
- I Am the door John 10:7, 9
- I Am the good shepherd John 10:11, 14
- I Am the resurrection and the life John 11:25
- I Am the way, the truth, and the life John 14:6
- I Am the true vine John 15:1, 5

*Praise God that for those
seeking forgiveness there is
no sin that is too dark or too
heinous for Jesus to forgive.*



FINDING GOD'S HEART

Only a fool ignores highway road signs. Likewise, only a spiritual fool ignores the signs in the Bible that lead to salvation. Have you recognized and responded to the signs God has placed before you? John organized his entire gospel around eight miracles—eight proofs or “signs” of the deity of Jesus. As you read the gospel of John, ask God for eyes that see the signs, then embrace their message. Look for the signs that point to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

The Eternal Word

(Gen. 1:1–2:3)

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

John's Witness: The True Light

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

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. ¹²But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³who 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

¹⁴And 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.

¹⁵John 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.'"

¹⁶And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No 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

(Matt. 3:1–12; Mark 1:1–8; Luke 3:1–20)

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

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

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

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

And he answered, "No."

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

²³He said: "I am

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

as the prophet Isaiah said."

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

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

(Matt. 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21, 22)

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 Nathanael

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.”

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

⁵⁰Jesus 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.” ⁵¹And 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. ²Now both Jesus and

His disciples were invited to the wedding. ³And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.”

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

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

⁶Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. ⁷Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸And He said to them, “Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast.” And they took *it*. ⁹When 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. ¹⁰And 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!”

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

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

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

(*Matt. 21:12–17; Mark 11:15–19; Luke 19:45–48*)

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

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

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

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

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 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



THE WILL TO LOVE

John 3:16

Love is often misunderstood. It is not nearly as sentimental as we would like to make it. It's really a choice. An act of your heart and your will. You are about to leave the office and a client calls with a problem. Or you have just spent the day taking care of aging parents and your daughter is devastated over a broken date. Not exactly a time when you want to invest in someone. Yet that's when you are called to put your will in gear and show love to another. Christian love—God's kind of love—is a deliberate effort, and God gives you the grace to make it happen, starting right in your own home first.

John 3:16 brings you back to the most important act of love ever: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." This love went beyond human expectation. It wasn't expressed out of emotion—it was an act of God's will!

God, You are the source of love. When I am too tired, too agitated, or too self-focused to extend kindness and compassion to my family members—both little ones and big ones—Your Word and Your leading guide me back to the priority of love. Always love. Amen.

Read the Bible in one year: John 1–3

Next devotional: p. 11

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."

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,

The Samaritan Woman

An Open-Hearted Witness

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."

JOHN 4:7

Notable Accomplishment: Vocal witness of Jesus's messiahship

Meaning of Name: Unnamed

Main Text: John 4:7–39

A LITTLE HISTORY

As Jesus's popularity in and around Jerusalem grew, the religious leaders were upset by His influence. To avoid trouble, Jesus decided to leave Judea and travel north to Galilee. The shortest route was through Samaria, a region with a mixed race of Jews and Gentiles which the Jews normally avoided. Jesus and His disciples stopped outside the city of Samaria. While the disciples went into the town to obtain food, Jesus encountered a woman who came to the well for water.

HER STORY

Her contact with Jesus—John 4:7–9

Normally women went to the community well early in the morning, but this woman came at noontime, probably because of her public shame (vv. 16–18). For a Jewish man and teacher to talk to a woman, let alone a socially inferior woman, was a great breach of rigid social custom. Jesus, however, opened communication with the Samaritan woman by asking her for a cup of water.

Her confusion—John 4:10–15

When Jesus offered the woman "living water" that would quench all thirst and spring up into "everlasting life," she believed Jesus was talking about physical water. Of course, the woman wanted this water so she could avoid those unpleasant trips to Jacob's well.

