



A Quiet Time Booklet for Ladies



WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THIS TWENTY ONE DAY QUIET TIME BOOKLET BASED UPON THE BOOK OF JOHN. EVERY DAY YOU WILL READ THE SPECIFIED CHAPTER OF JOHN ON YOUR OWN, READ THROUGH THE QUIET TIME OF THAT DAY, AND THEN ANSWER THE “QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER.” WE ALSO ENCOURAGE YOU TO JOURNAL YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS DAILY- MAYBE EVEN DRAW SOME DOODLES IF YOU'RE FEELING ARTSY FARTSY!

BEFORE YOU DIG IN PLEASE TAKE SOME TIME TO STOP AND CONSIDER THE IMPORTANCE OF SPENDING TIME WITH GOD AND STUDYING HIS WORD. DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF CONSISTENCY WHEN IT COMES TO DAILY TIMES WITH GOD. REGARDLESS OF WHERE YOU ARE AT SPIRITUALLY, DAILY QUIET TIMES WILL AUTHENTICALLY DEEPEN YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND WALK WITH JESUS. IN THE MESSAGE VERSION OF JEREMIAH 29:11 GOD SAYS, “WHEN YOU COME LOOKING FOR ME, YOU'LL FIND ME. YES, WHEN YOU GET SERIOUS ABOUT FINDING ME AND WANT IT MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, I'LL MAKE SURE YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED.”

I WANT TO THANK ALL OF THE AMAZING WOMEN WHO CONTRIBUTED THEIR THOUGHTS, WISDOM, AND SPIRITUAL INSIGHT TO THIS BOOKLET. OUR HOPE AND PRAYER IS THAT YOU ENJOY IT AND FIND DEEPER CONNECTION WITH GOD AND JESUS AS A RESULT OF STUDYING THE GOSPEL OF JOHN WITH US.

Dig in sister friend, You are loved!



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Prologue: Why have a Quiet Time?

BY: JANET SCHALK

We face so many demands each day; it may seem we have little time left for peaceful reflection. Yet this can be the most renewing and revitalizing experiences of our lives! It is a time set aside for solitude, and connection with God; to hear what He has to say to you through scripture, and to offer praise and worship as well as supplication to Him. It can be very rewarding to record what you are learning in a spiritual journal. We tend to remember very little of what others tell us. But we remember a large percentage of what we discover for ourselves. It has been said "Tell me, and I will forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand." When we step outside of our normal life routine (say for example, communicating regularly with Christian friends, attending our home church and small group, etc.), we may find that we have relied on these resources for our spiritual nourishment more than our own walk with God. But if we learn how to feed ourselves from the Word of God, we will never go hungry. Quiet times are personal. Their purpose is to allow the scriptures to renew our minds and hearts so that we can be transformed by the Spirit of God. Our goal as disciples is not just to know *about* God, but to know *Him* intimately as one person knows another. He is our Friend, our Father, our Comforter, our Helper, our Guide, and our Lord. Knowing Him in this way, talking with Him in this way, will produce responses of joy, worship, sorrow, repentance, expectation, determination, and hope.

Ultimately, we want it to be love that spurs us on. The knowledge and understanding of God's love. When we neglect time with Him, not only does our love for Him grow cold, but we can forget His amazing love for us! "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Psalm 42:1-2) Remember feeling like this at some point in your walk with God? We can experience this again, and again, and again. If you are saying to yourself "I wish I felt that way, but I don't love God like that, so what should I do? How can I love when my heart is cold, and all I experience is the nagging guilt of knowing my love is a sorry thing not worth offering?" But when you read the words of the Psalmist a moment ago, wasn't there a faint stirring in you, an echo of the longing the Psalmist expressed? If there was, then your love is not absent but suppressed. It lies dormant beneath the weight of unbelief or discouragement. We must take the risk of loving, since the longing within is more than matched by the greater longing of our God who planted it there. God is calling us to be with Him.

Come to Him, trust Him, love Him, and let Him love you!

*Excerpts taken from the NIV Quiet Time Bible.

Name Above All Names

BY: MALLORY MELCHER-POST

Today's Reading: John 1

FUN FACT: Every year, March 6th is "Names Day." Not to be confused with International Donut Day (June 2nd- FYI), or Middle Child Appreciation Day (August 12th- represent!) On this day people are encouraged to look up and study out the meaning of their given name. Hilariously, my name "Mallory" is derived from the French name, "Maloré", and LITERALLY means "the unfortunate one, the unlucky one." So that explains the time I peed my pants at my 20th birthday surprise party... thanks a lot Mom and Dad!

This chapter of John is an amazing introduction to who Jesus is and who He always has been. He is truly the Son of God, made in his image. He is the inspired creator, the brilliant light, and the ultimate source of life. He is simultaneously all-powerful as well as all-perfect. He also chose to humble himself on our behalves and come to earth to live a human life. A life filled with rejection, persecution, and disappointment. All because of his unchanging and ever present love for you.

In verses 12-13 we are told that "...to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God." We are given a choice as young women to either reject Jesus, or believe in His name and live loved as children of God.

Names in our culture possess quite a bit of power. The name "Beyoncé" is world renown and probably just by hearing it you can think of some killer lyrics. Hearing the name "Hitler" causes hairs to stand and puts people on edge as they instantaneously think about the Holocaust and genocide of millions. But the name of Jesus has more power than anything or anyone on or off of the earth. Even the demons believe in his name and shudder! (James 2:19)

His name is the light that shines through the darkness that we experience in our lives and hearts. He has power to overcome your weaknesses, heal your hurts, and bind your wounds. The question is do you allow this power to influence your life? Do you truly believe in the name of Jesus and the power he possesses over your life's circumstances? His name brings truth, light, and freedom to those that live according to it.

