



MARCH 2026 ISSUE

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

GROW & GLORIFY

M A G A Z I N E

GROW. GATHER. GIVE. GLORIFY.

GROW & GLORIFY

MAGAZINE

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FROM THE EDITOR

Spring has a way of reminding me that God is always in the business of renewal. The light lasts a little longer. The ground softens. What looked dead not long ago begins to wake up again. It does not happen loudly or all at once, but it is steady and sure. That is the heart behind Grow & Glorify.

This magazine exists to help us slow down long enough to really listen to God's Word and then to live what we have heard. Each issue centers on a single book of Scripture. We stay there on purpose. Sitting with one book allows Scripture to lead, to shape us, and to do the work only it can do.

For this first issue, we are spending our time in the Gospel of John. John invites us to see Jesus clearly. Again and again, light breaks into darkness, belief moves from curiosity to conviction, and life is offered to those willing to follow. John tells us plainly why he wrote, so that we might believe, and by believing, have life in His name. But belief in John is never passive. It always moves.

You will see that rhythm throughout these pages. In Grow, we sit with Scripture and learn to see it clearly. In Gather, we practice living it out in community and hospitality. In Give, we let faith move us toward service and quiet obedience. And in Glorify, we reflect what we have received from God in everyday faith. Together, these sections remind us that truth is meant to be lived, not just learned.

My hope is that this issue encourages you not just to learn more, but to respond. To obey when Scripture calls you to move. To reflect Christ in quiet faithfulness. To allow renewal to shape your words, your choices, and the way you love the people right in front of you.

So take your time. Open your Bible. Read carefully. Then step forward in faith and live what you have seen.

I'm so thankful you're here!

Kristy Huntsman
Head Editor

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Glorify

STUDY JOHN TOGETHER:

**WANT TO GO DEEPER WITH
FRIENDS OR YOUR CHURCH?**

Download the free 13-Week Group Study Guide
designed to walk alongside this issue.

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WELCOME TO

GROW & GLORIFY

MAGAZINE



A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding an open book. The hand is positioned over the left page, with fingers gently gripping the edges. The book's pages are visible, showing some text. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color, possibly a wall or a window with light filtering through. Overlaid on the center of the image is the word "GROW" in a large, white, serif font. Below it, in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, is the phrase "ROOT YOURSELF IN THE WORD".

GROW

ROOT YOURSELF IN THE WORD

Grow is where we slow down and let Scripture speak for itself. In this issue, we open the Gospel of John and step into a story where light breaks into darkness, ordinary people meet Jesus in their everyday moments, and belief takes on movement and shape. These pages are designed to root you deeply in the Word through reading plans, study tools, archaeological insights, and thoughtful reflection so that your faith can stretch, strengthen, and come alive. As spring reminds us that renewal begins beneath the surface, John reminds us that true renewal begins in the heart grounded in God's truth.

THE WORD IN FOCUS:

The Gospel of John

by Kristy Huntsman



John opens his Gospel with light. Not a manger or a genealogy, not angels or shepherds, just light. “In the beginning was the Word.” Before time, before creation, before the darkness ever had a name, Jesus already was. “In Him was life,” John writes, “and that life was the light of men.” (John 1:4)

John’s Gospel feels like Genesis revisited. The Word who once spoke life into existence now steps into the story to live it. Where Matthew, Mark, and Luke emphasize what Jesus did: His miracles, parables, and movement among the crowds. John slows the pace. He wants us to see who Jesus is. He writes: “The Word became flesh and lived among us,” and everything turns on that sentence. (John 1:14)

John is not writing a simple historical record. He is offering a revelation. The God who spoke from Sinai now walks dusty roads.

The voice that called galaxies into being sits beside ordinary people and invites them to believe. This is the heartbeat of John’s Gospel: light entering real life.

The God Who Came Near

John tells us plainly why he wrote: “These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:31) In John’s Gospel, belief is never passive. It is trust that moves.

We see that movement again and again. Nicodemus comes to Jesus in the dark, cautious and uncertain, but later steps into the light to honor the Savior he once questioned (John 3:1–2; 19:39).

A Samaritan woman meets Jesus at a well and leaves her water jar behind to tell others what she has found (John 4:28–29). A man born blind obeys a simple command: “Go, wash,” and returns seeing (John 9:7). Thomas, the doubter, reaches the confession John has been building toward all along: “My Lord and my God.” (John 20:28) In John, belief never stays abstract. It walks and obeys.

Signs That Reveal the Son

John calls Jesus’ miracles “signs” because they point beyond themselves. When Jesus calls Himself the Bread of Life, He has just fed a hungry crowd (John 6:35). When He says, “I am the Light of the world,” He opens the eyes of a man born blind (John 8:12; 9:1–7).

*Every sign is a
sermon in motion.
Jesus does not
merely speak truth;
He embodies it.*

When He declares, “I am the Resurrection and the Life,” He calls Lazarus out of the tomb (John 11:25).

Every sign is a sermon in motion. Jesus does not merely speak truth; He embodies it. Hunger meets bread. Thirst meets water. Darkness meets light.

When Belief Becomes Costly

John is honest about the tension belief creates. Some believed, yet stayed silent because they loved human approval more than God’s glory (John 12:42–43).

In John’s Gospel, hidden faith is not neutral. True belief steps into the light, even when it costs something. That tension reaches its climax at the cross. John does not describe the crucifixion as defeat, but as glory. “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified,” Jesus says (John 12:23). Glory looks like obedience, surrender, and love carried to completion. When Jesus declares, “It is finished,” He is announcing victory, not loss. (John 19:30)

Abiding in the Light

Belief in John is not a single moment; it is a way of life. “Abide in Me,” Jesus says. (John 15:4) Faith remains. It stays connected.

John ends his Gospel with an invitation. On the shore of Galilee, Peter meets grace instead of condemnation, and Jesus speaks the same words He has been offering all along: “Follow Me.” (John 21:19)

From first light to final word, John’s Gospel calls readers to see Jesus clearly, trust Him fully, and walk with Him faithfully.

*“In Him was life,
and the life was
the light of men.”
John 1:4*



Scan here for a
printable version!



IN THE MARGINS:

A 60 Day Journey Through John

by Kristy Huntsman

Before you dive in, take a deep breath. You're about to spend sixty days walking with Jesus through the eyes of the "disciple whom [He] loved." This isn't a sprint, and it's not about perfection; it's about presence.

Each day is designed to take about 20–30 minutes (except for the Anchor Days, where you'll read or listen to the entire book in one sitting). The goal isn't to check every box, but to learn to see Jesus more clearly. Even if you only make it part of the way through, you'll still walk away with a richer understanding of His life, His words, and His heart.

If you want to go deeper, each week gives you a simple focus (structure, key words, contrasts, and commands), but once you start digging in, you'll notice how one passage leads naturally to the next. Before long, you'll be learning things you can't wait to keep exploring. So keep going. Keep chasing those questions, keep seeking. The more you do, the more you'll fall in love with God's Word and the One who wrote it.

What You'll Need

- A Bible you don't mind writing in. I absolutely love the scripture journals from Crossway for this. They're inexpensive and perfect for marking, highlighting, and jotting notes without fear of "messing up" your main Bible.
- A notebook or journal for reflections, prayers, and insights.
- Colored pens, pencils, highlighters, and an open heart.

There's no perfect way to do this. Some days you'll have time to dig deep, other days you'll only have a few quiet minutes. That's okay. The point isn't perfection, it's consistency. So find a quiet corner, open your Bible, and begin. Let the light of John's Gospel draw you closer to the One who still says, "Follow Me."

Let's spend the next sixty days walking with Jesus, seeing, believing, and being renewed.

Anchor Day 1 – Meet Jesus

Before you start breaking the Gospel down verse by verse, take time to experience it as one continuous story. Read John in a single sitting, and you'll start noticing things you might otherwise miss: the contrast of light and darkness, the repeated invitation to "come and see," or how each miracle reveals something new about Jesus. Listening absolutely counts too!

Sometimes you'll catch more with your ears than with your eyes. Got a long drive, a laundry pile, or a morning walk? That's the perfect time to let God's Word play and soak it in. It doesn't matter how you choose to do it, let this first day draw you in to see Jesus more clearly, to hear His words, feel His compassion, and notice how every page points back to who He truly is.

- **Day 1 – Read the entire book of John in one sitting**

Days 2–9 – Observe & Outline

Before diving deep into word studies or theology, spend a few days just getting familiar with the story itself. Read through each section slowly enough to follow the flow but not so slow that you lose momentum. As you read, jot down the main events of each chapter and any questions or themes that stand out. Don't worry about finding all the answers right now. This step is simply about noticing the people, places, and events that shape the story. By the end of this section, you'll have a clearer sense of the story's rhythm and the threads you'll want to pull on later.

- **Day 2 – Outline John 1–3**
- **Day 3 – Outline John 4–6**
- **Day 4 – Outline John 7–9**
- **Day 5 – Outline John 10–12**
- **Day 6 – Outline John 13–15**
- **Day 7 – Outline John 16–17**

- **Day 8 – Outline John 18–19**
- **Day 9 – Outline John 20–21**

Days 10–16 – Mark the Keywords

Now that you've seen John's Gospel as a whole, it's time to trace the threads running through it. John repeats certain words again and again, each one revealing more of who Jesus is.

This week, you'll focus on one keyword each day. As you read, find every place that word appears and mark it in your Bible or Scripture journal. I like to use colored pencils, assigning each keyword its own color, and drawing a small box around each word, filling it in with its color. The patterns pop quickly, and you can see at a glance how John weaves these ideas together.

Sometimes English translations use different words for the same Greek term. That's why we've included a QR code linking to a list of every occurrence based on the original Greek. This will help you mark confidently, even if your translation varies.

As you study, jot down what you notice. How does John use the word? What does it reveal about Jesus? We'll focus on seven key words here, but once you start, you'll see many more waiting to be discovered.

- **Day 10 – Mark and Study "Believe"**
- **Day 11 – Mark and Study "Life"**
- **Day 12 – Mark and Study "Truth"**
- **Day 13 – Mark and Study "Glory"**
- **Day 14 – Mark and Study "Witness/Testify"**
- **Day 15 – Mark and Study "Love"**
- **Day 16 – Mark and Study "Abide"**



Scan here for
keyword list

Days 17–23 – The Witnesses: “That You May Believe”

John doesn’t leave us guessing about why he wrote his Gospel, he tells us point blank: “These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:31) If you look closely, the whole book is set up like a courtroom scene. From the very beginning, John begins calling witnesses (some human, some divine) to testify about who Jesus is. One by one, their voices build the case for belief.

As you read this week, keep an eye out for the different witnesses. When you find one, make a small “W” in the margin and box it in, or choose another marking style that helps you spot them at a glance. The goal is simply to see how John layers the evidence throughout his Gospel. Note what each witness says (or shows) about Jesus, how people respond to that truth, and what stands out to you about belief and unbelief.

- **Day 17 – John 1:19–51**
 - Witnesses: John the Baptist, Andrew, Philip, and Nathanael
- **Day 18 – John 3:1–21 and 4:1–42**
 - Witnesses: Nicodemus, the Samaritan Woman, and the People of Sychar
- **Day 19 – John 5:31–47**
 - Witnesses: John the Baptist, Jesus’ own works, the Father, the Scriptures, and Moses
- **Day 20 – John 10:22–42; 15:26–27; and 16:7–15**
 - Witnesses: Jesus’ works in His Father’s name and the Holy Spirit
- **Day 21 – John 9:1–41**
 - Witness: The Man Born Blind
- **Day 22 – John 11:1–44**
 - Witnesses: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus
- **Day 23 – John 19:31–37 and 21:24**
 - Witness: John the Apostle

Days 24–31 – Who Jesus Is: Images and Metaphors in John

John’s Gospel paints one of the most vivid portraits of Jesus in Scripture. Through simple, familiar images (light, water, bread, a shepherd) John reveals eternal truths about who He is. These aren’t just titles; they’re invitations to know His heart.

As you read, watch for each image that describes Jesus. Mark it with a squiggly blue underline so it stands out on the page. Seeing these phrases pop from the text will help you trace patterns, notice connections, and remember what they reveal about His nature. If blue isn’t your style, choose a color or symbol that works for you; the goal is to make these moments visible so you can easily find and reflect on them again.

Each day, note what the image tells you about Jesus and how the surrounding story explains it. Watch how people respond, look for Old Testament echoes, and write what these moments teach you about His heart.

