John 14 ENCOUNTER JESUS

"Jesus replied, 'Philip, I've been with you all this time and you still don't know who I am? How could you ask me to show you the Father, for anyone who has looked at me has seen the Father?'" (John 14:9)

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Imagine the sadness that must have been in the Savior's heart as He uttered these words. Picture the scene in the Upper Room. Jesus' faithful followers surround Him. Christ has already experienced the painful distraction of the disciples' argument about who was to be the greatest in the kingdom. He has vulnerably shared how His body is about to be broken and His blood is about to be shed, only to be met with the dispute of His closest friends (Luke 22:17-26).

Then, as a testimony of humble servanthood, Christ takes a basin of water and a towel and begins to wash the feet of each disciple. He washes the feet of Peter, James, John, and even Judas (John 13:5-15). He washes the feet of his betrayer, extending love and grace to him one final time. During the Passover meal, Christ turns to Judas and says, "What you do, do quickly" (John 13:27). Judas then departs to complete the terms of his agreement to betray Christ.

As you revisit this familiar story, pause and reflect upon the heart of the Savior:

- What might Jesus have been feeling as He experienced the dread of crucifixion and the insensitivity of his disciples' response and the anticipation of His imminent betrayal and the departure of his closest friends?
- What feelings might have been in Christ's heart in the Upper Room?
- Imagine that this One who is "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" experiences additional pain as he utters His next words (Isaiah 53:3).
- Allow the Holy Spirit to gently lead you to respond to the heart of Jesus as you hear Him say, "*Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me?"*
- Now allow your compassion to prompt your deepened longing to know Him: *"Lord Jesus, I want to better know You. I want to know You for who You really are."* A life of abundance requires fresh, frequent Encounters with Jesus to empower and motivate our participation with Him in Kingdom living.

Pray like this: "*Jesus, as I sense Your sadness that Your followers have often missed knowing You, my heart is* _____. *As I seek to live a life of revival and blessing, prompt me often Holy Spirit to consistently pursue a deeper knowing of Jesus."*

John 14 EXPERIENCE SCRIPTURE

"Believe that I live as one with my Father and that my Father lives as one with me—or at least, believe because of the mighty miracles I have done." (John 14:11)

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When Jesus invited His disciples to *"believe Me for the sake of the works themselves" (John 14:11),* He referred not only to the evidences that make believing a rational, reasonable exercise but also to the context of the invitation. **He invites us to believe in a person.** Believing in Christ and His Word will have a profound and relational meaning in each of our lives.

People can have convictions in misguided and wrong beliefs—as the terrorist attacks of September 11 prove. **We must move beyond subjective believing to a conviction in what is objectively true.** And those beliefs must be shown to be not only true but also relevant—that is, relationally meaningful to life.

Having convictions, then, can be defined as "being so thoroughly convinced that Christ and His Word are both objectively true and relationally meaningful that you act on your beliefs regardless of the consequences."

The expression "WWJD" (What Would Jesus Do) likely had its origin in this idea that to live with God-honoring convictions is to live and love as Jesus would. What's He been doing through you lately?

A life of abundance is expressed through the discipline of Experiencing Scripture as the Word provides direction and adequacy to answer the question WWJD. God's living Word is the *"lamp for our feet and light for our path" (Psalm 119:105).*

Reflect on a recent time of Experiencing Scripture:

- Romans 15:7 I recently expressed Christ-like acceptance to _____ when _____
- Proverbs 15:1 I recently shared a gentle response in the face of anger when _____
- James 5:16 I recently apologized to _____ concerning _____
- Romans 12:15a I recently was able to rejoice with _____ over _____
- Romans 12:15b I recently was able to mourn with _____ over _____
- Other:_____

Celebrate with a partner or small group over your recent walk in the light of God's Word. Allow the Holy Spirit to ask you often—what Bible verses did I experience today?

John 14 ENCOUNTER JESUS

"Loving me empowers you to obey my commands." (John 14:15)

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Some of us view God as an inspecting God. As you read the verse, you may have imagined a tone of expectation and demand. The words might carry a questions tone, conveying the sense that there is a test to be passed or a measurement to be taken. You may have even imagined your inspecting god shaking his finger at you as he speaks these words. His stern tone and gestures warn of his constant inspection.

Some of us may view God as disappointed in us. As you read the verse above, you may have heard a voice that seemed full of dissatisfaction. This kind of god might look down at you with arms crossed, shaking his head as he says: "If you really loved me, then you would be able to keep my commandments. In fact, I have known all along that you did not really love me, and what you just did proves it!"

Some of us may see God as distant god. As you read the verse above, the voice you heard may have seemed cold or disinterested. A distant god would speak the verse with halfhearted enthusiasm or great indifference. This kind of god might seem preoccupied with other tings or other more important people. You might picture him looking up absent-mindedly and saying: "Oh, if you love me, then you will probably keep my commandments. Thanks for stopping by."

Consider the wonder that this verse may be a promise in a long line of promises! (See John 14:2, 3, 12, 13, and 14). Could it be when you woke up this morning God was looking down longing for you to love Him, knowing that as you do, you'll then keep his commandments? **The real Jesus is not inspecting, disappointed, or distant. He's excited to share in your love!**

A life of abundance finds encouragement and freedom to live as an *awakening catalyst* through Engaging Fellowship with other Jesus followers.

Pause to first reflect on how at times you might not see God as "excited to love you":

- *Sadly at times I view God incorrectly as* _____ *(inspecting, disappointed, distant, or other).*
- Now share this with a partner or small group and then take turns praying for one another that the Holy Spirit would bring freedom to embrace Christ as He really is—exited to love you!
- Celebrate together that as you awaken each morning, He is longing to share with you His love and caring involvement.

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