

explore

Oct-Dec 2026

For Your Daily Walk with God

*“The Son is the radiance of God’s
glory and the exact representation
of his being, sustaining all things
by his powerful word.”*

Hebrews 1:3

Hebrews

Michael J.
Kruger

Christmas

Tim
Chester

John

Christopher
Ash

How to use *explore*

Issue 116

The 92 daily readings in this issue of *Explore* are designed to help you understand and apply the Bible as you read it each day.

It's serious!

We suggest that you allow 15 minutes each day to work through the Bible passage with the notes. It should be a meal, not a snack! Readings from other parts of the Bible can throw valuable light on the study passage. These cross-references can be skipped if you are already feeling full up, but will expand your grasp of the Bible. *Explore* uses the NIV2011 Bible translation, but you can also use it with the NIV1984 or ESV translations.

On most days a prayer section will encourage you to stop and pray through the lessons—but it is always important to allow time to pray for God's Spirit to bring his word to life, and to shape the way we think and live through it.

We're serious!

All of us who work on *Explore* share a passion for getting the Bible into people's lives.

We fiercely hold to the Bible as God's word—to honour and follow, not to explain away.

1

Find a time you can read the Bible each day

2

Find a place where you can be quiet and think

3

Ask God to help you understand

4

Carefully read through the Bible passage for today

5

Study the verses with *Explore*, taking time to think

6

Pray about what you have read

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Welcome to *explore*

Being a Christian isn't a skill you learn, nor is it a lifestyle choice. It's about having a real relationship with the living God through his Son, Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us that this relationship is like a marriage.

It's important to start with this, because it is easy to view the practice of daily Bible reading as a Christian duty, or a hard discipline that is just one more thing to get done in our busy lives.

But the Bible is God speaking to us: opening his mind to us on how he thinks, what he wants for us and what his plans are for the world. And most importantly, it tells us what he has done for us in sending his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. It's the way that the Spirit shows Jesus to us, and changes us as we behold his glory.

Here are a few suggestions for making your time with God more of a joy than a burden:

- ☑ **Time:** Find a time when you will not be disturbed. Many people have found that the morning is the best time as it sets you up for the day. But whatever works for you is right for you.
- ☑ **Place:** Jesus says that we are not to make a great show of our religion (*see Matthew 6:5-6*), but rather, to pray with the door to our room shut. Some people plan to get to work a few minutes earlier and get their Bible out in an office or some other quiet corner.
- ☑ **Prayer:** Although *Explore* helps with specific prayer ideas from the passage, do try to develop your own lists to pray through. Use the flap inside the back

cover to help with this. And allow what you read in the Scriptures to shape what you pray for yourself, the world and others.

- ☑ **Feast:** You can use the "Bible in a year" line at the bottom of each page to help guide you through the entire Scriptures throughout 2026. This year, you will have an Old Testament and a New Testament passage to read, enjoy and reflect on each day. Over the course of the year, you'll read through the entire Bible once.
- ☑ **Share:** As the saying goes, *expression deepens impression*. So try to cultivate the habit of sharing with others what you have learned. Why not join our Facebook group to share your encouragements, questions and prayer requests? Search for *Explore: For your daily walk with God*.

And enjoy it! As you read God's word and God's Spirit works in your mind and your heart, you are going to see Jesus, and appreciate more of his love for you and his promises to you. That's amazing!



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JOHN: The Father's love

Last time we were in John's Gospel, we learned to rejoice in the cross. Today, the apostle gives us two more reasons for joy, whatever our circumstances.

You are loved

Read John 16:23-28

- ❓ *How many times is the Father mentioned here?*
- ❓ *Why does Jesus say he won't pray for his followers (v 26)?*
- ❓ *What new relationship will they have with the Father?*

When Jesus says "in my name", he means: *on the basis of who I am and what I have done for you on the cross.* To ask "in Jesus' name" means to ask on the basis, not of any good in us, but of what Jesus has done for us.

Jesus does not have to ask the Father to love us. The Father has loved us steadily, freely and wonderfully, from all eternity. "The Father himself loves you" (v 27).