- **Day 24 – John 1:1–34**
 - The Word (1:1–5, 14) → Genesis 1
 - The Light (1:4–9) → Isaiah 9:2
 - The Lamb of God (1:29–36) → Exodus 12; Isaiah 53:7
- **Day 25 – John 1:45–51; 2:1–11; 3:22–30**
 - Jacob’s Ladder / Son of Man (1:51) → Genesis 28:10–17; Daniel 7:13–14
 - The Bridegroom (2:1–11; 3:29) → Isaiah 62:4–5
- **Day 26 – John 3:14–4:42; 5:1–15**
 - The Serpent in the Wilderness (3:14–15) → Numbers 21:4–9
 - The Giver of Living Water (4:6–14) → Jeremiah 2:13
 - The Great Physician / Healer (5:6–15)
- **Day 27 – John 6:22–71**
 - The Bread of Life (6:35, 48, 51) → Exodus 16

- **Day 28 – John 8:12; 9:1–41**
 - The Light of the World (8:12) → Psalm 27:1; Isaiah 49:6
 - The One Who Gives Sight to the Blind (9:32–39)
- **Day 29 – John 10:1–30**
 - The Door of the Sheep (10:7–9) → Ezekiel 34:11–16
 - The Good Shepherd (10:11–18) → Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34:23
- **Day 30 – John 11:1–44; 14:1–6**
 - The Resurrection and the Life (11:25–26)
 - The Way, the Truth, and the Life (14:6)
- **Day 31 – John 15:1–11; 8:48–59**
 - The True Vine (15:1–5) → Isaiah 5:1–7
 - The I AM (8:58) → Exodus 3:14

Days 32–40 – Contrasts in John

John loves to teach through contrast. He shows us light by setting it against darkness, truth beside lies, belief against disobedience. Defining things by their opposites is one of Scripture’s favorite tools. It sharpens our understanding and brings God’s truth into focus. Other writers highlight contrast through people or events, but John does it through ideas, layering truth and metaphor in a way that feels both simple and profound.

When you find a contrast, write the two words in the margin and draw an orange box around them: Light / Darkness, Truth / Lies, Belief / Disobedience, and so on. Or come up with your own style that stands out to you. Seeing these pairs at a glance will help you trace how John paints with contrast to make the truth unmistakably clear.

- **Day 32 – John 1:4–9; 3:19–21; 8:12; 12:35–36, 46**
 - Light / Darkness
- **Day 33 – John 8:31–47; 18:37–38**
 - Truth / Falsehood

- **Day 34 – John 5:24–29; 10:10; 11:25; 20:31**
 - Life / Death
- **Day 35 – John 3:36; 6:60–71; 12:37–50; 14:15, 23–24**
 - Belief / Unbelief (Obedience / Disobedience)
- **Day 36 – John 15:9–25; 13:34–35**
 - Love / Hate
- **Day 37 – John 3:6; 6:63; 8:23**
 - Spirit / Flesh (Above / Below)
- **Day 38 – John 10:26–27; 12:47–48**
 - Hearing / Rejecting His Word
- **Day 39 – John 8:31–36**
 - Freedom / Slavery
- **Day 40 – John 9:35–41**
 - Sight / Blindness

Days 41–47 –The “Truly, Truly” Sayings of Jesus

Throughout John’s Gospel, Jesus often begins with the words “Truly, truly, I say to you.” In Greek, it’s *amēn*, *amēn*, a deliberate repetition that signals importance and certainty. When Jesus speaks this way, He isn’t quoting others; He’s declaring truth as the Author of it.

Each “Truly, truly” moment pulls back another layer of who He is and what it means to believe. Mark each one with a double underline in purple (or another color that stands out). As you read, note what these sayings reveal about Jesus, about faith, and about your own walk with Him.

- **Day 41 – John 3:1–12**
- **Day 42 – John 5:19–30**
- **Day 43 – John 6:26–58**
- **Day 44 – John 8:31–58**
- **Day 45 – John 13:12 – 38**
- **Day 46 – John 14:12 – 16:24**
- **Day 47 – John 21:15–19**

Days 48–56 – The Imperatives of Jesus

Belief in John's Gospel is never passive; it moves. True faith is shown through action, especially in the commands of Jesus. When He says "Come," "Abide," "Go," or "Love," He is calling us into obedient, living faith.

In Greek, commands are built into the form of the word itself. John's original readers would have recognized them immediately. These commands are called imperatives.

The list below does not include every imperative in John, but it highlights the main themes of Jesus's teaching. As you read, note what He said, who He said it to, and what it means for us today. Mark each command with a red box as a reminder that these were words meant to be acted on.

- **Day 48 – John 1:35–51; 3:11–21; 14:1–11**
 - Come and see (1:39), Follow Me (1:43), Believe in Me (14:1, 11).
- **Day 49 – John 8:31–36; 14:15–24; 15:1–11**
 - Abide in My word (8:31), Keep My commandments (14:15), Abide in Me and in My love (15:4, 9).
- **Day 50 – John 13:12–35; 15:12–17**
 - Wash one another's feet (13:14), Love one another (13:34; 15:12).
- **Day 51 – John 5:1–15; 8:1–11**
 - Get up, take up your bed and walk (5:8), Sin no more (5:14; 8:11).
- **Day 52 – John 6:16–21; 16:25–33; 20:19–21**
 - Do not be afraid (6:20), Take heart (16:33), Peace be with you (20:19).
- **Day 53 – John 4:7–26; 16:23–27**
 - Give Me a drink (4:7), Ask and you will receive (16:24).
- **Day 54 – John 4:27–42; 9:1–25; 20:21–23**
 - Go, call your husband (4:16); Go wash in the pool of Siloam (9:7); As the Father sent Me, I send you (20:21).

- **Day 55 – John 21:1–19**
 - Bring some of the fish you've caught (21:10); Feed My sheep (21:15–17).
- **Day 56 – John 21:18–25**
 - Follow Me (21:19, 22).

Days 57–59 – The Prayers of Jesus

When Scripture records a prayer, it matters. When it records the words of a prayer, it matters even more. God does not waste words. He invites us to listen so that we might understand His heart and respond. That invitation deepens when it is Jesus praying. Each time the Son speaks to the Father, we are shown what mattered most to Him and what He desires for those who follow Him.

As you read these prayers, draw a green bracket { } along the side of the passage. Note what Jesus asks, who He mentions, and what His words reveal about His love for the Father and for us.

- **Day 57 – John 11:41–42; 12:27–28**
- **Day 58 – John 14:15–27; 16:5–15**
- **Day 59 – John 17**

Anchor Day 2 – Abide and Be Renewed

You have spent the last sixty days walking beside Jesus through the eyes of His beloved disciple. Today, step back and see the story as a whole. Read or listen to the entire Gospel of John in one sitting, and notice how everything you have studied comes together.

- **Day 60 – Read the entire Gospel of John in one sitting.**

John wrote these words so that we might believe and keep on believing. Each time we return to his Gospel, we see Jesus more clearly so that we might find life in His name.

WORD PORTRAIT:

Witness in the Gospel of John

Written and Illustrated By Erynn Sprouse

John sets out his case as thoroughly as one would in court. His purpose? To prove “that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God” (John 20:31 NASB). He calls witnesses throughout the book, and each shares their testimony in their own way. John the Baptist is the opening witness, one whose testimony ultimately costs his own life. John’s testimony is based on a sign given by none other than the Holy Spirit. A Samaritan woman recognizes Jesus for who He is, and testifies to her town. Jesus himself testifies, but does not rely on His own testimony. He calls to mind John the Baptist, cites the miracles He performs, claims God the Father, the scriptures, and even Moses as witnesses. Jesus’ miracles serve as a star witness throughout the book: He strengthens the legs and hands of the feeble, heals diseases, gives sight to the blind, and even raises the dead. He claims the works will continue after Him thru the apostles and with the aid of The Helper, who will bring them into all truth so that the apostles can testify as well. The final witness is the apostle whom Jesus loved—John. The keyword *martyria*, primarily translated “witness” and “testify,” draws John’s gospel together, bringing its purpose to fruition.



1. The works (miracles) Jesus performed (John 5:36)
2. God the Father (John 8:18)
3. God the Holy Spirit (John 1:33)
4. The apostles (John 15:27)
5. The Helper (John 15:26, 16:13)
6. John, writer of the gospel (John 19:35, 21:24)
7. Jesus (John 8:18)
8. Samaritan woman (John 4:39)
9. John the Baptist (1:34)
10. Moses (John 5:46)
11. The scriptures (John 5:39)
12. Those who saw Lazarus raised (John 12:17)



SIGNS THAT REVEAL THE MESSIAH

by Heather Jones

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” (John 1:14). The Word that was present at creation, through whom all living things were made, came to this earth. The depth of that truth is difficult to grasp. Throughout John’s Gospel account, we are introduced to who the Word truly is and what He came to do while on this earth. Now you may be asking, who is John, and how is he qualified to reveal these truths to us?

John, the one whom Jesus loved, was an apostle, evangelist, and church leader in Asia. He wrote this Gospel account with a pagan mindset in view, addressing a pagan culture. With that being said, we cannot read John at face value alone. We must spend time chewing on the text to truly understand what John is trying to communicate. Thankfully, John clues us in to why he felt the need to write this account. In John 20:31, we see that John wrote this book to record the signs that Jesus performed so that readers, generation after generation, would be able to see those signs, believe that Jesus is the Christ, and receive eternal life. As Plato once noted, John is written as a spiritual Gospel, revealing the deeper realities behind Jesus’ works. Because of this, if we read the Gospel of John in the same manner as the other Gospels, we may miss the point entirely.

These “signs” that John records give us major insight into the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36). Dr. Dan Owen defines a sign as “a symbolic action designed to teach a spiritual lesson.” John 2:18–21 is a great example of the deeper meaning behind the miracles, or signs, that Jesus performs. Jesus told them that the sign He would perform was that He would tear down the temple and raise it again in three days. This stunned the Jews because it had taken forty-six years to build the current temple. The deeper meaning is revealed in John 2:21, where John explains that Jesus was speaking about His body, not the Jewish temple. With that in mind, let us now look at how seven of the signs found in the Gospel of John reveal who Jesus is.

The first sign takes place at a wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2:1–11). When the wine ran out during the celebration, Mary came to Jesus asking for help. Jesus responded by saying that His hour had not yet come, yet He still instructed the servants to fill the jars with water. When the water was drawn out, it had become wine. The headwaiter was astonished and remarked that the best wine had been saved for last. John is intentional in what he records here. God saved the good wine until now, and this sign points to Jesus as the provider of what is better.

This moment connects directly to John 1:17, where we are told that the Law came through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. The new wine represents the new covenant, and Jesus is its provider.

The second sign also occurs in Cana (John 4:46–54) and introduces us to a man whose faith is still forming. A royal official, having heard of Jesus' works, came begging Him to heal his dying son. Jesus acknowledged the common tendency to require signs and wonders before believing. Yet Jesus still showed compassion. He sent the man home, assuring him that his son would live. The man believed the word Jesus spoke to him and went on his way. When he returned, he discovered that his son had been healed at the exact moment Jesus spoke. Through this sign, John shows us that true belief rests not on what is seen, but on trusting the word of Christ.

*...true belief rests
not on what is
seen, but on
trusting the word
of Christ.*

The third sign takes us from Cana to Jerusalem and the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1–15). There, Jesus encountered a man who had been paralyzed for thirty-eight years. Jesus asked him a simple yet piercing question: "Do you wish to be made well?" The man explained that he had no one to help him into the water when it was stirred. But Jesus made it clear that healing did not come from the pool. He commanded the man to rise, take up his pallet, and walk. Immediately the man was healed.

Spiritually speaking, we are all sick, and Jesus alone has the power to make us well.

The fourth sign shifts to a large crowd in John 6:5–14. Faced with thousands of hungry people, Jesus took a small amount of bread and fish, gave thanks, and distributed it. Everyone ate until they were full, and leftovers remained. Later, Jesus explained that the people followed Him not because they understood the sign, but because their physical hunger had been satisfied. He challenged them not to labor for food that perishes, but for food that endures to eternal life. Through this sign, Jesus reveals Himself as the Bread of Life, the only one who can truly satisfy spiritual hunger.

