

# JESUS AND ME

He is perfect, and so is His love.

## A BETTER YOU

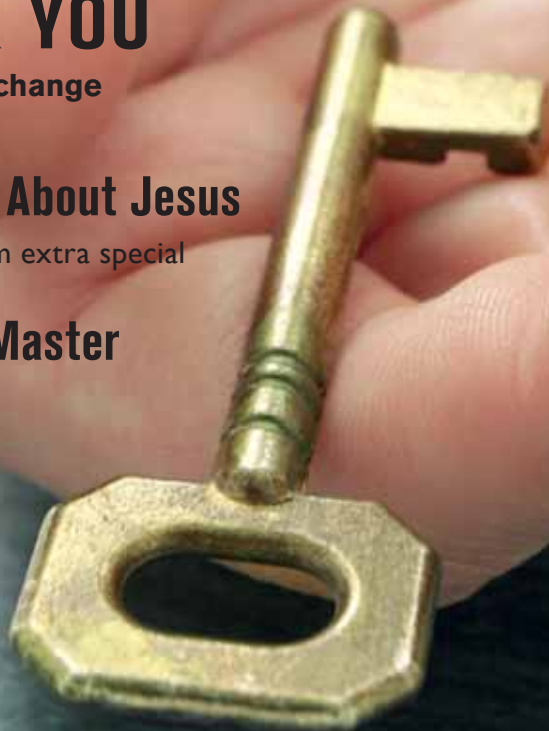
The key to positive change

## 5 Things I Love About Jesus

“Extras” that make Him extra special

## More Like the Master

Qualities to cultivate



## PERSONALLY SPEAKING

I was 21 when I read from the Bible for the first time. Someone had suggested I read the Gospel of John first, but I knew so little about the Bible at the time that I didn't understand the Gospels were four separate accounts of Jesus' life and ministry. So I started at what seemed the more logical place, at the beginning of the New Testament, with the Gospel of Matthew.

By the time I got to the Gospel of John, I was fascinated with Jesus. He had the perfect answer to every question and always knew exactly what to do. But more than that, He seemed to understand *me* and know exactly what I needed. His words were powerful and alive. *He* was alive! His words reached across nearly 2000 years and touched me in a way I had never experienced before. When I finally came to John 15:15—"I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you"—I felt He was speaking directly to me. Jesus called *me* His friend! I got so excited I couldn't sit still. I wanted to tell the whole world.

I had prayed to receive Him as my Savior a few months before, but nothing much changed until I began reading His words with an open, receptive heart. His words were powerful and alive and, best of all, personal. And it got even better. Some time later, I discovered that Jesus still speaks directly and personally to His followers today, just as wonderfully as He spoke to His first disciples.

I hope this booklet will help you make that direct, personal connection with Jesus, or strengthen the relationship you already have with Him.



five

# Things I Love About Jesus

By JOE JOHNSTON

**RANDOMNESS:** Jesus has an intricate plan for the whole universe, but I love how He seems to be perfectly random about lots of things that don't have much bearing on that plan. Like the irregular texture of tree bark, or where the next branch will pop out. Either that, or it's not random at all and that branch needs to be exactly where it is for the universe to run right. If that's the case, I love how He makes it look random to me.

**Intricacy:** The flip side of random. I love how He makes seemingly random things happen, but then they all come together at the end and make perfect sense, and I realize it wasn't haphazard at all, but pure genius.

**Color:** He seems almost obsessed with color, but it's not like He splatters psychedelic fluorescent everywhere. He adds just enough khakis and grays so that when something bright comes along, it wows me.

**Passion:** His way of being passionate about everything He does. For instance, if I was going to create an insect I'd pick a head, a body, a few legs, and maybe a stinger or something. But He can't stop at that. "Oh, here I could add some antennae with trillions of little hairs on them that will act as sensors, then maybe some fold-up wings to hide inside its shell, a compound eye, a trochanter here, mesothorax there, and a subesophageal ganglion." He's crazy!



When I “create” a cloud, I take a blank piece of paper, draw a straight line, add three humps above it, and I’m done. When He creates a cloud, He starts with an insanely complex background of atmosphere, then bunches together millions of microscopic icy crystals, each with six perfectly symmetrical sides but its own unique form. Then He sends light to render it in full 3-D and air currents to make it dance. It seems He can’t get involved in a project without giving it His best.

