



40-DAY FAST

**THE GOSPEL OF JOHN
& 1-3 JOHN**



PREFACE

If this is your first time joining our 40-Day Fast, welcome aboard! If you've done this with us before, we hope this time is even more impactful than ever. We pray this guide and devotional provide encouragement along the way.

Over the next 40 days, we aim to remove distractions so we can increase the time and focus we give to our relationship with God. However, removing distractions is not the point of the fast. Abstaining from certain foods or meals is not the point. "Getting healthier" is not the point. We'll even go so far as to say that praying more and reading Scripture more are not the points of the fast. All of those things are good and even necessary, but they are not the ultimate mission. The point of the fast is to intentionally grow closer to God, and we do that by removing distractions (social media, secular media, foods, etc.) to increase the time and focus we give to our relationship with God through prayer and Scripture.

This devotional booklet is the first in a series of three booklets that work through the apostle John's writings. This first booklet will cover the gospel of John and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd John. Because we are covering four books in 40 days, the readings may be uneven or seem to break in unexpected places. To get the most out of this, we suggest that, before we start each of the books, you read or listen to the whole book (John, 1st, 2nd, 3rd John) in one sitting. This helps us see the unity and flow of the book before breaking it down.

We are excited to participate in this fast with you and to see how God uses this time to draw you closer to Himself.

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WHAT TO FAST:

Secular media, meats, and sweets

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WHAT TO FAST:

Secular media and one meal a day

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The 40-Day Fast devotional will also be available at experiencecc.com. Beginning on January 13th, 2025, we will read and fast together as a community each day. If you want to share the link and invite your family and friends to read along with you, they can start reading this devotional at any time!

DAYS 21-30

WHAT TO FAST:

Secular media, meats, and sweets

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WHAT TO FAST:

Secular media and one meal a day

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Audio versions of the daily readings and devotionals can be found anywhere you get your podcasts. You can use these to listen along or to send and share with friends and family.



bit.ly/eccpodcast-spotify



bit.ly/eccpodcast-apple

BEFORE WE BEGIN

WHAT IS FASTING?

To fast means to voluntarily abstain from certain foods or certain activities for an extended period of time. Biblical fasting is a discipline of voluntarily denying one's self in order to be available for prayer and communion with God. Since it's an ultimate act of self-denial, you are entering into an intense training in righteousness.

WHY FAST?

There are many reasons why people fasted in the Bible, and all of them are good. Some wanted wisdom while others were repenting of their sins. However, there was one aspect of the fasting experience each had in common: a personal encounter with the living God. As you begin to consider reasons for your fast, there is one that will override all other reasons and that is to have a powerful, life-changing encounter with God.

WHAT WILL WE BE FASTING?

During the 40-day fast, we will alternate our fasting in 10-day increments. On days 1–10 and again on days 21–30, we will fast from meat and sweets. On days 11–20 and again on days 31–40, we will eat only one meal a day (or you can choose to abstain from one meal a day). We plan to fast from secular media for all 40 days of the fast.

We also encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit about giving up other things for the duration of the fast. These can be things that are unique to you as you are led, such as caffeine, video games, social media, etc.

WHY GIVE UP SECULAR MEDIA?

As followers of Christ, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 6:19). Just as nothing unclean was allowed to enter the temple, we should be careful with what we allow to enter our hearts through our eyes or ears. As Christians, we are called to discern whether what we watch, what we listen to, and what we think about are leading us to God (see Philippians 4:8).

PREPARE

SPIRITUALLY

Ask God to help you make a list of your sins. Confess every sin the Holy Spirit calls to your remembrance and accept God's forgiveness. Seek forgiveness from all whom you have offended, and forgive all who have hurt you as the Holy Spirit leads you.

PHYSICALLY

Eat smaller meals before the fast and avoid foods high in fat and sugar. If you have a chronic ailment or are on prescription medication, consult your doctor and consider modifying your fast.

HOW-TO GUIDE

We have composed a devotional for you to read for each day of the fast. Take your time to contemplate the Scripture and the devotional—don't rush.

1. Grab your Bible and read the Scripture referenced for that day. This will give you context for the devotion.
2. Read the daily devotion.
3. Write notes, thoughts, and prayers in the spaces provided on the left and right side of your pages.
4. End with about 10 minutes of prayer, using the Psalm at the bottom as a prompt.

PRACTICAL TIPS AND GUIDELINES

EXERCISE MODERATELY

During the days when we're fasting a meal or only eating one meal, avoid strenuous exercise and excess physical activity.

STAY HYDRATED

- Make sure to drink plenty of water while fasting.
 - Drinking fruit juice during the fast will decrease your hunger pains and give natural energy.
 - The best juices are made from fresh watermelon, lemons, grapes, apples, cabbage, beets, carrots, celery, or leafy green vegetables. In cold weather, you may enjoy a warm vegetable broth.
 - Mix acidic juices (orange and tomato) with water for your stomach's sake.
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REST AND PREPARE MENTALLY

- Rest as much as your schedule will permit.
 - Prepare yourself for temporary mental discomforts, such as impatience, crankiness, and episodes of anxiety.
 - Expect some physical discomfort, especially on the second day. You may have hunger pains and dizziness.
 - Withdrawal from caffeine and sugar may cause headaches.
 - Physical discomforts may also include weakness, tiredness, or sleeplessness.
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BREAKING THE FAST

- End the fast by eating certain foods gradually. Suddenly reintroducing your stomach to foods you haven't eaten in 40 days will likely have negative, even dangerous, consequences.
- Practice moderation and wisdom in what media you introduce back into your life after the fast is over.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

BE CONTENT THROUGHOUT

Avoid complaining about what foods you can't eat, movies you can't watch, etc. Don't appear gloomy for people to feel sorry for you or think how spiritual you are. On the contrary, do what Jesus says and "put oil on your head and wash your face" (Matthew 6:17)! Act normal and carry on. We have the privilege and honor of giving things up for Christ, knowing He gave everything up for us. Complaining negates the very purpose of this fast. We don't have to fast, we get to.

AVOID VIEWING THE FAST AS A "DIET PLAN"

Some people will see the chief benefits of these next 40 days as getting a little slimmer, getting off caffeine, or not taking desserts for granted. But if we look at Scripture, we see it as a time set aside for deep spiritual urgency, when God's people really wanted Him to show up in a big way.

REPLACE SACRIFICE WITH GOD

Sometimes we can get caught up in the "whats" of fasting without thinking about the "who." For these next 40 days, there are things we should want to give up in our lives so we might replace them with God. As Jared Wilson says in his book *Gospel Deeps*, "the soul has a palate and a throat, else Jesus would not bid us drink." John Piper says, "It is not just our bodies that are built for enjoyment, but our spiritual senses, the insides of our insides." The problem, of course, is we are bent on thinking our insides will have joy when our outsides do. But it doesn't work that way. It's actually the other way around. Food and drink will not truly satisfy our bodies until the bread and wine of Jesus' body satisfies our souls. For the next 40 days, we get to savor and enjoy Christ without any distractions. If we just give up food and don't replace it with the presence of God, it is of no benefit to us. We'll only be unnecessarily hungry people. Let's all take a moment to breathe in, slow down, and remember not just what we're about to do, but who we are doing this for.

FASTING SUCCESSFULLY

If you sincerely humble yourself before the Lord, repent, pray, and seek God's face, you will experience a heightened awareness of His presence (see John 14:21). A single fast, however, is not a spiritual cure-all. Just as we need fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit daily, we also need new times of fasting before God. It takes time to build your spiritual fasting endurance. If you fail to make it through your first fast, do not be discouraged. As soon as possible, undertake another fast until you do succeed. God will honor your faithfulness.

DAY 1

Read John 1:1–28

*Feel free to write
in the margins.*

The first thing John the Apostle does in his gospel account is explain the identity of two people: Jesus and John the Baptist. He begins with Jesus; the Son of God and the eternal second person of the Trinity. If you had any pre-conception that Jesus was just a good man, just a good teacher, or just a good religious figure among many, John blows that away before he says anything else. Look at how fundamentally important Jesus is. He is eternal. He is with God. He is God. He created all things. He contains life itself. He contains the light of all light. He gives us the right to be God's children. His glory is God's glory. He gives us grace. He gives us truth.

As John the Apostle is defining Jesus, he weaves in the definition of another man: John the Baptist. But do you see how he defines John? He defines Jesus as self-existing, dependent on nothing. But he defines John as being sent from God, not light itself but a witness to the light, one who ranks below Him, one who existed after Him, not the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet, but a voice crying out, "Get ready for Jesus." The only way we know John the Baptist is in how he relates to Jesus. John is nothing in himself, but everything in Jesus.