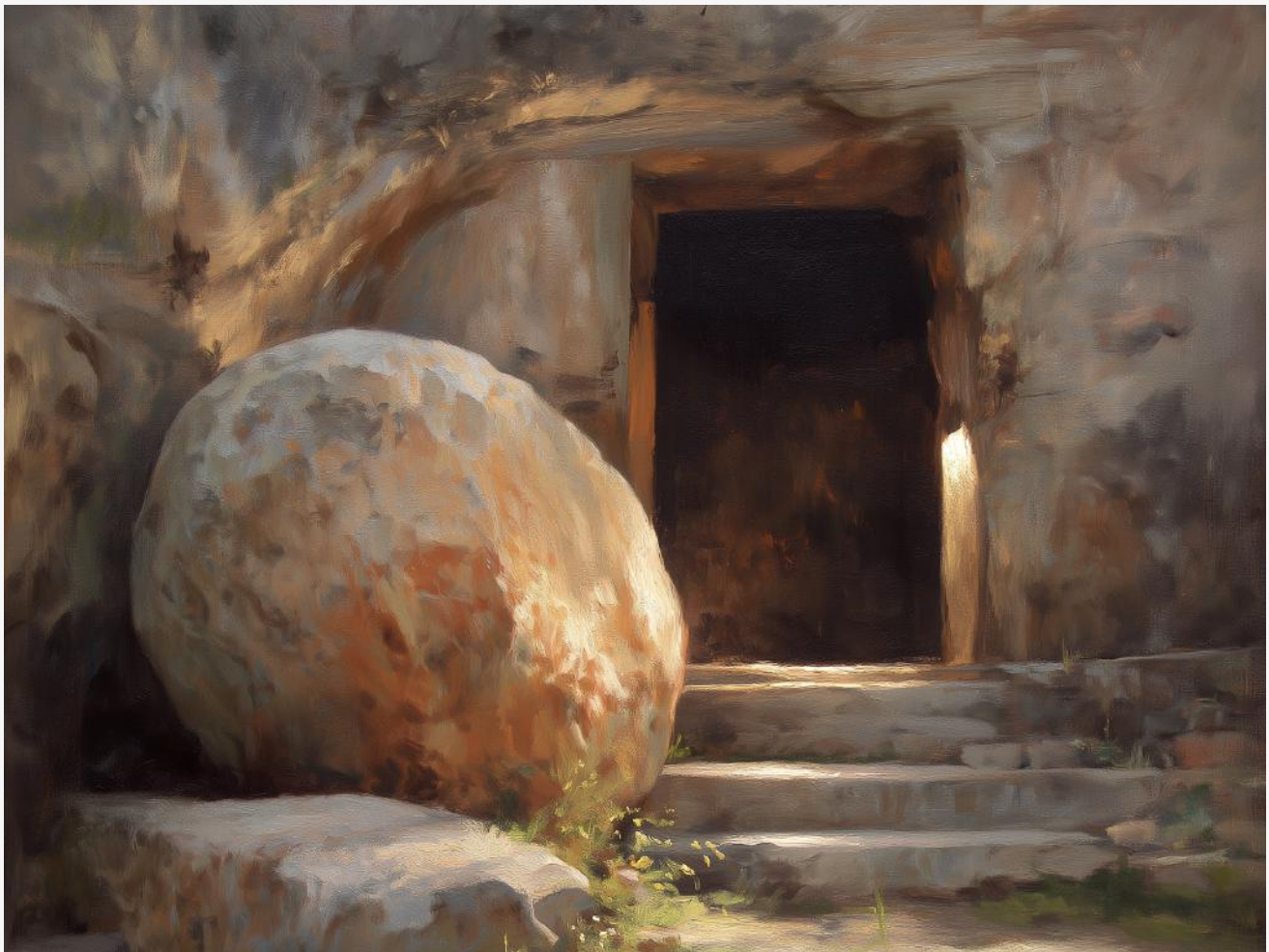
The fifth sign is recorded by John just a little later in this same chapter (John 6:16–21). The disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee when strong winds stirred the water, and fear set in. Jesus came to them walking on the water and said, "It is I; do not be afraid." In the original language, Jesus uses the divine phrase "I AM." This moment is not merely reassurance; it is revelation. Jesus identifies Himself as the divine presence who stands above the chaos. When the I AM enters the storm, fear no longer has the final word. John shows us that peace comes not from calm circumstances, but from the presence of the One who has authority over the journey itself.

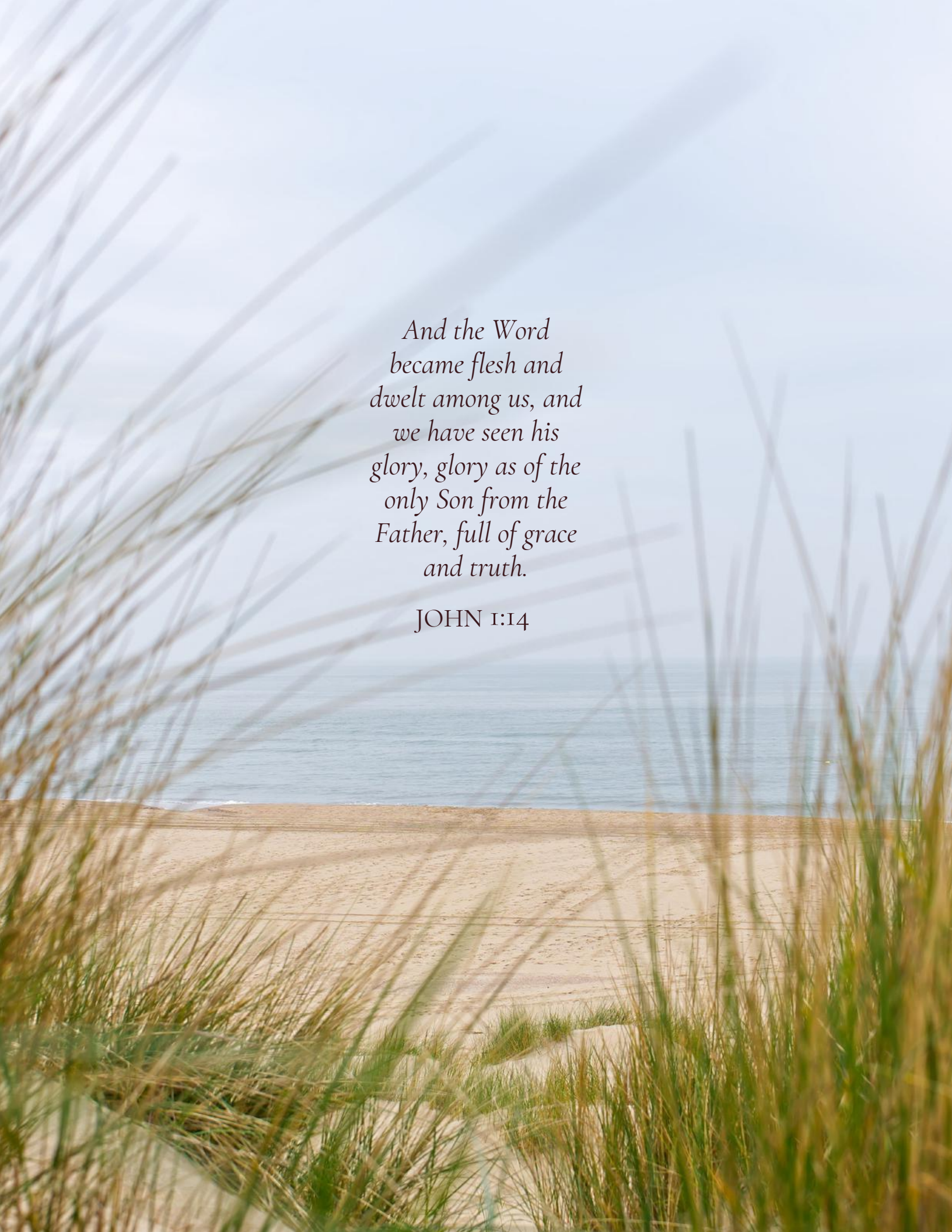
The sixth sign appears in John 9 and centers on a man born blind. When the disciples asked whose sin caused the man's condition, Jesus corrected their thinking. This blindness was not the result of sin but an opportunity for God's works to be revealed. Jesus made mud, anointed the man's eyes, and sent him to wash in the pool of Siloam. When the man returned, he could see. Those who knew him hardly recognized him. John shows us that this sign is not only about light, but about sight being given. Jesus is the Light of the world, and He alone has the power to open blind eyes.

Encountering Him brings real transformation, changing not only what we see, but how we see.

The final and most powerful sign is found in John 11 with the raising of Lazarus. Lazarus had died, and his sisters Mary and Martha were overwhelmed with grief. Even Jesus was deeply moved. Yet this moment of sorrow set the stage for a profound revelation. In the middle of the narrative, Jesus declared, *“I am the resurrection and the life.”* Earlier, He had already explained that Lazarus’ illness was for the glory of God, so that the Son of God might be glorified through it. While others focused on what Jesus could have done to prevent the death, Jesus revealed His authority over death itself, not merely to restore life, but to show that resurrection is found in Him. He prayed openly so all would know He was sent by God, then called Lazarus out of the tomb. Lazarus walked out alive, and many believed.

Through these signs, Jesus reveals exactly who He is: the giver of new life, the healer, the provider, the Light, the Bread of Life, and the Resurrection. John records these events so that readers, generation after generation, might believe and have life in His name. If your faith feels shallow, John invites you to look deeper. These are not merely stories of power; they are signs pointing us to the spiritual reality of who Jesus is and who He can transform us to become.



A serene beach scene with tall grass in the foreground, a sandy beach, and the ocean under a blue sky. The grass is out of focus, creating a soft, dreamy atmosphere. The ocean is calm, and the sky is a clear, pale blue.

*And the Word
became flesh and
dwelt among us, and
we have seen his
glory, glory as of the
only Son from the
Father, full of grace
and truth.*

JOHN 1:14



HOPE BY THE WATER

BY CHRISTA BRYANT

From Genesis 6 through the Pauline epistles, water plays an important role in Scripture. From its destructive force in the Flood to its saving grace in baptism, water often marks the line between life and death. In John 5, the waters of the Pool of Bethesda were believed to offer a continuous hope of healing for the blind, the lame, and the withered.

As twenty-first-century Americans, the account of the Pool of Bethesda can seem far-fetched. An angel comes down at certain times to stir the waters, allowing the sick to be placed into the pool. The first one to enter is healed of their disease.

Many questions naturally arise. If an angel stirred the waters, why did it happen only occasionally? Why was only one person healed? Why was there a race among the sick to reach the pool? While Scripture does not answer these questions directly, several aspects of the passage can help modern Christians better understand the narrative.

First, though the account may seem difficult to believe, archaeologists have discovered the actual pool in Jerusalem referred to in John 5. The Pool of Bethesda is unique because it is described as having five porticos. This detail puzzled scholars for many years, leading some to assign symbolic interpretations rather than reading the text literally. One common suggestion was that the five porticos represented the five books of the Torah.

In the 1880s, however, archaeologists uncovered a pool near the temple in Jerusalem that indeed had five sides. Both the Romans of the first century and the Jews who controlled the land for centuries afterward associated this site with healing. Early followers of Jesus even built shrines and churches over the location to commemorate His miracles. Because of extensive construction over the centuries and an Israeli ban on archaeological digs at the site beginning in 1967, further excavation has been limited. Still, the remains of the pool and images of its five porticos remain.



Christians should remember that archaeology does not prove the Bible true, but it can confirm what Scripture records.

The Bible is true because it is the Word of God, not because it can be verified by physical evidence.

Archaeological discoveries are not meant to persuade skeptics; rather, for the believing Christian, they can strengthen confidence that Scripture speaks accurately about real places and real events.

Second, this passage reminds modern Christians that we need one another. The man by the pool was never able to reach the water because he had no one to help him. He could not be healed on his own. Likewise, we cannot reach heaven alone; we need the encouragement, strength, and support of fellow believers.

At the same time, the passage reminds us that even when we feel alone, we are never without God. Many of our brothers and sisters in Christ are unable to fellowship freely with other Christians. Some live in places where believers are persecuted, some are imprisoned, and others live in isolated areas. Even then, God remains faithful to those who remain faithful to Him.

Third, the passage is not primarily about the miraculous pool or the power of the water. It is about the power of faith. The man whom Jesus healed had suffered for thirty-eight years. While Scripture does not specify how long he had been lying beside the pool, it is clear that he had been there a long time. Why did the man stay? He knew the power the pool was believed to hold, and despite repeated disappointment, he continued to hope. He had seen others healed. He knew the waters were stirred. That assurance, that hope, kept him waiting by the pool until the day Jesus walked by him.

Though Jesus was often moved by compassion for the sick and afflicted, it was the man's faith that led Jesus to say, "Get up and walk." For years he had watched others receive healing while he remained still.

Yet he continued to believe that God could heal, even as he waited while others were blessed.

How often are we tempted to grow resentful when others receive what we long for? How often do we question God's timing when our suffering seems to linger without purpose? How often do we feel forgotten while standing on the edges of His promises?

The man endured thirty-eight years of suffering. He was lonely and set apart. Yet he remained faithful. His healing was not only a blessing to him but was recorded for generations to learn from. God was good to him, and God will be good to those who remain faithful through waiting, wondering, loneliness, and delayed answers. He still offers a continuous hope.

