

Dear friend,

Welcome to the book of John. I'm so glad that you are being intentional about connecting with God on a regular basis through reading your Bible. The focus for the summer will be on the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, which tell the story of Jesus' life.

As you read each chapter, you will be asked to consider doing the following:

- **Speak & Write:** Read the chapter out-loud, use the 6 devotional methods of Bible Study and write down your questions, thoughts and insights. The devotional methods are taken from the 40 Days in the Word Study by Rick Warren and include:
  - **Pronounce it!** Read a verse over and over, emphasizing each word in the verse, one at a time.
  - **Picture it!** Use this method with narratives and stories. Picture yourself as an active participant in the story. What does the setting look like, what smells and sounds are there? Imagine the emotions of each character, putting yourself in their shoes.
  - **Probe it!** Ask yourself the S.P.A.C.E.P.E.T.S questions
    - Is there a Sin to confess?
    - Is there a Promise to claim?
    - Is there an Attitude to change?
    - Is there a Command to obey?
    - Is there an Example to follow?
    - Is there a Prayer to pray?
    - Is there an Error to avoid?
    - Is there a Truth to Believe?
    - Is there Something to praise God for?
  - **Paraphrase it!** Put the Bible verse into your own words
  - **Personalize it!** Put your name in the place of nouns and pronouns used
  - **Pray it!** Turn the verse into a prayer and pray it back to God.
- **Read:** Read the devotional content.
- **Apply:** Actively put what you are learning into practice.

The devotional content was written out of my own personal time with God and highlights what He was teaching me. As you speak and write, you may discover that you gain insights that are much different from mine, which is wonderful. The Holy Spirit will speak into your life in ways that are personal for you.

I hope you experience God as you seek to connect with Him each day.

Sincerely,

Cherie VanderEnde  
Connections Director

## **John 1**

Read John 1 out loud. What made you stop and think? Did anything stand out? Do you have a question, or is there something you don't understand and want to learn about? Take a moment to write this down in your journal. Choose one of the six methods of Bible Study to use.

### **Devotional:**

John 1:14 "So the Word became human and made His home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son."

It is really hard to grasp what unfailing love and faithfulness look like - because it is impossible to experience it outside of a relationship with God. It is what we all long for - it is what everyone pursues. We want the certainty and the comfort of a love that never lets us go in spite of our faults and failings.

Take a moment to think about the billboard top 20 songs. Most of the lyrics will probably be about human relationships, and the hurt and pain they cause, or the longing to receive love from another person. The truth is people will always fail us because we are imperfect, but God will never fail us. He is the only one FULL of unfailing love and faithfulness - nothing compares, no-one but God can offer this. Jesus is worth building your life around, worth making your center, and no matter what you face, is the only one who can give you the security and love you crave.

### **Application:**

Do a google search for Bible Verses about God's love and faithfulness and choose one to post where you will see it often. Recite it out loud three times a day and commit it to memory.

## **John 2**

Read John 2 out loud. As you were reading, did anything make you stop and think? Cause you to pause for a moment? Did you have a question? Choose one of the six Devotional Bible Study methods to use. Did it help clarify anything? Be sure to write your observations down.

### **Devotional:**

John 2:23-25 "...many people believed in Him as they saw the miracles He performed, But Jesus did not trust himself to them, because He knew them all..."

Jesus knew exactly who He was, and what His purpose on earth was. He did not look at His ability to do miracles as a way to gain popularity and admiration. He did them out of obedience to the Father.

It's easy to trust God when life is good, "miracles" are happening and blessings abound. But when life throws a punch that leaves you gasping on the ground in pain...do you still trust? Do you still believe in Him? Or does the faith you had in Him fade away?

Think back to the parable of the soil found in Matthew 13. Seeds that fell on hard soil, weedy soil and shallow ground were quickly destroyed, but the seed that fell in the good soil flourished. As followers of Jesus, it is important to cultivate, nurture and passionately pursue God no matter what is happening in life. To make it your number one priority to find God and want Him more than anything else this world has to offer. To go through each moment connected and listening for his guiding voice.

It is easy for a slow shift to occur where you are trusting other people, instead of trusting God, and so it is very important to be intentional about connecting to God in prayer.

