GO ONE MORE

A 30 DAY DEVOTIONAL

1C

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Welcome to Go One More

Jesus once told a story about a shepherd with a hundred sheep. When one went missing, he went after it.

That is what these thirty days are about: one person.

Over the next month, you will ask God to put one name on your heart: someone in your everyday life who does not yet know how much God loves them. Then, one small step at a time, you will pray for them, notice them, listen to them, serve them, and maybe invite them. All you need is a willingness to go one more step for one more person.

And if you are reading this while you are still figuring out what you believe about God, you are welcome here too. Read along, write down your questions, and see what you discover. These pages were written with you in mind.

HOW IT WORKS

About Fifteen Minutes a Day

Find a quiet spot and grab a pen. Each day follows the same pattern, so it gets easier as you go.

READ: The Bible passage for the day. Tap the button to open it in the free Bible App, or look it up in any Bible. We quote the New Living Translation (NLT).

THE STORY: A true story from history or from today.

GO DEEPER: What the passage shows us about God and about people.

BRING IT HOME: How it connects to your actual week.

NAME THE ONE: A few questions to answer honestly. Short answers are fine.

TAKE ONE STEP: One small, specific action for today.

PRAY FOR THE ONE: A prayer you can pray as written or in your own words.

Miss a day? Just pick up where you left off. And it is even better with someone else, so consider going through it with a friend, your spouse, or your Life Group.

NEW TO THE BIBLE?

How to Find Your Way Around

The Bible is a collection of sixty six books written over many centuries. A reference like Luke 15:3-7 means the book of Luke, chapter 15, verses 3 through 7. Most Bibles have a table of contents in the front, and the Bible App lets you simply search for the reference.

The first four books of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are called the Gospels. Each one tells the story of Jesus' life. A few other words you will see along the way:

Gospel: Means "good news." It is the message that God offers forgiveness and new life through Jesus.

Grace: God's kindness and love, given as a free gift.

Disciple: A follower of Jesus who is learning to live like Him.

Prayer: Simply talking with God, out loud or in your head, in your own words.

MY ONE

The Name on My Heart

Before you start Day 1, ask God to bring one person to mind. Write their name here and come back to this page throughout the month.

Name:

Date I started praying for them:

Why I think God put them on my heart:

Three things I will pray for them:

1.

2.

3.

Nobody Would Have Picked Him

READ | Luke 15:3-7

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *God does extraordinary work through ordinary people who are willing to take the next faithful step.*

THE STORY

An Unlikely Beginning

At seventeen years old, Dwight L. Moody left his family's farm in Massachusetts and traveled to Boston looking for work. His formal education had ended after the fifth grade. He had no theological training, no ministry experience, and none of the polish people usually associate with an influential Christian leader.

After struggling to find a position, Moody asked his uncle for a job in his shoe store. His uncle agreed on one condition: Dwight had to attend church. Moody accepted, joined a Sunday school class, and met a teacher named Edward Kimball.

On April 21, 1855, Kimball went to the shoe store, found Moody in the stockroom, and spoke with him personally about the love of Jesus. Kimball was nervous and almost talked himself out of going in. He went anyway, and that quiet conversation became a turning point. Moody trusted Jesus and eventually devoted his life to serving Him.

Years later, Moody would preach to enormous crowds on both sides of the Atlantic, start schools, and influence generations of Christian leaders. None of that was visible in the stockroom. There was only an ordinary young man and a teacher willing to have one conversation.

GO DEEPER

The Shepherd Who Goes

Luke 15 begins with a complaint. Religious leaders are offended that Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them. Jesus answers with a story. A shepherd realizes that one sheep is missing. The other ninety-nine are safe and accounted for. The shepherd goes after the one anyway, because the one matters.

Jesus is showing us the heart of God. When God looks at a crowd, He sees individuals. He sees the coworker who seems fine but goes home discouraged. He sees the neighbor carrying a burden no one has noticed. He sees the family member who has quietly drifted from faith.

That is also how Jesus meets us. He came to us while we were still lost, long before we had our lives together, and did for us what we could never do on our own. So when we notice one person, we are joining Jesus in the work He is already doing. Changing a heart is His job, which frees us from forcing a response. Like Kimball, we are responsible only for the step in front of us. The outcome belongs to God.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Luke 15:3-7 one more time. Notice how far the shepherd goes, and notice how the story ends: with a celebration.*

BRING IT HOME

Begin with the Person Already Near

The idea of "Go One More" can feel overwhelming until it gets specific. A crowd has no face, but a person does. Think about the people already in your normal week. Who shows up again and again in your schedule? Who has trusted you with part of a struggle? Who seems curious, lonely, discouraged, or simply open to friendship?

You may not feel ready. That's okay. Nervous people take faithful steps all the time, leaning on God as they go. Today that step may

be only a name written on a page and carried into prayer. That's a great place to start.

> **PAUSE** *Ask God to bring one person clearly to mind. Do not force an answer. Pay attention to the name or face that keeps coming back to you.*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 When have you assumed that someone else was more qualified to be used by God?

02 Which ordinary people helped shape your faith? What did they do that mattered?

03 Who may be your "one" during these thirty days?

> **MY ONE** *Write one name here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Remember, Name, and Pray

Take ten quiet minutes today. Write the names of three to five people God used to help you know or follow Jesus. They may have been parents, friends, teachers, pastors, coaches, or coworkers. If you are still exploring faith, think of the people who first made you curious about God. Thank God for each one by name.

Then return to the name you wrote above. Commit to pray for that person every day for the next thirty days. You do not need to force a spiritual conversation today. Just ask God to help you see this person the way He does.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Father, thank You for seeing possibilities that others miss. Thank You for the ordinary people You used to shape my faith. Forgive me for letting my limitations become excuses. Open my eyes to the person You have placed in front of me. Teach me to pray faithfully, listen carefully, and obey with courage. I trust You with the results. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Today, God is asking you to be faithful with the one in front of you.

SOURCE NOTE | Historical details about D. L. Moody verified against Moody Bible Institute, "D. L. Moody's Story."

The Person Behind the Person

READ | John 1:40-42

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *A simple invitation can become the first chapter of a story only God can see.*

THE STORY

Before Anyone Knew His Name

Long before Billy Graham preached in stadiums, he was a teenager on a dairy farm in North Carolina with little interest in religious meetings. In the fall of 1934, a traveling evangelist named Mordecai Ham came to Charlotte for a series of revival services. Billy wanted nothing to do with them.

