



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Daily Discipleship Guide

Spring 2023 | CSB



u,
ved
ye are
another.
him, Lord,
answered him,
follow me now;
afterwards.
Lord, why cannot
all "lay down my life
him, Wilt thou lay down
e? Verily, verily, I say unto
hall not crow, till thou hast
rice.

OF MANY MANSIONS

at "not your heart be troubled: ye
believe in God, believe also in me.
a my Father's house are many man-
sions: if *it were* not so, I would have told
ou. ^mI go to prepare a place for you.
³And if I go and prepare a place for you, ⁿI
will come again, and receive you unto my-
self; that ^owhere I am, *there* ye may be also.
⁴And whither I go ye know, and the way
ye know.

JESUS IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

⁵Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know
not whither thou goest; and how can we
know the way?
⁶Jesus saith unto him, I am ^pthe way,
^qthe truth, and ^rthe life: ^sno man cometh
unto the Father, but by me.
⁷If ye had known me, ye should have
known my Father also: and from henceforth
ye know him, and have seen him.
⁸Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the
Father, and it sufficeth us.
⁹Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so
long time with you, and yet hast thou not
known me, Philip? ^uhe that hath seen me

U N D E R S T A N D | E X P L O R E | A P P L Y

John 12-21



ONE MORE THING

“Just one more thing before I go . . .”

It might be a parent talking to their college-bound freshman, a friend wrapping up a phone call with a really great story, or boss leaving last-minute instructions before a business trip. Whatever the specific situation, we’ve all found ourselves with a lot to say and not enough time to say it. So, in a last-ditch effort to squeeze every second out of every minute, we add one more thing to the list.

That’s similar to what we find throughout John 12–21. Jesus knew His “hour” was coming. His arrest and crucifixion were close. In His last few hours, He had a few more things to share with His disciples. Even after three years of teaching them through His words and His example, Jesus still had things to tell them about being His people in a fallen world.

Thankfully, Jesus’s crucifixion was not the end of the story. He rose from the dead on that first Easter morning, so He would continue walking with them, teaching them through the work of the Holy Spirit. Plus, He promised to come back for them one day—and anyone else who chose to accept His offer of salvation by faith.

That’s the “one more thing” John wanted his readers to understand more than anything else. All of Jesus’s teaching, all of His miracles, even His death and resurrection pointed in one direction. God’s Son had come to earth to be humanity’s Savior. Of all the things He said and did, the one thing Jesus wants us to grasp is that we can find forgiveness for our sins and experience eternal life through Him. If you’re ready to accept the salvation that only He can provide, here’s what you need to do . . .

- **Admit** to God that you are a sinner. Repent, turning from your sin.
- **By faith receive** Jesus as God’s Son and accept His gift of forgiveness from sin. He took the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross.
- **Confess** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. You may pray a prayer similar to this as you call on God to save you: “Dear God, I know that You love me. I confess my sin and need of salvation. I turn away from my sin and place my faith in Jesus as my Savior and Lord. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen.”

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a pastor or another Christian about your decision. Connect with a local church that will help you grow spiritually and demonstrate your faith in Jesus publicly by following Him in baptism by immersion.

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THE WEEK OF

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*Evangelistic Emphasis

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FROM THE TEAM

When someone dear to us passes away, our last conversations with that person take on new meaning. We may have had other discussions that were more extended, but those last words seem to overshadow everything that came before. Even as time passes, those final exchanges seem to dominate our memories and color our perceptions of that loved one. We may even find ourselves reliving those last conversations, remembering every detail including what was going on around us.

In his Gospel, John dedicated nearly half of what he wrote to the week leading up to Jesus's death, and a large portion of those words focus on the last hours of His life. All the actions we find in John 13:1–19:42 took place during the final 24 hours leading up to Jesus's arrest and crucifixion. It begins with the washing of the disciples' feet and ends with Jesus's body being placed in a tomb.

He included Jesus calling on John to care for Mary in His place, their final conversation before Jesus's death .

During this study of John 12–21, we will walk with John as he relayed those final conversations, teachings, predictions, prayers, denials, and actions of Jesus. In doing so, we will be reminded of His purpose, of the hope He offers, and the joy of being a disciple He loves.

In His service,

Dwayne McCrary

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BIBLE READING PLAN

MARCH

- ☐ 1. John 12:1-3
- ☐ 2. John 12:4-8
- ☐ 3. John 12:9-11
- ☐ 4. John 12:12-16
- ☐ 5. John 12:17-19
- ☐ 6. John 12:20-22
- ☐ 7. John 12:23-26
- ☐ 8. John 12:27-29
- ☐ 9. John 12:30-34
- ☐ 10. John 12:35-36
- ☐ 11. John 12:37-43
- ☐ 12. John 12:44-47
- ☐ 13. John 12:48-50
- ☐ 14. John 13:1
- ☐ 15. John 13:2-5
- ☐ 16. John 13:6-11
- ☐ 17. John 13:12-15
- ☐ 18. John 13:16-17
- ☐ 19. John 13:18-20
- ☐ 20. John 13:21-25
- ☐ 21. John 13:26-30
- ☐ 22. John 13:31-33
- ☐ 23. John 13:34-35
- ☐ 24. John 13:36-38
- ☐ 25. John 14:1-4
- ☐ 26. John 14:5-7
- ☐ 27. John 14:8-11
- ☐ 28. John 14:12-14
- ☐ 29. John 14:15-17
- ☐ 30. John 14:18-21
- ☐ 31. John 14:22-26

