

LIFE. LOVE. PURPOSE.

What Jesus Has to Say About the Things That Matter Most A 28-Day Journey with Jesus

Welcome

Life can be complicated.

Relationships get messy. People hurt us. We carry wounds we cannot seem to let go of. We wonder whether our lives really matter and whether there is something more than simply getting through another day.

For more than two thousand years, people have turned to Jesus with these same questions. This devotional is an invitation to spend four weeks listening to what Jesus has to say about the things that matter most:

LIFE.

How do we live when relationships are difficult and life gets messy?

LOVE.

How do we forgive, receive mercy, and love when love is costly?

PURPOSE.

Why are we here? What is my life really for?

RESPONSE.

What do I do with what Jesus has said?

Each day, read the Gospel, reflect on Jesus' words, consider the question, take one practical step, and close with prayer.

You don't need to have everything figured out.

You simply need to be willing to listen.

Come and see what Jesus has to say.

WEEK ONE — LIFE

When Life Gets Messy

What do I do when the people I love hurt me?

DAY 1 — When Relationships Break

Matthew 18:15–20

Relationships are one of life's greatest gifts—and often one of its greatest sources of pain. Jesus understands that people hurt one another. He doesn't pretend that conflict won't happen among his followers. Instead, he gives us a different way to respond.

His first instruction is surprisingly simple:

Go to the person.

Don't begin with gossip. Don't recruit people to your side. Don't allow resentment to quietly grow. Jesus invites us to take the difficult but loving step of going directly to the person.

This doesn't mean every relationship will immediately be healed. Reconciliation takes honesty, humility, and sometimes time. But Jesus calls us to become people who pursue peace rather than people who simply avoid problems.

A mature life is not a conflict-free life.

It is a life that knows what to do when conflict comes.

Reflect

Is there a broken relationship or unresolved conflict I have been avoiding?

Today's Step

Ask God to show you one step you can take toward peace.

Prayer

Jesus, give me the courage to face what I have been avoiding. Help me seek truth without anger and reconciliation without pride. Make me a person who brings peace. Amen.

DAY 2 — Let Jesus Restore What Is Broken

Luke 6:6–11

Jesus encounters a man with a withered hand.

The man has learned to live with his limitation. We don't know how long his hand had been withered, but we can imagine that over time he had adjusted his life around what was broken.

We do the same thing.

Sometimes we become so accustomed to our wounds that we stop believing anything can change. We learn how to hide our pain, manage our anger, avoid certain people, and live around the parts of our lives that aren't working.

But Jesus sees what is broken.

And he invites the man to step forward.

That may be the hardest part of healing: stepping out of hiding.

Jesus may be inviting you to bring something into the light today. A wound. A relationship. A fear. A habit. Something you've quietly accepted as permanent.

What if Jesus is not finished with you?

Reflect

What part of my life have I stopped believing Jesus can change?

Today's Step

Name that area honestly in prayer.

Prayer

Jesus, I bring you what is broken in me. Help me believe that your grace can reach places I have given up on. Teach me to trust you with my healing. Amen.

DAY 3 — God Works Through Imperfect Stories

Matthew 1:1–16, 18–23

At first glance, a genealogy may seem like an unusual place to find hope.

But the family history of Jesus is filled with real people and complicated stories. There are faithful people and failures. There are heroes and sinners. There are unexpected turns, painful moments, and surprising acts of grace.

And through all of it, God is working.

That should give us hope.

Your story may not have unfolded the way you expected. Your family may not be perfect. You may carry regrets about choices you made or things that happened to you.

But God is not limited by imperfect people or complicated histories.

Jesus entered a real human family and a real human story.

And he can enter yours.

Your past explains some things about you.

It does not have to determine your future.

Reflect

Do I believe God can work through my imperfect story?

Today's Step

Thank God for three people who have shaped your life—even if some relationships have been complicated.

Prayer

God, thank you for meeting me in my real life, not an imaginary perfect one. Take every part of my story and continue writing something beautiful through it. Amen.

DAY 4 — What Does a Good Life Look Like?

Luke 6:20–26

Jesus has a way of challenging our assumptions.

We often think a good life means comfort, security, success, popularity, and having enough of what we want.

But Jesus asks us to look deeper.