Her confrontation—John 4:16–24

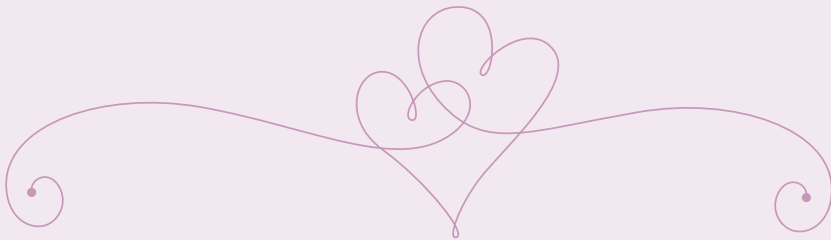
Jesus, God in human flesh, next demonstrated His knowledge of all things by confronting this woman with having had five husbands and now living with a man who was not her husband. She tried to change the subject away from her sin and toward religious worship (v. 19). Jesus then stated that a time was coming when true worship would involve not the *where* but rather the *how*; that is, God must be worshiped in spirit and truth!

Her conversion—John 4:25–26

The woman understood that the Messiah of the Jews was coming and would give her people understanding of spiritual things. Jesus normally avoided declaring to the Jews that He was the Messiah because of their political and military misconceptions, but He gave this woman a forthright declaration: “I . . . am He.” Her conversion to belief in Jesus as the Messiah is implied in John 4, verses 29 and 39.

Her witness—John 4:27–30

When the disciples returned to the well, the Samaritan woman left her waterpot, returned to the city, and told the people about Jesus, asking and urging them to go see for themselves. Because of her witness “many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him” (v. 39).



STRAIGHT TO YOUR HEART

You can be saved. After speaking with Jesus, the woman drank of the water Jesus offered her: living water springing up into everlasting life. Jesus extends the same living water to you. He promises, “I will give them eternal life, and they shall never perish” (John 10:28).

Your testimony is a powerful tool. The Samaritan woman offers a great role model for witnessing by sharing your testimony. This woman told the world how Jesus had affected her life. That’s all God is asking of you. Jesus has given you the living water of eternal life. Make sure to do your part to spread the good news that Jesus is offering that same living water to your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. Speak up and share your testimony.



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."

The Whiteden 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 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 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

(Matt. 14:13–21; Mark 6:30–44; Luke 9:10–17)

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

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SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE

John 5:36

Is it time to simplify your life? Management experts confirm time and again that a routine makes possible what seems impossible. A routine simplifies things that were formerly complex. It is amazing what the simple discipline of keeping a schedule will help you accomplish.

Take a careful look at the life of Jesus. He never seemed to be in a hurry because His schedule was based on God’s priorities for His life. John 5:36 says, “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.” Look at your life closely, write down a plan, and follow through.

Lord, I long to honor You with each hour of my day. I choose to give my time to You. This is another area of stewardship, and I want to be a good steward. I pray for wisdom as I plan each hour of every day. Amen.

Read the Bible in one year: John 4–5

Next devotional: p. 12



A GENEROUS SOUL

John 6:1–14

God is generous and giving. When the disciples came with a need, Jesus fulfilled the need by giving food to five thousand people.

Are you nurturing a giving spirit? Are you generous with your resources? Giving God and people your time is sometimes the most expensive, and most appreciated, gift you can give. Generosity also includes little touches and activities you can do to brighten someone's day, such as sending a quick note, making a cheery phone call, weeding someone's flower bed, or delivering a bouquet of wildflowers.

I remember clearly the day I assessed my spiritual life and decided I needed help in this area. So I prayed . . . and continued to do so. Every day I asked God to open my eyes and my heart and to bring to my knowledge the needs of others. I consider it fine-tuning my heart to God's Word, God's ways, God's grace, and God's generosity. With His help I can meet the needs of others and reach out with His love. Why not make this one of your goals?

Father, show me the big and little ways I can share my resources, including my time. Help me think of others before myself when I have free time and some spending money. Amen.

Read the Bible in one year: John 6–7

Next devotional: p. 17

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." ¹³Therefore 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. ¹⁴Then 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

(Matt. 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–52)

¹⁵Therefore 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.

¹⁶Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. ¹⁸Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. ¹⁹So 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. ²⁰But He said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." ²¹Then

they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.

The Bread from Heaven

²²On 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—²³however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks—²⁴when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. ²⁵And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, “Rabbi, when did You come here?”

