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REAL IMPACT.

*Bible Studies for Women
from Moody Publishers*

1-WEEK SAMPLER INSIDE

A 7-WEEK
BIBLE STUDY OF
John 13-17

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His Last Words

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT AND PRAYED IN HIS FINAL HOURS

KIM ERICKSON

A SON'S LAST WORDS

In 2008, I thought I had it all.

In the picture below, you can see that. I had an amazing husband and two crazy boys. I was an attorney with a fancy office in an international law firm. I loved living in Arizona and driving around with the top down in my red convertible. You get the picture. Sounds like I really did have it all, right? I thought so too, until April 25, 2008. On that morning, our three-year-old, Austin, who had been sick with strep throat, never woke up. There was nothing anyone could have done. Austin was gone.

My perfect world came crashing down. I realized that I had nothing and had achieved nothing because I had no relationship with God. He had no part of my life. I realized *everything* could be taken away at any moment—even my husband and my children.



But even though I had ignored God most of my life, He stepped in to save me. He used losing Austin to call me to a different life. A few days after Austin died, I gave my life to Jesus. I acknowledged Him as my Savior and made Him Lord of my life. A friend gave me my first Bible, and my journey began as a Christ follower.

Losing Austin led me to the Bible and the magnificent truths contained in it. When you lose someone, it seems like you can always remember your last moments together. My last words to Austin and his last words to me are burned in my heart and mind like nothing else. He woke me up in the middle of the night and said, “Mom, I want to brush my teeth. And my throat hurts.” He was so mature for his

age and he talked like such a big boy. So we got up and went into the bathroom. He brushed his teeth and I got his medicine.

As I settled him back into his bed, I made him drink some water. He was moaning and he pulled back because his throat hurt so much (even after more than forty-eight hours on antibiotics). I said, “I know it hurts, angel, but you have to drink it. Your body needs it to get better.” He bravely took another swallow, still moaning.

“You are one tough cookie,” I said as I smoothed the hair on his forehead.

“I’m a tough cookie?” he asked with his little blond head tilted to one side (as if to say, silly mom, cookies are not tough!).

Smiling, I explained, “Tough cookie means that you are brave and strong.” He nodded and gave me a big grin and confirmed, “I *am* a tough cookie!”

“Yes, you are. Now, back to bed,” I said as he curled back up with his “boo” (his blanket).

As I tucked him in, I told him, “You’re going to start feeling better tomorrow. The medicine is going to start working and you are going to be better tomorrow.” I kissed his head and turned off the light. “Love you.”

“Love you,” Austin murmured back as he cuddled in his bed.

Although I remain brokenhearted with the loss of Austin, I am grateful for our last words of love and the clever, funny little boy the Lord gave us for three years.

As I began to study the Bible, the gospel of John gripped my heart because it contains the last words Jesus said to His disciples. As a new believer and grieving mom, I pored over and over these words. Jesus knew these were His final hours. Jesus knew these would be the last words He would speak to His disciples before

His death. Oh, what I would have given to know that night when I tucked him into bed that those were to be my final moments with Austin!

Since Jesus did know what were His final moments with His disciples, I wanted to know what He said. After studying John 13–17, I am certain Jesus taught lessons in those last hours that He especially wanted to imprint on them.

Jesus' last words changed my life. I believe His words have the power to change yours.

Through this study we will also catch a glimpse of the apostle John, who is widely presumed to be the disciple “whom Jesus loved.” In our culture, it might be said that John was one of Jesus' best friends. After spending three years with Jesus, you might assume that all the disciples stood by Jesus through His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. But the disciples scattered—except John. John was the only one of the Twelve recorded as being at the cross.

John stood by his friend and Lord, risking everything to see his friend to the end. John's loyalty stirred my heart to find out more. I learned that this apostle was often with Jesus when He performed amazing miracles. He was there when Jesus commanded Lazarus back to life after four days in a tomb. John was there when Jesus was transfigured on the Mount of Olives, and he was there in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus prayed and agonized over what was to come. In fact, Jesus loved John so much that He entrusted the care of His mother, Mary, to him in the last moments before His death.

