

John Devotionals

John Commentaries & Sermons

Our Daily Bread

John's Gospel

>400 devotionals & sermon illustrations

Updated April, 2013

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More Devotional Illustrations

OUR DAILY BREAD

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John 1

- D L Moody's [Notes from My Bible](#) - general
- D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 1

JOHN 1:14-18

What Message Does Your Life Preach? - Jesus is God in human form. In coming into our world, He revealed the heavenly Father to us. That's what John meant when he said that "the Word became flesh." We call this the doctrine of the incarnation.

F. W. Boreham applied this truth in his book *Faces in the Fire*. He wrote,

"The Christian man must accompany the Christian message. The Word must be presented in its proper human setting. . . . The Word made flesh is thus pronounced with an accent and an eloquence which are simply irresistible. . . . The words of men become [filled] with passion and with power only when they are made flesh. And in the same way, the thoughts of God to men are only eloquent when they are so expressed."

To emphasize the importance of putting actions behind our words, Boreham quoted English writer George Eliot (pen name for Mary Ann Evans). Speaking of how people's lives convey the meaning of ideas, Eliot said, "Sometimes [words] are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft responsive hands, they look at us with sad, sincere eyes, and they speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living human soul."

Likewise, if people are to "hear" the Word of God, they must "see" it demonstrated in our lives. Jesus said,

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

Christians who live what they believe give flesh to the Word. —R W DeHaan

We teach more with our life than with our lips.

JOHN 1:1-14

He Left His Palace - At one time a wise and beloved Shah who cared greatly for his people and desired only the best for them ruled Persia. One day he disguised himself as a poor man and went to visit the public baths. The water for the baths was heated by a furnace in the cellar, and the Shah made his way to that dark place to sit with the man who tended the fire. The two men shared the coarse food, and the Shah befriended him in his loneliness. Day after day the ruler went to visit the man. The worker became attached to this stranger because he "came where he was" (Luke 10:33). The Shah expected the man to ask for a gift when he learned his true identity. Instead, he looked with love and wonder into his leader's face and said,

"You left your palace and your glory to sit with me in this dark place, to eat my coarse food, and to care about what happens to me. On others you may bestow rich gifts, but to me you have given yourself."

As we think of what our Lord has done for us, we can echo that fire tender's sentiments. He stepped from heaven to earth, from the worship of angels to the mocking of cruel men, from glory to humiliation. To provide our salvation, Jesus came in human flesh, took upon Him-self the form of a servant, and "became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). Our great Creator became our Savior. He deserves our heartfelt worship and humble adoration.—P R Van Gorder

God's highest Gift should awaken our deepest gratitude.

JOHN 1:1-14

His Steps or Your Steps? - As finite creatures, we sense that our earthly life and eternal destiny are somehow bound up with our Creator. Most religions of the world represent man's effort to reach up to God and become acceptable to Him. In China, for example, devout pilgrims ascend a sacred mountain called Taishan. They climb seven thousand steps to its summit, first passing through the "middle gate," then through "heaven's southern gate." Finally they reach one of the most beautiful buildings in all of China—the Temple of the Azure Cloud. Here they offer sacrifices, which the worshipers believe will gain God's favor. Such effort represents great religious fervor—and futility, for it brings devotees no closer to God than when they mounted the first step.

By contrast, Christianity begins with the Creator of heaven and earth reaching down to us. In His holiness He is beyond the highest mountain peak, so far out of reach of sinners that only He Himself could span the gulf. And that's exactly what He did. By the miracle of the incarnation, He became flesh and offered Himself as a once-and-for-all sacrifice for our sin. Then, after rising from the dead, He went back to Glory. And He did it all for us. Our part is to confess that we are sinners, to renounce all efforts to earn our salvation, and to trust Him as our Savior.

Those still climbing endless steps of self-effort may as well give up. They lead nowhere. Instead, take that all-important step of faith in the Lord Jesus. It's the only step that leads to heaven. —D J DeHaan

Salvation is not something we achieve but something we receive.

JOHN 1:1-18

The Masterpiece Revealed - In an article in Moody Monthly, Frank M. Fairchild told of a beautiful fresco on the ceiling of a Roman palace. Painted by Guido Reni in 1614, it was one of the most impressive works of its day. But visitors couldn't fully appreciate the masterpiece because they had to crane their necks to see it. To solve the problem, palace officials placed a large mirror on the floor beneath the painting, enabling viewers to study its reflection and more fully appreciate its beauty.

Fairchild made this observation:

"Jesus Christ does precisely that for us when we try to get some notion of God. . . . He interprets God to our dull hearts. In Him, God becomes visible and intelligible to us. We cannot by any amount of searching find out God. The more we try, the more we are bewildered. Then Jesus Christ appears. He is God stooping down to our level, and He enables our feeble thoughts to get some real hold on God Himself."

Christ came to reveal God to us. But He is more than a reflection of the Father. He is God in human flesh. Hebrews tells us that He is "the express image" of God (1:3). And Jesus Himself said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

As we meditate on the wonder of "the Word made flesh," we will say with the hymnwriter, "O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord."—R W DeHaan

Christ's birth brings the infinite God within the finite reach of man.

John 1:8-9 Believers Should be Like the Moon!

Max Lucado, in his book ["It's Not About Me,"](#) points out something true about the moon that should be true of all believers--it reflects the light of something greater. He says: "What does the moon do? She generates no light. Contrary to the lyrics of the song, this harvest moon cannot shine on. Apart from the sun, the moon is nothing more than a pitch-black, pockmarked rock (cp 2 Cor 4:7) But properly positioned, the moon beams. Let her do what she was made to do, and a clod of dirt becomes a source of inspiration, yea, verily, romance. The moon reflects the greater light." (Matthew 5:16) "Such a shift comes so stubbornly, however. We've been demanding our way and stamping our feet since infancy. Aren't we all born with a default drive set on selfishness? I want a spouse who makes me happy and coworkers who always ask my opinion. I want weather that suits me and traffic that helps me and a government that serves me. It is all about me." Just as John the Baptist lived to testify to Christ (the light), so to should we.

John 1:12 Full Pardon Refused

In the early 1800's, President Andrew Jackson issued a full pardon to George Wilson, a man sentenced to be hanged. Wilson refused it. But could he legally refuse the President's pardon? Supreme Court Justice John Marshall declared, "The value of the pardon depends upon its acceptance. If it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must hang." And Wilson was hanged. To pardon everyone's sin, Christ shed His blood on the cross. The price was paid. But each individual must first receive this forgiveness. (Evangelism, A Biblical Approach, M. Cocoris)

John 1:41 The Greatest Discovery

The renowned physician Sir James Simpson was the first to employ ether in obstetrics and to discover the important qualities and proper use of chloroform. A group of young scientists who highly respected Dr. Simpson asked him, "What do you count as the most outstanding discovery you have ever made?"

With tears welling up in his eyes he lifted his head and said, "Young men, the greatest discovery I have ever made is that Jesus Christ is my Savior; that is by far the most important thing a person can ever come to know!" Yes, one can make no greater discovery than this. Whenever men have "found" Jesus Christ they have learned that He makes good on His promises and by His transforming power does something wonderful for them, in them, and through them.

While it is true that for Andrew, Philip, John, Peter, and the rest of the Twelve, "finding Christ" meant poverty, hardship, suffering, persecution, and, in fact, death by execution for most; yet they also discovered in Him a Savior, Lord, Companion and Friend. Those who come to know the Lord today find Him equally precious. As a pastor I have spoken to parents a few moments after a child was suddenly snatched from them by an automobile accident, a drowning, or a brief illness. I have been present as a husband or wife passed from time into eternity, thus disrupting the closest of all human ties; and yet the surviving loved ones experienced God's peace and comfort. I have stood at the bed-side of men who had suffered a severe coronary attack — when their life was still in jeopardy — who have calmly testified to our Lord's keeping and sustaining power. Several have exclaimed, "God's way is best. If He wishes to take me, I am ready." Yes, I have seen Christians experience all kinds of sorrow, heartache, and disappointment; but in every case when they were in fellow-ship with Jesus Christ, I have witnessed in their lives God's strengthening power. The Lord has never failed those who have put their trust in Him. Have you discovered Jesus Christ?

Christ is not valued at all, until He is valued above all! —Augustine

John 1:41 Sharing the Gospel

In the late 1800's and early 1900's, [Alexander Whyte](#) pastored a large church in Edinburgh. During that time, a salesman by the name of Rigby would travel to Edinburgh regularly just to hear him preach. He would often invite other businessmen to accompany him to the services. One Sunday morning he asked a fellow traveler to go to church with him. Reluctantly, the man said yes. When he heard Whyte's message, he was so impressed that he returned with Rigby to the evening meeting. As the preacher spoke, the man trusted Christ as his Savior. The next morning, as Rigby walked by the home of Pastor Whyte, he felt impressed to stop and tell him how his message had affected the other man's life. When Whyte learned that his caller's name was Rigby, he exclaimed, "You're the man I've wanted to see for years!" He went to his study and returned with a bundle of letters. Alexander Whyte read Rigby some excerpts—all telling of changed lives. they were men Rigby had brought to hear the gospel. Like the Samaritans who had been led to Jesus by the woman at the well, these men "believed in Him because of the word" of Rigby. (ource unknown)

John 2

- D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 2

John 3

- D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 3

John 3:1-18

Regeneration Not Reformation - The message of salvation is regeneration—not reformation. Paul says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). The new birth is not an overhaul of the "old wreck," or a new paint job. The old Adamic nature is so incorrigibly corrupt that even God will not attempt to fix it up. He insists on completely rejecting the old hulk and making a new man. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:6,7).

The old nature received at birth is hopeless, and dressing it up with education and culture only makes it more dangerous than before. The more we work on the "old man," the more deceptive it becomes. Do you know why the sinner must be born anew? Because he was born all wrong the first time. He doesn't have to be taught to go his own way—it comes naturally to him. But by the new birth he is turned around and headed in the right direction!

Spurgeon told of a missionary who visited a primitive hut and became nauseated by the filthy floor on which he had to sit. He suggested to his host that they scrub the dirty surface with soap and water, but the man replied, "the floor is just clay—packed down and dry. Add water and it turns to mud. The more you try to wash it, the worse the mess becomes!" Yes, the hut needed something besides an earthen floor. So it is with the human heart: it is hard and dirty, and nothing will help it. Man needs a new heart. He must be born again from above! - M R DeHaan

John 3:3

All Show but No Go - The story is told of a wealthy man who, although he was outwardly religious, was not a Christian. He had in his employ an old gardener, a true believer, who tried to show him the emptiness of mere religion without Christ. Now it happened that there was one tree on the rich man's estate which never bore any fruit. However, one day as the owner was walking in his orchard, he saw some beautiful apples hanging on it. Imagine his surprise, especially when he went to pick some and found them to be tied on! The gardener by this simple illustration wanted to point out to his employer the difference between real Christianity and pious sham. Religion without Christ is like a barren tree on which the fruit is merely "tied on"!

Many so-called Christians today make an outward show of piety but it is only "tied on" religion. Their heart is not in it. They bring no fruit to perfection because they have never been born again. There is no genuine spiritual life within! They go through the motions, but their outward profession lacks the reality of an inner possession. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John tells us that "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:12).

As sinners, we are spiritually dead. The only way to experience genuine salvation is through Christ who said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. . . ." Personally receiving Him as Savior and Lord, we are born again and made "new creatures."

Have you ever actually trusted Christ, or are you simply going through the motions? Are those so-called "good works" of yours just "tied on," or are they the genuine fruit of a new life? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved . . ." (Acts 16:31).

The only "works" of unsaved men that will endure in Heaven are the nailprints in Christ's hands! —W. P. Loveless

John 3:6-7 An Inner Recreating

The new birth or regeneration is an inner recreating of fallen human nature by the Holy Spirit. It changes the disposition from lawless, godless self-seeking into one of trust and love, of repentance for past rebelliousness and unbelief, and loving compliance with God's law henceforth. It enlightens the blinded mind to discern spiritual realities and liberates and energizes the enslaved will for free obedience to God.

The use of the figure of new birth to describe this change emphasizes two facts about it. The first is its decisiveness. The regenerate man has forever ceased to be the man he was; his old life is over and a new life has begun; he is a new creature in Christ, buried with him out of reach of condemnation and raised with him into a new life of righteousness.

The second fact emphasized is that regeneration is due to the free, and to us, mysterious, exercise of divine power. Infants do not induce or cooperate in their own procreation and birth; no more can those who are dead in trespasses and sins prompt the quickening operation of God's Spirit within them. ([Your Father Loves You by James Packer](#), Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986)

John 3:11-12 Billy Graham

The Rev. Billy Graham tells of a time early in his career when he arrived in a small town to preach a sermon. Wanting to mail a letter, he asked a young boy where the post office was. When the boy had told him, Dr. Graham thanked him and said, "If you'll come to the Baptist church this evening, you can hear me telling everyone how to get to heaven." "I don't think I'll be there," the boy said. "You don't even know your way to the post office." (Bits and Pieces, Vol. F, #41)

JOHN 3:14-21

Don't Reject the Pardon! - William McCarrell writes that...

"While Andrew Jackson was President of the United States, a man was given a court trial and condemned to die. President Jackson offered to pardon him but the condemned man refused the pardon. Prison authorities, the Attorney General of the United States, and others earnestly endeavored to convince the man to accept the pardon. They tried to impress upon him that it would not only spare his life, but that if he did not accept the pardon it would be an insult to the President. The man persisted...The Attorney General consulted the Supreme Court, asking whether legal authorities could not force the man to receive the pardon. The court ruled that the pardon was merely a printed statement until the man accepted it. If he rejected the pardon, it remained printed matter" (William McCarrell, My Favorite Illustration).