²⁶Jesus 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. ²⁷Do 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.”

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

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

³⁰Therefore they said to Him, “What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?”

³¹Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

³²Then 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. ³³For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

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

³⁵And 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. ³⁶But I said to you that you have seen Me 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? ⁶²*What* 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 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.

For Your Heart and Mind

BE PREPARED

As you pursue a heart of excellence, realize that preparation is important to God and He will guide your planning. His very name is Jehovah-jireh, “God will provide”! You have the opportunity to mirror this aspect of God’s character when you plan and prepare in order to provide for your loved ones. Blessed by your farsighted preparations and God’s promised care, your loved ones are indeed doubly blessed!

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 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.

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

The Woman Caught in Adultery

This woman did something very wrong—she committed adultery. As Romans 3:23 tells us, “All have sinned.” This means we have all done wrong, including you. Your sin might not be the same as this woman’s, but sin is sin. Whatever the sin, the law has condemned you and there’s no way out—except through Jesus. Jesus is the only way out. He does not excuse you, but He does offer to take your sin on Himself, having paid the price for it through His death. Accept Jesus’s offer of salvation and forgiveness, and be free of sin’s bondage.

Read more about the woman caught in adultery in John 8:1-12.

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 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

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THE FLAWLESS WORD OF GOD

John 8:31–32

How gullible are you? I am not asking in a derogatory way. I tend to believe what I hear, read, and watch. If you’re like me, you realize there is definitely a need to discern truth. And that ability comes from learning, growing, and understanding the Bible. You may want to get involved in a Bible study or take some classes to further your knowledge. Memorizing Scripture is crucial to being able to separate fact from fiction.

A story has been told often of how the American Bankers Association once trained its tellers to detect counterfeit bills. Not once during their training were the tellers exposed to counterfeit money. They spent the entire time handling nothing but the real thing. By the end of their training, they knew the real thing so well that counterfeits were glaringly obvious.

When it comes to discerning truth, your training is to become so familiar with God’s Word that counterfeits and lies are quickly obvious to you.

Jesus, memorizing takes time and energy, which are in short supply in my life. Please give me an energy boost and open my mind to Your Word. I want to do everything I can to know truth and learn about You. Amen.

Read the Bible in one year: John 8–9

Next devotional: p. 20

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.

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

⁹Some said, "This is he." Others *said*, "He is like him."

He said, "I am *he*."

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

¹¹He 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."

¹²Then they said to him, "Where is He?"

He said, "I do not know."

The Pharisees Excommunicate the Healed Man

¹³They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. ¹⁴Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then 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."

¹⁶Therefore 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.

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

He said, "He is a prophet."

¹⁸But 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. ¹⁹And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

²⁰His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but 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." ²²His 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. ²³Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

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

²⁵He 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."

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

²⁷He 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?"

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

³⁰The 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! ³¹Now 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 doorkeeper 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.

¹⁷“Therefore *My Father* loves Me, because I lay down *My life* that I may take it again. ¹⁸No 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*.”

¹⁹Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings.

²⁰And many of them said, “He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?”

²¹Others 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

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

²⁵Jesus 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. ²⁶But 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. ²⁸And 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. ³⁰I and *My Father* are one.”

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A FIERCE LOVE

John 10:14

Family. Think about how deeply you love and care for them. How concerned you are about each precious life under your roof! As a mom, you worry and struggle right along with your children. What they do impacts every part of you. I know how that feels. It is a fierce love and protective instinct moms have for their children. You want to protect them from anything that will hurt them. It’s the same with God, the Good Shepherd.

Jesus said in John 10:14, “I am the good shepherd; and I know *My sheep*, and am known by *My own*.” It is Jesus who leads you, who brings you to still waters, who offers you love and care and concern. God knows you. And He knows the hearts and purposes of your children. He will not let go of you or them when the path is rocky. He loves you fiercely!

Good Shepherd, when I worry, You invite me to the calm and balm of Your care. Thank You for guiding me and my family, for loving with an incomparable passion those whom I hold dear. Amen.