A friend named Albert McMakin kept asking. He finally got Billy to come by stirring up his curiosity and letting him drive the old vegetable truck, packed with as many people as Albert could fit inside.

Billy kept going back night after night. That November, just before his sixteenth birthday, he responded to the message and committed his life to Jesus. Decades later, millions would hear him preach. Almost nobody remembers Albert McMakin. But his invitation, and a borrowed truck, became part of the story.

Big stories often begin before the person everyone remembers steps into the spotlight. A friend extends an invitation. A volunteer welcomes a teenager. A parent keeps praying. Their faithfulness becomes part of someone else's future, even if history forgets their names.

GO DEEPER

The Ministry of Introduction

Before Peter preached to thousands, his brother Andrew walked him to Jesus. Andrew shows up only a few times in John's Gospel, and every time he is doing the same thing. He brings his brother to Jesus. He brings the boy with the bread and fish to Jesus. Later, when a group of foreigners wants to see Jesus, Andrew helps make that happen. He is rarely the center of the scene, but he keeps becoming a bridge.

A bridge is valuable because of what it connects. That takes the pressure off. Your job is to help create a path toward Jesus, the One who can meet another person's deepest needs.

When Andrew brought Simon to Jesus, Jesus saw more than the man standing in front of Him. Simon was impulsive and ordinary, yet Jesus gave him a new name, Peter, that pointed to who he could become. Jesus meets people as they are, ready or not. So we can leave the question of who is worth asking to Him. The person who hesitates today may be the one inviting someone else tomorrow.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read John 1:40-42 again. What was the very first thing Andrew did after meeting Jesus?*

BRING IT HOME

Make the Next Step Easy to Receive

An invitation is most loving when it considers the other person's experience. Unfamiliar words, a building they have never been inside, childcare questions, and fear of being singled out can make a simple event feel risky. Good hospitality anticipates those concerns. Explain what to expect. Offer to arrive together. Make it clear that the friendship will remain safe if the answer is no.

The goal is to make room for a real encounter with Jesus. Ask God for the courage to be clear and the humility to leave the response free.

PAUSE *Think about the person who first invited you, welcomed you, or helped you take faith seriously. Thank God for that person's courage.*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 Who helped bring you closer to Jesus, even if their role seemed small at the time?

02 Why do we tend to measure faithfulness by visible results?

03 Who could you encourage or invite during this series?

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Send One Invitation

Choose one easy, no pressure way to move toward your person. Invite them to coffee, lunch, a walk, a group gathering, or an upcoming service. The goal is simply to create room for friendship.

Write the invitation you plan to send, then pray for warmth, courage, and freedom from pressure.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Father, thank You for the people who helped bring me closer to Jesus. Make me attentive to the opportunities You place in front of me. Free me from needing to know the outcome. Give me the courage to offer a sincere invitation and the humility to trust You with the response. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

You may be one faithful invitation away from joining a story only God can see.

SOURCE NOTE | Historical details from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, "The Night Billy Graham Was Born Again"; biblical account from John 1:40-42.

The Influence Nobody Applauds

READ | 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *The influence that changes a life is often quiet, repeated, and almost invisible.*

THE STORY

The Teacher Who Stayed with One Student

In March 1887, twenty year old Anne Sullivan traveled from the Perkins School for the Blind to Tuscumbia, Alabama. Her new student was six year old Helen Keller, who had been deaf and blind since early childhood. Helen was bright and full of energy, but she had no reliable way to communicate with the people around her.

Sullivan began spelling words into Helen's hand. Helen copied the movements, often without understanding that the patterns carried meaning. The lessons were repetitive and exhausting. Sullivan kept returning to ordinary objects, ordinary moments, and the same patient connection between a thing and its name.

The famous breakthrough at the water pump mattered because of all the quiet teaching that came before it. Once Helen understood that the letters spelled into one hand named the water flowing over the other, language began to open. Sullivan kept teaching her for years as Helen learned to read, write, speak, and study.

History remembers Helen Keller's achievements. Behind them stood a teacher who stayed close enough, long enough, for understanding to grow.

GO DEEPER

Faith That Lives in the Home

Paul was an early church leader who mentored a younger pastor named Timothy. In this letter he reminds Timothy where his faith started: with his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. The Bible records no sermons from them and gives them no public platform. Their faith lived in the home before it ever showed up in Timothy's leadership.

Their influence was probably built through repeated, ordinary things: stories told again, prayers offered again, Scripture opened again, forgiveness modeled again. Growth often works less like a dramatic performance and more like water shaping stone over time.

Quiet influence can feel unsatisfying because it offers so little feedback. A parent repeats an important lesson while a child seems distracted. A friend sends another encouraging text and gets only a short reply. It is easy to assume a small response means a small impact. Yet deep roots often grow under surfaces that look unchanged.

Imperfect people can do this well. Parents lose patience. Friends say the wrong thing. Our influence matters most when it points past our mistakes to Jesus, who is more dependable than we are. We apologize when needed, return to what is true, and keep showing up.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read 2 Timothy 1:5 and 3:14-15 again. Who are the people Paul gives credit to?*

BRING IT HOME

Choose Faithfulness You Can Sustain

Grand gestures are memorable, but steady habits usually shape relationships more deeply. A weekly check in, a regular meal, a short prayer, or remembering important dates can communicate lasting care. Choose something small enough to continue after the first burst of motivation fades.

Let go of the need to be recognized for the difference you make. Some of the most meaningful things you do will happen where no one is watching, and God sees every one of them.

> **PAUSE** *Remember one sentence of encouragement that stayed with you. What made it powerful?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 Who invested in you consistently when you were younger in faith, or younger in life?

02 Where are you tempted to quit because you cannot see progress?

03 Who needs steady encouragement from you right now?

> **MY ONE** *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Speak One Encouraging Sentence

Choose one person who may be discouraged. Offer specific encouragement. Name a quality you see, a way they have grown, or a reason you are grateful for them. Specific words are easier to remember than general compliments.

Write the sentence first. Keep it honest and simple, then share it today.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Father, thank You for every person who planted truth in my life. Help me remain faithful when growth is hidden. Give me words that strengthen people. Show me someone who needs to be noticed today, and help me speak with sincerity and grace. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

You never know which faithful moment someone will carry for the rest of their life.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against Perkins School for the Blind, “Anne Sullivan.”

The One Everyone Walked Past

READ | Luke 10:25-37

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Compassion begins when another person's interruption becomes our responsibility.*

THE STORY

Supplies Packed for the Wounded

When the American Civil War began, Clara Barton was working in Washington, D.C. Wounded soldiers arrived with too few supplies and little organized care. Barton began collecting food, bandages, clothing, and medicine, storing many of the donations in her own rooms.