APRIL

- ☐ 1. John 14:27-31
- ☐ 2. John 15:1-4
- ☐ 3. John 15:5-8
- ☐ 4. John 15:9-11
- ☐ 5. John 15:12-17
- ☐ 6. John 15:18-21
- ☐ 7. John 15:22-25
- ☐ 8. John 15:26-27
- ☐ 9. John 16:1-4
- ☐ 10. John 16:5-11
- ☐ 11. John 16:12-15
- ☐ 12. John 16:16-18
- ☐ 13. John 16:19-22
- ☐ 14. John 16:23-24
- ☐ 15. John 16:25-28
- ☐ 16. John 16:29-33
- ☐ 17. John 17:1-2
- ☐ 18. John 17:3-5
- ☐ 19. John 17:6-8
- ☐ 20. John 17:9-12
- ☐ 21. John 17:13-15
- ☐ 22. John 17:16-19
- ☐ 23. John 17:20-23
- ☐ 24. John 17:24-26
- ☐ 25. John 18:1-5
- ☐ 26. John 18:6-9
- ☐ 27. John 18:10-14
- ☐ 28. John 18:15-18
- ☐ 29. John 18:19-24
- ☐ 30. John 18:25-27

MAY

- ☐ 1. John 18:28-32
- ☐ 2. John 18:33-36
- ☐ 3. John 18:37-40
- ☐ 4. John 19:1-5
- ☐ 5. John 19:6-7
- ☐ 6. John 19:8-11
- ☐ 7. John 19:12-16
- ☐ 8. John 19:17-18
- ☐ 9. John 19:19-22
- ☐ 10. John 19:23-24
- ☐ 11. John 19:25-27
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- ☐ 13. John 19:31-37
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- ☐ 15. John 20:1-2
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- ☐ 17. John 20:8-10
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- ☐ 21. John 20:24-25
- ☐ 22. John 20:26-29
- ☐ 23. John 20:30-31
- ☐ 24. John 21:1-3
- ☐ 25. John 21:4-7
- ☐ 26. John 21:8-11
- ☐ 27. John 21:12-14
- ☐ 28. John 21:15-17
- ☐ 29. John 21:18-19
- ☐ 30. John 21:20-23
- ☐ 31. John 21:24-25

MEMORY VERSES

Session 1:

Meanwhile, the crowd, which had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify. – John 12:17

Session 2:

“As for me, if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to myself.” – John 12:32

Session 3:

“Don’t let your heart be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.” – John 14:1

Session 4:

“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don’t let your heart be troubled or fearful.” – John 14:27

Session 5:

I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. – John 15:5

Session 6:

The other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, then also went in, saw, and believed. – John 20:8

Session 7:

When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment. – John 16:8

Session 8:

“I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe in me through their word. May they all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us, so that the world may believe you sent me.” – John 17:20-21

Session 9:

At that, Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword away! Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?” – John 18:11

Session 10:

“My kingdom is not of this world,” said Jesus. “If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I wouldn’t be handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.” – John 18:36

Session 11:

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished.” Then bowing his head, he gave up his spirit. – John 19:30

Session 12:

Jesus said, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.” – John 20:29

Session 13:

“If I want him to remain until I come,” Jesus answered, “what is that to you? As for you, follow me.” – John 21:22

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

The first half of the Gospel of John (chaps. 1–11) tells primarily of seven “signs” Jesus performed. These signs highlight His role as Messiah. The second half (chaps. 12–21) focuses primarily on events surrounding the final week of Jesus—leading up to and including His arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection.

The two halves open and close with similar scenes and statements. For instance, John declared early in the second half of his Gospel that Jesus “loved his own who were in the world” (13:1). This echoes what John stated earlier about Jesus: “He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him” (1:11). Additionally, the first half closes with climatic scenes related to Lazarus being brought back to life. The second half culminates with scenes related to the empty tomb of Jesus and His subsequent appearances.

Reading through the second half of John’s Gospel, three themes emerge. These focus on the responses of people, the words of Jesus, and the actions of Jesus.

Perplexed—John consistently portrayed people who were puzzled by what was happening. The disciples were perplexed when Jesus allowed Mary to anoint His feet with expensive oil (12:3-8). They were perplexed as the people shouted “Hosanna” when Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem (12:12-16). The religious leaders did not know what to do with Jesus (12:19). The disciples were confounded as Jesus took a basin and towel and washed their feet (13:1-20). The women, Peter, and

John were perplexed when they found the tomb empty (20:1-14).

Promises—Jesus told His disciples they soon would not see Him, they would mourn, weep, and have sorrow. Soon afterward, they would experience joy, a reference to His burial and subsequent resurrection (16:16-29). He promised that if He went away, He would send the Holy Spirit as a Counselor (15:26). He also promised if He were lifted up (meaning crucified), He would draw all people to Himself (12:32).

Proof—The second half of John contains many instances that prove the reliability of what Jesus had said or done. For example, although the disciples did not understand what was happening at the triumphal entry, they recalled after the resurrection what the Scripture had declared prophetically about Jesus (12:16). The Lord’s words became the proof He had come from God (16:30). The wounds in the hands and side of Jesus proved to Thomas that He was alive (20:26-28). Finally, John said the proof of what he had written in his Gospel came because he had been an eyewitness to the events (21:24).

May what you read in John’s Gospel help you “believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and . . . by believing [may you] have life in his name” (20:31).

