

CANDID DISCIPLESHIP

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 13:1–17, 31B–35

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## Learning the Language

*“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

John 13:35

We visited a small village on an island off the mainland of Haiti, and without our interpreters, we were helpless. We had attempted to learn French Creole before we arrived, but the few words we learned were insufficient for carrying on conversation. On this particular day of leading a community Bible school, we arrived with a bucket filled with ocean water, a few towels, and a camp chair. We motioned for the first child to sit in the chair as one of our students poured water from her hands over the child’s sandy foot. The child giggled when the cold water touched her foot and again when the towel tickled her toes. One by one the children took a turn having their feet rinsed, and then we noticed parents, grandparents, and neighbors had joined the line.

Jesus knew. Sometimes words are insufficient. But embracing vulnerability to extend love says all that needs to be said. May we become more fluent each day in the language Jesus teaches.



*Teach us to serve one another well, O God, and love as you have loved. Amen.*

Andy Blackwelder, Greeneville, Tennessee

CANDID DISCIPLESHIP

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 18:2–11

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## Earnestly Seeking

*Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, “Whom are you looking for?” They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus replied, “I am he.”*

John 18:4–5

Jesus didn't run away from those searching for him, and he didn't panic. He calmly asked, “Whom are you looking for?” On this day they weren't looking for the bread of life; the light of the world; the door; the resurrection and the life; the good shepherd; the way, the truth, and the life; or the true vine. Today they were looking for the man, Jesus of Nazareth. It's why his answer, “I am he,” took them to the ground. He didn't say, “You got me,” or, “Busted!” Instead his answer echoed the Lord's words to Moses hundreds of years earlier: “I AM WHO I AM” (Exod. 3:14).

In our doubt, curiosity, skepticism, and uncertainty; in our devotion, faithfulness, and humility; from wherever we are coming, Jesus calmly asks us daily: “For whom are you looking?” May we patiently grapple with the question, for those who seek might find more than they expect.



*You are never far from us, Lord, and yet we do not always see you for all that you are. Give us new eyes and ignite in us a fresh desire to know you more deeply. In Christ. Amen.*

Andy Blackwelder, Greeneville, Tennessee

CANDID DISCIPLESHIP

SCRIPTURE: LAMENTATIONS 3:19–24

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## Admitting Helplessness

*But this I call to mind,  
and therefore I have hope:  
The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,  
his mercies never come to an end.*

Lamentations 3:21–22

Let's be real: sometimes even the most faithful among us feel hopeless. We don't like to admit it because we think people of God shouldn't feel this way, but sometimes we're sitting outside the sealed-up tomb in silence, wondering if this is the end of the road.

Hopelessness hurts. And it's lonely. And nothing is more painful in these hopeless moments than well-intentioned neighbors sharing chipper slogans to try to snap us out of it. Sometimes we need to rest our forehead on the cold, immovable stone and weep. Rushing into hope robs us of the raw realization that we are not as polished as we pretend to be. In our hopelessness, we are made aware that we cannot save ourselves—we need a miracle from God.



*None of us enjoy the darkness, O God, but all of us must travel through it. Remind us that even the darkness is not dark to you, and there is nowhere we can go that you will not be there beside us. Hold us as we weep, and deliver us in your miraculous mercy, we pray. Amen.*

Andy Blackwelder, Greeneville, Tennessee

THE GIFT OF UNITY

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 20:1–18

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## Heart Recognition

*Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?  
Whom are you looking for?”*

John 20:15a

In the movie *Back to the Future*, the main character, Marty McFly, goes back to a time when his mother is a teen. She develops a crush. Although it seems disturbing, it’s no surprise: her heart recognized someone she’d love unconditionally in the future.

Mary Magdalene’s need for Jesus’ unconditional love compelled her to go to the tomb to be near his body, but she was too consumed by grief for her heart to recognize the risen Christ when he appeared before her.

Aren’t we all guilty of this? When we allow something to consume us, such as grief, greed, or anxiety, our hearts are blinded. We rush right past our children, a coworker, or the stranger on the street, completely oblivious that there is a piece of God, and God’s Son, within their hearts.

That’s why it’s so critical to contemplate Jesus’ question in our prayer time: “Whom are you looking for?” If we practice seeking God in the quiet, we’ll recognize the holy in everyone, despite the chaos of our emotions.



