

# John 11

## ENGAGE FELLOWSHIP

*“Jesus loved Miriam, Martha, and Lazarus.” (John 11:5)*

### MY JOURNAL

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It's important to remember that Jesus fulfilled all that his Father intended for Him as a single person. Scripture records that as He entered His teen years, he “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52). Notice His mental and physical growth, as well as His spiritual. Important also, is that Jesus developed “favor” with others. He was a good student, worker, son, brother, and a good friend!

“In the village of Bethany there was a man named Lazarus, and his sisters, Miriam and Martha” (John 11:1). During His public ministry, the Gospels mention that Jesus makes several trips to Bethany, a small village outside of Jerusalem (see Luke 10:38-42). There seems to be no apparent religious or political significance to the village, and yet it is important to Jesus because His three friends live there!

Miriam, Martha and Lazarus appear to be sources of fellowship for Jesus. As good friends, Jesus is welcomed into their home, meals are taken together, times of significant conversation take place, tears are shed together and others notice the love of four friends.

#### **Startling people with loving initiatives can lead to meaningful fellowship.**

People are lovable because they are created by the One who is love. “Jesus loved Miriam, Martha, and Lazarus” (John 11:5). Jesus validates others’ lovableness by giving first to them.

God provides people for us to love through meaningful fellowship. “Look how much he loved Lazarus” (John 11:36). Others observe Jesus’ love for his friends and are startled.

God provides people to love us through meaningful fellowship. “Miriam was the one who would anoint Jesus’ feet with costly perfume and dry his feet with her long hair” (John 11:2). Jesus receives love from others who care deeply for Him.

**Pause to list** people in your life who serve as sources of fellowship...

- Given that people are worthy of love, to whom might you say, “You are lovable?”
- Express gratitude to God for the people with whom you have: enjoyed hospitality, had meals together, shared significant conversation, shed tears, cared for so deeply that others noticed your closeness.
- To whom might you take initiative to “give first” by showing appreciation, providing encouragement, giving comfort, offering support.

*“Lord, thanks for blessing my life friendships, especially with \_\_\_\_\_.”*

Just as Jesus would express care and concern for these three in Bethany that He loved (John 11:5), how might God want to additionally express love to friends in your life? Pray now with your partner or small group and ask Him: *“Dear Lord, show me not only who to love but also how to love him/her in relevant ways.”*

# John 11

## ENCOUNTER JESUS

*“Jesus comforted people throughout His time on earth, sometimes identifying with others’ pain to the point of weeping for them.”  
(John 11:35)*

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**J**esus comforted people throughout His time on earth, sometimes identifying with others’ pain to the point of weeping for them (John 11:35; Luke 19:41). Even on the eve of His own death, He comforted the disciples because He sensed their sorrow and anxiety (John 14:1, 18, 27; 16:3).

We are impressed by two miracles in this chapter: the raising of Lazarus from the dead and the miracle of a God who cries! Imagine “weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15) and think that there is a “blessing” available when we mourn. The blessing is called comfort (Matthew 5:4).

Jesus was moved deeply within His spirit as He wept with His friend Miriam. Comfort flowed through the prompting and power of the Comforter. For us comfort may be as simple as sharing “I’m really sorry that happened.” Very often the Holy Spirit’s first work is to take captive and resist our common, unhelpful, or unproductive responses. Consider that Jesus could have but didn’t give these unhelpful responses:

- **Advice/instruction:** “Let me tell you how to solve the problem.” “Maybe next time that happens you should...”
- **Logic/reasoning:** “Let me analyze the situation and tell you why it happened.” “I think that happened because...”
- **Pep talk:** “You’re a winner! You’ll make it through these tough times!” “I’m sure tomorrow will be a better day.”
- **Minimize the incident:** “Sure it hurt, but there’s still a lot going on that’s good.” “Aren’t you being overly sensitive?”
- **Spiritualizing:** “Well, you know that God will work all this out for your good.” “Joseph’s brothers meant evil for him, but God meant it for good.” It’s good to know that we are more than conquerors through Christ!”

Each response seems to work best after we give comfort.

Jesus has compassion for us. “When Jesus looked at Miriam and saw her weeping at his feet, and all her friends who were with her grieving, he was deeply moved with tenderness and compassion” (John 11:33). “Then tears streamed down Jesus’ face” (John 11:35). Jesus not only hurts for people named Miriam in Bethany, but He also hurts for us. We can approach Jesus with our pain, knowing that He cares for us.

Pause and experience Jesus’ comfort...

- Recall a painful life event, remembering how you felt (e.g., disappointed, rejected, alone). Now image Jesus comes near to you, gently calling your name. As you turn, you see Jesus’ tender eyes filled with compassionate tears for you.
- Thank Jesus for caring so much: *“Dear Jesus, I’m grateful that You cared enough to come looking for me. Thank you for Your compassionate, caring heart toward my pain.”*



