

HSM
WEEKLY
journal

SEMESTER 2: YEAR 4

THIS BOOK
BELONGS TO:

Gospel of John: Nicodemus| Week 16

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Have you ever wished for a do-over? Maybe on a test, a game, or a conversation where you said something you didn't mean? We've all had moments we wish we could take back and start again. In today's passage, Jesus meets a man named Nicodemus who's looking for answers about God – and Jesus tells him he needs to be “born again.” Not a physical do-over, but a spiritual one. Jesus is talking about a whole new start – a new life given by the Spirit.

Background Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a Jewish religious leader who studied and taught God's law. He was respected, knowledgeable, and thought he had faith figured out. But when he saw Jesus performing miracles and teaching with authority, he knew there was something different about Him. Curious and maybe a little cautious, Nicodemus came to Jesus at night to ask questions and find out who He really was.

Prepare your heart - pray before you read “God, open our hearts and eyes as we read Your Word. Help us understand what it means to be born again and how to truly live by Your Spirit. Amen.”

Read: John 3:1-21

1. ICEBREAKER: If you could have a do-over moment from your week, what would it be?
2. Why do you think Nicodemus went to Jesus at night?
3. How does the Spirit provide new life?
4. What makes spiritual rebirth different from just trying to be a better person?
5. What do verses 16-17 tell us about God's heart for the world?
6. How can you walk in the light and reflect God's love this week?

PRAY together, asking God to help you shine His light and reflect His love.

Weekly Challenge

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you one area where you need a fresh start. Take one small step this week to walk in the light – whether that means being honest, forgiving someone, or choosing what honors God.

Character Trait - Teachability: being willing to learn and follow God's ways.

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Gospel of John: The Woman at the Well | Week 17

“Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” - John 4:13-14

What’s your favorite drink? Maybe it’s soda, an energy drink, chocolate milk, or just a simple glass of water. In today’s passage, Jesus asks a woman at a well for a drink of water – but their conversation quickly turns into something much deeper. He offers her living water, a gift that satisfies the deepest thirst of our souls, not just our bodies.

Background Jesus was traveling through Samaria, a region the Jews normally avoided because of long-standing tensions with Samaritans. At a well, He met a Samaritan woman drawing water in the heat of the day. Their conversation surprised her. Jesus spoke with compassion, unveiled the sin and emptiness in her life honestly, and offered her eternal life through “living water.”

Prepare your heart - pray before you read “God, open our hearts to hear Your Word today. Help us to see our need for You and to receive the living water only You can give. Amen.”

Read: John 4:1-42

1. ICEBREAKER: If you could pick only one beverage to drink for the rest of your life, what would it be?
2. Why do you think the woman came to the well at noon?
3. How can you be more open to conversations with people who are different from you, like Jesus was with the Samaritan woman?
4. How can we be bold in sharing God’s love like the woman did with her town?
5. What do you think it means to be spiritually thirsty, and how does Jesus satisfy that thirst?
6. Is there an area in your life that you feel spiritually thirsty or empty? Share as you feel comfortable.

PRAY together, asking God to help you point other people to His living water.

Weekly Challenge

Think of one person in your life who might need to hear about Jesus’ living water. Pray for them, and find a way to share God’s love with them this week.

Character Trait - Courage: Stepping outside our comfort zone to share Jesus with others.

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Gospel of John: Healing Stories | Week 18

“Go,” Jesus replied, “your son will live.”

The man took Jesus at his word and departed.” - John 4:50

Have you ever had to trust someone with something really important? Maybe a parent to give you a ride home, a teammate to complete a play, or a friend to hold something in confidence. In today’s passage, we see a desperate father do just that – he takes Jesus at His word: “Go; your son will live.” The man heads home in faith, and his trust is rewarded when he learns his son was healed at that exact moment.

Background

This story took place in Galilee, shortly after Jesus had been ministering there. The man who came to Jesus was a royal official – someone with authority who served in the king’s house. Travel between towns could take hours or even days, so journeys like these were a big commitment. At the time, people relied heavily on word of mouth for news like that of the miracles of Jesus.

Prepare your heart - pray before you read

“God, help us to trust Your Word and Your power, even when we can’t see the full picture. Increase our faith as we read Your Word today. Amen.”

Read: John 4:46-54

1. ICEBREAKER: Think of a time when you had to trust someone without seeing proof. How did that feel?
2. What does Jesus’ response, “Go; your son will live,” show about His power and authority?
3. What does this story show us about faith?
4. Is there an area of your life right now where you need to trust Jesus without seeing the outcome?
5. Where have you experienced God’s faithfulness after trusting Him in the past?
6. How can you still grow in faith when it’s hard to see immediate results?