She did not stop at gathering supplies. Barton pushed for permission to take them closer to the fighting. Although she had little formal nursing training, she traveled to battlefields including Antietam and Fredericksburg, where she handed out supplies and cared for wounded and dying soldiers.

After the war, Barton opened an office to help families learn what had happened to missing soldiers. That work answered thousands of letters and helped identify more than twenty thousand missing Union soldiers. Years later, she founded the American Red Cross.

The war was far bigger than one woman. Barton noticed the need within her reach and moved toward it.

GO DEEPER

The Distance Between Seeing and Loving

In Jesus' story, a man is beaten and left on the side of the road. A priest and a temple worker both see him and keep walking.

Their failure happened in the space between noticing and responding. Maybe they feared danger, a delay, or the cost. Jesus leaves their reasons unnamed, which keeps us from excusing ourselves too quickly.

Then a Samaritan stops. Jews and Samaritans had a long and bitter history, so Jesus' audience would have been shocked that he was the hero. The Samaritan also had a schedule and a destination. Compassion rearranged his plans. He used his supplies, gave up his ride, spent his money, and promised to come back. Feeling sorry was only the beginning.

The story starts with a lawyer trying to figure out the limits of his responsibility: "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus turns the question around: What kind of neighbor will you be? This is exactly what Jesus did for us. He came near to our pain and paid the cost. We help others as people who have also been helped.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Luke 10:25-37 again. Count how many practical things the Samaritan does for the hurting man.*

BRING IT HOME

Let One Interruption Matter

You cannot stop for every need, and wisdom matters. But constant hurry can become a way of never being available to love anyone deeply. Build enough margin into your life that an interruption does not always feel like an enemy. Sometimes the most important appointment in your day will not be on your calendar.

Begin with one person and one practical question: What would help? Listen before acting, and offer something specific. A ride, a meal, a phone call, or twenty patient minutes can become the place where another person experiences the love of God.

> **PAUSE** *Ask yourself: Who have I seen recently but not truly noticed?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **What usually keeps you from stopping when someone needs attention?**

02 **Where has hurry made you less compassionate?**

03 **Who might need practical care from you this week?**

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Create Room to Stop

Leave one open space in today's schedule. Use it to check on someone, help with a practical need, or have a conversation without watching the clock.

Name the person or situation you want to make room for.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Jesus, You saw me and moved toward me with mercy. Slow me down enough to notice the people along my road. Interrupt my plans when love requires it. Give me wisdom to know what I can do and courage to do it. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Seeing a need becomes compassion when love is willing to stop.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against the American Red Cross, “About Clara Barton,” and the Library of Congress, “Clara Barton.”

The God Who Sees Me

READ | Genesis 16:7-13

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *People begin to believe they matter when they are truly seen.*

THE STORY

A Conversation About the Chair

Jeff Erlanger was a young boy who used an electric wheelchair after surgery for a spinal tumor. Before another difficult operation, his parents helped make his wish come true: to meet the man he considered his television friend, Fred Rogers.

Rogers remembered Jeff. In 1981, he invited the ten year old onto Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. Instead of talking around Jeff or treating the wheelchair as something embarrassing, Rogers asked him directly how it worked and why he needed it. Jeff answered in his own words.

The conversation was simple and unhurried. Jeff talked about what was hard and what he could do. Then he and Rogers sang together. The moment became memorable because the audience was invited to know Jeff.

Rogers later described the visit as one of his most treasured moments on the show. He gave a child his full attention and let him be fully present in the story.

GO DEEPER

Found at the Edge of the Story

Hagar was a servant in the household of Abraham and Sarah. She carried the consequences of decisions made by people with far more power than she had. When the conflict in that home

became unbearable, she ran into the wilderness. A pregnant servant alone in that landscape faced danger and almost no protection.

The text says the angel of the Lord found her by a spring. That word matters. Hagar may have felt thrown away, yet God knew exactly where she was and what she had been through. He called her by name and asked where she had come from and where she was going. The God who already knew gave her room to tell the truth.

Her problems were still there. But something changed: Hagar understood that God saw her in the middle of her suffering. She gave God a name that came from her own experience: El Roi, "the God who sees me."

Jesus showed that same attention. Even in crowds, He saw individuals. He noticed a woman who quietly touched His clothing, a tax collector hiding in a tree, and a blind man the crowd tried to silence. Every person in the crowd mattered to Him.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Genesis 16:7-13 again. What questions does God ask Hagar, and why might that matter to someone who feels forgotten?*

BRING IT HOME

Practice the Second Look

Most people reveal their story slowly. A first answer may be polite; a second question often opens the door. Remembering what someone said last week shows the conversation mattered to you. Put away the phone, use the person's name, and listen for feelings as well as facts.

Simply receive what you discover. Sometimes the greatest gift is being heard without being hurried, corrected, or compared.

PAUSE *Where has your attention been most distracted? Who has been getting the leftovers of your attention?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 When have you felt invisible, and what helped you feel seen?

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02 Whose role or label may keep you from noticing their story?

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03 How can you offer undivided attention to your one person?

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Learn One Detail

Have one conversation in which your only goal is to understand. Ask an open question, listen carefully, and remember one meaningful detail for next time.

A question you could ask: What has been good, hard, or important for you lately?

PRAY FOR THE ONE

God who sees me, thank You for knowing my whole story. Forgive me for looking past people. Teach me to offer patient, undistracted attention. Help the person in front of me experience dignity, kindness, and a glimpse of Your care. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Attention says, before anything else is spoken: You matter.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against MisterRogers.org, "Jeff Erlanger," and PBS, "A Boy in a Wheelchair Visits."

Before You Do Anything Else

READ | Nehemiah 1:1-11

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Prayer is where the work begins.*

THE STORY

The Work That Began in Prayer

George Müller cared for thousands of orphaned children in Bristol, England, during the 1800s. He refused to build his work around public pressure or emotional appeals for money. He brought the needs to God in prayer and waited.

In 1845, overcrowding made a new building necessary. Müller began praying about a home large enough for three hundred children. For more than a month, no donation came in for the project. Müller wrote honestly about the silence, but he kept praying.

Then a gift of one thousand pounds arrived, the largest donation the ministry had received to that point. More followed. The new home opened, and the work kept growing until Müller's ministry had cared for about ten thousand children.

The buildings became visible, but prayer came first. Müller let prayer shape the decision, the pace, and his dependence on God throughout the work.