*Risen Christ, help me to recognize you in everyone,  
despite the chaos. Amen.*

Claire McGarry, Windham, New Hampshire

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THE GIFT OF UNITY

SCRIPTURE: ACTS 4:32–35

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## Overcoming Differences

*Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul.*

Acts 4:32a

Due to multiple circumstances, I received my living accommodations late in the college application process. I ended up being the only freshman in a campus townhouse with five other women. None of us had ever met before, and we quickly learned we had absolutely nothing in common. In fact, we were all so different, with different morals and values, it grew difficult to share the space. More than just endlessly piling dishes in the sink and eating all my food, one roommate actually ran up a \$700 phone bill in my name and refused to pay it!

Although some of the believers that formed the early Christian communities most likely knew one another, there had to have been a plethora of personality types and quirks. Yet their mutual love and commitment to Christ was such a significant common denominator that it made them one in heart and soul. The natural result of that led them to share everything: their possessions, their money, and, most of all, their purpose.

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*God of all, help me overcome my differences with others, making us one in heart and soul through our love for you. Amen.*

Claire McGarry, Windham, New Hampshire

TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2021

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## THE GIFT OF UNITY

SCRIPTURE: ACTS 4:32–35

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### Never in Need

*There was not a needy person among them.*

Acts 4:34a

When I was a missionary in Guatemala, I made fifty dollars a month. Between a good exchange rate and living frugally, I was fine most of the time. There were a few times during my three years there that I was at risk of running out. Each and every time, a surprise check would miraculously arrive from my mom or another relative. I say miraculously because it took weeks for mail to get to me, and there were times when it never arrived at all. There's no way those checks could have been timed with my need without God's grace.

Despite working hard and being good stewards of our money, there will always be times when things seem dire. That's when the miraculous can happen: we get a pay raise without asking; we receive a donation we didn't solicit; or we suddenly realize we actually can make do without. It's God's grace at work—inspiring others to help or shifting our perspective to realize we don't have a need after all.



*Provider of all, thank you for always meeting my needs even before I express them. Amen.*

Claire McGarry, Windham, New Hampshire

THE GIFT OF UNITY  
SCRIPTURE: PSALM 133

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## Holy Fragrance

*It is like the precious oil on the head,  
running down upon the beard,  
on the beard of Aaron,  
running down over the collar of his robes.*

Psalm 133:2

My friend Jess began a program called Kids in Service. It's a service-project group for children up to the age of eighteen who work together to help others locally, nationally, and internationally. As varied as the kids' ages and personalities, the small acts of kindness run the gamut from making and delivering baked goods to local workers in appreciation for what they do to cutting up old denim jeans for shoes for children in Africa. Each and every project plants a seed of unity in the doers and the receivers. They also help to bridge distance and disparity.

Like the oil that was used by Moses to anoint Aaron as high priest of Israel, when the kids come together to overcome their differences and make a difference, a fragrance of love is exuded, marking it as holy.



*Lord, inspire me to bridge the gap between myself  
and others by carrying out small acts of kindness. As  
I do so, may they exude the fragrance of your love,  
marking them as holy. Amen.*

Claire McGarry, Windham, New Hampshire

THURSDAY, APRIL 8, 2021

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## THE GIFT OF UNITY

SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 1:1–2:2

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### Coming Clean

*If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

1 John 1:9

My mother started working as a traffic supervisor when I was in the fifth grade—and she’s still doing so at the age of eighty-six! All the police officers in town know her, and she runs into them often. Growing up, the worst offense we could commit was getting in trouble and not telling my mother before her police friends did. It embarrassed her to no end when she had to learn about it from someone else. She was very clear that if we came clean with her first, all would be well.

It’s not uncommon for us to apologize to whomever we’ve wronged but sidestep going to God for forgiveness. We can’t be truly cleansed of our unrighteousness until we go to the Holy Redeemer with a contrite heart. That’s how we’re made clean and all is truly made well.