Through this study, you will read what John had to say about Jesus. You will experience Jesus through John's eyes. Who better to show you the heart of Jesus than one of His best friends? In this gospel, John shared the intimacy of Christ's final hours with His disciples.

While it was John's loyalty and friendship that intrigued me to learn more, it was the words of Jesus in these chapters that amazed me, humbled me, and changed me. Consider this: if you knew that you only had hours left on this earth, what

would you say to your friends and loved ones? Would you try to tell them how much you love them? Would you try to impart last words of wisdom? Would you share your innermost heart with them?

Our changed lives are meant to bring glory to God.

You will discover that Jesus did all these things during His final hours with the disciples and in His final prayer. Through this study, I hope you experience a new revelation of the amazing love of our God and gain a deeper understanding of the heart of Jesus. When you begin to see more of Him, you begin to examine your own heart and life. During this study, I was repeatedly overwhelmed by His love and lifted up and amazed by His promises. God's Word is so powerful to change our lives!

While God does want us to draw closer to Him and transform our lives through His Word, His goal is not only about changing us "on the inside." Our changed lives are meant to bring glory to God. As you study the gospel of John, you will discover that God wants you to love others so that all may believe in Jesus and have eternal life with Him. In fact, John stated this as the purpose of his gospel: "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

It is my prayer that you dive deep into the heart of Jesus and allow His lovingkindness to change your heart. I pray that you emerge from this study determined to live a life that shows the world around you the amazing love of God.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of sharing this journey with you. Let's get started!

Prayerfully,

Kim

GETTING THE MOST FROM THIS STUDY

Allowing the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to work in your heart takes time.

To allow more time for reflection, each week consists of just four lessons. For each daily lesson, first read the assigned passage in your own Bible to get the overall context. Next, the assigned Scripture for the day is provided, verse by verse, in this book. Beside each verse is space to write what the words reveal to us about God—something about the Father, Son, or the Holy Spirit.

Journal in the chart for each lesson as the Holy Spirit guides you. It is important that you do not feel you have to write something in every space. Studying these chapters verse by verse is an exercise in reflecting and seeking understanding. If nothing comes to mind, leave the spaces blank. One caution, however, is to take care that you do not go so fast through the verses that you do not allow time to let the Holy Spirit speak to you.

On the fifth day each week, you'll find questions for reviewing, reflecting, and praying about the daily lessons. A discussion guide follows each week, to work through with a small group, though you may also do this study on your own. But I encourage you to go through this material with at least one other person because it will deepen your understanding of the Scriptures and hold you accountable for making changes in your life that reflect *His Last Words*.

To make your Bible study time more meaningful and impactful, visit **MoodyPublishersWomen.com** for a free digital study pack for this Bible study. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at **KimErickson@LoveMyWord.com** or **www.LoveMyWord.com**. I'd love to hear from you!

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WEEK ONE

love
one another

JOHN 13

Our study begins with this beautiful picture painted by John, starting in chapter 13, verse 1:

Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

Jesus knows that His time with the disciples is drawing to an end. Jesus knows what is about to happen to Him and to His friends. The final hours are upon Him. The enemy is on the way. It is time. Jesus knows He is about to speak—for the last time before His death—with the disciples. He looks around the table at the men He has chosen to change the world. I imagine His heart aches for the pain they will endure for Him, for His name, for the gospel.

He gets up from the table and begins washing their feet—a shocking act in their culture.

When He is finished, He speaks to them more directly than ever before. The time for parables is over. Jesus knows these men must understand, must deeply and thoroughly comprehend, why He has come and why He must die. He must fill their hearts with love and courage!

WEEK 1 | DAY 1

PRIDE AND POSITION

Read John 13:1–11 in your Bible, then complete the chart below, verse by verse.

Briefly write what each verse reveals to you about the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the verse reflects a character trait of God (merciful, patient, gentle, loving). The verse might show what the Lord values (obedience, service) or how He wants us to behave (humbly, kindly, compassionately). It's fine to leave some spaces blank since you won't find an answer to the question in every verse. The idea is to read each verse thinking, *Does this verse tell me anything about God?* and then writing what comes to mind.