GO DEEPER

A Burden Brought to God

Nehemiah was a Jewish man serving in the royal court of Persia, hundreds of miles from Jerusalem. When he heard that the city's walls were still in ruins and its people were in trouble, he let it become personal.

His first response was to sit down and cry. For days he went without food and prayed. That pause mattered. He remembered who God is, honestly admitted what had gone wrong, recalled God's promises, and asked for a specific opportunity to help. When Nehemiah finally acted, his plan came out of those days of prayer.

Sometimes we rush into action because planning makes us feel in control. Prayer makes us admit that we cannot change everything ourselves. It also gives us time to check our motives. Do we want someone's life to improve because we care about them, or because their change would ease our worry?

God already cares more than we do. Jesus Himself withdrew to pray before major decisions and on the night before the cross. If He leaned on the Father, we need to lean on Him even more.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Nehemiah 1:1-11 again. Notice what Nehemiah does first, and how long he does it, before he asks for anything.*

BRING IT HOME

Let a Name Reshape Your Prayers

Praying daily for one person changes the way you notice them. You may become more aware of their burdens, more patient with their pace, and more sensitive to natural openings.

Be specific, but hold your requests with open hands. Ask for healing, courage, truth, and opportunity. Also ask God to change you: to remove judgment, correct impatience, and make you someone they can trust. The first answer to your prayer may happen in your own heart.

> **PAUSE** *Sit quietly with your person's name before God. What burden, hope, or need comes to mind?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **Do you tend to plan first or pray first? Why?**

02 **What specific need can you bring to God for your person?**

03 **What might God want to change in you as you pray?**

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Begin a Thirty Day Prayer

Choose a consistent time and place to pray for your one person every day. Attach the prayer to something you already do, like morning coffee, your commute, lunch, or bedtime.

Complete this sentence: Each day, when I

, I will pray for

.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Father, I bring this person to You by name. You know every need, question, fear, and hope. Work in ways I cannot see. Shape my heart as I pray. Give me patience, wisdom, and readiness to respond when You open a door. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Before you try to move someone toward God, bring that person before God.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against Müllers, “Our History,” and George Müller’s own account of the Ashley Down orphan homes.

The Friends Who Carried Him

READ | Mark 2:1-12

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Faithful friends carry people toward Jesus when they cannot get there alone.*

THE STORY

Five Miles Together

In 1977, fifteen year old Rick Hoyt asked his father if they could enter a five mile benefit race. Rick had cerebral palsy and used a wheelchair. His father, Dick, had never been a distance runner. He agreed to push him anyway.

They finished near the back of the field. The result did not matter to Rick. Afterward, he told his father that when they were running, he did not feel disabled. Dick listened, trained, and kept pushing.

That first race became more than one thousand events completed together. Dick pushed Rick through marathons, pedaled him on a specially designed bicycle, and pulled him in a boat during triathlons.

Rick had the desire, and Dick supplied strength his son could not supply alone. They moved forward together because love was willing to carry weight over a real distance.

GO DEEPER

Faith with Four Sets of Hands

The four friends in Mark 2 carried more than a mat. They carried the weight of a man who could not walk, the frustration of a blocked doorway, and the risk of public embarrassment. We never learn their names. Their faith shows up in what they do

together: they arrive together, refuse to quit together, and lower their friend through the roof together.

The crowded house could have been a reasonable excuse. Instead, the obstacle made them creative. Opening up a roof was messy and disruptive. Love was willing to cause a scene because the man on the mat mattered more than the room's approval.

Everyone could see the man's paralysis. But Jesus first spoke to a need no one could see: "My child, your sins are forgiven." Then He healed his body too. Jesus cares about our immediate burdens, and He also deals with our deepest need, which is to be made right with God.

Notice that the friends could carry the man only so far. Forgiveness and healing came from Jesus alone. We carry, pray, encourage, and remove barriers, and we leave the saving to Him.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Mark 2:1-12 again. Verse 5 says Jesus saw "their" faith. Whose faith was He talking about?*

BRING IT HOME

Carry One Corner, Not the Whole Mat

Some burdens need more than one person. Pride may tell you to handle everything yourself, while fear may tempt you to do nothing. Invite people you trust to pray, help, or share practical care.

Ask what one corner you can carry. A specific, limited commitment is often more helpful than a big promise you cannot keep. Faithful friendship looks like love that keeps showing up and keeps bringing the person to Jesus.

> **PAUSE** *What weight might your person be carrying that you have not fully recognized?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **Who carried you, spiritually or practically, during a difficult season?**

02 **What obstacle may be keeping your person from moving toward Jesus?**

03 **What part of that burden can you help carry without taking control?**

> **MY ONE** *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Lighten One Burden

Choose one practical act that makes your person's week lighter: bring a meal, run an errand, offer a ride, help with a task, or simply be present during something difficult.

Write one offer that is specific enough to get a clear yes or no.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Jesus, thank You for the people who carried me when I was weak. Show me how to support my person without trying to control the outcome. Make my faith persistent, creative, and compassionate. Bring them close to You. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Sometimes faith looks like carrying one corner of someone else's mat.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against Team Hoyt, "The Hoyt Family."

When Prayer Feels Unanswered

READ | Luke 18:1-8

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Persistent prayer trusts God's character when His timing remains hidden.*

THE STORY

The Prayers Augustine Could Not See

Augustine became one of the most influential Christian thinkers in history, but his path to faith was long and messy. As a young man in the late 300s, he chased ambition, relationships, and one philosophy after another while resisting the faith his mother had taught him.

His mother, Monica, prayed through all of those years. She followed his life with concern, spoke when she could, and cried over choices she could not control. Augustine did not change on her schedule, and Monica could not argue him into belief.

In Milan, Augustine listened to a pastor named Ambrose and kept working through his questions. After years of searching, resisting, and talking, he chose to follow Jesus. Monica lived to see him baptized.

Her story is often remembered because her prayers were answered. But its real strength is in the long middle, when she had no guarantee how things would turn out. Monica kept praying for her son without treating his life like a deadline.

GO DEEPER

The Long Middle of Faith

Beginnings bring energy, and answers bring celebration. The middle is harder. It is the stretch after we have asked for help

but before anything seems to change. Jesus told the story of the persistent widow so His followers would keep praying and not give up. He knows how easily waiting wears us down.

The widow has no power or influence. Her only strength is that she keeps coming back. The judge finally gives in for selfish reasons. Jesus says God is the opposite of that judge. He welcomes repeated prayers, and we keep praying because we trust Him.