**Care:** Boy, does He care! He cares about everything! I mean every single little tiny microscopic itty bitsy thing. Imagine how much importance He puts on you and me, or the detail, care, and planning that went into each of the 6.8 billion of us now living, as well as the billions before and after. It wears me out just thinking about it. I am so lucky to have Him! 🌿

## FEEDING READING

God’s Word has power to...

*...bring us closer to Jesus.*

John 1:1,14

John 8:31

Revelation 19:11–13

*...guide us on the path of life.*

Psalms 119:105

Psalms 119:130

2 Timothy 3:15–17

*...increase our faith.*

John 20:31

Romans 10:17

1 Thessalonians 2:13

1 Peter 2:2

*...help us be successful.*

Joshua 1:8

Psalms 1:2–3

Luke 8:15

*...enrich our lives.*

Jeremiah 15:16b

John 6:63

John 15:7

John 15:11

*...lead us to salvation.*

Romans 1:16

James 1:21b

1 Peter 1:23

## PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Dear Jesus, keep me from having my life so full of good things that I don’t have time for the best. Help me not to be so pressured that I put off my time with You. Help me to bask in Your spiritual sunshine, rest in Your arms, drink deeply of Your Word, and inhale of Your Spirit. Help me to seek You daily and love You most of all—more than any of the other things I enjoy. Help me to remember how You said that without You, I can do nothing.<sup>1</sup> Help me to not have misplaced priorities, but to keep You, Your love, and Your values in the right place—first.

1. John 15:5a



# more like the master

BY PETER AMSTERDAM

A Persian fable says, one day  
A wanderer found a piece of clay  
So redolent of sweet perfume,  
Its odor scented all the room.  
“What are thou?” was the quick demand.  
“Art thou some gem of Samarkand,  
Or spikenard rare in odd disguise?  
Or other costly merchandise?”  
“Nay, I am but a piece of clay.”  
“Then, whence this wondrous sweetness, pray?”  
“Friend, if the secret I disclose,  
I have been living with the rose.”

—*Author unknown*

CHRISTIANS ARE SUPPOSED TO TRY TO BE LIKE JESUS—LIVING AS HE WOULD, ACTING AS HE WOULD, SPEAKING AS HE WOULD, AND EVEN THINKING AS HE WOULD. But how do we accomplish that? How can we be more like Him? As in the Persian fable, it comes from living close to Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

Many of us do spend time with Jesus, but how much *quality* time do we spend with Him, where we shut out the business of the day and give Him our full attention, communing with Him,

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1. 2 Corinthians 3:18

2. John 15:4

3. Galatians 5:22–23 KJV

4. Romans 10:17

enjoying Him, and getting to know Him better in order to become more like Him? If we don't, no matter how many good qualities we possess or how dynamic we are or how dedicated we are with people or what else we may have going for us, if we're not spending time with Jesus, we're not going to be a very good reflection of Him or His love to others.

The dictionary defines "communion" as "a feeling of emotional or spiritual closeness, a connection." So communing with Jesus means to make an emotional and spiritual connection with Jesus. Praise, prayer, and reading God's Word are all ways of making and sustaining that connection. These are the lifeblood of our spiritual lives.

### **Quality time**

Many of us tend to pick up the pace when our workloads increase, and that leads to more stress. Taking

time off to relax can help relieve the pressure, but time alone or with friends or family can't give us what Jesus can.

Hobbies can also be relaxing and fun, but if we're not careful, they can actually contribute to the problem by taking time away from the essentials, including the *most* essential—taking time with Jesus. That's a common mistake people make—filling every spare moment with more "busyness," when the Lord wants them to take that time with Him.

The surest way to complete and lasting renewal—in fact, the *only* way—is to spend time with Jesus. We need His love and strength and wisdom, and the only way we can get those is by spending time with Him.

But carving out time from your daily schedule is no guarantee that you're going to get closer to the Lord; it's what you do with that time that counts. You need to get still, empty your

mind of the business of the day, and let the Lord fill you with positive, encouraging, strengthening, faith-building thoughts from His recorded and living Word.

Jesus said the requirement for a fruitful life is abiding in Him. "Abide in Me, and I in you."<sup>2</sup> That means staying connected with Him by taking time to read His Word and pray and listen to Him.

It's easy to let prayer become a formality, but one thing that can help you avoid that is to think of Jesus as the Friend, Counselor, and Lover that He wants to be to you. As someone once said, "The more one loves Jesus, the more he delights to be with Jesus alone. Lovers love to be alone."