It is much the same with God's salvation. Even though the Lord Jesus has provided redemption for everyone, only those who accept His pardon actually benefit from His offer. Until we personally trust Christ as Savior, we will never be free from the judgment of God upon sin. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

Salvation is offered to all. But to experience it and to benefit from all its rich and enjoyable blessings, we must accept it. —R W DeHaan

Salvation is free—but we must receive it.

John 3:20 Life in a Barrel - Someone who visited a large barrel factory gave this description of the inspection department:

"I noticed that the man who makes the final check of those huge containers whirls them around a few times to inspect the outside. Then, rolling them over, he thrusts a small electric light into the hole in their side and with his eye at the same opening gazes quietly for a moment as if looking for something. 'What do you do that for?' I asked. 'To see if it's charred correctly, if there's enough glue on the joints, and if there are any visible flaws.' He graciously allowed me to put my eye to the hole in one of the barrels, but all within was black as pitch. 'Here,' he said pushing me aside and putting the electric lamp through the opening, 'now look.' I did so and the inside was now as bright as day. Every joint and irregularity was clearly revealed."

Our lives are much like that barrel! Only the entrance of God's Word can remove our spiritual darkness. When by grace the Holy Spirit sheds His beams into the heart of a sinner, great conviction grips the soul for all the hidden evil and glaring imperfections show up. The barrel inspector with his light could only discover the flaws, but Christ, the Light of the world, can do far more. He can remedy them and make us anew!

There are many who enjoy sin so much they refuse to come to Christ lest their deeds be reproved by the light of His presence. I pray that you are not numbered among such foolish individuals. If you are not regenerated by His grace, at the final "checkout" your soul will be rejected by Him as not fit for Heaven. Remember the parable of the barrel, and let the search-light of God's Word reveal your sin to you. Then seek the spiritual renewing Christ alone can provide!

When the holy light of Jesus
Floods your dark and sinful soul,
You will see how much you're needing
His blest grace to make you whole. — G.W.

The first step toward salvation is to recognize your sin; for he who makes little of his disease will make little of his doctor. —T. Goodwin

John 3:16 - The Heart of the Gospel - Luther called John 3:16 "the heart of the Bible—the Gospel in miniature." It's so simple a child can understand it; yet it condenses the deep and marvelous truths of redemption into these few pungent words:

"God"...The greatest Lover
"So loved"...The greatest degree
"The world"...The greatest number
"That He gave"..The greatest act
"His only begotten Son".The greatest gift
"That whosoever"..The greatest invitation
"Believeth"...The greatest simplicity
"In Him"...The greatest Person
"Should not perish"..The greatest deliverance
"But"....The greatest difference
"Have"....The greatest certainty
"Everlasting Life"..The greatest possession
Source unknown

Fort Hancock - **Fort Hancock** is on the farthest tip of Sandy Hook, which reaches out into the Atlantic on the New Jersey coast. During World War II it was a military training center. A civilian of the area was eager to bring the good news of Christ to the thousands of young men stationed there. The military authorities would not permit him to enter in person. Not to be denied, he asked a firm that specialized in novelties to make several thousand mirrors about three inches in diameter. On the back of each mirror he had printed the words of John 3:16. Beneath these words he had this direction, "If you want to see who it is that God loves, look on the other side." As each soldier looked at himself he saw the person whom God loved. (Arthur Tonne, Source unknown)

As a group of college students toured the slums of a city, one of the girls, seeing a little girl playing in the dirt, asked a guide, "Why doesn't her mother clean her up?" "Madam," he replied, "that girl's mother probably loves her, but she doesn't hate dirt. You hate dirt, but you don't love her enough to go down there and clean her up. Until hate for dirt and love for that child are in the same person, that little girl is likely to remain as she is." (Source unknown)

John 3:30 (See [John 3:30 Commentary](#)) **The Pointer** - In his classic work *The Master's Indwelling*, Andrew Murray illustrated this problem of being distracted. He wrote, "When a man is giving a lecture, he often uses a long pointer to indicate places on a map or a chart. Do people look at that pointer? No, that only helps to show them the place on the map, and they do not think of it. It might even be of fine gold, but the pointer cannot satisfy them. They want to see what the pointer points at. And the Bible is a pointer, pointing us to God."

John 3:30 - William Carey - When Alexander Duff was home on furlough from India in 1834, he often visited missionary statesman William Carey. On his last visit before Carey died, Duff spent much of his time talking about Carey's work. Finally, Carey seemed to tire of it and whispered, "Pray." After Duff prayed, he arose to leave the room, but Carey called him to return to his side. "Mr. Duff," he said graciously, "you have been speaking about Dr. Carey, Dr. Carey. When I am gone, say nothing about Dr. Carey. Speak about Dr. Carey's Savior." May we too call attention to Jesus, the One whom God has highly exalted. His is the name to remember.

John 3:30 - Beethoven is Everything! - The kind of attitude we need is seen in the following story. After a performance of [Beethoven's](#) Ninth Symphony, the audience gave conductor [Arturo Toscanini](#) and the Orchestra a prolonged ovation. Toscanini, filled with emotion, turned to his musicians and whispered, "I am nothing, you are nothing." Then, in almost adoring tones, [Toscanini](#) said, "But Beethoven is everything!" Likewise, we must recognize that Jesus is everything.

John 4

- D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 4

JOHN 4:5-15

Are You Thirsty? - How simply our Lord presented the gospel. He often depicted the sinner's response to the salvation He offered in terms of everyday activities like eating, drinking, and receiving.

During a gospel meeting in a town in Ohio, a man was greatly convicted of his need of the Lord Jesus. He concealed his feelings even from his wife, who was a lovely Christian. One evening when she was away, he became so anxious about his condition that he began pacing the floor. His daughter, noticing her father's agitation, asked him what was wrong.

"Oh, nothing," he replied, trying in vain to relieve his pangs of conviction.

The youngster, with the profound simplicity of childhood, said, "Daddy, if you were thirsty wouldn't you go and get a drink of water?"

Her words startled the father. He thought of his thirsty soul, so parched and empty. Then he remembered what he had heard in the meeting—that the gospel was like a freely flowing fountain. He resisted no longer. That night he asked Jesus to save him.

Nothing can quench our spiritual thirst but Jesus. The wells of the world only make us more thirsty. Jesus said, "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst" (John 4:14). —P R Van Gorder

**No matter how much we drink from the wells of wealth and achievement,
we will only become more thirsty.**

JOHN 4:9-25

WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH - God, the infinitely holy One, is worthy of our worship. He is our Creator, Sustainer, and Savior. Without His loving care and guidance we would have no hope. We must therefore take the time and put forth the effort to worship Him in a way that brings honor and glory to His name.

When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman, He said, "God is Spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." In the devotional classic *The Practice of the Presence of God*, Brother Lawrence explains what this means.

"To worship God in truth is to recognize . . . that God is what He is; that is to say, infinitely perfect, infinitely to be adored, infinitely removed from evil, and thus with every attribute divine."

Brother Lawrence then added,

"What man shall there be, however small the reason he may have, who will not use all his strength to render to this great God his reverence and worship?"

We need to ask ourselves if this is the way we worship the One who made us? Do we reverence and adore Him from the deepest part of our minds and souls—from the heart? Are we totally honest before Him about what we are? Do we acknowledge who He is? To give Almighty God the honor of which He is worthy, we must approach Him "in spirit and truth." —D C Egnor **Christ is not valued at all until He is valued above all**

John 4:1-26 Jesus Three Steps with the Woman at the Well (see [John 4:4-15 Commentary](#))

1. First, He gave the revelation concerning new life. He stated that He came to give everlasting life.
2. Second, He revealed the spiritual need of the woman. He spoke of her immoral relationship with the man with whom she was living. This caused the woman to suppose Jesus was a prophet. Third, He revealed the nature of the Father declaring that "God is spirit" and consequently can be worshiped in any geographical place.
3. Finally, He revealed Himself to her as the Messiah. (J. Dwight Pentecost in Today in the Word, June 24, 1989)

John 4:13-14 Thirsting - (see [John 4:4-15 Commentary](#)) It is worth our attention that the two occurrences of the word "drinketh" in our text are actually in two different forms. The construction used in Greek implies a continual, habitual drinking in the first case, but a one time action in the second. Likewise, while the woman referred to a "well" (Jn 4:12) (literally "a hole in the ground"), Christ referred to a "flowing well" or "spring," using a different word. Furthermore, when He said one who drinks from His spring shall "never thirst," He said so in a very emphatic way. Not only is the word emphasized by the sentence structure, but it is compiled of two negatives preceding the verb "thirst," which is further strengthened by the word "forever," i.e., "shall not, shall not thirst, forever." One who drinks from the wells of the world will thirst again, for sinful pleasures never satisfy. But just a single drink from the springs of "living water" (4:10; 7:38) of which Christ spoke eliminates spiritual thirst forever. (Daily Walk)

John 4:32-37 Spiritual Priorities

In telling his disciples to lift up their eyes and look on the fields, Jesus is saying something about spiritual priorities. He has already told them: "I have food to eat of which you do not know," and "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work" (vv. 32,34). Now in effect he's saying to them: What you should concentrate on at this moment is not our picnic, but those people coming across the fields of Sychar led by the woman to whom I've been speaking.

Whenever opportunity affords, evangelism is to be our first priority. It's also, or ought to be, a joyful privilege: "He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together" (v. 36). There's nothing more worthwhile than seeking under God to be the human agent in saving men and women for all eternity.

Evangelism is also a partnership. Jesus said to his disciples, "I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor" (v. 37). What did he mean? He meant that he had been witnessing to the Samaritan woman, and she had been witnessing to her friends and neighbors and now they were coming to the well. It would be the disciples' privilege to "reap" them: to teach them more about Jesus and establish them in the kingdom and family of God.

It takes great humility to say, without jealousy or resentment, "I sowed, now you reap." But that's the pattern. In the winning and nurturing of souls sometimes we will be the reapers and sometimes we will also be the sowers, preparing the way for others to reap. Yet each role is essential; so we must be ready to fulfill either. ([Your Father Loves You by James Packer](#), Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986)

John 4:35 Wheat Harvest

Paul Rader used to tell the story of a great wheat harvest in Australia that rotted in the fields during World War I. Because so many men had responded to the call of the colors, nobody was left to gather in the grain harvest. It was a case of "reap or rot," as Rader pointed out. This is exactly the situation we face in our churches today: a plentiful harvest, and few reapers. This is no time to panic. The vast needs of the world stand as a fresh call to prayer. Christians have been commissioned to the high task of being co-laborers with God in His harvest. In so many areas, it is ripe to be gathered. It is a harvest for which God gave heaven's best. He is not about to let it rot in the fields. We must take the words of the Lord seriously. (Source unknown)

- D L Moody's [Notes from My Bible](#) - John 5

John 5

Witnesses to Christ:

1. the Father (5:18)
2. His works (5:36)
3. John the Baptist (5:33)
4. the Scriptures (5:39)
5. Moses (5:46-7)
6. Christ himself (8:14)

Source unknown

John 6

- D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 6

John 6:11

"A small circle of usefulness is not to be despised," observed Hudson Taylor, the pioneer missionary to China.

When Jesus depicted usefulness, He often startled His listeners. He used a boy's picnic pak to make more than five thousand fish sandwiches for a supper on the grass. We know nothing about the boy except that he shared what he had.

In contrast, the disciples worried about how much it would cost for this unplanned shindig—eight months of salary. The crowd was not exactly a grateful group; Jesus was nothing more to them than a fish-in-every-pot politician. The disciples and crowd both missed the point; perhaps the boy understood. A barley loaf in Jesus' hand became life-giving bread because it pointed to the Bread of Life; only He could take the insignificant and make it important.

In the Old Testament, God did not give Israel water from the rock to promote the use of mineral water; He took common water and gave it uncommon symbolism. Every drop should have re-minded Israel of the everlasting Water of Life.

To paraphrase Paul's words, we are nothing but old jelly jars; yet He takes what we have and who we are and reveals Himself through us (2 Cor. 4:7-12). When we are faithful in giving Him what we have, He increases our circle of usefulness. He takes all things great and small and makes them wise and wonderful.

John 6 Spiritual Hunger

Even an atheist, Franz Kafka, recognized the importance of satisfying his own spiritual hunger. In one short story, *The Hunger Artist*, he summed up his thoughts. He wanted his other works burned but insisted that this one story be saved.

In a typically bizarre fashion, Kafka has the hunger artist making his living by professional fasting. He is the practitioner of a once venerated profession. Seated on straw in his small barred cage, he is marveled at by throngs of people. After forty days, his fasts were terminated in triumph. His manager would make a speech, the band would play, and one of the ladies would lead him staggering in his weakened state out of the cage.

However, the day arrived when fasting was no longer understood or appreciated by the people. He lost his manager and had to join a circus. His cage was placed next to the animals. He became depressed by the smell, the restlessness of the animals at night, the raw flesh carried past him, and the roaring at feeding time. The people barely glanced at him in their hurry to see the animals. Even the circus attendants failed to limit his fast by counting the days. Finally, he was discovered lying in the straw, and in his dying breaths he told his secret: "I have to fast," he whispered. "I can't help it. I couldn't find the food I liked. If I had found it, believe me, I should have made no fuss and stuffed myself like you or anyone else."

Kafka was a writer of parables. The parable of the hunger artist is not about physical hunger but about spiritual hunger. Kafka was the hunger artist, and he realized he was starving to death spiritually, but he couldn't find any food he liked. ([The Agony of Deceit by](#)

JOHN 6:1-14

About halfway through a rehearsal conducted by Sir Michael Costa, with trumpets blaring, drums rolling, and violins singing their rich melody, the piccolo player muttered to himself, "What good am I doing? I might just as well not be playing. Nobody can hear me anyway." So he kept the instrument to his mouth, but he made no sound. Within moments, the conductor cried, "Stop! Stop! Where's the piccolo?" The most important person of all missed the piccolo's seemingly unimportant contribution.