So who are you? Are you male or female? Are you white, black, Asian, or Hispanic? Are you rich or poor? Do you have a Ph.D. or a high school diploma? Are you at the top of your career, or an unpaid intern? Hopefully, you see now that none of these titles or statuses are anything in themselves. Anything you can say about yourself or anyone else is only true in so far as it reveals who Jesus is.

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Begin praying with Psalm 2:7:

"I will declare the LORD's decree.

He said to me, 'You are my Son;

today I have become your Father.'"

DAY 2

Read John 1:29-2:12

How did you come to believe in Jesus? Did your parents teach you as a child? Did you stumble into a church? Maybe you experienced healing after a desperate prayer. What John shows us in this passage is that there are many ways by which people come to believe in the one Messiah. John the Baptist believed because he saw the Spirit descend. Two of his disciples believed because of his testimony. One of them told Peter. Philip just followed Jesus' command. Nathanael was impressed with Jesus' knowledge. The servants at the wedding saw Jesus' sign.

It seems like John is setting up what will be a very important theme throughout his gospel. Jesus provides many ways and opportunities for us to know him. And just as importantly, not everyone will know him, despite all their opportunities. Did you notice an important character missing from the list above? The headwaiter, by all available evidence, didn't see the Worker through the work. When Jesus miraculously turns water into wine, he concludes the wine must have been stored in the back. He doesn't outright reject Jesus, but he makes the same mistake many others will in this gospel: interpreting a supernatural work through a natural lens.

We'll continue to discuss this theme of unbelief throughout John's gospel, but for now think of all the opportunities you have to share the good news of the gospel: the Messiah is here! Think back on the way you came to know who Jesus is. Who shared Him with you? How did they do that? How did you react? Did you immediately receive it or did you need further convincing? Take all of that personal experience, filter it through scriptural truth, and then share your testimony and tell of Jesus' work.

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Begin praying with Psalm 130:7:

***"Israel, put your hope in the LORD.
For there is faithful love with the LORD,
and with him is redemption in abundance."***

DAY 3

Read John 2:13–3:30

Remember the foreshadowing we saw yesterday of missing spiritual truth through natural eyes? Here are four more examples of exactly that: the merchants and money changers saw financial opportunity in the Father's house, the Jews saw the temple building in Jesus' teaching, Nicodemus saw physical birth in spiritual rebirth, and John's disciples saw changing social dynamics in the rise of the Messiah. It's almost unbelievable to have example after example of people not seeing who Jesus truly is. Even John's disciples, who should have known better, let a theological argument end in essentially saying, "John, why is everyone going to this Jesus guy instead of us now?"

So why is it that all these people missed the truth? Why didn't they see it? According to Jesus, it seems like they weren't born again. They were born of the flesh, so they understood the things of the flesh. They knew the things they could see, hear, touch, and feel. But other than that, they were blind. They couldn't understand spiritual truth because they weren't born of the Spirit. Even Nicodemus, a great and learned teacher of the Jewish tradition, couldn't understand what Jesus, the God whom he had studied, was telling him.

So what should we do about this? How do the failures of others impact the way we live? We should learn from their mistakes. Don't be spiritually blind. Don't let the truth about God get lost in your own desires and understanding. You cannot see the truth unless you truly understand the One who gives truth. And in order to see Him for who He is, you must be born again. You have to ask God to make you a new creation, one that honors Him and truly knows Him.

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Begin praying with Psalm 25:4–5:

***"Make your ways known to me, LORD;
teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
I wait for you all day long."***

In John 3:31–4:38, we encounter one of the most beautiful and profound moments in the Gospels: Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well. This woman wasn't a figure of power, success, or moral purity. She was a five-time widow or divorcee, drawing water in the heat of the day, likely to avoid the judgmental stares of others. As a Samaritan, she was part of a group despised by the Jews. And as a woman with a complicated past, she was likely an outcast even in her own community. By all accounts, she was humbled by life's circumstances, carrying the weight of rejection and shame.

Read John 3:31–4:38

Yet, it is to this woman that Jesus chooses to reveal Himself as the Messiah for the very first time. Think about that for a moment. Jesus doesn't first announce His identity to religious leaders, the rich, or the powerful, but to an outcast—a Samaritan woman who was broken and weary. In this encounter, Jesus shows us that His grace is not reserved for the elite or the morally righteous but is extended to all, especially those who are broken and humbled.

What's even more remarkable is that, through this woman, many people in her village come to believe in Jesus. Her testimony, born out of her personal encounter with the Savior, becomes a beacon of hope to others. Jesus' choice to reveal His glory through her reflects His heart for the marginalized and the outcast.

Her story continues to resonate with us today. It reminds us that no one is too broken or too far gone to be used by God. Jesus sees our worth, even when the world doesn't, and He chooses the humbled to display His glory. Our pasts don't define us. Our encounter with Jesus defines us. Just as He met the Samaritan woman in her need, He meets us in ours, offering living water that brings eternal life.

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Begin praying with Psalm 40:2:

*"He brought me up from a desolate pit,
out of the muddy clay,
and set my feet on a rock,
making my steps secure."*

DAY 5

Read John 4:39–54

There's a big difference between knowing about someone, and meeting that someone face-to-face. When you know about someone, your understanding is limited to second-hand reports and intangible ideas. Maybe those reports are accurate, but you don't have personal knowledge and experience about whether they are or not. You have to rely on the trustworthiness of the reporter. In contrast, when you've met someone personally, you can be confident in what you know about them. Maybe you've just heard they are kind and compassionate, but once you've seen them in action, stopping what they're doing to help someone they don't know, you can know for sure they are kind.

In this passage, we see two different encounters in which people had heard about Jesus but now met him face-to-face. The Samaritans say that, while the woman's testimony was helpful, it was nothing compared to meeting and hearing from the Messiah Himself. Those who already believed were confirmed in their belief, and many skeptics of the woman became believers. The second encounter (with the royal official) involves two different types of belief. In verse 50, John says the official believed what Jesus said. Later in verse 53, it says the official believed when he heard that his son lived because of what Jesus said.

So, assuming you are a follower of Jesus, why do you believe in Him? Is it because you've heard about a man who lived and spoke 2,000 years ago? Or have you had the reports confirmed by your personal experience with Him? Have you seen His Spirit work in your life? Not everyone will see and experience miraculous healings, speaking in tongues, or dramatic conversion stories, but everyone who believes in Him will experience hope for the future, peace in the present, and maturity from their past because of the presence of His Spirit.

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Begin praying with Psalm 25:14:

***"The secret counsel of the LORD
is for those who fear him,
and he reveals his covenant to them."***

DAY 6

Read John 5:1-23

Hope is an easy thing to misplace, especially when you feel disappointed by the thing you hoped in last time. Examples of this abound today, whether it's "healing" crystals, a different job, tarot cards, horoscopes, the Enneagram, Tinder, or anything else we think will finally make us happy. As an example, consider Leland Olds, chairman of the Federal Power Commission from 1940 to 1949. All he wanted in life was to effect positive change. But he kept hoping in different institutions and kept being disappointed. First, it was social work, then the social gospel movement, then teaching history, then economics, and finally government work. But everything ultimately left him disappointed. None of it worked like he wanted it to. After he lost his government position in 1949, he never recovered his hope or passion and died 10 years later.

The passage we read today, likewise, is a story of misplaced hope. The disabled man hoped in a superstition that if he was the first one in the pool when the waters were stirred, he would finally be healed. Whether or not God actually healed people through this pool is unclear, but what is clear is that the man hoped in the pool rather than in God. Then, God in the flesh showed up and healed him. Great! End of story. Everyone is happy. But there's another group who misplaced their hope in this passage. The religious leaders placed their hope in their interpretation of the law, instead of the Law Giver. When their hope seemed to disappoint them, they turned to persecuting the One through whom the law came.

So the question for us is, what do we hope in? What do we think will finally "fix" us, or make us happy? If it's anything other than the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, then it's a misplaced hope. There's only one source of true hope that will not disappoint, and His name is Jesus.

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Begin praying with Psalm 62:5:
*"Rest in God alone, my soul,
 for my hope comes from him."*

DAY 7

Read John 5:24–6:15

In this section, we're coming off the heels of the religious leaders "trying all the more to kill" Jesus, and we end with the people almost taking "him by force to make him king" (5:18; 6:15). Talk about whiplash. But sandwiched between these two misunderstandings of who Jesus is and what He came to do is Jesus' own testimony about who He is as a person and His work.

Jesus lays out three major topics here: judgment and resurrection, true testimony, and receiving that testimony.