But He won't push you. He waits to see how much you are willing to abandon all other distractions in order to put Him first. If you have Him in first place, then you will see and feel His power and help in your

life beyond what you ever imagined.

### **The nature of Jesus**

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”<sup>3</sup>

These are virtues that define Jesus, and if we read His Word and spend time with Him in prayer on a regular basis, we will take on some of His attributes. How can we expect to be changed for the better? Let’s go down the list and see.

*Love:* God is love. Jesus is the embodiment of God’s love. As followers of Jesus, we, too, need to manifest love in every way we can.

*Joy:* True happiness comes from being close to God and living our lives His way.

*Peace:* The word in the Old Testament that is translated “peace” actually has a broader meaning: completeness, soundness, and overall well-being. In the New Testament, “peace” often refers to inner tranquility, a combination of hope, trust, and quiet of mind and spirit. Peace comes from faith, and faith comes from reading and believing God’s Word.<sup>4</sup>

*Longsuffering:* At least one English version of the Bible translates this “patience”—the ability to persevere calmly when faced with difficulties. We often need to be patient, either with people or with circumstances, and we need to do so in a spirit of love.

*Gentleness:* To be gentle is to have a mild

and kind nature, a gracious and honorable manner, consideration, and a spirit of fairness and compassion. Jesus sounds like a true gentleman, doesn’t He?

*Goodness:* My Bible dictionary says that goodness consists of righteousness, holiness, justice, kindness, grace, mercy, and love. Other definitions include having an upright and virtuous character, and having a kind and gentle disposition. Again, these certainly characterize Jesus. If His Spirit abides in us, so they should also characterize us.



*Faith, or faithfulness:*

One of the meanings of faithfulness is unwavering belief. Another is being conscientious, having a sense of responsibility and devotion to duty.

*Meekness:* I particularly like one definition that says meekness is “an attitude of humility toward God

and gentleness toward men, springing from a recognition that God is in control.”

*Temperance, or self-control:* This is the ability to control your behavior, especially in terms of reactions and impulses.

Jesus wants to impart

to us these qualities, so they mesh into the core of our being. We will then demonstrate them in our lives, not only for our own benefit by changing our nature and improving our personality, but also for the benefit of others whom He wants to bless and reach through our example. ✚

POINTS TO PONDER

# JESUS and Me

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.

—*JOHN 3:16*

Union with Jesus Christ is the foundation of our hope.

—*Jean-Jacques Pictet*  
(1655–1721)

Being confident in how much Jesus loves you won't just make you happier; it will be a stabilizing force in your life. When you are assured of His love for you, when you are aware that He is intimately concerned about your welfare and happiness, then that knowledge will give you peace in your heart and steady you, even when you face disappointments,

heartbreaks, difficulties, or anything else that life sends your way. His love is the only thing in the world that is absolutely perfect and unfailing. There are a lot of things that are nice, beautiful, and wonderful, but nothing is perfect like His love. He is perfect, and so is His love. It's durable, dependable, and forever!

—*Maria Fontaine*

Be Lord  
within me to strengthen me  
without me to preserve me  
over me to shelter me  
beneath me to support me  
before me to direct me

behind me to bring me back  
around me to fortify me.  
—*Lancelot Andrews*  
(1555–1626)

All the peace and favor of  
the world cannot calm a  
troubled heart; but where  
this peace is which Christ  
gives, all the trouble and  
disquiet of the world cannot  
disturb it.

—*Robert Leighton*  
(1613–1684)

Rest of the weary,

Joy of the sad,  
Hope of the dreary,  
Light of the glad;  
Home of the stranger,  
Strength to the end,  
Refuge from danger,  
Savior and Friend!  
—*John Samuel Bewley*  
*Monsell* (1811–1875)

To me, Jesus is the Life I  
want to live, the Light I  
want to reflect, the Way to  
the Father, the Love I want  
to express, the Joy I want  
to share, the Peace I want

to sow around me. Jesus is  
everything to me.—*Mother*  
*Teresa* (1910–1997)

Abide in Me, and I in you.  
As the branch cannot bear  
fruit of itself, unless it  
abides in the vine, neither  
can you, unless you abide  
in Me. I am the vine,  
you are the branches. He  
who abides in Me, and I  
in him, bears much fruit;  
for without Me you can  
do nothing.—*Jesus* (*John*  
*15:4–5*) ✠



Faith in Jesus  
Christ is the soul's  
flight into the city  
of refuge.