The Bible leaves many delays unexplained. What it gives us is a reminder of who God is when the reasons are unclear. And the clearest picture of who God is comes from the cross. There, Jesus showed how close and active God's love really is. When circumstances make us question His care, the cross reminds us what He has already done.

We can keep praying and still be honest about our sadness. The Psalms ask, "How long?" and still return to trust. Bringing our grief to God is one way of trusting Him with what hurts.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Luke 18:1-8 again. Verse 1 tells you exactly why Jesus told this story. What is the reason?*

BRING IT HOME

Don't Turn the Person into a Deadline

When you pray for someone you love, urgency can quietly turn into pressure. You start watching every conversation for proof and reading every setback as failure. Release the timeline. The person is living a real story in the presence of God, on His timeline.

Keep asking, and keep loving normally. Share meals, laugh, listen, and stay interested in the whole person. Let persistent prayer make your friendship more patient.

> **PAUSE** *Where has disappointment tempted you to stop praying?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **How do you usually respond when prayer seems unanswered?**

02 **What timeline do you need to release to God?**

03 **What small sign of grace can you thank God for today?**

> **MY ONE** *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Pray the Same Prayer Again

Return to one request you have nearly given up on. Pray it again honestly, then add a sentence of surrender: Father, I trust Your love, wisdom, and timing.

Write down the request and one reason you can keep trusting God's character.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Father, You are near and You care. Teach me to pray without giving up. When I cannot see movement, anchor me in who You are. Protect my heart from frustration and help my love remain patient, hopeful, and free. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

God is present even in His silence. Keep bringing the name before Him.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details drawn from Augustine's Confessions and Encyclopaedia Britannica's account of Augustine and Monica.

What Grows in Secret

READ | Mark 4:26-29

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *God is working beneath the surface long before change becomes visible.*

THE STORY

The Long Months No One Applauded

In 1967, seventeen-year-old Joni Eareckson was paralyzed in a diving accident. The life she expected disappeared in an instant. Building a new one would take years.

She spent two years in rehabilitation. During long months marked by grief, depression, and hard physical work, she learned ordinary tasks in new ways. She also learned to draw and paint by holding a brush between her teeth.

The skill developed slowly, one movement at a time. Her artwork eventually drew public attention, and her story reached people through interviews, books, and a film. Letters began arriving from others living with disabilities, and in 1979 she founded Joni and Friends to respond.

The public ministry came later. First came the unseen repetition, the awkward first attempts, and the days when progress was hard to recognize. What eventually encouraged millions was formed during months when faithfulness looked very small.

GO DEEPER

Growth You Cannot Watch Happen

In this short story from Jesus, a farmer scatters seed and then goes back to his daily life. He sleeps and wakes, night after night,

while the seed grows. He has a part to play, and what happens under the soil is out of his hands. Growth comes gradually: first the leaf, then the head, and finally the full grain.

The story challenges our impatience. We want visible progress and a clear connection between our effort and the result. But change in a person's life is often quiet. A sentence heard today may come back during a crisis years later. An act of kindness may challenge an old assumption.

The farmer's sleep is an act of trust. He has done what he can for the day, and he accepts that growth continues without his supervision. Rest reminds us that we are not God.

Our part still matters. Farmers prepare the soil, plant the seed, and bring in the harvest. We do our part carefully because it matters, and we accept our limits because only God can produce real change. Only God produces new life.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Mark 4:26-29 again. What does the farmer do, and what does he not do?*

BRING IT HOME

Learn to Notice the First Green Leaf

Growth rarely shows up all at once. Notice small signs without expecting them to be more than they are: a new question, more honesty, a change in attitude, a willingness to come back, or a small act of courage.

If you see no change, resist the urge to inspect, pressure, or force progress. Keep the relationship healthy through prayer, consistency, honesty, and freedom. The person you care about is a person to love.

> **PAUSE** *What seed may already have been planted in your person's life?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **Where are you tempted to force an outcome?**

02 **What truth can you plant gently and appropriately?**

03 **How would trusting God's hidden work change your approach?**

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Plant Without Pulling

Share one small piece of hope naturally. It may be a verse that encouraged you, a brief answer about why you have hope, or a simple description of what God is teaching you.

Write the one thought you could share without turning the conversation into a speech.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

God of the harvest, help me plant faithfully and wait humbly. Keep me from pressure, pride, and panic. Work beneath the surface in ways I cannot see. Give me wisdom to know when to speak and peace when my role is simply to wait. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Plant faithfully, love patiently, and let God be responsible for growth.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against the official Joni and Friends biography and organizational history.

Wrestling in Prayer

READ | Colossians 4:12

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Some of the most important work we do for another person happens where they never see it.*

THE STORY

A Mother Praying Miles Away

As a teenager in England, Hudson Taylor knew the language of Christianity but had not made it his own. One afternoon, looking for something to read, he picked up a small booklet about Jesus and decided to read the story while skipping the sermon at the end.

The words reached him anyway. Taylor later wrote that he understood what Jesus had done for him and came to trust Him. No pastor or family member was in the room to see it.

Miles away, his mother had set aside that same afternoon to pray for her son. According to Taylor's own account, she prayed until she felt certain God had answered. When she came home, and Hudson tried to tell her the news, she already knew.

Taylor would later serve in China for decades, but it began with two hidden rooms. A son read alone. A mother prayed where he could not see her.

GO DEEPER

The Work No Crowd Can See

Paul describes a man named Epaphras who "always prays earnestly" for the church in the city of Colossae. The word Paul uses suggests effort and struggle, like a wrestler. Epaphras was far away, yet he fought for them in prayer anyway.

His prayers went beyond their immediate problems. He asked God to help them grow strong, confident, and clear about how to live. Praying for others teaches us to think about the whole person, including needs that are not obvious at first.

This kind of care gets very little recognition because most of it happens in private. No one hears the name being repeated or sees the early mornings. God does.

On the night before He died, Jesus prayed for His followers and for everyone who would later believe because of them. That includes us. The Bible says Jesus still speaks to the Father on our behalf. So when we pray for someone, we are joining Jesus in His care for them. Their future rests in His hands, so our words never have to be perfect.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Colossians 4:12 again. What exactly did Epaphras pray for?*

BRING IT HOME

Pray Beyond the Immediate Crisis

It is natural to pray first for the problem you can name. Also ask what kind of person God may be shaping through this season. Pray for wisdom, courage, humility, freedom, endurance, and a growing awareness of His love.