*Holy Redeemer, it’s difficult to admit when I’m wrong. Give me the strength to do so and to humbly apologize to those I’ve offended. Above all, prompt me to turn to you with a contrite heart for your forgiveness so that you can cleanse all my unrighteousness. Amen.*

Claire McGarry, Windham, New Hampshire

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THE GIFT OF UNITY

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 20:19–31

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## Power in Numbers

*A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.”*

John 20:26

I got a text from a friend saying there was an opening on her son’s soccer team and asking if my teen son wanted to play. Although he did, I messaged her back saying that he hadn’t played since he was six. I didn’t think he’d be a good fit. She explained they were desperate and needed anyone who could fill the slot so that they could reach their quota. Otherwise, they’d have to forfeit all their games.

The exchange underscored how important it is for people to come together. There is power in numbers. Uniting with others makes us better and stronger. When Jesus appeared to the disciples after his resurrection, they, too, were together. It’s as if Jesus were blessing their decision to gather, uniting them even more through the shared experience of seeing the resurrected Christ for the first time, as a group.

As Christians, we, too, are called to gather, uniting hearts and minds in one common love of God, giving that love more power and strengthening each of us for the journey.

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*God of togetherness, unite me with fellow believers so that I’m strengthened in all the ways we lack. Amen.*

Claire McGarry, Windham, New Hampshire

SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 2021

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## THE GIFT OF UNITY

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 20:19–31

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### Eyes of the Heart

*Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”*

John 20:29

My kids are constantly pulling up images on their cell phones to illustrate their point. Whether it's proof that they actually do hold a festival of freezing hairdos in Takhini Hot Springs in Canada or that sea otters hold hands when they sleep to prevent drifting apart, they feel compelled to provide evidence that they are right. And they've grown skeptical when others present an argument yet can't back it up with something they can see with their eyes.

My kids are no different than so many of us can be regarding our faith, demanding visible proof. Nevertheless, we're called to believe without seeing. The irony is, we don't need our eyes to see Jesus. We see him with our hearts all the time, whenever we open them wide enough. God is in the good Samaritan who stops to help, the person struggling financially who donates anyways, and the first responder who comforts more with her words than she ever could with her hands.



*Good and true God, increase the sight of my heart so that I see you everywhere and in everyone. Amen.*

Claire McGarry, Windham, New Hampshire

BY AND FOR GOD'S GLORY

SCRIPTURE: ACTS 3:12–19

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## Pointing the Praise in the Right Direction

*“You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?”*

Acts 3:12b

Although there's no *I* in *team*, we've all seen the athlete or employee who takes all the credit for the team's success. He'll sing his own praises for as long as anyone will listen, and she'll steal the glory for what her staff members did. In return, he gets a multimillion-dollar contract, and she gets a promotion, taking her closer to the top.

It's the complete opposite in the life of people of faith. We know that in order to be great, we must become small. We put ourselves last in order for others to be first. Most of all, we point the praise in the right direction for anything we accomplish. Any and all credit goes to the source, the One who gifted us with life to begin with and blessed us with any talents or success we've been able to achieve.



*Mighty source of all, thank you for the life and gifts you have blessed me with. May I always point the praise in your direction, for any and all things I achieve. Amen.*

Claire McGarry, Windham, New Hampshire

MONDAY, APRIL 12, 2021

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BY AND FOR GOD'S GLORY

SCRIPTURE: ACTS 3:12-19

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## Where There's a Will

*“. . . and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead.”*

Acts 3:15a

In 2012, at the age of twenty, Canadian Emily Hime took over an orphanage in Haiti. Running Maison Ke Kontan (Happy Heart House) on a shoestring budget put Hime on a financial roller coaster, with the orphanage on the verge of closing multiple times. Each time, one generous donor or another would step forward and save the day. It is clear that Hime has been called to help those in need. With defeat not an option, she finds a way to overcome with God's help.

When God's only son was rejected and crucified, it looked as if God's will was defeated. It seemed that all was lost, causing many to lose hope. Then Christ was resurrected, and hope was restored. The resurrection of Christ is not just a one-time event. It's a recurring miracle that happens every time we lose hope only to have God intervene, creating a way that resurrects hope in our lives and in our hearts.