At certain times in life we all feel insignificant and useless. Surrounded by people with greater talent than ours, we are tempted in our weak moments just to settle back and "let George do it." We reason that what we have to offer won't make much difference anyway. We forget that Jesus used five loaves and two small fish to feed a multitude. Like that young boy on the mountainside, each of us has something important to offer, and we are foolish to hold back because we discount the value of our contribution.

Whether our talent is great or small, the performance isn't complete until we do our best with what we have. —R W DeHaan

In God's eyes it is a great thing to do a little thing well.

John 6:9

What Good Am I? - Sir Michael Costa was conducting a rehearsal in which the orchestra was joined by a great chorus. About halfway through the session, with trumpets blaring, drums rolling and violins singing their rich melody, the piccolo player muttered to himself, "What good am I doing? I might just as well not be playing. Nobody can hear me anyway." So he kept the instrument to his mouth, but he made no sound. Within moments, the conductor cried, "Stop! Stop! Where's the piccolo?" It was missed by the ear of the most important person of all.

It's much the same way with the Christian and his use of his talents for the Lord. If in the great "Orchestra of life" the cry ever goes out, "Stop! Stop! Where's the piccolo?" let's make sure the Divine Conductor isn't missing you or me! Whether our talent is great or small, the performance isn't complete until we do our best with what we have.

John 6:15-21 Confident Hindu

You may remember Rao, the Hindu holy man who flirted with fame in 1966. The old mystic believed he could walk on water. He was so confident in his own spiritual power that he announced he would perform the feat before a live audience. He sold tickets at \$100 apiece. Bombay's elite turned out en masse to behold the spectacle. The event was held in a large garden with a deep pool. A crowd of more than 600 had assembled. The white-bearded yogi appeared in flowing robes and stepped confidently to the edge of the pool. He paused to pray silently. A reverent hush fell on the crowd. Rao opened his eyes, looked heavenward, and boldly stepped forward. With an awkward splash he disappeared beneath the water. Sputtering and red-faced, the holy man struggled to pull himself out of the water. Trembling with rage, he shook his finger at the silent, embarrassed crowd. "One of you," Rao bellowed indignantly, "is an unbeliever!" (John MacArthur, in *Tabletalk*, April, 1990)

John 6:27

Better Riches - In the book, *Illustrations and Incidents for Preachers and Teachers*, the story is told about an Arab who lost his way while traveling across a desert. Toiling for two days without food, he became nearly exhausted. At last he stumbled upon a little oasis where travelers before him had halted. He hoped to find some remnant of food, but only a small bag had been left behind. In eagerness he opened it, but to his disgust and disappointment, he found pearls instead of fruit or dates. He had riches but not bread! If all the wealth of the world had been given to him, it would have meant nothing as far as his most urgent need of the moment was concerned. What he required was food that he might be nourished and strengthened. Money and jewels without life were worthless!

So it is with many traveling across the desert of this world. Intent upon the acquisition of silver and gold, they give no thought to their spiritual needs. Even though someday they might find their hands full of riches, they lack that which alone can satisfy their souls. What a tragedy when they stand before God and discover that wealth is no passport to Heaven. Fame and success will not qualify them to enter the Pearly Gates. In fact, all such things will be stripped away and left behind.

There is nothing wrong with riches if properly acquired and rightfully used. But the most important thing is partaking of the "Bread of Heaven" and receiving the eternal blessing God imparts (John 6:35). Accept Christ as your Savior, for "he that eateth of this bread shall live forever" (John 6:58).

The riches of this world are vain;
They vanish in a day.
But sweet the treasures of God's love —
They never pass away!—G.W.

John 7

John 7:37 Cup or Bucket'

Lord, I crawled across the barrenness to You with my empty cup, uncertain but asking any small drop of refreshment. If only I had known You better I'd have come running with a bucket. (Nancy Spiegelberg, Decision, November, 1974)

John 7:38 God's Healthy Trees - A healthy tree consists of up to eighty percent moisture. It draws large quantities of water through its root system or absorbs it from dew and rain. In his book "As a Tree Grows", W. Phillip Keller says,

"the tree does not hoard this moisture for itself. The vast network of running roots beneath the soil often exceeds the outspread canopy of trunk, branches, and leaves spread to the sky. And vast quantities of water are lifted through the framework of the tree to be transpired into the surrounding air. This moisture, along with the discharge of oxygen, is what gives the forest atmosphere such a fresh fragrance."

Christians use the water of life in much the same way. In John 7:38, Jesus said that rivers of living water will flow from the heart of the one who believes in Him. He was referring to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in and through us. The Spirit, who we receive when we trust the Lord Jesus as our Savior, empowers and refreshes us, which enables us to help others. Our part is to read and study God's Word, to receive cleansing and renewal through confession, and to obey the Lord. Then, as we depend on the Holy Spirit, "living water" flows through us and provides refreshment and goodness to people around us. —D C Egnor

Only the Living Water can quench the driving thirst of the soul.

John 7:38

Overflowing Rivers - We are saved to tell others! When the Lord redeems us, He so fills us with "living water" that, if we are normal Christians, we overflow to others in a witness that produces results for God.

There recently came to my attention the true story of an amputee soul winner in Melbourne, Australia, who has a most remarkable ministry. A pastor who visited this crippled woman writes,

"When this girl was 18, she was seized with a dreadful affliction and the doctor said that to save her life he must take off her foot. Next the other foot was removed. The disease continued to spread, and her legs had to be amputated at the hips. Then the malady broke out in her hands. And by the time I saw Miss Higgins, all that remained of her was just the trunk of her body. For 15 years now she has been in this condition. I went to offer comfort, but I did not know how to speak to her or what to say. I found the walls of her room covered with texts, all of them radiating joy, and peace, and power. She explained that one day while lying in bed she inquired of the Lord what a total amputee could possibly do for Him. Then an inspiration came to her. Calling a friend of hers, who was a carpenter, she had him construct a device to fit her shoulder, and attach to it an extension holding a fountain pen. Then she began to write letters witnessing to the grace of God. She had to do it entirely with body movement, yet her penmanship was beautiful. She has now received over 15 hundred replies from individuals who have been brought to Christ through the letters she produced in that way."

The preacher said to her; "How do you do it?" and she smilingly replied, "You know Jesus said of His own that out of them `shall flow rivers of living water.' I believe in Him, and He has helped me to overflow to others."

Does not that amputee soul winner put all of us to shame? Have you tried to bring even one lost sheep into the Savior's fold? If not, why not?

We are not storerooms, but channels,

We are not cisterns, but springs;

Passing our benefits onward,

Fitting our blessings with wings. —Anon.

If "he that winneth souls is wise" what is the implication concerning those who don't? —H. G. Bosch

John 8

- D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 8

John 8:3-5 Boomerang Effect - The boomerang of condemnation often injures the one throwing. The Pharisees condemned the woman in order to condemn Christ. But they ended up the only ones condemned, not by Christ but by their own hearts. (Christ At The Crossroads, C. Swindoll)

No One Is Hopeless - When I first began to work for God in Chicago a Boston businessman was converted there and stayed three months, and when leaving he said to me that there was a man living on such a street in whom he was very much interested, and whose boy was in the high school, and he had said that he had two brothers and a little sister who didn't go anywhere to Sabbath School, because their parents would not let them. This gentleman said, "I wish you would go round and see them."

I went, and I found that the parents lived in a drinking saloon, and that the father kept the bar. I stepped up to him and told him what I wanted, and he said he would rather have his sons become drunkards and his daughter a harlot than have them go to our schools. It looked pretty dark, and he was very bitter to me, but I went a second time, thinking that I might catch him in a better humor. He ordered me out again. I went a third time and found him in better humor. He said, "You are talking too much about the Bible. I will tell you what I will do; if you teach them something reasonable, like 'Paine's Age of Reason,' they may go."

Then I talked further to him, and finally he said, "If you will read Paine's book, I will read the New Testament."

Well, to get hold of him I promised and he got the best of the bargain. We exchanged books, and that gave me a chance to call again and talk with that family.

One day he said, "Young man, you have talked so much about church, now you can have a church down here."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, I will invite some friends, and you can come down here and preach to them; not that I believe a word you say, but I do it to see if it will do us chaps any good."

"Very well," I said, "now let us have it distinctly understood that we are to have a certain definite time."

He told me to come at 11 o'clock, saying, "I want you to understand that you are not to do all the preaching."

"How's that?"

"I shall want to talk some, and also my friends."

I said, "Supposing we have it understood that you are to have 45 minutes and I fifteen; is that fair?"

He thought that was fair. He was to have the first 45 and I the last 15 minutes.

I went down, and the saloonkeeper wasn't there. I thought perhaps he had backed out, but I found the reason was that he had found that his saloon was not large enough to hold all his friends, and he had gone to a neighbor's, whither I went and found two rooms filled. There were atheists, infidels, and scoffers there. I had taken a little boy with me, thinking he might aid me. The moment I got in they plied me with all sorts of questions, but I said I hadn't come to hold any discussion; that they had been discussing for years and had reached no conclusion. They took up the 45 minutes of time talking and the result was there were no two who could agree.

Then came my turn. I said, "We always open our meetings with prayer; let us pray," I prayed, and thought perhaps someone else would pray before I got through. After I finished the little boy prayed. I wish you could have heard him. He prayed to God to have mercy upon those men who were talking so against His beloved Son. His voice sounded more like an angel's than a human voice. After we got up, I was going to speak, but there was not a dry eye in the assembly. One after another went out, and the old man I had been after for months—and sometimes it looked pretty dark—came and, putting his hands on my shoulder with tears streaming down his face, said, "Mr. Moody, you can have my children go to your Sunday School."

The next Sunday they came, and after a few months the oldest boy, a promising young man then in the high school, came upon the platform, and with his chin quivering and the tears in his eyes, said, "I wish to ask these people to pray for me; I want to become a Christian."

God heard and answered our prayers for him. In all my acquaintances I don't know of a man whom it seemed more hopeless to reach. I believe if we lay ourselves out for the work there is not a man but can be reached and saved. I don't care who he is, if we go

in the name of our Master, and persevere until we succeed, it will not be long before Christ will bless us, no matter how hard their heart is. "We shall reap if we faint not." ([Moody's Anecdotes, pp. 84ff](#))

Daniel Webster - The great attorney, orator, and statesman Daniel Webster was such an imposing figure in court that he once stared a witness out of the courtroom. Apparently Webster knew the man was there to deliver false testimony, so he fixed his "dark, beetle-browed" eyes on the man and searched him. According to the story, later in the trial "Webster looked around again to see if [the witness] was ready for the inquisition. The witness felt for his hat and edged toward the door. A third time Webster looked on him, and the witness could sit no longer. He seized his chance and fled from the court and was nowhere to be found." (Today in the Word, Moody Bible Institute)

John 8:7 The First Stone

One day I noticed on my pastor friend's desk a smooth, polished rock inscribed, "The First Stone." When I expressed surprise, he explained that it was a continual reminder from John 8:7 to himself, as well as to visitors, of the need of self judgment first. I now have a similar stone on my desk. How about a stone for your desk' (Emerson C. Ross in the Alliance Witness)

John 8:25 Luther writes

They desire to know who he is and not what he says. He desires them first to listen and then they will know who he is. The rule is: listen and allow the word to make the beginning, then the knowing will nicely follow. If, however, you do not listen, you will never know anything. For it is decreed, God will not be seen, known, or comprehended except through his word alone. Whatever therefore one undertakes for salvation apart from the word is in vain. God will not respond to that. He will not have it. He will not tolerate any other way. Therefore, let his book in which he speaks to you be commended to you. For he did not cause it to be written to no purpose. He did not want us to let it lie there in neglect, as if he were speaking with mice under the bench or with flies on the pulpit. We are to read it, to think and speak about it, and to study it, certain that He Himself, not an angel or a creature, is speaking with us in it. (Source unknown)

John 8:31-45

The darkest hour - The image of a duck flying through the air with an arrow embedded in her body is still fresh in my memory. A local newspaper carried the story and picture of a mallard duck that had eluded rescuers who wanted to remove the foreign object. A couple of months later a Canada goose flew into Wisconsin with the same problem. A young bow hunter had hit his mark, but his arrow hadn't stopped the bird. She had evaded game wardens, avoided tranquilizer-laced grain, and even dodged cannon-fired nets. After about a month, apparently exhausted from her injury, the goose was caught with a fishing net. Soon after surgery, veterinarians returned her to freedom. If geese could think, she probably wondered why she had tried so hard and for so long to elude her captors.

The experience of these reluctant captives reminds me of the men Christ spoke to in John 8. They too were slow to realize the seriousness of their condition. They didn't understand Christ's motives. To them, He looked like a captor. He wanted them to surrender their lives to Him. He asked them to become His disciples. He implored them to become spiritual bond-slaves. They were unable to comprehend that by surrendering they could "be made free" (v. 33).

Is it possible we have forgotten that real freedom is found only in being secure in Christ? This relates not only to our ultimate salvation but also to our daily walk with the Lord.

As servants of Christ, we are bound to be free. —M R DeHaan

Salvation produces a change within that releases the chains of sin.

John 8:34

Enslavement - When we repeatedly give in to a particular sin, we become a slave to it. A man dying of AIDS admitted that he had felt guilty about his homosexual way of life. But he couldn't carry out his resolve to give up his immoral lifestyle. Another young man admitted that his wife left him because of his preoccupation with pornographic literature. He's unhappy, but he can't stay away from smut shops. Similarly, many people who take cocaine know they are ruining their lives, but they feel powerless to give up the habit.

Samson too had become a slave to sin. He continued an affair with Delilah even though he knew she was bent on betraying him to his enemies. Samson was not stupid, but he was a slave to his lust. Like the homosexual, the pornography addict, and the drug user, he could not do what he knew he should.

Once we start down the wrong path, turning back is difficult. Jesus said that whoever keeps on sinning will become a slave to sin (John 8:34). Some of the most dangerous practices bring temporary pleasure. That's why they are so ensnaring. Freedom, however, is found in becoming a slave of Jesus Christ.