Read the Bible in one year: John 10–11

Next devotional: p. 30

Relationships and Forgiveness

Expecting the best of others is not always easy, is it? Usually, people disappoint us more than they encourage us. We can become jaded in our view of others. And why not? Why set ourselves up for heartache and pain? If we are not careful, however, we can build walls around our hearts that make it difficult to respond in the right way—God's way—to the people and situations we encounter.

Our human nature generally wants retaliation when we're harmed. It's common to think, "You hurt me, so I'm going to hurt you." This kind of response is the normal pattern of the world.

Jesus took the concepts of love and generosity to a whole new level. He taught that generosity applies not only to those who are kind and loving toward us, but also to our enemies. We are to treat others—specifically our enemies—differently. Instead of retaliating or withholding, we must bless, pray for, and, most importantly, forgive our enemies. Nailed to the cross, Jesus prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Jesus, the master teacher, also instructs us:

- **Love your enemies.** You and I, as part of the body of Christ, should "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you" (Luke 6:27).
- **Pray for the difficult people in your life.** Ask God to fill you with His patience. Use your heart for prayer, not hatred (Matt. 5:44).
- **Forgive** "up to seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22). Forgiveness has no limits. We're to forgive no matter the number of sins committed. Do not stop forgiving!
- **Follow the Golden Rule.** At all times, strive to live your life by Jesus's command: "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Matt. 7:12).

A spiritually mature woman realizes God is at work in her life *through* people—with all their quirks and irritations, all their shortcomings and sinful behavior. No one can make you forgive another person. Forgiveness must come from inside and work its way out into an active response.

Remember that life is short; do not wait until it is too late to let go of any bitterness caused by past offenses. In Christ, not only are you capable of withstanding great pain inflicted by others, but you also possess the strength and power to forgive—with His love—those who cause the hurt. Choose forgiveness!

STUDY AND REFLECT: Proverbs 17:9; Matthew 6:12; John 13:34–35

Renewed Efforts to Stone Jesus

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

³³The 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."

³⁴Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods"?' ³⁵If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), ³⁶do 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'?" ³⁷If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe 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."

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

²⁷She 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

²⁸And 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." ²⁹As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly and came to Him. ³⁰Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but

Martha

A Servant at Heart

Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.

LUKE 10:38

Notable Accomplishment: Acknowledged Jesus as the Christ

Meaning of Name: Aramaic meaning “mistress” or “hostess”

Main Texts: Luke 10:38–42; John 11:1–44; 12:1–8

A LITTLE HISTORY

Jesus loved Martha and Mary and their brother, Lazarus. His interactions with this family provide an example of Jesus’s close relationship with them and a dramatic illustration of His power as He raised Lazarus from the dead.

HER STORY

Martha’s hospitality—Luke 10:38

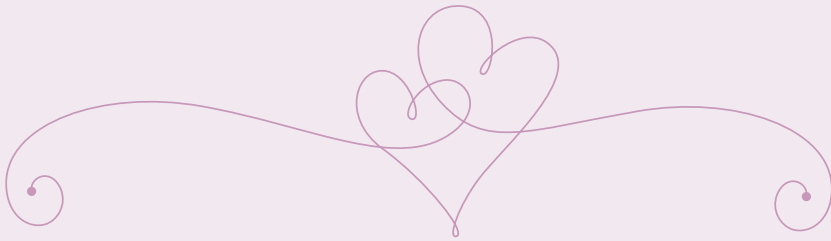
As Jesus and His disciples traveled, they often entered a village called Bethany, about two miles east of the temple in Jerusalem. It appears that Jesus and His disciples often visited the home of Martha and her sister, Mary, and their brother, Lazarus. As Jesus was a friend of the family, Martha “welcomed Him into her house.”

Martha’s distraction—Luke 10:39–42

When Jesus came to visit on one occasion, Martha’s stress level shot through the roof. She wanted everything to be just right. The Lord of the universe was in the other room! But she was more concerned with cooking than with her guest and His teaching. In her frustration that her sister was with Jesus and not in the kitchen, Martha rebuked the Lord: “Do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?” Jesus gently reminded Martha of this important truth: it is more important to spend time *with* God than to do things *for* God.