⏪ Pray

When you lie awake because there are worries on your mind, try this experiment. Before you think about your worries, say to yourself, "I am a Christian because the Father loves me, steadily, freely and for ever". Now go back to your worries. They'll still be there, but you may see them differently.

You are saved

Read John 16:29-32

- ❓ *The disciples don't understand fully—but what have they finally seemed to grasp (v 30)?*
- ❓ *What tone of voice is verse 31, do you think?*
- ❓ *When Jesus dies on the cross, who won't be with him, and who will (v 32)?*
- ❓ *What does this tell us about who deserves praise for people being saved?*

That's a relief, actually, because it means the cross is 100% about what he does for us, and 0% about what we can do for him.

Notice that the cross is a rescue done by both Father and Son together, right the way up to that terrible moment when Father and Son are separated: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34).

Read John 16:33

- ❓ *Why has Jesus told his friends "these things"?*
- ❓ *When troubles come (and they will), what will they need to remember?*

⏩ Apply

Verse 33 is the last thing recorded by John that Jesus says to all his disciples before the cross.

- ❓ *In which areas of your life do you particularly need to remember Jesus' encouragements of verse 33?*

The Father up in lights

Sometimes a theatre puts the name of a famous actor or actress up in lights outside, so everyone will know about them. “Glory” means something like that.

In today’s section, Jesus begins a prayer which will take up the rest of the chapter.

Why does Jesus pray?

Why would Jesus pray this prayer out loud so the disciples can hear it? He doesn’t need to. The Father would hear a private prayer just as well!

Read John 17:13

- ❓ *What reason does Jesus give?*
- ❓ *How does Jesus want us to react to what we overhear in this prayer?*

Remember that as we go through it.

The glory of the cross

Read John 17:1

- ❓ *What is Jesus praying for?*

TIME OUT

Read John 12:23-33

- ❓ *What “hour” has arrived (notice verse 33)?*

Notice the link between being “glorified” and being “lifted up” on the cross.

How amazing that on the cross we see Jesus in lights, and therefore the Father in lights. There we see God more clearly than anywhere else.

The gift of eternal life

Read John 17:2-3

- ❓ *What does “eternal life” mean?*

It’s a relational thing—living in relationship with the Father and the Son.

- ❓ *Who gives eternal life?*
- ❓ *Who does he give it to?*

Notice the supremacy of the Father and the wonderful submission of Jesus.

Pray

Thank the Father that he gave you to Jesus, and thank Jesus that by his death he gave you an eternal relationship with himself and the Father.

The finished work

Read John 17:4-5

Jesus “finishes” the work he came to do at the cross. The same word is used in John 19:30. In his prayer Jesus anticipates that terrible and wonderful completion of the work of giving eternal life.

- ❓ *How do you think the cross brings the Father glory?*

Jesus’ rescue mission was given him by the Father. When he completes it, we see not only Jesus but also the Father’s love. The cross was the Father’s idea first!

The Father revealed

Why would you say that the Bible matters? Today we're going to learn one wonderful reason.

The "eternity" gift

Read John 17:6

- ❓ *Who does Jesus reveal the Father to?*
- ❓ *Does anything strike you about how Jesus describes these people?*

If someone asks you when God rescued you, the first answer is that the Father rescued you in eternity past when he gave you to Jesus, long before you were born!

The words of eternal life

Read John 17:7-8

- ❓ *What have Christian disciples obeyed and come to know (v 6-8)?*

This is a single message (a "word") given to us in a book ("words"). It's not just the words Jesus literally spoke on earth; it's the whole message about Jesus in the Bible, including what his apostles wrote about him in the New Testament and what the prophets had written about him in the Old Testament.

Notice that it is by the message and words of the Bible that we grasp who Jesus really is.

Apply

- ❓ *Why is it so important to go to a church where people really trust, obey and teach the Bible?*

Belonging to Father and Son

Read John 17:9

What does Jesus mean by saying "for they are yours"? Surely they were the Father's, but now the Father has given them to Jesus!

Read John 17:10

All the people who really belong to Jesus really belong to the Father! The Father and Jesus are so closely united that they have everything and everyone in common. So if we belong to Jesus, we belong to the Father, and if we belong to the Father, we belong to Jesus.

