

**THE NEXT
STEP**

FOR YOUR

JOURNEY

NELSON SEARCY

Copyright © 2016 by Nelson Searcy

Published by Church Leader Insights www.ChurchLeaderInsights.com

ISBN: 978-0-578-15304-9

Printed in the United States of America

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means – for example, electronic, photocopy, recording – without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

All Rights Reserved.

Scripture verses quoted from The New Living Translation © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. All rights reserved.

Scripture taken from The Message. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Dedicated to:

*All of you who are just beginning your journey of faith —
may you grow to be fully-developing followers of Jesus.*

CONTENTS

Nelson's Story	15
<i>Next Step #1: Study Your Bible</i>	19
<i>Next Step #2: Learn to Pray</i>	25
<i>Next Step #3: Connect to a Growing Church and a Group</i> ..	29
<i>Next Step #4: Serve Others</i>	33
<i>Next Step #5: Be Baptized</i>	37
<i>Next Step #6: Forgive Others</i>	41
<i>Next Step #7: Live a Life of Worship</i>	45
<i>Next Step #8: Share Your Faith</i>	49
A Final Thought	53
<i>Appendix 1: Who I Am When I Follow Jesus</i>	55
<i>Appendix 2: Questions About Baptism</i>	59
<i>Appendix 3: Writing Your Story</i>	63
<i>Appendix 4: Resources for Further Growth</i>	67
<i>Appendix 5: The Journey Church Statement of Beliefs</i>	69
The Gospel of John	75

Selected Other Books by Nelson Searcy

*The Difference Maker:
Using Your Everyday Life for Eternal Impact*

*Tongue Pierced: How the Words
You Speak Transform the Life You Live*

*Unshakable: Standing Strong
When Things Go Wrong*

*The Greatness Principle:
Finding Significance and Joy by Serving Others*

*The Generosity Ladder:
Your Next Step to Financial Peace*

Revolve: A New Way to See Worship

CONGRATULATIONS!

The decision you've made to become a follower of Jesus Christ is the most important decision of your life. God created you for a purpose and discovering that purpose begins with knowing him. You may not be completely sure what happened when you decided to follow Jesus or what you should do now. There are probably a million questions running through your mind. This book will answer some of those questions and help you get on the right track in your new Christian life.

*... anyone who belongs to Christ
has become a new person.*

The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

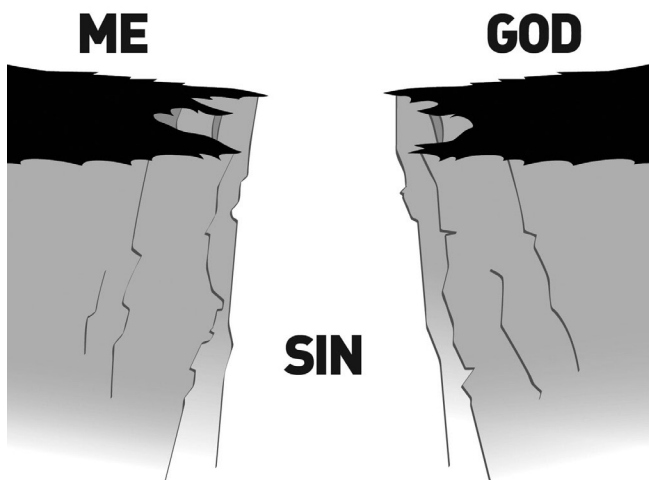
– 2 Corinthians 5:17

What it Means to Follow Jesus

Following Jesus is both a one-time decision and a lifelong process. God wants you to have a meaningful life, in relationship with him through his son, Jesus. But he doesn't force that desire on you. He gives you a choice. You can choose to live according to his plan, or you can choose to go your own way. If you choose to say "no" to God – in other words, if you decide to tackle life on your own terms – that decision separates you from him.

On your own, there is nothing you can do to bring yourself into a right relationship with God. Good works won't do it. Religion won't do it. Morality won't do it. Neither will money, philosophy, knowledge, nor science. For centuries, seekers have tried to forge a relationship with God through all of these paths with little success.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Think about the story the following verses tell:

*There is a path before each person
that seems right, but it ends in death.*

– Proverbs 14:12

*But God showed his great love for us by sending
Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*

– Romans 5:8

*For there is only one God and one Mediator who can
reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus.*

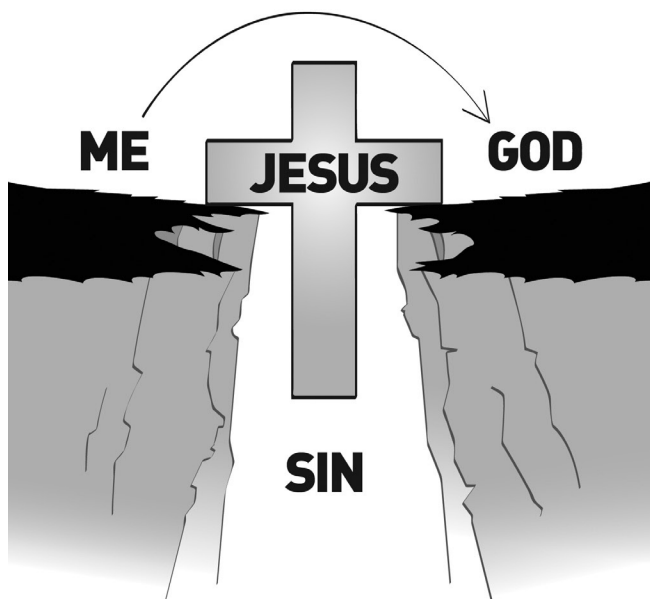
– 1 Timothy 2:5

*Christ suffered for our sins once for all time.
He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring
you safely home to God. He suffered physical death,
but he was raised to life in the Spirit.*

– 1 Peter 3:18

You have taken a big step by acknowledging that Jesus is the mediator who restores your relationship with God. You have prayed and asked Jesus to be the leader and director of your life. You've asked him to forgive you for all the ways you've sinned against him while living life on your own terms, and you've committed to becoming more like him. At the moment you asked Jesus to come into your life, he did. Your salvation is sealed and secure.

CONGRATULATIONS!



While you can never lose your salvation, the process of becoming a fully developing follower of Jesus is ongoing. There are many specific steps you can take to help you get started off well in your new Christian life – steps that will help you better understand the decision you’ve made and help you begin growing in your faith. In the following pages, you’ll find:

- The story of how I became a Christ-follower (it may surprise you!)
- An explanation of your eight best Next Steps
- The Journey's Statement of Beliefs
- The entire Gospel of John, including a reading plan to help you get started

As the Bible says, ... *anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!* (2 Corinthians 5:17). Now that you have asked Jesus to forgive you of your sins and come into your life, you are a new creation! Real life starts right now. Anything prior to knowing Jesus was simply existing, but knowing God and walking with him is truly living. Welcome to the journey!

– Pastor Nelson

NELSON'S STORY

I became a follower of Jesus a little differently, and a little later, than most people might expect. I asked Jesus to come into my life right around my 18th birthday. Until that point, I had been consumed with some other things. I started a successful computer business in high school. When I hit 17, I was working on an engineering degree at North Carolina State University, while traveling and speaking at various conferences for young entrepreneurs.

At one of these conferences, I met a man who had written a book I wanted to read, so I headed to a local bookstore to pick it up. While I was browsing the shelves, I noticed a book by Billy Graham called *Peace With God*. I bought Dr. Graham's book on a whim, thinking it was a history book about a guy I had heard a little about while growing up in North Carolina.

So, in October of 1989, I was reading through *Peace With God* and got to the page where Billy Graham offered an invitation of salvation to any reader who didn't know Jesus. God

convicted my heart. I prayed the prayer Dr. Graham had laid out for me there and then saw a toll-free number that he suggested I call.

I went back to my little apartment in Raleigh and called the 800 number. Yep, I'm that guy. The person on the other end encouraged me to do a few things – read my Bible, pray, get involved in a good church and make my decision public through baptism.

After I gave my life to God, he put me on a new path. I ended up getting my bachelor's degree in Religion and Psychology at Gardner-Webb University and then a Masters of Divinity at Duke University, while pastoring a little church outside of Charlotte. Eventually, I moved to southern California to work on staff at a large megachurch. Then, in 2000, my wife Kelley and I moved to Manhattan to start The Journey Church of the City, and then to Boca Raton in 2010 to lead The Journey Church here in South Florida.

I trust that, if you are reading this, you have made a decision to give your life to Christ at The Journey. I am thrilled to be on this path with you.

If, for some reason, this book is in your hands but you have never asked Jesus into your life, let me encourage you to pray the same prayer I prayed that fall day in North Carolina:

Dear God, I open my heart to you and invite you into my life. I confess that I am a sinner. I ask that you would forgive me of all that I've done wrong. Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, who died for me and who gives me the opportunity to know you. I want to be your follower. Thank you for accepting me. In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen

Next Step #1

STUDY YOUR BIBLE

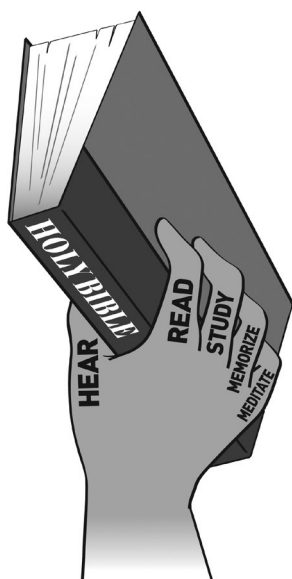
How much do you really know about the Bible? Many people think they know what the Bible has to say but have never taken the time to read it for themselves. How much have you read? Maybe you've studied bits and pieces, but have never understood it as a cohesive unit. The Bible is an incredible manuscript. Think about these facts:

- The Bible is comprised of 66 books that were written over a period of 1500 years.
- The books were written by over 40 different authors, from different areas with different life experiences.
- These authors did not collaborate with one another. In some instances, they didn't even speak the same language.

- Their work, passed down through many generations and translated many times, has resulted in the consistent book you are about to integrate into your life; the book that tells God's story of the formation of the universe, the creation and fall of man, and God's plan and purpose for us to know him through his son, Jesus Christ.

Grasping the Truth of the Bible

The Bible is God's primary tool for communicating with his people. There are several methods for making that communication a daily part of your experience with him.



God wants you to have a strong grasp on the truth contained in the Bible and its implications for your life. You lose grip on something easily if you hold on with only two or three fingers, but when you hold on with five fingers your grasp is much more secure. Think of holding onto the Bible with all five of your fingers. Each one represents an important aspect of understanding the Bible as a whole:

- **Hear:** Make sure you listen to good Bible teaching, both through your church and through other resources you can find. Take notes on what you hear.
- **Read:** You will get to know God better as you spend time reading his Word. Set a goal to read the Bible for at least 15 minutes every day.
- **Study:** Make sure you are really studying the truths you read. As you dig into the Bible, always be asking yourself:
 1. What **promise** is there to **claim**?
 2. What **example** is there to **follow**?
 3. What **command** is there to **obey**?
 4. What **sin** is there to **confess**?