Today, reflect on the power of the name and life of Jesus. Thank him for his life, his love, and his concern for you. Consider what he may be calling you to change or decide today.

Questions to Consider:

1. How will your day look if you live every minute of it actively BELIEVING in the name of Jesus? What about your life?
2. What darkness in your heart do you need Jesus to help you overcome?
3. What situations or circumstances in your life do you need to surrender to Jesus?

Now Watch Me Whip!

BY: YUNG GORE

Today's Reading: John 2

In this chapter, we get to see the heart of Jesus during a busy time of the year!

In vv. 1-11, Jesus and his disciples finally arrive at a family wedding in Cana of Galilee after walking for 2 days. At his mother's request, Jesus performs his first miracle and turns 180 gallons of water into wine (it would have been embarrassing for the bride and groom to run out before the reception was over). Then he goes on a stay-cation with his mother, brothers, and disciples in Capernaum for a few days (v. 12), and eventually heads to Jerusalem for a major holiday, the Jewish Passover (much like Easter for Christians). Jesus, upon arriving at the temple, sees what is going on and then takes time to make a whip and drive out the cattle and the sheep and he overturns tables (vv.13-17).

This is a rare moment of expressed anger for Jesus. Can you think of another time in his life where we see Jesus get angry and take aggressive action? Just a few verses earlier, out of compassion and obedience to his mom, Jesus saved the day! What drove Jesus to such an extreme behavior? The scriptures tell us that Jesus' disciples remembered that it was said of the Messiah in the prophetic Psalm 69 that "zeal for your house will consume me." Jesus was consumed with zeal for God's house, God's church. He saw God's house being exploited by locals who were using it as a place for profit, self-promotion, and taking advantage of others (the businessmen would charge extra money for their livestock and doves to people who had traveled to the temple to make sacrifice but couldn't bring their own sacrifices). Jesus could not stand by and watch God and his house be misrepresented.

So what does it mean to be zealous? Zeal can be defined as "the fervor or tireless devotion for a person; diligent enthusiasm; powerful interest." This is how Jesus felt about God and his house. Do we feel the same?

Questions to Consider:

1. What consumes you during this holiday season? Meditate on Proverbs 23:17, "Do not let your heart envy sinners, but always be zealous for the fear of the LORD."
2. In what ways can you show your "tireless devotion" to God during this time of the year?

The Greatest Gift of All

BY: JESSICA MAY

Today's Reading: John 3

This chapter gives us amazing insight into how we can be saved and receive eternal life. Nicodemus (a teacher of Jewish religious law) came to Jesus to talk to him and acknowledge that he knew Jesus was the son of God. Jesus then tells him that the only way to receive eternal life is to be “born again.” Nicodemus responds the same way I would and I am sure many of us would. He asks Jesus how this is physically possible. While it can be easy to get hung up on our physical limitations Jesus makes it clear that salvation and having a close relationship with God is not about the physical but the spiritual.

In verse 5 Jesus says “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.” When we focus on changing our flesh we will only produce outward change, but when we focus on our spirit that’s when we can make true change in our heart for God. When we change our hearts it makes our outward changes more meaningful and lasting. When we focus on our physical limitations or the physical barriers between us and God it can seem overwhelming.

There are so many things that keep us from being close to him and when we make it about our own strength to overcome it can seem impossible, but in Christ there is hope for us! In verses 16-17 it says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” This is so encouraging! Life has its challenges but Christ came so that we have the chance to be close to God and be saved from our sin. God desires to have a close relationship with all of us and gave his son so we could be near to him, and that is the greatest gift of all time!

Questions to Consider:

1. What barriers keep you from a close relationship with God and how can you overcome them with Christ's help?
2. What are some tools or resources God has put in your life to help you draw closer to him? Are there any ways you can grow in making the most of those resources?

Jesus: The True Thirst Quencher

BY: TERRY ADAME

Today's Reading: John 4

I love this chapter of the Bible! It is one of the many interactions between Jesus & a woman. Jesus truly loved and respected women. Jesus desires for us to know how much He wants a relationship with us.

When Jesus first interacts with the Samaritan woman in verse 7 and He asks her for a drink, we see her surprise, since first, Jews did not associate with Samaritans (as they were considered lower class) and second, she is a woman (as women were also considered lower class). I love that Jesus broke all barriers & didn't care what the world expected, but loved the Samaritan woman and wanted to save her and use her to help others.

In verses 10-15, we see the response of Jesus regarding the offer of "living water" and the ensuing conversation with the woman trying to understand this "living water." Truly Jesus wants the woman to know He has the true thirst quencher... the spiritual water that will give her eternal life.

We also see how Jesus didn't just want a drink from the woman, He wanted to heal her from the inside out. He wanted her to know the truth, but more importantly, He wanted her to be honest with the fact she had 5 husbands and the man she was now with is not her husband. Can you imagine how she felt, what she was thinking, how she was feeling? The embarrassment, the fear (since women could be shunned or killed for a lifestyle like this), the desire to run away. Yet, there was something special about this Jewish man who challenged her, but cared about her as well.

Have you ever felt like this woman? Alone, scared to be honest with who you are and what you are going through? Feeling like you have to pretend to be someone you aren't? Fighting to be accepted, fighting to fit in?