About resurrection and judgment, He says that everyone will be raised, and He will be their just judge.

About true testimony, He explains why they should (already) believe Him. Though Jesus' self-testimony is obviously true to us, He references the testimonies of John the Baptist and God the Father. Referencing these two other witnesses follows the teaching in Deuteronomy, where two to three witnesses are required to establish a charge as true (19:15; 17:1). Although unnecessary, Jesus abides by the two-witness rule, written by Moses, then tops it off with Moses as the third witness. Jesus shows He is adhering to the letter of the law in response to their accusation that Jesus breaks the letter of the law.

About receiving truth, Jesus says that despite His true testimony, they don't accept him and they don't have God's word residing in them, even though they pour over the Scriptures. So here's the question for us: do we merely read God's words, or do we have God's Word dwelling in us? Jesus is highlighting the chasm of the difference between knowing about God and knowing God.

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Begin praying with Psalm 50:16–17:

"But God says to the wicked:

***'What right do you have to recite my statutes
and to take my covenant on your lips?***

You hate instruction

and fling my words behind you.'"

What is it that you need? I mean really need. There is probably a big gap between our answers today and those of the crowd Jesus fed. iPhone? Didn't have it. Wifi? Didn't have it. Air conditioning? A car? Regular access to a nearby grocery store with five kinds of Cheerios? You get the point. But maybe now you're thinking, "Ah, food! We all need food to eat!" Let's see what Jesus has to say about that. Jesus uses the feeding of the 5,000 to point to a deeper truth—He is the true bread that satisfies not just physical hunger, but the spiritual hunger of our souls.

Read John 6:16-71

Jesus explains that just as bread nourishes the body, He alone can nourish and sustain our spirits. He invites us to come to Him, basically declaring, "Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty" (6:35). His audience, however, struggles to understand this deeper meaning, just as the Samaritan woman struggled to comprehend Jesus' teaching about living water in John 4.

To the Samaritan woman, Jesus offered "living water," which would quench her spiritual thirst forever (John 4:13-14). Just as He uses bread to explain spiritual nourishment in John 6, He used water as a metaphor for eternal life to the Samaritan woman. Both metaphors—bread and water—reveal the same truth: Jesus is the only source of true satisfaction. Physical needs, like hunger and thirst, are temporary, but the spiritual needs of the soul are eternal. Jesus meets those needs perfectly.

Both stories also highlight the importance of belief. When Jesus told the Samaritan woman about the living water, she believed and shared the good news with her village. In John 6, however, many who heard Jesus' teaching about being the bread of life found it difficult to accept. Some turned away, unable to understand or believe.

In both cases, Jesus invites us to trust in Him for sustenance that lasts forever. He is the bread that fills our deepest hunger and the water that quenches our deepest thirst. In Him, we find eternal life and satisfaction that the world cannot offer. In Him, we find what we truly need.

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Begin praying with Psalm 107:9:

***"For he has satisfied the thirsty
and filled the hungry with good things."***

DAY 9

Read John 7:1–36

The crowd, the religious leaders, and even Jesus' own brothers are trying to make sense of His identity. Some believe He is a good man, others think He is a deceiver, and still others wonder if He could be the Messiah. This confusion reflects the timeless struggle to understand who Jesus truly is—a question we still have to answer today.

Early in the passage, Jesus' brothers encourage Him to go to the Feast of Tabernacles and publicly reveal Himself. They don't believe in Him yet (7:5), which shows that even those closest to Him had not fully grasped who He was. Jesus responds by explaining that His timing is not determined by human expectations but by the will of God. This reveals a key aspect of His identity—He operates according to God's plan, not man's.

As Jesus teaches at the Feast, His words stir more questions. Some are amazed at His wisdom, wondering how He knows so much without formal training (7:15). Jesus responds by pointing them to the source of His authority: "My teaching isn't mine but is from the one who sent me" (7:16). Jesus isn't just a wise teacher—He is sent from God and speaks with divine authority.

The crowds continue to speculate about Jesus' identity. Some think He might be the Messiah, but they are confused by His origins, saying, "Surely the Messiah doesn't come from Galilee, does he?" (7:41). They are caught up in their assumptions, unable to see that Jesus fulfills all the Messianic prophecies, including being born in Bethlehem.

In this passage, Jesus asks the same question of us: "Who do you say I am?" Is He just a good teacher or prophet, or is He the Son of God? Jesus' words and actions point to the truth: He is the Messiah, sent from God to bring salvation. The question is not just for those in John 7—it is for us today. How will we answer?

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Begin praying with Psalm 72:11:

***"Let all kings bow in homage to him,
all nations serve him."***

DAY 10

Read John 7:37-8:1

Jesus stands up on the last day of the feast and declares, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink" (7:37). This bold claim of Jesus offering living water was met with divided responses. The crowd and the Pharisees, certain in their own reasoning, quickly concluded that Jesus couldn't be the Messiah. They gave four reasons for this: 1) The Messiah can't come from Galilee, 2) Jesus wasn't from Bethlehem, 3) No ruler or Pharisee believed in Him, and 4) No prophet arises from Galilee.

On the surface, these seem like strong arguments, but a closer look shows how flawed they are. Three of these reasons are factually incorrect, and the fourth is irrelevant. First, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, even though He was raised in Galilee. Second, prophets like Jonah did come from Galilee, showing the Pharisees' ignorance of Scripture. Lastly, whether rulers or Pharisees believed in Him had no bearing on the truth of who He was. Despite being wrong on every point, the Pharisees remained confident in their judgment.

This raises a timeless question: How can we be so confident in what we believe to be true, and yet be so wrong? A quote from Mark Twain captures this perfectly: "It ain't what you don't know that gets you into trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so." The Pharisees were certain of their conclusions, yet they were blind to the truth standing before them. Their confidence was misplaced, rooted in pride and tradition rather than in a sincere search for truth.

Jesus' invitation is clear: Investigate and you will see. He invites us to seek the truth for ourselves, to look beyond assumptions and cultural biases. When we honestly investigate who Jesus is, we find that He is indeed the Messiah, the living water, and the Savior of the world. The challenge for us today is to humble ourselves, ask questions, and seek the truth in Christ with an open heart, just as Nicodemus did. Only then will we truly see.

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Begin praying with Psalm 63:1:

"God, you are my God; I eagerly seek you.

I thirst for you;

my body faints for you

in a land that is dry, desolate, and without water."

DAY 11

Read John 8:2–20

Here we witness another exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees, where Jesus defends the validity of His testimony. This isn't the first time He has done so. Similar encounters are seen in John 5 and 7. It may seem repetitive, but there's a reason for it. Jesus is about to make astonishing claims about His divine nature, and He needs to lay a foundation for His credibility. If you were to tell someone that everything they believed is wrong, wouldn't you want to ensure they trusted you first? That's what Jesus is doing here.

The Pharisees challenge Him, saying, "Your testimony is not valid" (8:13), but Jesus refutes their accusation by pointing out that His testimony is valid because He knows where He came from and where He is going (8:14). Jesus emphasizes that His authority comes directly from God the Father, establishing that His words are not just claims, but truth. He tells them, "If you knew me, you would also know my Father" (8:19). This is profound. Jesus is saying that to truly know Him is to know God Himself.

The Pharisees' rejection of Jesus wasn't just a refusal to believe in Him—it was a refusal to know God. Jesus came to reveal the Father to us. He is the light of the world (8:12), shining truth into the darkness of misunderstanding and doubt. When we come to know Jesus, we don't just gain knowledge about Him. We come into a relationship with the Father. This relationship is not based on empty words but on the truth that Jesus speaks with authority given by God. To know Jesus is to know the Father because they are one in essence, mission, and love. This passage reminds us of the deep unity between Jesus and the Father, and it calls us to trust in His divine testimony.

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Begin praying with Psalm 9:10:

***"Those who know your name trust in you
because you have not abandoned
those who seek you, Lord."***

DAY 12

Read John 8:21-59

This is where Jesus cashes in all of his credibility chips. Throughout this passage, Jesus makes bold declarations revealing who He is, His relationship with the Father, and His role as the source of salvation. He tells the people who were confident they were the only ones who truly knew God, that they were, in fact, acting as if the devil was their father—they are face to face with God, and saying He has a demon.

Verse 23 is a key moment in the gospel where Jesus proclaims His heavenly authority and nature. He says, "You are from below,... I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world." He contrasts Himself with humanity, making it clear that He isn't merely a man but He is of divine nature.