When we are in the grip of an evil practice that is ruining our life, we can acknowledge our sin and helplessness to the Lord, submit fully to Him, and be assured that He will deliver us. —H V Lugt

**The pleasures of sin are for a season,
but its wages are for eternity**

John 9

- D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 9

John 9:1-7

Did Someone Sin? - When illness strikes someone, we tend to think of it as the result of sin. Since all our woes can be traced to man's original sin, we reason that sin must also be the immediate cause of sickness. Apparently this was how the disciples analyzed the case of the man born blind. But Jesus' reply, "Neither has this man nor his parents," undercuts all pat answers to affliction.

Perhaps emotional illness, more than any other kind of suffering, is subject to shortsighted, judgmental responses. Most physical diseases are socially acceptable, but a stigma still hangs over most psychological disorders. In her book *God's Remedy for Depression*, Vivian Clark tells of a discussion on the topic "Is Depression Sin for the Christian?" One person said, "Because it can't coexist with the fruit of the Spirit, which is joy, it must be a sin." Another added, "There is no reason for Christians to be depressed." Just then, a sad-faced woman slipped away from the group. For days she had been despondent and unable to gain victory. Those remarks added to her depression.

Some emotional problems may indeed be caused by wrong attitudes or secret sins. But all of us transgress, and yet not everyone breaks down. The causes of depression and mental illness are so varied and complex that we must not engage in simplistic solutions. To help someone, we shouldn't immediately ask, "Who sinned?" Rather, we should pray, "Lord, help me further Your work in this person's life."—D J DeHaan

**Compassion invests everything necessary
to heal the hurts of others.**

John 9 Bible Translation

Wycliff Bible translators Bob and Jan Smurtherman were assigned to the Macuna people of southeast Colombia, South America. Progress was going well in putting the Bible into the Macuna language. The chief's son was engaged as the language helper. Each portion of the Scripture had to be checked and double-checked for meaning and clarity.

After five years of labor, the Gospel of John was being finalized for publication. Gathered together to hear the Word of God, the tribe sat patiently.

Beginning at John 9:1, the son read about Jesus' encounter with the man born blind. When he got to the verse where Jesus says that this man was born blind "in order that the works of God might be put on display," the old chief stood to his feet. Requiring silence by his uplifted right hand, he said, "We must stop killing our babies."

To a people steeped in animism, the normal process was to take their deformed babies to a desolate place. There the babies were deserted and exposed until dead.

The implications of the gospel became shockingly clear upon hearing of a better way. - Philip L. McKown

Light and Mind

In his brilliant new book, *Catching the Light*, quantum physicist Arthur Zajonc writes of what he describes as the "entwined history of light and mind" (correctly described by one admirer as the "two ultimate metaphors of the human spirit"). For our purposes, his initial chapter is most helpful. From both the animal and human studies, we know there are critical developmental "windows" in the first years of life. Sensory and motor skills are formed, and if this early opportunity is lost, trying to play catch up is hugely frustrating and mostly unsuccessful. Prof. Zajonc writes of studies which investigated recovery from congenital blindness. Thanks to cornea transplants, people who had been blind from birth would suddenly have functional use of their eyes. Nevertheless, success was rare. Referring to one young boy, "the world does not appear to the patient as filled with the gifts of intelligible light, color, and shape upon awakening from surgery," Zajonc observes. Light and eyes were not enough to grant the patient sight. "The light of day beckoned, but no light of mind replied within the boy's anxious, open eyes." Zajonc quotes from a study by a Dr. Moreau who observed that while

surgery gave the patient the “power to see,” “the employment of this power, which as a whole constitutes the act of seeing, still has to be acquired from the beginning.” Dr. Moreau concludes, “To give back sight to a congenitally blind person is more the work of an educator than of a surgeon.” To which Zajoc adds, “The sober truth remains that vision requires far more than a functioning physical organ. Without an inner light, without a formative visual imagination, we are blind,” he explains. That “inner light”—the light of the mind—“must flow into and marry with the light of nature to bring forth a world.” - National Right to Life News, March 30, 1993, p. 22

John 10

- D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 10

John 10 Called By Name

A friend, who was traveling in the East, heard that there was a shepherd who still kept up the custom of calling his sheep by name. He went to the man, and said: “Let me put on your clothes, and take your crook, and I will call them, and see if they will come to me.” And so he did, and he called one sheep, “Mina, Mina,” but the whole flock ran away from him. Then he said to the shepherd: “Will none of them follow me when I call them?” The shepherd replied: “Yes, sir, some of them will; the sick sheep will follow anybody.” I’m not going to make the application, I leave that to you. - Moody’s Anecdotes, p. 41

John 10:4 My Sheep Know My Voice

A man in Australia was arrested and charged with stealing a sheep. But he claimed emphatically that it was one of his own that had been missing for many days. When the case went to court, the judge was puzzled, not knowing how to decide the matter. At last he asked that the sheep be brought into the courtroom. Then he ordered the plaintiff to step outside and call the animal. The sheep made no response except to raise its head and look frightened. The judge then instructed the defendant to go to the courtyard and call the sheep. When the accused man began to make his distinctive call, the sheep bounded toward the door. It was obvious that he recognized the familiar voice of his master. -Source unknown

John 10:9

Have You Walked Out? - The renowned magician and escape artist, Houdini, could get out of any set of handcuffs, or any strait jacket that was ever put on him. In fact, he could release himself from almost any enclosure in less than one minute. Only once did he fail. That strange incident occurred when he was touring the British Isles. Arriving at a small town, he agreed to exhibit his ability by escaping from the local jail. The cell door was so ordinary looking that he smiled at the simplicity of the task. On the given signal he began to use all the terrific speed and dexterity he possessed to effect his release. To his great surprise, he was unable to pick the lock! Frantically he tried every device he knew, but nothing happened. For two more hours he worked feverishly. Finally, completely exhausted, he fell against the door and lamented his defeat. Immediately it sprang open. His frustration had been due to the fact that it had never been locked at all! How frequently, by a similar ruse, Satan has deluded poor sinners who are seeking to find a way to open the door of salvation! They work, they cry, they fret, they pray — trying in every way possible to bring release to their captive souls. Yet it is only when they fall exhausted from their own efforts, and rest their all against the "Door" — the Lord Jesus Christ — that they find the immediate release they so desperately seek.

You who today are weeping and straining every nerve to escape the clutches of Satan, just let go, and let God do that which your feverish trying will never accomplish. For having done all that is necessary to please God, the Savior now provides the only way to peace and Heaven. Lovingly He still invites men to stop struggling and to enter by faith into the liberating joys of His

free salvation!

Life's uncertain, death is sure;
Sin's the cause; Christ's the cure!
Man can't do it; Hell's in store;
God says, "Trust"; Christ's the Door! —Anon.

The "windows" of Heaven's blessing (Mal. 3:10), can only open to those who have first entered its "Door"!

John 10:10 Howard Hughes and "The Myth of More"

All he ever really wanted in life was **more**. He wanted more money, so he parlayed inherited wealth into a billion-dollar pile of assets. He wanted more fame, so he broke into the Hollywood scene and soon became a filmmaker and star. He wanted **more** sensual pleasures, so he paid handsome sums to indulge his every sexual urge. He wanted **more** thrills, so he designed, built, and piloted

the fastest aircraft in the world. He wanted **more** power, so he secretly dealt political favors so skillfully that two U.S. presidents became his pawns. All he ever wanted was **more**. He was absolutely convinced that more would bring him true satisfaction. Unfortunately, history shows otherwise. This man concluded his life emaciated and colorless; with a sunken chest; fingernails in grotesque, inches-long corkscrews; rotting, black teeth; tumors; and innumerable needle marks from his drug addiction. Howard Hughes died believing the **myth of more**. He died a billionaire junkie, insane by all reasonable standards. - Bill Hybels, Leadership

John 10:22-30

Feelings and Doubting - A NEW Christian confided to another believer that he was doubting his salvation. "Yesterday I was filled with joy, and I thought I would never be in the dark again. But now it's all gone, and I'm in the depths. What's the matter with me?"

"Have you ever passed through a tunnel?" asked his friend.

"Sure," said the new believer.

"When you were in the tunnel, did you think the sun had been blotted out of the sky?"

"No, I knew it was there even though I couldn't see it." "Were you distressed when you were in the tunnel?" "No, I knew I'd soon be out in the light again."

"And did you get out?"

"Of course!" replied the new Christian. Then he paused as the truth dawned on him. "I see what you mean. God's promises remain the same no matter how I feel about myself. I should trust God, not my feelings!"

Emotions change. The tides of enthusiasm are often controlled by daily happenings. But based on what Christ has done and what the Bible says, we can have a settled assurance about our relationship with God. Tunnels are only temporary!

John 11

- D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 11

John 11:17-37 Are You Afraid to Cry? - Tears are stronger than words and more binding than treaties. In 1947, President Harry S. Truman visited Chapultepec Castle, the West Point of Mexico. A hundred years earlier, when U.S. Troops captured the citadel, only six cadets survived, and they all committed suicide rather than surrender. As Truman placed a wreath on the monument to the heroes and bowed his head, the cadets in the color guard burst into tears. Someone said that nothing did more to help cement the two countries together than the emotion expressed on that occasion.

Christians, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, can express their deepest agonies and noblest desires through tears. When mingled with prayer, trust, or compassion, tears become a most beautiful and ennobling expression of the believer's faith.

I have no doubt that Jesus delighted in life's wholesome joys and pleasures, even though Scripture does not mention His smiles or laughter. Yet He was so in touch with the heartbreaks of sin all around Him that He wept unashamedly at a tomb, shed tears over the unbelief of Jerusalem, and entered fully into the sorrows of sin-laden humanity.

Our Savior's tears encourage us to be true to our emotions, letting the Holy Spirit use them to overcome barriers and heal relationships. Moistened eyes often convey faith, honesty, caring, love. We cry because hurting, hardened, unbelieving people need Jesus. And they just might meet Him through our tears. —D J DeHaan

**The soul could have no rainbow
if the eyes had no tears.**

John 11:30-44 Miracle or Obedience -

Jesus performed a mighty miracle in raising Lazarus from the dead. But He did not take away the stone from the door of the sepulcher, nor did He remove the grave clothes when His resurrected friend came out of the tomb, "bound hand and foot" (John 11:44). Commenting on this fact, J. Boyd Nicholson wrote, "Standing before the grave of Lazarus, whose body was corrupting, the Lord demanded something of those who longed for a miracle. They might have questioned, 'Lord, You are going to raise the dead; why not move this heavy stone with but a word—a thought?' Herein lies a great principle: The Lord will not do by a miracle what we are to do by obedience. Is there a stone He wants you to roll away? Is there some hard, unyielding attitude; someone you will not forgive; some unconfessed sin; some step of obedience He awaits? It is ours to obey, it is His to do the miracles." ([Our Daily Bread](#))

John 11:50 One for All

In Makkoth 1:10 it is stated that it was rare for the Sanhedrin to issue the death penalty. "The Sanhedrin that puts to death one person in seven years is termed tyrannical. R. Elazar ben Azariah says, One person in seventy years." So the condemnation of our Lord by the Sanhedrin was evidently very unusual and supports the testimony of Scripture to the antipathy for Him, as well as evidences a sense of urgency in Caiaphas's plot that "one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish." - From Exegesis and Exposition, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Fall, 1988), p. 53

John 12

- D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 12

John 12:12-19 Easy Does It! -

It's Sunday morning, time for the electronic church in America. Thousands lounge in their living rooms watching television. Almost every channel carries a religious program. Some preachers proclaim a clear-cut gospel message. Others, however, pace before an enraptured audience, telling them that Jesus will heal all their diseases and make them rich. "He wants you well! Poverty is of the devil!" shouts the preacher. And the swelling of applause picks up where he leaves off. People love the "gospel" of prosperity and deliverance from sickness.

Now turn back the calendar to a Sunday morning around 33 A.D. The city is Jerusalem. There's no TV, but there is a preacher who stirs the hopes of an excited crowd. For three years He's been going about Judea and Galilee, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and even raising the dead. Now He rides into Jerusalem on a colt, gladly receiving the acclaim of the crowd. But those who shout "Hosanna!" are accepting Him for what they think He will give them, not for who He is and what He came to do. They want an earthly Messiah who will provide for their material welfare, not a suffering Messiah whose death on the cross will expose their sin, provide forgiveness, and call for a life commitment.

Jesus didn't promise release from all the suffering in the world. But He did offer forgiveness, peace, eternal life, and a cross. Anything less than taking up that cross in serving Him is shallow allegiance.—D J DeHaan

The word "**easy**" appears only once in the New Testament, and then in connection with yoke.

John 12:24 Agonizing Decision

In his book *Yes, But How? Getting Serious About Your Faith*, Vernon Grounds tells about a young woman named Mildred Cable. She grew up in Great Britain and fell in love with a man who felt that the Lord had called him to be a pastor in that country. Mildred was convinced that the Lord wanted her to serve as a missionary in China. When the man asked her to marry him, she faced an agonizing decision. One night after much praying, talking, and weeping, she told him she could not accept his proposal. With heavy hearts they said goodbye and went their separate ways. Vernon Grounds writes, "That night she died to her own desires, her own hopes, her own humanly legitimate dreams. She died to her own will (and chose) to carry out the will of God. She went to China where God gave her . an extraordinarily fruitful ministry." - Daily Walk, August 15, 1993

John 12:27-36 "The Shadow of Death"-

The Lord Jesus Christ was born into this world to die for our sin. In His youth and during His public ministry, the specter of the cross loomed before Him. He lived in its shadow, knowing that being about His Father's business (Luke 2:49) would lead Him eventually to drink the bitter cup of divine wrath (Luke 22:42).

