



EXPLORE THE BIBLE®

Daily Discipleship Guide

Spring 2023 | CSB



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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.

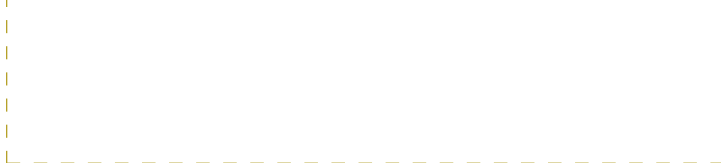
He included Jesus calling on John to care for Mary in His place, their final conversation before Jesus's death .

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
- ☐ 12. John 19:28-30
- ☐ 13. John 19:31-37
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- ☐ 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-
...sions: if *it were* not so, I would have told
...you. ¹⁰I go to prepare a place for you.
...¹¹And if I go and prepare a place for you, "I
...will come again, and receive you unto my-
...self; that ¹²where I am, *there* ye may be also.
...ed to
...uld be
...east saith
...s, to whom I
...e dipped *it*. And
...sop, he gave *it* to
...of Simon.
...p Satan entered into
...s unto him, That thou
...at the table knew for what
...e this unto him.
...e of them thought, because
...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 ⁷the way,
...the truth, and 'the life: ⁸no 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

12

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?