Keep a short list so your prayers stay specific. When an answer comes, write it down. When the request remains, come back without shame. And keep what people share with you private, between you and God.

> **PAUSE** *If your person could hear your prayers, would they recognize that you have really listened to them?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **What do you usually pray for when you pray for another person?**

02 **What deeper work might God want to do in your person's life?**

03 **How can you become more consistent in praying for others?**

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Write a One Person Prayer

Write a short prayer shaped by what you know about your person. Include one present need, one request for who they are becoming, and one sentence of trust in God's love.

Keep the prayer somewhere private and come back to it throughout these thirty days.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Father, teach me to carry this person faithfully before You. Work in their circumstances and in the deepest places of their heart. Give them wisdom, courage, peace, and openness to Your love. Make me trustworthy with their story. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

A person can live inside the answer to prayers they never heard you pray.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details drawn from J. Hudson Taylor's autobiography, A Retrospect.

The Power of Showing Up

READ | Ruth 1:14-18

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Presence becomes powerful when it remains after easier options disappear.*

THE STORY

The Ship Back to Germany

In 1939, German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer traveled to the United States. Friends had arranged a safe teaching position for him as Nazi control tightened in Germany. Staying in America would have been understandable and far easier.

Bonhoeffer stayed only a few weeks. He became convinced that he could not help rebuild the church in Germany after the crisis if he did not share the suffering of Christians there during it. He boarded a ship and went home shortly before the war began.

Back in Germany, Bonhoeffer kept training pastors, supported resistance to the Nazi regime, and served people under growing danger. He was arrested in 1943 and executed in 1945.

His return cost him everything. It was a decision to stay present to people he believed God had given him. Sometimes showing up means turning down the easier distance.

GO DEEPER

Love That Refuses the Easy Exit

Naomi had lost her husband and both of her sons. She was a widow in a foreign country with nothing to offer her two widowed daughters in law. She urged them to go back to their own families and start over. Orpah made a reasonable choice

and went home. Ruth made a costly one. She tied her future to Naomi's.

Ruth's famous words are beautiful because of the hardship behind them. "Wherever you go, I will go" meant unfamiliar roads. "Your people will be my people" meant living as a foreigner. "Your God will be my God" meant trusting herself to the God of Israel. Her commitment was a direction chosen before the outcome was known.

Presence matters because suffering often brings isolation. Friends show up at the start of a crisis and then slowly return to normal life, while the hurting person stays in a changed world. Ruth shows a love that stays after the first wave of sympathy.

God is like that. Jesus entered our world, faced the cross, and promised His followers, "I am with you always." Because He stays with us, we can learn to stay with others.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Ruth 1:14-18 again. Notice how many times Ruth says "I will."*

BRING IT HOME

Replace Vague Care with Reliable Presence

Saying "Let me know if you need anything" is kind, but a person under stress may not have the energy to ask for help. Offer something concrete: I can bring dinner Thursday, sit with you at the appointment, or call once a week. Specific care is easier to receive.

Don't measure presence by how deep the conversation gets. Sometimes showing up means sitting in silence, doing an ordinary task, or talking about something other than the crisis. Often love just needs a chair that stays occupied.

> **PAUSE** *Who has stayed with you through a difficult road? What did their presence say to you?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **When are you tempted to give advice when someone needs your presence?**

02 **Who may be walking through a lonely season?**

03 **What would consistent care look like for the next month?**

> **MY ONE** *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Show Up Again

Contact someone whose hard season has lasted longer than the first wave of attention. Offer your time.

Write a specific way you can be present this week, and put it on your calendar.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

God, thank You for staying near me. Make me a steady friend who does not disappear when a road becomes long. Give me patience to listen, wisdom to respect boundaries, and love strong enough to remain. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

You can walk with someone on a road you cannot fix.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against the Bonhoeffer House Berlin, “Dietrich Bonhoeffer.”

The Question Jesus Asked

READ | Mark 10:46-52

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Love listens before it assumes it already knows what another person needs.*

THE STORY

The Doctor Who Stayed at the Bedside

Dr. Paul Farmer helped build health systems, taught at Harvard, advised world leaders, and cofounded Partners In Health. Yet his colleagues remembered that he was happiest beside a patient, listening before deciding what care should look like.

Farmer's work in Haiti taught him that a diagnosis did not explain a whole life. A patient might miss treatment because the clinic was too far away, food was scarce, the bus cost too much, or family responsibilities made the plan impossible.

Instead of labeling patients uncooperative, Farmer and his team asked better questions. They made home visits, trained local health workers, and adjusted treatment to fit the lives people described. Listening changed the care that followed.

Farmer treated his expertise as a reason to listen more closely.

GO DEEPER

A Question That Restored Dignity

Bartimaeus was a blind man begging beside the road. When he heard Jesus was passing by, he shouted for help, and the crowd told him to be quiet. Jesus stopped, called him over, and asked, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The answer seems obvious. Bartimaeus was blind. Yet Jesus asked anyway, and the question gave Bartimaeus a voice. People

who live with great need often get used to others talking about them, around them, or for them. Jesus talked to him and let him answer in his own words: “My rabbi, I want to see!”

Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem and the cross, the most important mission in history. Even so, He stopped for one man the crowd considered noise.

Good intentions can still become controlling when we decide too quickly what someone else needs. We rush to advice because uncertainty makes us uncomfortable. A sincere question slows the moment down and shows respect. Listening is an act of love before we try any solution.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Mark 10:46-52 again. Notice what Bartimaeus throws aside when Jesus calls him, and what he does after he can see.*

BRING IT HOME

Ask One Question and Stay for the Answer

A good question is open enough to invite a story: What has this season been like for you? What do you wish people understood? What would feel supportive right now? The exact wording matters less than the posture behind it.

After asking, resist the urge to fill the silence. People sometimes need a moment to decide whether the space is really safe. Listen for what gets repeated and what carries emotion.

> **PAUSE** *In your recent conversations, have you been listening to understand or listening to respond?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **What makes patient listening difficult for you?**

02 **What question might help your person share more honestly?**

03 **What assumptions about their spiritual life should you let go of?**

> **MY ONE** *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Ask One More Question

During your next conversation, ask one thoughtful follow up question before offering your own experience or advice.

Try: What has that been like for you? What do you wish people understood? How can I support you?

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Jesus, quiet my need to have the right answer. Help me listen with attention, patience, and humility. Give the person in front of me room to speak honestly, and teach me to hear both their words and their heart. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

A thoughtful question can open the door to someone's heart.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against Partners In Health, "The Life of Dr. Paul Farmer," and the Harvard Gazette.