Holman Hunt depicted the certainty of Christ's death in a painting titled "The Shadow of Death." It shows Jesus standing beside His workbench inside a carpenter's shop in Nazareth. He has laid down His saw and is lifting His eyes to heaven. His face is distorted, apparently with pain. He stretches, raising His arms to release the tension in His muscles. The evening sun, coming in through the open door, casts His shadow on the wall behind Him in the form of a cross. The tool rack runs parallel to the shadow of His outstretched arms. He looks as if He has been crucified. A woman, no doubt Mary, kneels on the floor, her hands positioned on a chest containing the precious gifts of the wise men. She seems shocked by the shadow of her Son as if He were on a cross.

This painting expresses the central truth that Jesus Christ came to earth to take away "the sin of the world" (John 1:29). He could do that only through bearing our sin "in His own body on the tree" (1Peter 2:24). We can rejoice because Jesus did not turn aside from living under the shadow of the cross. —D C Egner

The nail-pierced hands of Jesus reveal the love-filled heart of God

John 12:42 Ritual Bathing

A total of 36,000 Sadhus (Hindu holy men) were part of the estimated crowd of 40 million attending the two month Kumbh Mela festival in India last spring. More than 200 American Sadhus of the Hari Krishna groups brought millions of dollars worth of Hindu literature to the festival. One of our partners in South India explains the purpose of the ritual bathing in the river, "They come for forgiveness of sins and salvation. Some thousands come stark naked—some of them rolling on the rough roads for miles, believing the festering sores on their bodies would earn them salvation. Hundreds have kept one arm lifted up for years until the arm gets shriveled with dry gangrene others have stood on one leg for years, hanging on to a suspended sling while sleeping. All these are done to appease angry gods."

During the festival, which takes place in the heat of summer, our Indian Christian partners set up free medical clinics. About 150 Christian students passed out literature and talked with pilgrims about the love of Christ. "Some received us with friendliness, some merely tolerated us, and others ferociously objected to the spread of Christianity," wrote our partner. A number of pilgrims accepted Christ, though circumstances prevented them from taking an open stand at the Kumbh Mela. But five Hindus, including two Sadhus, were baptized—the ultimate step of courage for a Hindu. - Partners, published by Partners International, August, 1992, p. 7

John 12:44-50 - Are You Drowning? -

If a man who couldn't swim fell into deep water and called for help, would you throw him a book called Five Easy Swimming Lessons? Shout encouragement? Or jump into the water and yell, "Just follow my example. I'll teach you to swim"? None of those actions would save the drowning man. He doesn't need a book, a motivational speech, or swimming lessons. He needs a savior, someone to reach him where he is, pull him out of his life-threatening circumstances, and deliver him to safety.

Our spiritual condition demands the same kind of action. The Bible says "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23), and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Everyone born into this world is a sinner doomed to destruction. We cannot redeem ourselves by reading books about religion, by trying harder to do right, nor by following the example of others. Our only hope of escape from sin's deadly embrace is Christ, who stooped down in grace to redeem the dying. The Bible says that "the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). He redeems all who trust in Him for salvation. Just as a drowning person must cease struggling and relax in the arms of his rescuer, we too must trust in the Lord Jesus.—R W DeHaan

Christ believed is salvation received.

John 13

■ D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 13

John 13:1-17 George Washington

During the American Revolution a man in civilian clothes rode past a group of soldiers repairing a small defensive barrier. Their leader was shouting instructions, but making no attempt to help them. Asked why by the rider, he retorted with great dignity, "Sir, I am a corporal!" The stranger apologized, dismounted, and proceeded to help the exhausted soldiers. The job done, he turned to the corporal and said, "Mr. Corporal, next time you have a job like this and not enough men to do it, go to your commander-in-chief, and I will come and help you again." It was none other than George Washington. - Today in the Word, March 6, 1991

Salvation Army

In 1878, when William Booth's Salvation Army was beginning to make its mark, men and women from all over the world began to enlist. One man, who had once dreamed of becoming a bishop, crossed the Atlantic from America to England to enlist. Samuel Brengle left a fine pastorate to join Booth's Army. But at first General Booth accepted his services reluctantly and grudgingly. Booth said to Brengle, "You've been your own boss too long." And in order to instill humility in Brengle, he set him to work cleaning the boots of other trainees.

Discouraged, Brengle said to himself, "Have I followed my own fancy across the Atlantic in order to black boots?" And then, as in a vision, he saw Jesus bending over the feet of rough, unlettered fishermen. "Lord," he whispered, "you washed their feet; I will black their shoes." Liberating Ministry From The Success Syndrome, K Hughes, Tyndale, 1988, pp. 45ff

John 13:7 - Spiritual Vision -

The disciples did not always understand what Jesus said and did. Like the blind man of Bethsaida in our Scripture reading for today, their prophetic insight was as distorted as one who sees "men as trees walking." In John 13:7 Jesus tells them not to become confused or bewildered by the heartbreaking events that were to transpire. They were to proceed by faith, resting on the precious promise that "hereafter" they would comprehend His wise purposes.

There is an old Hebrew legend that tells of a rabbi journeying on a mule through a wild country. His only companion was a rooster whose shrill crowing at sunrise awoke him to his devotions. He came to a small town at nightfall and sought shelter, but the inhabitants turned him away. Outside the village he found a cave in which to sleep. He lit his lamp before retiring, but a gust of wind blew out the light. During the night a wolf killed his rooster and a lion devoured his mule. Early in the morning he went to the town to see if he could buy some food. To his surprise he found no one alive. A band of robbers during the night had plundered the settlement and killed all the inhabitants.

"Now I understand my troubles," said the rabbi. "If the townspeople had received me, I would now be dead. Had not my rooster and mule been killed their noise or the light of my lamp would have revealed my hiding place. God has been good to me."

Christian, trust the Lord's wise leading. You may not understand it all now, but you shall know "hereafter."

I know not now why schemes were spoiled
And lofty aspirations foiled;
I know not now why briars and thorn
Should mar ambitions nobly born.
Hereafter I shall know, shall see
These very things were best for me! —A.G.

We must TRUST God even when we cannot TRACE Him!

John 13:14 An Influencing Example -

Albert Einstein once remarked, "Setting an example is not the main means of influencing another, it is the only means."

In washing the disciples' feet, Jesus shocked His followers. This was not the beginning of the first valet school; Jesus was not some water-basin wonder. With a towel around His waist, Jesus washed soiled feet, but He was more interested in dirty people than dusty toes.

The disciples had been vying for leadership positions, and Jesus played chief foot washer to clean their hearts rather than their feet. Knowing that He would be going away, Jesus acted as a servant to combat the hotshot attitudes of the disciples. He hoped they would recall and imitate His humility.

The Old Testament writers described Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, and Daniel as servants. Humble and caring leaders before God and others, they led without service charges.

In coming to this earth, Jesus became part of a long-running play, but He was not acting. He took the servant part for some thirty-three years to show people how to live (Philippians 2:7). Those who follow Him lead by example. They never make a grand entrance; they come in the service door, and others soon come after them.

John 13:31-35 Love Your Neighbor

In his book *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis wrote, "Do not waste your time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor act as if you did. As soon as we do this, we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you loved someone, you will presently come to love him. If you injure someone you dislike, you will find yourself disliking him more. If you do him a good turn, you will find yourself disliking him less." ([Our Daily Bread](#))

Spirit of Unity

During World War II, Hitler commanded all religious groups to unite so that he could control them. Among the Brethren assemblies, half complied and half refused. Those who went along with the order had a much easier time. Those who did not, faced harsh persecution. In almost every family of those who resisted, someone died in a concentration camp. When the war was over, feelings of bitterness ran deep between the groups and there was much tension. Finally they decided that the situation had to be healed. Leaders from each group met at a quiet retreat. For several days, each person spent time in prayer, examining his own heart in the light of Christ's commands. Then they came together. Francis Schaeffer, who told of the incident, asked a friend who was there,

"What did you do then?" "We were just one," he replied. As they confessed their hostility and bitterness to God and yielded to His control, the Holy Spirit created a spirit of unity among them. Love filled their hearts and dissolved their hatred. When love prevails among believers, especially in times of strong disagreement, it presents to the world an indisputable mark of a true follower of Jesus Christ. ([Our Daily Bread](#))

John 13:15 Servant's Attitude

Vernon Grounds, then president of Denver Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, challenged the graduating class of 1973 with the truth of today's text. Dr. Grounds told the graduates that he was going to present to them a tangible symbol that could help them in their future ministries. As the classmates filed quietly to the front, they wondered what it would be—a special Scripture verse, a little book, and inscribed medallion? To their surprise, it was a small square of white terry cloth. One graduate, who has served as an overseas missionary, says, "We were commissioned to go into the world as servants. That small piece of towel, frayed and grubby from years in my wallet, is a constant reminder of that moving moment and of our basic call to serve." Do you and I have a servant's attitude? The example Christ gave in the upper room was for us. We too need to serve our fellowman. Perhaps it's time for us to realize that the "towel in our hand" is a servant's towel. - Source unknown

John 13:15

Jesus Christ visibly demonstrated the love of God when He was on earth. In stooping to wash His disciples' feet, He mirrored the submissive step He had taken when He left heaven to become a man. He lived with the limitations of humanity, yet He healed the sick, reached out to the despised, and endured bitter hatred as His reward. He died like a criminal on a Roman cross. All of these things reflected God's love, for Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Jesus is no longer with us in His physical body—He now sits at God's right hand in heaven. Therefore, if God's love is to be embodied on earth today, it must be done through those of us who are Christians.

Not long ago, sixteen women from Evanston, Illinois, beautifully demonstrated God's love by rearranging their schedules to give round-the-clock nursing care to Martha, a 26-year-old woman with ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or Lou Gehrig's disease). They bathed her, fed her, talked with her, prayed for her, and witnessed to her. Martha, who had not accepted Christ as her Savior and couldn't understand how a loving God could let her get ALS, saw His love in these women and eventually became a Christian. Although feeble and unable to speak clearly, she gave a testimony of her faith and was baptized in a local church. A short time later, she died. She is with the Lord today because sixteen women, following Jesus' example, personified God's love. —H V Lugt

My life helps paint my neighbor's picture of God

John 13:31-35 Love Your Neighbor -

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John 13:35 Do You Need a "Business" Card? -

MANY Christians should carry ID cards saying, "I am a Christian." This is because their manner of living is so much like the world's that without some kind of identification you would never recognize them as being citizens of heaven.

C. H. Spurgeon apparently saw this inconsistency in some of the believers in his day, for he wrote,

"When I went to school, we drew such things as houses, horses, and trees, and used to write the word house under the picture of the house, and the word horse under the picture of the horse. Otherwise, some persons might have mistaken the house for a horse. So," Spurgeon continued, "there are some people who need to wear a label around their necks to show they are Christians, or else we might mistake them for sinners."

Jesus told His followers, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). In Matthew 12:33, He said, "a tree is known by its fruit." According to the apostle Paul, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

If we need identification cards to prove we are followers of Christ, maybe we're not.

John 14

■ D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 14

John 14:6

DRIVING in England can be stressful for Americans. British drivers sit on the right side of the car and drive on the left side of the road. Intersections called roundabouts are particularly confusing. No stoplights or stop signs. Before turning into one of these traffic circles, you have to know which lane takes you where you want to go. You stay in the outer lane if you are taking the first turn, the middle lane if you go halfway around, and the inside lane if you go three-quarters of the way around. If you get in the wrong lane, you may end up going down the wrong road or in circles.

The Lord spoke to His people Israel as if they were about to enter a British roundabout (Jeremiah 6:16). He told them to consider where they were going. He encouraged them to follow the good way, trusting Him as they had done in the past. But Israel refused to ask where the good way is. The result? Disaster!

Millions of people today make the same mistake. When faced with the decision of whether to live for God or for themselves, they choose themselves. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). After receiving Him as Savior, we must travel through life with Him in the driver's seat. His way is the only way to get where we want to go.

John 14:2 Happy Memories

The Lord Jesus is now in heaven, the "Father's house." He has gone there to "prepare a place" for all who have put their trust in Him. There is a sense, however, in which believers may have a part in preparing that place. That thought was brought to my attention as I read these observations by an unknown writer:

"I once had friends who were traveling abroad. Intending to build a new house upon their return, in all their journeying the dream of that new home was constantly in their minds. When they therefore could secure a beautiful picture, statue, or vase, they purchased in and sent it on ahead to await their arrival. The same thing was done with rare and curious treasures, which afterward, when placed in their new home, could be linked with happy memories and in this way contribute to their future enjoyment."