—*Hugh Binning*  
(1625–1654)

BY JASON RAE AND SHANNON SHAYLER

# a better you

HOW WILL READING  
GOD'S WORD MAKE  
YOUR LIFE BETTER?

*Food for spiritual strength and growth.* Just as your body needs food to survive and grow strong, your spirit needs spiritual nourishment from God's Word. This little analogy crops up repeatedly in both the Old and New Testaments:

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1. Matthew 4:4;  
Deuteronomy 8:3
  2. Job 23:12
  3. Psalm 119:103
  4. 1 Peter 2:2
  5. John 8:31–32
  6. Romans 10:17
  7. John 15:10–11

When Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God,” He was quoting Moses.<sup>1</sup>

Job declared in his time of suffering, “I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.”<sup>2</sup>

In Psalm 119, King David said to the Lord, “How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”<sup>3</sup>

The apostle Peter, writing to new Christians, admonished them to “as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word.”<sup>4</sup>

***Deeper relationships with Jesus.*** When you received Jesus into your heart, you began a wonderful and fulfilling personal relationship with Him. He wants to be your best friend, counselor, teacher, guide, and much more! The way to get to know Him better is through His Word. The four Gospels, especially, reveal His nature, His personality, His power, and His love.

He wants His relationship with you to be a two-way, give-and-take affair. It is through reading the Word that you will find out not only what He has for you, but also what He would like from you.

Think of His words as personal love letters to you from the one who knows and cares about you more than any other can.

***Truth and freedom.*** It seems that everywhere you look today, someone is marketing “the truth” in the form of some new book, program, or product. Who are you supposed to believe—and how much will it cost you?

Well, Jesus has the real article. “If you abide in My word,” He promises, “you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”<sup>5</sup>

You can rest assured that the Bible tells the truth. Become familiar with its precepts, and you will have a standard by which you can measure all things.

***Faith.*** Faith isn’t something you can *try* to have. It comes by taking in the Word of God.<sup>6</sup> If you’re weak in faith, it’s probably because you’re not reading and believing God’s Word enough. But the more you read and study the Word with an open mind and receptive heart, the more your faith will grow. It’s that simple and that sure!

***Happiness.*** Lasting happiness comes from following Jesus’ loving example, and you know how to do that from His Word. Jesus said, “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love. . . . These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.”<sup>7</sup>

***Contentment and peace of mind.*** By studying God’s Word, you will come to understand His loving ways. This will give you faith that whatever your circumstances may be, He



is in control and has your best interests at heart. “Now acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace; thereby good will come to you.”<sup>8</sup> When disappointments, obstacles, and setbacks wear on you, taking a little time to read from God’s Word will put things back in proper perspective.

***Answers to your problems and questions.*** When you’ve got questions, the Lord has answers, and when you have problems, He has solutions—and they’re all in His Word. By reading God’s recorded Word or hearing Him speak to your heart personally when you pray for guidance—His spoken Word—you can find the answer to every question and every problem you will ever have. Once you become familiar with the spiritual principles, divine wisdom, and practical counsel that are in the written Word, you will find that the Lord will show you how to apply it to questions and problems that come up in your own life. His

Word will be like a light, illuminating the path ahead of you.<sup>9</sup>

***Finding God’s will.*** God has a plan for your life. He knows what’s best for you, so if you can learn to let Him direct your decisions, everything will work out great in the end. It sounds simple enough, but how do you find out what is God’s best for you in a particular situation? How do you find “God’s will”?

The Word is the known, sure, absolute, revealed will of God. So when you’re faced with a decision, look at all He’s said before. Pattern your decision on a similar situation in the Word, or on the foundation principles of God’s Word. You can also ask God to speak to your own heart directly and show you what His will is for you in that particular situation. (For more on how you can hear directly from God yourself, read *Hearing from Heaven* ).

God’s Word also has the power to change the way you see life’s problems.

It will cause you to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove [know] what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”<sup>10</sup>

***Models for godly living.*** The Bible is full of stories about otherwise ordinary men and women whose faith and love for God saw them through thick and thin and made them great in His eyes. Much can be learned and much strength can be drawn from their examples. There are also many faith-building accounts of God’s love and care for His children, His protection, and His supply of their every need, as well as examples of what not to do and the consequences of violating His spiritual principles. “Whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might

have hope.”<sup>11</sup>

***God’s promises and power at your disposal.*** The Bible is full of promises that God has made to man—promises that He wants us to apply practically. Some of His promises are universal, like “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”<sup>12</sup> Others were originally made to certain individuals or groups, but they are also available to anyone who applies them to their own similar situation and meets whatever conditions may be attached.