This doesn't mean that you don't need other people, or that you should never trust them. We were made to live in community, made to encourage, support, love and care for each other. However, our ultimate trust should never reside in a person...that should be reserved only for God.

**Application:**

Is there a symbol, a time of day, a Bible verse you can post, an alarm you can set that would be something to remind you to connect to God throughout the day. For example, I (Cherie) love trees and how the Bible talks about the importance of the roots going down deep into the soil, and that no matter what happens around that tree, as long as the roots are deep, it will be okay. When I see a picture of a tree, it reminds me to connect back to God. So I have pictures of trees everywhere. What is something you could use to help redirect your thoughts back to God?

**John 3**

Read John 3 out loud. Choose one of the 6 methods of Devotional Bible Study to use. Did you learn anything new? Did anything stand out? Was there a principle to apply? Be sure to write this down and take the time to share your insights with someone else.

**Devotional:**

John 3:19-21 "...Everyone who makes a practice of doing evil, addicted to denial and illusion, hates God-light and won't come near it, fearing a painful exposure. But anyone working and living in truth and reality welcomes God-light so the work can be seen for the God-work it is." Message version.

Light brings life - but it also can reveal ugliness and things that need to be fixed and changed.

Humans have a tremendous capacity for self-deception - so that even when things are revealed, we can build a new reality in order to avoid dealing with the brokenness that is exposed.

What could happen if you allowed the light to expose your brokenness and cause you to turn to God and allow him to do the work of healing you? Ignoring issues doesn't make them go away, and often will only increase problems, while admitting brokenness and seeking help brings peace.

Relationship with God means you are vulnerable with him. Remind yourself that He is gentle, loving and that He only wants what is best. That He is FOR you. When you allow the light of His presence to shine into Your life, and you feel that twinge in your gut that tells you there is something you need to work on, choose to walk towards the ick. He will be there to meet you and help you heal, grow and change.

**Application:**

Pray and ask God to reveal to you something that you need to work on or change. Write it down.

Ask for His help in finding people who can hold you accountable or provide wise counsel as you deal with the issue that was revealed.

**John 4**

Using the **Picture it** method of Bible study, take a moment to imagine in as vivid detail as you can the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-30.

## **Devotional:**

The Samaritan woman most likely felt invisible and worthless. She was an outcast, someone who had to draw water in the heat of the day instead of with everyone else when it was cooler. She probably endured seeing people whisper and stare as she walked by and felt the pain of not being invited to parties or gatherings. She experienced rejection, was gossiped about and used and abused by men.

One day she goes to the well for water as usual. This time there is this man who notices her and is kind despite the fact that He is a Jew and the Jews disliked Samaritans intensely. He takes the time to share with her the greatest gift that could ever be given another human being - a relationship with God. That day, her life was transformed, all because someone took the time to see her, talk to her, and let her know that her past, her status, her nationality and other people didn't define her. She was set free.

Jesus set an example for us on how we are to treat others. We are to notice them, see them as valuable, treat them with kindness and gentleness and share with them how they can receive the gift of a relationship with God.

The fields are ripe for harvest..."What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester." (John 4:36). I love how this verse points out that it is ALL those who follow Jesus, working together, that help people find Jesus.

## **Application:**

Begin each day with the prayer, "God, who do you want me to serve and tell about you today?"

If you are unsure of how to share your faith, consider reading the book *Just Walk Across the Room* by Bill Hybels or take the four week class by the same name next time it is offered. Choose to see each person you come into contact with as someone Jesus died for. Pray and ask for the strength and courage to share your faith with others.

## **John 5**

Read John 5 out loud. Choose one of the six methods of Bible Study to use. Did you learn something new? Do you have questions? Did it make you curious about something? Is there something you need to change? Be sure to write this down.

## **Devotional:**

John 5:6-7 "...Would you like to get well? I can't sir..."

Why do you think that this man, who had been ill for 38 years, when asked if he wanted to get well didn't respond with an enthusiastic YES! Why respond with "I can't?" Did he think that Jesus was expecting him to make himself better? After 38 years of being ill, did he have no hope that anything could or would ever change? Why did he automatically assume that when asked if he wanted to get better, he was going to have to do something to make it happen?