Martha's acknowledgment—John 11:17–27

Toward the end of Jesus's earthly ministry, He received a message from Martha and Mary that their brother was sick. Yet Jesus delayed His departure long enough that no one could misinterpret the miracle He would perform when He arrived at their home. Martha was the first to come to Jesus when He arrived. Having learned Jesus's previous lesson, Martha focused on the important things. She acknowledged that Jesus had a special relationship to God and if Jesus had been there, Lazarus wouldn't have died. Yet Martha had hope that her brother would be raised from the dead at the end of time. When Jesus declared that He was "the resurrection and the life . . . and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die," Martha confessed, "You are the Christ, the Son of God" (vv. 25–27).



STRAIGHT TO YOUR HEART

God wants your devotion more than your duty. Perhaps you suffer from the "Martha syndrome." You get so caught up in your service that you seldom spend time with the Savior. Make it your goal this week to step away from your busy life and spend time with Jesus.

God's rebukes are for restoration. Martha was out of control when Jesus came for a meal. She was bossy, accusing, and critical, and Jesus gently rebuked her for having the wrong focus. Later when Jesus arrived to help her brother, Martha immediately came to meet Jesus. She had learned Jesus's lesson well. Rather than playing hostess to the Jews who came to mourn her brother's death, her focus was on Jesus. How well do you receive God's rebukes and instruction, either through His Word or from your fellow Christians? Proverbs 15:31 says, "The ear that hears the rebukes of life will abide among the wise."



was in the place where Martha met Him. ³¹Then 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."

³²Then, 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."

³³Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.

³⁴And He said, "Where have you laid him?"

They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

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

³⁷And 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

³⁸Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. ³⁹Jesus 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."

⁴⁰Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" ⁴¹Then 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.

⁴²And 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." ⁴³Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" ⁴⁴And 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

(*Matt. 26:1-5; Mark 14:1, 2; Luke 22:1, 2*)

⁴⁵Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. ⁴⁶But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. ⁴⁷Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said,

"What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. ⁴⁸If we let Him alone like this, everyone 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

(*Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9*)

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. ⁸For 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

(*Matt. 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:28–40*)

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 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?”

Mary of Bethany

A Woman Who Chose the Good Things

Mary . . . sat at Jesus' feet
and heard His word.

LUKE 10:39

Notable Accomplishment: Prepared Jesus's body for burial

Meaning of Name: "Bitterness"

Main Texts: Luke 10:38–42; John 11:1–44; 12:1–8

A LITTLE HISTORY

Once Jesus left His hometown of Nazareth, He never again had a fixed place that He could call home. With that unsettled lifestyle came few opportunities for close friendship. Yes, He was a friend of sinners, but there were only a few people He visited in their homes, on a repeat basis. One of those was the home of Mary and Martha, two sisters who resided in Bethany with their brother, Lazarus.

HER STORY

Mary chose to worship—Luke 10:38–42

During the visit recorded in Luke 10, Jesus was invited for a meal, as is the custom in Middle Eastern cultures. While the meal was being prepared, Mary sat at Jesus's feet, feasting on His words rather than helping Martha prepare the feast. When Martha complained to Jesus, He obviously thought Mary had made the right choice, saying, "Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her" (v. 42).

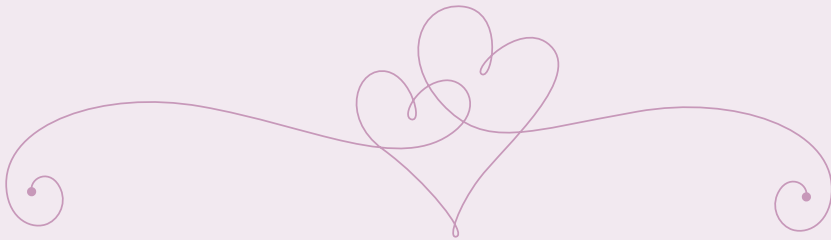
Mary chose to weep—John 11:1–44

On another occasion, Jesus received news that Lazarus was gravely ill. Knowing of Lazarus's death, Jesus took several days to make His way to the home of His friends. When Mary learned that Jesus was waiting at a distance, asking to speak with her, she went to Him. She fell weeping at His feet and declared:

“Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died” (v. 32). Mary worshiped as she wept.