One of the best ways to study your Bible effectively is to get involved in a Growth Group. Growth Groups are groups of people that meet to study the

Bible, pray for one another and enjoy life together. We'll take a closer look at Growth Groups in Next Step #3.

- **Memorize:** God wants you to hold scripture close to your heart so that you can call on it when you need to. This comes as you memorize verses that speak to you. Try to memorize at least one verse a week.
- **Meditate:** After you memorize a verse, spend some time meditating on it. Analyze it and dwell on its truth as you work out, cook, commute, or do any other activity where your hands are busy but your mind is free.

As you begin integrating the Bible into your life, you'll discover that it is helpful in all situations. Consider this verse from the book of Hebrews:

*For the word of God is alive and powerful.
It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword,
cutting between soul and spirit,
between joint and marrow.
It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.*
— Hebrews 4:12

Choosing a Bible Translation to Read

While there are many worthwhile translations of the Bible, here are three that prove to be especially readable and accurate:

- The New Living Translation (NLT)
- The New International Version (NIV)
- The New King James Version (NKJV)

Try skimming passages online (see Appendix 4) or in a bookstore to see which translation you are most comfortable reading.

Once you have chosen a translation you like, commit to reading the Bible regularly.

As you begin to make the Bible part of your daily life, you will see how it is relevant to everything you face. God will use your time in the Bible to teach you about his truths and draw you closer to him.

Next Step #2

LEARN TO PRAY

Communication is essential to any healthy relationship. You wouldn't have many friends if you never talked to them, would you? Think about how your relationships with your family members would suffer if you never made time to connect.

The same is true of your relationship with God. Just as reading your Bible helps you know God more intimately, so does spending time with him in prayer. Prayer is your opportunity to talk with God about what's on your mind and to hear what he wants to speak into your life.



Here are a few tips for developing a strong prayer life:

- Set aside time every day to spend in prayer. Don't be tempted to push your conversations with God into the leftover space in your busy schedule.
- Make prayer as much of a priority as reading your Bible. Combining your prayer time and your Bible reading time into a morning devotional is a great idea.

*Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and
went out to an isolated place to pray.*

– Mark 1:35

- Don't role-play when you talk with God. Just be yourself. You don't have to use fancy words or focus on high-minded ideas to impress him. Come to God as simply and honestly as you can. Speak from your heart. He is your father.

*Don't worry about anything; instead,
pray about everything.*

*Tell God what you need,
and thank him for all he has done.*

– Philippians 4:6

How to Pray

There is no right or wrong way to pray. Over the years, though, I have found that modeling my prayers on the prayer Jesus most famously prayed to his Father (Matthew 6:9-13) is helpful in clearing the lines of communication and having good conversations with God. Using that prayer as a guide, try to incorporate these elements into your prayer time:

- Praise and thank God for the good things in your life.
- Confess any sin that you may be struggling with.
- Tell God what is worrying you and what you need help with.
- Pray that he will guide and direct your life in the way it is supposed to go.

Remember, prayer is a conversation, not a monologue. As you develop your prayer life, you will get more comfortable both speaking to and hearing from God. So, go ahead and start the conversation. Ask God to reveal himself to you. He is your guide on this journey.

Next Step #3

CONNECT TO A GROWING CHURCH AND A GROUP

As a new follower of Jesus, it is critically important that you get plugged into a thriving, healthy church. The best place to learn about God and grow in your faith is around other people who want to do the same.

At The Journey Church, where I pastor, our mission is to give you the best opportunity to become a fully developing follower of Jesus Christ. That happens through both large weekend services and in smaller, more intimate group settings.



Making the commitment to get involved in church gives you many great opportunities to grow in your faith. You will get to:

- Worship through song
- Learn from your pastor
- Meet new friends
- Use your talents to serve other people

Actually, getting involved in church is not optional. God commands it (Hebrews 10:25). He wants you to prioritize meeting together regularly with other people who are passionate about following him.

If you don't, you will naturally begin to get discouraged and pulled down by the everyday concerns of life. To stay spiritually healthy, you have to set apart time to come together with other believers for worship and teaching.

*Let us think of ways to motivate one another
to acts of love and good works.*

*And let us not neglect our meeting together,
as some people do, but encourage one another...*

– Hebrews 10:24-25

Created for Community

God also wants you to live life together with others who are on a journey similar to your own. You were built to be in relationships with other people, and those relationships are best developed in group environments. One of the greatest next steps you can take as a new Christian is to join together with a group of believers.

Growing Together

There is no such thing as a healthy lone-ranger Christian. As you plug into the church and then connect with other believers in a group, you will learn about God, develop relationships with other believers and have the chance to serve other people through volunteering from time to time (see Next Step #4). All of these things, combined with your faithful

prayer and Bible Study, will work together to help you become a fully developing follower of Jesus Christ.

*I was glad when they said to me,
'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'*

– Psalm 122:1

Next Step #4

SERVE OTHERS

As a new believer who is growing spiritually, your life should begin to look more and more like Jesus. In fact, the Bible says that God wants you to become like his Son:

*For God knew his people in advance,
and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son
would be the firstborn, with many brothers and sisters.*

- Romans 8:29

The best way to become like Jesus is to serve others. Jesus himself said that he *came here not to be served but to serve others, and to give his life as a ransom for many* (Mark 10:45). So when you serve other people, you are living like Jesus lived.

Simple Ways to Serve Others

While there are countless ways to serve, these five simple ways rank at the top of the list:

1. Give your **time**
2. Offer your **talent**
3. Invest your **treasure**
4. Encourage with your **talk**
5. Share your **testimony**

As you commit to growing spiritually through serving, let these tips guide you:

- **Look for opportunities to serve others in small ways every day.**

This starts by making a decision to look beyond yourself to the needs of others. By nature, we are all inwardly-focused and self-absorbed – and we have been throughout history. When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippian church in the early 60s AD, he already felt the need to remind them to live an outwardly-focused life:

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others.

Be humble, thinking of others

as better than yourselves.

Don't look out only for your own interests,

but take an interest in others, too.

– Philippians 2:3-4

- **Do what comes naturally.**

While you can't address every unmet need you see around you, you can choose to help wherever possible. Just by paying attention, you will be able to recognize the natural opportunities God gives you to serve. If you see someone drop his wallet, pick it up and give it back. If the church is having a canned food drive, grab some cans of food and donate them. If your co-worker is upset, offer a word of encouragement. You don't need to pray about whether you should serve in these ways; they are natural opportunities for you to show God's love to others.

Do not withhold good from those who

deserve it when it's in your

power to help them. If you can help

your neighbor now, don't say

'Come back tomorrow, and then I'll help you.'

– Proverbs 3:27-28

- **Serve others with others.**

God created us for community (see Next Step #3). Serving with other people is a key part of enjoying community. To help you do just that, we offer a number of opportunities to get connected in specific areas of service at The Journey. Consider these areas where you can plug in:

- Sunday Teams (greeting, ushering, passing out materials)
- Worship Team
- Kids and Age-graded Teams
- Serving at the Office during the week
- Plus other great places of service

For more on finding significance and joy by serving others, be sure to read *The Greatness Principle* available at the resource table on Sundays.

Next Step #5

BE BAPTIZED

Baptism confuses a lot of people. Initially, it's not easy to understand the significance of being totally immersed in water after becoming a Christian. Much of the confusion centers on questions like, "I was sprinkled as a child, so I don't have to be baptized, right?" or "If I don't get baptized does that mean I'm not saved?"

Baptism is both an act of obedience and a public declaration of faith. The Bible teaches that you should follow Jesus' example of baptism by immersion soon after you make the decision to commit your life to him. When Jesus was ready to begin his earthly ministry, he showed his devotion to the Father by being baptized:

*Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River
to be baptized by John. But John tried to talk him out of it.
'I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,' he said,
'so why are you coming to me?' But Jesus said,*

'It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.' So John agreed to baptize him. After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.'

– Matthew 3:13-17



Later, the apostles taught that all who accept the message of Jesus Christ and invite him into their lives should follow him in baptism:

*Peter replied, 'Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins....'
Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.
— Acts 2:38, 41*

The Significance of Baptism

Baptism is symbolic of two essential truths of your faith:

1. **What Jesus did for you.** He died for your sins, was buried and came back to life (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
2. **What has happened to you as a result.** You died to your old life, are buried in baptism and raised to live a new life in Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-4).

Never get tricked into thinking that baptism is what saves you. The work of your salvation was done the moment you believed in your heart that Jesus is Lord and professed that belief with your mouth by asking him to come into your

life and forgive you of your sins. Baptism is a next step of obedience – the outward symbol of the work that God has done in you. You have been *raised to walk in newness of life* (Romans 6:4). That’s definitely something to celebrate!

Talk with your pastor about your desire to be baptized. But let me strongly encourage you to not put it off. If you have more questions about baptism, see Appendix 2.

Next Step #6

FORGIVE OTHERS

Now that Jesus has forgiven you of your sins, you may be able to begin thinking differently about forgiving the people in your life who have hurt you. Once you experience his grace, the natural next step is to extend that grace to others.

*...be kind to each other, tenderhearted,
forgiving one another, just as God through
Christ Jesus has forgiven you.
– Ephesians 4:32*

Being able to forgive other people is essential to experiencing the fullness of life that God has in store for you. When you are unable to forgive someone who has hurt you, you put a roadblock between you and God's best plan for your life.

But let's be honest – forgiveness isn't easy! One of the reasons it's so hard to forgive is because we misunderstand the

true nature of forgiveness. We tend to think it is something it's not.

Here's what forgiveness is not:

- Forgiving others is not justifying their actions.
- Forgiving others is not denying that you are hurt.
- Forgiving others is not something that hinges on receiving an apology.

Who in your life do you need to forgive? In order to take this important next step, you must first understand the process of biblical forgiveness.

The Biblical Process for Forgiveness

- **Remember how much you've been forgiven.**

Before you can forgive someone who has hurt you deeply, you have to remember how much God has forgiven you. Grasping the extent of God's grace in your own life is what will give you the ability to offer similar grace to others.

- **Release the person who hurt you.**

Releasing someone who has hurt you means letting that person out of the prison you've constructed in your mind. It means that you stop holding on to bitterness; you stop dwelling on how he or she did you wrong.

While you may not feel like releasing the person who has caused you pain, understand that this step is an intentional choice rather than the result of emotion. The only other option is to hold a grudge indefinitely, which is much more harmful to you than to the offender.

- **Re-establish the relationship (as much as possible).**

Forgiveness and reconciliation are not the same thing. Forgiveness is a requirement for healthily moving past pain, but reconciliation has to be considered on case-by-case basis. Paul says:

*Do your part to live in peace with everyone,
as much as possible.*
– Romans 12:18

You can do your part by remembering how much you've been forgiven, releasing the other person and doing what you can to prayerfully re-establish the relationship, but keep in

mind that some relationships can't or shouldn't be re-established. For example, don't reconnect in a relationship that may cause you additional personal harm or expose you to any kind of emotional or physical danger. Be wise. Forgiveness doesn't require putting yourself back in a questionable situation.