PRAY together, asking God to grow your faith by trusting Him.

Weekly Challenge

Choose one situation where you are tempted to worry or doubt. Take it to Jesus in prayer and trust Him to work, even if you can’t see the solution yet.

Character Trait - Trust: Relying on God’s power and timing instead of our own understanding.

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Gospel of John: Bread of Life | Week 19

“Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life.”

- John 6:47-48

Is there one food that always hits the spot—something you could eat every day and never get tired of? In today’s passage, Jesus talks about bread, but not just any bread. He calls Himself the Bread of Life. This bread doesn’t just fill our stomachs; it satisfies our souls. Jesus offers what no meal ever could—lasting satisfaction for our deepest hunger.

Background

This story takes place after Jesus miraculously feeds 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish. Many people were following Him for His miracles, but Jesus began teaching about a deeper kind of hunger. In Jewish culture, bread was a staple of daily life, so His metaphor would have been very familiar. People often saw God’s provision in the things that sustained life physically, and Jesus pointed them to spiritual nourishment that lasts forever.

Prepare your heart - pray before you read

“God, open our hearts to understand the bread of life You offer. Help us to see our need for You and to rely on Your Spirit to truly satisfy us. Amen.”

Read: John 6:35-59

1. ICEBREAKER: If you could eat one food forever without getting tired of it, what would it be?
2. What does Jesus mean when He says, “I am the bread of life”?
3. How does believing in Jesus change how we are spiritually nourished?
4. Why do people struggle to understand what Jesus is saying about eating His flesh and drinking His blood?
5. When have you tried to satisfy your hunger (physical, emotional, or spiritual) in the wrong places? How did it turn out for you?
6. How can you rely on Jesus daily for spiritual strength?

PRAY together, asking God to satisfy your soul with the Bread of Life.

Weekly Challenge

Spend a few minutes each day this week “feeding” on Jesus – read a passage, pray, or reflect on what He has done for you. Notice how it satisfies in ways nothing else can.

Character Trait - Dependence: Relying on Jesus to truly satisfy our deepest needs.

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Gospel of John: Living Water | Week 20

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” - John 7:37-38

Ever spill a glass of milk or maybe a hot coffee? Disaster, right? In a similar way, when we try to take life into our own hands, things eventually spill out of control. In today's passage, Jesus stands up and proclaims Himself as the Living Water – the steady source that truly satisfies and sustains. While everything else in life can leave us empty or messy, Jesus offers a fullness that never runs dry.

Background This moment takes place during the Feast of Tabernacles, a weeklong celebration when God's people remembered how He provided for them in the wilderness. The festival included a water-drawing ceremony – where they'd pour water on the altar to symbolize the pouring out of God's blessing and to pray for winter rain. When Jesus proclaims that He offers Living Water, He's declaring Himself the true source of life and spiritual refreshment. The crowd is divided. Some are drawn to Him, others are skeptical but His invitation remains open to all.

Prepare your heart - pray before you read “God, You invite us to come and drink from the living water You offer through your Son, Jesus. Help us to understand what that means and to be filled with Your Spirit. Amen.”

Read: John 7:37-52

1. ICEBREAKER: Do you usually follow the crowd or stand your ground? Give an example.
2. Why do you think people were divided in their responses to Jesus?
3. What do you think it means to be “thirsty” spiritually?
4. How can you come to Jesus to be refreshed when your faith feels dry?
5. What helps you stay connected to the “living water” Jesus offers?
6. How can you pour that same living water into the lives of others this week?

PRAY together, asking Jesus to fill you with His Living Water.

Weekly Challenge

Take time each day this week to “drink deeply” – spend quiet moments in prayer or Scripture, asking the Holy Spirit to refresh you and renew your heart.

Character Trait - Dependence: Relying on Jesus to truly satisfy our deepest needs.

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Gospel of John: Raising Lazarus | Week 21

“Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶ and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” - John 11:25-26

Have you ever felt like all hope was gone, only to be surprised by how things turned around? Maybe it was a game that seemed impossible to win until your team made an unbelievable comeback, or a friendship that was restored after one honest conversation. In today's story, we see the ultimate comeback: through the power of Jesus, a man who was dead is brought back to life!

Background Jesus had a close friendship with three siblings from Bethany: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. When Lazarus became sick, his sisters sent word to Jesus for help. However, Jesus didn't rush to his aid. This delay set the stage for one of the most powerful signs in John's Gospel: Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. This miracle ultimately points to Jesus' identity as the “Resurrection and the Life.”