Mary chose to care sacrificially—John 12:1–8

As the Passover feast approached, Jesus returned to Bethany on His way to the cross. A supper of appreciation was made for Jesus for raising Lazarus. At the supper, Martha was busy performing her role of serving, while Mary performed her usual role of love and devotion—she anointed Jesus with a costly oil. When others criticized Mary’s actions, Jesus commended her. Throughout their relationship, Mary had chosen to listen at Jesus’s feet, weep at Jesus’s feet, and, with this anointing, prepare His body for burial.



STRAIGHT TO YOUR HEART

Choose Jesus over everything else. Mary chose to listen at Jesus’s feet, worship at Jesus’s feet, and work at His feet to prepare His body for the death He would soon experience. Mary lived out Jesus’s desire for all of us to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). Every day you have a choice whether you will serve yourself or serve Jesus.

Be an uninhibited worshiper of God. Mary was an uninhibited worshiper of God. How closely do you follow Mary’s example? Do you seek new ways to show your love for Jesus? People may consider your sacrifices of worship unwise, wasteful, even foolish. But God doesn’t. He welcomes the gifts of worship you bring to pour out at His feet, so make them lavish—and make them every day.



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. ⁴⁵And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. ⁴⁶I have come *as* a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. ⁴⁷And 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. ⁴⁸He 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. ⁴⁹For 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. ⁵⁰And 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 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

(*Matt. 26:21–25; Mark 14:18–19; Luke 22:21–23*)

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.

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."

Day
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LOVE—A SACRIFICE OF SELF

John 13:34

It is easy to love people who love in return. But what about those who don't? Jesus makes this astounding statement in Matthew 5:44–45: "I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you . . . that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." God expects you to love the unloving, just as He loved you when you were lost in sin. God's love is never deserved—it simply is.

It is natural for you to expect that when you are nice to others, they will return the kindness, right? Wrong! And you probably have the scars to prove it. Yet Jesus said, without exception, "Love one another; as I have loved you." Love is the sacrifice of self for the sake of your family and even your enemies.

Lord, it is hard to care about those who don't care in return. But with Your help and by Your grace, I will look at each of these people through Your eyes of love—Your unconditional love. Amen.

Read the Bible in one year: John 12–13

Next devotional: p. 33



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, 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."

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."

Day
310



EXPERIENCE GOD'S PEACE

John 16:33

God provides real peace for us . . . and that includes you—even if you have a screaming baby, a high-stress job, or are knee-deep in troubles. You may not be feeling much like a woman after God's own heart, but John 16:33 records Jesus saying that even though in this world you will have tribulation, you also have God's perfect peace in every circumstance of your life. So even if at this moment you aren't able to fully appreciate the truth of God's peace, it is there and it will make itself apparent. First Corinthians 15:58 says, "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, [and here's the part for you today] knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Bless you today, and hang in there!

Father, thank You for caring so much about me that You know I need peace and rest. Restore my energy and my commitment to You and Your plan for my life. Amen.

Read the Bible in one year: John 14–16

Next devotional: p. 34

EXCITING, ELECTRIC, AND ENERGIZING

John 17:8

God's Word is exciting and energizing. It is even thrilling! Why? Because it is life-changing and heart-transforming. Today the Bible is my lifeline. For the first twenty-eight years of my life, I turned to everything *but* the Bible for help. Ever since the day I discovered the truth about Jesus Christ in the Bible, I've relentlessly devoured His Word. My appetite for the life-giving, life-saving, life-sustaining truths in Scripture has only increased as the years have gone by.

Proverbs 2:6 says, "The LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding." What you read between the covers of your Bible is wisdom for all your trials and for all the days of your life. Stand on it. Live by it. And teach it to your children every day so that they, too, have the thrill of a transformed life.

Lord, Your Word leads me to the refuge of Your heart. It fills me with passion to love You and compassion for loving my children. Transform me, Lord. Amen.