As you become more familiar with God’s Word, you will learn to recognize His promises and claim them as your own. When you do that, it shows you have faith. It’s a positive declaration of your faith and knowledge of the Word which pleases God and sets His power in motion to answer your prayers.

***More love.*** It is difficult to follow Christ’s injunction to “love your neighbor as yourself”<sup>13</sup> when your “neighbors”—those you interact with on a regular basis—are sometimes the most difficult people to get along with, much less love. Where do you find the “Christian grace” to overlook the overbearing boss, the jealous coworker, the noisy partyers next door, or worse? How do you learn to love as Jesus loved? “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.”<sup>14</sup> As you read and study God’s Word, you’ll acquire more and more of His Spirit and love, and that will help you be more understanding, compassionate, and tolerant toward others. ❧

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8. Job 22:21

9. Psalm 119:105

10. Romans 12:2

11. Romans 15:4

12. Joel 2:32; Romans 10:13

13. Matthew 22:39

14. Psalm 119:165 KJV

## WHEN THE BIBLE SEEMS BORING



**Q:** *I'VE HEARD THAT READING THE BIBLE AND/OR OTHER INSPIRATIONAL MATERIAL EVERY DAY IS THE KEY TO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS. I TRY TO DO THAT, BUT SOMETIMES IT DOESN'T HOLD MY INTEREST AND MY MIND WANDERS. AM I MISSING SOMETHING?*

**A:** You can't just sit down and start reading and expect to fully understand what you read, or for it to have the desired effect. Jesus said, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."<sup>1</sup> The Spirit of God is what brings the Word to life and makes it more than ink on a page. The key is getting your spirit in tune with His.

One of the best ways to do that is to start your times of reading and reflection with prayer. There are many short, powerful prayers in the Bible about the Word. One classic is "Open my eyes to see wonderful things in your Word."<sup>2</sup> Ask God to clear your mind and heart so He can fill them with His thoughts and truths.

Another good way to start is with praise, recounting and thanking God for His goodness. "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise."<sup>3</sup> Sing it, say it, read it (the Psalms are full of praises to God), or meditate on the words of a devotional song—whatever you find works best for you to put your mind and spirit in a receptive, reflective mood to receive whatever God has for you that day. ✨

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1. John 6:63

2. Psalm 119:18 TLB

3. Psalm 100:4

# divine nature

BY MARIA FONTAINE

GOD HAS GIVEN US “EXCEEDINGLY GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES, THAT THROUGH THESE [WE] MAY BE PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE.”<sup>1</sup> What is the “divine nature”?—It is the essence of God, how He thinks and how He acts. And through the promises He gives in His Word, we can be like He is. We can partake of those same attitudes, those same feelings, those same ways of looking at things by believing and putting into practice the principles and promises that are right there in the Bible.

We can transcend the confines of earthly attitudes that keep us weighed down, sorrowful, fretful, worried, and fearful. We can not only have a head knowledge of the fact that “all things work together for good to those who love God,”<sup>2</sup> but we can believe, practice, and experience it.

We can be cleansed of all those attitudes and mental habits that are earthly and not heavenly. Jesus told His followers, “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”<sup>3</sup> We can be rewired into new creations in Christ Jesus, and through His power overcome our wrong attitudes and bad habits.<sup>4</sup>

The more we live in the Word and believe it and practice it, the more we’ll be in sync with that heavenly realm. The more we “set [our] mind on things above, not on things on the earth,”<sup>5</sup> the easier it becomes to live in this world without being controlled or shaped by it.<sup>6</sup> ✠

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1. 2 Peter 1:4

4. 2 Corinthians 5:17

2. Romans 8:28

5. Colossians 3:2

3. John 15:3

6. John 15:19

## HOW TO AVOID BURNOUT

When a candle burns, it’s mostly the wax, not the wick, that’s burning. An oil lamp is the same; it must be the oil that burns, and not the wick. If the wick burns without oil, it will be consumed quickly. Most of the wick must be deeply immersed in the oil, so only a small part of the wick is exposed to the air and flame.