Have you ever put God in a small box and faced life with an "I can't" attitude? What if that view of life is keeping you from experiencing what God has for you? What if healing and change is possible but you can't see it because you have resigned yourself to the I can't way of living? What if you could find joy in the midst of the thing you want deliverance from - but "I can't" keeps you from experiencing God?

God specializes in the “I can’t” situations of life because He can! There is nothing impossible for him. His ways are higher than our ways, and His plan is perfect. What might happen if you faced life recognizing that you have an “I can” God in your corner?

**Application:**

Is there something in your life that you have an “I can’t” attitude about. Sometimes, our vision of what should happen gets in the way of trusting that God may have a better way. Maybe what we want isn’t best? Take a moment and talk to God about whatever you are facing, tell Him that you know He is able to handle the situation, that his time is perfect and that you can trust Him. Let go of control and the desire to fix and instead choose to follow.

**John 6**

Read John 6 out loud. Use the **Picture it** method of Bible study on one of the following stories:

- Jesus feeds 5,000 - John 6:1-15
- Jesus walks on water - John 6:16-21

As you read through the rest of the chapter did anything make you stop and think? Was there anything confusing or that you had questions about? Were you convicted of an attitude that needed to change? Be sure to write these down.

**Devotional:**

John 6:26 "I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs."

Have you ever felt what it feels like to realize someone you thought was a friend was just using you to get something they wanted? It is sometimes easy to read Scriptures like the one above and not really meditate on how much feeling that people wanted the things he could do for them, more than they wanted a relationship with him must have hurt.

When Jesus points out to them that they are really only interested in what He could do for them, instead of responding with - we'd love to get to know you as a person Jesus - they responded with what I imagine was..."okay, fine Jesus, if you won't do more miracles for us...let us perform miracles for ourselves." ouch...

The challenge each day is to seek God and a relationship with Him above all else. To connect with Him moment by moment, and invite Him into every activity. To want Him more than what He can do for you. Is there anything in your life that you have put as a higher priority? Something that if it was taken from you, would cause you to walk away from God?

**Application:**

Do you want a relationship with Jesus more than you want Him to do things for you? Even if life never gets better, and heartache is around every corner, and you lose everything on earth you hold dear - is a relationship with Him more precious than having what you want on earth? Take time to really think about these questions. Ask God to help you surrender to Him in every area of your life, and dedicate it back to him.

## **John 7**

Read John 7 out loud. As you read, put yourself in Jesus' shoes as he listens to all the talk about him. How would you feel? Did anything else stand out to you? Do you have questions? Is there something that you need to address or change? Is there something to thank God for? Be sure to take the time to write your observations down and then share them with a friend.

### **Devotional:**

Stop and think about the human side of who Jesus is. He was not immune to the pain of mistreatment. This chapter is full of rejection. His own brothers were goading him with, "hey Jesus...you want to be famous...this festival is your chance." That had to hurt.

Not only were his brothers teasing him, the pharisees and religious leaders were out to get him, and Jesus was very aware that there were those who wanted to kill him. He must have experienced fear.

Perhaps Jesus experienced feelings of extreme loneliness as He realized that most of those at the festival were against Him. It was a party, and He was an outsider.

Did Jesus feel misunderstood? There were people who were making assumptions about Him and falsely accusing Him of things. He was gossiped about. Everywhere He turned He may have seen people staring and whispering about Him.

Yet, in spite of all the pain thrown His way by people, Jesus kept His eyes on His Father. Jesus did not try to please people, which would have been impossible given the wide variety of attitudes and beliefs there were about Him.

Jesus was able to be secure in who He was and what He came to do because He was focused on doing His Father's will. He did not allow the opinions of others to sway him, and in spite of their mistreatment of Him, had a heart of love towards those who were against Him.

### **Application:**

Sometimes staying the course and following God is hard, unpopular and everyone seems to have an opinion on what you should or should not do. This is why it is so important to stay connected to God by reading the Bible, praying and aligning your life to please God alone, not people. Pray and ask God to give you the strength to follow Him.

## **John 8**

Read John 8 out loud. Was there anything that stood out to you? Did you learn something new or were convicted about an attitude or behavior you need to change? Be sure to write down your observations.