JOHN 13:1–11

What does this verse tell me about God?

1. Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

*Sample response:
Jesus loved His disciples to the end.
Jesus loves me as His own.*

2. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,

3. Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God,

4. rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.

5. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?"

7. Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand."

8. Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."

9. Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

10. Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you."

11. For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

If you knew you only had one day to live, with whom would you spend your last hours on earth and why?

We know how Jesus chose to spend His last hours on earth—with those He loved, and loved “to the end.” John gave us some understanding of how Jesus loves us and what He did for us. The word he used for “end” is *telos*, meaning “perfection” or “completeness.” Jesus loves His own to perfection. Jesus loves His own to completeness. The love of Jesus makes you complete!

If you knew you only had one day to live, what would you do with your last hours?

I am willing to bet that washing feet did not make your list! But serving one another in love and humility is so important to God that Jesus spent some of His last hours on earth washing the feet of His disciples. Jesus gave us a living, loving, and humble example of how He expects us to love one another.

It is interesting that the disciples did not appear to have any servants. It would have been customary in the culture at the time, at least in wealthier circles, to have a servant wash their feet. The disciples must have done duties themselves, typically performed by servants.¹

By the time the Last Supper took place, crowds were following Jesus. Surely some of the followers were servants in other households and would have gladly given up their posts to serve Jesus and the disciples. Yet, Jesus had no servants. Doesn't that say something about the character of God? He did not ask servants to attend to Him. More importantly, He did not expect it. Clearly, pride and position mean nothing to God.

In your last hours on earth, what would you tell your loved ones? What lessons would you want them to learn from the example of your life?

Next, Peter objected when it was his turn to have his feet washed. "You can't wash *my* feet!" But Jesus' reply to Peter was startling; that if He didn't wash him, Peter would have no part in Him. Jesus has illustrated both humbly serving one another and the spiritual aspect to His act: in order to share in fellowship and eternal life we must be cleansed through Jesus. When we put our faith in Christ, we are cleansed—forgiven and made children of God.

Jesus told the disciples that, by the grace of God alone, they would one day share in God's kingdom. What are you holding on to that might be keeping you from fully sharing in your inheritance as a follower of Christ? Are you feeling guilty

about something that is keeping you from joyfully sharing in God's grace? Write about it here:

Ask God to forgive you and know that you are completely clean through the grace of Christ!

The washing of the disciples' feet also is symbolic of God's *daily* grace and forgiveness of our sins. Jesus told Peter that once he had been washed clean, he only needed to wash his feet. In other words, by believing in Christ and accepting Him as our Savior, we are granted eternal life, but we should consider our sins often and confess them to God. Thankfully, His mercies are new every day!

The LORD's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.
—Lamentations 3:22–23 NASB

Closing Prayer: Try to close each day's lesson in prayer. You may pray the written prayer aloud if you choose. Father God, help me to fully understand that putting my faith and trust in Your Son, Jesus, washes me clean of my sins and grants me eternal life and fellowship with You. Help me see when I am putting pride and position before You or my service to others. Lord, I want to spend a few moments every day confessing my daily sins and seeking the cleansing that only You can bring. Thank You, Lord, for Your grace, mercy, and love for me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

WEEK 1 | DAY 2

BLESSED IF YOU DO THEM

Read John 13:12–17 in your Bible.

Next, complete the chart below, verse by verse.

Briefly write what each verse reveals to you about the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the verse reflects a character trait of God (merciful, patient, gentle, loving). The verse might show what the Lord values (obedience, service) or how He wants us to behave (humbly, kindly, compassionately). It's fine to leave some spaces blank since you won't find an answer to the question in every verse. The idea is to read each verse thinking, *Does this verse tell me anything about God?* and then writing what comes to mind.

JOHN 13:12–17

What does this verse tell me about God?

12. When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?"

13. "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am."

14. "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

15. "For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you."

16. "Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him."

17. "If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

Even at this late hour in Jesus' ministry, most likely a few days before the foot washing, the disciples clearly needed a lesson in humility. [Read Luke 22:21-27](#) and describe the scene:

The disciples, even though they spent the most time with Jesus, were still focused on things of this world: prestige, position, and pride. Jesus reminded them, "Let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves" (v. 26). Jesus also said, "I am among you as the one who serves" (v. 27).