He tells us that people can have everything the world says they need and still be empty. And people who appear to have very little can discover a joy the world cannot take away.

Jesus isn't glorifying suffering. He is challenging our definition of success.

What if a successful life is not simply about what you accumulate?

What if it is about who you become?

What if the good life is found not in having more, but in learning to trust God more deeply?

Jesus invites us to build our lives on something that can survive disappointment, loss, and change.

Reflect

What have I been using to measure whether my life is successful?

Today's Step

Identify one worldly measure of success that you need to surrender to God.

Prayer

Jesus, help me see life through your eyes. Free me from chasing things that cannot satisfy my soul. Teach me what truly matters. Amen.

DAY 5 — Love Your Enemies

Luke 6:27–38

Jesus says something most of us would rather skip:

Love your enemies.

Love the people who don't love you back. Pray for the people who hurt you. Bless those who curse you.

This is not easy.

Jesus isn't asking us to pretend evil is good or that hurt doesn't matter. He is offering us a way to live without allowing another person's actions to control our hearts.

Hatred has a way of keeping us connected to the very people we want to escape.

Jesus offers freedom.

When we pray for someone who hurt us, something begins to change—not necessarily in them, but in us.

We stop allowing resentment to define us.

Love is not weakness.

Sometimes love is the strongest thing a person can do.

Reflect

Who is hardest for me to love right now?

Today's Step

Pray sincerely for that person today.

Prayer

Jesus, you know how difficult this is for me. I cannot love this person well without your help. Give me a heart that is free from hatred and open to your mercy. Amen.

DAY 6 — Look in the Mirror First

Luke 6:39–42

It is easy to see what is wrong with everyone else.

We notice their attitude, their mistakes, their bad habits, and the things they should change.

Jesus tells us to look in the mirror first.

This doesn't mean we should ignore problems. It means we should approach other people with humility.

Before I correct you, perhaps I should ask what God wants to correct in me.

Before I judge your motives, perhaps I should examine my own.

Humility changes relationships because it changes the way we enter them.

The person who knows they need mercy is usually much better at giving it.

Reflect

Is there something I criticize in others that I need to examine in myself?

Today's Step

Before criticizing someone today, pause and ask God: “What do you want to change in me?”

Prayer

Jesus, help me see myself honestly. Remove the pride that makes me quick to judge and slow to change. Give me a humble and merciful heart. Amen.

DAY 7 — Build Your Life on Rock

Luke 6:43–49

Jesus asks a challenging question:

“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but do not do what I command?”

It's possible to admire Jesus without following him.

We can know his words, hear his teachings, and even agree with what he says without actually allowing those words to shape our lives.

Jesus compares the person who hears and acts on his words to someone who builds a house on solid rock.

Storms still come.

Following Jesus doesn't mean life will be easy.

The difference is the foundation.

When the storms come—and they will—we discover what our lives are built on.

Reflect

What teaching of Jesus am I hearing but not yet living?

Today's Step

Choose one teaching of Jesus and put it into practice today.

Prayer

Jesus, I don't want simply to hear your words. I want to build my life on them. Show me where I need to move from listening to doing. Amen.

WEEK TWO — LOVE

When You Can't Let Go

How do I forgive someone who has hurt me?

DAY 8 — Forgiven to Forgive

Matthew 18:21–35

Peter wants to know how many times he has to forgive.

Seven times seems generous.

Jesus' answer is essentially: Stop keeping score.

Then Jesus tells a story about a servant who is forgiven an enormous debt but refuses to forgive someone who owes him much less.

The point is uncomfortable.

We desperately want mercy when we need it. But we can become very reluctant to offer mercy when someone else needs it.

Jesus reminds us that forgiveness begins by recognizing how much we ourselves have received.

Forgiveness doesn't mean what happened was okay.

It doesn't mean trust is automatically restored.

It doesn't mean there are no consequences.

Forgiveness means choosing not to let another person's sin become the master of your heart.

Reflect

Who am I still holding hostage in my heart?

Today's Step

Begin praying for the person you need to forgive.

Prayer

Merciful Jesus, thank you for forgiving me. Help me receive your mercy so deeply that I can begin to extend mercy to others. Amen.

DAY 9 — Love Looks Like a Cross

John 3:13–17

The cross tells us what love looks like.