Prepare your heart - pray before you read “God, open our eyes to see Your power and Your love in this story. When life feels hopeless or out of control, help us trust that You are still working. Amen.”

Read: John 11:1-44

1. ICEBREAKER: Do you have a “comeback story?” Share as you're able.
2. How do Mary and Martha each respond to Jesus when He finally arrives? What does this tell us about the state of their hearts?
3. How does Jesus responds to them?
4. Why do you think “Jesus wept” in v. 35 even though he was going to raise him from the dead?
5. Jesus says “I am the resurrection and the life” in v. 25. What does that mean for us today?
6. Has God ever brought something “back to life,” for you?

PRAY together, asking God to bring ‘new life’ into your relationship with Him.

Weekly Challenge

Look for one area in your life where you need Jesus to bring new life. Pray about it each day this week and ask Him to help you trust His timing.

Character Trait - Faith: Trusting God's power and goodness even when you can't see the outcome.

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Gospel of John: Foot washing | Week 22

“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.” - John 13:15-16

How smelly are your feet? Don't check! Now imagine walking miles every day through dirt and dust in the same pair of worn-out sandals; your only pair. By the end of the day, your feet would be sore, filthy, and, let's be honest, pretty gross.

In today's story, Jesus does something shocking. He takes on the job no one wanted - the work of a servant, and washes His disciples' feet. Through this humble act, He gives us a powerful example of love and service.

Background Jesus knows what is ahead and the stage is set for the Last Supper. The disciples are still arguing about who's the greatest. But instead of giving a lecture, Jesus gives a living example. He takes the posture of a servant. In that time, washing feet was the lowest job in the household. Yet the King of Kings chose to do it.

Prepare your heart - pray before you read “God, open our eyes to Your love and humility today. Help us to not just hear, but to follow your example. Amen.”

Read: John 13:1-17

1. ICEBREAKER: What's the nicest thing someone has ever done for you?
2. What do you notice about Jesus' attitude and actions in this passage?
3. Why do you think Peter was uncomfortable with Jesus washing his feet?
4. How does Jesus redefine what leadership looks like? (i.e. servant leadership)
5. When have you seen someone show this kind of humble love or service?
6. What might it look like for you to “wash feet” this week (at home, at school, or with your friends)?

PRAY together, asking God to fill your heart with humility and service.

Weekly Challenge

Find one person you can serve quietly this week - someone who won't even expect it. Serve them without expecting credit or thanks.

Character Trait - Servanthood: Humbly putting others before ourselves through service, just as Jesus did.

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Gospel of John: Trial before Annas, Peter's Denial | Week 23

““Didn’t I see you with him in the garden?” ²⁷Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.” - John 18:26b-27

Have you ever felt yourself crumble under pressure? Maybe it was a moment when you should’ve stood up for a friend but stayed silent. Or a time you knew you should’ve spoken up but fear got the best of you. Maybe you were too scared to admit you were the one who messed up. In today’s passage, Peter faces that same kind of pressure. His story shows how quickly fear can take control... but even more, how deeply Jesus still loves us, even when we fail.

Background After Jesus is arrested in the garden around midnight, He’s taken to the high priest for questioning. Peter follows at a distance, wanting to see what happens—but when people start to recognize him as one of Jesus’ disciples, fear takes over.

Prepare your heart - pray before you read “God, help us see ourselves in this story. When we face pressure, give us courage to stay true to You. Remind us that Your love doesn’t run out, even when we fail. Amen.”

Read: John 18:12-27

1. ICEBREAKER: Has fear every prevented you from doing something? Share as you’re able.
2. What stands out to you about how Jesus responds when questioned by the high priest?
3. Why do you think Peter followed Jesus after His arrest?
4. What might have been going through Peter’s mind each time he denied knowing Jesus?
5. Have you ever felt pressure to hide your faith, like Peter did? What was that like?
6. What are some ways we can be courageous in following Jesus, even when it’s uncomfortable, unpopular or even dangerous?

PRAY together, asking God to give you courage to stand in your faith.

Weekly Challenge

Think of one situation where it was hard for you to stand up for your faith. Maybe at school, online, or with friends. This week, ask God to give you courage to be open about your faith, even in small ways.

Character Trait - Courage: Standing firm in faith even when it’s uncomfortable or risky.

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Gospel of John: Jesus and Pilate | Week 24

“Pilate said, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.” - John 18:31

Have you ever been in a situation where you knew the truth, but the crowd around you pushed for something else? It takes real courage to stand up for what’s right when everyone else seems to be going the other way. In today’s story, Jesus faces that kind of moment as He stands before Pontius Pilate while the crowd’s voice loudly proclaims His sentence to the cross.