Jesus sent a clear message that not one of them was greater or more important than the others. He pointed out that if He could wash the disciples' feet, they should also serve one another. It is a powerful reminder not to think too much of ourselves.

Think of a time recently when you thought too much of yourself. Write about a time when you allowed your pride or your focus on prestige to shift your focus off Christ.

When Jesus spoke to the disciples after washing their feet, He reminded them of their position with respect to the Lord. The student is not greater than the Teacher and the messenger is not greater than the one who sent him. In other words, we will never be “greater” than our Lord. Also, nothing in our lives should be “greater” than Him.

Next, Jesus gave a clear directive. He gave us an example we should follow (v. 15). As followers of Christ, we are to serve one another without consideration of pride or position. Jesus showed us *how* to serve: with a heart understanding that we are no better or greater than others.

If you are serving because you think you are “supposed to,” then you are not serving in love. If you are serving with thoughts that you are so “good” because you volunteer at a local charity, then you are not serving the way Jesus taught us. If you are serving because you feel sorry for someone, you are not serving the way Jesus taught us. Serve because you love the people you are involved with. Consider each and every person, and ask yourself: Do you love them? Is *that* why you are serving?

What activities should you *stop* doing because you are not serving in love?

What service could you do with love?

Now, let's turn this around. Remember in yesterday's lesson that Peter did not want Jesus to wash his feet. Surely not! But serving one another is what God asked us to do. Are you letting anyone serve you? If not, why aren't you letting anyone help you? Is it pride? Is it fear? Is it selfishness? Turning away help, or not asking for help, is sometimes selfish or prideful. Are you handling something all by yourself so that you alone can take credit? Who are you denying the opportunity to be blessed by serving you? [Write your thoughts here:](#)

Jesus continued His clear message: you will be blessed if you do this. God wants us to use our lives to serve Him by serving others. He assured us that it will not be in vain. Write about the blessings the Lord has provided as a result of serving others. [Explain what you have received from doing the work of the Lord.](#)

Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. —1 Corinthians 15:58

Closing Prayer: Father, thank You for being our Teacher and Lord. Thank You for making it so simple to do Your work. I pray that I will serve others with humility and love. Lord, show me the service You would have me do. I want to abound in Your work, Lord. I pray that I will allow the Holy Spirit to guide my way. Thank You for the blessings You give me every day. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

WEEK 1 | DAY 3

CHOOSE CHRIST

Read John 13:18–30 in your Bible.

Next, complete the chart below, verse by verse.

Briefly write what each verse reveals to you about the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the verse reflects a character trait of God (merciful, patient, gentle, loving). The verse might show what the Lord values (obedience, service) or how He wants us to behave (humbly, kindly, compassionately). It's fine to leave some spaces blank since you won't find an answer to the question in every verse. The idea is to read each verse thinking, *Does this verse tell me anything about God?* and then writing what comes to mind.

JOHN 13:18–30

What does this verse tell me about God?

18. "I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.'"

19. "I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he."

20. "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me."

21. After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me."

22. The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke.

23. One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table at Jesus' side,

24. so Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking.

25. So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?"

26. Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

27. Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly."

28. Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him.

29. Some thought that, because
Judas had the moneybag,
Jesus was telling him, “Buy
what we need for the feast,”
or that he should give
something to the poor.

30. So, after receiving
the morsel of bread, he
immediately went out.
And it was night.

This scene is an example of how God grants understanding in His time. Even though Jesus spoke of the betrayal three times, no one around Him really understood what was going on. Often we cannot understand things when they are happening to us, though we might later. In all things, understanding comes from God.

Write about a time in your life when understanding something that happened to you came later, after the fact:

Verses 19–20 are interesting because Jesus told His disciples that He was telling them things before they happened so they would believe that “I am he.” Really? Even the disciples didn’t get it. Even the disciples didn’t really believe it. These verses tell us that even those closest to Jesus had trouble understanding who Jesus was, or perhaps had their doubts. If you ever stumble or have doubts about God, remember that Jesus understands. Though most Christians will admit they struggle with doubts at times, your faith in Jesus is still the foundation of your relationship with God.