OUTLINE

- I. Prelude: Christ As the Eternal Word** (John 1:1-18)
- II. Presentation: Christ as the Son of God** (John 1:19–12:50)
- III. Preparation: Instruction of the Twelve by the Son of God** (John 13:1–17:26)
 - A. The Last Supper (John 13:1-38)
 - B. The way to the Father (John 14:1-31)
 - C. The true vine (John 15:1-27)
 - D. The gift of the Spirit (John 16:1-33)
 - E. Jesus's high-priestly prayer (John 17:11-26)
- IV. Passion: Suffering of Christ as the Son of God** (John 18:1–20:31)
 - A. His arrest, trial, and death (John 18:1-19:42)
 - B. His triumph over death (John 20:1-31)
- V. Postlude: The Continuing Work of the Son of God** (John 21:1-25)
 - A. Appearances to His disciples (John 21:1-14)
 - B. Assignment to His disciples (John 21:15-25)



ON THE COVER

Olive trees growing in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem. [See Session 9.]


USING THE **DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE**

A person's spiritual growth hinges on daily Bible engagement. *Daily* implies a discipline much like exercising, brushing teeth, or eating a certain number of calories EVERY day. Our spiritual training should be no different since we need spiritual nourishment every day. The focus is the *Bible*, God's Word. There is nothing wrong with knowing the thoughts of great philosophers, leaders, or theologians, as long as God's Word is the final word on the matter. Engagement carries the idea of participation and involvement. *Engagement* is active, requiring us to read, study, and reflect.

Your *Daily Discipleship Guide* is full of tools to help you engage with God's Word. But like any tool, you have to use it to get the benefit.

- Use this resource when studying with a group. The first four pages of each session help the group examine a Bible passage and moves us toward acting on the truths discovered as a group and an individual.
- Use the **Talk It Out** page to hold yourself and others accountable by meeting in a smaller group of same-sex individuals (an accountability group). Share with the smaller group what God has been teaching you through the group time and your personal daily Bible study while working to memorize a Bible verse.
- Use the **Daily Exploration** pages to go deeper into God's Word, building on your group's study experience. Engage in daily Bible study, record your thoughts, reflect on the questions, and take action.
- Use the resource every week even when you are unable to attend the group's Bible study. Missing a group Bible study does not excuse you from being engaged daily with God through His Word.

Want this resource on your phone or tablet for when you are on the go? Purchase an eBook at goExploreTheBible.com or at Lifeway.com/digitalstudies.



Getting the most from Talk It Out

Talk It Out supports groups of three or four people who come together weekly to encourage, share, and sharpen each other. While other issues may be addressed, the Talk It Out section focuses on the weekly memory verse. The questions and comments provide a means for encouraging each other to memorize Scripture while reflecting on the main point of that week's lesson.

These groups are made up of three to four people...

- Participants should be of the same gender.
- These groups should be smaller on purpose.
- These groups can meet at almost any location.
- These groups can easily accommodate each other's schedules.

Some married couples may choose to use the Talk It Out section for a weekly family devotional activity.

...Who meet weekly...

- We were created to relate, so meeting weekly is important.
- In some cases, your smaller group may need to meet virtually. You may find it best to meet face-to-face every other week or once a month and use virtual tools the other weeks.

...To hold each other accountable and encourage each other in their spiritual growth.

- Review the questions and comments in Talk It Out.
- Look for ways the memory verse relates to the main point of the lesson.
- Include time to pray for each other.

Why Wasn't This Sold?

Jesus is worthy of our worship as the promised Messiah, the Son of God.

JOHN 12:1-11



...you,
...aved
...at ye are
...another.
...nim, Lord,
...answered him,
...follow me now;
...afterwards.
...Lord, why cannot
...all "lay down my life

...him, Wilt thou lay down
...ake? Verily, verily, I say unto
...shall not crow, till thou hast
...rice.

...OF MANY MANSIONS
...et 'not your heart be troubled: ye
...believe in God, believe also in me.
...in my Father's house are many man-
...sons: if *it were* not so, I would have told
...you. ¹⁰I go to prepare a place for you.

³And if I go and prepare a place for you, "I
...will come again, and receive you unto my-
...self; that ⁹where I am, *there* ye may be also.

⁴And whither I go ye know, and the way
...ye know.

**JESUS IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND
THE LIFE**

⁵Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know
...not whither thou goest; and how can we
...know the way?

⁶Jesus saith unto him, I am ²the way,
...the truth, and 'the life: ³no man cometh
...unto the Father, but by me.

⁷If ye had known me, ye should have
...known my Father also: and from henceforth
...ye know him, and have seen him.

⁸Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the

What is the most formal dinner you have ever attended? Are you more comfortable with being the host/hostess or being a guest? Explain.

On December 22, 1874, President Ulysses S. Grant and his wife, Julia, hosted King Kalakaua of the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) for the first official state dinner at the White House. Few questioned the presence of taste testers required by King Kalakaua to make sure the guest was honored appropriately. We will find a way to honor those we believe to be worthy of being honored.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

After raising Lazarus, Jesus went to Ephraim before returning to Bethany where He and His disciples were invited to a dinner. Some readers mistakenly think the meal happened at Lazarus's home. Parallel accounts indicate the banquet occurred at the home of Simon the leper (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9). Lazarus was a special guest. Mary and Martha, Lazarus's sisters, were present. Martha helped serve the meal, after which Mary anointed Jesus's feet.

Some confuse this incident with the narrative in Luke 7:36-50. Similarities include the name of the host (Simon) and the act of anointing Jesus with precious ointment. However, significant differences regarding the place, people, and purpose demonstrate these were separate events. The banquet in Luke 7 happened during Jesus's Galilean ministry, while John 12 was set in Bethany of Judea. Simon in Luke 7 was a Pharisee, not a leper. The woman of Luke 7 was identified as a notorious sinner, while Mary of Bethany had no history of infamy. In John 12, Lazarus was present, unlike the record of Luke 7. In John 12, Judas objected to what he considered

wasteful use of a valuable commodity. Luke did not mention such complaints. Finally, unlike Luke's account, John mentions that dinner attracted many Jews who heard about Lazarus's being raised.