Background Jesus has been arrested and brought from the Jewish leaders to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. The Jewish leaders want Jesus executed, but they don’t have the authority under Roman rule, so they hand Him over. Pilate questions Jesus about being “King of the Jews,” trying to figure out if He’s a political threat. Instead, Jesus explains His kingdom is not of this world. The crowd demands the release of a murderer named Barabbas and condemns the innocent Jesus to death.

Prepare your heart - pray before you read “God, open our eyes to Your truth. Help us see Jesus clearly as our King and Savior. Amen.”

Read: John 18:28-40

1. ICEBREAKER: Have you ever been blamed for something you didn’t do? How did that feel?
2. How does Jesus describe His kingdom? What makes it different?
3. Pilate asks, “What is truth?” – how would you answer that question?
4. Why do you think the crowd chose Barabbas over Jesus?
5. What’s one area of your life where you find it hard to stand for truth or live for King Jesus?
6. How can you “listen to His voice” more this week?

PRAY together, asking God to help you live courageously in your faith.

Weekly Challenge

Each day this week, take a few minutes to pause and ask, “What is Jesus teaching me through His truth today?” Read one short passage and reflect on what stands out.

Character Trait - Courage: Choosing to do what’s right, even when it’s hard or unpopular.

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Gospel of John: Jesus' Last Words | Week 25

“When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” - John 19:30

Have you ever felt the relief of finishing something big? Maybe a project that took hours of hard work, a concert you practiced for, or a championship game you trained months to play? That feeling of completion brings such a sense of accomplishment and rest. In today's passage, we see Jesus declare the completion of the ultimate accomplishment with the words: “It is finished.” But this isn't just relief; it's redemption.

Background Jesus has been arrested, beaten, and nailed to a cross. Roman soldiers divide up His clothing, a fulfillment of prophecy from Psalm 22. Jesus, fully human, experiences pain and thirst. Yet even in His final moments, He's fully in control, ensuring every prophecy is fulfilled and every part of God's redemptive plan is carried out.

Prepare your heart - pray before you read “God, as we read about the final moments of Jesus' life, help us to see the depth of Your love for us. Open our hearts to understand the weight and beauty of what Jesus accomplished on the cross. Amen.”

Read: John 19:23-30

1. ICEBREAKER: What's something you've finished that makes you proud?
2. How do the words “I am thirsty” reveal both Jesus' humanity and fulfillment of prophecy (Psalm 69:21)?
3. When Jesus said “It is finished,” what do you think He meant?
4. How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus' work for your salvation is completely finished?
5. What's something about this passage that surprises or challenges you?
6. How might this passage shape the way you worship, serve others, pray, or simply live your life?

PRAY together, thanking God for Jesus' work on the cross.

Weekly Challenge

Is there an area of your life where you've been trying to “earn” God's love or approval? This week, pause and remind yourself: “It is finished.” Rest in the truth that Jesus has already done everything necessary for you to belong to Him.

Character Trait - Sacrifice: Willingly giving up something valuable for the sake of others.

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Chain Breaker: Paul's Conversion | Week 26

“He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” - Acts 9:4

How have you grown and changed over the years - not just physically, but mentally, emotionally, and spiritually? We all go through seasons that shape who we are. In today's passage, we see the incredible transforming power of God at work in a man named Saul. His heart, though once hardened against Jesus, is completely changed.

Background Saul (later known as Paul) was a devout Pharisee determined to defend his understanding of God's law. He believed Christians were dangerous and thought he was serving God by persecuting them.

Prepare your heart - pray before you read “God, open our eyes and hearts as we read Your Word today. Help us to see how You can transform our lives. Teach us to listen, obey, and trust Your direction. Amen.”

Read: Acts 9:1-19

1. ICEBREAKER: What's one trait you have that you hope never changes?
2. Why do you think Jesus appeared to Saul in such a dramatic way?
3. What do you notice about Saul's reaction to hearing Jesus' voice?
4. How might have Saul's blindness for three days changed the way he saw himself and God?
5. What stands out to you about Ananias' role in this story? What do you think it took for him to obey God's command?
6. What's an area in your life where you might need to surrender control and let God lead instead?

PRAY together, surrendering to God the parts of us He wants to transform in His Spirit.

Weekly Challenge

Look for one way to let God change your direction this week. Maybe it's in your attitude, your priorities, or the way you treat someone. Ask God to open your eyes to where He's leading you and then follow.

Character Trait - Obedience: Trusting God's voice and following His direction.