Jesus next became troubled in spirit because of the betrayal, and He told the disciples that one of them would betray Him. They were confused. They could not imagine who among them would betray Jesus. Some said, “Is it I?” (Mark 14:19). The disciples’ questions and confusion about the betrayal of Jesus should be a lesson that any of us are capable of grievous sin. If we don’t believe this, “we are deluded and have no real idea of how much we owe to the grace of God.”²

Consider also that Judas was close enough to Jesus that Jesus was able to hand a piece of bread to him (v. 26). Judas *must* have been sitting near enough to hear Jesus say “not all of you are clean” (v. 11) and the reference to Scripture that was to be fulfilled: “He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me” (v. 18). And again more plainly, “One of you will betray me” (v. 21).

By referencing the betrayal before dipping the bread and handing it to Judas, was Jesus giving Judas a last chance to think again? In their culture, it was considered a gesture of friendship to hand the bread to another during a meal. One commentary put it this way: “No man in history was more ‘put on the spot’ than Judas in that moment.”³ Judas’s acceptance of the bread reflected his choice—his rejection of Christ.

The enemy tempts each of us to sin and we are each capable of giving in. [How is the enemy tempting you right now? What choices are you making in your life that reflect the enemy more than they reflect Christ and your faith in Him?](#)

Please understand, as seen in these verses, Jesus gives us endless chances to choose His way and reject Satan's prompting. Next time, in that moment when you must choose, picture Jesus sitting next to you holding out a piece of bread and giving you a chance to choose His way, a chance to make the right choice. **Take each thing you wrote above and write how you could choose differently. Make it some sort of action, not just a thought or emotion. What could you do at that moment when you must choose?**

Let's look at what happened when Judas made his choice. Jesus commanded Judas to "do quickly" what he was about to do. Although prompted by Satan, Jesus was still in control of Judas and the situation. Jesus was not a victim of His circumstances. He went willingly to the cross . . . for you. Why? Because He loves you infinitely more than you can imagine *and* because Jesus desired to do the will of the Father:

From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." (Matthew 16:21-23)

Perhaps when you feel tempted and before you take the actions you listed above, you could say, “Get behind me, Satan! You will not be a stumbling block to me. I will keep my mind on God’s interests, not my own!”

Take comfort, however, in the fact that even when you do not stand firm and make the right choice, Jesus is still in control. Jesus still commands you and your life.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
—Jeremiah 29:11 NIV

Closing Prayer: Father, I am overwhelmed by Your love for me. I am overwhelmed by Your humility in letting me choose You, even when You command all things. Thank You, Lord, for loving me so much that You would give me so many chances to choose Your way. Lord, help me stop and consider You in the daily choices in my life. Help me make the choices that would be pleasing to You. Thank You for loving me enough to make plans for me in Your kingdom. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

WEEK 1 | DAY 4

THE NEW COMMANDMENT

Read John 13:31–38 in your Bible.

Next, complete the chart below, verse by verse.

Briefly write what each verse reveals to you about the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the verse reflects a character trait of God (merciful, patient, gentle, loving). The verse might show what the Lord values (obedience, service) or how He wants us to behave (humbly, kindly, compassionately). It's fine to leave some spaces blank since you won't find an answer to the question in every verse. The idea is to read each verse thinking, *Does this verse tell me anything about God?* and then writing what comes to mind.

JOHN 13:31–38

What does this verse tell me about God?

31. When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him."

32. "If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and glorify him at once."

33. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.'"

34. “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.”

35. “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

36. Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.”

37. Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”

38. Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.”

Jesus told us that God would be glorified through the Son of Man. How? One commentator put it this way: “Had God remained aloof and majestic, serene and unmoved, untouched by any sorrow, unhurt by any pain, men might have feared Him and men might have admired Him; but they would never have loved Him.”⁴

Take a moment to reflect on all that Jesus sacrificed to lower Himself to become a man on earth, die on the cross, and bear all of your sins. Consider whether your

life is honoring His great love for you. Write about any changes the Holy Spirit reveals to you about your life or choices:

Next, Jesus told the disciples that He would be with them only a little while longer. But notice that He called them “little children.” Jesus probably was speaking to the disciples in this way so they could understand and appreciate their new relationship with the Father. As believers in Christ, we belong to the Father. We are children of God.