LIFTED UP

The Serpent, the Savior, and the Call to Believe

BY TAYLOR HUNTSMAN

Of all the chapters in John, Chapter 3 may be the most studied. As children, John 3:16 is often the first verse we memorize, and later we study being “born of the Spirit.” Yet in the middle of this familiar chapter is a small verse that can easily be overlooked. Verse 14 says, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”

To understand this statement, we must look back to Numbers 21. While wandering in the wilderness, the Israelites began to complain against God and Moses, questioning why they had ever left Egypt. Because of this rebellion, God sent a plague of serpents among them, and many were bitten and died. Yet even in judgment, God showed mercy. When the people confessed their sin, God provided a way of deliverance. Moses was instructed to make a bronze serpent and set it on a pole so that those who looked at it would live. Salvation required no strength or skill, only the humility to recognize their need and look to what God had provided.

What, then, does this mean in John 3:14? Jesus is speaking prophetically. When He says the Son of Man must be “lifted up,” He is pointing to His crucifixion. But He does more than predict His death; He explains its meaning through the serpent in the wilderness. In verse 15, He makes the connection clear: “So that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life.” Just as God provided a remedy in the wilderness, He now offers life through belief in the One who would be lifted up.

This conversation took place at night, as Jesus spoke with Nicodemus, a Pharisee struggling to understand what it meant to be “born again.” After this exchange, Nicodemus fades into the background, until the prophecy is fulfilled. As a Pharisee, he would have been well acquainted with Numbers 21. When he later saw Jesus crucified, lifted up just as Moses had lifted the serpent, the meaning became clear. In John 19:39, Nicodemus appears again, bringing spices to help bury Jesus’ body. What once confused him now compelled belief.

The beauty of this verse lies in its simplicity. God did not ask the people in the wilderness to heal themselves. He did not demand worthiness, only trust and obedience. They had to recognize their need and look to the provision God had raised up.

Jesus says the same is true now. The Son of Man was lifted up, not as a symbol, but as the Savior Himself. Just as the serpent was lifted for all to see, Christ was lifted up for all who would look to Him. The remedy has been provided. The question John leaves us with is the same one Nicodemus eventually answered: Will we look to Him for life?

Jesus, the Ladder to Heaven

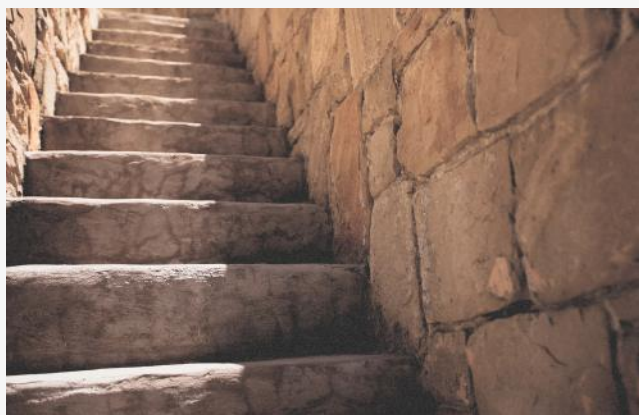
By Haley Hite

Do you remember, as a child, being too small to see something in a crowd of tall adults? All you could see were the legs of the people around you. But then a parent or grandparent would lift you onto their shoulders, and suddenly, you towered over obstacles and could see everything!

Does it ever feel hard to see the spiritual side of life? Sometimes we are so caught up in our daily lives that we struggle to see beyond what is right in front of us. Sometimes it's our preconceived ideas about Christ and His church. Sometimes it's our belief that God is not as magnificent as He truly is. So how do we see what cannot be seen?

You are invited to **"come and see."**

In John 1:43–51, Philip tells Nathanael about "Jesus of Nazareth." Nathanael responds skeptically, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" He is seeing through the lens of his own preconceived ideas. Instead of arguing, Philip simply says, "Come and see."



When Jesus sees Nathanael approaching, He says, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit." Nathanael responds: "How do you know me?" Jesus replies, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Before Nathanael ever came to see Jesus, Jesus had already seen and known him. That knowledge convinces Nathanael that Jesus is the Son of God.

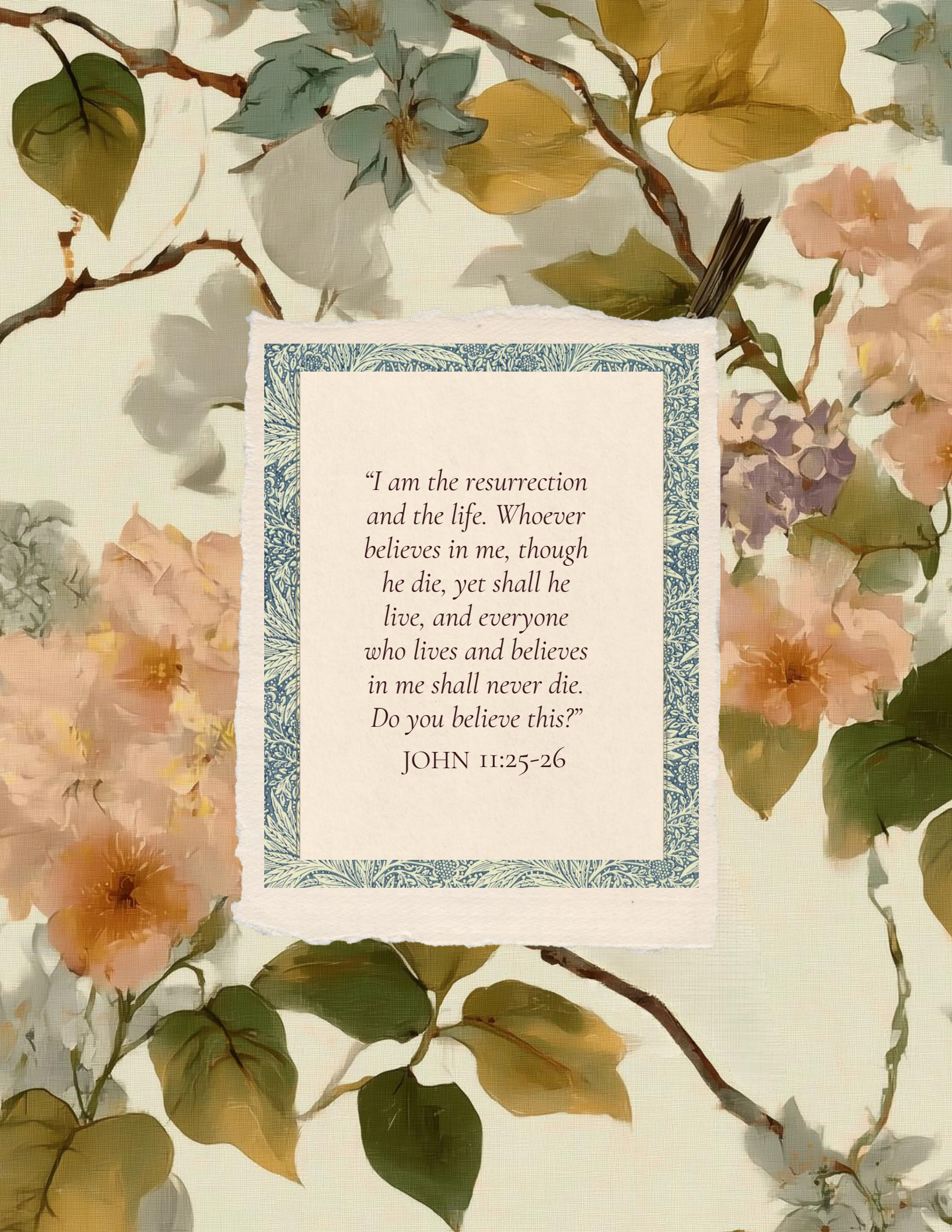
Jesus then says, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." Nathanael's faith is real, but it is only the beginning. Jesus promises something more: "You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

This statement reaches back to Genesis 28, where Jacob dreamed of a ladder connecting heaven and earth. Jesus is claiming that He is that ladder, the true connection between God and man. He is not merely revealing truth; He is revealing access. Through Him, heaven is opened.

John writes with a deeper spiritual meaning, and this moment is no exception. Nathanael cannot yet grasp all that Jesus will reveal, but Jesus promises that greater sight is coming, sight that reaches beyond what human eyes can see.

Jesus promises that greater sight is coming, sight that reaches beyond what human eyes can see.

What could be more out of reach for us than heaven? We cannot climb there on our own. We can only reach it through Christ. When we truly see Jesus, everything else comes into focus. John invites us, again and again, to "come and see." Let Jesus lift you beyond your limited view. Let Him be your ladder to heaven, your way to spiritual sight.



*"I am the resurrection
and the life. Whoever
believes in me, though
he die, yet shall he
live, and everyone
who lives and believes
in me shall never die.
Do you believe this?"*

JOHN 11:25-26

BORN AGAIN:

Jesus' Teaching to Nicodemus

by Re'Elle Crowell



Spring is a season enjoyed by many. *It is a season of new life and new beginnings.* The plants and animals are growing, and a sense of beauty and purpose can be seen coming to life. It is a time for growth and change. However, this time of rebirth is not just necessary in the physical world. It is also a fundamental part of the spiritual world. The topic of renewal can be seen throughout the Bible, with God renewing and restoring His covenant with the people of Israel throughout their history. In the New Testament, that covenant is completed, and a new one is put into place. To enter into this new covenant, a rebirth, a renewal, must take place.

In John 3, Jesus is discussing this concept with a man named Nicodemus. This man is described as being “of the Pharisees” and “a ruler of the Jews.”

He was clearly a man of power and influence. The very first thing he does is acknowledge Jesus. He tells Jesus that the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders know that Jesus is from God. This is important because it is connected to a theme that is seen throughout the book of John. So, it is interesting that at the start, the Jewish leaders seem to acknowledge that Jesus is from God.

Next, Jesus responds to Nicodemus in a way that would not have immediately made sense to him. Verse three reads, “Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.’” Given what Nicodemus has said, Jesus’ reply is confusing. There is no recorded confusion about how Jesus responded, but it is obvious that Nicodemus does not understand what it means.

He takes Jesus' words very literally, asking how a person can return to the womb to be born again. He does not question whether what Jesus is saying is true or not. He is questioning the means by which it can happen. This is the first thing of note regarding rebirth: **It is essential.** This can be seen not just from Nicodemus' easy acceptance of the teaching, but also from the connection that Jesus makes to the kingdom of God.

No one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.

Now, Nicodemus seems to believe Jesus' words, but he lacks the understanding. This is where it can be seen that the concept of rebirth and its importance are not just physical. Another theme that can be seen in the book of John is the contrast of physical and spiritual. Many of the Jews, even those that followed Jesus, had a limited understanding of what God's promises entailed. They followed physical rules and expected physical blessings in return. The belief that God was going to establish a kingdom on earth was a prominent one among His people. Before casting judgement on this understanding, it should be considered that many times the people of Israel received an abundance of physical blessings from their obedience to God. The connection is very reasonable to them. However, that was not God's plan nor Jesus' outlook on things. Their focus on the physical is contrasted with His view of the spiritual several times. In chapters two, six, and eight, for example. Jesus knows this and so He goes on to clarify to Nicodemus, telling him that one must be born of what and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus' clarification brings the conversation to its central claim.

To summarize what Jesus is teaching here, to enter the kingdom of God, **one must be born again of water and Spirit.** Excellent! Now, what does that mean? Let's go through that statement step-by-step. **First**, it is a teaching of Jesus. That means the logical conclusion is the statement is true and should be followed. **Next**, this teaching is connected to the kingdom of God. What is that? This concept is a big one because it is not limited to one specific thing. Verses such as Luke 9:27 mean that the kingdom was something physical and that would be there soon, while verses such as 2 Timothy 4:18 imply that it is somewhere followers of God go and are free from evil. Oftentimes, when there are multiple possible meanings, context is the best means of determining which is being discussed.

The final part of the statement is that one must be born of water and the Spirit. There are many ideas about what this means, but it is best to let the Bible answer. In 1 Peter 1:3 it is said that Jesus "has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." In Romans 6, there is a connection drawn between Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection and baptism. In Acts chapter two, Peter tells the people to repent and be baptized in Jesus' name and they will receive forgiveness for their sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. A connection between rebirth, baptism, and the Holy Spirit is easy to see in God's Word.

From Jesus' teaching, readers can learn that it is vitally important to be baptized in order to join His church and see Heaven with Him. The power and importance of rebirth cannot be underestimated. In this season of growth and change, in this time of new beginnings, know that it all pales in comparison to the *beauty and majesty of being born again of water and Spirit into Christ.*



GATHER

CREATE MOMENTS THAT BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Gather is where we remember that faith is meant to be shared. John's Gospel shows Jesus meeting people at tables, in conversations, and in the ordinary moments where relationships take root. These pages celebrate the beauty of community through simple meals, thoughtful hospitality, and the joy of being present with one another. As spring invites us to open our doors again, we hope these ideas help you open your heart as well by building fellowship that is honest, welcoming, and grounded in Christ.