The climax of this passage comes in verse 58, when Jesus declares, "Before Abraham was, I am." The phrase "I am" echoes God's self-revelation to Moses in Exodus 3:14, where God calls Himself "I AM WHO I AM." Jesus intentionally connects Himself to the divine name, asserting that He is not only sent by God but is one with God Himself. This claim underscores the necessity of faith in Him for salvation. With these words, Jesus proclaims His eternal existence, showing that He transcends time and that He is not bound by human limitations. This declaration leaves no room for misunderstanding—Jesus is claiming to be God in the flesh.

For us today, recognizing Jesus' identity as the eternal "I AM" calls us to place our faith in Him alone. He is not just a teacher or prophet; He is the living God, offering forgiveness, freedom from sin, and eternal life. In knowing who Jesus is, we are invited to trust Him fully and walk in the light of His truth.

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Begin praying with Psalm 90:2:

***"Before the mountains were born,
before you gave birth to the earth and the world,
from eternity to eternity, you are God."***

DAY 13

Read John 9:1–41

According to retribution theology, bad things happen to bad people and good things happen to good people. The classic Old Testament example of this is Job, when his friends tried to find out what sin he committed that God must have been punishing him for. We see in this passage that despite 42 chapters of disproving this in Job, it's still a pernicious idea in the New Testament world. Jesus' disciples assumed that this man's blindness must be a consequence of sin. But Jesus' response is transformative: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned... This came about so that God's works might be displayed in him" (9:3). Jesus shifts the focus from human blame to divine purpose. The man's blindness was not a punishment for wrongdoing, but an opportunity for God to reveal His glory. Sometimes, our hardships are the very platforms God uses to display His power, mercy, and love.

When the blind man obeys what Jesus told him, his sight is restored. And not only was his sight restored, but he also came to believe in Jesus as the Son of God. His blindness had prepared the stage for God's works to be displayed—both physically and spiritually.

Our trials and struggles serve a higher purpose. It is tempting to ask, "Why me?" when faced with hardship. But through this passage, Jesus invites us to trust in God's sovereignty. Our pain, confusion, or suffering are often the very circumstances in which God chooses to reveal His power and grace. Let this story be a reminder: God is always at work, even in our darkest moments. Our struggles can be the canvas on which God paints His glory for all to see. Trust in His purpose, even when the reason for the pain isn't clear.

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Begin praying with Psalm 34:19:

***"One who is righteous has many adversities,
but the LORD rescues him from them all."***

DAY 14

Read John 10:1-39

What separates a good leader from a bad leader? What makes them different? Is it the way they act? Is it their motive? Jesus tells us it's both, and their motive is revealed in their actions. He paints a beautiful picture of Himself as the Good Shepherd, revealing His deep love and care for His followers. He contrasts Himself with the false shepherds, or hired hands, who abandon the sheep in times of danger. Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (10:11). This powerful statement shows the heart of Jesus—He is not distant or indifferent, but intimately concerned with the well-being of His flock.

Jesus knows each of His sheep by name and calls them to follow Him. "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (10:27). As the Good Shepherd, He provides guidance, protection, and care. We are not left to wander aimlessly through life; rather, we are led by One who knows the path before us and desires what is best for us.

One of the most comforting aspects of this passage is the assurance that the Good Shepherd will never abandon His sheep. Jesus states, "I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand" (10:28). In a world filled with uncertainty, Jesus offers security that transcends circumstances. His commitment to us is unwavering, even to the point of laying down His life for our salvation.

As followers of Christ, we are called to trust the Good Shepherd, listen to His voice, and follow where He leads. This requires surrender and faith, knowing that He leads us on paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Our shepherd's love is sacrificial, personal, and protective.

We serve a Good Shepherd who has laid down His life for us, who knows us by name, and who promises to lead us safely into eternal life. Trust in Him, for His care is perfect.

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Begin praying with Psalm 95:7:

*"For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
the sheep under his care."*

DAY 15

Read John 10:40–11:27

We've seen earlier in the experience of the blind man that God can use disabilities and hardships for His own glory. But can He, and does He, do the same with even death? The death of the ones we love? The death of the ones He loves? It's clear from this passage that nothing is beyond God's plan and control.

Martha, understandably filled with grief, confronts Jesus, saying, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died" (11:21). She, like many of us, struggles to understand why Jesus did not intervene sooner and prevent Lazarus's death. However, Jesus responds with a promise: "Your brother will rise again" (11:23). Though Martha believes in the future resurrection, Jesus redirects her focus to the present, revealing, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live" (11:25).

Through Lazarus's death, Jesus is setting the stage for a greater revelation of God's power and purpose. Lazarus's illness and death were not meaningless; they were part of a divine plan to display God's glory and strengthen the faith of those who witnessed what was about to happen. Jesus even said earlier, "This sickness will not end in death but is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it" (11:4).

In this story, we learn that God often allows suffering, not as punishment or neglect, but as a means to grow our faith. While it's natural to question why hardship comes, Jesus shows that in our darkest moments, He is present, ready to reveal Himself in ways that deepen our belief in Him.

When faced with pain or loss, we are invited to trust in God's greater plan. Just as Jesus turned a situation of death into a testimony of life, He uses our struggles to draw us closer to Him, to strengthen our faith, and to reveal His glory. Trust that your suffering has purpose and can lead to a greater revelation of God's love and power.

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Begin praying with Psalm 119:71:

***"It was good for me to be afflicted
so that I could learn your statutes."***

DAY 16

Read John 11:28-57

Today we witness the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to Martha: Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. This event serves as a foreshadowing of Christ's own victory over death and a reminder that death does not have the final word for those who trust in Him.

When Jesus arrives at the tomb, He is deeply moved by the grief of Mary, Martha, and the others. He weeps with them, sharing in their pain. But Jesus doesn't leave the situation in sorrow. He approaches Lazarus's tomb with a profound confidence in God's power and purpose. In this moment, Jesus declares, "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25), reaffirming His authority over life and death.

When Jesus calls Lazarus to come out of the tomb, Lazarus, who had been dead for four days, walks out alive, still wrapped in his burial clothes. The crowd is astonished. Through this miracle, Jesus reveals that even death, the most feared and seemingly final of human experiences, must submit to God's authority. The raising of Lazarus is not just about one man's return to life; it's a sign pointing to Jesus' own impending death and resurrection, where He will once and for all conquer death for all who believe.

Death is not the end. For Lazarus, the grave could not hold him, and for Jesus, the crucifixion would not be the final chapter. Death may seem overwhelming and final in the moment, but through Jesus, we are promised eternal life. He breaks the power of death, turning it into a doorway to eternal communion with God.

As believers, we can live in the hope that death does not have the final word over our lives either. Jesus' resurrection power is at work in us, transforming our fear of death into confidence in His promise of life. No matter what we face, we can trust that in Christ, life—eternal life—will always prevail over death.

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Begin praying with Psalm 118:17:

*"I will not die, but I will live
and proclaim what the LORD has done."*

DAY 17

Read John 12:1–19

In today's passage, we witness radically different philosophies of asset management. What do we value, and how do we express that value? Do we selfishly hole away money for our own gain, or do we generously share what God has given us and give it back to Him? The extravagant anointing of Jesus by Mary with expensive perfume contrasts sharply with Judas's criticism, revealing different views of how we manage what we have in service to God's Kingdom.

Mary's act of worship, pouring out her costly perfume, reflects the true essence of asset management in God's kingdom—lavish devotion and sacrificial giving. She understood that Jesus' worth far exceeded any earthly treasure. This kind of giving, extravagant and sometimes misunderstood, demonstrates faith that values God above all material wealth. In contrast, Judas embodies a mindset of self-preservation and greed. Though he spoke of caring for the poor, his true motive was personal gain. In God's kingdom, managing assets goes beyond the mere stewardship of money; it is about the posture of our hearts.

We are entrusted with resources—not just money, but our time, talents, and influence. Like Mary, we are called to use them for the glory of God, recognizing that any sacrifice we make in His name will never be wasted. Jesus' response to Judas's objection teaches us that honoring God with our possessions should be our highest priority. While helping others is crucial, it flows from a life first surrendered in worship to Him.

As stewards of God's Kingdom, we must regularly assess how we use our possessions. Are we holding them with clenched fists, seeking personal security and gain, or are we pouring them out freely at Jesus' feet, trusting Him to multiply what we offer? True asset management in God's Kingdom means recognizing the eternal value of what we give to God. When we do, like Mary, we participate in something far greater than ourselves—the glory of God's unfolding plan.

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Begin praying with Psalm 49:20:

***“Mankind, with his assets
but without understanding,
is like the animals that perish.”***

Just about everyone who speaks English can quote Matthew 7:1 in the King James Version—"Judge not lest ye be judged." But if you've read the Bible past that one verse, you probably know that Jesus does a lot of judging. John 12:20-50 is one such passage. It reminds us there are real, eternal consequences to our actions today.