Jesus gave His followers a new commandment. In the New International Version it is stated this way: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (vv. 34–35). What does this verse mean to you?

Our love for one another is a shining light to lead others to Christ. It is a call to live by *His* mission: to serve one another in love, with a self-sacrificing love for each other. It is a call to grant forgiveness to others. It is a call to humble ourselves, a call to stand out in the crowd. It is a call to keep our priorities straight, and lead by example. It is a call to spread the good news of the gospel.

Read Colossians 3:12–14. List what we are to “put on” as people who have been chosen by God:

Write some things you could do to “love one another as I have loved you” or how you could “put on love” this week. Be as specific as possible.

We are not Jesus, so we cannot, unfortunately, be perfect. If we ignore our imperfections and forget to confess our sins, we are not truly living in God’s grace. **So write down when you were not a shining light this week that would lead others to Christ.**

Call on Jesus and ask Him to forgive you. Ask that the Holy Spirit guide your every word, every act, and every thought as you go through your day.

Let’s continue to look at God’s promise in our passage today. Peter asked where the Lord was going and Jesus responded, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.” Take notice that there was no “maybe.” Jesus was firm. You *will* follow later.

Peter did not want to wait until later (don’t you love him!). He told Jesus, “I will lay down my life for you.” Jesus responded, “Will you lay down your life for me?”

What if Jesus asked you that question? When push comes to shove, would you lay down your life for Jesus? Really? Let's start small. What are you currently giving up to serve Him? What are you already laying down to follow Jesus?

Instead of laying down his life for Jesus, Peter betrayed Him. Jesus knew of Peter's betrayal and told him about it before it happened as we're told in verse 38. **What was the point of this prediction? Write your thoughts here:**

What if this verse is meant to encourage us? Perhaps this Scripture is meant to give us hope. If Peter, one of Jesus' most loyal followers and a leader among the disciples, could deny Him when times got tough, we are all capable of denying Christ. Yet, the Lord is incredibly patient and loving toward us. We should not have confidence in ourselves, but in Christ alone.

We should also consider prayer as a powerful weapon against the enemy. Jesus gave us a great example with regard to Peter:

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.”

—Luke 22:31–32

Jesus prayed for His disciples. Even His disciples needed prayers for protection, and if they needed such prayers, you can be certain that we do too! Thankfully, we are not alone, even when we do not know just how to pray, and even in those times when we can barely form words. We're told in Romans 8:26–27, “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

How comforting to know that the Spirit of God “intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” I don’t know about you, but that brings great comfort to me, knowing that He was interceding for me when I lost Austin. We’re also told in Romans 8:34 that “Christ Jesus who is at the right hand of God is interceding for us.”

Have there been times in your own life when your pain or sorrow was so deep that you couldn’t even find the words to pray? Write your thoughts here.

What does it mean to you right now in your own journey that the Spirit intercedes for you?

“With everlasting love I will have compassion on you,” says the LORD your Redeemer. —Isaiah 54:8

Closing Prayer: Lord, Your lovingkindness humbles me. Thank You for being patient with my weaknesses and forgiving of my failures. Help me love others as You love me. Father, I want to show Your light to everyone around me. I want others to know that I follow You because of the way I behave toward my family, friends, neighbors, and community. I want to have the strength, courage, and faith to lay down the things of this world to serve You, Lord. Thank You for interceding for me. Make me a prayer warrior for others. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

WEEK 1 | DAY 5

REVIEW, REFLECT, AND PRAY

Before you begin today, ask God to reveal anything you may have missed the first time through the lessons. Take time to review the verses for each day and fill in any spaces you left blank, if you can. Remember that only God through the Holy Spirit grants understanding, especially when it comes to God's Word. And be assured it's okay if you have empty spaces.