Sometimes we work too hard, trying to do everything ourselves when we need to let Jesus do it through us. When we do the burning, we give off smoke and soot and burn out fast, but when we let the Lord’s oil, the Holy Spirit, flow through us and do the burning, we last a long time.

“It is no longer I who burn, but Christ burns in me” (Galatians 2:20 *paraphrased*).

—D.B.B





# Thirsty No More

A RETELLING OF JOHN CHAPTER 4

BY ABI F. MAY

SUSANNAH SIGHED AS SHE DRAPED HER HEAD-COVERING OVER HER LONG RAVEN HAIR.

Picking up an empty clay urn, she set out on the long, hot, dusty walk to fetch water from the communal well near Sychar, the Samaritan village where she lived.

She approached the well warily, because there sat a stranger—a Jew, judging by appearance. She was astonished when the man asked her for a drink of water, because

the Jews' religious customs forbade them any interaction with the Samaritans, whom they considered “unclean.”

“You’re a Jew and I’m a Samaritan!” she exclaimed. “Why do you ask me for a drink?”

“If you knew who I was,” the stranger replied, “you would be the one asking for water.”

Susannah was mystified. How could this man get water out of the well? He had nothing to pull it out with.

The stranger answered with words that she would later repeat until they were imprinted upon her memory—words that millions after her would draw hope from.

“Everyone who drinks water from this well will get thirsty again. But anyone who drinks the water I give will never be thirsty again. The water I give comes from the fountain of eternal life.”

“Go on then, give me a drink of that water.

Then I won't ever get thirsty or need to come here anymore!"

"Go and bring your husband," the stranger told her.

She hesitated, then lowered her eyes. "I don't have a husband," she conceded.

"That much is the truth. You have been married five times, but the man you are living with now isn't your husband."

Susannah was astonished. "You're a prophet, I see," she began. "You might be able to settle a certain dispute then. My people have always worshiped on Mount Gerizim, but you Jews say that Jerusalem is the only place to worship." The fact that a Jewish ruler had destroyed the Samaritans' temple on their holy mountain 200 years earlier went unspoken, but clearly it was on her mind.

"Believe me," the stranger replied, "the time is coming when you won't worship the Father either on this mountain or in Jerusalem. God is a Spirit, and those who worship God must worship Him in spirit and truth."

She marveled at this answer. God—a Spirit who she could worship anywhere? Her race, religion, gender, age, background—could none of that matter? She felt warmed by the idea of God's love being inclusive of all people, even herself.

There was something else she wanted to ask. "I know that the Messiah will come—the one called Christ—and explain everything to us."

The stranger gazed into her eyes, and her heart beat faster. "I am that one!"

Her eyes widened and her thoughts raced. "I must tell my friends and family! Wait here

Do you thirst for more? Jesus, the source of living water, will satisfy the yearnings of your soul. Receive Him as your Savior by praying:

*Dear Jesus, I believe*

*You are the Son of God.*

*Thank You for giving*

*Your life for me. I ask*

*You now to come into*

*my heart, quench my*

*inner thirst, and give me*

*eternal life. Amen.*

for me!”

Susannah rushed back to Sychar, her still-empty urn forgotten.

The midday heat had passed, and people were milling around the market square. She excitedly told all those she could about the man she had met and their conversation. “He *must* be the Christ!” she exclaimed. “He had never seen me before, yet he knew everything about me.”

Soon Susannah returned to the well at the head of a small crowd.

The stranger was still there, now accompanied by several men, and from them she learned that the stranger’s name was Jesus.

He did not stay a stranger, because the people were captivated by what He told them. Some of them invited Him and His companions to stay with them, so Jesus spent two days in Sychar, explaining the Holy Scriptures.

Some days later, Susannah made her way back through town with a full water pot. Her load was heavy, but her

steps were light. She still needed to fetch water daily, but her inner emptiness was gone.

One of the townsmen who noticed her walking by said, “You tried to convince us that this man Jesus was the promised Messiah. Well, now we believe—no longer just because of what you told us, but because we have heard Him ourselves and are certain that He is the Savior!”

Susannah smiled as she went on her way. She was not the only one who had found the living water! ✨

“He who believes in Me, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” —*Jesus*<sup>1</sup>

“Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.” —*Revelation 22:17*

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1. John 7:38

# Nourish your spirit

A Spiritual Exercise

GOOD NOURISHMENT FROM A BALANCED DIET OF VEGETABLES AND FRUIT, PROTEINS, CARBOHYDRATES, AND FATS IS IMPORTANT FOR MAINTAINING GOOD HEALTH. The same applies to our spirits. We all have days when we are busier than usual, but we should make a habit of taking some time for “food for the soul.”