FRESH SPRING SALADS *for Gathering*

by Shayla Clabaugh

When spring arrives, nothing makes me more excited than a fresh green salad. These are two of my go-to favorites, simple, flavorful, and perfect for sharing around the table. Whether you're hosting a casual lunch or contributing to a potluck, I hope these recipes bring a little brightness to your gathering.

BROCCOLI SALAD

Serves: 8–10

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Dressing

1 cup mayonnaise

1½ tablespoons granulated sugar

3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Salt, to taste

Salad

1½ pounds broccoli florets, chopped

1 cup cooked bacon, chopped

⅓ cup red onion, finely chopped

½ cup sweetened dried cranberries

½ cup roasted sunflower seeds

This broccoli salad is a longtime favorite for potlucks, family gatherings, and ladies' days. It strikes the perfect balance between savory and sweet, making it a true crowd-pleaser. While it can be served right away, I find it's even better after resting in the refrigerator for a couple of hours, allowing the flavors to fully develop.

INSTRUCTIONS

Whisk together all dressing ingredients in a small bowl and set aside.

In a large bowl, combine all salad ingredients and toss well. Drizzle with the dressing and toss again until evenly coated. Refrigerate for up to 3 days.





STRAWBERRY SPINACH SALAD

Serves: 6–8

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Dressing

¼ cup olive oil

3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

2 teaspoons maple syrup (or honey)

¼ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

Salad

5 cups baby spinach or mixed greens

2 cups sliced strawberries

½ cup thinly sliced red onion

1 cup feta cheese

½ cup roasted sliced almonds

2 cups blueberries

If you're looking for a light, refreshing salad, this one fits the bill beautifully. It works just as well for a quick lunch as it does as a side dish for guests. Serve it as written, or turn it into a heartier meal by adding grilled chicken, avocado slices, or a hard-boiled egg.

INSTRUCTIONS

Whisk together all dressing ingredients and set aside.

In a large bowl, gently toss all salad ingredients. Dress just before serving to prevent the spinach from wilting.

Shortcut tip: If you're short on time, a poppy seed dressing or apple cider vinaigrette makes a great store-bought alternative.

THE GIFT OF BEING *INTERRUPTIBLE*

BY ENA SAVAGE

"Hey Mom"

"Honey, if you have time..."

3 a.m. insomnia.

Tummy bugs for Christmas.

Life is full of interruptions. Interruptions are not specific to our generation. Jesus lived an interrupted life. Christ's example in the Gospel of John shows that being interruptible is our calling. Some days this seems impossible, but by changing our perspective and loving people, we can learn to be more interruptible.

Is life full of interruptions, or is it full of opportunities? This is a matter of perspective. Jesus responded to interruptions not as impositions but as opportunities. In John chapter two, Jesus and His disciples enjoyed a wedding feast until the wine ran out. Prompted into action by His mother, Jesus acted to save the groom from shame. He changed water into wine, preserving the groom's honor, and His glory was manifested (John 2:11). Jesus accepted this interruption as an opportunity to serve. The needs of others must be seen not as interruptions but as opportunities to serve.

We may come as guests but need to be prepared to work as servants.

Remembering our purpose helps put the focus on people. In a world of temporary things, remembering that souls are eternal emphasizes the importance of people.

Jesus recognized this truth. He saw people as eternal souls worth His time and love. Jesus loved people from the least to the greatest with no distinction. After restoring the blind man's sight, Jesus later sought him out to check on him (John 9:35). People matter to Jesus. People should matter to us.

Ironically, people are also the main cause of interruptions in life. Yet Jesus saw them with a heart of compassion. *When we choose to see people like Christ did and love people like He does, interruptions become blessings that allow us to show people His love.* It is easy to hurry the love right out of life and be too selfish to consider others. Busyness leaves no room for Christ's love and grace.

People do not plan to need help or cause interruptions, but we can plan our response to these unexpected needs. We can see interruptions as opportunities to shine our light and share God's love, or we can allow them to make us bitter and resentful. What do we do with the opportunities God gives us? How are we teaching our children and grandchildren to react to life's interruptions? Often, the truest hospitality begins when our plans are interrupted.



Better Together



REDISCOVERING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

BY SIERRA BUSH

Five years have come and gone since the world “shut down” and adapted to social distancing and limited gatherings in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. Many ordinary rhythms of life were disrupted in that season. Grocery stores, federal buildings, and many other public spaces closed their doors, lobbies, and waiting rooms. In some cases, churches closed their doors for worship as well.

That season looked different for each of us. What was that time like for you? Were there aspects of worshipping from home that felt easier or more convenient? Did you feel the emotional strain of being separated from other believers?

As restrictions lifted, did anything change for you or your congregation as you returned to gathering together? As Christians, seasons of separation should prompt us to reflect on what God intends for His people. Rather than returning to old habits out of convenience, Scripture invites us to consider where we are meant to be as God’s Word describes true community.

What Does God Say About Community?

The English word “community” doesn’t appear in the Bible. Instead, Scripture is filled with descriptions of fellowship and shared Christian living.

That distinction matters. Living in harmony and fellowship with other Christians isn't meant to be something we occasionally opt into. It is intended to shape our daily lives. Community isn't built only in formal moments.

It takes shape in quiet conversations before worship begins, in prayers offered over shared burdens, in meals eaten together after services when schedules are set aside for people. It grows when someone notices your absence, remembers your name, or checks in when life feels heavy. These ordinary, repeated moments are how God knits His people together, shaping faith through presence rather than convenience.

Returning to Worship

Hebrews 10:25 instructs believers not to forsake assembling together. While the command itself is clear, the verse also explains why gathering matters. The second half of this verse urges Christians to "exhort one another" (NKJV). The Greek word *parakaleō* carries the idea of encouragement, comfort, and strengthening.

Whether your congregation continued meeting in person throughout that season or you are still navigating what returning looks like, gathering with other believers plays an essential role in keeping our hearts oriented toward heaven.

When we worship together, we speak to one another through "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Ephesians 5:19). Through gathering, we follow the example of servants like Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas by meeting needs within the body (Acts 6). And through gathering, we use our individual gifts to serve one another and glorify God (1 Corinthians 12).

Christian faith was never designed to be lived in isolation. Scripture consistently reminds us that life in Christ is lived together, even when culture suggests otherwise.

When we allow cultural messages to shape our priorities more than God's instruction, Scripture calls us to gently realign our hearts with His design.

Growing your Church

When we take an others-centered approach to community seriously, inviting others becomes more natural. It may look like welcoming someone to worship, sharing a meal after services, or opening space for connection through simple gatherings. As we consider others, we recognize that what feels comfortable to us may not feel the same to someone else. By putting ourselves in another's place, we can better understand how to create opportunities for belonging, encouragement, and service.

When you are present in worship, your voice encourages others. Your presence strengthens others. Your example matters more than you may realize. Community is built through presence. Our roles as brothers and sisters in Christ are lived out when we show up for one another.

It can be tempting to believe that our absence goes unnoticed or that missing a gathering makes little difference. Scripture gently reminds us that every member plays a role in strengthening the whole body. When we gather on Sunday mornings, we worship God together and help one another remain faithful on this side of heaven. Each believer is a meaningful part of that shared life, whether it always feels that way or not, and God uses that shared faithfulness in ways we rarely see in the moment.

*Every member plays a
role in strengthening the
whole body.*

Spring Blooms

MEET EVERYDAY GATHERINGS

BY CRISTEN BERNETHY

One of the simplest and most charming ways to welcome spring is by incorporating fresh or faux flowers into your décor. Whether you opt for a single arrangement as the table's focal point or create a more layered display, florals instantly add life and color to any space.



For this setting, we styled two centerpiece options. The first features faux flowers arranged in a crock gifted to me by my grandmother. Incorporating meaningful family pieces not only adds character but also makes the design feel especially personal. The second centerpiece keeps things effortlessly simple, using fresh flowers displayed in a mason jar, a timeless and approachable choice.

SIMPLE WAYS TO REFRESH YOUR DINING ROOM



Both arrangements are paired with dinner and dessert plates, complemented by soft pink napkins tied with a simple bow. This small detail subtly elevates the overall tablescape without feeling overdone.

Gathering around the table doesn't need to feel formal to be meaningful. In our home, full of the energy of boys and the bustle of everyday life, we often keep things relaxed with a seasonal centerpiece and paper plates. It's a reminder that true hospitality isn't about perfection, but about being present with the people you love.

"True hospitality isn't about perfection, but about being present with the people you love."







GIVE

SERVE WITH PURPOSE AND GRACE

Give is where we turn our faith outward through the way we love and serve. John's Gospel shows Jesus noticing needs, meeting people with compassion, and pouring Himself out in both quiet moments and costly acts of devotion. These pages offer practical ways to live that same heart of service, caring for your family, supporting your church, tending to those around you, and honoring God in the everyday. As spring stirs us toward renewal, may you be encouraged to serve with purpose and grace in every season of life.

learning to *Notice* who needs you

By Ariana Crowell

As I was growing up, I experienced moments of feeling invisible, not in my family, but within the church. I longed for someone outside my family to reach out and pour into me spiritually. I needed it desperately.

Let your experiences train your eyes.

For a while, I sat with that hurt, wondering why no one was stepping in. Eventually, I realized that I couldn't expect others to do all the work. So, I started asking. I invited older women to lunch, made a point to talk with them after church services, and hoped someone would invest in me spiritually. But no one did. It hurt. And in those moments of disappointment, I made a promise to myself: no one I could help would ever feel the way I felt. That leads to my first piece of advice: let your experiences and circumstances shape the needs you are most inclined to notice.

With that resolve, I began paying closer attention. I intentionally opened my eyes to people who felt overlooked, and I realized I was surrounded by others in the same position I had been in. There were girls I'd attended church camp with for years who needed a mentor. There were kids in my Bible class who needed someone to invest beyond Wednesday nights. There were mentors facing difficult circumstances who needed reminders that someone was praying for them.

Watch closely for receptivity.

It's important to note, though, that not everyone responded well. Some people were perfectly content to let me pour into a lidded cup. When that happened, I learned to redirect my efforts toward those who were receptive; those who took the encouragement to heart and grew. That brings me to my second piece of advice: watch closely. People reveal more than they realize. Their responses will show you whether your efforts are bearing fruit or if they're better placed elsewhere.

Listen carefully for what's being said.

Over time, these first two steps became instinctive. Not to boast, but to encourage you to persevere, the payoff is worth it. This habit has equipped me to meet needs I never personally experienced. I've been blessed to participate in short-term mission work and hear stories of brethren losing contact afterward, so I make an effort to stay in touch. I know many baby Christians who aren't studied with after conversion, so I study with them. That leads to my third piece of advice: listen carefully when people mention their needs. They will often tell you exactly what they're lacking, you just have to practice hearing it.

As with everything, Jesus is the perfect example. He met the needs of people in every kind of circumstance. He noticed the woman at the well in John 4, fed the 5,000 in John 6, healed the man born blind in John 9, and prayed for believers throughout history in John 17. Jesus met needs because He looked closely, listened carefully, and loved deeply. When we learn to do the same, His compassion becomes visible through our lives.



5 WAYS

To Refill Spiritually When You Are All Poured Out

By Robyn Donaho

We all understand physical exhaustion, but have you ever felt spiritually tired? Has going to mid-week Bible study, serving in a great ministry, or even following God's will been met with a less-than-cheerful heart? Sometimes we need to refill our spiritual selves so that we can joyfully work for the Lord with all our might.



1

DO THE JOB YOU WERE SENT TO DO (JOHN 1:7-8, 32-34)

John's job was to "bear witness about the light," and his actions supported that goal. Consider what is draining your battery and whether it can be done more effectively or efficiently. Don't be afraid to make changes, simplify, or consider a new area of service. Even a small change can bring renewed energy and focus.

2

REFLECT ON YOUR JOY BEING COMPLETE (JOHN 3:29-30)

Consider your work completed, results given, and blessings bestowed, and rejoice in your service to Jesus. When you see how the mighty hand of God has used you for His purpose, you will be encouraged. Even when things don't turn out as we hope, lessons and blessings still abound. With humility, thank God for allowing you to be part of His plan and find joy in the fruits of this labor.

3

GET A DRINK OF WATER (JOHN 4:13-14)

Return to the source that sustains, and drink deeply. Connecting to the Lord routinely is necessary, but when you feel spiritually depleted, invest in an intentional tune-up. Take time to pray and study with renewed focus. Put yourself on Do Not Disturb: ask someone to watch your kids, put away your phone, block distractions, and make this a special time between you and the Lord. Drink the Living Water that gives renewed life for the work set before you.

4

REJOICE WITH THE LABORERS (JOHN 4:36-38)

We are encouraged when we connect with fellow harvesters in the fields. Call a friend to exchange ideas and pray for one another. Attend a retreat or family camp that uplifts your spirit. God gave us a church family that spans the globe; the connection we share and the support we offer one another is something we must intentionally use.