As you read through the rest of the chapter, notice how Jesus changed her life. Notice also how she responds. She went with confidence and shared about what Jesus did for her and the Bible says, "many of the Samaritans believed in him because of the women's testimony." Today, reflect on Jesus' love for you and how you can respond to His calling.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are you coming to Jesus daily by studying His word and through prayer?
2. What is in your life today that you want Jesus and your close spiritual friends to know? What are you afraid to be open about? Remember Jesus already knows and wants an incredible relationship with you!

Do You Want To Get Well?

BY: SILVIA MENDEZ

Today's Reading: John 5

In this chapter we read about the healing pool in Jerusalem. In verses 1-5 we read about a man who was lame and could not walk. Jesus comes by this place where a crowd of people in need of healing would gather. They would wait for the water to be stirred, then rush in, in hopes of being healed. This man who could not walk had been invalid for 38 years. There was something about this man that captured Jesus' attention. One would imagine after so many years of waiting, hoping, and dreaming of the day he would finally be healed, he might have lost hope. That was not the case, not for this man. If he had no hope, he simply would not have been there.

Sometimes in our own life struggles we might be tempted to give up. To give up trying, to not even hope. Sometimes we have dreams that we are just too afraid to make known. The fear can become so big that it paralyzes us. In verses 6-13 we read that Jesus asked him, "Do you want to get well?" The man answered him, "There is no one to help me, when the water is stirred, someone else always gets there before me."

Why do you think Jesus asked him that question?

Jesus then tells him, "Pick up your mat and walk."

Jesus wants to help us, but receiving his help requires our petitioning for his help, then our faithful obedience. The man listened, trusted and obeyed Jesus. He was healed because he chose to trust, have faith, and act.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is an area in your life where Jesus can heal you or help you?
2. Will you be willing to ask him for help? Ask sisters to help you? Then she used to have faith and act is that Jesus has answered you?

Better Than Wonder Bread

BY: ASHLYN WILSON

Today's Reading: John 6

John 6 is an amazing chapter that shows just how wonderful, miraculous, and generous our God is. From feeding five thousand people to walking on water to proclaiming to be the "bread of life," we see how important it is to believe and trust in Jesus, living by faith.

We've all heard the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand with only five loaves of bread and two fish. This is an incredible feat! And yet somehow people still doubted that Jesus could provide...look at verses 5-7. When Jesus asked Philip where they could buy a great amount of bread, Philip started considering the cost and trying to come up with a human solution. But Jesus was trying to strengthen Philip's faith and help him see that our human resources aren't enough, that we NEED Jesus. We can limit what God does in us by assuming what is and isn't possible. Is there some impossible task that you believe God wants you to do? Don't let your estimate of what can't be done keep you from taking on the task! God can do the miraculous; trust him to provide the resources. Also, keep in mind that Jesus used the bread and fish of a young boy (verse 9), never think you are too young to do something great for God!

After Jesus' miracle of feeding the five thousand, he performs another miracle - he walks on water! In verses 16-21 we read about the disciples' fear as they see Jesus approaching their boat on the lake. If they had thought about all they had already seen Jesus do, they could have accepted this miracle. But they were frightened by the storms and the image of Jesus walking towards them on the lake (maybe they thought it was a ghost!), and they didn't expect him to come, and they weren't prepared for his help. Faith is a mindset that expects God to act. When we act on this expectation, we can overcome our fears, worries, or insecurities. Just like he provided food for the five thousand people, Jesus can provide peace in the storms of life. As girls, we often face spiritual and emotional storms and feel tossed about like a small boat on a big lake, and it's scary! Instead of giving in to our circumstances, we can choose to trust God with our life, and He will give us peace.

Take some time to reflect on Jesus's power, the miracles he's done in your life, and the ways in which he has provided for you in times of need. And if you have time, I encourage you to read the whole chapter - you will get a better, fuller picture of the powerful, trustworthy, and amazing man (and God!) that Jesus is!

Questions to Consider:

1. How would your day-to-day life look different if you were to believe that God can provide you with all that you need? Would you be more grateful, less anxious, would you pray more...?
2. What fear, worry, insecurity, or sin do you need Jesus' help with in overcoming?

Feeling Thirsty?

BY: MARY FARRELL

Today's Reading: John 7

In John chapter 6 Jesus is already experiencing opposition. Many people were following him...but for the wrong reasons. Even many of his disciples leave him at this point because they said "His teaching was hard." Even at the end of chapter 6, Jesus reveals to his disciples that someone in this intimate group he formed was going to betray him!

Here in chapter 7 we see a Festival of Tabernacles was about to begin! The Jewish leaders were already looking for a way to kill him (v. 1). Jerusalem was crowded. People from all over Judea and Galilee were to come together to celebrate this feast. This feast was actually a prophetic anticipation of the coming of the Messiah (Lev 23:33, 39-43, Duet 16:13-17). On the day of this festival a water pouring ritual occurred. This ritual was a symbolic, prophetic prayer for the coming of the Messiah who would be the source of all God's blessings. Here is where Jesus makes his declaration in John 7:37-38, "If a man is thirsty, let him come to ME and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." So in fact the reason he came was to claim that HE was this living water and they would not need this symbolic water any longer!

PERCEPTION OF THE PEOPLE:

- HIS BROTHERS: At this stage his brothers have no real understanding of who their brother Jesus really is (v. 5). They think his goal was most likely to become a public figure. So therefore they thought he Jesus ought to go where the crowds were and perform his so called miracles.
- THE CROWDS: Verse 12 says: there was a widespread whispering about him going on. "Some said he was a good man while others said, 'he deceives the people.' But no one would publicly say anything for fear of the leaders."
- THE JEWS: The Jews were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without being taught?" But the Jewish leaders were also already looking for a way to kill him.
- THE PHARISEES: They sent the temple guards to arrest Jesus (v. 46). The temple guards were so impressed with him that they did not arrest him!!!