The day after the banquet, Jesus entered Jerusalem as people cheered and waved palm branches. They proclaimed Jesus to be the King of Israel who came in the name of the Lord. Some were present when Jesus raised Lazarus. They testified about His amazing miracle, attracting people who wanted to see the One who could raise the dead. The people's exuberance further infuriated the Jewish leaders. They feared Jesus's popularity, saying among themselves that the whole world was going after Him.

JOHN 12:1-11

1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany where Lazarus was, the one Jesus had raised from the dead. **2** So they gave a dinner for him there; **Martha**^A was serving them, and Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with him. **3** Then **Mary**^B took a **pound**^C of perfume, pure and expensive **nard**,^D anointed Jesus's feet, and wiped his feet with her hair. So the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. **4** Then one of his disciples, Judas **Iscariot**^E (who was about to betray him), said, **5** "Why wasn't this perfume sold for three hundred **denarii**^F and given to the poor?" **6** He didn't say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief. He was in charge of the money-bag and would steal part of what was put in it. **7** Jesus answered, "Leave her alone; she has kept it for the day of my burial. **8** For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me." **9** Then a large crowd of the Jews learned he was there. They came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, the one he had raised from the dead. **10** But the chief priests had decided to kill Lazarus also, **11** because he was the reason many of the Jews were deserting them and believing in Jesus.

Key Words

- A. Sister to Mary and Lazarus. Martha is always shown as gifted in hospitality and service (Luke 10:40; John 11:20; 12:2).
- B. Sister to Martha and Lazarus. She is always shown in a position of worship and deeply desiring to know Jesus (Mark 14:3,6-9; Luke 10:39,42; John 12:3,7).
- C. The Greek (*litra*) refers to twelve ounces, according to the ancient Roman standard.
- D. Fragrant oil derived from a plant in India. According to Matthew 26:7 and Mark 14:3, Mary poured her nard from an alabaster jar.
- E. Aramaic for "man of Kerioth," perhaps referring to the village of Kerioth Hezron near Hebron.
- F. A denarius represented a day's wage, so Mary's nard equaled a laborer's annual salary.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

1. HONORED

(JOHN 12:1-3)

Believers should humbly honor Christ as Lord.

How should we respond to Jesus's work in our lives?

How do we balance when there is conflict between what our culture finds acceptable and our expressions of worship?

2. QUESTIONED

(JOHN 12:4-8)

Believers should affirm others who worship Jesus.

How can a person's misguided agenda discourage others from honoring Christ?

How do we reconcile Judas's being involved in ministry as a disciple with his betrayal that led to Jesus being arrested?

3. DIVISION

(JOHN 12:9-11)

Believers honor Christ by testifying to others about His work.

How can the way a person honors Christ bring others to Him?

APPLY THE TEXT

Share with your group ways of showing devotion to Jesus.

What role does the group play in helping each other show devotion to Jesus?

How can the group corporately express devotion to Jesus?

KEY DOCTRINE: Stewardship

Believers should recognize that their time, talents, and material possessions are entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. (See Deuteronomy 8:18; Romans 12:1-2.)

BIBLE SKILL: Review passages that interpret a narrative.

Review Romans 12:1-2 and compare Mary's sacrificial act of love with the idea of a believer's sacrifice in the Romans passage. How do Mary's actions serve as an illustration of what Paul was teaching in Romans 12?

TALK IT OUT

Focus on John 12:17. If you were a lawyer trying a case, what kind of person would you want to be your “star witness?”

John’s Gospel is the only one that tells of Jesus raising Lazarus (chap. 11). He noted that the crowd who worshiped Jesus at the triumphal entry was the same crowd that witnessed that miracle. They had seen firsthand His power and were convinced He was worthy of their praise.

If you are a follower of Jesus, what convinced you that He is who He says He is?

Think about an emotionally powerful experience you’ve had. Maybe it was a great concert, an exciting sporting event, or even a really powerful movie. You probably wanted to tell people who weren’t there all about it. This was the effect Lazarus being raised from the dead had on everyone who witnessed it, only a million times greater! They couldn’t wait to bear witness.

**What makes your personal experience such a powerful part of your testimony?
How can we encourage each other to “continue to bear witness?”**

For the next seven days, make “continue to bear witness” a repeating event on your smartphone calendar.

Prayer Requests



DAILY EXPLORATION

Day 1: John 12:1-2

Underline the phrase that describes Lazarus.

Passover commemorated the night the Lord passed through Egypt killing the firstborn, except where the doorposts had been painted with the blood of a sacrificial lamb. Jews celebrated this miracle annually during the spring. Jerusalem's population would swell by an additional 100,000 people as the faithful came to celebrate. Many visitors stayed in the homes of friends or family members who lived either in Jerusalem or one of the nearby villages, such as Bethany, the hometown of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

John linked the event in John 12:1-11 with the raising of Lazarus from the dead in chapter 11. Lazarus figures prominently in this section, being mentioned by name five times in 12:1-17. John's description of him as the one Jesus "raised from the dead" emphasizes the source of Lazarus's fame. The occasion for the meal may have been in part to celebrate Lazarus's return from the grave, but the context makes it clear that the main honoree was Jesus. Mary, Martha, Lazarus, the twelve disciples, and likely others were present. We are not told by John who the host was, but we know Martha was involved as a server.

**Note the significance of Lazarus being known for what Jesus did.
How does Jesus's work in you impact how you're known by others?**

Day 2: John 12:3

Reflect on the extravagance of what Mary did.