5

DON'T LIMIT WHAT JESUS CAN DO (JOHN 5:6-9)

When the lame man was asked if he wanted to be healed, he had no idea what was coming his way. When you are spiritually empty, don't limit how God can refill and use you. Connect with Him, be encouraged by fellow Christians, and let your faith grow. The Lord can and will work through you in ways that are unknown, exciting, challenging, and good — and He will give you everything you need for that moment.

Challenge:

Reading John with spiritual renewal in mind led to immediate answers — in just the first five chapters. If you are feeling depleted, read John (or any book of the Bible) while intentionally seeking renewal. Scripture will provide everything needed to be filled again.



FAITH LIVED OUT

Faithfulness Across a Lifetime

By Carla Moore

I'm excited to begin writing a column that will focus on interviews with people I find intriguing, memorable, encouraging, and different from me. And so, I begin with an interview with my mother, who is all of the above.

Words I would use to describe my mom are convicted, determined, devoted, mischievous, uncompromising, respectful, loving, and honest. Her name is Elsa, a fact that puts stars in the eyes of her Frozen-loving great-granddaughters, though she has always gone by her middle name, Janice. She is 86 years old now and lives just five minutes from my home in a facility that provides round-the-clock care.

She has lived a full life.

She sang alto in a high school trio that recorded several singles, worked for the Federal Aviation Agency, and even saw JFK and Jackie in Fort Worth on the day of his assassination. She met my dad on a blind date (recalling instantly that it was February 29, 1962) and knew almost immediately that he was “the one”.

But what matters most to my mother is her faith.

She has lost much over the years: her husband, her independence, her health, her mobility, and many of her choices. But she has not lost her memory. She is a devoted Bible student with remarkable recall. I can begin a passage “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this...” and she will finish it without hesitation. She loves talking about the Bible.

She was raised in a denomination, but when her older sister obeyed the gospel, she began asking thoughtful questions: planting seeds in Mom. “Where you attend, are there elders?” her sister asked, pointing her to passages like Acts 14:23.

Mom told me, “I began to wonder...why don't we have elders?” She gathered tracts, especially those by A.G. Hobbs, read every scripture cited, and studied carefully. On May 12, 1960, she became a New Testament Christian.

She married my father, Carl Garner in June of 1963, and together they entered a life of ministry.



My dad worked in Texas Bible Chair programs at Navarro Junior College in Corsicana, and later at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos. My mom worked alongside him, loving and serving college students she always called “the kids.”

I asked her what she loved most about that season. “The kids,” she said simply. They filled our home, joined us for devotionals and retreats, and were woven into our everyday life. Hospitality wasn’t an event; it was simply who she was.



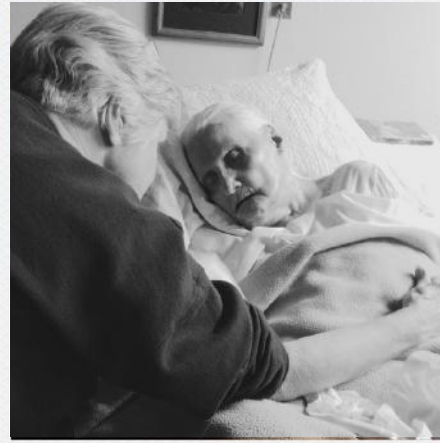
*Hospitality is a posture of the heart,
not a hosted event.*

“When do you think you grew the most spiritually?” I asked her. “At McCarty,” she said. “Studying with those kids.” Her office sat in the lobby of the student center, a natural stopping place for students in between classes. She loved them and she loved their souls, and they knew it.

When I asked her what the hardest part of being a Christian had been, she didn’t hesitate. “Nothing is hard about that.”

I pressed a little, reminding her of a particularly painful experience she and my dad endured years ago. She waved it off as part of life. When I mentioned how often people talk now about “church hurt” and leaving because of it, she responded plainly: “I can’t imagine losing your soul because your feelings were hurt.”

Though Mom and I think very differently and (like all mothers and daughters) have disagreed over large and small things, I have immense respect and love for her.



*Faith does not disappear with hardship;
it clarifies what matters most.*

For more than ten years, Mom cared for her own mother as Alzheimer’s slowly took hold. Recently my brother sent me a photograph of Mom bending near Grandma’s ear, listening to her and loving on her. It was a reminder of how Mom attended to her with tenderness, doing small things, not because they mattered to her, but because they mattered to Grandma. And in this way, she taught me what faithful caregiving looks like.

Now the roles are reversed.

Life is hard for her these days. She is tired and longs to be with the Lord. I try to remind her of truth, but I also know sometimes she just needs support and presence, not perspective. I remind her of the countless lives she’s influenced for good.

I asked her once, “When you think about heaven, do you imagine seeing Dad again?”

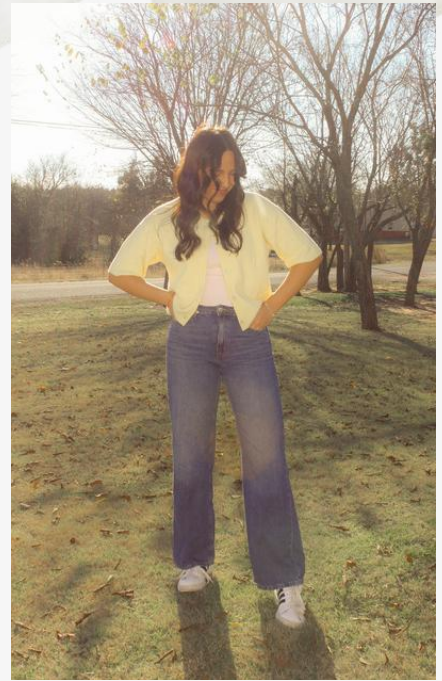
“I think first about meeting God,” she said. “I think that’s what he wants me to do. Then I’ll look around and see who all is there.”

That answer didn’t surprise me. The Lord has always held her heart.

Faith lived out doesn’t always look dramatic. Sometimes it looks like quiet conviction, long obedience, and love that keeps showing up, year after year, season after season. My mother’s life has been a steady testimony that faith, when lived fully, leaves a legacy no illness or age can erase.

SPRING STYLE WITH *Intention*

By Savannah Slater



With warmer weather approaching, we can be reminded that modesty can remain both intentional and stylish. But beyond color palettes and seasonal trends, there's a deeper question: how do we dress in a way that reflects Christ while still expressing our personal style?

We can read from 1 Timothy 2:9–10 and 1 Peter 3:2–4 that women are called to be modest, and I know most of us are very familiar with these verses. From these passages, we see that modesty is not meant to draw unwanted attention to ourselves. Even though we are talking about outward appearance, Scripture also reminds us that modesty reflects the inward person of the heart. We can be modest on the outside and still be immodest on the inside if our mindset doesn't reflect Christ. What we wear can reflect what is going on in our hearts.

*I believe modesty is truly
about the heart.*

If we desire to serve Christ and keep His commandments (John 14:15), then our choices, including how we dress, will naturally reflect that desire. Ladies, we can be modest and still be on trend.

As Christians, we are called to be a light in the world, and our everyday choices can either draw attention to ourselves or gently reflect Christ. In Matthew 5:16, we are reminded, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

When selecting an outfit for the day, here are three questions you can ask yourself before heading out:

Will my choice of outfit bring honor and glory to God?

Am I choosing this outfit to fit in or to seek the approval of others?

Does my outfit reflect a heart that wants to honor God?

I know this can be especially difficult for younger teens or women navigating school, college, or new environments where trends and comparison are everywhere. Whether we are at school, work, or spending time with friends, we have opportunities to glorify God, not just through our words, but through the way we live and serve those around us.

When it comes to shorts and skirts, I personally choose lengths that fall closer to my knee, but I'm not suggesting you need to exactly mirror my style. Rather than allowing trends, culture, or comparison to dictate our choices, God's Word can provide the guidance we need.



Another helpful tip is layering. Adding a cami or tank top under a dress or cropped shirt is a simple way to add coverage while still enjoying current styles.

Shopping with modesty in mind can also help us choose clothing that reflects Christ and allows us to focus more fully on serving others without distraction.

Finally, seek wise counsel. Turning to mature women in the church for biblical guidance on modest apparel can be incredibly helpful. Their wisdom and experience can offer clarity and encouragement as we grow.

Overall, modesty is an important and beautiful quality for a woman to cultivate. Being different can be difficult at times, but it honors God. Modesty isn't about rules or restrictions on how we dress; it's about a heart that desires to honor God, not only in appearance, but in all aspects of life.

When our choices reflect Christ, even in small, everyday ways, God is glorified, and that is our ultimate goal.



BE THE LIGHT:

No Excuses, Just Servant Hearts

By Susan Langford

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

—Matthew 5:14–16

Lewisville Church of Christ hosts a girls' servant leadership camp for one week each July for high school girls. I have been involved with OWLS (Outstanding Women Leading and Serving) for over ten years. I have the privilege of serving as one of the camp's directors alongside my dear friends, Maci Jackson and Jolene McDonie. It is a week that transforms not only the campers' lives, but the counselors' lives as well.

Several years ago, one of our young ladies asked a question that has stayed with me all these years: "How do you do it?"

I didn't completely understand the question at first. This thoughtful camper sincerely wanted to know how the directors, counselors, speakers, and cooks give up a week each summer to serve at OWLS. She knew we all came from a variety of different backgrounds—wives, moms, grandmothers, college students, and women in leadership roles at their places of employment. This camper's question led to the OWLS 2022 theme, **"No Excuses."**

That particular year, we had different women from the Lewisville congregation come and speak to our young ladies about how they serve in the church through all the different stages of life.

It was powerful to hear from an empty nester who owns her own business, *but she serves.*

It was humbling to hear from a full-time and very busy stay-at-home wife and mom, *but she serves.*

Finally, it was beautiful to hear from a wife and mom who is an executive in a publishing firm, *but she serves*.

All of these Christian women *make zero excuses and serve with humble hearts*.



This column is about women who serve Jesus with their whole selves, in such quiet humility that it is overwhelming to those of us who observe and learn from them.

They are lights in the world (Matthew 5:14–16). People see their good works and learn about our Savior. Women who serve with their whole selves look toward biblical examples like Hannah, Ruth, Deborah, Esther, and Mary, the mother of Jesus. Studying these examples has inspired me—and countless others—to seek to serve, because it is about His glory, His faithfulness, and His love. We must have zero excuses, just transformed lives and hearts.

Grow and Glorify Magazine is launching during springtime, a season when many of us focus on “spring cleaning,” so to speak. We refresh our homes in preparation for a new season of rebirth. Let the same occur within our hearts.

How are you going to “be the light” and show Jesus? Take it one step at a time.

Step 1: Study biblical women and the characteristics that made them servants of our Father and His Son. The women mentioned above can be a starting point for your study.

Step 2: Seek biblical mentors. Biblical mentorship can lead you to serving in extraordinary ways (Hebrews 10:24–25).

Step 3: Start small in finding opportunities to serve. Servant leadership is just as powerful in small moments as it is in large ones. Organizing a ladies’ day at church is a massive undertaking. However, washing dishes after a meal is just as needed and appreciated (Galatians 5:13).

Step 4: Serving is not meant to be a stressor for Christians; the intention is to show Christ’s love. Jesus is our ultimate example of service (Matthew 20:26–28; Mark 10:45). When cultivating servant leadership, extend grace to yourself. When we step out of our comfort zones, it will be difficult, but the reward is showing Him to others.

Step 5: Service doesn’t have to stay within the walls of a church building. How can you serve your community? How can you serve at your children’s school? How can you serve at your place of employment? In all of these settings, you are showing Christ (Philippians 2:3–5).

My prayer is that this column will accomplish the powerful words of the verse below:

*“Therefore encourage one another
and build one another up...”
1 Thessalonians 5:11*

Let’s be champions for servant leadership and keep pouring love and truth into each other. During this springtime, pray specifically for opportunities to serve. When we pray with intention and specificity, He will provide. Now, are we ready to receive?

GLORIFY

REFLECT HIS GLORY AS YOU WALK IN HIS WAYS

Glorify is where truth turns into transformation. John's Gospel not only reveals who Jesus is, but invites us to respond. To step out of the shadows like Nicodemus, to abide in the Vine, to walk in the light, and to let our lives bear the kind of fruit that points back to Him. These pages help bridge the gap between what we've learned and how we live, offering devotionals, reflections, and practical steps that shape our hearts toward obedience. As spring reminds us of new growth, may the words of Jesus take root in you and flourish in a life that reflects His glory as you walk in His ways.



THE WORD REFLECTED:

Glory in the Gospel of John

by Kristy Huntsman



When most people think of glory, they picture something shining like golden light, bright crowns, maybe even the sound of echoing applause. But John's Gospel shows us something far quieter. It looks like a Son kneeling to serve, whispering, "Not My will, but Yours."