Jesus is the source of all God's blessings. He is the living water. Take time to write down all of the ways God has blessed you! Keep adding to that list through the holidays!! Being thankful is a key to staying faithful!!

Questions to Consider:

1. Where do you need to deepen your faith about who Jesus is? Is he a good prophet, a man of good moral character? Or is he really the Messiah to you?
2. At times you may be tempted to leave Jesus too when times get tough. What scriptures can you memorize and rely on to keep you strong in your faith and to have deeper convictions about who Jesus really is? Think about what kind of convictions Jesus had to have in order to stay strong and make it to the cross for us with all of the opposition going on in his life!

Take Care of Your Heart

BY: KELLY SHULTS

Today's Reading: John 8

John 8 is an amazing chapter that shows the interaction of Jesus and some of the Pharisees of his time. There was an intense discussion if Jesus' testimony was valid. We can feel the heat in the exchange of words. Read carefully the passages bellow and answer the questions

The Pharisees questioned Jesus saying:

- "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid." v. 13
- This made the Jews ask, "Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come?'" v.22
- They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. v.27
- They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" v. 33
- "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." v.44
- The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?" v.48
- At this, they exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?" v.52-53
- "You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" v.57
- At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds. v.59

Stop and Consider...

- Why do you think these men did not believe that Jesus was God's son?
- Do you think that they came to Jesus to learn from Him or to argue?
- Thinking about you: Have you ever been in a situation that you couldn't hear the other person because you were mad with them? What are some of your natural biases?
- In v. 59 they wanted to stone Jesus. What does this show about their lack of self-control?

Continued onto the next page...

Jesus said boldly:

- "I AM the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." v. 12
- Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. In your own Law, it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. I AM one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent Me." vv. 14-18
- Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come." v. 21
- "You are from below; I AM from above. You are of this world; I AM not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins." vv. 23-24
- "So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." vv. 28-29

Questions to Consider

1. Why did Jesus need to be so strong in answering the Pharisees?
2. Have you been in any situation where your parents, your teachers or somebody else was strong in challenging or correcting you? How did that make you feel?
3. Verse 15 says, "You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one." How can we judge people by human standards?

I personally don't like seemingly nitpicky discussions. Yet Jesus saw through their petty questions and focused on the heart of the matter: faith and dependence on the heavenly Father. Lack of faith can harden us so that we don't hear Jesus or spiritual people. We all can be like Pharisees, trying to promote our own thoughts or ideas. That is the reason we need to guard our hearts. "Everyone should be **quick to listen**, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (James 1:19). At this time, pray that you are able to overcome natural biases and really hear, believe and obey Jesus.

God Has a Purpose

BY: MAE LOVGREN

Today's Reading: John 9

This entire chapter is a story in which Jesus healed a man who was born blind. The question was asked, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Often times we think our struggles have come to us as a punishment for our sins. Jesus teaches us that it's not punishment but an opportunity for God to receive the glory. "Neither this man nor his parents sinned. But this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him" (v.3)

Our struggles and weaknesses are opportunities for God to display his power in us. It's an opportunity for those around us to see God working in our lives. The blind man was healed and he went away praising God for it. What happens when you don't see healing like Paul in 2 Corinthians 12? Do you get depressed or bitter? Not Paul. He learned to praise God in it. God has a purpose for our weaknesses, struggles and pain. If you are going through a struggle, your story has been written so the works of God might be displayed in you. Your story can be just as miraculous as this blind man. Let's not look at hardship as punishment but as an opportunity to trust God and praise Him for his faithfulness.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you believe that God wants to use your life so that his name can be glorified? If yes, how do you see him working in your life? If no, talk to a friend and ask them how they see God working in your life.
2. Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 and write down how Paul responded to his hardships.

Voices

BY: KAEELI GARNER

Today's Reading: John 10

What is your favorite voice to listen to? Maybe it's a singer on the radio, maybe it's your dad saying goodnight, or maybe it's your best friend laughing when she sees something funny. Think about that voice. If you heard it, you would know who was speaking. You know who that voice belongs to. If it's a famous singer and you know every word of the song, you'll probably sing along. If it's your dad saying goodnight, you'll probably (hopefully) respond with a "Goodnight, I love you!" If it's your best friend laughing then you'll probably be laughing too. Voices are powerful and those that our ears are accustomed to, we can recognize with just one word.

In John 10, we get to learn all about the amazing shepherd that Jesus is to His sheep and how they respond only to His voice. Jesus talks about the sheep knowing His voice not once, but *five* times, within this chapter (verses 3, 4, 5, 16, 27). Not only do the sheep know His voice, but when they hear it, they follow. This means they do more than hear it, they listen to it. He doesn't expect them to blindly follow either, but instead He shows them that He cares by calling them by name. He is called the Good Shepherd because He takes care of His sheep and provides for them (Psalm 23).

The sheep know His voice and listen, but why is that important? Because only the sheep that know His voice and enter through His gate will be saved (verse 9). They know His voice so well, that He only has to speak their name and they will follow Him (verse 3). They trust that He will take care of them when He simply calls their name. When you're asking God to lead you somewhere, do you listen for a quiet voice speaking your name, or do you wait for a loudspeaker and flashing lights to show you where to go?