You may find it helpful to plan your spiritual diet for the coming week, much like you might plan ahead the meals you will cook and what to shop for. This will help ensure that you get at least a few minutes of spiritual feeding each day. Find what works best for you. Here are some ideas to get you started.

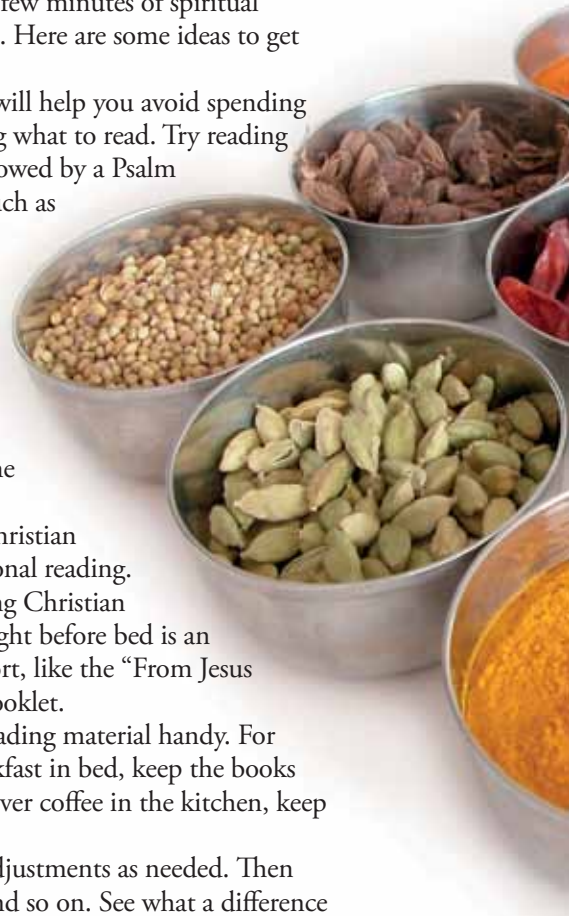
Having a fairly structured, ongoing project will help you avoid spending time in the often-hecky early morning deciding what to read. Try reading a chapter a day from the book of Proverbs, followed by a Psalm and a page from a book of daily devotionals, such as *Daily Might*.

Times of deeper study will help you find answers to your questions and solutions to your problems. You might have a study project of working through the Gospels and book of Acts, or the epistles, or one of the titles in the *Get Activated* or *Mountain Streams* book series. Or enroll in a Christian study course such as the *12 Foundation Stones*.

Lighter feeding can come from articles in Christian magazines and booklet or other short inspirational reading. Consider listening to Christian music or reading Christian fiction or poetry for variety in your routine. Right before bed is an ideal time to read and reflect on something short, like the “From Jesus with Love” message on the back page of this booklet.

Make it easy for yourself by keeping your reading material handy. For instance, if you like to have your spiritual breakfast in bed, keep the books you’ll need for that nearby; or if you’ll have it over coffee in the kitchen, keep your material there.

Follow your plan for one week, and make adjustments as needed. Then follow your modified plan for another week, and so on. See what a difference those times of positive spiritual input make in how your days go. ✨



FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

# Meet Me in the

# m o r n i n g

You do well to take time with Me first thing in the morning, for you are powerless without the strength you draw from Me, you are foolish without the wisdom you learn from Me, and you have no love to share with others unless you first get it from Me. Without Me, you would continue on in your own little world and be limited to your own meager resources. Your human strength would run out before the day had scarcely started, your own thoughts would get in the way, and you wouldn't go far on yesterday's store of love. But when you come to Me, I open the boundless world of My Spirit to you. I am wisdom, I am strength, and I am love.

As I told My disciples, you can find rest for your spirit and strength for the day in Me.<sup>1</sup> It seems easier to carry on in your own energy than to work at entering into the realm of My Spirit where I would carry you along, but that's not so. You really make it harder for yourself, because you make it harder for Me to help you.

So take a little time each morning to draw close to Me. Practice makes perfect. As you practice reaching out to Me by praying and reading My Word, it will become easier. Keep taking this time with Me each morning and it will become easier to connect with Me throughout the day, whenever you need My help.

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1. Matthew 11:28–30