Love is more than attraction. More than emotion. More than saying the right words.

Love gives.

God loved the world and gave his Son.

Jesus loved us and gave himself.

That doesn't mean healthy love requires us to become doormats or remain in harmful situations. But it does mean real love eventually costs us something.

Love costs time.

Love costs attention.

Love sometimes means putting another person's needs ahead of our convenience.

The question is not simply, "Who loves me?"

A deeper question might be:

"How am I learning to love?"

Reflect

What has love cost me?

Today's Step

Make one quiet, sacrificial act of love today without expecting anything in return.

Prayer

Jesus, teach me to love as you love. Free me from selfishness and help me become a person who gives generously and loves faithfully. Amen.

DAY 10 — Love Stays

John 19:25–27

Mary stands at the foot of the cross.

She cannot take away Jesus' suffering.

She cannot change what is happening.

But she stays.

Sometimes we think love means having the right answer or being able to fix the problem.

But often the greatest gift we can give someone is simply our presence.

To sit with someone who is grieving.

To listen without trying to solve everything.

To remain when leaving would be easier.

Mary teaches us that love stays.

Who in your life may not need your advice today?

Maybe they simply need to know they are not alone.

Reflect

Who needs me simply to be present?

Today's Step

Give someone your undivided attention today.

Prayer

Jesus, help me love people with patience and presence. Teach me not to run from another person's pain but to walk beside them when I can. Amen.

DAY 11 — Stop Looking for Reasons

Luke 7:31–35

Jesus points out how easily people find reasons to reject others.

John the Baptist was too strict.

Jesus was too welcoming.

No matter what they did, someone found a reason to criticize.

We can do the same thing.

Sometimes we decide what we think about a person before we really know them. We notice what makes them different from us and allow those differences to become barriers.

Jesus continually moves toward people.

The overlooked.

The misunderstood.

The people others have already judged.

What if we spent less time looking for reasons to dismiss people and more time looking for opportunities to understand them?

Reflect

Is there someone I have dismissed without really knowing them?

Today's Step

Give your full attention to someone you might normally overlook.

Prayer

Jesus, give me your eyes for people. Help me see beyond appearances, assumptions, and first impressions. Teach me to love without prejudice. Amen.

DAY 12 — The One Who Is Forgiven Much

Luke 7:36–50

A woman with a painful reputation enters a room where Jesus is eating.

Others see her past.

Jesus sees her.

Others see what she has done.

Jesus sees what she can become.

The woman responds to Jesus with love because she has encountered mercy.

That is what happens when forgiveness becomes real.

We stop trying to earn God's love.

We begin responding to the love we have received.

Maybe the greatest obstacle to loving God is not that we don't know enough about him.

Maybe we haven't yet allowed ourselves to believe that we are truly loved by him.

Reflect

How deeply do I understand that God has forgiven and loves me?

Today's Step

Spend five minutes simply thanking Jesus for his mercy.

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for seeing me completely and loving me anyway. Help me receive your mercy and respond with a grateful heart. Amen.

DAY 13 — Your Past Doesn't Disqualify You

Luke 8:1–3

The people following Jesus came from different backgrounds.

Some carried painful histories.

Some had experienced healing.

Some had made serious mistakes.

Jesus didn't gather perfect people.

He gathered people willing to follow him.

Your past may be part of your story, but it does not have to be your identity.

You are more than your worst decision.

You are more than what someone else did to you.

You are more than the label others have placed on you.

Jesus offers a new beginning.

The question is whether we are willing to receive it.

Reflect

What part of my past am I allowing to define me?

Today's Step

Tell Jesus honestly: "This is part of my story, but it does not have to be my future."

Prayer

Jesus, help me stop defining myself by the past. Give me the courage to receive the new life you offer. Amen.

DAY 14 — What Kind of Heart Do I Have?

Luke 8:4–15

The seed is good.

The problem is not with the seed.

The question is what kind of soil receives it.

Jesus says the Word of God can be lost because of distraction, difficulty, worry, wealth, and the endless demands of life.

God may be speaking more often than we realize.

Are we listening?

A healthy spiritual life requires making space.

Space to pray.

Space to listen.

Space to think.

Space to allow God's Word to sink beneath the surface.

You don't have to hear God say everything at once.

Start by becoming available.