Mary's actions were startling for several reasons. First, Jews considered washing someone's feet a degrading task, typically reserved for servants. This explains Peter's protest when Jesus washed his feet (John 13:4-9). Mary did not wash the Lord's feet with water, though; she anointed them with nard. Second, the perfume was extravagant. The perfume was pure, not diluted with other oils or extracts. Nard was an oil derived from the roots of a tree that grew in northern India; it was red and had a sweet aroma. Third, Mary uncovered her hair, let it down, and used it to wipe dry the feet of Jesus. Respectable Jewish women of the first century kept their hair concealed. Keeping it covered indicated personal piety. Jewish law at the time allowed a man to divorce his wife if she went in public with her hair uncovered. Mary, though, seemingly with reckless abandon, disregarded cultural expectations and concerns. Expressing a balance of humility and devotion, she instead focused solely on honoring and worshiping Jesus.

How should you respond to Jesus's work in your life?

Day 3: John 12:4-6

Note the discrepancy between Judas's words and motives.

The Gospel writers regularly included two details about Judas Iscariot: he was one of the Twelve, and he was the one who betrayed Jesus. Along with the other disciples, Judas had heard Jesus preach and teach; he had witnessed the miracles. Additionally, he, along with a partner, had gone out and proclaimed a message of repentance. He may have been involved in casting out demons and anointing the sick with oil (Mark 6:7-13). Judas had earned the trust of the other disciples; he served as the group's treasurer, the one in charge of the money-bag.

The first recorded words of Judas in Scripture were in protest of Mary's extravagance. His words contrasted his greed, selfishness, and deceit with her generosity, selflessness, and devotion. Mary's gift was equivalent to about a year's salary. He, a thief, knew Mary's extravagance meant he would have no opportunity to get his hands on her money. Of the Gospel writers, only John indicated that Judas kept the money-bag. This money was used to meet the needs of the disciples and to help the poor (John 13:29). Additionally, only John gave the detail that Judas would steal from the bag. Judas was self-serving, greedy, hypocritical (pretending to care about the poor), and he was a thief.

How do you reconcile Judas's being a disciple of Jesus with his greed and betrayal that led to Jesus being arrested?

Day 4: John 12:7-8

Identify how Jesus interpreted Mary's action.

Jesus knew Mary could have sold the perfume. He also knew she had kept it for His pending burial. Jesus considered Mary's action to be noble—a beautiful gesture and a good deed (Matthew 26:10). Some have used the Lord's statement, "for you always have the poor with you," as an excuse not to help people in need. Such thinking violates what God said to the ancient Israelites: "For there will never cease to be poor people in the land; that is why I am commanding you, 'Open your hand willingly to your poor and needy brother in your land'" (Deuteronomy 15:11). Throughout both Old and New Testaments, Scripture urges believers to care for those who are less fortunate. We do not have to choose between caring for the poor and showing love toward Christ.

Jesus's focus already was on His death and burial: "you do not always have me." He knew Mary would not have many more opportunities to express her devotion to Him. As had happened when she sat at the feet of Jesus rather than busy herself with serving guests (Luke 10:38-42), Mary, with this perfume, had again made the better choice.

How is Jesus's statement in verse 8 applicable to you?

Day 5: John 12:9-11

Notice the chief reason many of the Jews were believing in Jesus.

After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the chief priests and Pharisees worried that everyone would become a follower of Jesus and that they would lose their places of authority. “So from that day on they plotted to kill [Jesus]” (John 11:53).

News had spread of Lazarus walking out of his tomb. Curiosity seekers made their way to Bethany. They had heard what Jesus had done and wanted to see this man who had performed the impossible. Additionally, they wanted to see Lazarus, the one Jesus had raised from the dead. The very thing the religious leaders feared began to happen. Many of the Jews saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears. They began deserting the chief priests’ authority and believing in Jesus. Not only did the religious leaders want to kill Jesus, they wanted to kill Lazarus because he was the reason many Jews were believing in Jesus.

How can the way you honor Christ bring others to Him?

APPLY THE TEXT

How can you show your devotion and appreciation to Jesus? As an act of devotion, who will you tell about Jesus and what He has done in your life?



LEADER HELPS

Using the Daily Discipleship Guide to Lead a Bible Study Group

The *Daily Discipleship Guide* was created for the purpose of building disciples. As the leader of the group, you play a major role. You can build disciples through the group Bible study time, encouraging daily Bible engagement, facilitating smaller groups, and apprenticing future leaders.

Building Disciples through the Group Time

Leading the group Bible study time is the most direct way you will build disciples. Each week, you will introduce the group to the Bible passage, examine the key message in that passage, challenge the group to act on that passage, and encourage them to reflect more deeply in the week that follows. Doing so requires preparation. Here is a way to prepare that gives you adequate time to study the lesson and will make the session fresh in your own life.

Early in the Week (Sunday or Monday)

- Ask God to open your mind and heart to His Word as you study.
- Read the Bible passage for the coming session, and review Understand the Context and Key Words.

Through the Week

- Ask God to use the Daily Explorations to help you understand and apply the lesson to your life.
- Complete the Daily Exploration activities in the days leading up to the group time.
- Meet with a group of three to four other teachers to share and pray for each other. Use Talk It Out to start your conversation.
- Pay careful attention to the Apply the Text sections for that session, looking for ways you need to apply the Bible in your own life.
- Start gathering items you may use in the group time.