Read John 12:20-50

Central to this passage is the idea that people will be judged based on their relationship to the truth revealed in Christ. Jesus states, "I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me would not remain in darkness" (12:46). Light, in this context, symbolizes truth and revelation. Those who embrace the light—who believe in Jesus—are freed from judgment. But those who reject Him, who choose to remain in darkness, will face condemnation, not because Jesus came to judge them, but because in rejecting Him, they reject life itself.

Jesus clarifies that He does not come to the world as a judge but as a Savior: "I did not come to judge the world but to save the world" (10:47). Yet, He also acknowledges that rejection of His message brings inevitable judgment. The Word that He has spoken—the truth He has revealed—will serve as the standard for judgment on the last day (10:48). In other words, people are judged by their response to the gospel—whether they receive or reject the light that has been given to them.

The "why" of judgment is rooted in love. God desires that none should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Jesus' mission was to rescue humanity from darkness, but those who turn away from Him choose separation from the very source of life. In rejecting the light, they embrace the consequences of darkness—spiritual death.

Judgment, then, is not arbitrary but flows from each person's response to Christ. The invitation is clear: walk in the light, receive eternal life, and escape the judgment that follows a rejection of truth. Today, we are called to embrace the light of Christ and live in the freedom of His salvation.

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Begin praying with Psalm 9:7-8:

***"But the LORD sits enthroned forever;
he has established his throne for judgment.
And he judges the world with righteousness;
he executes judgment on the nations with fairness."***

DAY 19

Read John 13:1–30

Who's the most godly person you know? How do you know it's them? When someone interrupts another person mid-sentence, is that an indication of a growing relationship with God? Maybe when they brag about their achievements, or briskly walk past someone obviously in need of help? Obviously not. The marks of a relationship with God are humility and service.

Peter, initially resistant to Jesus washing his feet, is a reflection of how many of us respond when we are faced with humility. We may struggle with the idea that greatness in God's Kingdom comes through serving, not being served. Yet Jesus gently corrects Peter, emphasizing that only those who allow themselves to be cleansed by Him can truly have fellowship with Him.

Jesus not only washes the feet of His loyal disciples but also the feet of Judas, knowing full well that Judas would soon betray Him. This act of service toward His betrayer underscores the depth of Christ's love and humility. Godliness is not selective in its service; it extends love and service even to those who may reject or oppose us.

As followers of Christ, we are called to emulate His example—embracing humility and service as marks of true godliness. Whether serving those who love us or those who may hurt us, we are to reflect the heart of Christ, Who, out of His great love, knelt to serve and called us to do the same. Let us remember that godliness is expressed through humility and service, following the example Jesus set before us.

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Begin praying with Psalm 25:9:

***"He leads the humble in what is right
and teaches them his way."***

DAY 20

Read John 13:31-14:7

This passage is a great example of how chapter breaks can be misleading. If you only read one chapter at a time, let alone one verse at a time, you might miss the connection between Jesus' teaching in 13:31-35, Peter's dialogue in 13:36-14:4, and Thomas' dialogue in 14:5-7. Jesus says He is going away, and where He is going they cannot come. Peter asks where Jesus is going, and He responds that Peter cannot follow now but will later follow to where He is going. Then Thomas asks the way to this place Jesus describes. In response, Jesus reveals Himself and His nature in one of His most famous quotes—"I am the way" (14:6).

So what does this teach us about Jesus? First, Jesus is here with us now. He was physically present with His disciples as He shared this teaching, and He is spiritually present with us today through His Holy Spirit. At the same time, Jesus is in a place we are not. He has gone to prepare a place for us and is awaiting the day we will be rejoined with Him. How are we to be rejoined with Him? What is the way from where we are to where He is? He is the way. He is the only way.

Hopefully this passage has washed away any idea you may have had that Jesus is just someone content to be on the outskirts of your life. Jesus isn't a side character in the grand narrative of your own life, watching from afar as "you do you." Whether we recognize it or not, He is in fact at the center of our lives, at the end of everything we do, and everywhere in between. Have you found truth? That truth is Jesus. Have you found life? That life is Jesus. And if you haven't found the way, the way is Jesus.

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Begin praying with Psalm 16:11:

***"You reveal the path of life to me;
in your presence is abundant joy;
at your right hand are eternal pleasures."***

DAY 21

Read John 14:8–14

Everything Jesus does is to glorify the Father. When Philip asks Jesus, “Lord,... show us the Father and that’s enough for us” (14:8), he is longing for a clearer revelation of God. But Jesus’ response redirects Philip’s understanding: Anyone “who has seen me has seen the Father” (14:9). Jesus emphasizes that His entire life and work reveal the Father’s heart and character.

Jesus makes it clear that He is perfectly united with the Father. He tells Philip, “Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who lives in me does his works” (14:10). Every word Jesus speaks and every miracle He performs is an expression of the Father’s will and power. Jesus’ purpose on earth is to make the Father known and to glorify Him through His obedience, love, and sacrifice.

This relationship between Jesus and the Father also extends to those who believe in Him. Jesus promises, “Truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father” (14:12). As believers, we are invited to participate in glorifying the Father through the works we do in Jesus’ name. Our prayers, actions, and service all become opportunities to reveal God’s glory to the world.

In everything, Jesus models the truth that life’s ultimate purpose is to glorify the Father. He lived in perfect submission, speaking only what the Father gave Him to say and doing only what the Father willed. As we follow Jesus, we are called to the same purpose—living in a way that reflects and honors God in everything we do. By seeking the Father’s glory, our lives become a testimony to His goodness and power, just as Jesus’ life was.

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Begin praying with Psalm 115:1:

***“Not to us, LORD, not to us,
but to your name give glory
because of your faithful love, because of your truth.”***

DAY 22

Read John 14:15-31

Here, Jesus prepares His disciples for His impending death, offering them comfort and promises. He speaks about the coming of the Holy Spirit, peace that only He can give, and His departure from this world. In the midst of these comforting words, verse 29 stands out: "I have told you now before it happens so that when it does happen you may believe." Jesus knew that the tragic events of His crucifixion would deeply shake His disciples. Yet He intentionally prepared them in advance, speaking truth to anchor their faith during the coming storm.

Jesus' forewarning wasn't to frighten His disciples but to give them peace and assurance when tragedy struck. He was equipping them to remember His words, even in their darkest hour, so that they could trust in His sovereignty. After His death and resurrection, they would understand that everything had unfolded according to God's plan, and their faith would be strengthened. Jesus wanted them to have something solid to cling to—His promises, spoken ahead of time.

For us, this verse is a reminder of the importance of receiving Jesus' words and trusting in His promises before challenges arise. Life is full of uncertainties, and tragedy can strike when we least expect it. But just as Jesus spoke to His disciples in advance, He speaks to us today through His Word. When we immerse ourselves in Scripture and internalize Jesus' promises, we build a foundation of faith that can withstand any trial. His words offer peace, assurance, and hope, even when circumstances seem overwhelming.

Jesus promises peace, saying, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you" (14:27). This peace is not the absence of hardship but a profound trust in God's plan, no matter what happens. As we receive Jesus' words, we are prepared to face life's difficulties with confidence, knowing that He is in control and has already spoken the truth we need to hold on to.

Before trials come, let us treasure His words, knowing they will guide us through any storm.

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Begin praying with Psalm 130:5:

***"I wait for the LORD; I wait
and put my hope in his word."***

DAY 23

Read John 15:1–25

Jesus uses the metaphor of the vine and the branches to illustrate the importance of abiding in Him. He emphasizes that, just as branches cannot bear fruit apart from the vine, we cannot bear spiritual fruit apart from our relationship with Christ. In verse 11, Jesus explains the purpose of His teaching: "I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete." Jesus' words are meant to fill us with His joy, a joy that is full and unshakable.

This complete joy comes from abiding in Christ. When we remain connected to Him through His Word, prayer, and obedience, we are like branches receiving life from the vine. Just as a healthy branch bears fruit, so our lives will bear spiritual fruit—love, peace, patience, kindness, and more—when we abide in Jesus. His words nourish us and give us strength to live lives that honor God and bless others.

Jesus also teaches that remaining in Him involves keeping His commands, particularly the command to love one another (15:12). This kind of love—selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional—is the natural overflow of a heart rooted in Christ. It's through loving others, even in difficult circumstances, that we experience the fullness of joy Jesus promises. Joy, in the Christian life, isn't dependent on external circumstances but is a deep, abiding sense of contentment and peace that comes from being united with Christ.