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Chain Breaker: Paul and Silas | Week 27

“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose.” - Acts 16:25-26

Have you ever noticed how music can completely change your mood? You might turn on something calm to relax, something upbeat when you’re happy, or something reflective when you’re sad. Music is powerful! In today’s passage, Paul and Silas experience that power in a deeper way - not just through music, but through praise!

Background Paul and Silas were traveling through Philippi, preaching the Good News of Jesus. After freeing a slave girl from an evil spirit, they were arrested because her owners lost their source of income. Beaten and locked in prison, they had every reason to complain but they chose praise instead.

Prepare your heart - pray before you read “God, when life feels heavy, help us remember that You’re still in control. As we read Your Word today, teach us what it means to find joy and hope in You! Amen.”

Read: Acts 16:16-34

1. ICEBREAKER: What is your favorite worship song?
2. What do you think was going through Paul and Silas’ minds when they were beaten and locked up?
3. Why do you think Paul and Silas chose to pray and sing hymns?
4. How did God use their worship to impact the other prisoners and even the jailer?
5. Why didn’t Paul and Silas escape when the doors opened?
6. How might prayer and worship change the way you respond when life feels unfair or overwhelming?

PRAY together, asking God to help you turn your heart towards praise even when it’s hard.

Weekly Challenge

When something hard or frustrating happens this week, stop and pray instead of complaining. Try thanking God or even worshiping Him in that moment and see how it changes your heart and perspective.

Character Trait - Joy: Choosing to find peace and hope in God’s presence – no matter the circumstances.

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Chain Breaker: Paul's Sermon at Athens | Week 28

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. ²⁵ And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.” - Acts 17:24-25

Have you ever tried to explain something really important to someone who just wasn't getting it? Maybe it was the next play in a game, directions to your house, or notes they missed in class. In today's passage, we see Paul trying to explain something even more important to the people of Athens: who God really is.

Background Athens was known for its culture, philosophy, and pursuit of knowledge. The people loved discussing new ideas but didn't truly know the God who made them. Paul was deeply concerned by the city's idolatry. He spoke to them clearly and confidently explained who God is.

Prepare your heart - pray before you read “God, thank You that You make Yourself known to us. As we read today's passage, open our eyes to see the ways You're at work in the world around us. Teach us to share Your truth with kindness, wisdom, and courage. Amen.”

Read: Acts 17:16-31

1. ICEBREAKER: What are some “things” in your life that you couldn't live without?
2. Why do you think Paul was so disturbed by all the idols in the city?
3. Why do you think the people had an altar “to an unknown god”?
4. What does Paul say about who God is and what He's like?
5. Where do you see “modern idols” in our world today?
6. What idols have taken over your life lately? How might you put them in their right place?

PRAY together, asking God to fill you with knowledge and confidence in sharing who He is.

Weekly Challenge

Find one opportunity this week to start a conversation about your faith; even in a small way. It could be by sharing a verse that means something to you, inviting a friend to church, or simply listening and showing God's love in a moment that matters.

Character Trait - Courage: Speaking God's truth with confidence and love.

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Chain Breaker: Partnership in the Gospel | Week 29

“Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters,^[b] that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ¹³As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard^[c] and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.” Philippians 1:12-13

What makes you smile? Maybe it's seeing a friend, a beautiful sunset, the change of seasons, a sibling's giggle – or even just that it's Wednesday and you're at church! In today's passage, Paul shares his gratitude for fellow believers and encourages them to keep rejoicing in the Good News, no matter what challenges they face.

Background Philippi was a Roman city in Greece, and the church there was one of Paul's earliest missionary works in Europe. While writing this letter, Paul was imprisoned, yet his words overflowed with hope, love, and encouragement, and reminded us that joy comes from the presence of Christ, not the absence of problems.

Prepare your heart - pray before you read “God, thank You that joy isn't based on our circumstances, but on You. Open our hearts as we read Paul's letter, and help us to experience the kind of joy that lasts. Amen.”

Read: Philippians 1:1-18a

1. ICEBREAKER: What are some things that brought you joy this week?
2. How would you describe Paul's attitude while He was in prison?
3. How can challenges or opposition actually advance God's work, according to Paul?
4. What does Paul focus on during his suffering? What can we learn from this?
5. How does focusing on God's purposes help you handle challenges in school, with friendships, or with family?
6. How can we follow Paul's example and rejoice in God, even when life doesn't go the way we want?

PRAY together, asking God to fill you with His joy!

Weekly Challenge

Identify one thing you can rejoice about or be thankful for each day, even in the midst of challenges. Try sharing that joy or encouragement with someone else this week.

Character Trait - Gratitude: Recognizing God's work in our lives and responding with thankfulness

What is standing out to you from today's text?
What can you take with you?

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