The Day before Group Study Time

- Ask God to direct the creation of a group plan.
- Review the group plan in the back of the *Daily Discipleship Guide*.
- Review the first four pages of the *Daily Discipleship Guide* for that session and the commentary provided in the Leader Helps for that session.
- Review your responses and notes from the completed Daily Explorations.
- Listen to the weekly podcast at goExploreTheBible.com/Adults-Training.
- Adjust the plan to fit the needs of your group.
Note: You can create custom plans using the DOC file provided in the Digital Download for the Leader Pack—it's the same content printed in the Leader Helps.
- Consult *QuickSource* for additional insights and ideas.
- Review the weekly Adult Extra idea on the Explore the Bible blog (goExploreTheBible.com/LeaderExtras).
- Consult the *Explore the Bible Adult Commentary* for additional insight.
- Pull needed posters from the *Explore the Bible: Leader Pack* (or create your own using Visual Ideas on pages 160–161).
- Make sure you have all your resources gathered including extra copies of the *Daily Discipleship Guide* for guests.

The Day of the Group Study Time

- Arrive early. The group time begins when the first person arrives so make sure that is you.
- Pray for the study and the group.
- Adjust the room as needed.
- Lead the study, adjusting as you go.

Continued on next page — — — — —

After the Group Study Time

- Consider the After the Session idea at the end of the group plans.
- Contact the group, encouraging them to complete the Daily Exploration section and sharing gathered prayer requests and other appropriate information.
- Record insights gained about teaching, individuals in the group, and Scripture.
- Pray for specific needs of people in the group.
- Do it all again, asking God to open your mind and heart to His Word this week.

Building Disciples by Encouraging Daily Bible Engagement

Here are some ways to encourage your group to engage with the Bible daily.

- **Visit them.** Deliver a copy of the *Daily Discipleship Guide* to every person in your group.
- **Ask them.** That seems simple, but the simple is not always easy. Learn to comfortably ask if group members are studying the Bible. You may want to use a statement instead of a question, such as, “I hope you took a look at the Day 3 activity for this week.” It’s a question disguised as a statement, so it’s not as threatening.
- **Tell them.** Let them know that you are using the Daily Exploration section as well. Set the standard.
- **Show them.** Point to the Daily Exploration section at the conclusion of the group study. From time to time, demonstrate how to use the section, guiding them through Day 1 as a group.
- **Invite them.** Call on pre-enlisted volunteers to share with the group what they are learning and how they are using the Daily Exploration section.

As teachers, we have taken on the responsibility of encouraging everyone on our ministry list (class roll, membership list, etc.) to engage daily in Bible study. We can’t make them do it, but we can provide them with a tool and encourage them to use it.

Building Disciples through Smaller Groups

Talk It Out is designed for smaller groups of three to four people to meet weekly. The goal of the smaller groups is simple: holding ourselves and others accountable for living a Christ-honoring life.

Create smaller groups:

- Explain the importance of the smaller groups, emphasizing the goal.
- Allow the group to form their own initial groups of three by gender (men's smaller groups and women's smaller groups). This tends to work better than assigning groups.
- Allow the smaller groups to add one person from the names on the ministry list of people who are not present.
- You may want to encourage the groups to form based on neighborhoods or proximity to work.
- Make sure some of the groups have extra space for new people and guests.
- As the Bible study group grows, you may need to reorganize the smaller groups, but try not to regroup too often so that trust can be built within each smaller group.

Support the smaller groups:

- Provide opportunities for the members of the smaller groups to pray with each other during the group time.
- Make study assignments in the weekly group time based on the smaller groups.
- Pre-enlist a volunteer to share with the larger group how participation in the smaller group is impacting his or her life.
- Periodically organize fellowship events built around the smaller groups. The smaller groups could be the basis for teams during the event.

Be in a smaller group:

- Meet with two or three other Bible study leaders as part of your weekly preparation.
- Be part of a smaller group within your class.
- Host a smaller group for guests and new group members.

Continued on next page — — — — —

Building Disciples by Apprenticing Other Leaders

Starting new groups is critical to the life of your church and the lives of the individuals in your group. People in your group need to be challenged to take on a greater role in your church. Providing the opportunity to do so helps them grow and removes the largest barrier to starting new Bible study groups—finding a leader. You can make a difference in the growth of individuals and in the future growth of your church by apprenticing potential group leaders. Here's how you can use the *Daily Discipleship Guide* to make this happen.

- **Step 1:** Prior to group time, ask a potential leader to follow along in the Leader Helps for that session as you lead the group. Tell him or her to note what you did and what you adjusted. You're just coaching your apprentice to use the book he or she has in a different way.
- **Step 2:** After that group experience, spend time with the group member going over what you did and how you adjusted the leader material for the group.
- **Step 3:** Invite him or her to do this again in a few weeks.
- **Step 4:** Ask him or her to lead a group time or part of one using the suggestions in the Leader Helps for that session. You may be away that week, or you can simply observe as a group member. Offer to help him or her prepare if needed.
- **Step 5:** As your apprentice gains confidence, allow him or her to teach more in the near future.
- **Step 6:** As a need for a new group surfaces, prepare to move on to lead the new group, with the apprentice becoming the leader of the current group (which tends to work best), or commission the apprentice and a few others from the group to start a new group.
- **Step 7:** Do it all again.

Not everyone in the group will become a Bible study leader. For those who do, you can become a mentor to potential leaders, extending your teaching ministry and demonstrating discipleship.

Why Wasn't This Sold?

ENGAGE

BEGIN: As the group arrives, talk about what they had for dinner last night. After a few minutes, direct attention to the lesson introduction on page 13. Encourage them to respond to the questions after the introduction. Be prepared to share about a formal dinner you attended.

ASK: *What are some other ways to demonstrate honor to people in our culture?*

Lead the group in a brief discussion about who our culture honors and how we show them honor.