*Sovereign Rescuer, inspire me to help those in need.  
When I face hardships of any kind, remind me that  
when it's your will, you'll always resurrect hope in me  
and in those I help. Amen.*

Claire McGarry, Windham, New Hampshire

BY AND FOR GOD'S GLORY

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 4

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## Free Falling

*Offer right sacrifices,  
and put your trust in the LORD.*

Psalm 4:5

In training to become a resident advisor (RA) in college, they made us take turns doing trust falls for group bonding. We'd form two rows, turn and face each other, and extend our arms. Then, one person would climb up on a table, turn his or her back to us, and fall into our arms. It was a scary experience in both regards: falling and catching. But the more we did it, the better we got at both. Eventually, we were able to do the exercise with complete trust in one another.

Trusting God can be just as intimidating, especially when something really matters. That's when it feels we have further to fall. But just like we repeated that exercise in RA training, the more we practice trusting God, the better we'll get at doing so. Eventually, we'll reach a point where no matter how high the obstacle, we're willing to let go and free-fall, confident our Savior will catch us.



*Ever-present Savior, increase my trust in you so that  
I'm willing to free-fall into your grace, no matter how  
high the starting point. Amen.*

Claire McGarry, Windham, New Hampshire

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2021

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BY AND FOR GOD'S GLORY

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 4

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## Guiding Light

*“Let the light of your face shine on us, O LORD!”*

Psalm 4:6b

Our home has an open floor plan with a cathedral ceiling in the foyer. There's a lamp there I turn on each night. It's amazing how it casts its glow throughout the house, up and down. If anyone has to get up in the middle of the night, there's no fear of tripping. Yet I forget to turn it off each morning. It's not evident it's still on when the sunlight pours in, drowning it out.

This reminds me of how so many of us are with God. When circumstances turn dark, we look to God to light the way. Yet when all is resolved, that holy presence goes unnoticed. Our need isn't as great, so the light gets drowned out by the busyness of life and our own self-sufficiency. What's critical to remember is that although the bulb in the lamp at my house burns out and needs to be replaced, ours is an eternal God whose light never dies. Our goal should be to walk in that light, in bad times and in good.



*Luminous God, open my eyes to your guiding light in bad times and in good. Amen.*

Claire McGarry, Windham, New Hampshire

BY AND FOR GOD'S GLORY

SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 3:1-7

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## Blessing the World

*Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed.*

1 John 3:2

My MOSAIC Moms group meets once a month to talk about the intersections between motherhood and faith. The discussion at our most recent gathering was about what gifts our children will possess and bless the world with when they grow up. Despite most of our kids being in their teens, we're unsure. There's still so much more for them to experience and discover. We know it will be a complete joy to watch it all play out.

We're all God's children, and God delights in watching our stories unfold. No matter our age, careers, or accomplishments, what we will be still isn't known. We're constantly being made new in God's love, ever growing, ever changing. The more we open ourselves up to God's grace, the more we're led to bless the world in new and exciting ways.



*Creator of us all, help me understand that my life is still incomplete. Open my heart to all the ways you want to grow me so I can further bless the world in new and exciting ways. Amen.*

Claire McGarry, Windham, New Hampshire

FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 2021

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BY AND FOR GOD'S GLORY

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 24:36B–48

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## Astounding Joy

*While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering . . .*

Luke 24:41

One day, I got sucked into the YouTube rabbit hole and watched video after video of adorable little kids being told their moms were going to have another baby. Each and every time, the kids were completely dumbfounded—not by jealousy but by sheer excitement. Whether they cried tears of joy, jumped up and down, or threw themselves at their mom with elation, they all said the same thing: “I can’t believe it! I just can’t believe it!” The news was just too wonderful and too astounding to be fully grasped.

None of the apostles cried, jumped up and down, or threw themselves at Jesus when he appeared to them after the resurrection, but they most certainly couldn’t fully grasp that he was standing before them, in the flesh. It was just too wonderful and too astounding to be believed!



*Resurrected Christ, the news of your resurrection is so incredible and wondrous, we still grapple with understanding it fully. Open my mind and heart to all that it means, for me and the world. Amen.*

Claire McGarry, Windham, New Hampshire

BY AND FOR GOD'S GLORY

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 24:36-48

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## Opened Minds

*Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.*

Luke 24:45

Have you ever had the experience where you give your spouse or kids advice, and they brush it off as if you don't know what you're talking about? Then, days later, someone else says the same exact thing, and suddenly your spouse or kids think it's a great idea? When we call them on it, they claim they have no idea what we're talking about. Sadly, we know it's because they've tuned us out. It takes a new source to open their minds.