Reflect

What is choking God's Word in my life?

Today's Step

Remove one distraction and spend ten quiet minutes with God.

Prayer

Jesus, prepare my heart to receive your Word. Remove whatever keeps me from hearing you and give me a heart that is open and ready. Amen.

WEEK THREE — PURPOSE

You Were Made for More

Why am I here?

DAY 15 — Called to the Vineyard

Matthew 20:1–16

The landowner keeps going out looking for workers.

Early in the morning.

Later in the day.

Even near the end.

He keeps inviting people into the vineyard.

That is a beautiful picture of God.

God continues to call.

Some people discover their purpose early.

Others feel like they are still trying to figure things out.

Some wonder whether they have missed their opportunity.

But God is still calling.

It is never too late to respond.

Your purpose may not be to do something famous.

Your purpose may be found in loving your family, serving your community, sharing your faith, using your gifts, and doing the good God places in front of you.

You were made for more than simply living for yourself.

Reflect

Where might Jesus be calling me to serve?

Today's Step

Begin the day by asking: "Jesus, where do you need me today?"

Prayer

Jesus, help me hear your invitation. Show me where my life can make a difference and give me the courage to respond. Amen.

DAY 16 — Jesus Calls Ordinary People

Matthew 9:9–13

Matthew is sitting at his tax collector's booth when Jesus says two words:

"Follow me."

And Matthew gets up.

There is something wonderfully ordinary about this moment.

Jesus doesn't wait until Matthew has everything figured out.

He doesn't demand that Matthew first become someone else.

He calls him where he is.

Jesus still does that.

He meets people in ordinary places.

At work.

At home.

In the middle of disappointment.

In the middle of success.

Then he invites us forward.

Following Jesus often begins with getting up from something that has kept us stuck.

Reflect

If Jesus said “Follow me” today, what might I need to leave behind?

Today's Step

Identify one habit, attitude, or fear that may be keeping you from moving forward.

Prayer

Jesus, I hear your invitation to follow. Give me the courage to get up and move toward the life you are calling me to live. Amen.

DAY 17 — Hearing and Doing

Luke 8:19–21

Jesus says that his true family includes those who hear God's Word and act on it.

Hearing is important.

But eventually, hearing must lead somewhere.

We all know the difference between information and transformation.

Information tells me what I should do.

Transformation happens when I actually begin doing it.

Jesus isn't looking for people who can merely repeat his teachings.

He is forming people whose lives begin to look different because they have listened.

Maybe today God isn't asking you to learn something new.

Maybe he is asking you to live something you already know.

Reflect

Am I hearing Jesus—or acting on what I hear?

Today's Step

Do one thing today simply because Jesus asks you to do it.

Prayer

Jesus, help me move beyond good intentions. Give me the courage to put your words into practice today. Amen.

DAY 18 — You Are Sent

Luke 9:1–6

Jesus sends the disciples out.

That is remarkable because they are not finished products.

They still have questions.

They still misunderstand Jesus.

They will still make mistakes.

And yet he sends them.

Sometimes we think we have to become perfect before God can use us.

Jesus seems to disagree.

He calls us, forms us, and sends us—all while continuing to work on us.

You don't have to know everything to encourage someone.

You don't have to have all the answers to share hope.

You don't have to be perfect to love someone well.

The people around you may need exactly what God wants to do through you.

Reflect

Who has Jesus placed in my life who needs encouragement or hope?

Today's Step

Encourage someone today.

Prayer

Jesus, use me as I am while continuing to make me more like you. Show me who needs the hope you have given me. Amen.

DAY 19 — Who Is Jesus?**Luke 9:7–9**

Herod hears about Jesus and becomes curious.

People have been talking.

Stories are spreading.

Questions are being asked.

Who is this Jesus?

That question remains.

Some people see Jesus as a teacher.

Others as a prophet.

Others as a moral example.

Christians believe he is much more.

But eventually, every person has to wrestle with the question personally.

Who is Jesus to me?

Not merely to my family.

Not merely to my church.

Not merely to history.

Who is Jesus to me?

Your answer to that question can change everything.

Reflect

Who do I believe Jesus is?

Today's Step

Write one honest sentence describing who Jesus is to you right now.

Prayer

Jesus, help me know you—not simply know about you. Lead me deeper into the truth of who you are. Amen.