However, Jesus also reminds us that following Him may bring opposition from the world (15:18–19). Yet, even in the face of rejection or hardship, our joy remains complete because it is grounded in Him, not in the world's approval or success.

Jesus' words call us to abide in Him, love one another, and remain faithful in trials. As we align our hearts with His, we discover the joy that comes from living in close communion with Him. His joy fills our hearts completely, sustaining us through every season of life.

Begin praying with Psalm 30:11–12:

*"You turned my lament into dancing;
you removed my sackcloth
and clothed me with gladness,
so that I can sing to you and not be silent.
LORD my God, I will praise you forever."*

DAY 24

Read John 15:26–16:33

Jesus continues to build on the theme of complete joy, this time focusing on the promise of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus prepares His disciples for His departure, He reassures them that they will not be left alone or without guidance. The Holy Spirit, whom He calls the Counselor, will come to comfort, guide, and empower them. Jesus explains, "When the Counselor comes, the one I will send to you from the Father... he will testify about me" (15:26). The Spirit's presence ensures that the disciples—and we—will continue to experience Jesus' joy and truth, even when He is no longer physically with us.

Jesus acknowledges that His disciples will face hardship and persecution in the world, but the Holy Spirit's coming will prevent them from stumbling. "I have told you these things so that when their time comes you will remember I told them to you" (16:4). Jesus doesn't promise a life without challenges, but He equips us with the Holy Spirit to sustain us in those trials. The Spirit keeps us anchored in God's truth and joy, helping us persevere in faith despite opposition.

This joy, rooted in the Spirit's presence, is not tied to fleeting emotions or circumstances but is a deep, abiding sense of peace that comes from knowing we are never alone. The Holy Spirit helps us understand Jesus' words, reminds us of His promises, and empowers us to live faithfully. "I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world" (16:33). This assurance of Jesus' victory, communicated through the Spirit, gives us confidence and joy even in difficult times.

Through the Holy Spirit, we experience the complete joy Jesus promised. The Spirit's presence within us fills our hearts with peace, leads us into truth, and strengthens us when the world feels overwhelming. As we rely on the Spirit, our joy remains steadfast, preventing us from stumbling and helping us walk in faithfulness, no matter what we face.

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Begin praying with Psalm 126:5:
*"Those who sow in tears
 will reap with shouts of joy."*

DAY 25

Read John 17:1–26

This prayer offers a glimpse into God's eternal purpose: to draw the world, which has fallen into rebellion, back into a relationship with Himself. From the beginning, God created the world in perfect harmony, with humanity meant to enjoy fellowship with Him. However, sin entered the world through human rebellion, breaking that relationship and bringing separation between God and His creation.

In His prayer, Jesus acknowledges this brokenness. He refers to the world, which is now in rebellion against God's ways, and yet He does not abandon it. Jesus says, "I have revealed your name to the people you gave me from the world" (17:6). Even though the world has turned from God, His heart remains one of love, and He is actively working to restore the relationship. Jesus, sent by the Father, is the very means through which God draws the world back to Himself. Jesus came into the world to reveal God's love and truth, to redeem humanity through His sacrifice, and to open the way for reconciliation.

In verses 18 and 23, Jesus prays for His followers to be united with one another and with God, saying, "As you sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world... That the world may know you have sent me and have loved them as you have loved me." God is using His people, transformed by Christ, to continue the mission of drawing the world back to Him. Even as the world remains in rebellion, God's plan is at work—through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and the witness of His followers.

The beauty of this passage is that despite humanity's rebellion, God has not given up on His creation. His love and mercy are greater than our sin. Through Jesus, God is actively restoring the world to Himself, one heart at a time, calling people back into a relationship that was always meant to be. Let us be faithful to this mission, living as witnesses to His love and grace.

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Begin praying with Psalm 80:3:

***"Restore us, God;
make your face shine on us,
so that we may be saved."***

DAY 26

Read John 18:1-18

When we are presented with God's will for our lives, we are faced with a choice: to resist or to obey. This passage captures two opposing responses to God's will—one of complete surrender in Jesus, and one of resistance and fear in Peter.

Jesus, knowing the immense suffering ahead, chooses to drink the cup the Father has given Him. His obedience reflects absolute trust in God's plan, even when that path leads to the cross. There is no struggle or hesitation, only a quiet confidence that God's purposes are greater than the pain He is about to endure. Jesus models for us what it means to surrender fully, not because the road is easy, but because He trusts the One who leads Him.

In contrast, Peter struggles to accept the path laid before him. First, he takes matters into his own hands, drawing his sword to defend Jesus. Peter's reaction is rooted in earthly wisdom—fighting against what he cannot control or comprehend. When that fails, he turns to fear, denying his connection to Jesus. Peter's actions, though understandable, reflect our own resistance to God's will when it seems too hard or confusing.

We often find ourselves responding like Peter, resisting God's plan by trying to take control or by retreating into fear. We may resist the "cup" God offers because it involves suffering, discomfort, or uncertainty. Yet, Jesus calls us to something greater—to trust in God's wisdom even when we do not understand, and to believe that His plan, however painful, is ultimately for our good.

The challenge for us is to embrace the cup we are given. Like Jesus, we are invited to surrender our fears, our resistance, and our need for control, trusting that God's plan is not only wise but also good. In that surrender, we find peace and purpose, even in the midst of suffering.

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Begin praying with Psalm 39:7:
"Now, Lord, what do I wait for?
My hope is in you."

DAY 27

Read John 18:19–38

How do you deal with injustice? When power is abused, what's your instinctive reaction? Here, Jesus stands before the Jewish leaders and Pontius Pilate, facing unjust trials and false accusations. Despite being bound and questioned, Jesus remains composed, fully aware that the authority held by these earthly rulers is under God's ultimate control.

This idea is echoed in Romans 13:1, where Paul writes, "Let everyone submit to the governing authorities, since there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are instituted by God." Every ruler, judge, or leader holds their position because God allows it. Even in the midst of an unjust trial, Jesus knew that the events were unfolding according to God's plan. Though earthly authorities sometimes act unjustly, as in the case of Jesus' trial, we can trust that God is still sovereign. Pilate, with all his power, could only do what God permitted, and Jesus willingly submitted to the Father's plan, even when it led to His crucifixion. The greater purpose was God's redemptive work, which could only be accomplished through Jesus' suffering and sacrifice.

We will encounter situations where those in authority seem unfair, unjust, or oppressive. Yet, Romans 13 and John 18 remind us that God's hand is always at work, even when we cannot see it. He establishes, sustains, and ultimately holds all rulers accountable. Our role is to trust in God's sovereignty, knowing that He uses even flawed human systems for His purposes. We are called to respect earthly authority while keeping our eyes fixed on God's eternal Kingdom. Our ultimate allegiance is to Christ, the true King, whose rule is just and everlasting. Even in the face of injustice, we can trust that God is in control and will bring about His perfect will.

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Begin praying with Psalm 47:7–8:

***"Sing a song of wisdom,
for God is King of the whole earth.
God reigns over the nations;
God is seated on his holy throne."***

DAY 28

Read John 18:39–19:16

This exchange between Pilate and the crowd reveals a deep spiritual misidentification. The Jewish people, who had long awaited the Messiah, rejected the very One sent to save them. When they cried out that they had no king but Caesar, they publicly declared allegiance to an earthly, oppressive ruler, denying their true King, Jesus. This moment encapsulates the question Pilate indirectly asks: "Who is your king?" The leaders and the crowd chose political power and self-interest over the humble, sacrificial kingship of Jesus.

For us today, this question is just as relevant. "Who is your king?" Who is the one we allow to rule over our hearts and lives? The crowd in this passage misidentified their king, choosing an earthly leader instead of embracing the eternal, heavenly King standing before them. Every day, sometimes in big dramatic ways, but oftentimes in our simpler everyday choices, we face similar decisions. Do we prioritize worldly power, success, or comfort over allegiance to Christ?

Jesus' kingship is unlike any earthly authority. He reigns with love, humility, and truth. When we acknowledge Him as our King, we submit to His rule and embrace His values—sacrifice, mercy, and righteousness. Yet, like the crowd, we can sometimes be tempted to turn away, seeking control, influence, or comfort from other "kings" in our lives.

The crowd's rejection of Jesus as their King serves as a reminder that we, too, must be careful not to misidentify where our ultimate loyalty lies. We are called to make Christ the King of our hearts, above all other allegiances. Only He can offer the peace, salvation, and eternal hope we seek. As we reflect on this passage, let us declare with our lives: Jesus is our King.