TRANSITION: *With today's session, we are starting a new quarter, but we are continuing our study of John's Gospel. Last quarter ended with Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead in John 11. Today's study examines something that happened not long after that. Jesus was the honored guest at a dinner in Bethany the week before His death, but what John emphasized was a startling act of worship and generosity—along with Jesus's response.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

INTRODUCE: Point to **Pack Item 2** (*Poster: Outline of John*) displayed on the wall. Remind the group that Jesus's coming and His public ministry are the focus of the first several chapters of John's Gospel.

SUMMARIZE: *Beginning in John 12, though, the focus shifts toward the last week of Jesus's life on earth. Distribute copies of **Pack Item 7** (Handout: John Time Line). Point out that this event took place around AD 33, just before Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead. Share that Bethany was where Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, and it is the setting for the banquet we see in today's key passage.*

READ: Invite a volunteer to read **John 12:1-3**, instructing the group to look for ways Jesus was honored.

EXPLAIN: Use information from Understand the Context (p. 13) to identify two different anointings of Jesus in the Gospels. Explain that this session will focus on the second one.

EXPLAIN: Distribute copies of **Pack Item 11** (*Handout: First-Century Sabbath Laws*). Remind the group that the Jewish leaders believed that Jesus had violated the Sabbath on multiple occasions and wanted to arrest and execute Him as a result. Point out the danger of holding this dinner in light of the Sanhedrin's instructions (John 11:57). Talk about the risk of being with Jesus at the banquet.

EXAMINE: Encourage the group to work in pairs to make a list of ways John described Mary's offering. After a few minutes, allow volunteers

to share what stuck out to them. Highlight the fact that Mary's perfume was expensive and pure. Note that it also was aromatic, filling the room with its fragrance.

- **(12:3)** Mary used a pound of pure and expensive nard. This fragrant ointment was made from the roots of a rare herb. It may have been imported from its native India. Such a large amount seemed extravagant, lending credence to the idea that Mary applied it to Jesus's head and His feet. Using a pound of perfume caused the house to be filled with the fragrance. As with modern perfume, some fragrances were diluted with other oils to reduce the cost. Mary's perfume was pure, making it even more valuable. Mary's expression of gratitude was not watered down by any consideration of expense.

ASK: *What can we say about Mary based on John's description?* Lead a brief discussion about Mary's humility and passion for worshiping Jesus. Emphasize that she wasn't worried about the reactions of others. *She was simply determined to honor the Lord with her gift and her actions.*

REFLECT: Direct the group to silently respond to this question on page 15: ***How should we respond to Jesus's work in our lives?*** Encourage them to recall things Jesus has done in their lives and how they can show gratitude and honor to Him for those situations.

TRANSITION: *"Haters gonna hate" is a popular saying in our culture. It means someone is always going to complain or find fault with something. As it turned out, what's true in the 21st century was also true in the first century. Someone at the*

banquet had a problem with Mary's extravagant gift and worship.

READ: Read John 12:4-8 aloud, directing the group to determine the attitude or motivation behind Judas's question.

ASK: *What role did Judas have with the disciples? How did that play into his criticism of Mary?* Note that there were other disciples who agreed with him that the perfume, costing a year's wages, could have been sold to benefit the poor (Matt. 26:8-9; Mark 14:4-5).

VISUAL: On a board, create a chart with two columns, one titled "Mary" and the other "Judas." For each column, encourage the group to suggest descriptive words that illustrate the attitudes of Mary and Judas. Ask: ***How do we reconcile Judas's being involved in ministry as a disciple with his betrayal that led to Jesus being arrested?*** (p. 15)

CONSIDER: Enlist a volunteer to read the Key Doctrine (p. 15). Encourage volunteers to suggest how Mary demonstrated biblical stewardship. Challenge the group to reflect on their own attitudes toward generosity. Offer time for silent prayer, allowing the group to talk with God about areas where they could be better stewards and areas where they could adjust their attitudes toward generosity.

DISCUSS: Read verse 8 aloud again. Ask: ***What did Jesus mean by this?***

- **(12:8)** The disciples could (and should) minister to the poor at any time. However, they would not always have Jesus physically present with them. The time for honoring Jesus in person was limited. His death was

fast approaching. It was important for them to take advantage of the time they had to show love for their Master.

- **(12:8)** Some have used Jesus's statement, "for you always have the poor with you," as an excuse not to help people in need. The Bible teaches we should always look for occasions to help the poor (see Deut. 15:7-11), but we also have a responsibility to honor Jesus through our giving and our worship.

TRANSITION: *Because John included her in this story, we know what Mary did—and we can follow her example.*

READ: Call on a volunteer to read aloud **John 12:9-11**, suggesting the group look for reasons a large crowd would have gathered. Note that they were probably neither faithful followers nor hostile enemies of Jesus, but curious onlookers.

REFLECT: Call attention to the last verse in this section. Ask: ***Why did the leaders feel so threatened by Jesus—and even Lazarus?*** Share that they were ruled by jealousy over Jesus's popularity and fear over their own loss of standing.

- **(12:10-11)** The religious establishment had already begun a conspiracy to kill Jesus (11:49-53). His popularity challenged their position and authority and drew people away from their teaching. His miracles, along with His authoritative preaching, stood in sharp contrast to the impact of their teaching among the people (Matt. 7:29). They saw the effect Lazarus's presence had on the people, so they also decided to kill Lazarus.

ASK: ***Were the leaders more like Mary or Judas? Why?*** Note how they aligned with Judas's attitude. Affirm again that Mary developed a reputation for honoring Jesus. Ask: ***How can the way a person honors Christ bring others to Him?*** (p. 15)

CHALLENGE

REVIEW: Encourage the group to share ways believers can show devotion to Jesus.