DAY 20 — Who Do You Say I Am?**Luke 9:18–22**

Jesus asks his disciples:

“Who do you say that I am?”

This is one of the most important questions in the Gospels.

Other people have opinions.

The crowds have opinions.

History has opinions.

But Jesus turns to his disciples and makes the question personal.

Who do *you* say I am?

Faith eventually becomes personal.
You cannot live forever on someone else's faith.
At some point, you have to decide whether you trust Jesus.
Whether you believe his words.
Whether you will follow him.
The journey may begin with questions.
But Jesus is not afraid of your questions.
He simply asks you to keep coming closer.

Reflect

Who is Jesus to me—not merely to others?

Today's Step

Write your answer to Jesus' question: "Who do you say that I am?"

Prayer

Jesus, meet me in my questions. Lead me beyond secondhand faith into a real and personal relationship with you. Amen.

DAY 21 — Trust Before You Understand

Luke 9:43b–45

Jesus tells his disciples something they do not understand.
They are confused.
They don't know what is coming.
And they are afraid to ask.
Most of us know what that feels like.
We want answers.
We want a plan.
We want to know what will happen next.
But faith sometimes means trusting before we understand.
The disciples will eventually look back and understand more clearly.
But in this moment, they simply have to stay with Jesus.
Perhaps that is what faith looks like for you today.
Not having every answer.
Not seeing the whole road.
Simply choosing to stay close to Jesus.

Reflect

Where am I demanding answers before I am willing to trust?

Today's Step

Give one unanswered question to God today.

Prayer

Jesus, I don't understand everything. But help me trust you with what I cannot yet see. Keep me close to you as I wait. Amen.

WEEK FOUR — RESPONSE

What Are You Going to Do About It?

Faith eventually requires a response.

DAY 22 — Talk Is Cheap

Matthew 21:28–32

Jesus tells the story of two sons.

One says no but later changes his mind and goes.

The other says yes but never follows through.

Which one did the father's will?

The answer is obvious.

Actions matter.

Jesus isn't looking for perfect words.

He is looking for real responses.

There is hope in this story for anyone who has said no to God.

The first son changed his mind.

You can change your mind too.

You can begin again.

But eventually, faith requires more than saying the right things.

At some point, we have to get up and go.

Reflect

What is Jesus asking me to do?

Today's Step

Take one concrete step of obedience today.

Prayer

Jesus, help me move beyond words and good intentions. Give me the courage to respond to whatever you are asking of me. Amen.

DAY 23 — It's Not About Being the Greatest

Luke 9:46–50

The disciples argue about who among them is the greatest.

Jesus responds by placing a child beside him.

The disciples are thinking about status.

Jesus is thinking about humility.

We live in a world that constantly asks us to prove ourselves.

Be more successful.

Be more important.

Be more impressive.

Jesus offers another way.

Greatness is not found in making everyone notice you.

It is found in learning to love and serve.

You don't have to be the most important person in the room to live an important life.

Reflect

Where am I trying too hard to prove that I matter?

Today's Step

Choose the humble place today. Do something good without needing recognition.

Prayer

Jesus, free me from the need to prove myself. Teach me to find my worth in being loved by you and serving others. Amen.

DAY 24 — Jesus Knows You**John 1:47–51**

Nathanael is surprised when Jesus tells him that he has seen him.

Jesus knows more about Nathanael than Nathanael expects.

That can be both comforting and frightening.

Jesus sees the things we show everyone.

He also sees the things we hide.

The fears.

The questions.

The failures.

The hopes.

And he still invites us closer.

There is tremendous freedom in being known and loved.

You don't have to perform for Jesus.

You don't have to pretend.

You can be honest.

The real you is the person Jesus wants to meet.

Reflect

What would change if I truly believed Jesus knows me completely and loves me anyway?

Today's Step

Spend five quiet minutes with Jesus without trying to impress him.

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for knowing me completely. Help me stop hiding from you and learn to rest in your love. Amen.

DAY 25 — Don't Keep Looking Back**Luke 9:57–62**

Several people tell Jesus they want to follow him.

But each one has a reason to delay.

Following Jesus will always involve a decision.

There will always be something that makes waiting seem easier.

Maybe later.

Maybe when life calms down.