The writer then made this application: "I love to think that we, in these pilgrimage days on earth, are doing the same for our heavenly home. The kindly deed that made a rare picture in somebody's life, the little sacrifice that blossomed into joy, the helpful friendship—all these we shall find again. Whatever of beauty, tenderness, faith, or love we can put into other's lives will be among our treasures in heaven." - Our Daily Bread, January 30, 1994

John 14:6 Need for Godly Leaders

The need for godly leaders has been a popular topic in the Christian community. And rightly so. Leadership has often been sadly lacking within the church. But "fellowship" also needs attention. When believers aren't prepared to follow, they cast doubt on their status as believers. The following account comes to us from E. Stanley Jones. He told of a missionary who lost his way in an African jungle. He could find no landmarks and the trail vanished. Eventually, stumbling on a small hut, he asked the native living there if he could lead him out. The native nodded. Rising to his feet, he walked directly into the bush. The missionary followed on his heels. For more than an hour they hacked their way through a dense wall of vines and grasses. The missionary became worried: "Are you sure this is the way? I don't see any path." The African chuckled and said over his shoulder, "Bwana, in this place there is no path. I am the path." - Today in the Word, May, 1996, p. 24

Barna Statistics Even those who claim to be Born Again are not necessarily firmly grounded in the truths of the Bible. In his book which provides a statistical analysis of religious beliefs in America, George Barna cites several fascinating statistics which are based

on a national survey. In chapter four he states, "The Devil, or Satan, is not a living being but is a symbol of evil." Then asking that segment of his survey respondents who have identified themselves as being Born Again, he states, "Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with that statement?" The Born Again population reply with 32 percent agreeing strongly, 11 percent agreeing somewhat and 5 percent did not know. Thus, of the total number responding, 48 percent either agreed that Satan is only symbolic or did not know! Should it then be surprising that a few pages later Barna would receive some very startling responses? His next question, "Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and others all pray to the same God, even though they use different names for that God." Again, the respondents were asked to agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly. Of that population surveyed who identified themselves as Born Again, 30 percent agreed strongly, 18 percent agreed somewhat and 12 percent did not know. That is a total of 60 percent! (What Americans Believe, pp. 206-212). Watchman Expositor, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1993, p. 31

Hundreds of Religions - H. A. Ironside was occasionally interrupted during his sermons with the objection that there were hundreds of religions," and that no one could determine which was the right way. Ironside would answer by indicating that he knew of only two religions. "One," he would say, "covers all who expect salvation by doing; the other, all who have been saved by something done. The whole question is very simple. Can you save yourself, or must you be saved by another?" - Source unknown

John 14:15 - Love Makes Obedience Easy

If you love me, you will keep my commandments, not the other way around. Love makes obedience easy. It is the delight of love to do what the loved one desires when the heart grows dull and obedience is difficult, the proper response of the Christian is not to grit his teeth and tough it out, but to remember who it is that asks this of him and the for his sake, to do it. - Ray Stedman, Authentic Christianity, p. 157

John 14:16 Jackie Robinson

Jackie Robinson was the first black to play major league baseball. Breaking baseball's color barrier, he faced jeering crowds in every stadium. While playing one day in his home stadium in Brooklyn, he committed an error. The fans began to ridicule him. He stood at second base, humiliated, while the fans jeered. Then, shortstop Pee Wee Reese came over and stood next to him. He put his arm around Jackie Robinson and faced the crowd. The fans grew quiet. Robinson later said that arm around his shoulder saved his career. - Leadership

John 14:12-31 God's "Quilt"

A theology student writing a term paper about confession meant to type, "When we confess our sins, He takes away our guilt." But the young man couldn't type too well, and when he came to the word guilt, he typed quilt by mistake. When the professor returned his paper, the student grinned as he read the marginal note: "Never fear, little one, you'll never freeze, because God gave us a Comforter." Using his sense of humor, the professor had conveyed a marvelous truth. Jesus said that the Father would send the Comforter to abide with us forever. Pentecost fulfilled that promise (Acts 2:1-4). And ever since that historic day, the Holy Spirit has been faithfully carrying on His ministry in the lives of believers. His comforting activities include: guiding us into truth (John 16:13), assuring us we are God's children (Rom. 8:16), helping us pray (Rom. 8:26), transforming us into Christ's image (2 Cor. 3:18), and strengthening us (Eph. 3:16). Our response should be to learn all we can about Christ and by the Spirit put into action what we know. The Holy Spirit's purpose is always to glorify Christ, never to call attention to Himself. Thank you, Father, for our Comforter. Help us not to grieve or quench Him. We face this day with confidence because of His blessed ministry in our lives.—D J DeHaan

The Christian's heart is the Holy Spirit's home.

John 14:15

I Love You, Mother - When I was a little boy, my mother often recited to me Joy Allison's simple yet profound poem. Although a bit old-fashioned, it captures the heart of today's text about the true test of love:

"I love you, Mother," said little John;

Then, forgetting his work, his cap went on,

And he was off to the garden swing,

Leaving his mother the wood to bring.

"I love you, Mother," said little Nell;

"I love you better than tongue can tell!"

Then she teased and pouted half the day,
Till Mother rejoiced when she went to play.
"I love you, Mother," said little Fran;
"Today I'll help you all I can."
To the cradle then she did softly creep,
And rocked the baby till it fell asleep.
Then stepping softly, she took the broom
And swept the floor and dusted the room;
Busy and happy all day was she,
Helpful and cheerful as she could be.
"I love you, Mother," again they said,
Three little children going to bed.
How do you think that Mother guessed
Which of them really loved her best?

John 14:27 Real Peace -

When Australian pastor H. B. Macartney visited Hudson Taylor in China, he was amazed at the missionary's serenity in spite of his many burdens and busy schedule. Macartney finally mustered up the courage to say,

"You are occupied with millions, I with tens. Your letters are pressingly important, mine of comparatively little value. Yet I am worried and distressed while you are always calm. Tell me, what makes the difference?"

Taylor replied,

"I could not possibly get through the work I have to do without the peace of God which passes all understanding keeping my heart and mind."

Macartney later wrote,

"He was in God all the time, and God was in him. It was the true abiding spoken of in John 15."

When life becomes more like Macartney's than Taylor's, when we become tense, troubled, anxious, and fearful, and when we desire the peace Jesus promised, we must learn to abide in Christ as Hudson Taylor did. Abiding in Christ means to be in touch with Him continually so that the composure He experienced while on earth rules our lives. We need not agonize or plead or try to work up a certain feeling. The path to abiding in Him is that of confessing and rejecting all known sin, surrendering completely, and looking trustfully to the Lord Jesus for strength. It's continual dependence on Him.

We can enjoy the serenity of a peace-filled life if we will learn to abide in Christ. —H V Lugt

Peace floods the soul when Christ rules the heart

John 14:25-31 Peace, A Precious Commodity -

When Jesus was with His disciples in the upper room shortly before His crucifixion, He knew they would face turmoil and unrest in the days ahead. They would experience the distressing events of His betrayal, arrest, execution, and burial. Then, after His resurrection and ascension, they would face long periods of hard work, opposition, ridicule, and persecution. So in the quiet of those final moments together, He gave them words of comfort: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27).

Peace of mind and heart is still one of our most precious and needed commodities. In his book *A Time to Heal*, former President Gerald R. Ford repeated a story he had heard some years earlier. During the civil war in Greece in 1948, a villager was planning to emigrate to the United States. Before he left, he asked his weary, beleaguered, poverty-stricken neighbors, "What should I send when I get to America? Should I send money? Food? Clothing?" "No," one of his neighbors replied, "you should send us a ton of

tranquillity."

When the burdens and pressures of life pile up on us, we, like those Greek patriots and Christ's disciples, need peace. We who know Jesus as Savior can trust Him to make good on His promise (John 14:27). When we stop to remember what He did for us on Calvary and rest in His loving arms, we will begin to experience the power of the Prince of Peace. —D C Egener

Peace floods the soul when Christ rules the heart.

John 14:27

A dear friend of many years, Ethel La Botz, sent me a letter in which she wrote:

"As I was reading your devotional in Our Daily Bread called 'The Peace Corps,' I was reminded of what a missionary in Brazil told me when we were there. Reared in a godless home, she was unhappy and dissatisfied with life. Then one day she noticed an advertisement for the Peace Corps. The thought came to her, that's what's missing in my life—peace. So she joined and was sent to Irian Jaya, but she soon realized she couldn't find what she was lacking. Through her work, however, she came in contact with an old Indian. He was different from anyone she had ever met. She inquired as to what caused his peace, joy, and contentment, and he told her that Jesus was in his heart. So she started reading the Bible. Through the Word and the witness of the Indian friend, she found the peace that only Christ can give."

That same peace is available to all who by faith receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," said Paul in Romans 5:1.

Those who have peace with God can also experience the peace of God. This is what John 14 is all about. The Bible says,

"Let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7).

Yes, in this troubled world we can find peace—the wonderful, satisfying peace of God! —R W DeHaan

No God, no peace. Know God, know peace

John 15

■ D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 15

John 15:1-7 Pour it In! -

The Word of God has cleansing power. One of the surest ways to live a victorious Christian life is to bathe ourselves daily in the purifying principles of the Bible—by reading it, studying it, and obeying it.

A woman in a pagan area of the world became a believer and began attending Bible classes taught by the missionary who had led her to Christ. The teacher soon became discouraged because the new convert seemed to forget everything she was taught. One day the missionary remarked impatiently to the young Christian, "Sometimes I wonder what's the use trying to teach you anything. You forget it all anyway. You remind me of a strainer. Everything I pour into your mind runs right through." The student quickly responded, "I may not recall everything, but just as water passes through a strainer and makes it clean, what you have taught me from the Bible helps make me clean. I need that. That's why I keep coming back." The forgetful new Christian may not have retained all of the missionary's instruction, but as the truths of the Bible "poured through" her mind, she felt its cleansing effect.

It's important for us to be in God's Word every day—but even more important for the Word to be in us, where its purifying power can do its most effective work. —R W DeHaan

**If we pore over God's Word,
His cleansing power will pour through us.**

John 15:7

A MAN purchased a lottery ticket that would pay him \$100,000 if it turned out to be the lucky one. He asked my friend, a pastor, to pray that his number would be picked so he could give one-tenth of his winnings to the Lord. My friend hesitated, then said, "All right,

but first let me ask you this: Are you willing to give God the same percentage of your present weekly income?" The fellow looked surprised and dismayed. "B-b-but I need that to live on," he stammered.

This man's seemingly spiritual request was merely a cover-up for selfishness, and God doesn't honor such prayers.

Scripture verses like Matthew 21:22, "whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive," are not sweepstakes promises that cater to our selfish nature, nor are they tickets to wealth and success.

While the Bible contains many statements about God's willingness to hear and answer our prayers, John 15:7 defines the condition: We must live in fellowship with Christ and cherish His words in our hearts.

The more we study God's Word, know the mind of Christ, and desire His will, the more we'll pray with right motives—and the more answers to prayer we'll see.

John 15:12 The Mucker

In Ernest Gordon's true account of life in a World War II Japanese prison camp, *Through the Valley of the Kwai*, there is a story that never fails to move me. It is about a man who through giving it all away literally transformed a whole camp of soldiers. The man's name was Angus McGillivray.

Angus was a Scottish prisoner in one of the camps filled with Americans, Australians, and Britons who had helped build the infamous Bridge over the River Kwai. The camp had become an ugly situation. A dog-eat-dog mentality had set in. Allies would literally steal from each other and cheat each other; men would sleep on their packs and yet have them stolen from under their heads. Survival was everything. The law of the jungle prevailed until the news of Angus McGillivray's death spread throughout the camp. Rumors spread in the wake of his death. No one could believe big Angus had succumbed. He was strong, one of those whom they had expected to be the last to die. Actually, it wasn't the fact of his death that shocked the men, but the reason he died. Finally they pieced together the true story.

The Argylls (Scottish soldiers) took their buddy system very seriously. Their buddy was called their "mucker," and these Argylls believed that it was literally up to each of them to make sure their "mucker" survived. Angus's mucker, though, was dying, and everyone had given up on him, everyone, of course, but Angus. He had made up his mind that his friend would not die. Someone had stolen his mucker's blanket. So Angus gave him his own, telling his mucker that he had "just come across an extra one."

Likewise, every mealtime, Angus would get his rations and take them to his friend, stand over him and force him to eat them, again stating that he was able to get "extra food." Angus was going to do anything and everything to see that his buddy got what he needed to recover.

But as Angus's mucker began to recover, Angus collapsed, slumped over, and died. The doctors discovered that he had died of starvation complicated by exhaustion. He had been giving of his own food and shelter. He had given everything he had—even his very life. The ramifications of his acts of love and unselfishness had a startling impact on the compound. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:12).

As word circulated of the reason for Angus McGillivray's death, the feel of the camp began to change. Suddenly, men began to focus on their mates, their friends, and humanity of living beyond survival, of giving oneself away. They began to pool their talents—one was a violin maker, another an orchestra leader, another a cabinet maker, another a professor. Soon the camp had an orchestra full of homemade instruments and a church called the "Church Without Walls" that was so powerful, so compelling, that even the Japanese guards attended. The men began a university, a hospital, and a library system. The place was transformed; an all but smothered love revived, all because one man named Angus gave all he had for his friend. For many of those men this turnaround meant survival. What happened is an awesome illustration of the potential unleashed when one person actually gives it all away. - *Holy Sweat*, Tim Hansel, 1987, Word Books Publisher, pp. 146-147

John 15:13 Who Cares About the Bear!

Two hikers were walking through the woods when they suddenly confronted a giant bear. Immediately, one of the men took off his boots, pulled out a pair of track shoes and began putting them on. "What are you doing?" cried his companion. "We can't outrun that bear, even with jogging shoes." "Who cares about the bear?" the first hiker replied. "All I have to worry about is outrunning you." Jim Whitehead, quoted by Seymour Rosenberg in Spartanburg, S.C., *Herald*

John 15:13 The Transfusion

There was an orphanage near an American Marine Base in Viet Nam. One day the Viet Cong fired mortar shells into the orphanage, killing dozens of children and wounding many more. A boy named Kai had a seriously wounded friend who needed a blood transfusion. Kai's friend had a rare blood type and only Kai's blood matched it. Little Kai had never heard of a blood transfusion but

when the American doctors explained it would save his friend's life, little Kai volunteered. As the blood began to flow from Kai to his friend, Kai began to whimper. When the doctors asked if it hurt, he said no. A little later he whimpered again. Again he told the doctors it did not hurt. The doctors asked, "What's wrong, Kai?" With tears coursing down his light brown, dusty cheeks, Kai asked, "When am I to die, sir, when am I to die?" You see, little Kai didn't know that you only give a little blood. He thought you gave it all, and he was willing to do so for his little friend. -- Source unknown

John 15:13 A Young Hero

Jean, Nev. - A 13-year-old boy endured flames licking up his back as he passed his two little brothers out a window of their burning home, then managed to escape himself. "He stood there and handed me them babies out while he was cooking," Jimmy Holsclaw said Saturday of his son, Jimmy. "He never looked up or hesitated a minute, he did just what he was supposed to do." Jimmy was in critical condition Saturday in a hospital burn unit in nearby Las Vegas, suffering from second and third degree burns over almost half his body and severe smoke inhalation. His efforts early Friday saved the lives of his 3-year-old and 4-year-old brothers after the boys were trapped in a bedroom of their burning mobile home. -- Spokesman-Review, February 12, 1984

John 15:13 A True Friend

A story is told by a train engineer. He was approaching a trestle and saw two young girls walking over it. They heard the train approaching and tried to run to safety, but one girl's foot caught between the ties. They tried and tried to free it, but it was no use. Finally the one commanded her friend, "Run to safety and save yourself." She did, but immediately turned and ran back to try to release her friend. It seemed hopeless. She again ran to safety, but again returned to her friend. This happened three times, as the train came closer and closer. Finally the train struck the two girls who were locked in an embrace, and together they fell into the river below. - Ken Gangel, Moody Founder's Week, 2/4/83

John 15:13 The Widower

William Dixon was a widower who had also lost his only son. One day he saw a neighbor's house on fire; although the aged owner was rescued, her grandson was trapped upstairs in the blaze. Dixon didn't hesitate. Climbing an iron pipe on the side of the house, Dixon lowered the boy to safety, badly burning his own hands on the overheated pipe. Shortly after the fire, the boy's grandmother died, leaving him alone. As the town council considered what to do, two men appeared requesting custody of the boy. One was a father who had lost his son and wanted to adopt the orphan as his own. The other was Dixon. The first man gave his reasons for wanting to adopt the boy, then Dixon stood before the council and simply held up his badly scarred hands. When the vote was taken, the boy went to him. - Today in the Word, April, 1989, p. 36.