Pray

Spend a moment thinking about belonging to the Father and belonging to Jesus, and praise the Father and the Son for this amazing privilege.



The wounds of love

Spend a couple of minutes thinking through all the things in your life that you can thank God for. Did you mention suffering...?

The stunning conclusion to this section of Psalm 119 in verses 65-72 says that suffering is used by God *for our good*—it helps us to learn to love him and obey his word. The psalmist is not saying that suffering is good; it is not. If it were, there would be suffering in the new creation. Suffering is like a knife: it can be wielded by a mugger to harm us, or by a surgeon to heal us. God is a wise, kind surgeon, and this section teaches us that suffering is his scalpel.

Surrounded but firm

Read Psalm 119:49-56

- ❓ *What circumstances does the psalmist face in these verses?*
- ❓ *What is his comfort (v 50, 52)?*

Committed, whatever

Read Psalm 119:56-64

There is something wonderfully simple about the psalmist's response when God speaks, according to these first two sections.

- ❓ *What does he do (v 56, 60)?*
- ❓ *What else does he resolve to do?*

..... TIME OUT

The first two sections use a variety of terms for God's word. Some are clear to us: "words", "ways", "promises", "commands"—others less so. "Laws" translates two words. One is a general word for all that God teaches; the

other refers to his judgments about what is right and what is wrong. "Statutes" are words that bear witness to who God is. "Precepts" are the detailed application of God's word to the circumstances of life. "Decrees" emphasises the permanent, binding nature of what God says.

School of hard knocks

Read Psalm 119:65-72

- ❓ *What does the psalmist declare about God at the heart of this section (v 68)?*
- ❓ *Does he say this because his life is easy?*
- ❓ *What impact have the hardships he has faced had upon him (v 67, 71)?*

▼ Apply

Do we realise that to pray, "God make me more like Christ; help me walk in your ways", may well be to pray for suffering?

- ❓ *When have you seen difficulties in life lead to spiritual growth—either in your own life or the lives of others?*

⬆️ Pray

Pray that you would share the psalmist's conviction in verse 68 that God is good. Pray too that when suffering comes—which it surely will—it would drive you to God in dependence, rather than away from him in bitterness.



The Father's protection

It can be pretty scary to be a Christian in many parts of the world. Even in so-called "Christian" countries it's not easy to live publicly as a real Christian. How safe are we?

Alone in a hostile world

Read John 17:11a

- ❓ *What is going to happen to Jesus?*
- ❓ *What about the eleven apostles?*
- ❓ *Why do you think they might be scared?*

..... TIME OUT

Read John 15:18-24; 16:1-4

This hatred from the world is what they, and we, ought to expect. No wonder they are scared!

Protection by union

Read John 17:11b-12

- ❓ *What does Jesus pray for his disciples?*
- ❓ *How is the Father going to protect them?*

The "name" that the Father gave Jesus is who Jesus is: God the eternal Son in intimate fellowship with the Father. Jesus protected them by bringing them into fellowship with the Father and the Son. Any attack on them was an attack on God!

Jesus and the Father are "one" (10:30). Christians are "one". Rather than teaching that we must work hard to get along, here Jesus is saying that God has brought us into fellowship with the Father and the Son.

Pray

Spend some time now praising the Father and the Son for bringing you into fellowship with them and with all other real Christians. Thank God for guaranteeing your eternal safety.

Hated but rejoicing

Read John 17:13-15

- ❓ *Why does Jesus pray this prayer out loud so they can overhear it (v 13)?*
- ❓ *What is going to happen to us in the world (v 14)?*
- ❓ *Can we expect to be taken out of situations where this happens (v 15)?*

Apply

We need consciously to remind ourselves of the wonderful protection from the Father for which Jesus prayed. When it's tough being a Christian, never forget this.

- ❓ *In what circumstances in your life do you particularly need to remember this?*
- ❓ *How will it make a difference to your emotions? To your actions?*

Set apart for a mission

When explorers get ready to be sent somewhere dangerous, they need to separate themselves from the comfortable life they will leave behind.