### **Devotional:**

Did you notice that although the woman brought before Jesus was "caught in the act" the man she was with wasn't brought and accused as well?

Right after that story, Jesus sat down to teach "in the section of the Temple known as the treasury." That section of the Temple was (according to Benson Commentary) "...a certain part of the women's court, where the chests were placed for receiving the offerings of those who came to worship; and consequently was a place of great concourse."

In that society - women were second class citizens. They basically had the social status of a slave according to this article <https://bible.org/.../christianity-best-thing-ever-happened-w...>

As humans, we love to play the "status" game and "rank" people. We compare - putting ourselves above or below another. Jesus NEVER does this. He simply loves people...all people, regardless of race, social status, gender, sinful behavior, financial status etc. He saw every person as having great value and worth.

If I want to be like Jesus - I have to love people - all people. If I am to live a life that reflects His, when I look at other human beings, I have to see them as He sees them - of great value and worth.

**Application:**

Are there people you struggle to love? In Matthew 5:43-44 it says, ““You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!’” Take a moment to pray for the individual you struggle with, and ask God to bless them.

**John 9**

Read John 9 out loud. Use the **Picture it** method of Devotional Bible Study and put yourself in the place of each character in the story of the man healed from blindness. Did you gain any insights? Have any questions? Were you prompted to do something or change something? Be sure to write these things down.

**Devotional:**

What would happen if you looked at everything in your life, the good, the bad and everything in between as an opportunity for God to use you to display His glory?

The blind man could have become bitter and angry about all the hardship he had to endure at the hands of the religious leaders, the feeling of not being defended by his parents, the frustration of seemingly no-one being excited for and with him for his newfound sight. Instead, his encounter with Jesus gave him courage, and a life transforming faith. His life became a living illustration - one that would be read and talked about for thousands of years.

This story can serve as a reminder to always keep your eyes on Jesus, and remember that He is always at work, often in ways we are unaware of and don't understand. He may be using your pain to help others believe, find courage, have hope, or to help you grow in your faith and shape your character to be more like that of Jesus.

**Application:**

Is there someone in your life who has been an example to you of what faith looks like? Have they been a picture of what Jesus is like? Has their life showed you how to grow in faith and surrender your life to God? Take a moment and write them a thank you note.

Maybe you are the one struggling. Pray and ask God to help you stay strong and focused on Him, and if it is His will, to use you to point others to Him.

## **John 10**

Read John 10 out loud. What stood out to you? What Devotional Method of Bible Study could you use to help you think more deeply about a section of verses? Did you learn anything new? Is there something you can apply to your life? Be sure to write your thoughts down.

### **Devotional:**

If something is repeated often in a passage of Scripture, it means “pay attention.” Notice how many times the idea of listening and following is talked about in this chapter.

John 10:3 "...the sheep listen to His voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out."

John 10:4 "...and His sheep follow Him because they know His voice..."

John 10:14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me..."

John 10:16 "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice..."

John 10:27 "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me..."

How familiar is God's voice to you? Do you recognize it? Can you pick it out in the noise? If you have made Jesus your leader and forgiver, your number one goal should be to be so connected to Him that you can hear His voice louder than all the other voices trying to get your attention.

### **Application:**

Good relationships don't just happen, they require work, effort, time and attention. This is also true of your relationship with God. By choosing to make reading your Bible and praying a priority each day, you are strengthening your relationship with God and hearing His voice will get easier.

## **John 11**

Read John 11 out loud. Use the **Picture it** method of Bible Study to put yourself in the shoes of the characters of the story of Lazarus. Did you gain any insights or see things from a new perspective? Is there another method of devotional Bible study you could use to help you see things more clearly or discover a truth you can apply to your life?

### **Devotional:**

When Lazarus died, the pain and loss was deeply felt by his sisters, Mary and Martha. It was also felt deeply by Jesus. Jesus wept openly while standing outside of the tomb of His friend Lazarus.

When life is hard and overwhelming you can take comfort in knowing that you serve a God who can relate to your pain. Even though He knows how things will work out, and that the outcome will be for our good, He understands our pain. Just because he knows the end of the story doesn't mean He doesn't feel with us while we are in the middle of the pain.