Sometimes we want to listen to Jesus, but it can be hard to distinguish His voice amongst the noise of everything else. Let's look at verse 5 again, where Jesus says the sheep will never follow a stranger's voice. If we're His sheep and we run away from voices we don't know, then why can we get so caught up in other things? Whether it be distractions or temptation or the cute boy at school? Maybe it's because we get too comfortable and allow other voices into our ears. Maybe we ought to consider that we can get too comfortable with allowing Satan to speak to us. If we allow Satan to divert our thoughts, we listen to his voice instead of to Jesus. Thus, it's even more important to be able to distinguish God's voice, which is only possible when we know Him through a deep and personal relationship.

Questions to Consider:

1. What voices do you listen to besides Jesus and what do they tell you? Do they lead your life in a better way than when you listen to Him?
2. How do you know when God is speaking to you and how do you respond to Him?

Trust and Timing

BY: LINDA BRUMLEY

Today's Reading: John 11

We can be very impatient—especially when we think there's a serious problem or that our idea for a solution is imperative.

Why did Lazarus die?

1. For God's glory so that God's son could be glorified through it. (v.4)
2. "...so that you may believe." One last shot at solidifying the faith of Jesus' disciples before he went to the cross; a final stunning miracle as a confirmation of who Jesus really is and as a sign that his words are absolute, reliable TRUTH!

Mary and Martha couldn't see this at the time. It wasn't just Laz who had felt the love: "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." He loved them all. It had been demonstrated, felt, and returned. So, now where's the love? He delays two days, knowing his friend would die in his absence. This is unthinkable under ordinary circumstances!

Meanwhile, over in Bethany, Laz is getting worse. Mary and Martha are increasingly troubled--desperate hope, hourly disappointment. And what is Laz going through? Agonizing pain? Gasping for air? Coma? Paralysis? Seizures?

When Jesus finally sets out for Bethany, his disciples object. Bethany is in Judea. The last time Jesus was there the Jews had tried to stone him. Big risk. Potentially unnecessary sacrifice.

In Mary and Martha's minds, Laz had made an unnecessary sacrifice, because if Jesus had just come right away, he could have prevented Lazarus' death. (v.21)

We won't always see the glory in our sacrifices or our suffering. Suffering can make us angry at God. It can make us doubt his attention to our needs or that he hears our prayers. When our prayers seem to go unanswered we can doubt the love of God, or even his goodness or his existence.

Questions to Consider:

1. What can make you doubt?
2. Why did Jesus weep even when he knew God would be glorified, faith would be enhanced and Laz would live again?
3. Do you trust that Jesus cares deeply about your problems even when he allows them to go unresolved?
4. Are you willing to make sacrifices to see God glorified? Give examples.
5. This chapter says a lot about timing. Do you trust God is in control of the timing of events in your life?

Pray for trust in God's purposes and timing in your life and the lives of people you care about. Look for ways God can be glorified through easy times and hard times.

Selfless Devotion

BY: JASMIN SEGARRA

Today's Reading: John 12

I've always wondered what it must have been like to see Jesus in the flesh, blessing those around him with miracles in order to confirm the word. As I read through John chapter 12 I was saddened over the unfaithfulness among the Jews and the selfishness of Judas. Then I thought "Oh wait... even though Jesus isn't here how many times do I act the same way?" Just because he isn't here in the flesh with me, doesn't make it any different! In John 12 we have an amazing example set by our Lord Jesus, of what it looks like to be non-judgmental, patient and forgiving. Not only do we have that example of Jesus in this chapter but we have Mary's amazing example of selflessness, when she decides to not hold onto what she could gain in the world but what she can lose in the world and in that action gain so much more from God.

In verses 2-7 we get a clear look at Mary's selflessness and her heart to give Jesus the best of what she had. On the other hand, we see Judas speak his mind on what she should've done instead of honoring Jesus:

"Here a dinner was given in Jesus's honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus's feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages. He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the moneybag, he used to help himself to what was put into it." "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial."

Everywhere we go we see a, "every man for themselves", way of life being lived out by so many people and as human beings it's our natural tendency to want to self-protect and keep the best of what we have for ourselves only! As we are fighting to live by the scriptures and be giving and loving to others, we are still fed this, "You're wasting your life on Jesus", outlook from people and sometimes we feed this to ourselves. Those thoughts do run through our minds because we want more than what we are seeing God give us in the moment. HONESTLY, selfless devotion to God is costly. Take another look at Mary, think of the money she "wasted" by pouring her perfume on Jesus's feet, think of how it cost her socially, since people had scolded her for that decision she made but it didn't stop her. These costs didn't stop her from doing so because she understood that YOU will not waste your life if you spend it in selfless devotion to Jesus but you will totally waste it if you spend it on yourself. (Mark 8:35-36)

God gave up more than we ever could so that we could be saved. Then we have Jesus, who lived as a perfect example in order to help us get to heaven (what more could we ask for right?). Then in John 12 God's word supplies us with another great example by telling us about Mary and her heart to "waste" the best of what she had on Jesus. God wants so badly to give us more than we could ever imagine but are we stopping those blessings from being given to us because we are holding back from giving to him?

Questions to Consider:

1. What does treasuring Jesus more than yourself and your stuff look like for you?
2. When serving and giving to God, what is your motive behind it? To surrender and give him your best, or to receive glory from people around you?
3. What do you need to let go of that will give you so much more with God?

The Vulnerable Servant

BY: SARA ENGEL

Today's Reading: John 13

This is a powerful moment in Jesus' life and that of his disciples that takes place soon before his death. He had been teaching, preaching, healing, loving, correcting and training his disciples. They had the opportunity to witness him doing these things for many people in many different settings. Here they are sharing their last meal together and Jesus decides to do something that no one would have thought he would do. He washes his disciples' feet. He humbles himself, stoops down, washes and then dries the feet of men who were familiar with traveling many miles on dusty roads. I don't know about you, but this sounds less than appealing to me... Jesus sets an amazing example of servanthood and vulnerability.