John 15:13 He Couldn't Swim

One summer morning as Ray Blankenship was preparing his breakfast, he gazed out the window, and saw a small girl being swept along in the rain-flooded drainage ditch beside his Andover, Ohio, home. Blankenship knew that farther downstream, the ditch disappeared with a roar underneath a road and then emptied into the main culvert. Ray dashed out the door and raced along the ditch, trying to get ahead of the foundering child. Then he hurled himself into the deep, churning water. Blankenship surfaced and was able to grab the child's arm. They tumbled end over end. Within about three feet of the yawning culvert, Ray's free hand felt something—possibly a rock—protruding from one bank. He clung desperately, but the tremendous force of the water tried to tear him and the child away. "If I can just hang on until help comes," he thought. He did better than that. By the time fire-department rescuers arrived, Blankenship had pulled the girl to safety. Both were treated for shock. On April 12, 1989, Ray Blankenship was awarded the Coast Guard's Silver Lifesaving Medal. The award is fitting, for this selfless person was at even greater risk to himself than most people knew. Ray Blankenship can't swim. - Paul Harvey, Los Angeles Times Syndicate

John 15:1-18 No Sprinkler System

Dr. Howard Hendricks tells of a small town in Texas where one year the school burned to the ground with the loss of more than 200 lives, because they didn't have a sprinkler system. They began to rebuild after the initial shock had passed and called in the foremost company in fire prevention equipment to install a sprinkler system. When the new school was opened for public inspection, guides pointed out the new sprinklers in each room, to alleviate fears of another disaster. The school operated without incident for a number of years, then they needed to add on to the existing structure. As work progressed, they made a startling discovery. The new fire extinguishing equipment had never been connected to the water supply! They had the latest in technology and equipment, yet it was entirely useless!

New Rules created quite a stir in the early '80s. In the book, professor Daniel Yankelovich of New York University documented a shift in social values in the '70s, a shift more massive and more rapid than any of the recent past. The book was subtitled, "Searching for Self-Fulfillment in a World Turned Upside Down." The old rules, Yankelovich said, stressed duty to others, particularly to one's family. If someone were selfish and got caught, it was embarrassing and looked ugly. But no longer. In what Yankelovich

calls "the duty to self ethic," our primary responsibility is for our own needs and interests. All other relationships and values must fit into that order of priority. Yankelovich feels that the movement may be liberating, but he is an honest scientist. After tracking 3,000 people in personal, in-depth interviews, and analyzing hundreds of thousands of questionnaires, he admits that so far the search for self-fulfillment has been futile. It has resulted in insecurity and confusion. "What is self-fulfillment?" he asks. And "When you find yourself, what will you do with yourself?" The frightening thing is that 83 percent of Americans buy into the "new rules," either in whole or in part. But those foolish people are not evangelical Christians, right? Wrong! James Davison Hunter, in his examination of students and faculty in 16 leading evangelical colleges and seminaries, used Yankelovich's earlier questionnaire and concluded that evangelicals are more committed to self-fulfillment than their secular counterparts. "The percentage of evangelical students agreeing with these statements far exceeded the corresponding percentage of the general population," Hunter wrote. "Self-fulfillment is no longer a natural by-product of a life committed to higher ideals, but rather is a goal, pursued rationally and with calculation as an end in itself. The quest for emotional psychological and social maturity, therefore, becomes normative. Self-expression and self-realization compete for self-sacrifice as a guiding life ethic." - Moody, May, 1993, p. 34

John 15:18-19 First Century Believers

Those first believers turned to Christ with the full understanding that they were espousing an unpopular cause that could cost them everything. Shortly after Pentecost some were jailed, many lost all their earthly goods, a few were slain, hundreds were 'scattered abroad.' They could have escaped all this by the simple expedient of denying their faith and turning back to the world. This they steadfastly refused to do. To make converts, we are tempted to play down the difficulties and play up the peace of mind and worldly success enjoyed by those who accept Christ. We will never be completely honest with our hearers until we tell them the blunt truth that, as members of a race of moral rebels, they are in a serious jam, and one they will not get out of easily. If they refuse to repent and believe on Christ, they will most surely perish. If they do turn to Him, the same enemies that crucified Him will try to crucify them. -- A. W. Tozer, Source unknown

John 15:27 The "Go" in the Gospel? -

The other evening I heard a man on the radio emphatically state that he did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I could sense that he had a real feeling of scorn for those who do. Prominent men in public places have also expressed their con-tempt for "born-againers." This is typical of the general attitude toward orthodox Christians and the truths they confess. Although the worldling may not show personal animosity toward a believer, yet he looks upon him as "narrow" or "bigoted." While he may treat Christians in a rather cordial manner, the fact remains that the worldly man is against us. We can never know when this secret hostility will flame out into violent persecution.

In the face of the world's hatred what are we to do? The answer is: witness! We are not to return "evil for evil," or retort in scorn to their words of contempt. As graciously and as sweetly as God enables us, we are to give to them a message of life. We will be greatly helped if we bear in mind the words of the Lord Jesus: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). The world rejected Jesus Christ. Few homes opened their doors to Him and His small band of followers. The multitude enjoyed the scene as the Roman soldiers mocked Him, spit upon Him, and pressed the crown of thorns upon His head. They cried out for His death, and taunted Him as He hung in agony on the cross. Let us never forget this, for "the servant is not greater than his Lord!"

By God's grace, let us then be patient with men as they some-times mistreat us. Let us be careful too not to bring down violence upon ourselves by antagonizing the world needlessly through words or actions that do not reflect the spirit of our Lord. Faith-fully, graciously, and tactfully let us witness concerning the trans-forming grace of God which is available through Jesus Christ.

Though the world may scorn and hate us,
And the devil strong oppose,
We must tell the lost of Jesus —
That He died, and for them 'rose! — Anon.

**Every Christian must witness,
for there is an impelling GO in the Gospel!**

John 16

■ D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 16

John 16:7

ONE of the ironies of sports is that teams sometimes perform better after a key player gets hurt. In the fall of 1991, the Detroit Lions lost one of their starting offensive linemen, Mike Utley, to a paralyzing spinal injury. Yet even in his absence, he spurred them on.

Wearing T-shirts in Utley's honor under their jerseys and with his number printed on their uniforms, the Lions pounded their next opponent. After the game, the players credited their rousing win to a spirit of unity and determination in honor of their missing teammate.

In the first century, Jesus' departure from this earth could have demoralized His followers. But it didn't. Although Jesus was no longer with them in body, the Christians soon had a power that could defeat any foe. And it was far more significant than the spirit of an injured teammate. It was the energizing presence of the Holy Spirit of God.

We are in a battle every day. Either we can ignore the Spirit's help and let our sinful desires defeat us, or we can walk in the Spirit and enjoy love, joy, peace, and all the other benefits of spiritual victory.—J D Brannon

John 16:8 Missing Telegram

Evangelist Paul Rader had many a talk with a banker in New York. The banker would reply that he was too busy for religion. Time passed and the banker, seriously overworked, was sent to a sanatorium for complete rest. One day God spoke to Paul Rader; the message was clear: "Go and speak to ." Rader obeyed, catching a train and going with all speed to the sumptuous sanatorium. Arriving at the facility, Rader saw the banker standing in the doorway. "Oh, Rader," said the banker, "I am so glad to see you." "I received your telegram," said Rader. "That's impossible," said the banker. "I wrote a telegram begging you to come, but I tore it up. I didn't sent it." "That may be," said Rader, "but your message come by way of Heaven." Paul Rader found his friend under deep conviction of sin and he pointed him to Christ as a perfect Saviour. That man accepted Christ and his heart was filled with joy. "Rader," he said, "did you ever see the sky so blue or the grass so green?" Rader replied, "Sometimes we sing" 'Heaven above is softer blue, Earth around is sweeter green; Something lives in every hue Christless eyes have never seen.'" Suddenly the banker leaned against Paul Rader and fell into his arms, dead. - Morning Glory, July 13, 1993

John 16:14 Floodlight Ministry

The Holy Spirit's distinctive role is to fulfill what we may call a floodlight ministry in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. So far as this role was concerned, the Spirit "was not yet" (John 7:29, literal Greek) while Jesus was on earth; only when the Father had glorified him (John 17:1, 5) could the Spirit's work of making men aware of Jesus' glory begin. I remember walking to church one winter evening to preach on the words, "He will glorify me" (John 16:14), seeing the building floodlit as I turned a corner, and realizing that this was exactly the illustration my message needed. When floodlighting is well done, the floodlights are placed so that you do not see them; in fact, you are not supposed to see where the light is coming from; what you are meant to see is just the building on which the floodlights are trained. The intended effect is to make it visible when otherwise it would not be seen for the darkness, and to maximize its dignity by throwing all its details into relief so that you can see it properly. This perfectly illustrated the Spirit's new covenant role. He is, so to speak, the hidden floodlight shining on the Savior. Or think of it this way. It is as if the Spirit stands behind us, throwing light over our shoulder on to Jesus who stands facing us. The Spirit's message to us is never, "Look at me; listen to me; come to me; get to know me", but always, "Look at him, and see his glory; listen to him and hear his word; go to him and have life; get to know him and taste his gift of joy and peace." The Spirit, we might say, is the matchmaker, the celestial marriage broker, whose role it is to bring us and Christ together and ensure that we stay together. --Your Father Loves You by James Packer, Harold Shaw Publishers, 1986, page for February 1

John 16:24

Alexander the Great - Among those who served in the court of Alexander the Great was a famous philosopher who had outstanding ability but little money. He asked Alexander for financial help and was told he could draw whatever cash he needed from the imperial treasury. When he submitted to the treasurer a request for an amount equal to \$50,000, he was promptly refused. The treasurer had to verify that such a large sum was indeed authorized. But when he asked Alexander, the ruler replied, "Pay the money at once. The philosopher has done me a singular honor. By the largeness of his request he shows that he has understood both my wealth and generosity."

John 17

- **D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 17**

John 17:16 The Frogman -

The water spider is an amazing little creature. Called the frogman of the spider world, it lives in rivers and streams. How does this fascinating species survive in its watery environment? It spins a tough basket-like web of silk, a kind of diving bell, and anchors it under water to plants or other objects. Then it captures a surface air bubble, which it pulls down and ejects into its underwater house, filling it with air. This combination of web building and bubble trapping allows the water spider to live in an environment that normally would destroy it. As Christians, we too live in an environment that could destroy us. The world's values, attitudes, and practices threaten to drown us unless we are able to protect ourselves from them. How are we to survive spiritually in this hostile worldly environment? We must build a "bubble" of protection around ourselves by studying the Scriptures, praying, fellowshiping with believers, communing with the Holy Spirit, trusting God, and obeying His Word. These activities will insulate our minds and help to keep us safe and secure. As the water spider lives in the water but is not of the water, so we must live in but not be of the world.

[\(Our Daily Bread\)](#)

John 17 Other Sheep

Pastor Tom Starr told of a conference he attended where John R. Rice gave one of his last messages. He had suffered a heart attack and spoke from a wheelchair. His text was from John 10, "Other sheep have I who are not of this fold." and he mentioned other believers who might not be precisely aligned theologically, but nonetheless were believers. Dr. Rice had opposed Billy Graham's ministry because of Dr. Graham's willingness to work with unbelieving religious leaders. But when Billy learned that Dr. Rice was advertising some of his materials in a non-Christian publication, he mailed him a check for \$500 to help. When Dr. Rice went into the hospital with the heart attack, Billy was one of the first to call him. Tom Starr, Spokane, WA

John 17:1-5 Do We Know God

American writer Mark Twain was known for his wit and charm. On a trip to Europe he was invited to dinner with a head of state. When his daughter learned of the invitation, she said, "Daddy, you know every big person there is to know except God." Sadly, that was true, because Mark Twain was an unbelieving skeptic.

That daughter's comment should cause us to ask ourselves if we know God. We may be blessed with life-enriching friendships, acquainted with a wide circle of important people, but do we know God? And is our knowledge of Him more than second-hand information or speculation, the things we might read in books?

Jesus wanted His disciples to have an intimate knowledge of God. He prayed, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). This knowledge is intensely personal, and is gained only through a deep, prolonged friendship. Indeed, the knowledge referred to in this text and elsewhere in Scripture is compared with the intimacy of husband and wife as they become one (Genesis 4:1).

We can have that knowledge as we spend time talking with God, reading His Word, and sharing His love with the world. - Vernon C. Grounds

It's not enough to know God with your head; you must know Him in your heart.