A Table with Room

READ | Luke 19:1-10

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Hospitality creates space where guarded people can become known.*

THE STORY

A Picnic Table in the Front Yard

Kristin Schell lives in Austin, Texas. Like a lot of us, she lived on a street full of people she barely knew.

So she tried something simple. She put an ordinary wooden picnic table in her front yard, painted it a bright turquoise, and started sitting at it. Then she began inviting friends and neighbors to join her there.

Over time, people who had lived near each other for years began learning each other's names and stories. Kristin said she was simply trying to take Jesus' command seriously to love her neighbor as herself.

The idea spread. Today there are turquoise tables in front yards in nearly every state. They are simple wooden tables, and that is the point. A table with an open seat tells people there is room for them.

GO DEEPER

Grace Came to the House

Zacchaeus climbed a tree because the crowd blocked his view. He was a chief tax collector, which meant he worked for the Roman government that occupied Israel and probably got rich by overcharging his own people. He had money, power, and very few friends.

Jesus stopped under the tree, called him by name, and announced that He was coming to his house. The crowd grumbled. They thought kindness meant approval. Jesus was willing to be misunderstood in order to move toward a man everyone else had already written off.

At that meal, Zacchaeus changed. He promised to give half his wealth to the poor and pay back four times what he had cheated anyone. Jesus moved toward Zacchaeus before he changed. Grace came first, and change followed.

Then Jesus explained why He came: “to seek and save those who are lost.” Zacchaeus was the mission.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Luke 19:1-10 again. Who invites whom to dinner in this story?*

BRING IT HOME

Use Your Table as a Bridge

Hospitality works fine with an ordinary home and a simple meal. Perfection can actually make inviting harder. A simple table, takeout containers, a lawn chair, and your full attention may say more than a performance.

Think about who rarely gets invited. A coworker new to the area, a neighbor living alone, a family under pressure, or someone who feels unsure around church people. Open your space without an agenda. Let the welcome itself say there is room.

> **PAUSE** *Who is easily welcomed in your life, and who may assume there is no place for them?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **What makes hospitality feel difficult or intimidating?**

02 **How can you make an ordinary space feel welcoming?**

03 **Who could be included at your table this month?**

> **MY ONE** *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Set One More Place

Invite your person into an ordinary part of your life: a meal, a game, a walk, a family activity, or time on your porch or in your front yard.

Choose a date and write a simple invitation that feels warm and has no pressure.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

> *Jesus, thank You for welcoming me before I had everything together. Make my home, my schedule, and my life places of grace. Help me welcome people sincerely and trust You to work through ordinary time together. Amen.*

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Sometimes the distance between a person and hope is one open chair.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details from Kristin Schell, The Turquoise Table: Finding Community and Connection in Your Own Front Yard (Thomas Nelson, 2017), and TheTurquoiseTable.com.

Kindness They Can Feel

READ | Acts 9:36-42

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Small acts of practical love make an invisible God visible.*

THE STORY

A Blanket for Every Child

In 1995, Karen Loucks of Colorado read a magazine article about a three-year-old girl going through chemotherapy for leukemia. The little girl said her security blanket helped her get through the treatments.

Karen knew how to make a blanket. So she made a few and took them to a cancer center in Denver for children who needed some comfort of their own. She named the effort Project Linus, after the Peanuts character who never goes anywhere without his blanket.

Other people wanted to help, and the idea spread across the country. Since then, volunteers have given away millions of handmade blankets to children in hospitals, shelters, and hard places.

Each of those volunteers can put something warm in a scared child's hands and say, "Someone made this for you."

GO DEEPER

A Life Stitched into Other Lives

Tabitha, also called Dorcas, is introduced as a follower of Jesus who was "always doing kind things for others and helping the poor." When she died, the widows she had helped gathered around Peter, crying, and showed him the coats and clothes she

had made for them. Their grief held physical evidence of her love.

Those clothes mattered. In a world without safety nets, clothing meant warmth and dignity, and making it took time and money. Tabitha used her skill to meet real needs. Her love for Jesus became something people could see and touch.

Jesus loved people the same way. He fed hungry crowds, touched sick bodies, welcomed children, and cried beside a friend's grave. His love moved through words, time, food, and touch, and finally through His own body given on the cross.

God's love is a gift we receive. Receiving that gift begins to change us. Practical kindness goes hand in hand with talking about Jesus, and it makes our words believable.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Acts 9:36-42 again. What did the widows show Peter, and what does that tell you about Tabitha?*

BRING IT HOME

Offer the Skill Already in Your Hands

Tabitha used what she knew how to do. So did Karen Loucks. Your gift may be cooking, fixing things, organizing, teaching, driving, budgeting, childcare, technology, or quiet companionship. Every practical ability can become a way to love someone.

Ask one person what would really help, then make an offer with clear limits. Give because God has been generous to you, and let the gift stay a gift.

> **PAUSE** *If someone described your faith by what they could see and feel, what examples would they name?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **Which kinds of service come naturally to you?**

02 **What practical need have you noticed recently?**

03 **How can you serve without making someone feel they owe you?**

> **MY ONE** *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Meet One Concrete Need

Choose one useful, right sized act of kindness. Ask permission when needed and make it easy for the person to say no.

Complete this sentence: I noticed

. Would it help if I

?

PRAY FOR THE ONE

> *Father, thank You for loving me in ways I can experience. Open my eyes to practical needs. Keep my service humble, respectful, and free from the need to be noticed. Let my actions make Your kindness easier to see. Amen.*

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Love becomes believable when someone can feel its weight in their hands.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against Project Linus, “About Us,” and Mental Floss, “Project Linus’s Blanketeers Donate Homemade Blankets to Children in Need.”

When Love Costs Something

READ | John 12:1-8

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Extravagant love is rarely convenient, calculated, or easily understood.*

THE STORY

He Stepped Out of Line

In July 1941, a prisoner escaped from Auschwitz, the Nazi concentration camp. As punishment, the guards chose ten other prisoners to die by starvation. One of the men selected, Franciszek Gajowniczek, cried out for his wife and children.

A Polish priest named Maximilian Kolbe stepped out of line and asked to take the man's place. The request was accepted. Kolbe went into the starvation cell with the other condemned prisoners.

After two weeks, the guards ordered the cell emptied. Kolbe was among those still alive, and he was killed by lethal injection. Gajowniczek survived the camp and lived for decades after the war.

Kolbe gave his own future for a stranger whose cry he had heard.