Jesus was with his disciples for three years, teaching them about the Scriptures and God's love. Even though they knew he was the Messiah and the greatest teacher ever known, their minds weren't open wide enough to truly understand all that he was teaching. It wasn't until he opened their minds after his resurrection and the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 2:4) that they could truly comprehend the magnitude and magnificence of God's holy word.



*Magnificent Teacher, open my mind to the wonders of your great love and holy teachings. Amen.*

Claire McGarry, Windham, New Hampshire

SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 2021

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GROWING IN FAITH

SCRIPTURE: ACTS 4:5–12

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## By God We Are Saved

*“There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved.”*

Acts 4:12

As an adult, I was visiting with a new group of friends when one person boldly asked, “Are you saved?” My answer was, “Yes, I am saved.” The conversation continued as we shared the joy of being in the midst of believers. Each person shared about their salvation. Some stories were filled with amazing experiences. Some stories were quiet and peaceful. We discussed ways to share about salvation with others in the community.

Looking back on my life, I am thankful for people God placed in my life to show me the way to salvation: my parents, Sunday school teachers, friends who were saved and shared the good news with me, and also the women in church who invited me to Bible study.

I was not baptized until I was in my early twenties, even though I always considered myself “saved.” Truly, I did not know the full meaning of salvation through Christ until I was an adult. No earthly person can provide salvation. Jesus Christ is the only way.

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*Thank you, Lord, for the people in my life who showed me the way to you. Amen.*

Melissa Henderson, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

GROWING IN FAITH  
SCRIPTURE: PSALM 23

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## Comfort in God

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff—  
they comfort me.*

Psalm 23:4

I scheduled a test to determine the cause of severe pain in my body, something I had done numerous times in the past. Each diagnosis was the same: “You have significant arthritis in your neck and spine.”

Every time a doctor requested that I have an MRI (or what I call the tunnel test), fear rushed into my mind and body. My hands shook, my heart raced, and my breathing became rapid. I am claustrophobic in certain situations. I never wanted to be told that I needed the tunnel test. Yet the doctors always requested a new scan. Hoping for a clear diagnosis, I agreed to the procedure.

Before the scan, I prayed for God to give me comfort. During the scan, I prayed for the peace that only God can provide. After the scan was completed, I prayed and thanked God for walking with me and carrying me through a dark valley of fear.



*Thank you, Father, for covering us with your peace  
and comfort. Amen.*

Melissa Henderson, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 2021

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GROWING IN FAITH

SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 3:16–24

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## Words and Actions

*Little children, let us love, not in word or speech,  
but in truth and action.*

1 John 3:18

Have you observed a child watching other people? Their young eyes and ears take in the sights and sounds around them. We may not notice when a child is watching and listening, but they are absorbing the words and actions of family, friends, and strangers.

My husband and I have one grandson. Rowan is three years old. Filled with curiosity, amazement, wonder, and many questions, we know he is learning by the example of family and friends. He is interested in everything around him. From animals to trains to running fast, he is fascinated with life.

We are conscious of our words and actions because we want to set a good example. We want to show our grandson how to share the love of God. Pausing before speaking can be a blessing to everyone. If we are angry, the wrong words can come out of our mouths before we realize the damage they can cause. If we are happy and filled with joy, we can share words of encouragement and inspiration.



*May our words and actions show the love of God to everyone. Amen.*

Melissa Henderson, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

GROWING IN FAITH

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 10:11–18

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## He Searches for Me

*“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”*

John 10:11

During our faith journey, we can become lost at times. Growing in faith takes time, patience, and the learning of lessons. There were times in my teen and young adult years when I made poor choices. Whether following the crowd or choosing a path that led to sadness and regret, those bad decisions always led to disappointment. I would not want to repeat any of those wrong paths. Through reflection and asking for forgiveness, I found Jesus’ way to be the best way in life.

I am thankful that when I make mistakes, he never leaves me. When my words and actions have not reflected his love to others, he searches for me and brings me back.

Christ is the Good Shepherd. He gave his life for us. We do not want to disappoint him, but when we make mistakes, we can pray and confess our sins and ask for forgiveness. He will never leave us. He will search and find us. What a comfort to know that Jesus will always love us.