Forgiveness can be difficult, but it is an essential step to being able to walk in the abundant new life God has for you now that you are on this journey with him. You are never going to outgrow the need to forgive others. You'll have to repeat the process many times as you move through life. So, make being quick to forgive a habit as quickly as you can.

*Then Peter came to him and asked,
'Lord, how often should I forgive
someone who sins against me? Seven times?'
'No, not seven times,' Jesus replied,
'but seventy times seven!'
— Matthew 18:21-22*

Next Step #7

LIVE A LIFE OF WORSHIP

You were created to worship God! There's a common misconception that worship is something that only happens in a church service. On the contrary, every aspect of your life can be an expression of worship if you will choose to live with the realization and recognition of who God is and what he has done.

*You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory
and honor and power. For you created all things,
and they exist because you created what you pleased.*

– Revelation 4:11

Your daily life is an act of worship when you live in a way that brings pleasure to God. As Pastor Rick Warren explains in *The Purpose Driven Life*, you bring pleasure to God when you:

- Love him supremely
- Trust him completely
- Obey him wholeheartedly

- Praise him continually
- Use your abilities to serve him

Warren writes:

Every activity can be transformed into an act of worship when you do it for the praise, glory and pleasure of God.... How then is it possible to do everything for the glory of God? By doing everything as if you were doing it for Jesus and by carrying on a continual conversation with him while you do it.

Ongoing Worship

The life of worship that God calls you to can happen anytime, anywhere. No matter what you are doing, do it to the glory of God. When you do, it will become a worshipful experience. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the early Christians in Rome:

*So here's what I want you to do, God helping you:
Take your everyday,
ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work,
and walking-around life—
and place it before God as an offering.
Embracing what God does for you
is the best thing you can do for him.
— Romans 12:1 (The Message)*

Ways to Worship at The Journey

- Fully participate in each Sunday/Weekend worship service
- Volunteer at a worship service or during the week
- Give financially (called a Tithe)
- Join a Group

The key is to keep make worship a regular part of your life. It's foundational to your growth as a follower of Jesus.

Next Step #8

SHARE YOUR FAITH

At the end of Jesus's ministry on earth, he encouraged all of his followers to tell others about him. This command is known as the Great Commission:

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

– Matthew 28:19-20

You don't need to be a Bible scholar, a theologian, or a pastor to share your faith with other people. In fact, you don't even have to fully understand what happened when you gave your heart to Christ. The best way to share your faith is to tell others your story. As a new follower of Jesus, you have a powerful story to share. (I encourage you to begin by writing

your story down. I've given you some tips and space to get started in Appendix 3.)

The personal story of what Jesus has done in your life is compelling because your friends are interested, others can relate, and it's hard to argue with. When people see the way God has changed you, it becomes harder to deny the evidence that Christianity is true. A skeptic may deny your beliefs or attack your church, but he cannot ignore the fact that your life has been changed.

Focus on Relationships

Building authentic relationships is the key to reaching others for Jesus. So where should you look to initiate relationships that will eventually give you the opportunity to share your faith? Start with these three groups of people:

1. People you already know: family, neighbors, co-workers, and friends.

This is the best group of people for you to share your faith with. The key is to continue socializing with them as you always have. Don't jump right into your mission to share your faith without still being there as the family member, neighbor, co-worker, or friend that they know and love.

2. People you used to know: schoolmates, former co-workers, friends you've lost touch with, etc.

It may take some effort to reconnect, but you will be amazed how open people are to renewing friendships, even if it has been a long time. Find them online or through a friend of a friend and see what God can do!

3. People you would relate well with: civic groups, health clubs, community organizations, sports leagues, etc.

Tips for Sharing Your Faith

- **Pray.** Always talk to God about people before you talk to people about God. Ask him to lead you to those he wants you to reach. As God puts people on your mind, add them to your prayer list, and use a tool like the *Invest and Invite Card* to pray for them daily.
- **Listen.** You can't build authentic relationships without being a great listener. Take a genuine interest in the cares and concerns of the people around you. Show respect for who they are and what they have to say. Remember: *People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.*

- **Build on areas of common ground.** Look for and initiate conversations around areas of common ground. Plan activities or get into deeper discussions around these points of mutual interest.
- **Mention spiritual matters early.** Plant early seeds. When a friend asks what you did over the weekend, you might mention that you went to church as part of your answer. Simply mentioning church or Growth Group early on will help you introduce an invitation when the time is right.
- **Always be ready.** As the Apostle Peter urges: *If you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it* (1 Peter 3:15). Be prepared to share your story and invite others to church. Keeping a few invitation cards in your wallet or purse at all times will help you feel prepared and confident when an opportunity arises.

For more on how to share your faith, be sure to read my book *The Difference Maker*.

A FINAL THOUGHT

You are a new creation on a new journey. I hope you will put into practice the eight next steps we've discussed:

1. Study Your Bible
2. Learn to Pray
3. Connect to a Growing Church and a Group
4. Serve Others
5. Be Baptized
6. Forgive Others
7. Live a Life of Worship
8. Share Your Faith

Also spend some time studying The Journey Church's Statement of Beliefs (Appendix 5) and all of the verses that support those beliefs. While you become a Christian by faith, you should do all you can to learn about the life that is now yours through Christ.

I trust that this book has been and will continue to be helpful to you as you start walking your new path. It isn't

meant to answer every single one of your questions. No book could do that. The truth is, I can't tell you every twist and turn your journey with God is going to take, because I don't know. No one knows but God himself. That's the beauty of a relationship. You jump in and see where it leads. Enjoy the journey!

*No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has
imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.*

– 1 Corinthians 2:9-10

Appendix 1

WHO I AM WHEN I FOLLOW JESUS

I am God's child.	John 1:12
I am a friend of Jesus Christ.	John 15:15
I have been made right before God.	Romans 5:1
I am together with the Lord, and I am one with him in spirit.	1 Corinthians 6:17
I have been bought with a price and I belong to God.	1 Corinthians 6:19-20
I am a member of Christ's body.	1 Corinthians 12:27

I have been chosen by God and adopted as his child.	Ephesians 1:3-8
I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.	Colossians 1:13-14
I am complete in Jesus.	Colossians 2:9-10
I have direct access to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ.	Hebrews 4:14-16
I am free from condemnation.	Romans 8:1-2
I am assured that God works for my good in all circumstances.	Romans 8:28
I cannot be separated from the love of God.	Romans 8:31-39
I have been established and anointed by God.	2 Corinthians 1:21-22
I am hidden with Christ in God.	Colossians 3:1-4

I am confident that God will complete the good work he started in me.	Philippians 1:6
I am a citizen of heaven.	Philippians 3:20
I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind.	2 Timothy 1:7
I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.	1 John 5:18
I am a branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine, and a channel of his life.	John 15:5
I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.	John 15:16
I am God's temple.	1 Corinthians 3:16
I am a minister for God.	2 Corinthians 5:17-21
I am seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenly realm.	Ephesians 2:6

I am God's workmanship.

Ephesians 2:10

I may approach God with
freedom and confidence.

Ephesians 3:12

I can do all things through
Christ who strengthens me.

Philippians 4:13

Appendix 2

QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM?

It illustrates Christ's burial and resurrection.

Christ died for our sins...he was buried...and he rose again.

– 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

*For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and
in baptism you were also raised with Christ.*

– Colossians 2:12

It illustrates your new life as a Christian.

Baptism doesn't make you a believer – it shows that you already believe. Baptism does not *save* you; only your faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring: an outward symbol of the commitment you make in your heart.

*When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes
a brand-new person inside. The old life has passed away
and a new life has begun!*

– 2 Corinthians 5:17

*By our baptism then, we were buried with him and shared
his death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the
dead...so also we may live a new life!*

– Romans 6:4

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith...it is
the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.*

– Ephesians 2:8-9

WHY BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?

Because Jesus was baptized that way.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water.

– Matthew 3:16

Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion.

The Greek word for baptize means to immerse or dip under water. It symbolizes a burial and resurrection.

*...then both Philip and the man went down into the water, and
Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water.*

– Acts 8:38-39

The founders of denominations agree.

Martin Luther: “I would have those who are to be baptized to be completely immersed, as the word imports and the mystery signifies.”

John Calvin: “The word ‘baptize’ signifies to immerse. It is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church.”

John Wesley: “‘Buried with him’ alludes to baptizing by immersion according to the custom of the first church.”

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Every person who has believed in Christ.

Those who believed and accepted his message were baptized...

– Acts 2:41

Simon himself believed and was baptized...

– Acts 8:13

But when they believed Philip as he preached the Good News...and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

– Acts 8:12

WHEN SHOULD YOU BE BAPTIZED?

As soon as you have believed.

There is no reason to delay. As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized.

Those who believed...were baptized...that day!

– Acts 2:41

Then Philip began with the scripture and told him the Good News about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the man said,

‘Look, here is the water! Why shouldn’t I be baptized right now?’ Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ The man answered, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God.’ So they went into the water and Philip baptized him.

– Acts 8:35-38

CAN FAMILY AND FRIENDS BE BAPTIZED TOGETHER?

Yes!

If each person fully understands the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his or her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage families to be baptized at the same time. It is a wonderful expression of commitment.

However, it is important to remember that baptism is a personal statement of faith, not a family or group tradition. It is usually not wise to delay your baptism while you wait on others to join you. This puts undue pressure on them, and delays your obedience.

Appendix 3

WRITING YOUR STORY

Take a few minutes to write out your story of becoming a Christian. This is the beginning of your testimony and will be a powerful tool as you start to share Jesus with others in your life.

Here's an outline to help you write your personal faith story. I've provided space below for you to get started.

I. Your life before Christ.

1. Where were you spiritually before receiving Christ, and how did that affect you – your feelings, attitudes, actions and relationships?
2. What caused you to begin considering Jesus as your savior?

II. How you came to Christ.

1. What realization did you come to that finally motivated you to receive Christ?

2. Specifically, how did you receive Christ?

III. Your life since becoming a Christian.

1. How did your life begin to change after you trusted Christ?
2. What other benefits have you experienced since becoming a Christian?

As you write, remember:

- Be concise and simple in wording.
- Avoid religious clichés or God-talk.
- Be direct and to the point. My favorite testimony in the Bible comes from a blind man Jesus healed. When the religious leaders asked the man how it happened, he couldn't explain it. He simply told them what he knew, "*I was blind, and now I can see!*" (John 9:25 – read the whole story on pages 112-115). Such directness is powerful.
- 2–4 minutes is preferred. 3 minutes is ideal.
- Emphasize aspects of your story that will relate to the person you are talking to.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

Appendix 4

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER GROWTH

Books:

Unshakable by Nelson Searcy

The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren

Experiencing God by Henry Blackaby

God's Promises For You by Max Lucado

Websites:

www.BibleGateway.com – Read the Bible online

www.BibleStudyTools.com

www.YouVersion.com

Your Church's website

Appendix 5

THE JOURNEY CHURCH STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

1. About God

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

Genesis 1:1, 26, 27; 3:22 || Psalm 90:2 ||

Matthew 28:19 || 1 Peter 1:2 || 2 Corinthians 13:14

2. About You

You are made in the spiritual image of God, designed to be like him in character. You are the supreme object of God's creation and love. Although you have tremendous potential for good, you are marred by an attitude of disobedience towards God called sin. This attitude separates you from God until the relationship is restored through a personal commitment to Jesus Christ.