### **Application:**

Psalms 34:17-18 says, "Is anyone crying for help? God is listening, ready to rescue you. If your heart is broken, you'll find God right there; if you're kicked in the gut, He'll help you catch your breath."

If you are in pain, post the above verse in a prominent place. Remind yourself that although things may not go as you hope or plan, God's plan and timing is perfect and you can trust Him. He is at work. Let go of your preferred future and surrender that to what He has for you. Do an internet search for "promises of God" and read through the verses. Keep focused on Him and not your circumstances.

### **John 12**

Read John 12 out loud. Imagine the wide variety of emotions Jesus may have had during each situation He was in. Can you relate to any of them? What insights did you get? Do you have any questions? Is there anything you can change or apply to your life? Be sure to take the time to write these down.

### **Devotional:**

As you read this chapter, did you wonder why Jesus continued to allow Judas to be one of His disciples. Judas was an embezzler, and Jesus had to know this. John knew it because he wrote about it. Did all the disciples know about it? Jesus knew He was going to be betrayed...by Judas...and yet Judas remained one of the 12.

Before you judge Judas too harshly, ask yourself, "Are there things in my life that I am holding onto that are preventing me from having a deep relationship with God? Things that are between you and Him because you're holding on to something you know needs to change, but you're not ready to give it up yet?"

You could say that Judas had Jesus WITH him in person - and marvel at his ability to continue not to become fully devoted...yet those who have chosen to make Jesus our leader and forgiver have the Holy Spirit INSIDE of them. He longs to guide and direct us and yet we still engage in behavior that quiets and muffles His voice.

### **Application:**

Pray, and ask God to reveal to you anything that is keeping you from having an even closer relationship with Him. It is a scary prayer to pray, because it is one He will answer. Are you willing to lay it all down at His feet?

### **John 13**

Read John 13 out loud. Did anything surprise you? Is there a principle to apply to your own life? Which one of the devotional methods of Bible Study could you use in this chapter?

### **Devotional:**

John 13. "...and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus."

The relationship that Judas had with evil didn't start that night at the supper table. It was one that had been cultivated in the years prior as Judas continually chose to listen to evil's promptings, instead of listening to Jesus. If you remember earlier in the book of John, it was revealed that he embezzled money as the treasurer.

In John 10, Jesus mentioned that His sheep are very familiar with His voice and follow Him. This assumes the "sheep" have taken action and are deliberate about listening for and hearing God's voice and following through.

The Bible tells us that Satan prowls around like a roaring lion - seeking whom he may devour. No-one is exempt from being prompted by the devil and falling into temptation and allowing themselves to be led by evil.

Everyday is a choice - a spiritual battle. It is vital to continually read the Bible, pray and stay connected to other believers who are serious about their faith. To commit to listen for God's voice and following through on the promptings He gives.

God's word is filled with what His voice calls His followers to do. It also makes it clear what evil looks like. It is not a mystery - but it does require us to be very aware and choose to listen for the voice of God, to immerse ourselves in Scripture so that when evil prompts we know to combat it with God's word. And when God prompts to follow through in obedience.

#### **Application:**

A close walk with God requires intentionality, just like a close relationship with another person requires it. As you choose to make God's Word and prayer a part of your daily life, you will become more and more aware of God's voice leading you throughout the day. The more familiar you are with God's voice, the better you will be able to detect evil and be able to run from it. Pray and ask God to help you be more aware of Him.

#### **John 14**

Read John 14 out loud. Was there a word or phrase that made you stop and think? Cause you to have a question, or get you curious about why it was used? Every word has meaning in the Bible, pay attention to what makes you want to learn more. Be sure to write down your thoughts. You can also use [blueletterbible.com](http://blueletterbible.com) to find out more.

#### **Devotional:**

John 14:15 "If you love me, obey me."

To obey according to dictionary.com means "to comply with or follow the commands, restrictions, wishes, or instructions" of the person in authority. If you have chosen to make Jesus the leader of your life, obedience is how you express your love and trust of Him.

It is not enough to just read God's Word, it should change you. James 1:22 says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." You may wonder how to know what God wants? Joshua 1:9 says, "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."

Taking the time to read and apply God's Word on a daily basis, pray and hang out with people doing the same for encouragement and support. God always has your best at heart, so obeying His commands is always for your good.