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Begin praying with Psalm 2:6:

***"I have installed my king
on Zion, my holy mountain."***

DAY 29

Read John 19:17–30

Here we witness the crucifixion of Jesus—the killing of the only innocent person to ever live, but also a profound act of love and divine will. While the Roman soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross and the Jewish leaders mocked Him, the reality of the situation is clear: Jesus' life was not taken from Him; He gave it up willingly. In verse 30, we see Jesus' final words: "It is finished." Then, John writes, "Then bowing his head, he gave up his spirit" (19:30). These words show that Jesus was in full control, even in His death.

Jesus had said earlier in His ministry, "No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down on my own" (John 10:18). His death was not the result of the power of His enemies, but the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. Jesus chose to endure the cross, not as a helpless victim, but as a willing Savior who came to do the Father's will. He came to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45), and at the right moment, He gave up His spirit, having accomplished everything necessary for the salvation of humanity.

Jesus did not go to the cross because He was overpowered by Roman soldiers or betrayed by human weakness. He went to the cross because He loves us deeply and was determined to fulfill God's plan of salvation. Every step, every word, and every act of His life led to this moment, where He willingly gave Himself up for our sake.

As we reflect on the cross, we must remember that Jesus' sacrifice was not forced upon Him. He chose it out of love for us. His life was not taken from Him; He laid it down so that we can be reconciled to God. In this act of ultimate love, Jesus accomplished what no one else could—He finished the work of salvation, making a way for us to have eternal life with the Father.

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Begin praying with Psalm 40:7–8:

*"Then I said, 'See, I have come;
in the scroll it is written about me.
I delight to do your will, my God,
and your instruction is deep within me.'"*

DAY 30

Read John 19:31–20:10

What catches my eye most in this passage is Peter and John’s reaction to the empty tomb, “they did not yet understand the Scripture that he must rise from the dead” (20:9). It’s clear they believed Jesus really had resurrected, but they didn’t yet fully understand it. They were witnesses to an empty tomb, but the meaning of the resurrection was not yet clear to them. This moment highlights the struggle between seeing and fully understanding God’s plan.

How often do we, like Peter and John, see the evidence of God’s work in our lives but fail to fully comprehend what He’s doing? We might see a situation change or experience God’s provision, but the bigger picture—the greater plan—is still unfolding. Or maybe we’ll come to see how God has been preparing us through a series of seemingly unrelated events, which in hindsight we can see were all leading to one extraordinary moment. Peter and John saw that Jesus was gone, but it would take more time and revelation for them to grasp the full reality and prophetic nature of His resurrection.

This passage reminds us that faith is often a journey. Sometimes, we see the signs of God’s hand at work without fully understanding His purposes. But even when we don’t yet understand, we are called to trust Him. Peter and John would soon encounter the risen Christ. They would understand the victory of His resurrection and the fullness of its prediction in the Old Testament and in Jesus’ teaching. We too will see God’s plans more clearly as we continue to walk in faith. Even when we don’t fully comprehend, God is always at work, and His plans for us are good.

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Begin praying with Psalm 68:20:

***“Our God is a God of salvation,
and escape from death belongs to the LORD
my Lord.”***

DAY 31

Read John 20:11–23

In a moment of deep intimacy, Jesus breathes on His disciples and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (20:22). This act is a foretaste of the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit that would come at Pentecost, marking the beginning of the Church's mission. Here, Jesus gives them a glimpse of the new life and power they will receive through the Spirit.

The act of Jesus breathing on His disciples mirrors the creation of humanity in Genesis when God breathed life into Adam (Genesis 2:7). Just as physical life began with God's breath, spiritual life is now being renewed and transformed by Jesus' breath, symbolizing the new life we receive in Him. The Holy Spirit would soon come in full power, equipping the disciples to carry the gospel to the world, but in this moment, they experience the initial blessing of God's Spirit, renewing them and preparing them for their mission.

This scene is also a foreshadowing of our future hope—our own spiritual and physical resurrection in Christ. Just as Jesus physically rose from the dead, His resurrection is a promise of our own. When we are in Christ, we receive the Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our future resurrection (Ephesians 1:13–14). Though we still live in a broken world and experience the effects of sin and death, the Spirit within us is a foretaste of the full redemption that is to come.

As Christ followers, we already participate in the new life Jesus has secured for us. Through the Holy Spirit, we experience the power of Christ's resurrection in our lives today—overcoming sin, finding joy in His presence, and being renewed day by day. But even more, we look forward to the day when our spiritual and physical resurrection will be complete, when we will share in Christ's eternal victory over death. Until then, we live in the hope and power of the Spirit, confident in the promise of new life that is already ours in Jesus.

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Begin praying with Psalm 71:20–21:

***"You caused me to experience
many troubles and misfortunes,
but you will revive me again.
You will bring me up again,
even from the depths of the earth.
You will increase my honor
and comfort me once again."***

DAY 32

Read John 20:24–21:14

Here, we encounter two powerful moments that reveal the nature of life with the risen Jesus. First, there is the dramatic encounter between Thomas and the resurrected Christ. Thomas, who had doubted Jesus' resurrection, is invited by Jesus to touch His wounds and believe. Overcome, Thomas declares, "My Lord and my God!" (20:28). This powerful moment of revelation is followed by a quieter, more intimate scene in John 21, where the risen Jesus appears to His disciples by the Sea of Galilee. Instead of another dramatic display, Jesus prepares a simple meal of fish and bread, sharing breakfast with His friends.

These two moments—one of dramatic revelation and one of quiet fellowship—illustrate the rhythm of our spiritual lives. We often experience God in moments of intense power and transformation, where He dramatically intervenes, heals, or reveals Himself to us. These are the "Thomas moments" when we come face to face with His glory and are compelled to declare, "My Lord and my God!" These experiences are life-changing and fill us with awe at God's majesty.

But just as important are the quiet moments, like the shared meal by the sea. After the drama of the resurrection, Jesus comes to His disciples in the simplicity of a meal, inviting them to sit, eat, and enjoy His presence. This moment reminds us that following Jesus is not just about experiencing His power but also about building a relationship with Him. In these quiet, simple moments, we find peace, rest, and connection with God and others.

Our lives should reflect this same balance. There are seasons when God works powerfully in us, revealing His glory in ways we cannot ignore. But there are also seasons of quiet relationship—of simply being with God and others. As followers of Jesus, we need both. We must embrace the drama of God's powerful work but also cherish the simple, everyday moments of fellowship with Him and with those around us. Both are gifts from God and are vital to a full, flourishing life of faith.

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Begin praying with Psalm 16:9:
*"Therefore my heart is glad
 and my whole being rejoices;
 my body also rests securely."*

DAY 33

Read John 21:15–25

Jesus' exchange with Peter regarding John reveals the importance of paying close attention to Jesus' actual words rather than allowing speculation or rumors to distort what He says. Misunderstandings about Jesus' message can easily arise when we rely on secondhand information or when we let others' interpretations overshadow the clear truth of His words. The early disciples dealt with this challenge, and we face it today as well.

In our spiritual lives, it's crucial to listen to Jesus' words directly by reading Scripture ourselves, not just relying on other people's interpretations or musings. While it's valuable to learn from pastors, authors, and teachers, nothing replaces the clarity and truth of engaging with God's Word firsthand. Jesus' teachings are accessible to all believers, and we are invited to study them directly to know His heart, His mission, and His call for our lives.

In a world filled with voices and opinions about what Jesus said, we must prioritize His actual words. When we open the Bible and read Jesus' teachings for ourselves, we gain clarity, wisdom, and a deeper relationship with Him. Let us be quick to turn to Scripture, trusting that God will speak to us through His living Word, and let us discern carefully, always returning to what Jesus truly said, rather than what we think He might have meant.

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Begin praying with Psalm 81:13–14:

***"If only my people would listen to me
and Israel would follow my ways,
I would quickly subdue their enemies
and turn my hand against their foes."***

When beginning this letter, John states his purpose for writing from the start. He says he has a message to share with the readers that was revealed by God directly. That message is this: "God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him." If that point comes at the beginning of the letter, John must think it's pretty important for his readers to know. And in fact, as he continues writing, he explains why this characteristic of God matters so much, and why people should know about it.

Read 1 John 1:1-2:11

For people to have credibility when they talk about their relationship with God, they need to look like they actually know God. If a person's life seems to be full of nothing but darkness and sin, can they say they really know God? No matter how much they insisted, that claim would come across as an obvious lie. That would be like a person insisting they were a doctor, but then not being able to explain how breathing works, or how the circulatory system functions. So if those of us who say we're followers of Jesus bear no resemblance to Him at all, we should consider ourselves in trouble.