Read the Bible in one year: John 17-19

Next devotional: p. 42

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

(Matt. 26:47–56; Mark 14:43–52; Luke 22:47–53)

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

(Matt. 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:54–62)

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 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. ²¹Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have

For Your Heart and Mind

HONOR YOUR PARENTS

Honor your parents. What does this mean? To honor your parents means to speak well of them, to respect them, and to show all courtesy to them in their position as parents. The family is the foundational and fundamental relationship where submission is required. If you're a parent, the best way to teach submission to your children is by showing honor and respect for your own parents.

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

(*Matt. 27:1, 2, 11-14; Mark 15:1-5; Luke 23:1-5*)

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 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

(*Matt. 27:15-23; Mark 15:6-14; Luke 23:13-23*)

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

(Matt. 27:27–31; Mark 15:16–20)

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!"

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

(Matt. 27:32–56; Mark 15:21–41; Luke 23:26–49)

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. 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

(*Matt. 27:57–61; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–56*)

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.

The Empty Tomb

(*Matt. 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–12*)

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 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."

Mary Magdalene

A Faithful Follower

The twelve were with Him, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities— Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons.

LUKE 8:1–2

Notable Accomplishment: First to see the risen Savior

Meaning of Name: Mary from Magdala

Main Texts: Matthew 28:1; Luke 8:1–3; John 19–20

A LITTLE HISTORY

Down through the centuries, Mary Magdalene suffered from a tarnished reputation. Maybe it was because of her unusual demon infestation—seven demons! History may defame her, but the Bible reveals a woman who was totally devoted to following Jesus from a pure heart and a blameless character.

HER STORY

Mary's deliverance—Luke 8:2

We can only imagine the destruction, pain, torment, and suffering that seven demons inflicted on the life of Mary, who was from the small town of Magdala. We don't know the particulars of her deliverance, but given her connection with Jesus, we can assume that the instrument of her deliverance was Jesus.

Mary's devotion—Luke 8:2–3

Freed from satanic bondage, Mary joined Jesus's followers. Verses 2 and 3 tell us three things about Mary: First, her name appears at the head of the list of women who followed Jesus. Second, she was a woman of means who supported Jesus's ministry. Third, Mary left her home in Magdala to follow Jesus, leaving behind her personal comfort.

Mary's dedication—John 19:25

Mary's dedication continued as she was present throughout the trial and crucifixion of Jesus. The disciples fled in fear, leaving only Jesus's mother,

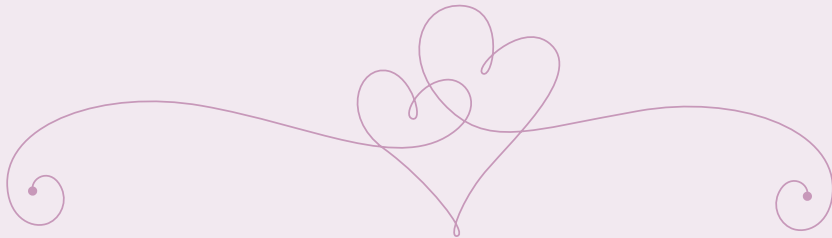
His aunt, and Mary Magdalene to witness Jesus dismiss His spirit and die. Matthew 27:61 tells us Mary Magdalene watched Joseph of Arimathea take Jesus's body and lay it in Joseph's own tomb. She then stayed after the stone was rolled over the entrance of the tomb.

Mary's determination—Matthew 28:1

Having brought burial spices to prepare Jesus's body (Mark 16:1), Mary Magdalene and another woman returned to the tomb the morning after the Sabbath, and were amazed that the stone had been removed from the entrance (John 20:1). Immediately, Mary returned to tell the disciples that Jesus's body had been taken. Peter and John ran back to the tomb and, seeing the linen wrappings, understood what Jesus had told them about His resurrection. The disciples left, but Mary stayed, standing outside the tomb weeping (John 20:1–11).

Mary's reward—John 20:11–18

Last at the cross when Jesus died, Mary was also last at the garden tomb and first to witness the most important event in world history—the defining truth of Christianity, namely the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What a great honor God conferred upon the faithful Mary Magdalene.