**Application:**

Take a moment and assess what you do on a regular basis. Is there something you need to change? Something you should add? Pray and ask God to give you strength to be able to live a life of surrender and obedience.

**John 15**

Read John 15 out loud. Did anything make you stop and think? Was there an attitude to change, or did you feel prompted to do something? How could you practically apply something you read to your life?

**Devotional:**

"I am the TRUE vine..." The use of that word along with how many times the word "remain" is used seems to imply that there are lots of other vines you can choose to get your sustenance from.

As humans, it is tempting to turn to other things to try and get our needs met: money, other people, success, approval of others, a talent we have, fame, power, and health to mention just a few. All these sources try and convince you that they have something of lasting value to offer, but in the end it is very temporary.

In the TRUE vine there is peace, guidance, fruitfulness, purpose, meaning, love and so much more. Are you choosing to stay connected to the TRUE vine through prayer? Through reading your Bible regularly? Through choosing to be around other believers who can challenge you to grow in your faith? Have you allowed yourself to be distracted by false vines?

**Application:**

Ask yourself, is there anything in your life that is holding you back from fully remaining in the TRUE vine? Are there things that you are putting your faith in to meet your needs other than God? Pray and ask God to give you the strength to stay connected to Him. Set an alarm to go off during the day to remind you to pray and connect to God. Use a symbol or post a Bible verse or computer screen saver that directs your attention back to God.

**John 16**

Read John 16 out loud. Which one of the six devotional methods of Bible Study could you use to help you understand and apply what you have read?

**Devotional:**

The Holy Spirit is an amazing gift to those of us who have made the decision to make Jesus our leader and forgiver. Here are just some of the things the Holy Spirit does:

- John 14:26 "But **the Helper**, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will **teach you** all things and **bring to your remembrance** all that I have said to you."

- Romans 8:26 “Likewise the Spirit **helps us in our weakness**. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself **intercedes for us** with groanings too deep for words.”
- Ephesians 3:16 “That according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be **strengthened with power** through his Spirit in your inner being”
- Romans 8:11 “And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is **living in you**, he who raised Christ from the dead will also **give life** to your mortal bodies because of[a] his Spirit who lives in you.”

**Application:**

Take a moment and think about the fact that as a follower of Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit with you 24/7, 365 days a year. He is with you always. Thank God for the gift of the Holy Spirit and ask for help being more aware of His presence and how He is at work in your life.

**John 17**

Read John 17 out loud. Was there anything that really impacted you as you read it? Is there an attitude to change? Did you feel God prompting you to do something? Be sure to write down your observations and thoughts.

**Devotional:**

John 17:21-23 "I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one - as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me...May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me."

Satan loves nothing better than to divide and cause dissention. He knows that unity is a powerful thing, and will do what he can to destroy it. The evil one especially loves to divide those who follow Jesus.

Because we are all so different, and yet can experience unity, when it happens it points people to Jesus. What a challenge and goal. This It has to be a unity that is clearly supernatural that makes people go - I don't get it - how is this possible, and the answer is, because God is a God of unity and all powerful and able to take people of such diversity and get them all on the same page working together for a common goal of seeing lives transformed by the power of God and living lives that reflect Jesus.

May God unite us all! May our unity draw others to Himself! May we all be so connected to our Savior, following HIS lead that the unity that results is so astounding it makes those far from Him realize their need for a Savior and find salvation and life everlasting.

**Application:**

Take a moment to pray for the unity of the church. Ask God what your part to play is in joining the mission of seeing people far from God become fully devoted followers of His.

## **John 18**

Read John 18 out loud. Picture the emotions Jesus must have felt. Try to imagine the emotions of the disciples. Put yourself into each of the characters shoes and imagine the sights, sounds, emotions, tones of voice, actions that are described. Did you gain an insights? Does this help you see things in a new way?

### **Devotional:**

Jesus had a favorite place to go with his disciples. A grove of Olive trees in the Kidron Valley. Most likely many good memories were made there as Jesus spent time with His disciples. But soon a difficult and painful memory would be added as this was the place Judas chose to betray Jesus, and turned Him over to be tortured and crucified.