*God, thank you for searching for us even when we stray. Amen.*

Melissa Henderson, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

GROWING IN FAITH

SCRIPTURE: ACTS 4:5–12

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## Healing

*“Let it be known to all of you . . . that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.”*

Acts 4:10

When the rulers, elders, and scribes had gathered, they asked the prisoners what power or by what name did they heal. In preparation for his response, Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. He explained to the people that the man’s healing was through the power of Christ. Peter was sharing that healing comes from God, not from man. Peter reminded them that they were the ones who wanted Jesus crucified and that God had raised him from the dead.

Learning about a miraculous healing can bring joy and amazement. God is able to heal any person at any time. God may also choose not to heal someone here on earth. I’ve often heard the statement, “I’ll be healed on this earth or fully healed in heaven.”

Each time I learn of someone recovering from a terrible disease or sickness, I am thankful to God. For those who are not healed on this earth, I am filled with prayer that they will be healed physically and spiritually in heaven.



*May our hearts be filled with joy at the thought of God’s love for us. Amen.*

GROWING IN FAITH

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 23

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## Restoring My Soul

*He restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths  
for his name's sake.*

Psalm 23:3

The more I read Scripture and share conversation with God, the more I feel my faith grow. Not the kind of growth similar to a change in height or weight, but the kind that fills my soul and spirit with the firm foundation of God. As I have grown in my faith journey, the way I share about my love for God and God's love for everyone has become bolder and stronger.

When I share my faith and receive a not-so-kind comment in return, I know my faith will not be shattered. Harsh or unkind words from another person won't determine my faith. If I share and am met with adversity, I will continue to pray for the other person. I will not give in.

If there is a time when my heart hurts with sadness, going to God restores my soul. God will lead me and guide me along the way.



*God, thank you for always restoring my soul and leading me in the right path. Amen.*

Melissa Henderson, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2021

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GROWING IN FAITH

SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 3:16–24

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## Faith and Helping Others

*How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?*

1 John 3:17

Serving a midday meal at the local shelter offers the opportunity to bless others with food and fellowship. A simple meal can be a lifeline for someone in need, but conversation can be one of the biggest blessings—for those serving as well as those being served.

My husband and I began volunteering at the shelter when our church alerted the congregation to the need for helpers. Washing vegetables, slicing potatoes, creating salads, and performing other tasks showed me that there is no small job at the shelter. Before the food line begins, a volunteer says a prayer thanking God for the meal and each person there. While serving the guests, we hold the plate and ask if they would like each item.

The guests enjoy a good meal as well as time to sit and converse. Chatting with an older man who had military experience, my husband and I learned history and life lessons. I hope the opportunity to share his story was a blessing to him as much as it was to us.

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*Lord, help us to show your love to everyone we meet.  
Amen.*

Melissa Henderson, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

SHARING GOD'S LOVE

SCRIPTURE: ACTS 8:26–40

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## What a Feeling!

*Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.*

Acts 8:35

What a feeling Philip must have had when he began to proclaim the good news about Jesus! Have you ever shared the good news of the gospel with a friend, family member, or stranger? What was their reaction? How did you share? Were your words spoken from the heart? Was your voice filled with excitement while telling of God's love and forgiveness?

I can only imagine how Philip felt when he began speaking. He started with the passage of Scripture the eunuch was asking about, and with passion, he told the whole story of Jesus. I want to share the good news about Jesus. But sometimes I am worried that the right words won't come or maybe someone will ask a question I don't have the answer for.

There is no need to worry. Fear is not from God. I can pray and ask God to help me share the good news of the gospel. Like Philip, I am ready and willing to share with those God puts in my path.



*Thank you, God, for giving me the words and actions to share the glory of the gospel. Amen.*

Melissa Henderson, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2021

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SHARING GOD'S LOVE

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 22:25–31

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## Worship Him

*All the ends of the earth shall remember  
and turn to the LORD;  
and all the families of the nations  
shall worship before him.*

Psalm 22:27

Imagine the whole world turning to God and everyone worshipping together. What a glorious sight! At this moment, we may wonder what that scene will look like. With turmoil, illness, unrest, sadness, and more filling the news reports each day, it's hard to imagine such unity.