In verse 8 you see that Peter was uncomfortable with this. Jesus explains to him that this is necessary- "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." This is likely to be symbolic of how Jesus' death cleanses him (and us) and that cleansing is needed in order to be united with him. Even though Jesus sacrificing himself for us is the most noble, heroic, and loving act in all history, he does it in a lowly manner. From this intimate moment of washing his friends' feet all the way to his crucifixion, Jesus shows so much humility and submission to God's will. He is Lord, yet he exemplifies servanthood. Phil 2:5-7 says it perfectly:

"In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."

In order to influence people towards God and have deep, meaningful and spiritual friendships we must serve each other. It takes humility and vulnerability to serve each other. We can do this by doing kind things for each other, helping out around our homes, and finding ways to meet each other's needs. However, it is not just in the actions that we do...we can also be vulnerable with each other in the way that Jesus was. He was confident that he belonged to God and was on a mission and yet he let his disciples know what was on his heart and opened up to them. When we are vulnerable, we do open ourselves up to being hurt at times. Clearly, Jesus is familiar with this feeling and can help us through our hurts.

Jesus calls us to imitate his example, "Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (vs. 14). He wanted them to understand how to truly change the world and lead powerfully. Yes, teach, preach and be powerful in the spirit, but serve, be humble, and love each other deeply.

John 13:1 says "...having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end". Jesus will love you to the end and give you the strength to serve and love those around you.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are you being vulnerable with Jesus in your prayers? How can you emulate Jesus and share what is on your heart and deepen your relationships?
2. How can you serve your family during this time? How can you serve your ministry? People in your community?

I Will Come to You

BY: MORGAN ROBERTS

Today's Reading: John 14

Has there ever been a time in your life where you felt alone? A time where you felt left out, apart from everyone else? Maybe you've felt this way because of how you look, your actions, or maybe what you choose to stand up for or not stand up for. Life is an arena that demands decisions from us and that can be a scary feeling.



Jesus lived his life as someone who went against the popular belief; therefore, so did his disciples. His disciples were a group of ordinary men like you and me who lived in a world that persecuted Christians. Everywhere they turned, they faced opposition. Jesus knew that the disciples would fall weak to peer pressure, people pleasing, and temptation to not stand up for what they believed.

Similarly, in high school and early years of college, it is so easy to fall into the same temptations of peer pressure and people pleasing that the disciples did. As humans, we don't enjoy the feeling of being alone! We search for ways to find inclusion through relationships. Jesus knows our struggles and our needs and that is why he gave us the Advocate - the Spirit of Truth.



Often times when I am in a situation where I have to stand up for my faith against the popular belief, I can feel afraid and alone. But Jesus says that he will not leave us as orphans, and that he will come to us. (v.18) What an amazing Lord!! He isn't going to make you suffer alone, he will come to you, strengthen you and provide you an answer of truth.

I think often of the Holy Spirit as a vein in our body. The reason one would have a heart attack is because there is blockage to the heart. Similarly, are we allowing the Spirit to flow through us freely or do we have blockages such as fear, insecurity, deceit, etc that stop the Spirit from flowing into our hearts, into our mind and out of our mouths? Do you believe that the Spirit of Truth can be alive and active in your life, in your relationships, and in your walk with God?

Jesus is not a Savior who wants you to walk through life frail and afraid. He promised his disciples peace (v. 27) and you can walk confidently with that peace. He encourages you, "Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (v. 27); he wants you to face the world as a courageous young woman who is not fearful of what the world thinks of her. He created you as his daughter, in his image; he also gave you his Spirit of Truth to live inside of you. What greater power do you have than the dwelling of the Spirit to guide you?

Questions to Consider:

1. As a young woman, what commands of the word are the most difficult for you to follow?
2. What in your daily life is hindering the Advocate - the Spirit of Truth to flow freely?

It's Not You, It's Me ... Really!

BY: BONNIE WILSON

Today's Reading: John 15

In this life, as women – young or old, the desire to be perfect in some area of our life is a persistent whisper in our ear. Our ambition to be the center of attention, find acclaim or gain status also lingers there as well. The perfect “me” is the perfect daughter, sister, friend, student, athlete, leader and so on. The entire book of John really confirms for us that “it’s not you, it’s me” (Jesus).

In our search for our own “I AM” statements and looking closer at the scriptures, it quickly becomes obvious that this life, when lived well and like Christ, is not about us at all. It really is all about Him, “the Great I AM”.

The book of John is full of these “I AM” statements, 7 of them in particular;

- John 6:35 ... I am the bread of life
- John 8:12 ... I am the light of the world
- John 10:7 ... I am the door of the sheep
- John 10:11 and 10:14 ... I am the good shepherd
- John 11:25 ... I am the resurrection and the life
- John 14:6 ... I am the way, the truth and the life

And then we come to John 15, starting right away in verse 1 it reads, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener”.

A few things to consider after reading John 15:1-8;

- HE is the vine (I AM the branch)
- GOD owns the vineyard (I AM His)
- GOD does the pruning (I AM perfected by Him)

When I consider the above and accept this teaching, my desire to be the vine (the best, the center of attention) is not such a battle. My ambition to be in charge (the leader) is not such a struggle. My goal to constantly prune (pursue perfection) seems meaningless. He has all of this under control. As “the Gardener” he is daily perfecting the vine, tending to his vineyard and pruning the branches. When He is done, I will be the perfect image of what He desires.