They may need to train physically, and to keep certain disciplines. It's like that for Jesus' church.



Read John 17:16-19

Set apart for mission



Jesus often said the Father had "sent" him on a rescue mission. Now he sends his followers "into the world".

This doesn't mean that our mission is identical to his. It just means that we too are "sent" people. His mission was to die to rescue the world; our mission is to take his rescue message into the world.

Set apart by the Bible




-  *What relationship does the Christian have with the world in which they live (v 16, 18)?*
-  *What does this look like in practice, do you think?*

Set apart


-  *In verse 17, what does Jesus pray?*
-  *How is the Father going to "sanctify" us (set us apart for a task)?*

Here, "word" is not referring to Jesus (as in John 1:1) but to the message of the Bible. Tenacious loyalty to the Bible will set us apart from the world (and from any part of the church which is worldly) to be missionaries for Jesus.


Apply

-  *Can you think of examples of how your values as a Christian are different from the values of non-Christians?*
-  *How does our culture disagree with the message of the Bible?*
-  *What should we do when tempted to compromise on these issues, or when church ministers begin to fudge them?*

Set apart by the cross

-  *What does Jesus say he does for himself?*

To "sanctify" means here to set himself apart for his death on the cross. Like a holy sacrifice in Old Testament times, Jesus has to go alone to the cross, set apart from the world.

-  *Why does Jesus say he is doing this?*

Only Jesus' death for us on the cross can set us apart, making us fit for mission.

Pray

Pray that your life as a Christian will always go back to the cross as your starting point, and always be shaped by the cross when called upon to make tough decisions for Jesus.

What *Jesus* prays for *us*

How do you feel when someone says they are praying for you? I guess it depends on what they are praying, and whether you think God will answer them!

Today we listen in to a prayer for us that God will most certainly answer, because of the one who prays it. So let's rejoice in what he prays.

Prayed for by Jesus

Read John 17:20

- ❓ *Who is Jesus now praying for?*
- ❓ *Why is this amazing for us today?*

Notice that these people don't just believe in some vague notion of "Jesus". They believe in the real, historical Jesus through the message of the apostles, which is the Bible. Jesus is not praying here for anyone who might call themselves a Christian; he is praying for people who believe the Bible message about the real Jesus.

Unity in the gospel

Read John 17:21-23

- ❓ *From these verses, what is Christian unity?*

Christians are brought into fellowship with the Father and the Son, and reflect their unity. So they don't need to try to create an outward institutional religious unity; they are given an inner spiritual unity.

In fact, outward unity is of no value, and can be dangerous, if there is no underlying unity brought by a shared fellowship in Christ and commitment to the gospel.

TIME OUT

Have you known Jesus-centred, Bible-based unity with unlikely people, perhaps in different cultures? Rejoice if you have!

Prospect of glory

Read John 17:24

- ❓ *What does Jesus ask here?*
- ❓ *Why is it so brilliant to hear Jesus praying this for you and me?*

It will be wonderful to see Jesus as he is, and to see the love the Father has for him in all its fullness.

Wonder of gospel love

Read John 17:25-26

Jesus "will continue to make" the Father known. He does this by the Holy Spirit today. Look at the end of verse 26. What happens when men and women come to know the Father? The love within the Trinity overflows to us!

Pray

This love is the only force that can remake a broken world. Pray that it will be seen in your local church.


What do you get most excited about? Compare this with seeing the Son in glory, and pray that your heart will be thrilled by that glorious prospect.

Who's in control?

It isn't always obvious who is in control. When Jesus is arrested, John prompts us to ask, who is really in control...

... when Jesus is arrested?


Read John 18:1-3


 *Who seems to be in control?*

But think: why does Jesus choose to go to this particular spot when he knows that Judas knows the place? Jesus is not trying to escape. He is arrested because he knows it is the right time to be arrested.


... when Jesus is identified?

Read John 18:4-7


 *What does Jesus already know?*

 *What name do the soldiers have on their arrest warrant?*

It is a purely human name from a very ordinary place.

 *How does Jesus answer, three times?*


Literally, he is saying simply, "I am".