The good news is, we don't have to stay in trouble. If we let the God of light into our lives, He will overcome the darkness that's characteristic of us apart from Him, because "that light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5). Walking in that light will result in us being obedient to the Lord's commands, and fill us with the same love that God has for all people.

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Begin praying with Psalm 139:11-12:

***"If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me,
and the light around me will be night'—
even the darkness is not dark to you.
The night shines like the day;
darkness and light are alike to you."***

DAY 35

Read 1 John 2:12–23

Imagine this: You've been saving money for years, jumping around from one apartment to the next, longing for the day you can finally buy a house. You find one that's perfect for you and the price is right, and after years of dreaming, you finally get to sign the papers and receive the keys for your very own home. It's one of the most exciting days of your life! You'll finally get to settle in. Much of your life will become easier and less complicated, because you can finally organize your life in the way that's best for you in your own house.

You lived in bliss for months, maybe even a few years. Life really did seem to get easier after you moved in and set everything exactly the way you wanted it. Then, things started to change. Some of the wiring in the house started to short out. Your roof developed a few leaks. Suddenly, the house is the source of your problems instead of the solution to them. And then, your father has a stroke and you recognize that even if your house was in perfect shape, there isn't anything it could do to change your father's condition.

You may not have to imagine what this is like, because you've probably lived it—or something like it. And despite how often you're confronted with how little power the things in the world have to truly change your life, you still get your hopes up about how the next thing you find is going to solve all your problems. We all do. But John reminds us here that "the world with its lust is passing away." God and his Word will last eternally, far beyond the temporary things we find around us. And those of us who follow Him get to exist in relationship with Him forever. While we're living this life, we should take care of our homes and possessions, and appreciate the things we have. But they shouldn't be the foundation we build on. God alone can provide what we need for eternity.

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Begin praying with Psalm 90:1–2:

***"Lord, you have been our refuge
in every generation.***

***Before the mountains were born,
before you gave birth to the earth and the world,
from eternity to eternity, you are God."***

What does it mean to be “in” Christ? Is it like being “in” a room? Sort of, but not really. Is it like being “in” a family? Yes, in a way. But that still doesn’t completely represent the full extent of what it means to be in Jesus. When John writes about being “in” Jesus, he describes a relationship that’s so close that it’s like we are completely covered on all sides by Jesus. No matter what angle we look at, Jesus is first in the line of sight.

Read 1 John 2:24–3:24

Achieving that kind of closeness, even for a moment, is a miracle of Red Sea-parting proportions. So what makes John’s words even more remarkable is that he instructs us to “remain,” or in other words, stay there. We shouldn’t only be there for a moment. A characteristic of our lives should be that we are constantly surrounded by Jesus on every side. That kind of miracle makes parting the Red Sea look easy, because as soon as we seem to be completely engulfed, we turn around and find we’re looking at something that isn’t Jesus.

What we must remember, though, is that John gave this instruction because Jesus gave us this instruction. In fact, you may recall John recorded it himself in his Gospel. Jesus said, “Remain in my love” (John 15:9), because he knew we can’t be complete any other way. And he reassures us that “remaining” is possible because “the Spirit of truth,” who lives in those of us who follow Jesus, allows us to stay grounded and shielded. We can truly stay, or “remain,” when we allow his power to work in and through us.

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Begin praying with Psalm 3:3:

***“But you, Lord, are a shield around me,
my glory, and the one who lifts up my head.”***

DAY 37

Read 1 John 4:1–5:21

One thing Christians and non-Christians alike can agree on is that we want to be loved. One thing we may not see eye-to-eye on, however, is how we would define love. Some think it's just doing nice things for someone, making them feel good, or giving them what they want. John gives us a completely different definition for love, though.

John states unequivocally that "God is love" (4:8). That must mean that in order for us to define love, it's necessary for us to know and understand God, at least in part. What are some of the things John tells us about God? He's sacrificial, giving us His son so we could have life (4:9–10). He's steadfast and faithful, promising to stick with us and provide what we need (4:12–15). In his Gospel, John also shows us the humility of God, because He came to earth to live with us, and that He's gracious, not coming to us to condemn us, but to save us (John 1:14; 3:17). And that's only the start! We have the rest of Scripture we can turn to, because God has revealed Himself to us in His Word.

Today, when you're trying to figure out how to love your neighbor, or your best friend, or your parents—or even God Himself—ask yourself how much your behavior looks like God. The more you start to reflect His image, the closer you'll know you're getting to truly loving the people around you.

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Begin praying with Psalm 63:3:

"My lips will glorify you

because your faithful love is better than life."

DAY 38

Read 2 John 1:1-13

We've seen through all of John's writings that he talked a lot about both love and truth. He continues with those themes here in this short letter. And because it's so short, it forces us to stop and consider the relationship between truth and love. On the surface, they may not seem to relate much; one thing is a concept that describes reality, and the other thing describes how you feel about and relate to another person. But John helps us look closer to see how they are tied together.

In John's Gospel, John shared that Jesus called Himself the "truth" (14:6). And because of that, here John ties truth to God's commands because we can know that everything sourced from Jesus is truth and will lead us into truth. They are things we can bank on, that we know will not lead us astray. And what is one of the most fundamental commands God gave to us? It's to love. We're supposed to love God and to love everyone around us in the same way that we love ourselves. And a key component of that love is to share the truth with everyone around us.

So we see that when we walk in truth, we love. And when we love, we want others to know the truth. We can't have one without the other. As you are interacting with people today, think about how dedicating yourself to the truth will be a way you can show love to those around you. Also, take some time to think about the inverse; how can compromising on the truth communicate a lack of love for the people around you? You might be surprised at the answers you find. But when you find them, let them help guide you into a deeper relationship with Jesus and all the people God has put in your life.

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Begin praying with Psalm 85:10:

***"Faithful love and truth will join together;
righteousness and peace will embrace."***

DAY 39

Read 3 John 1:1–4

In these few sentences, John gives us a rare glimpse of himself. He spends most of his time sharing the words and work of Jesus, and helping his readers understand how the truth of the gospel applies to their lives. But here he takes a moment to share some of his own thoughts and feelings. What he shares reveals the care he has for the people he leads and his love for the Lord.

Remarkably, John says he has “no greater joy” than hearing that people are walking in the truth (1:4). How many people can say that? Are you one of them?

Some of the people I’ve known who can say that are parents in regard to their children. As a parent, you feel so much concern for your kids’ well-being and want to see them flourish. And Christian parents know that walking with the Lord is the only way to truly flourish, so seeing a child fervently loving the Lord and following after Christ would honestly be a source of great joy.

As we see here, John takes this to the next level because he makes this statement not about his own flesh and blood, but about other people. He clearly thinks of them as a parent, though, since he calls them “my children” (1:4). Do we have enough regard for the people around us that we truly care about whether they’re walking in the truth and living the fullness of life God has to offer them? If not, pray that God will start to change your heart for the people around you, and make yourself available for God to use you to encourage others in the truth.

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Begin praying with Psalm 128:1–2:

***“How happy is everyone who fears the Lord,
who walks in his ways!
...You will be happy,
and it will go well for you.”***

DAY 40

Read 3 John 1:5-15

In the middle of this letter, John demonstrated his concern for the church by calling out a certain member who was thinking too much about himself. In our current culture, Diotrephes is not a name we come across very often. And unfortunately for this guy, we Bible readers are only likely to associate the name Diotrephes with selfishness and arrogance.

John calls him out for seeking to be first, preeminent, or esteemed, in social interactions. Jesus himself condemned the very same thing in Luke 14:7-14. There, he told a story about how much better it is to take the lowest place at the dinner table because it demonstrates humility and allows the dinner host to bring you honor if they choose to invite you to sit higher in the ranks.

You're on day 40 of this fast. There have likely been ups and downs along the way. But for the sake of argument, let's say it has gone remarkably well. You have seen God move, and you know you are better off than when you started. Don't let that become a source of pride. Don't leave this fast thinking, "Man, I have this down. I am a fasting champion." When you pray, continue to take a humble posture before God. And the next time you decide to fast, look to God for help even more than you have before. If God wants to put you in a place of prominence for you to be a help to others around you, He'll do that. If you try to do that yourself, you'll fall on your face.

As we learned at the beginning of our fast, the Son of God, fully divine, humbled Himself and became a human for our sake (John 1:14). No matter how much we grow and mature, we should always seek to follow His example, and be willing to lower ourselves so that God can raise us up for His glory and the good of us and everyone around us.

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Begin praying with Psalm 25:9:
"He leads the humble in what is right
And teaches them his way."

A huge thank you to our readers! Your interest and participation bring this devotional booklet to life, and we hope it inspires and uplifts you as much as it has for us.

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Thanks for being part of this journey with us!

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