Genesis 1:27 || Psalms 8:3-6 || Isaiah 53:6 || Romans 3:23
|| Isaiah 59:1-2

3. About Eternity

Humans were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin, or in union with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally separated from God is Hell. To be eternally in union with him is Heaven. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence.

John 3:16 || 1 John 2:25; 5:11-13 || Romans 6:23 ||
Revelation 20:15

4. About Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is co-equal with the Father. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate his power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven's glory and will return to earth again to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Matthew 1:22-23 || Isaiah 9:6 ||
John 1:1-5; 14:10-30 || Hebrews 4:14-15 ||
1 Corinthians 15:3-4 || Romans 1:3-4 || Acts 1:9-11 ||
2 Timothy 6:14-15 || Titus 2:13

5. About Salvation

Salvation is a gift from God to humanity. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. We can only be saved from sin's penalty by trusting in Jesus Christ. Eternal life begins the moment we receive Jesus Christ by faith.

Romans 6:23 || Ephesians 2:8-9 || John 1:12, 14:6 || Titus 3:5 || Galatians 3:26 || Romans 5:1

6. About Eternal Security

Because God gives us eternal life through Jesus Christ, we are secure in that salvation for eternity. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is grace and the keeping power of God that gives this security.

John 10:29 || 2 Timothy 1:12 || Hebrews 7:25; 10:10-14 || 1 Peter 1:3-5

7. About The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son as God. He is present in the world to make people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. The Christian seeks to live under his control daily.

2 Corinthians 3:17 || John 16:7-13; 14:16-17 ||
Acts 1:8 || 2 Corinthians 2:12; 3:16 || Ephesians 1:13||
Galatians 5:25 || Ephesians 5:18

8. About The Bible

The Bible is God's Word to all people. It was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. Because it is inspired by God, it is truth without any mixture of error.

2 Timothy 1:13; 3:16 || 2 Peter 1:20-21 ||
Psalms 119:105, 160; 12:6 || Proverbs 30:5-6

Reading Plan for the Gospel of John

- Day 1: John 1-7
- Day 2: John 8-14
- Day 3: John 15-21
- Day 4: John 1:1-18
- Day 5: John 1:19-51
- Day 6: John 2:1-25
- Day 7: John 3:1-36
- Day 8: John 4:1-38
- Day 9: John 4:39-5:15
- Day 10: John 5:16-47
- Day 11: John 6:1-21
- Day 12: John 6:22-71
- Day 13: John 7:1-36
- Day 14: John 7:37-8:11
- Day 15: John 8:12-30
- Day 16: John 8:31-59
- Day 17: John 9:1-34
- Day 18: John 9:35-10:21
- Day 18: John 10:22-42
- Day 19: John 11:1-44
- Day 20: John 11:45-12:19
- Day 21: John 12:20-50
- Day 22: John 13:1-38
- Day 23: John 14:1-31

- Day 24: John 15:1-27
Day 25: John 16:1-33
Day 26: John 17:1-26
Day 27: John 18:1-27
Day 28: John 18:28-19:16
Day 29: John 19:17-42
Day 30: John 20:1-23
Day 31: John 20:24-31
Day 32: John 21:1-25

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

JOHN 1

Prologue: Christ, the Eternal Word

¹In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He existed in the beginning with God.

³God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him.

⁴The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.

⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

⁶God sent a man, John the Baptist, ⁷to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony.

⁸John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. ⁹The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. ¹¹He came to his own people, and even

they rejected him. ¹²But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

¹⁴So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

¹⁵John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'"

¹⁶From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. But the one and only Son is himself God and is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

The Testimony of John the Baptist

¹⁹This was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Temple assistants from Jerusalem to ask John, "Who are you?" ²⁰He came right out and said, "I am not the Messiah."

²¹"Well then, who are you?" they asked. "Are you Elijah?"

"No," he replied.

"Are you the Prophet we are expecting?"

"No."

²²“Then who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?”

²³John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah: “I am a voice shouting in the wilderness,

‘Clear the way for the LORD’s coming!’”

²⁴Then the Pharisees who had been sent ²⁵asked him, “If you aren’t the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet, what right do you have to baptize?”

²⁶John told them, “I baptize with water, but right here in the crowd is someone you do not recognize. ²⁷Though his ministry follows mine, I’m not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandal.”

²⁸This encounter took place in Bethany, an area east of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing.

Jesus, the Lamb of God

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰He is the one I was talking about when I said, ‘A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.’ ³¹I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel.”

³²Then John testified, “I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him. ³³I didn’t know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, ‘The one on whom you see the Spirit descend

and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’³⁴I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.”

The First Disciples

³⁵The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. ³⁶As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, “Look! There is the Lamb of God!”

³⁷When John’s two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus.

³⁸Jesus looked around and saw them following. “What do you want?” he asked them.

They replied, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

³⁹“Come and see,” he said. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day.

⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus.

⁴¹Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means “Christ”).

⁴²Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, “Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas” (which means “Peter”).

⁴³The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Come, follow me.”⁴⁴Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter’s hometown.

⁴⁵Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, “We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth.”

⁴⁶“Nazareth!” exclaimed Nathanael. “Can anything good come from Nazareth?”

“Come and see for yourself,” Philip replied.

⁴⁷As they approached, Jesus said, “Now here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity.”

⁴⁸“How do you know about me?” Nathanael asked.

Jesus replied, “I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you.”

⁴⁹Then Nathanael exclaimed, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the King of Israel!”

⁵⁰Jesus asked him, “Do you believe this just because I told you I had seen you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this.” ⁵¹Then he said, “I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth.”

JOHN 2

The Wedding at Cana

¹The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, ²and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration.

³The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine."

⁴"Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

⁵But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, ⁸he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions.

⁹When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. ¹⁰"A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!"

¹¹This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

¹²After the wedding he went to Capernaum for a few days with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples.

Jesus Clears the Temple

¹³It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the Temple area he saw

merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money.

¹⁵Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. ¹⁶Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!"

¹⁷Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume me."

¹⁸But the Jewish leaders demanded, "What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it."

¹⁹"All right," Jesus replied. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

²⁰"What!" they exclaimed. "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?" ²¹But when Jesus said "this temple," he meant his own body.

²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said.

Jesus and Nicodemus

²³Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. ²⁴But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew human nature. ²⁵No one needed to tell him what mankind is really like.

JOHN 3

¹There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. ²After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.”

³Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

⁴“What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”

⁵Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. ⁶Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. ⁷So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”

⁹“How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things? ¹¹I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won’t believe our testimony. ¹²But if you don’t believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. ¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the

wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.

¹⁶“For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

¹⁸“There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God’s one and only Son. ¹⁹And the judgment is based on this fact: God’s light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. ²⁰All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.”

John the Baptist Exalts Jesus

²²Then Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem and went into the Judean countryside. Jesus spent some time with them there, baptizing people.

²³At this time John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon, near Salim, because there was plenty of water there; and people kept coming to him for baptism. ²⁴(This was before John was thrown into prison.) ²⁵A debate broke out between John’s disciples and a certain Jew over ceremonial cleansing. ²⁶So John’s disciples came to him and said, “Rabbi, the man you

met on the other side of the Jordan River, the one you identified as the Messiah, is also baptizing people. And everybody is going to him instead of coming to us.”

²⁷John replied, “No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven. ²⁸You yourselves know how plainly I told you, ‘I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.’ ²⁹It is the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the best man is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows. Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success. ³⁰He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.

³¹“He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else. ³²He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! ³³Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true.

³⁴For he is sent by God. He speaks God’s words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. ³⁵The Father loves his Son and has put everything into his hands. ³⁶And anyone who believes in God’s Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn’t obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God’s angry judgment.”

JOHN 4

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

¹Jesus knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John ²(though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did). ³So he left Judea and returned to Galilee.

⁴He had to go through Samaria on the way. ⁵Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime. ⁷Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." ⁸He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

⁹The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans. She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

¹⁰Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

¹¹"But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water?" ¹²And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"

¹³Jesus replied, “Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. ¹⁴But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life.”

¹⁵“Please, sir,” the woman said, “give me this water! Then I’ll never be thirsty again, and I won’t have to come here to get water.”

¹⁶“Go and get your husband,” Jesus told her.

¹⁷“I don’t have a husband,” the woman replied.

Jesus said, “You’re right! You don’t have a husband—

¹⁸for you have had five husbands, and you aren’t even married to the man you’re living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!”

¹⁹“Sir,” the woman said, “you must be a prophet. ²⁰So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?”

²¹Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem.

²²You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. ²³But the time is coming— indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. ²⁴For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

²⁵The woman said, “I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

²⁶Then Jesus told her, “I AM the Messiah!”

²⁷Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, “What do you want with her?” or “Why are you talking to her?” ²⁸The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone,

²⁹“Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?” ³⁰So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

³¹Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, “Rabbi, eat something.”

³²But Jesus replied, “I have a kind of food you know nothing about.”

³³“Did someone bring him food while we were gone?” the disciples asked each other.

³⁴Then Jesus explained: “My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work. ³⁵You know the saying, ‘Four months between planting and harvest.’ But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. ³⁶The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike! ³⁷You know the saying, ‘One plants and another harvests.’ And it’s true. ³⁸I sent you to harvest where you didn’t plant;

others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest.”

Many Samaritans Believe

³⁹Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, “He told me everything I ever did!” ⁴⁰When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days,

⁴¹long enough for many more to hear his message and believe. ⁴²Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world.”

Jesus Heals an Official's Son

⁴³At the end of the two days, Jesus went on to Galilee.

⁴⁴He himself had said that a prophet is not honored in his own hometown. ⁴⁵Yet the Galileans welcomed him, for they had been in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration and had seen everything he did there.

⁴⁶As he traveled through Galilee, he came to Cana, where he had turned the water into wine. There was a government official in nearby Capernaum whose son was very sick. ⁴⁷When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged Jesus to come to Capernaum to heal his son, who was about to die.

⁴⁸Jesus asked, “Will you never believe in me unless you see miraculous signs and wonders?”

⁴⁹The official pleaded, “Lord, please come now before my little boy dies.”

⁵⁰Then Jesus told him, “Go back home. Your son will live!” And the man believed what Jesus said and started home.

⁵¹While the man was on his way, some of his servants met him with the news that his son was alive and well.

⁵²He asked them when the boy had begun to get better, and they replied, “Yesterday afternoon at one o’clock his fever suddenly disappeared!” ⁵³Then the father realized that that was the very time Jesus had told him, “Your son will live.” And he and his entire household believed in Jesus. ⁵⁴This was the second miraculous sign Jesus did in Galilee after coming from Judea.

JOHN 5

Jesus Heals a Lame Man

¹Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days. ²Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches.

³Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches. ⁵One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. ⁶When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?”

⁷“I can’t, sir,” the sick man said, “for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.”

⁸Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!”

⁹Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking! But this miracle happened on the Sabbath, ¹⁰so the Jewish leaders objected. They said to the man who was cured, “You can’t work on the Sabbath! The law doesn’t allow you to carry that sleeping mat!”

¹¹But he replied, “The man who healed me told me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”

¹²“Who said such a thing as that?” they demanded.

¹³The man didn’t know, for Jesus had disappeared into the crowd. ¹⁴But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, “Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you.” ¹⁵Then the man went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him.

Jesus Claims to Be the Son of God

¹⁶So the Jewish leaders began harassing Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules. ¹⁷But Jesus replied, “My

Father is always working, and so am I.” ¹⁸So the Jewish leaders tried all the harder to find a way to kill him. For he not only broke the Sabbath, he called God his Father, thereby making himself equal with God.

¹⁹So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father

doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.²⁰For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished.²¹For just as the Father gives life to those he raises from the dead, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants.²²In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge,²³so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son is certainly not honoring the Father who sent him.

²⁴“I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

²⁵“And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it’s here now, when the dead will hear my voice—the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live.

²⁶The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son.²⁷And he has given him authority to judge everyone because he is the Son of Man.²⁸Don’t be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God’s Son,²⁹and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.³⁰I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will.

Witnesses to Jesus

³¹“If I were to testify on my own behalf, my testimony would not be valid. ³²But someone else is also testifying about me, and I assure you that everything he says about me is true. ³³In fact, you sent investigators to listen to John the Baptist, and his testimony about me was true.

³⁴Ofcourse, I have no need of human witnesses, but I say these things so you might be saved. ³⁵John was like a burning and shining lamp, and you were excited for a while about his message. ³⁶But I have a greater witness than John—my teachings and my miracles. The Father gave me these works to accomplish, and they prove that he sent me. ³⁷And the Father who sent me has testified about me himself. You have never heard his voice or seen him face to face, ³⁸and you do not have his message in your hearts, because you do not believe me—the one he sent to you.

³⁹“You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! ⁴⁰Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life.

⁴¹“Your approval means nothing to me, ⁴²because I know you don’t have God’s love within you. ⁴³For I have come to you in my Father’s name, and you have rejected me. Yet if others come in their own name, you gladly welcome them. ⁴⁴No wonder you can’t believe! For you gladly honor each other, but you don’t care about the honor that comes from the one who alone is God.

⁴⁵“Yet it isn’t I who will accuse you before the Father. Moses will accuse you! Yes, Moses, in whom you put your hopes. ⁴⁶If you really believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me. ⁴⁷But since you don’t believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?”

JOHN 6

Jesus Feeds Five Thousand

¹After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. ²A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick. ³Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him.

⁴(It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.)

⁵Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, “Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?” ⁶He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do.

⁷Philip replied, “Even if we worked for months, we wouldn’t have enough money to feed them!”

⁸Then Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up.

⁹“There’s a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?”

¹⁰“Tell everyone to sit down,” Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered 5,000.)

¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted. ¹²After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, "Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted."

¹³So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

¹⁴When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!" ¹⁵When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself.

Jesus Walks on Water

¹⁶That evening Jesus' disciples went down to the shore to wait for him. ¹⁷But as darkness fell and Jesus still hadn't come back, they got into the boat and headed across the lake toward Capernaum. ¹⁸Soon a gale swept down upon them, and the sea grew very rough. ¹⁹They had rowed three or four miles when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified, ²⁰but he called out to them, "Don't be afraid. I am here!" ²¹Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination!

Jesus, the Bread of Life

²²The next day the crowd that had stayed on the far shore saw that the disciples had taken the only boat, and they realized Jesus had not gone with them. ²³Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten. ²⁴So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went across to Capernaum to look for him. ²⁵They found him on the other side of the lake and asked, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

²⁶Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. ²⁷But don’t be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval.”

²⁸They replied, “We want to perform God’s works, too. What should we do?”

²⁹Jesus told them, “This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent.”

³⁰They answered, “Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do? ³¹After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, ‘Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

³²Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, Moses didn’t give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the

true bread from heaven. ³³The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴“Sir,” they said, “give us that bread every day.”

³⁵Jesus replied, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶But you haven’t believed in me even though you have seen me. ³⁷However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will.

³⁹And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰For it is my Father’s will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day.”

⁴¹Then the people began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” ⁴²They said, “Isn’t this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say,

‘I came down from heaven?’”

⁴³But Jesus replied, “Stop complaining about what I said. ⁴⁴For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up. ⁴⁵As it is written in the Scriptures, ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. ⁴⁶(Not that anyone has ever seen the Father; only I, who was sent from God, have seen him.)

⁴⁷“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸Yes, I am the bread of life! ⁴⁹Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. ⁵⁰Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh.”

⁵²Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” they asked.

⁵³So Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. ⁵⁴But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. ⁵⁸I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever.”

⁵⁹He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Many Disciples Desert Jesus

⁶⁰Many of his disciples said, “This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?”

⁶¹Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶²Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? ⁶³The Spiritual one gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴But some of you do not believe me.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn’t believe, and he knew who would betray him.)

⁶⁵Then he said, “That is why I said that people can’t come to me unless the Father gives them to me.”

⁶⁶At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. ⁶⁷Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, “Are you also going to leave?”

⁶⁸Simon Peter replied, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. ⁶⁹We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.”

⁷⁰Then Jesus said, “I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil.” ⁷¹He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would later betray him.

JOHN 7

Jesus and His Brothers

¹After this, Jesus traveled around Galilee. He wanted to stay out of Judea, where the Jewish leaders were plotting his death. ²But soon it was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters, ³and Jesus' brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, where your followers can see your miracles! ⁴You can't become famous if you hide like this! If you can do such wonderful things, show yourself to the world!" ⁵For even his brothers didn't believe in him.

⁶Jesus replied, "Now is not the right time for me to go, but you can go anytime. ⁷The world can't hate you, but it does hate me because I accuse it of doing evil. ⁸You go on. I'm not going to this festival, because my time has not yet come." ⁹After saying these things, Jesus remained in Galilee.

Jesus Teaches Openly at the Temple

¹⁰But after his brothers left for the festival, Jesus also went, though secretly, staying out of public view. ¹¹The Jewish leaders tried to find him at the festival and kept asking if anyone had seen him. ¹²There was a lot of grumbling about him among the crowds. Some argued, "He's a good man," but others said, "He's nothing but a fraud who deceives the people." ¹³But no one had the courage to speak favorably about him

in public, for they were afraid of getting in trouble with the Jewish leaders.

¹⁴Then, midway through the festival, Jesus went up to the Temple and began to teach. ¹⁵The people were surprised when they heard him. “How does he know so much when he hasn’t been trained?” they asked.

¹⁶So Jesus told them, “My message is not my own; it comes from God who sent me. ¹⁷Anyone who wants to do the will of God will know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own. ¹⁸Those who speak for themselves want glory only for themselves, but a person who seeks to honor the one who sent him speaks truth, not lies. ¹⁹Moses gave you the law, but none of you obeys it! In fact, you are trying to kill me.”

²⁰The crowd replied, “You’re demon possessed! Who’s trying to kill you?”

²¹Jesus replied, “I did one miracle on the Sabbath, and you were amazed. ²²But you work on the Sabbath, too, when you obey Moses’ law of circumcision. (Actually, this tradition of circumcision began with the patriarchs, long before the law of Moses.) ²³For if the correct time for circumcising your son falls on the Sabbath, you go ahead and do it so as not to break the law of Moses. So why should you be angry with me for healing a man on the Sabbath? ²⁴Look beneath the surface so you can judge correctly.”

Is Jesus the Messiah?

²⁵Some of the people who lived in Jerusalem started to ask each other, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill?”

²⁶But here he is, speaking in public, and they say nothing to him. Could our leaders possibly believe that he is the Messiah? ²⁷But how could he be? For we know where this man comes from. When the Messiah comes, he will simply appear; no one will know where he comes from.”

²⁸While Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he called out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I come from. But I’m not here on my own. The one who sent me is true, and you don’t know him. ²⁹But I know him because I come from him, and he sent me to you.” ³⁰Then the leaders tried to arrest him; but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come.

³¹Many among the crowds at the Temple believed in him. “After all,” they said, “would you expect the Messiah to do more miraculous signs than this man has done?”

³²When the Pharisees heard that the crowds were whispering such things, they and the leading priests sent Temple guards to arrest Jesus. ³³But Jesus told them, “I will be with you only a little longer. Then I will return to the one who sent me. ³⁴You will search for me but not find me. And you cannot go where I am going.”

³⁵The Jewish leaders were puzzled by this statement. “Where is he planning to go?” they asked. “Is he thinking of leaving the country and going to the Jews in other lands?”

Maybe he will even teach the Greeks! ³⁶What does he mean when he says, ‘You will search for me but not find me,’ and ‘You cannot go where I am going?’”

Jesus Promises Living Water

³⁷On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, “Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! ³⁸Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’”³⁹(When he said “living water,” he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)

Division and Unbelief

⁴⁰When the crowds heard him say this, some of them declared, “Surely this man is the Prophet we’ve been expecting.”
⁴¹Others said, “He is the Messiah.” Still others said, “But he can’t be! Will the Messiah come from Galilee?”⁴²For the Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah will be born of the royal line of David, in Bethlehem, the village where King David was born.”
⁴³So the crowd was divided about him. ⁴⁴Some even wanted him arrested, but no one laid a hand on him.

⁴⁵When the Temple guards returned without having arrested Jesus, the leading priests and Pharisees demanded, “Why didn’t you bring him in?”

⁴⁶“We have never heard anyone speak like this!” the guards responded.

⁴⁷“Have you been led astray, too?” the Pharisees mocked. ⁴⁸“Is there a single one of us rulers or Pharisees who believes in him? ⁴⁹This foolish crowd follows him, but they are ignorant of the law. God’s curse is on them!”

⁵⁰Then Nicodemus, the leader who had met with Jesus earlier, spoke up. ⁵¹“Is it legal to convict a man before he is given a hearing?” he asked.

⁵²They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Search the Scriptures and see for yourself—no prophet ever comes from Galilee!”

⁵³Then the meeting broke up, and everybody went home.

JOHN 8

A Woman Caught in Adultery

¹Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives, ²but early the next morning he was back again at the Temple. A crowd soon gathered, and he sat down and taught them. ³As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd.

⁴“Teacher,” they said to Jesus, “this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?”

⁶They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. ⁷They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, “All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!”

⁸Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

⁹When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. ¹⁰Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?”

¹¹“No, Lord,” she said.

And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.”

Jesus, the Light of the World

¹²Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”

¹³The Pharisees replied, “You are making those claims about yourself! Such testimony is not valid.”

¹⁴Jesus told them, “These claims are valid even though I make them about myself. For I know where I came from and where I am going, but you don’t know this about me.