John doesn't open with angels or kings. He starts with light breaking into the dark. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory." (John 1:14) That glory wasn't distant or untouchable; it was something Jesus lived. Every word, every act of mercy, every step of obedience revealed the heart of the Father. Glory isn't about recognition; it's about reflection.

John doesn't leave it as an idea. He says, "We have seen it." Glory is meant to be seen, not as a burst of power, but as a living picture of God's character.

When Jesus healed, forgave, taught, or washed feet, He was showing the invisible God in motion. That's what glory looks like in the gospel of John: the Father made known through the obedient life of the Son.

Reflect and Respond: How might your actions make God's character visible today? What could someone learn about Him by watching the way you speak, serve, or forgive?

Before we trace the word through John, sit with that image: not a throne room filled with splendor, but a servant with a towel. That's where glory begins.

The Word Made Visible (John 1:14; 2:11)

The very first sign Jesus performed, turning water into wine, wasn't a display of power for power's sake.

John tells us plainly: "This, the first of His signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee and manifested His glory." (John 2:11)

Glory is meant to reveal. Every miracle in John's Gospel is a window, not a performance. Through these windows, we glimpse the character of the Father. When Jesus heals, restores, and provides, He's showing us what God is like.

Reflect and Respond:

What are some everyday moments where you can "manifest His glory"? Is there a simple act of grace that could make Him visible to someone near you?

The glory of God isn't confined to mountaintops. Sometimes it looks like quietly meeting a need, forgiving before you're asked, or offering joy where despair used to live.

Whose Glory Are We Seeking?
(John 5:41–44; 8:54; 12:42–43)

There's a haunting verse tucked into John 12:42–43: "Many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him... for they loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God."

*"For they loved the
glory of men rather
than the glory of
God."
John 12:43*

This verse is one of those that always stops me cold. They believed, but they weren't willing to act on that belief because of what it would cost. They traded eternal glory for temporary approval. It's easy to read that and shake our heads, but it's important to ask ourselves how often we do the same. Do we shrink back from speaking truth, not because we doubt it, but because we're afraid of what others will think?

The religious leaders of Jesus' day measured righteousness by reputation. But Jesus challenged with a single convicting sentence: "I do not receive glory from men." (John 5:41) He wasn't chasing their praise because His worth was never up for debate. It rested fully in the Father's approval.

Then Jesus turned the mirror back on them: "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and don't seek the glory that comes from the only God?" (v. 44) Whose approval really drives the way I live? Do I care more about being liked or being faithful?

The kind of glory people give doesn't last. It fades fast, shifting with moods and opinions. But the glory that comes from God doesn't move. It's steady and solid.

John's Gospel keeps asking us the same question: Where am I seeking the wrong kind of glory? Real glory isn't about being noticed; it's about being faithful, even when no one else sees.

Reflect and Respond:

When have you caught yourself living for someone else's approval? What would it look like to trade that for the quiet confidence of living for God alone?

True glory doesn't begin with the approval of men. It starts with humble obedience to God.

Glory That Springs from the Right Source (John 7:18)

Later, Jesus said, “He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory, but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true.” (John 7:18)

The tiny preposition in this verse really matters. Jesus isn’t talking about who we speak for, but what our words flow from. Are they born out of our own opinions, emotions, and pride or from hearts shaped by the Word of God?

God warns that it’s not in man to direct his own steps and that our hearts, left to themselves, will deceive us. (Jeremiah 10:23; 17:9) When our words spring from ourselves, they carry our own glory. But when they spring from God, they carry His.

That’s how God is glorified in what we say, when our words flow from a heart so steeped in His Word that they sound like Him.

Reflect and Respond:

What usually shapes your words? Your feelings and experiences, or the Word of God? How could you make sure what you say and teach flows from Him today?

Glory begins at the source. The heart that draws from itself will always run dry, but the heart that draws from God never will.

Glory Through Surrender (John 7:39; 11:4; 12:23–28; 13:31–32)

In John’s world, glorification doesn’t happen on a throne; it happens on a cross. Over and over again, Jesus talks about the hour coming when the Son of Man will be glorified. John makes it clear that this glorification is His death. Glory and death don’t usually share a sentence, but in Jesus’ story, they do. The moment He laid down His life was the moment obedience reached its fullest expression and, in that surrender, the Father was glorified.

When Lazarus fell ill, Jesus said, “This illness is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” (John 11:4) Every miracle, every delay, every tear had a purpose: to point back to God.

Then, on the eve of His own death, Jesus prayed, “Father, glorify Your name.” (John 12:28) The answer thundered from heaven: “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

In John 13, when Judas leaves to betray Him, Jesus doesn’t panic. He says, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.” (v. 31) Even betrayal becomes a backdrop for God’s redemptive light.

Reflect and Respond:

Has obedience ever cost you something? True submission isn’t just agreeing with God when it’s easy, it’s surrendering when His will collides with your own. Where might God be asking for that kind of obedience in your life right now?

Glory bends low. It kneels to wash feet. It forgives enemies. It carries love all the way to the cross.

*Glory bends low. It
kneels to wash feet.
It forgives enemies.
It carries love all the
way to the cross.*

Glory That Multiplies (John 14:13; 15:8; 16:14)

Glory isn't static, it spreads.

In John 15:8, Jesus says, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples." The evidence of discipleship isn't titles or knowledge; it's fruit, the visible proof of an invisible connection.

But fruit isn't just for show. Its very purpose is to reproduce. The seed inside carries life meant to spread. When our lives bear fruit that reflects Christ with love, joy, patience, and truth, it plants seeds of faith in others. That's how God's glory multiplies.

Jesus tells His apostles, "Whatever you ask in My name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John 14:13) Then in John 16:14, Jesus says of the Spirit, "He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you." The Spirit's mission was to make Jesus known through the apostles.

*"Whatever you ask
in My name, this I
will do, that the
Father may be
glorified in the Son."
John 14:13*

That's what glory does too, it multiplies. It moves in a perfect circle: from the Father to the Son, through the Spirit, to the apostles, and then to us.

As we bear fruit, we reflect that same glory back to its source. What began in the heart of God now grows in the lives of His people.

Reflect and Respond:

What fruit in your life right now points others to Jesus? Where might He be inviting you to bear more?

The Glory We Reflect

When John uses the word glorify (Greek *doxazō*), he means "to enhance another's reputation," "to clothe in splendor." Glory isn't about adding something new to God, He's already infinitely glorious, it's about making that glory known.

Jesus glorified the Father by revealing His character. We glorify Jesus when we reveal His character in our actions.

Reflect and Respond:

In what ways can you reflect God's light into the places you go this week? In your home, your work, and your friendships?

Reflecting the Invisible

Glory isn't about brightness or applause; it's about reflection. In John's Gospel, Jesus reveals the Father through humble obedience, making the invisible God visible.

That same calling now rests on us. As we walk in His light, our words, actions, and faithfulness begin to reflect Him to the world.

This Glorify section is where truth moves into lived faith. Glory isn't something we earn; it's something we echo. Let's live in a way that makes His glory visible.

John 15: 7-10

not to depart;
dwell

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is

glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you

if we abide
in Him we will
bear fruit

John 14:15

keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.”

abide
↓
fruit
↓
glorify

We love because
He first loved us
(1 John 4:19)



ABIDE WITH ME

*Abide with me: fast falls the eventide;
the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.*

*Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away.
Change and decay in all around I see.
O thou who changest not, abide with me.*

*I need thy presence every passing hour.
What but thy grace can foil the tempter's
power? Who like thyself my guide and
strength can be? Through cloud and
sunshine, O abide with me.*

*I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless,
ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy
victory? I triumph still, if thou abide
with me.*

*Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes.
Shine through the gloom and point me to
the skies. Heaven's morning breaks and
earth's vain shadows flee; in life, in death,
O Lord, abide with me.*

- Henry Francis Lyte (1847)



DRAWING FROM EMPTY WELLS

BY KELLIE HUDSON

What do you feel like is your greatest struggle? Maybe you spend a little too much time on social media and can't help but compare your life to someone else's. Someone else is always a better wife, mother, teacher, or friend. Others are more successful, more accomplished. Why can't I be thinner, look younger, or feel better? Maybe you hold grudges against someone who has wronged you and just can't seem to get past it. Maybe you're justifying a secret sin in your life to keep from feeling guilty about it. Whatever your struggle may be, we're always feeling a little bit less than worthy.

We may not walk to a physical well each day, but we are just as familiar with the act of drawing. We return again and again to the places we hope will satisfy our longings with approval, control, comfort, or distraction, only to find ourselves thirsty all over again.

In John 4, Jesus encounters a woman from Samaria. She was living in a sinful situation that carried guilt and shame. Jesus offers this woman living water, the water of eternal life. When Jesus tells the Samaritan woman to go and get her husband and come back to Him, He challenges her to acknowledge the sin she was living in and her guilt and shame. This was the only way she would realize how thirsty she truly was and desire the salvation He was offering.

She was so ready to draw from His well that she ran back to town, telling all who would listen about the man who told her all that she had ever done. She believed wholeheartedly.

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.”
2 Peter 1:3

Reflect and Respond:
Are we thirsty for what Jesus has to offer? Have we acknowledged our sin, guilt, and shame? What wells are you drawing from? Comparison, busyness, insecurity, fear, success, denial, complacency? Will any of those things ever fill you up completely?

No matter how hard you work, what you change, or how much you gain, nothing on this earth can give you the contentment you're looking for. Only God can give you completeness. He has given us all we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3–4). He is the only one who can meet all your needs. His promises are better than any worldly desires.

God created us to thirst for Him. We have to want a relationship with Him and acknowledge that our life will never be complete without Him. Just like the woman at the well, sometimes we need a wake-up call. We need to be confronted with our sin and how we haven't put our trust in God.

Stop drawing your worth from the earthly wells that run dry. Look to God and all the riches and peace He offers from His living well. He will give you all you need. He will quench your thirst. He will make your life complete.



ABIDE. GROW. GLORIFY.



COME AND SEE

When I look back on my life, I wonder what might have happened if Christians never spoke up. What if no one talked to me about Jesus? What if my misconceptions were never gently corrected? What if my questions were left unanswered? What if no one took the time to point me towards the Bible? What if I walked into church that first Sunday and no one helped me understand the gospel? What if no one took the time to buy me my first Bible, study Scripture with me, and show me what it meant to follow Jesus?

There are so many what ifs. But the reality is that my eternity was changed because they did speak up. My questions were answered. My misconceptions were gently corrected. My coworkers pointed me toward the Bible. The preacher sat down with me and listened and taught me. Someone cared enough to buy me my first Bible. Others continued to study with me and encourage me as my faith grew. And because of those moments, many of them quiet and seemingly small, I was able to encounter Christ and experience His goodness for myself.

When I read the Gospel of John, I'm struck by how often faith begins the same way. In John's Gospel, the invitation is simple: come and see. When two disciples ask Jesus where He is staying, He replies, "Come and you will see" (John 1:39). Philip uses the same words when Nathanael is skeptical: "Come and see" (John 1:46). The Samaritan woman, newly changed and still processing her own encounter with Jesus, invites others by saying, "Come, see a man..." (John 4:29). Even in grief, at Lazarus' tomb, the invitation stands: "Lord, come and see" (John 11:34). Each moment carries its own simple invitation.

In every case, the invitation isn't about having the right words, it's about bringing someone close enough to encounter Jesus for themselves. None of these people were expert evangelists, nor did they have all of the answers. But each one played a vital role in bringing someone face to face with Christ and Jesus did the rest. That's because Jesus does the hard part, not us. He breaks through hard hearts and changes people from the inside. Speaking up doesn't always have to be a monumental act of brave teaching. Often, it looks like small acts of faithfulness, buying someone a Bible, bringing a meal to a hurting family, connecting someone with a trusted teacher, quietly sharing your story, or simply saying "come and see." Those small moments matter. Jesus does the heavy lifting. Our part is simply to open the door and invite others close enough to encounter Him.

Reflect and Respond:

Who played a "come and see" role in your own faith story, and how did their faithfulness shape you? What might it look like for you to open the door, without pressure or perfection, and trust Jesus to do the rest?



THE PRAYER OF A GIVING GOD

BY ABIGAIL S. BUCHANAN

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:16

When Jesus spoke these words, He was revealing not just that God loves, but *how* God loves. This was not a declaration meant to impress with its size, but a window into God’s heart. God loved the world in this way: He gave. Love, in its truest form, moved heaven to give what was most precious, His only Son.

John 17 draws us deeper into the heart of John 3:16 as we see Jesus, the gift Himself, conversing with God, the giver, on behalf of the recipients: believers in Christ. Mere hours before Christ will make the ultimate sacrifice, offering salvation to all of humanity, and several long days before He will walk out of His own tomb, securing victory over death, Jesus’ thoughts are on the graciousness of the Father and the needs of His followers; so He prays, interceding for the disciples and for us, asking that we might be granted God’s gifts.