Maybe when I have more answers.

Maybe when I feel more ready.

But sometimes waiting becomes another way of saying no.

Jesus doesn't call us to live trapped by the past.

He calls us forward.

You cannot move toward a new future while constantly looking behind you.

Reflect

What keeps me from giving Jesus my whole yes?

Today's Step

Name one obstacle and ask Jesus to help you move beyond it.

Prayer

Jesus, free me from whatever keeps me stuck. Give me the courage to move forward with you and trust where you lead. Amen.

DAY 26 — You Are Sent**Luke 10:1–12**

Jesus sends seventy-two disciples ahead of him.

The Christian life is not simply about coming to church.

We come together to worship.

We listen.

We are formed.

We receive grace.

And then we go.

We go back to our families.

Our workplaces.

Our neighborhoods.

Our friendships.

And we bring Jesus with us.

You may be the only person someone knows who will show them what Christian love looks like.

You don't have to preach a sermon.

Start by being present.

Listening.

Encouraging.

Forgiving.

Serving.

Your ordinary life can become part of God's mission.

Reflect

Where has Jesus sent me?

Today's Step

Bring Christ into one ordinary conversation through kindness, encouragement, or honest faith.

Prayer

Jesus, help me see my everyday life as part of your mission. Send me to bring your love wherever I go. Amen.

DAY 27 — Become Like a Child**Matthew 18:1–5, 10**

Jesus says that greatness begins with becoming like a child.

Children understand something adults often forget:

They know they need help.

As adults, we can become experts at pretending we have everything under control.

But faith begins with humility.

It begins when we acknowledge:
I don't have all the answers.
I can't control everything.
I need God.
This is not weakness.
It is freedom.
You were never meant to carry the entire weight of your life alone.
Jesus invites you to trust.
Not blindly.
But like a child who knows they are loved.

Reflect

What would it look like for me to trust God more simply?

Today's Step

Give God one thing you have been trying to control.

Prayer

Father, help me trust you. Teach me to receive your love and place my life more fully in your hands. Amen.

DAY 28 — You Belong to God

Luke 10:17–24

The disciples return excited.
They have seen amazing things happen.
They are excited about what they accomplished.
Jesus reminds them of something even greater.
Don't build your identity on success.
Don't build it on accomplishments.
Don't build it on what other people think.
Your deepest reason for joy is this:

You belong to God.

That is where this journey ends.
With belonging.
Before you accomplish anything else.
Before you figure everything out.
Before you become everything you hope to become.
You are invited into a relationship with God.
Life matters.
Love matters.
Purpose matters.

But underneath all of them is this truth:

You are loved. You are known. You are called.

And Jesus is still inviting you to come and see.

Reflect

What do I use to measure my worth?

Today's Step

Thank God simply for the gift of being loved and belonging to him.

Prayer

Jesus, thank you for this journey. Help me remember that my worth is not found in what I accomplish but in the love of God. Continue leading me, forming me, and sending me. Amen.

WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE?

You've spent four weeks listening to Jesus speak about the things that matter most.

LIFE

Jesus teaches us how to live when life gets messy.

He calls us toward reconciliation, humility, healing, and trust.

LOVE

Jesus teaches us how to love.

He invites us to receive mercy and become people who forgive, serve, and remain present.

PURPOSE

Jesus teaches us that our lives are meant for more.

We are called, gifted, and sent.

RESPONSE

Jesus eventually asks each of us to decide:

What are you going to do about it?

The journey of faith is not completed in twenty-eight days.

In many ways, it is only beginning.

Perhaps your next step is to:

- Begin attending Mass regularly.
- Spend time reading one of the Gospels.
- Return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Begin praying each day.
- Talk with someone about your questions.
- Join a small group.
- Serve someone in need.
- Take one concrete step toward following Jesus.

You don't have to take every step today.

Just take the next one.

MY NEXT STEP

After spending these twenty-eight days with Jesus, I believe God is inviting me to:

The next step I will take is:

I will take this step by:

LIFE. LOVE. PURPOSE.

What Jesus has to say about the things that matter most.

Four weeks.

Twenty-eight days.

One invitation.

COME AND SEE.

And when Jesus asks:

“Who do you say that I am?”

May we have the courage not only to answer with our words—

but with our lives.