¹⁵You judge me by human standards, but I do not judge anyone. ¹⁶And if I did, my judgment would be correct in every respect because I am not alone. The Father who sent me is with me. ¹⁷Your own law says that if two people agree about

something, their witness is accepted as fact. ¹⁸I am one witness, and my Father who sent me is the other.”

¹⁹“Where is your father?” they asked.

Jesus answered, “Since you don’t know who I am, you don’t know who my Father is. If you knew me, you would also know my Father.” ²⁰Jesus made these statements while he was teaching in the section of the Temple known as the Treasury. But he was not arrested, because his time had not yet come.

The Unbelieving People Warned

²¹Later Jesus said to them again, “I am going away. You will search for me but will die in your sin. You cannot come where I am going.”

²²The people asked, “Is he planning to commit suicide? What does he mean, ‘You cannot come where I am going’?”

²³Jesus continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You belong to this world; I do not. ²⁴That is why I said that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I AM who I claim to be, you will die in your sins.”

²⁵“Who are you?” they demanded.

Jesus replied, “The one I have always claimed to be. ²⁶I have much to say about you and much to condemn, but I won’t. For I say only what I have heard from the one who sent me, and he is completely truthful.” ²⁷But they still didn’t understand that he was talking about his Father.

²⁸So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man on the cross, then you will understand that I AM he. I do

nothing on my own but say only what the Father taught me.
²⁹And the one who sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him.”

³⁰Then many who heard him say these things believed in him.

Jesus and Abraham

³¹Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings.

³²And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

³³“But we are descendants of Abraham,” they said. “We have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean, ‘You will be set free’?”

³⁴Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. ³⁵A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever. ³⁶So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free. ³⁷Yes, I realize that you are descendants of Abraham. And yet some of you are trying to kill me because there’s no room in your hearts for my message. ³⁸I am telling you what I saw when I was with my Father. But you are following the advice of your father.”

³⁹“Our father is Abraham!” they declared.

“No,” Jesus replied, “for if you were really the children of Abraham, you would follow his example. ⁴⁰Instead, you are trying to kill me because I told you the truth, which I heard

from God. Abraham never did such a thing. ⁴¹No, you are imitating your real father.”

They replied, “We aren’t illegitimate children! God himself is our true Father.”

⁴²Jesus told them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, because I have come to you from God. I am not here on my own, but he sent me. ⁴³Why can’t you understand what I am saying? It’s because you can’t even hear me! ⁴⁴For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵So when I tell the truth, you just naturally don’t believe me! ⁴⁶Which of you can truthfully accuse me of sin? And since I am telling you the truth, why don’t you believe me? ⁴⁷Anyone who belongs to God listens gladly to the words of God. But you don’t listen because you don’t belong to God.”

⁴⁸The people retorted, “You Samaritan devil! Didn’t we say all along that you were possessed by a demon?”

⁴⁹“No,” Jesus said, “I have no demon in me. For I honor my Father—and you dishonor me. ⁵⁰And though I have no wish to glorify myself, God is going to glorify me. He is the true judge. ⁵¹I tell you the truth, anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!”

⁵²The people said, “Now we know you are possessed by

a demon. Even Abraham and the prophets died, but you say, ‘Anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!’⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?”

⁵⁴Jesus answered, “If I want glory for myself, it doesn’t count. But it is my Father who will glorify me. You say,

‘He is our God,’⁵⁵ but you don’t even know him. I know him. If I said otherwise, I would be as great a liar as you! But I do know him and obey him. ⁵⁶Your father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad.”

⁵⁷The people said, “You aren’t even fifty years old.

How can you say you have seen Abraham?”

⁵⁸Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I AM!”⁵⁹ At that point they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden from them and left the Temple.

JOHN 9

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

¹As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. ²“Rabbi,” his disciples asked him, “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?”

³“It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,”

Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. ⁴We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work. ⁵But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world."

⁶Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. ⁷He told him, "Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "sent"). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

⁸His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!"

But the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!"

¹⁰They asked, "Who healed you? What happened?"

¹¹He told them, "The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.' So I went and washed, and now I can see!"

¹²"Where is he now?" they asked. "I don't know," he replied.

¹³Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees, ¹⁴because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him. ¹⁵The Pharisees asked the man all about it. So he told them, "He put the mud over my eyes, and when I washed it away, I could see!"

¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, "This man Jesus is not from God, for he is working on the Sabbath." Others said, "But how could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?" So there was a deep division of opinion among them.

¹⁷Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been blind and demanded, “What’s your opinion about this man who healed you?”

The man replied, “I think he must be a prophet.”

¹⁸The Jewish leaders still refused to believe the man had been blind and could now see, so they called in his parents.

¹⁹They asked them, “Is this your son? Was he born blind? If so, how can he now see?”

²⁰His parents replied, “We know this is our son and that he was born blind, ²¹but we don’t know how he can see or who healed him. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself.” ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who had announced that anyone saying Jesus was the Messiah would be expelled from the synagogue.

²³That’s why they said, “He is old enough. Ask him.”

²⁴So for the second time they called in the man who had been blind and told him, “God should get the glory for this, because we know this man Jesus is a sinner.”

²⁵“I don’t know whether he is a sinner,” the man replied. “But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!”

²⁶“But what did he do?” they asked. “How did he heal you?”

²⁷“Look!” the man exclaimed. “I told you once. Didn’t you listen? Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?”

²⁸Then they cursed him and said, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses! ²⁹We know God spoke to Moses, but we don’t even know where this man comes from.”

³⁰“Why, that’s very strange!” the man replied. “He healed my eyes, and yet you don’t know where he comes from? ³¹We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. ³²Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he couldn’t have done it.”

³⁴“You were born a total sinner!” they answered. “Are you trying to teach us?” And they threw him out of the synagogue.

Spiritual Blindness

³⁵When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

³⁶The man answered, “Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him.”

³⁷“You have seen him,” Jesus said, “and he is speaking to you!”

³⁸“Yes, Lord, I believe!” the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.

³⁹Then Jesus told him, “I entered this world to render judgment—to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind.”

⁴⁰Some Pharisees who were standing nearby heard him and asked, “Are you saying we’re blind?”

⁴¹“If you were blind, you wouldn’t be guilty,” Jesus replied. “But you remain guilty because you claim you can see.”

JOHN 10

The Good Shepherd and His Sheep

¹“I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! ²But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They won’t follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don’t know his voice.”

⁶Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn’t understand what he meant, ⁷so he explained it to them: “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. ⁹Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. ¹⁰The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

¹¹“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. ¹²A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don’t belong to him and he isn’t their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. ¹³The hired hand runs

away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.

¹⁴"I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, ¹⁵just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

¹⁷"The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. ¹⁸No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded."

¹⁹When he said these things, the people were again divided in their opinions about him. ²⁰Some said, "He's demon possessed and out of his mind. Why listen to a man like that?" ²¹Others said, "This doesn't sound like a man possessed by a demon! Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

Jesus Claims to Be the Son of God

²²It was now winter, and Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of Hanukkah, the Festival of Dedication. ²³He was in the Temple, walking through the section known as Solomon's Colonnade. ²⁴The people surrounded him and asked, "How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

²⁵Jesus replied, "I have already told you, and you don't believe me. The proof is the work I do in my Father's name. ²⁶But you don't believe me because you are not my sheep. ²⁷My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, ²⁹for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. ³⁰The Father and I are one."

³¹Once again the people picked up stones to kill him.

³²Jesus said, "At my Father's direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?"

³³They replied, "We're stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God."

³⁴Jesus replied, "It is written in your own Scriptures that God said to certain leaders of the people, 'I say, you are gods!' ³⁵And you know that the Scriptures cannot be altered. So if those people who received God's message were called 'gods,' ³⁶why do you call it blasphemy when I say, 'I am the Son of God'? After all, the Father set me apart and sent me into the world. ³⁷Don't believe me unless I carry out my Father's work. ³⁸But if I do his work, believe in the evidence of the miraculous works I have done, even if you don't believe me. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father."

³⁹Once again they tried to arrest him, but he got away and left them. ⁴⁰He went beyond the Jordan River near the place where John was first baptizing and stayed there awhile.

⁴¹And many followed him. “John didn’t perform miraculous signs,” they remarked to one another, “but everything he said about this man has come true.” ⁴²And many who were there believed in Jesus.

JOHN 11

The Raising of Lazarus

¹A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. ²This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord’s feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. ³So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, “Lord, your dear friend is very sick.”

⁴But when Jesus heard about it he said, “Lazarus’s sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this.” ⁵So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, ⁶he stayed where he was for the next two days.

⁷Finally, he said to his disciples, “Let’s go back to Judea.”

⁸But his disciples objected. “Rabbi,” they said, “only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?”

⁹Jesus replied, “There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. ¹⁰But at night there is

danger of stumbling because they have no light.” ¹¹Then he said, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up.”

¹²The disciples said, “Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!” ¹³They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died.

¹⁴So he told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵And for your sakes, I’m glad I wasn’t there, for now you will really believe. Come, let’s go see him.”

¹⁶Thomas, nicknamed the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let’s go, too—and die with Jesus.”

¹⁷When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days.

¹⁸Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, ¹⁹and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. ²⁰When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.

²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask.”

²³Jesus told her, “Your brother will rise again.”

²⁴“Yes,” Martha said, “he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day.”

²⁵Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.

²⁶Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?”

²⁷“Yes, Lord,” she told him. “I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God.” ²⁸Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, “The Teacher is here and wants to see you.” ²⁹So Mary immediately went to him.

³⁰Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. ³¹When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus’s grave to weep. So they followed her there. ³²When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. ³⁴“Where have you put him?” he asked them.

They told him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵Then Jesus wept. ³⁶The people who were standing nearby said, “See how much he loved him!” ³⁷But some said, “This man healed a blind man. Couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?”

³⁸Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. ³⁹“Roll the stone aside,” Jesus told them.

But Martha, the dead man’s sister, protested, “Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible.”

⁴⁰Jesus responded, “Didn’t I tell you that you would see God’s glory if you believe?” ⁴¹So they rolled the stone aside.

Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me. ⁴²You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me.” ⁴³Then Jesus shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, “Unwrap him and let him go!”

The Plot to Kill Jesus

⁴⁵Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen. ⁴⁶But some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷Then the leading priests and Pharisees called the high council together. “What are we going to do?” they asked each other. “This man certainly performs many miraculous signs. ⁴⁸If we allow him to go on like this, soon everyone will believe in him. Then the Roman army will come and destroy both our Temple and our nation.”

⁴⁹Caiaphas, who was high priest at that time, said, “You don’t know what you’re talking about! ⁵⁰You don’t realize that it’s better for you that one man should die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed.”

⁵¹He did not say this on his own; as high priest at that time he was led to prophesy that Jesus would die for the entire nation. ⁵²And not only for that nation, but to bring together and unite all the children of God scattered around the world.

⁵³So from that time on, the Jewish leaders began to plot Jesus' death. ⁵⁴As a result, Jesus stopped his public ministry among the people and left Jerusalem. He went to a place near the wilderness, to the village of Ephraim, and stayed there with his disciples.

⁵⁵It was now almost time for the Jewish Passover celebration, and many people from all over the country arrived in Jerusalem several days early so they could go through the purification ceremony before Passover began.