RESPOND: Encourage the group to respond to the "Apply the Text" questions on page 15: ***What role does the group play in helping each other show devotion to Jesus?***
How can the group corporately express devotion to Jesus?

CHALLENGE: Lead the group to privately identify ways they will show their devotion and appreciation to Jesus during the coming week.

PRAY: Close in prayer, acknowledging Jesus is worthy of our worship and asking Him to help us honor Him purposefully in our quiet times and in our corporate worship.

AFTER THE SESSION

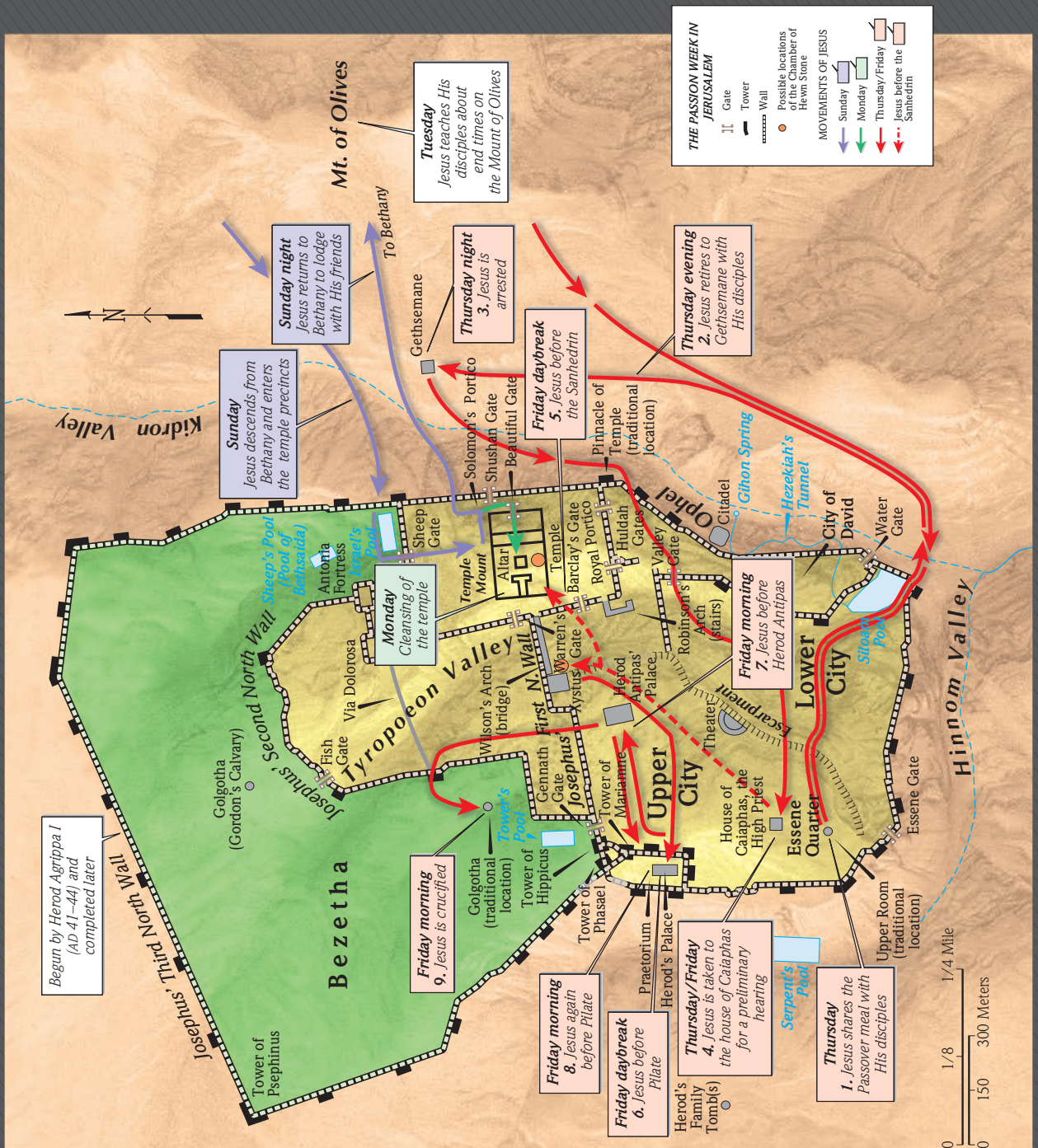
Reinforce attendance by suggesting that group members invite friends and family members who don't normally attend. Remind them that this part of John's Gospel focuses on the last week of Jesus's life on earth and the first Easter.

COMING **NEXT QUARTER**

JEREMIAH AND LAMENTATIONS

- Session 1.....**Prepares** • Jeremiah 1:4-19
- Session 2.....**Judges** • Jeremiah 2:1-13
- Session 3.....**Personal** • Jeremiah 7:1-15
- Session 4.....**Exclusive** • Jeremiah 12:1-13
- Session 5.....**Shapes** • Jeremiah 18:1-12
- Session 6.....**Rules** • Jeremiah 23:1-12
- Session 7.....**Present** • Jeremiah 29:4-14
- Session 8.....**Redeems** • Jeremiah 31:23-24
- Session 9.....**Worthy** • Jeremiah 35:5-19
- Session 10.....**Speaks** • Jeremiah 36:19-31
- Session 11.....**Trustworthy** • Jeremiah 42:7-22
- Session 12.....**Just** • Jeremiah 50:11-20,33-34
- Session 13.....**Good** • Lamentations 3:19-33

The Passion Week in Jerusalem



"The Passion Week in Jerusalem" is adapted from the *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary: Revised and Expanded* (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2014), 234. Used by permission.