 *What effect does this unexpected "name" have on them (v 6)?*

"I am" is God's name for himself. The soldiers thought they were arresting an ordinary human troublemaker; but here they're confronted with the name and power of God himself.

... when Jesus protects his own?

Read John 18:8-9

 *Why was Jesus concerned to ensure none of the disciples were arrested with him?*


... when Jesus drinks the cup?

Read John 18:10-11

..... TIME OUT


Read Psalm 75:8; Revelation 16:19

These are just two examples of what the "cup" means in Bible language.

 *What does it mean for the innocent Jesus to "drink the cup the Father has given me" (John 18:11)?*

Simon Peter has already volunteered to give his life for Jesus (13:37)—in battle, fighting his enemies. What he now needs to understand is that Jesus will give his life for Simon—on the cross, bearing his punishment.

Apply

 *Why does it matter greatly that we remember God is in full control as we consider the cross of Christ?*

The cost of being an insider

We want to be insiders, and hate feeling as if we're outsiders. Whoever the "in crowd" may be, we naturally want to belong with them. But there is often a cost...

Powerful opposition

Read John 18:12-14

? *Who is against Jesus?*

The most powerful people in the land are related to each other, and all are determined to kill Jesus. Annas and his relatives held power for 34 years out of 36 between AD 6 and AD 41. Annas was a nasty, corrupt political fixer.

Apply

? *Who are the most powerful people in your neighbourhood, workplace or society? Are they pro-Jesus or not?*

Outsiders and insiders

Read John 18:15-16

Look carefully at the language of being outside and being inside.

? *What is the inside place (v 15)?*

? *Where does Peter end up (v 16)?*

This is the place of all human power. Peter's move from outside to inside is a picture of what we all long to do, to get "in" with the powerful people.

Apply

? *Which group of people would you naturally most like to be "in" with, in*

your workplace, neighbourhood, college or school?

The cost of going in

Read John 18:17

? *What question does Peter have to answer in order to be allowed in?*

? *How does he answer?*

It is so easy, so natural, so understandable, and so terribly wrong. Notice how Jesus is described only as "this man"; who would want to be associated with him, now that he is under arrest?

Standing in the cold

Read John 18:18

It's a sad picture. These people are in the dark and cold (literally and spiritually) and have to light and warm themselves with a fire. And now Peter is "standing" with them, "warming himself" in the in-crowd.

Pray

Think ahead to when someone next challenges you about being a Christian.

? *What will you be tempted to say? Why?*

Pray that you will give courageous testimony to Jesus, especially when people around you despise him.


Hated without reason

We can't blame people for treating us badly when we've treated them badly. But Jesus was hated with no valid reason at all.


Open teaching

Read John 18:19-20

The “high priest” in verse 19 is still Annas. Even when people had retired from being high priest they kept the title.

 *What exactly does Annas ask about in verse 19?*

He wants to know what kind of a political movement this is—and it's a threatening question for people like Peter.

 *How does Jesus answer (v 20)?*

Of course, Jesus did instruct his disciples privately (such as in chapters 13 – 16). But what he said privately was the same message as the one he gave publicly. He had no secret agenda, and nothing to hide.


TIME OUT

Read 2 Corinthians 4:2

Think about how our openness about the gospel ought to follow the brave openness of Jesus. There ought to be no part of the Bible's teaching that we keep secret, or only talk about when we're with people who are already Christians.

Open testimony

Read John 18:21

 *Who will be able to report what Jesus has taught?*


Notice that this is exactly what Peter has not done (v 15-18) and will not do (v 25-27) in his denials.


Apply

We cannot give eye-witness testimony to Jesus. Only the apostles could do that. But we can speak up accurately and bravely to tell people what the apostles have told us Jesus said, found in the New Testament. We ought to do that.

Unfair condemnation

Read John 18:22-24

 *Why is the official angry?*

 *How does Jesus defend himself?*

Notice the word “testify”. He is inviting them to give eye-witness testimony to prove he is wrong, but they can't. This shows the trial is completely unfair.

Pray

Thank the Lord Jesus for suffering this unreasonable hatred on his way to the cross, for our sake.