Questions to Consider:

1. If I were to spend more time reading His word, trusting his I AM statements and praying to Him, how would that relieve me of the pressure to be more than who I AM today, right now?
2. What area of my life, where I have “me” as most important, could change radically if I let Him be most important (the vine, the owner of the vineyard and the gardener)?

The Joy of Suffering

BY: KAYLEE DRESCHER

Today's Reading: John 16

In this chapter, Jesus prepares his disciples for his death. He acknowledges that this is hard for them to grasp and that it will cause a time of grief. But he also says, "But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (v.7).

Some of the things we face in life seem unbearable. We will face trials in life; Jesus acknowledges this. He himself is facing death on the cross. And he is sharing this with his closest friends. But even while facing death, Jesus focuses on God and sees the joy in the situation. Because of Jesus' death we have the opportunity to have the Holy Spirit inside of us, which Jesus says is for our good.

When we face hardships, they do not seem good at the time. But God will work it out for the good of our relationship with Him. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)

We may not always receive the answer that we want or expected but it will be what is best for our growth in our relationship with God.

Jesus was facing the ultimate challenge and he joyfully trusted God: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Jesus shares all of this with us to bring us peace. Again, Jesus validates that our walk on Earth will come with challenges. But we get to follow in His perfect example. And He has shown us the way. He has already overcome every trial we will ever face. Trust in our perfect Lord and joyfully embrace the suffering.

Today reflect on Jesus' example of trusting God and examine what area of life you need to grow in trusting God.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is a hardship you are facing in life (big or small)?
2. Looking at this situation with faith and trust in God, how can you grow closer to God through this?
3. Look at Jesus' life and consider how he would handle the challenge that you are facing.

Jesus Prayed for You

BY: AMELIA CLOUSE

Today's Reading: John 17

This chapter is a three-part prayer of Jesus, prayed right before he is arrested, condemned and taken to the cross. Jesus takes time to pray that He is glorified, he prays specifically for his disciples and then generalizes his prayer for all of his believers. Have you ever prayed with one of your friends or even someone you met for the first time and realized that by hearing their prayer you just learned so much about the depth of their heart? That is the essence of this passage. He was probably feeling so much fear and anxiety before taking up the cross and yet he prays for the people that he loves; he prays for their protection and their unity.

In verses 13-18, Jesus prays "I have given them your word I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

Even though Jesus prays for our protection, he does not promise a life that will be a breeze. He tells us that as people who follow God we will be hated. Just like Jesus was tempted every which way, taunted and ridiculed, we will follow in his path. But he prays for us! He has a direct line to God and he prays for our protection! Jesus' prayer reassures that that we can do the difficult things we are called to because he will be by our side.

In his prayer, Jesus assures God that he left us with his word. And these words are essential, a "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17). Even though Jesus cannot be physically present with us, we can always access his truth. As long as we have our bible with us, we are protected. What a comforting thought!

Ladies, do not forget: this prayer is still true today. Jesus prayed for ALL of his believers and he prayed for you. Continue to take hope and comfort in that.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are some bold and spiritual choices you can make knowing that God will protect you?
2. Which of Jesus' words bring you comfort when you face trials?

I Got Busted and I Didn't Even Do Anything Wrong! (SMH)

BY: MARY WADSTROM

Today's Reading: John 18

What I love and see throughout this entire chapter is how fearless Jesus is in ALL circumstances! We as humans are so full of fear and control. Can you imagine living a life of NO fear... of ANYTHING. I wish for that but am so far from it. I'm sure that is why I love and am obsessed with Jason Borne movies. I've watched them 830,456 times.

Jesus is about to go to the cross and face his death, he's at peace...but not Peter, he cuts a guy's ear off. Like what is that going to do?? (Jesus fixes it-whew) Then, out of fear, Peter denies Jesus 3 times - the rooster crows and Peter realizes what he has just done. His heart is broken, he changes and goes on to do great things with his life

I love that no matter how many times we mess up God always has room to forgive and move on!!

Here's some truth about me: I am truly a "chicken" of just about everything. My first response is pretty much, "NO!", or "I can't do that", or "I don't know how to do that" I'm sometimes afraid to stand up for what I believe in, it's scary (I care about what people think of me.) I'm afraid to try new things. I'm afraid that I will fail. (I'm afraid of what people will think of me.)

Early on in my ministry days, we were asked to move to Denver and lead the church. I was 8 months pregnant and thought, "you've got to be kidding me people, I'm about to have a baby! I was sooo mad about it I refused to go to church the next day, locked myself in my bedroom and said "I AM NOT GOING". Later that morning a friend came over and began to pound on the door. After half an hour I couldn't take it any longer, so I opened the door and again declared "I AM NOT GOING!" She said, "Get dressed, we are going on a walk!" We walked, prayed and talked out all my fears.

I learned that day that I had told God I'd go anywhere, do anything, give up everything for him... (I owed him, he took my place on the cross- this is the least I could do) But when the rubber hit the road I was really far from that promise I had made to Him. Ultimately, I did end up going and had one of the best years of my life, meeting some of the best friends of my life. God always has good in store for us! We just need to trust.

Questions to Consider:

What are you most afraid of right now? At this very moment? I encourage you to write it out in your journal, pray about it and find someone to talk it out with.

I have learned once I open up and talk about my fears they basically go away. I let someone encourage me - or give me courage!! It's the craziest thing...give it a try. Talk it out with God, then talk it out with a friend.

Innocent, But Accused

BY: MALLORY JOHNSON

Today's Reading: John 19

Just this year, MTV aired a new show called *Unlocking the Truth*. The show is hosted by a man named Ryan Ferguson who was falsely convicted of murder, and spent 10 years of his life in prison as guilty man. His life was walled in, dark, hopeless, controlled and accused. Imagine what that must have been like – his family, his friends and anyone he knew now looked at him differently, questioning if his story was true or if he really had murdered a man.