⁵⁶They kept looking for Jesus, but as they stood around in the Temple, they said to each other, "What do you think? He won't come for Passover, will he?" ⁵⁷Meanwhile, the leading priests and Pharisees had publicly ordered that anyone seeing Jesus must report it immediately so they could arrest him.

JOHN 12

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

¹Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead. ²A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate with him. ³Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance.

⁴But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, ⁵“That perfume was worth a year’s wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor.”

⁶Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples’ money, he often stole some for himself.

⁷Jesus replied, “Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. ⁸You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”

⁹When all the people heard of Jesus’ arrival, they flocked to see him and also to see Lazarus, the man Jesus had raised from the dead. ¹⁰Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too, ¹¹for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted them and believed in Jesus.

Jesus’ Triumphant Entry

¹²The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A large crowd of Passover visitors ¹³took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted,

“Praise God!

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the
LORD!

Hail to the King of Israel!”

¹⁴Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, fulfilling the prophecy that said:

¹⁵“Don’t be afraid, people of Jerusalem.

Look, your King is coming, riding on a donkey's colt."

¹⁶His disciples didn't understand at the time that this was a fulfillment of prophecy. But after Jesus entered into his glory, they remembered what had happened and realized that these things had been written about him.

¹⁷Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, and they were telling others about it. ¹⁸That was the reason so many went out to meet him—because they had heard about this miraculous sign. ¹⁹Then the Pharisees said to each other, "There's nothing we can do. Look, everyone has gone after him!"

Jesus Predicts His Death

²⁰Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration ²¹paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, "Sir, we want to meet Jesus." ²²Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus.

²³Jesus replied, "Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. ²⁴I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. ²⁵Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. ²⁶Anyone who wants to be my disciple must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.

²⁷"Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray,

‘Father, save me from this hour’? But this is the very reason I came! ²⁸Father, bring glory to your name.”

Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, “I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again.” ²⁹When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him.

³⁰Then Jesus told them, “The voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. ³²And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” ³³He said this to indicate how he was going to die.

³⁴The crowd responded, “We understood from Scripture that the Messiah would live forever. How can you say the Son of Man will die? Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?”

³⁵Jesus replied, “My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going. ³⁶Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light.”

After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them.

The Unbelief of the People

³⁷But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him. ³⁸This is exactly what Isaiah the prophet had predicted:

“LORD, who has believed our message?

To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?”

³⁹But the people couldn’t believe, for as Isaiah also said,

⁴⁰ “The Lord has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts—so that their eyes cannot see, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and have me heal them.”

⁴¹Isaiah was referring to Jesus when he said this, because he saw the future and spoke of the Messiah’s glory. ⁴²Many people did believe in him, however, including some of the Jewish leaders. But they wouldn’t admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. ⁴³For they loved human praise more than the praise of God.

⁴⁴Jesus shouted to the crowds, “If you trust me, you are trusting not only me, but also God who sent me. ⁴⁵For when you see me, you are seeing the one who sent me. ⁴⁶I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark. ⁴⁷I will not judge those who hear me but don’t obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it.

⁴⁸But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken. ⁴⁹I don’t speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it. ⁵⁰And I know his commands lead to eternal life; so I say whatever the Father tells me to say.”

JOHN 13

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

¹Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. ²It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. ³Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. ⁴So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, ⁵and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

⁶When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."

⁸"No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."

⁹Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

¹⁰Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." ¹¹For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹²After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, “Do you understand what I was doing?”
¹³You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and you are right, because that’s what I am. ¹⁴And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other’s feet. ¹⁵I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. ¹⁶I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. ¹⁷Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.

Jesus Predicts His Betrayal

¹⁸“I am not saying these things to all of you; I know the ones I have chosen. But this fulfills the Scripture that says, ‘The one who eats my food has turned against me.’

¹⁹I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that I AM the Messiah. ²⁰I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me.”

²¹Now Jesus was deeply troubled, and he exclaimed, “I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!”

²²The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean. ²³The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table. ²⁴Simon Peter motioned to him to ask, “Who’s he talking about?” ²⁵So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, “Lord, who is it?”

²⁶Jesus responded, “It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl.” And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus told him, “Hurry and do what you’re going to do.” ²⁸None of the others at the table knew what Jesus meant. ²⁹Since Judas was their treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor. ³⁰So Judas left at once, going out into the night.

Jesus Predicts Peter’s Denial

³¹As soon as Judas left the room, Jesus said, “The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him. ³²And since God receives glory because of the Son, he will soon give glory to the Son. ³³Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can’t come where I am going. ³⁴So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.

³⁵Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

³⁶Simon Peter asked, “Lord, where are you going?” And Jesus replied, “You can’t go with me now, but you will follow me later.”

³⁷“But why can’t I come now, Lord?” he asked. “I’m ready to die for you.”

³⁸Jesus answered, “Die for me? I tell you the truth, Peter—before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.

JOHN 14

Jesus, the Way to the Father

¹“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. ²There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. ⁴And you know the way to where I am going.”

⁵“No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

⁶Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. ⁷If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!”

⁸Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

⁹Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? ¹⁰Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but

my Father who lives in me does his work through me. ¹¹Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

¹²“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. ¹³You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

¹⁵“If you love me, obey my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. ¹⁸No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. ¹⁹Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. ²⁰When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.”

²²Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, “Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?”

²³Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. ²⁴Anyone who doesn’t love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. ²⁵I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. ²⁶But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

²⁷“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid. ²⁸Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am. ²⁹I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe.

³⁰“I don’t have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me, ³¹but I will do what the Father requires of me, so that the world will know that I love the Father. Come, let’s be going.

JOHN 15

Jesus, the True Vine

¹“I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn’t produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. ³You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. ⁴Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

⁵“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. ⁷But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! ⁸When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

⁹“I have loved you even as the Father has loved me.

Remain in my love. ¹⁰When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! ¹²This is my commandment: Love each other in the same

way I have loved you. ¹³There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. ¹⁶You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. ¹⁷This is my command: Love each other.

The World's Hatred

¹⁸"If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. ¹⁹The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. ²⁰Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you. ²¹They will do all this to you because of me, for they have rejected the One who sent me. ²²They would not be guilty if I had not come and spoken to them. But now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³Anyone who hates me also hates my Father. ²⁴If I hadn't done such miraculous signs among them that no one else could do, they would not be guilty. But as it is, they have seen everything I did, yet they still hate me and my Father. ²⁵This fulfills what is written in their Scriptures: 'They hated me without cause.'

²⁶“But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. ²⁷And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.

JOHN 16

¹“I have told you these things so that you won’t abandon your faith. ²For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God. ³This is because they have never known the Father or me. ⁴Yes, I’m telling you these things now, so that when they happen, you will remember my warning. I didn’t tell you earlier because I was going to be with you for a while longer.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

⁵“But now I am going away to the One who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. ⁶Instead, you grieve because of what I’ve told you. ⁷But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. ⁸And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment. ⁹The world’s sin is that it refuses to believe in me. ¹⁰Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more.

¹¹Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

¹²“There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. ¹⁴He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. ¹⁵All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.’

Sadness Will Be Turned to Joy

¹⁶“In a little while you won’t see me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see me again.”

¹⁷Some of the disciples asked each other, “What does he mean when he says, ‘In a little while you won’t see me, but then you will see me,’ and ‘I am going to the Father’?”

¹⁸And what does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand.”

¹⁹Jesus realized they wanted to ask him about it, so he said, “Are you asking yourselves what I meant? I said in a little while you won’t see me, but a little while after that you will see me again. ²⁰I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. ²¹It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world. ²²So

you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy. ²³At that time you won't need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name. ²⁴You haven't done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.

²⁵"I have spoken of these matters in figures of speech, but soon I will stop speaking figuratively and will tell you plainly all about the Father. ²⁶Then you will ask in my name. I'm not saying I will ask the Father on your behalf,

²⁷for the Father himself loves you dearly because you love me and believe that I came from God. ²⁸Yes, I came from the Father into the world, and now I will leave the world and return to the Father."

²⁹Then his disciples said, "At last you are speaking plainly and not figuratively. ³⁰Now we understand that you know everything, and there's no need to question you. From this we believe that you came from God."

³¹Jesus asked, "Do you finally believe? ³²But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. ³³I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

JOHN 17

The Prayer of Jesus

¹After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. ²For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. ³And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth. ⁴I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.

⁵Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.

⁶“I have revealed you to the ones you gave me from this world. They were always yours. You gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything I have is a gift from you, ⁸for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me.

⁹“My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. ¹⁰All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring me glory. ¹¹Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are. ¹²During my time here, I protected them by the power of the name you

gave me. I guarded them so that not one was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures foretold.

¹³“Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. ¹⁴I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. ¹⁶They do not belong to this world any more than I do. ¹⁷Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. ¹⁸Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world.

¹⁹And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.

²⁰“I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. ²¹I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one— as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

²²“I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. ²³I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. ²⁴Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

²⁵“O righteous Father, the world doesn’t know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me. ²⁶I have revealed

you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them.”

JOHN 18

Jesus Is Betrayed and Arrested

¹After saying these things, Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley with his disciples and entered a grove of olive trees. ²Judas, the betrayer, knew this place, because Jesus had often gone there with his disciples. ³The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

⁴Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. “Who are you looking for?” he asked.

⁵“Jesus the Nazarene,” they replied.

“I AM he,” Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.) ⁶As Jesus said “I AM he,” they all drew back and fell to the ground! ⁷Once more he asked them, “Who are you looking for?”

And again they replied, “Jesus the Nazarene.”

⁸“I told you that I AM he,” Jesus said. “And since I am the one you want, let these others go.” ⁹He did this to fulfill his own statement: “I did not lose a single one of those you have given me.”

¹⁰Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's slave. ¹¹But Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?"

Jesus at the High Priest's House

¹²So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. ¹³First they took him to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time. ¹⁴Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, "It's better that one man should die for the people."

Peter's First Denial

¹⁵Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest's courtyard with Jesus. ¹⁶Peter had to stay outside the gate. Then the disciple who knew the high priest spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in.

¹⁷The woman asked Peter, "You're not one of that man's disciples, are you?"

"No," he said, "I am not."

¹⁸Because it was cold, the household servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire. They stood around it, warming themselves, and Peter stood with them, warming himself.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

¹⁹Inside, the high priest began asking Jesus about his followers and what he had been teaching them. ²⁰Jesus replied, “Everyone knows what I teach. I have preached regularly in the synagogues and the Temple, where the people gather. I have not spoken in secret. ²¹Why are you asking me this question? Ask those who heard me. They know what I said.”

²²Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby slapped Jesus across the face. “Is that the way to answer the high priest?” he demanded.

²³Jesus replied, “If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if I’m speaking the truth, why are you beating me?”

²⁴Then Annas bound Jesus and sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Peter’s Second and Third Denials

²⁵Meanwhile, as Simon Peter was standing by the fire, they asked him again, “You’re not one of his disciples, are you?”

He denied it, saying, “No, I am not.”

²⁶But one of the household slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Didn’t I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?”