STRAIGHT TO YOUR HEART

No problem is too difficult for Jesus. Mary Magdalene is living proof that even the devil and his demons are no match for Jesus's power. You may think your problems are too difficult for anyone to help, but Jesus isn't just anyone. He promised, "My grace is sufficient" (2 Cor. 12:9). Take Him at His word: lay your problems at Jesus's feet and let Him see you through each one of them.

A great salvation demands a great devotion. Mary knew what she had been delivered from. Her gratitude to Christ overflowed in great devotion to Christ. She who had been forgiven much owed much, gave much, loved much, and served much. The same should be true of your salvation. Like Mary Magdalene, show your love for Jesus and serve Him with your whole being today and for all the todays of your life.



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.

The Apostles Commissioned

(Luke 24:36–43; 1 Cor. 15:5)

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. ²³If 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."

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

²⁹Jesus 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

³⁰And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but 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*: ²Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the *sons* of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. ³Simon 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. ⁴But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?"

They answered Him, "No."

⁶And 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.

⁷Therefore 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. ⁸But 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. ⁹Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. ¹⁰Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."

¹¹Simon 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. ¹²Jesus said to them, "Come *and* eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"—knowing that it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus

then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.

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

Jesus Restores Peter

¹⁵So 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."

¹⁶He 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."

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. ¹⁸Most 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?"

Day 312



FOLLOW ME

John 21:19

It is wonderful being a woman after God's own heart, isn't it? To know Him. To love Him. To enrich the lives of others. To follow Him and to enjoy the blessings He extends to you when you do. No woman's life could be more satisfying than the life enjoyed by a woman after His own heart, a woman whose heart's desire is to do God's will.

Our transformation into being a woman after God's own heart is indeed God's work. When you follow the disciplines to place yourself before God—fostering a consistent devotional life, personal growth, godly home and family, and ministry to others—He works in your heart. When you follow God's will, it pleases Him, benefits the lives of those you serve, and shows Christ to the world.

God, I want to follow You. I want to be Your child, a true woman after Your heart—a woman who lives her life in You and for You. I acknowledge my sin and receive Your Son, Jesus Christ, in my needy heart, giving thanks that He died on the cross for my sins. Thank You for giving me Your strength so that I can follow You. Amen.

Read the Bible in one year: John 20–21

Next devotional: p. 47

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.

Truths for You from John

- Jesus is God in the flesh, and is the way, the truth, and the life.
- In order to experience God, you must have a relationship with Jesus as your Lord and Savior.
- You become a daughter of God when you receive Jesus.
- Although at times you may fail, Jesus extends forgiveness and longs to have you back.
- Restoration turns uselessness into usefulness.
- Your ability to love others is related to your understanding of God’s love for you.
- The four Gospels were written for you so that “you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31).
- “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).
- Jesus spoke with everyday people, such as the woman at the well, because He came to save everyday people from all nations.
- Jesus’s prayer is that you would be sanctified and unified with Him so that you may be a witness who attracts others to belief in Christ.

Join Elizabeth in discovering the transformative power of God's Word

In this innovative Bible, life-changing devotions by Elizabeth George are fully integrated with a daily reading plan that leads you on the same journey of spiritual growth that Elizabeth has been on for the past 30 years.

Study tools include:

- More than 250 **highlighted verses** that have most impacted Elizabeth's spiritual walk
- Over 150 **biographies** of well-known—and not so well-known—women of the Bible
- **Introductions** to every book of the Bible to help you approach the text
- Full-page **topical reflections** on 25 of life's challenges
- Plus 400 brief **whispers of practical wisdom**



Women around the world are drawn to Elizabeth's approach of daily starting with the Bible to handle life's challenges. *A Woman After God's Own Heart*® Bible gathers her tools so that they can be your guide as well.



Elizabeth George, whose books have sold more than 11 million copies, is the author of *A Woman After God's Own Heart*® (more than 1 million copies sold) and *Breaking the Worry Habit Forever*. She is also a popular speaker at Christian women's events. Elizabeth and her husband, Jim, are parents and grandparents, and have been active in ministry for more than three decades.

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