How do we feel when we tell our parents the truth, but they don't believe us? When I was in the 6th grade, I had an extremely unkind teacher who made things up about me to tell my parents. When I tried to explain to my dad that what he was saying wasn't true and that he was unkind to all the other kids in my class, my dad looked me in the eyes and said "I don't believe you." Wow, did that hurt.

To feel accused for something that you didn't do is one of the worst feelings we can ever feel as humans. In this chapter, Jesus is crucified, brutally murdered, for a crime he did not commit. When on trial, there was no valid evidence for a conviction of guilty, yet the Jews insisted on Jesus being crucified.

As we read in chapter 1, Jesus came to earth full of grace and truth, yet he was made out to be a fraud and liar by those he loved and served. He lived a sacrificial life of preaching, teaching and healing those he longed to save. But the ones he spoke the purest truth to were the very ones who accused him. What about us? When we read the scriptures, do we believe that the words Jesus says are true, or do we brush them to the side? Do our actions say that we believe Jesus spoke truth or that we accuse him of being a liar? When falsely accused, Jesus entrusted himself completely to God. In vs 10-11, Pilate tells Jesus that he has the authority to free or crucify him. Jesus' response? "*You would have no power over me if it were not given to you by God...*" Jesus did not fear people. He did not fight back when he was falsely accused. He trusted that God had the ultimate power and would bring justice for his life, regardless of what people thought about him.

Take some time to pray and reflect on whether or not you are living your life by the truths that Jesus spoke. Do your actions say that he is innocent or accused?

Questions to Consider:

1. How do you feel when you are falsely accused?
2. Does your life reflect that you *truly believe* that the words of Jesus are truth?
3. Are you entrusting yourself to God when situations aren't going your way?

Powerful Friend

BY: RACHEL SHEETS

Today's Reading: John 20

Wow! Here we see the key to why Christianity is so amazing—Jesus really did rise from the dead after being crucified! So far in this gospel we have heard and seen the life that Jesus began on this earth, and got to know him and his heart through his actions and words. Now in chapter 20 we get to see the power that shows he really is God's son and was here to fulfill the most important and amazing prophecy of all time.

Think of the power it must have taken to raise Jesus from the dead. Divine power. Many of us have had the unfortunate experience of losing something, or worse, someone we have loved. Imagine the power it would take to bring life back into that something or someone. Our powerful friend Jesus shows Mary Magdalene here that she need not cry, but rather she should rejoice in the fact that he is risen! In Mark 16:9, it says "When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons." Surely Mary had felt undying love for Jesus for healing her. What do we need to be healed of in our daily lives? Our struggles can easily overwhelm us and get us to believe we are not "fixable". But take heart—Jesus really is always right there by our side.

In verse 17 he tells Mary, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Can you believe Jesus wants to share his God with us? He is so kind. He knows that the same power that raised him from the dead in the tomb can be in our daily lives. We can have the power to overcome pettiness, our sharp tongues with one another, temptations to try to lie to look good in front of others or to get something we desire, and many other weaknesses and trials we face every day.

Let's live our lives as God sees us—as his children who believe and have faith that His son was raised from the dead and is now lovingly wanting to take our hand and let him heal us.

Questions to Consider:

1. What can you do today to remind yourself of Jesus' great power?
2. The love and gratitude that Mary felt upon hearing Jesus call her name (vs. 16) when she was in the tomb is very compelling. Jesus is calling each one of us. Plan a time to tap into that today and share the good news of the Resurrection with a friend

Do You Love Me?

BY: BRIANNA GRIMES

Today's Reading: John 21

Jesus always meets us where we are at. The first time Jesus met Peter he was on his boat fishing and Jesus called him to follow him (Mark 1:16-18). In John 21 in vs. 15- 19 Jesus again meets Peter on his boat and once more calls him to "follow him"

Where did Jesus meet you?

Sometimes we start the journey in following Jesus, but later we find ourselves back where we started. Peter was one of Jesus' best friends and he watched his best friend, Jesus, die. Peter was discouraged, disappointed and distracted. Jesus, during his whole ministry warned and tried to prepare his disciples that He was going to be leaving, and now that the time had come the disciples didn't feel prepared.

Do you ever feel like God is preparing you for something and when that "something" comes everything goes out the window? Peter returned from what he knew to what was comfortable. Jesus finds Peter, and just like before he calls Peter to follow Him. However, before Jesus calls Peter he needed to reinstate him, to re-establish Peter's love for Him.

In verses 15-19 Jesus asks Peter three times "Do you love me?" The Greek word for "love" here that Jesus uses is agape love, meaning to love deeply and intimately. Each time Jesus asks Peter this he uses agape love. Peter responds each time with "You know that I love you..". The "love" that Peter uses here is phileo love, meaning to be fond of someone. We always wonder why Jesus would ask him three times. Sometimes we ever feel bad for Peter that Jesus asked him three times if he loves him but when we look deeper we see that Jesus wanted Peter to be more than just fond of him. He wanted Peter to LOVE Him more than anything.

This was an important moment for Jesus and Peter to have before Peter could be used completely by Jesus. This was going to be the moment that Peter would go back to when things got hard or when he was discouraged. He remembered his agape LOVE for Jesus.

Jesus is asking you: "Do you LOVE me? Do you love me with an agape love?"

Today reflect on how much you LOVE Jesus.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what areas have you returned to a place that Jesus called you out of?
2. What can you do today to LOVE Jesus today with an agape love?