When we think of what Jesus experienced, we often focus on the physical pain He endured, but He also endured great emotional pain. Take a moment to put yourself in His shoes as you imagine this place of joy becoming a place of grief, pain and betrayal.

When the Bible says that Jesus knows our pain, knows our sorrow, knows what it feels like to emotionally suffer - He really does. You can turn to Him in your times of desperate pain and He can understand. Just like when you talk to a friend who has walked the path you are walking feels comforting, because they get it - you have a Savior who gets it too and is always ready to listen and be there for you.

### **Application:**

Talk to Jesus about whatever you are going through. He wants to hear from you. He understands. You don't have to pretend with Him. Ask Him to give you what you need to experience comfort and encouragement through the struggles of life.

## **John 19**

Read John 19 out loud. Use the **Picture it** method of devotional Bible Study to put yourself in the shoes of the characters in this passage. Did you gain any new insights? Did anything stand out to you?

### **Devotional:**

Hebrews 12:2 "Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end. He did not give up because of the cross! On the contrary, because of the joy that was waiting for Him, He thought nothing of the disgrace of dying on the cross, and He is now seated at the right side of God's throne."

Reading all that Jesus went through, imagine what could have happened if He gave up in the middle. Declared that what He was enduring was too hard and wasn't worth it. Thankfully, He did not do that. He never gave up because He was determined to be obedient to His Father's will, and because He looked through time and saw you and said, "That one is worth going through all this for." Never once did He give up - no matter the cost.

You have either gone through a difficult season, are in a difficult season or will go through a difficult season. When you feel like giving up, and circumstances are overwhelming it is vital that you take your eyes off of the situation, and focus on God. Remind yourself that God is always at work, and that He is a promise keeping God. Take time to read and memorize the promises of God and remember that your job is to trust God, and His job is everything else.

### **Application:**

The Bible is filled with promises God has made. What are you struggling with today? Fear? Anxiety? Worry? Anger? Is there something you need? Comfort? Encouragement? Do a google search for 'Bible Verses about \_\_\_\_\_' and choose one to memorize or post where you will see it often.

### **John 20**

Read John 20 out loud. What stood out to you the most. Was there a verse you connected with more than the others? What method of devotional Bible study could you use to see things from a fresh perspective? Be sure to write your thoughts and ideas down.

### **Devotional:**

The Easter story may be very familiar to you. It is read, discussed and celebrated each year. Sometimes, when something becomes familiar, it can lose its impact. The truth is, the resurrection changed everything.

Have you ever asked yourself if there is life after death? Or had someone else ask? Because Jesus rose from the dead the answer is a resounding YES! We have hope of everlasting life and so much more.

### **Application:**

The forgiveness of sin and the relationship made possible through the death and resurrection of Jesus is something that should be shared with everyone. It is the greatest gift you could give another, the opportunity to invite Jesus to be their leader and forgiver. Consider reading Just Walk Across the Room by Bill Hybels and learn how to share your faith, or take the class next time it is offered at Hidden Valley.

### **John 21**

Read John 21 out loud. Using the **Picture it** method of Bible study, put yourself in Peter's shoes. What feelings would you have? What reactions can you picture? What thoughts may be rushing through your head?

### **Devotional:**

After an impassioned speech about never turning his back on Jesus, Peter denied Him not once, but three times. Peter must have felt deep despair and regret knowing that one of the last things he did before Jesus was crucified was denied knowing Him.

Can you imagine Peter's excitement at hearing Jesus call to him from the shore? Can you feel his enthusiasm as he jumps out of the boat in order to get to him as soon as he can?

When you really come to understand all Jesus has done for you, joy and gratitude naturally result. Jesus came to make a way for us to have a life-giving relationship with Him, and through His death on the cross, removed the barrier of sin that kept us separated from Him.

### **Application:**

Take a moment to thank Jesus for providing a way for you to have a relationship with God. That because of that relationship, you have access to all the amazing benefits He provides. A few of these gifts include:

- Wisdom - James 1:5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."
- Strength - Isaiah 40:29 - "He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power."
- Hope - Romans 15:13 "May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace by means of your faith in him, so that your hope will continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit."
- Rest - Matthew 11:28 "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
- Peace - Philippians 4:6-7 "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."
- Supplying your needs - Philippians 4:19 "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."