Read what you wrote about God in each chart and write your thoughts here:

Next, review what you wrote in response to the questions in each lesson and take a few minutes to pray about what God wants you to learn.

If God revealed something to you this week, note it here:

If God reminded you of something you have been forgetting lately, or if the Holy Spirit showed you something that has not been part of your life for a while, write about it here:

If God challenged you to make a change in your life, how did He do it and what change will you make?

Before you end this week, take a few moments to be quiet and still. Take time to let the lessons become wisdom in your heart. Be still and let the Lord speak into your heart about what service you should do to “love one another.”

“Be still, and know that I am God.” —Psalm 46:10 NIV

Closing Prayer: Father God, this time with You is so precious. Thank You for Your Word and Your everlasting lovingkindness. I want to be transformed in Christ’s image. I know that only Your grace can make me more like Jesus. Father, help me love others as You have loved me. Guide me to the service of others that You would have me do. In the name of my Lord Jesus I pray. Amen.

READER CHALLENGE:

In John 13, we read that Jesus washed the apostles' feet and told them plainly that He gave them an example to follow. Jesus explained that we will be blessed if we humbly serve others. The pattern of obedience followed by blessing is repeated over and over again in the Bible. Jesus promised such blessings in the New Testament, and the Old Testament is filled with examples of God's people being blessed after they obeyed God. So why is it so difficult? Why do we struggle to humble ourselves and serve others? Why do we find it so hard to love one another as ourselves?

I wonder if it has to do with an inflated sense of self. We seem to be wired with a constant refrain of "hey, what about me?" People are inherently worried about whether they are getting what others are getting. One day at the store, I picked up some gum at the checkout counter and my six-year-old son immediately said, "Hey, what about me? Do I get to pick something too?" Think about how often you compare what you have to what someone else has. I can't recall many times in my life where I honestly thought, "Boy, I am so glad that she has _____ and I don't." Perhaps we are so overtaken by the "what about me" thinking that we fill our lives with activities that are supposed to help us get more of what we think other people seem to have. Our lives revolve around getting more happiness, contentment, security, money, time, pleasure, and so on.⁵ What if we could change our "what about me?" into "what about others?" What would our lives look like if we could consistently be motivated by "what about others?"

During this week's lessons, we explored *why* the Lord wants us to serve others and love one another. "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Jesus did not mention anything about serving others because others need our help. He did not tell us to serve others so that we can receive blessings (hey, what about me?). Jesus told us to serve others so others will know about Him. Loving one another is about pointing others to Jesus!

He did tell us that we *will* be blessed if we do these things, but the blessing is not the reason Jesus commanded us to love one another. We must do so because we are

motivated by His great love and we want to share that love with the world. We must serve others with a heart that is focused on showing people the love of Christ.

If people can feel the love of Christ wash over them as we serve them, they will wonder what we have that they don't. Let the door open for us to share the gospel, because what we have that they don't is Christ. If we can simply love one another, then others will be directed to Christ.

So as you continue this study and begin to think of ways to serve others, think of how you could serve in love *only*. Do not consider who "needs" you. Do not consider what you can do well. Do not consider what others will recognize or value. You should *only* consider what you might be able to do in complete and total love.

Write your ideas here:

We will circle back to this challenge at the end of our study. I can't wait to hear how God uses you to lead others to Him!

DISCUSSION GUIDE | WEEK ONE: JOHN 13

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

1. Review the lessons and what you wrote for Day 5. Share insights with the group.
2. Jesus washed Judas's feet, knowing this apostle would betray Him. Is there someone that you need to show love and compassion toward, even though it's especially difficult? Maybe others in the group could help you think of a way to "wash the feet" of that person.
3. Tell the group about a blessing you received, or are still receiving, from serving others.
4. Read Matthew 16:21–23 out loud. Can you identify where you do not "have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns"? (NIV) When this comes up the next time, pray quickly, "Get behind me, Satan!" and remind yourself that the things of God are most important. Consider putting a note that says, "Get behind me, Satan!" or "GBMS!" near the place where this most often happens to you during the day.
5. If it would encourage the group, share one thing you did to love one another this week.
6. Gather prayer requests for the week and close in prayer.

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His Last Words

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