²⁷Again Peter denied it. And immediately a rooster crowed.

Jesus' Trial before Pilate

²⁸Jesus' trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Roman governor. His accusers didn't go inside because it would defile them, and they wouldn't be allowed to celebrate the Passover. ²⁹So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, "What is your charge against this man?"

³⁰"We wouldn't have handed him over to you if he weren't a criminal!" they retorted.

³¹"Then take him away and judge him by your own law," Pilate told them.

"Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone," the Jewish leaders replied. ³²(This fulfilled Jesus' prediction about the way he would die.)

³³Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus to be brought to him. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked him.

³⁴Jesus replied, "Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?"

³⁵"Am I a Jew?" Pilate retorted. "Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?"

³⁶Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world."

³⁷Pilate said, "So you are a king?"

Jesus responded, “You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.”

³⁸“What is truth?” Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, “He is not guilty of any crime. ³⁹But you have a custom of asking me to release one prisoner each year at Passover. Would you like me to release this ‘King of the Jews?’”

⁴⁰But they shouted back, “No! Not this man. We want Barabbas!” (Barabbas was a revolutionary.)

JOHN 19

Jesus Sentenced to Death

¹Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip.

²The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him. ³“Hail! King of the Jews!” they mocked, as they slapped him across the face.

⁴Pilate went outside again and said to the people, “I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him not guilty.” ⁵Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, “Look, here is the man!”

⁶When they saw him, the leading priests and Temple guards began shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

“Take him yourselves and crucify him,” Pilate said. “I find him not guilty.”

⁷The Jewish leaders replied, “By our law he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God.”

⁸When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever. ⁹He took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked him, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave no answer. ¹⁰“Why don’t you talk to me?” Pilate demanded. “Don’t you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you?”

¹¹Then Jesus said, “You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.”

¹²Then Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, “If you release this man, you are no ‘friend of Caesar.’ Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar.”

¹³When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, *Gabbatha*). ¹⁴It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people, “Look, here is your king!”

¹⁵“Away with him,” they yelled. “Away with him!

Crucify him!”

“What? Crucify your king?” Pilate asked.

“We have no king but Caesar,” the leading priests shouted back.

¹⁶Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

The Crucifixion

So they took Jesus away.

¹⁷Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, *Golgotha*). ¹⁸There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

¹⁹And Pilate posted a sign over him that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." ²⁰The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, so that many people could read it.

²¹Then the leading priests objected and said to Pilate, "Change it from 'The King of the Jews' to 'He said, I am King of the Jews.'"

²²Pilate replied, "No, what I have written, I have written."

²³When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided his clothes among the four of them. They also took his robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. ²⁴So they said, "Rather than tearing it apart, let's throw dice for it. This fulfilled the Scripture that says, 'They divided my garments among themselves and threw dice for my clothing.'" So that is what they did.

²⁵Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene.

²⁶When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son."

²⁷And he said to this disciple, "Here is your mother." And from then on this disciple took her into his home.

The Death of Jesus

²⁸Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, “I am thirsty.” ²⁹A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. ³⁰When Jesus had tasted it, he said, “It is finished!” Then he bowed his head and released his spirit.

³¹It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn’t want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was the Passover). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down. ³²So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. ³³But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn’t break his legs. ³⁴One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. ³⁵(This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also can believe.) ³⁶These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, “Not one of his bones will be broken,” ³⁷and “They will look on the one they pierced.”

The Burial of Jesus

³⁸Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders),

asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away. ³⁹With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought seventy- five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. ⁴⁰Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth.

⁴¹The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. ⁴²And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

JOHN 20

The Resurrection

¹Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. ²She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

³Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb.

⁴They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed

the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. ⁸Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed— ⁹for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then they went home.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹¹Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. ¹²She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. ¹³"Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her.

"Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him."

¹⁴She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. ¹⁵"Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

¹⁶"Mary!" Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher").

¹⁷"Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them that I

am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

¹⁸Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, “I have seen the Lord!” Then she gave them his message.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said. ²⁰As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! ²¹Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” ²²Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴One of the disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. ²⁵They told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.”

²⁶Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but

suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”

²⁸“My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.

²⁹Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”

Purpose of the Book

³⁰The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

JOHN 21

Epilogue: Jesus Appears to Seven Disciples

¹Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. ²Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples.

³Simon Peter said, “I’m going fishing.”

“We’ll come, too,” they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night.

⁴At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn’t see who he was. ⁵He called out, “Fellows, have you caught any fish?”

“No,” they replied.

⁶Then he said, “Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you’ll get some!” So they did, and they couldn’t haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.

⁷Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It’s the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore. ⁸The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore. ⁹When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them— fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

¹⁰“Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,” Jesus said. ¹¹So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn’t torn.

¹²“Now come and have some breakfast!” Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. ¹³Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. ¹⁴This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead.

¹⁵After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” Peter replied, “you know I love you.” “Then feed my lambs,” Jesus told him.

¹⁶Jesus repeated the question: “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

“Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “you know I love you.” “Then take care of my sheep,” Jesus said.

¹⁷A third time he asked him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Then feed my sheep.

¹⁸“I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will dress you and take you where you don’t want to go.” ¹⁹Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, “Follow me.”

²⁰Peter turned around and saw behind them the disciple Jesus loved—the one who had leaned over to Jesus during supper and asked, “Lord, who will betray you?” ²¹Peter asked Jesus, “What about him, Lord?”

²²Jesus replied, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me.” ²³So the rumor spread among the community of believers that this disciple wouldn’t die. But that isn’t what Jesus said at all. He only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?”

²⁴This disciple is the one who testifies to these events and has recorded them here. And we know that his account of these things is accurate.

²⁵Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be written.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

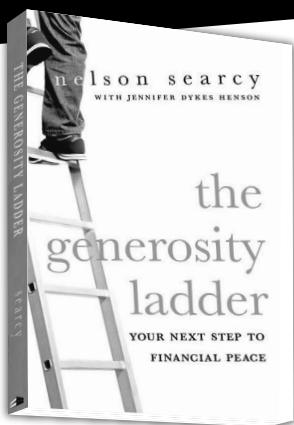
[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

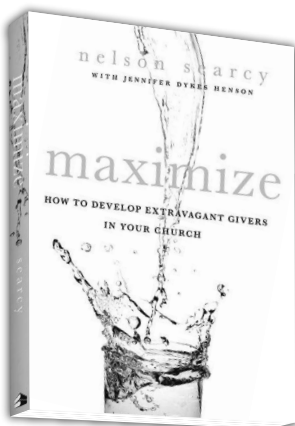
This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

HOW TO HANDLE YOUR FINANCES IN A GODLY MANNER



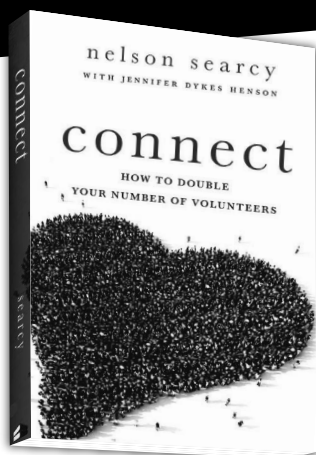
Published alongside *Maximize* is Searcy's book ***The Generosity Ladder***, for anyone who desires to handle money with excellence. Written to answer all of the questions and misunderstandings that surround the intersection of God and money, *The Generosity Ladder* will allow laypeople to fully grasp God's plan for their finances.

Maximize is the ultimate how-to book for pastors and church leaders who long for their churches to be fully resourced and able to carry out ministry initiatives without financial strain. Shining a light on the often taboo subject of money, *Maximize* offers an innovative, step-by-step plan for systemizing and maximizing financial gifts while growing strong disciples.



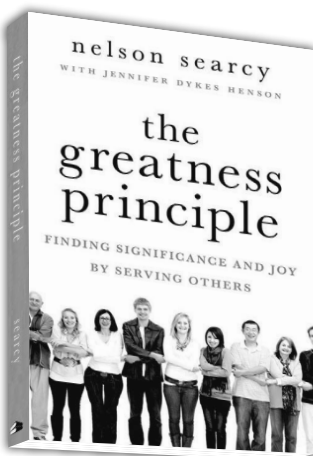
These books are available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [ChristianBook.com](https://www.ChristianBook.com)
For other resources, visit www.ChurchLeaderInsights.com

HOW TO FIND SIGNIFICANCE AND JOY BY SERVING OTHERS



Taking a comprehensive approach to the often frustrating issue of finding and retaining volunteers, **Connect** gives leaders the practical insight and tools they need to effectively involve people in serving the local church.

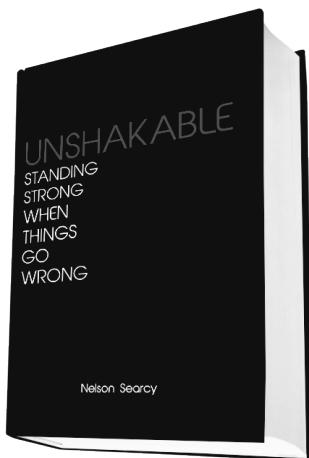
This little book packs a wealth of practical insight and inspired ideas that will energize church members to volunteer their time and talents. **The Greatness Principle** is perfect for small groups!



These books are available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [ChristianBook.com](https://www.ChristianBook.com)
For other resources, visit www.ChurchLeaderInsights.com

HOW TO STAND STRONG WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

This powerful, practical guide will help you discover how to face and survive life's scariest storms unscathed. You'll uncover timeless truths on how to prepare for, withstand and rebuild after:



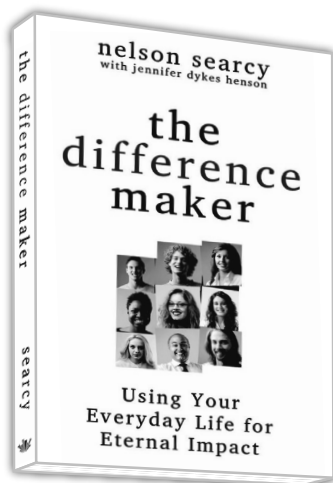
- Family problems
- Illness
- Lack of purpose
- Financial stress
- Career challenges
- Death of a loved one
- Temptation
- And more!

Unshakable will meet you in the eye of whatever storm you are facing and give you the tools you need to find peace and joy on the other side of your struggle.

Available on Amazon.com or for information on ordering in bulk for your church, call 800-264-5129 ext. 7 or send an email to info@ChurchLeaderInsights.com.

USING YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE FOR ETERNAL IMPACT

God has uniquely positioned you to influence those around you for him. He wants to partner with you in changing people's lives both now and for eternity. This practical guide will show you ways to begin using your everyday life to make a difference in the lives of those who don't know Jesus, including:



- The power of your personal story and how God can use it to transform others
- What it means to be ready to be used by God, no matter where you are
- How to avoid feeling intimidated in talking about your faith
- The ins and outs of what it means to be a Difference Maker for Jesus right where he has placed you

Are you ready to be a Difference Maker?

Available on Amazon.com or for information on ordering in bulk for your church, call 800-264-5129 ext. 7 or send an email to info@ChurchLeaderInsights.com.