John 17:1-5 The Most Basic Belief

This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ. —John 17:3

Adolf Hitler was dead. Germany was embarking on the overwhelming task of rebuilding itself as a nation. The German theologian Karl Barth had just returned from exile in Switzerland to the University of Bonn. With the noise of cranes and earthmovers in the background, Barth began his first lecture to a class of war-weary students. His very first sentence was: "I believe in God."

"I believe in God." Those are also the first words of The Apostles' Creed, and they are an affirmation that is basic to our Christian faith. In fact, that statement is the foundation from which we view all time and eternity.

That belief is the only solid foundation for rebuilding a nation or for building a life. If we ignore God, the best of human efforts will crumble in the long run and be shown to have no eternal value.

We must be sure, however, that the God we believe in is the one, true, and living God (Hebrews 11:6). We must believe in the God who has made Himself known in the Bible, and through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus said to His heavenly Father, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

Truly, this is the most basic belief. Is it yours? —Vernon C. Grounds

Sing praise to God who reigns above,
The God of all creation,

The God of power, the God of love,
The God of our salvation. —Schutz

The only solid foundation for building a life is belief in God.

John 17:1-8 He Wants More

You always sit in the row ahead of Sam in church. You smile and say “Good morning” when you come in. You say “See you next Sunday” when you leave. But one morning, you add a little conversation: “Sam, could you give me a hundred dollars?”

Unfortunately, that’s the way some people treat the Lord. They have a Sunday-only relationship with Him until they need something. But God desires much more.

The Lord wants us first of all to know Him as our Savior. “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3).

After we become His child (1:12), God desires an ongoing dialog with us and a growing knowledge of who He is and who we can be with His help. He doesn’t want to be a Sunday-only acquaintance or Someone we cry out to only when we’re desperate. God wants us to have a personal relationship with Him. He also wants us to grow in our desire to please Him by obeying Him. “We know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments” (1 John 2:3).

God loves you and wants you to know Him. He does answer desperation prayers. But before you start asking, make sure you know Him personally. --Cindy Hess Kasper

The Lord wants more than platitudes
From those for whom He died;
He longs for us to know His love,
And in that love abide. —D. De Haan

Knowing about God may interest us, but knowing God will change us.

John 17:4

Salvation Army - Miriam Booth, daughter of the founder of the Salvation Army, was a brilliant and cultured woman who began her Christian work with great promise and unusual success. Very soon, however, disease brought her to the point of death. A friend told her it seemed a pity that a woman of her capabilities should be hindered by sickness from doing the Lord’s work. With deep insight and gently grace, Miriam replied, “It’s wonderful to do the Lord’s work, but it’s greater still to do the Lord’s will!”

Commenting on John 17:4, blind minister and hymn writer George Matheson said, “Was the work of the Master indeed done? Was not His heaviest task yet to come? He had not yet met the dread hour of death. Why did He say, then, that His work was done? It was because He knew that when the will is given, the battle is ended! . The cup which our Father gives us to drink is a cup of the will. It is easy for the lips to drain it when once the heart has accepted it . The act is easy after the choice.”

John 17:15 The Recluse

In the year 1403, one of the wealthiest men in Paris died, leaving his entire estate to his teenage daughter Agnes. She was a beautiful and virtuous young woman, and many men wanted to marry her. But Agnes decided to give up her fortune and become a recluse. To isolate herself from society, she asked to be sealed into a cell within the wall of a church. The entrance was plastered shut except for one small hole through which food could be passed. She was confined in that small area at 18 years of age and remained there until she died at age 98. Source unknown

John 18

■ D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 18

John 18:1-11 Two Gardens

Two gardens are mentioned prominently in the Bible: the garden of Eden and the garden of Gethsemane. God placed the first man, Adam, in the garden of Eden; Jesus went into Gethsemane to restore what the first man had lost.

The first Adam sinned in the garden; the last Adam took this sin upon Himself. The garden of Eden had the tree of life, which man

could have enjoyed forever had he not broken fellowship with God. The garden of Gethsemane was a step toward the tree of death (Acts 5:30; 1 Peter 2:24). By Adam's transgression, he forfeited his right to the tree of life and brought death to all mankind. He who hung on the tree of Calvary conquered death and by His glorious resurrection restored the tree of life to all who believe.

The garden where Adam fell is gone from the earth, but there is a glad day coming when He who suffered alone in Gethsemane will restore all things. The curse will be lifted from the earth, the animals will again be docile (Isaiah 11:6-8), the deserts will disappear (Isaiah 35:6), the earth will yield her increase abundantly (Amos 9:13), and Jesus will be here personally to bless His people (Revelation 21:3).

What Adam lost, Jesus will restore. --M.R. DeHaan

Adam was God's first man in creation—
He through sin brought death to all mankind;
Jesus came to earth to bring salvation:
Trusting Him, eternal life we'll find. —Hess

God formed us; sin deformed us; Christ transforms us.

John 18:28-38 Life's Defining Moment

Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice. —John 18:37

Several law students at Duke University were seated around a table discussing ethics with federal Judge William Hoeweler. According to an article in US News & World Report, the judge warned, "I guarantee that sometime you will be asked to do something dishonest. Your future lies in that moment. Even if you have kids and a big mortgage, there's only one answer: 'No!'"

We will all face similar life-defining moments during the course of our lives. No decision will ever be more important than how we respond to the claims of the One who said to a judge, "For this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (Jn. 18:37). That person was Jesus Christ.

Jesus was truthful in word and deed, but more than that, He was God's unique expression of the truth (Jn. 14:6). Only He can expose the subtle lies of our hearts and create within us a longing to be true to ourselves, to others, and to God. Sooner or later all of us must decide whether we will commit ourselves to the One who is the truth—Jesus Christ.

Will we acknowledge the truth that we have broken God's law and accept by faith Jesus' offer of salvation? That is life's defining moment. -- Dennis J. De Haan

Yes, Jesus is the Truth, the Way,
That leads you into rest;
Believe in Him without delay
And you are fully blest. —Stockton

Your eternal destiny lies in your response to the truth.

John 18:28-38 What Is Truth?

Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" —John 18:38

It was the closest Pilate would come to life's greatest discovery. Jesus had just told him that He had come into the world to bear witness to the truth. This prompted Pilate to ask, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). The shrewd Roman politician had asked the right question of the right Person, and his answer was standing before him. But instead of falling to his knees in repentance, confession, and faith, he could only pass off the answer by concluding, "I find no fault in Him."

Sooner or later, all of us find ourselves in Pilate's position, where we must decide about the unusual Man who claims what no other can claim—that He is the truth.

Throughout history many religious leaders have come and gone, but not one has claimed to be the truth and then proved it by rising from the dead. Millions of people down through the centuries have found Jesus' life, His words, and His resurrection to be convincing evidence of His credibility. And they have concluded that knowing the truth must begin with a personal relationship with Christ.

Have you found the answer to life's most important question: "What is truth?" If not, consider Jesus' statement in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." -- Dennis J. De Haan

Not all roads lead to God,
As many people claim;
There's only one true way—
Christ Jesus is His name. —Sper

To know Christ is to know the truth.

John 19

John 19:1-16 Life's Two Magnitudes -

A great mathematician once said that he was not concerned about spiritual matters until he vividly saw life's "two magnitudes - the shortness of time and the vastness of eternity." When this truth came home to him, he became a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ.

If Pilate had considered these two realities, he would not have condemned Jesus to die on the cross. He knew that the Savior was innocent of the charges against Him. He even had an uneasy feeling that Jesus was not just an ordinary man, but his desire to keep his high government post was greater than his determination to do right. Actually, he obtained little earthly benefit from his decision. The church father Eusebius, quoting from Greek historians, said that Pilate fell out of favor with his superiors and committed suicide before A.D. 40 - less than 10 years after his fateful decree. Since we have no indication that he ever repented of his sin and trusted Christ as his personal Savior, we must assume he died in a lost and hopeless condition. He had not reckoned with the "shortness of time and the vastness of eternity."

John 19:1 The Number of Lashes

The number (of lashes) thirty-nine fits with that given in Makkoth 3:11, "forty (less one)." And the severity of the affliction is evident from the description of, or prescription for it in Makkoth 3:12. The body was to be laid bare and the victim flogged by a man with a leather scourge standing on a stone. According to Blackman the reason for standing was "so that the blows came down with great force" (n. 8). In 3:13 it is stated, "And he who smites must smite with his one hand with all his might." In 3:14 it is indicated that the punishment was sometimes so severe that men died under it. - From Exegesis and Exposition, Vol. 3, No. 1, (Fall, 1988), p. 54.

John 19:25-30 How Will You Finish? -

In 1981 Bill Broadhurst entered the Pepsi Challenge 10,000-meter road race in Omaha, Nebraska. Ten years earlier, surgery for a brain aneurysm left him paralyzed on his left side. But on a misty July morning, he stood with 1,200 lithe-looking men and women at the starting line. The gun cracked. The crowd surged ahead. Bill threw his stiff left leg forward and pivoted on it as his right foot hit the ground. His slow plop-plop-plop rhythm seemed to mock him as the pack disappeared into the distance. Sweat rolled down his face, pain pierced his ankle, but he kept going. Six miles, two hours, and twenty-nine minutes later, Bill reached the finish line. A man approached from a small group of bystanders. Bill recognized him from pictures in the newspaper.

"Here," the man said. "You've worked harder for this than I have."

With those words, Bill Rodgers, the famous marathon runner, put his newly won medal around Broadhurst's neck, proclaiming him a winner.

The sight of Jesus hanging "helpless" on a cross looked like a tragic defeat. But three little words from His lips amounted to a victory shout: "It is finished!" Three days later the truth of His words would be known. The empty tomb confirmed His claim. He had finished His work by defeating death and atoning for sin.

The Christian life is not a race to see who comes in first, but an endurance run to see who finishes faithfully. Remaining faithful to the finish makes us true winners. —D J DeHaan

**We are judged by what we finish,
not by what we start.**

John 19:30 Do or Done

"There is a great difference between your religion and mine," said a Christian to his neighbor.

"Indeed!" was the reply. "What is that?"

"It is this: Yours has only two letters in it, while mine has four."

"What do you mean?" said he.

"Well, yours has 'DO.' Mine has 'DONE.'"

John 19:38 Kumbh Mela Festival

A total of 36,000 Sadhus (Hindu holy men) were part of the estimated crowd of 40 million attending the two month Kumbh Mela festival in India last spring. More than 200 American Sadhus of the Hari Krishna groups brought millions of dollars worth of Hindu literature to the festival. One of our partners in South India explains the purpose of the ritual bathing in the river, "They come for forgiveness of sins and salvation. Some thousands come stark naked—some of them rolling on the rough roads for miles, believing the festering sores on their bodies would earn them salvation. Hundreds have kept one arm lifted up for years until the arm gets shriveled with dry gangrene. Others have stood on one leg for years, hanging on to a suspended sling while sleeping. All these are done to appease angry gods."

During the festival, which takes place in the heat of summer, our Indian Christian partners set up free medical clinics. About 150 Christian students passed out literature and talked with pilgrims about the love of Christ. "Some received us with friendliness, some merely tolerated us, and others ferociously objected to the spread of Christianity," wrote our partner.

A number of pilgrims accepted Christ, though circumstances prevented them from taking an open stand at the Kumbh Mela. But five Hindus, including two Sadhus, were baptized—the ultimate step of courage for a Hindu. Partners, published by Partners International, August, 1992, p. 7 - Source unknown

John 20

■ D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 20

John 20:15 A True Disciple

She was a 120 pound woman who had been drawn in her soul for 3 days and who had already made the trip between Jerusalem and the tomb 3 times. She was offering to carry the inert body of a man who weighed perhaps 160 pounds. She couldn't have done it, but she would have split her heart trying. D. G. Barnhouse

John 20:26-31 - CHRIST'S LORDSHIP -

The English preacher Alexander Maclaren once asked, "Why is it that one Person, and one Person only, triumphs over space and time and is the same close Friend with whom millions of hearts are in loving touch, as He was to those that gathered around Him upon the earth?"

That is a valid question. The following story, attributed to the British statesman Benjamin Disraeli, will help to answer it.

A young scholar approached Disraeli one day. He had developed a new religion and written a book to explain its doctrines. The young man claimed that his newly devised creed surpassed in beauty the message of Christ and His sacrificial crucifixion on Calvary. Disraeli asked the young man about the success of the book's sales, only to hear him complain that he couldn't get anyone to buy it or to believe in his religion. The old statesman placed his hand on the young man's shoulder and said,

"No, my boy, you will never get anyone to read your book and believe in your religion until you too have been crucified on a cross and risen from a tomb."

Only the spotless Son of God, the perfect substitute for sinful man, can provide salvation. Only a dying Savior who validates His sacrifice by bodily resurrection can lift the burden of sin's guilt. Because Jesus loved us and gave Himself for us, we should give Him our love. If we have placed our faith in Him, we can exclaim like Thomas in love and adoration, "My Lord and my God." The Savior deserves our heartfelt worship. —P R Van Gorder **When we recognize Jesus' lordship, we'll give Him our worship.**

John 21

■ D L Moody's Notes from My Bible - John 21

John 21:16 Lovest Thou Me'

Hark, my soul! it is the Lord;
'Tis thy Saviour, hear His word;
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee,
"Say, poor sinner, lovest thou me'

"I deliver'd thee when bound,
And when bleeding, heal'd thy wound;
Sought thee wandering, set thee right,
Turn'd thy darkness into light.

"Can a woman's tender care
Cease towards the child she bare'
Yes, she may forgetful be,
Yet will I remember thee.

"Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above.
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death.

"Thou shalt see my glory soon,
When the work of grace is done;
Partner of my throne shalt be;—
Say, poor sinner, lovest thou me?"

Lord, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love Thee and adore,—
Oh! for grace to love Thee more!

Olney Hymns, by William Cowper, from Cowper's Poems, Sheldon & Company, New York