Reflect and Respond: When you consider God as a giver, what does Jesus’ prayer reveal about the kind of gifts God desires to give His people?

With the darkest moment in eternity fast approaching, Jesus takes time to rest in what is already true. He reminds Himself and His disciples, “I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.... I have overcome the world” (John 16:32–33). In His prayer, He speaks of the faithfulness of God, trusting that what the Father has begun will not be abandoned (cf. Isaiah 66:9; 55:10–11). Jesus also recalls the work He has already completed: glorifying God, finishing the task given to Him, and making the Father’s name known (John 17:4, 6, 26).

Then Jesus turns His attention outward, to the reason behind God’s plan: us. On the eve of His death, the Creator of the universe lifts His voice to the Father on behalf of His people. The Son prays that His disciples would be kept in God’s name (vv. 9–11), protected from the evil one (v. 15), united as one (vv. 20–23), and brought to dwell where He is (v. 24).

Reflect and Respond: As you watch Jesus pray for others in the midst of His own suffering, what do you notice about His heart? How can we mirror this in our own lives?

And just as all physical gifts have a purpose, so too does every good and perfect gift from above (James 1:17). These aren’t just random requests for random blessings to be appreciated and then ignored. The gifts Jesus asks for His followers in John 17 all move toward one purpose, one intended outcome—a people made one. God desires that the world see His true nature and glorify Him, and that His people, united in the love of the Father and the Son, may share in that life and glory (John 17:21–22; 2 Peter 1:4).

Reflect and Respond: As you listen to Jesus pray for His people to be one, what do you notice about the kind of unity He desires? How can we demonstrate that in our daily walk?

God’s ultimate desire is to be known by His people, to dwell with them, and to live within them as they live within Him. To accomplish this, God gives His only Son, His Word, along with life, breath, and all things, with the intention that He might be glorified. This glorification is not rooted in self-exaltation. God does not invite people to share in His divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) out of need or vanity, but out of love. He longs for His people to share in His life because that life is very good, a life marked by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23), a place where mercy and truth meet and righteousness and peace kiss (Psalm 85:10).

Remember, glory is a matter of perspective. To glorify God is to allow the world to see Him for who He truly is: a giver, offering good gifts to those who are drawn into the perfection of His love. In this way, God’s glory is itself a gift, a shared life, the only true life (1 John 5:20). When Jesus prays in John 17 for God to be glorified and for His followers to be kept in the Father’s name, He is asking that God’s nature be revealed to them so fully that they may share in it, living lives shaped by compassion, mercy, forgiveness, and justice.

Heaven paid an unthinkable price to give us “the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27), yet our Lord gave it gladly (Isaiah 30:18; Jeremiah 3:19; Ephesians 1:5; Luke 12:32). As recipients of the gifts Jesus names in John 17 and secures through His death and resurrection (John 18–20), let us remember that God’s love is not a chotchke to be set on a shelf, but a way of being lived out. May we glorify Him by recognizing His true worth, before the world and within our own hearts, so that we may be with Christ where He is (John 17:24; Colossians 3:2), both now and in the age to come.

Follow Me Again

BY CARLA MOORE

On the edge of Capernaum, where the rocky shoreline tumbles precipitously into the Sea of Galilee, there is a quiet area for visitors to sit under shade trees and consider the many biblical events that took place there. The area is lined with many sharp-pointed agave plants, and there is a large sign that commands “No Swimming!” in English, Hebrew, Arabic, and Italian, which says “Attenzione! Pietre instabili!” And every time I see this sign, I think of unstable Peter.

Oh, Peter. Impetuous, brash, emotional Peter. Dedicated, whole-hearted, intense Peter. He wanted so much to be heaven-bound, but his earthly thoughts often got the best of him. The audacity of Peter, to take Jesus aside and rebuke him, as though he knew better (Mk. 8:32)! Peter’s faith propelled him over the side of the boat and onto the waves, but it dissolved into fear when he was distracted by the reality of his surroundings. His love and loyalty drove him to slice off the ear of the man who came to arrest Jesus, but he failed to see the necessity of what Jesus had to do.

Just before Jesus’ arrest, trial and crucifixion, Peter declared, “Lord, with you I am ready to go both to prison and to death!” And we know the rest of that story...his furtive following, his insistent denials, the crowing of the rooster, and Jesus’ eyes turning to Peter.



For many years, I imagined the scene where Jesus turned to look at Peter as one filled with hurt or disappointment. I could almost see Jesus mouthing the words to Peter "I told you so!"

But now, I think nothing could be further from the truth.

Just before Peter's declaration of loyalty (to the death!), Jesus said to him, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail, and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." So now, when I imagine the scene in that long-ago courtyard, I see Peter's grief-stricken eyes meeting those of his dear friend. I see comfort and love and confidence radiating from Jesus's eyes calling: "I prayed for you! I have faith in you! I know you are going to turn back to me! And I still have work for you to do!"

I have a dear friend with sin in her past. She had confessed it publicly and made things right, but, she confided to me, she still felt worthless, and she imagined that every time someone looked at her, they saw her as "that girl who was guilty of _____." I didn't understand it until I faced my own struggle with ongoing sin. I felt worthless to God...unworthy of his confidence and incapable of serving him in any way.

I had to learn more about forgiveness and the character of God. He is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love," (Psa. 103:8). When we repent of sin, He will remove it "as far as the east is from the west," (v. 12). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us...and to cleanse us..." (1 Jn. 1:9). That forgiveness carries the idea of letting go, hurling away, letting loose, and releasing. Our sin is gone.

Peter was sifted by Satan, but he overcame. Years later, he wrote that a tested faith is "more precious than gold," (1 Pet. 1:7). He learned to tone down his intensity, writing that we should "not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance," (v. 14). The Peter who dared to rebuke Jesus became one who urged us to "clothe yourselves...with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble," (1 Pet. 5:5). Peter followed Jesus again.

John 21 records that after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. When Peter realized it was the Lord, he threw himself into the water and swam to shore. I can't help wondering what words passed between the two of them on that occasion. Did Peter say, "I remember what you said to me! Lord, I am sorry! I have turned again and I want to be near you—I want to follow you again!"

That morning after Jesus fed the disciples, Jesus questioned Peter three times, "Do you love me?" Three times, Peter answered, "You know that I love you." So Jesus reminded him, "Follow me!"

That call is still ours. To follow him again.



Reflect and Respond:
Is there an area of your life
where guilt or shame has
caused you to keep your
distance from Jesus? What
is one small, faithful step
you could take to follow
Him again there?



ABIDE & BLOOM

BY ANDY STONE

In the book of John, we see many different aspects of Jesus and what that implies for us as His followers. Chapter 15 opens with Christ's words: "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit." (John 15:1–2, NKJV)

This image beautifully illustrates our relationship with Christ and the Father. Bearing fruit is not something to take lightly. Branches must remain connected to the vine in order to live and grow, and later in verse 6 we're told that branches removed from the vine are thrown into the fire. There is a serious call here: to remain, to stay, to abide in Christ.

Jesus explains what that abiding looks like when He says, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." (John 15:7–8)

Staying connected to the vine can be harder than it sounds. Life gets busy, and time often feels like a dwindling resource. We're pulled in countless directions each day, and it's easy to realize that our connection feels dry because we haven't made space to remain in His word or rest in His love.

Over time, I've worked a few simple practices into my daily routine that help keep me rooted and prayerful, even in busy seasons.

Daily Reading.

This is a habit I learned from my aunt, who reads one chapter of Proverbs every day, no matter what. For me, no matter what else is on my reading list, I make sure to read at least one Psalm. It's a small, consistent practice that keeps me grounded in Scripture on days when opening my Bible feels harder than usual.

Simple Prayers Throughout the Day.

I learned this practice at a retreat, and it's become part of my daily rhythm. Stop and say a short prayer you can repeat anytime, anywhere. It helps keep your heart oriented toward God throughout the day.

Writing.

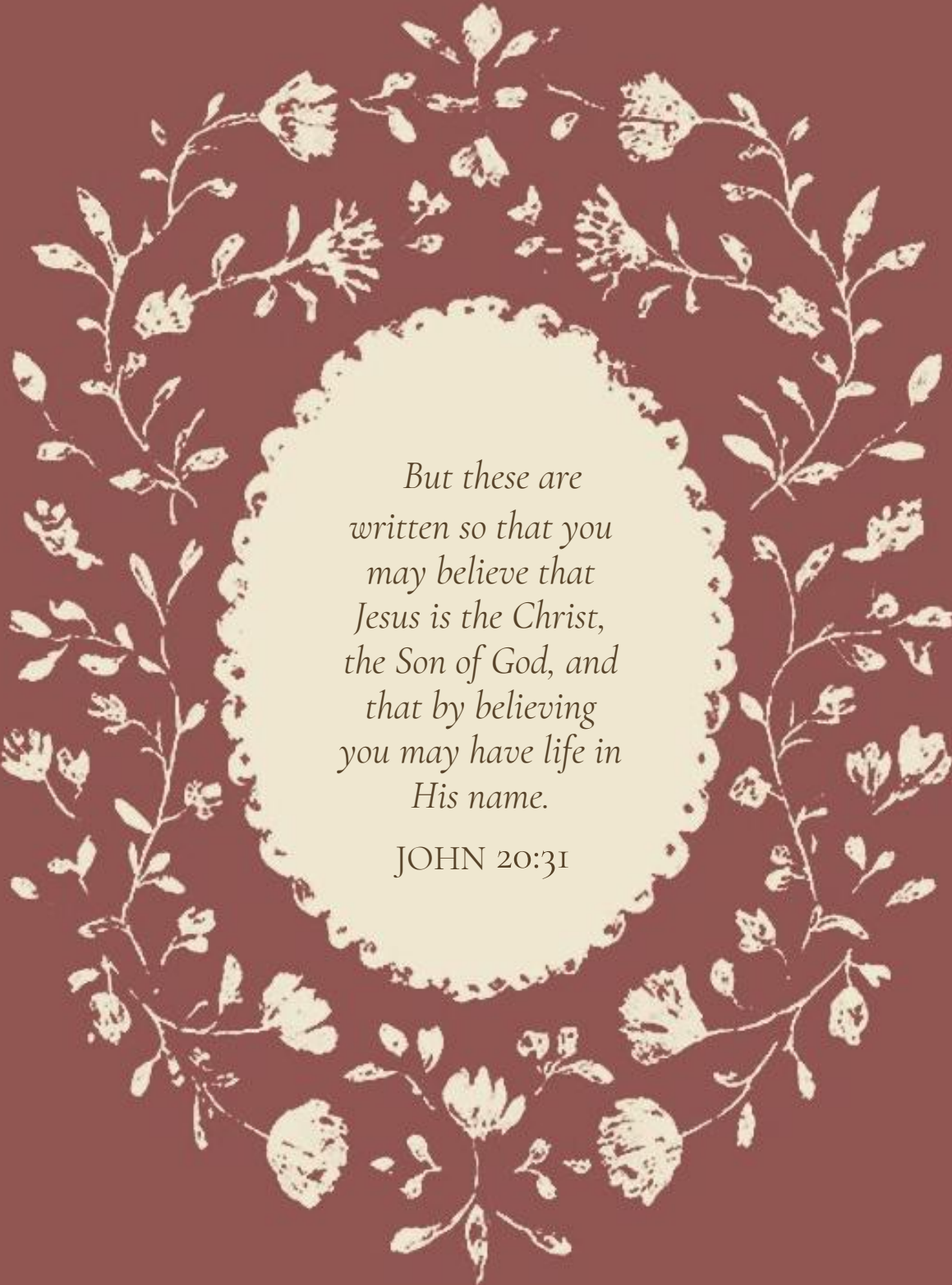
As a writer, I naturally turn to words. Writing letters to Christ, journaling prayers, or listing gratitude keeps me connected to the vine. Sometimes I simply write about my day, not as "Dear Diary," but as a conversation with God.

Reflect and Respond: What are a few small, simple ways you can remain rooted in Christ in your day-to-day life?

Psalm 1

The Way of the Righteous and the Wicked

- 1** Blessed is the manⁱ
who^a walks not in^b the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in^c the way of sinners,
nor^d sits in^e the seat of^f scoffers;
² but his^g delight is in the law² of the LORD,
and on his^h law he meditates day and night.
- ³ He is likeⁱ a tree
planted by^j streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its^k leaf does not wither.
^l In all that he does, he prospers.
- ⁴ The wicked are not so,
but are like^m chaff that the wind drives away.



*But these are
written so that you
may believe that
Jesus is the Christ,
the Son of God, and
that by believing
you may have life in
His name.*

JOHN 20:31