When the news of the day wears us down, when hope seems far off, we can find comfort in worshipping God ourselves. Worshipping the Lord, we can find joy that is essential for our mental and physical well-being. Going to God first thing in the morning can change my mind-set for the day. Before my feet touch the floor each morning, I say, "Thank you, Lord, for this glorious day." I often open the front door of the house and give thanks to God. Then I head for the back door and do the same thing.

That is my way of worshipping God first thing each morning, filling myself with the joy of God to share with others throughout the day.



*Let us worship God each day until the whole world  
does the same. Amen.*

Melissa Henderson, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

SHARING GOD'S LOVE

SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 4:7-21

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## Love One Another

*Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.*

1 John 4:11

Brothers and sisters, friends and foes, love each other. Do you find some people easier to love than others? Have you been in a circumstance where you could not feel love for a certain person? Truth be told, most of us have encountered people who are hard to love.

Yet we know God loves us and we should love one another. God loves unconditionally and eternally.

So what do we do when we know love is supposed to be the answer? How do we react when love is hard to show? I have asked God to soften my heart when I have feelings that aren't loving, and I find myself changed. I may not love the actions of a person, but I can show them God's love.

God loves me even when I make mistakes. God loves me when I am wrong. We ought to love one another with the same grace we are shown.



*Lord, help me love others as you love me. Thank you.  
Amen.*

Melissa Henderson, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2021

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SHARING GOD'S LOVE

SCRIPTURE: JOHN 15:1-8

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## The Vine and the Branches

*I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.*

John 15:5

This Scripture reminds me of the beautiful plants at our house. Yellow marigolds, red impatiens, and sweet pea vines adorn the yard. Plants with vines and branches need soil, moisture, and the proper amount of sunshine. Working together, these elements help the beauty of God's creations grow and bear fruit.

Christ is the vine, and we are the branches. Abiding in him allows us to bear the fruit of the Spirit. Those fruits will grow when we remember he is with us always. Apart from him, we can do nothing. He is in every moment of our lives, and we need him in every situation. Trust in him.

A pitcher filled with water can be poured onto the plants. The soil soaks up that water and helps each vine and branch to grow. We can be filled with the Holy Spirit and pour out that holy love. We can help others grow in faith and love.



*Jesus Christ, may we always abide in you and show your love to others. Amen.*

Melissa Henderson, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

SHARING GOD'S LOVE

SCRIPTURE: PSALM 22:25–31

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## Tell the Whole World

*Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord,  
and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,  
saying that he has done it.*

Psalm 22:30–31

These final verses of Psalm 22—a song pleading for deliverance and praising the greatness of God—declare that generation after generation will hear what God has done. Indeed, we are hearing this good news thousands of years later, and future generations will continue to be told. What part will we play in passing the story of God's greatness on to future generations?

When I think of sharing my testimony, I wonder if the words will flow freely when I speak or write. Will I stumble and fail? There is no need for worry. I pray and ask God to give me the words I need. The time to share is now, so that everyone will know the love of God. By speaking and writing about God's love and glory, we are passing this knowledge on to future generations. Whether singing worship music, reading devotions aloud, or writing about God, I am given opportunities to help the whole world know and develop a closer relationship with God.



*Father, please give us the words to share so everyone  
will know you. Amen.*

Melissa Henderson, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 2021

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SHARING GOD'S LOVE

SCRIPTURE: 1 JOHN 4:7–21

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## Love Revealed

*Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.*

1 John 4:7–9

God is love. It doesn't get more basic than that. Everyone who loves knows God, and everyone who does not love does not know God. In case that seems unclear, 1 John tells us what God's kind of love looks like. It is a love revealed in the most special way ever: in the sending of God's only son into the world—a son who died so that we might live.

When I ponder the thought of God sending this most precious son in an act of self-sacrificial love, I am amazed and in awe. How can I reflect a love that glorious? Through my smile, my words, my actions? A love like this is more precious than I could ever imagine. I love my family, friends, and even strangers. Yet thinking of the sacrifice God made for us brings me to tears of thanksgiving. In each and every moment, my prayer is that I will share God's kind of love.



*Thank you for showing us how to love by sending your only son so that we might live through him. Amen.*

Melissa Henderson, Mount Pleasant, South Carolina