GO DEEPER

The Fragrance of Costly Love

A few days before His death, Jesus was eating dinner with friends. A woman named Mary came in, poured a jar of expensive perfume on His feet, and wiped them with her hair. John tells us the whole house was filled with the fragrance. Her gratitude was impossible to ignore.

The perfume was worth about a year's wages. Judas complained that it should have been sold and the money given to the poor. It sounded reasonable, but John tells us Judas was really a thief. Extravagant love is often criticized by people who do not see what makes it worth it.

Mary was responding to the love she had already received. That is where real sacrifice begins. We give because Jesus first gave everything for us.

The cross shows us what costly love looks like. Jesus gave His life for people who could never repay Him. When that sinks in, convenience stops driving every decision. Wisdom and healthy boundaries still matter, but real love is willing to cost us something.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read John 12:1-8 again. Compare how Mary responds to Jesus with how Judas responds to Mary.*

BRING IT HOME

Move Beyond Whatever Is Left Over

Most of our relationships get the leftovers of our schedules. Costly love may mean offering your best time, listening when you would rather talk, sharing something you had planned to keep, or risking an honest conversation.

Costly love is usually quiet. Ask what sacrifice would actually serve the person. Then give freely, without expecting gratitude in return.

> **PAUSE** *What inconvenience are you willing to accept so another person can experience love?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **Where has convenience shaped your relationships?**

02 **What has God placed in your hands that you could share?**

03 **What expectation of being thanked or repaid do you need to let go of?**

> **MY ONE** *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Give Something Valuable

Offer something that costs more than a passing thought: unhurried time, a meaningful resource, a hard apology, or help that takes real effort.

Name the cost before God, and make sure the action respects healthy boundaries.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Jesus, Your love for me was costly. Forgive me for choosing convenience when You invite me to compassion. Show me what I can offer, purify my motives, and help me give without demanding a return. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Costly love leaves a fragrance.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against the Auschwitz Memorial, “Maximilian Kolbe.”

Your Story Is Useful

READ | John 4:28-30, 39-42

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *You can tell someone what Jesus has done for you before you have every answer.*

THE STORY

A Story the Headlines Did Not Believe

Chuck Colson had been one of President Richard Nixon's toughest political aides. When the Watergate scandal exposed abuses of power in the White House, Colson became known across the country for all the wrong reasons.

During the investigation, Colson became a Christian. Many reporters assumed it was a stunt to repair his image. Then he pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice and served seven months in federal prison.

Prison put Colson beside men he could not forget. After his release, he kept a promise to remember them and started Prison Fellowship, which grew into a ministry serving prisoners, former prisoners, and their families around the world.

Colson told his story, including the past. It was useful because he spoke honestly about failure, responsibility, grace, and a changed direction. It became more believable as his life backed it up.

GO DEEPER

A Witness with a Complicated Past

Earlier in John 4, Jesus had a long conversation with a Samaritan woman at a well. He knew all about her life, including several failed marriages, and still treated her with

honesty and respect. Afterward, she left her water jar and hurried back to town: “Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?”

She had more questions than answers. Her understanding was still growing, and her reputation may have made talking in public uncomfortable. She spoke anyway. She simply connected what had happened to her with a question that invited others to come and see for themselves.

Many people in that town believed because of her story, and then they went to hear Jesus themselves. Her story opened the door, and Jesus did the rest. When we share our experience, the goal is to make others curious about Jesus.

This gives us freedom. Jesus already knows the unedited version of our lives and still comes toward us. An ordinary story, told honestly, is enough.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read John 4:28-30 and 39-42 again. What did the people of the town say to the woman at the end?*

BRING IT HOME

Tell the Truth Without Performing

Tell your past and your present as they really are. Exaggeration weakens trust. Pick one theme, like fear, control, shame, loneliness, ambition, or grief, and explain how Jesus has met you there.

Keep the other person in mind. Your story is a gift. Share it when the moment fits. Ask permission, keep it short, and leave room for questions. The goal is to make Jesus easier to see.

> **PAUSE** *If you had two minutes, what would you want someone to understand about Jesus through your story?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **What was your life or heart like before a significant encounter with Jesus?**

02 **How did He meet you?**

03 **What difference is He making now?**

> **MY ONE** *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Write Your Two Minute Story

Write three short parts: Before, How Jesus Met Me, and Now. Use everyday language and keep the focus on what Jesus did. If you are still exploring faith, write about what has made you curious about Jesus so far.

Read it out loud. Cross out any church words your person may not understand.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Jesus, thank You for meeting me in my real story. Help me speak honestly without exaggeration or shame. Keep the focus on Your grace, and use my experience to awaken curiosity and hope in someone else. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

An ordinary story can point clearly to Jesus.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against Prison Fellowship, “Our Founder, Chuck Colson.”

The Conversation on the Road

READ | Acts 8:26-40

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Good spiritual conversations begin with paying attention, staying humble, and being willing to come alongside.*

THE STORY

A Long Walk After Dinner

On a September evening in 1931, the writer C. S. Lewis took a walk through Oxford with his friends J. R. R. Tolkien and Hugo Dyson. By then, Lewis believed in God, but he still struggled to understand Christianity and why Jesus' death mattered.

The three men talked late into the night. Tolkien and Dyson explored Lewis's questions through things he already loved: great stories, myths, longing, sacrifice, and the way a story can carry something true.

Lewis later told a friend that the conversation played an important role in his move from believing in God to believing in Jesus. It helped him see Christianity in a new way, even with some questions left over. Years later, he would write The Chronicles of Narnia.

Tolkien and Dyson met Lewis where he was. They listened closely enough to speak in a language that made sense to him.

GO DEEPER

God Was Already on the Road

Philip was one of the early followers of Jesus. In the middle of a busy season, an angel told him to go to a desert road. It must have seemed like a strange assignment. He went anyway and

met an important official from Ethiopia, riding home in his chariot and reading from the prophet Isaiah.

God's Spirit told Philip to go over to the chariot. Philip started with a question: "Do you understand what you are reading?" The man answered honestly and invited Philip to sit with him. The conversation began right where the man already was.

God had stirred the man's hunger and arranged the timing long before Philip showed up. Philip's job was to be available.

The passage the man was reading described a servant who suffered and was treated unjustly. Philip explained that it pointed to Jesus, who was innocent, suffered, died, and rose again to bring people back to God. We can talk about all kinds of questions, and our hope always comes back to Jesus Himself.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Acts 8:26-40 again. Notice who makes the first move in each step of this story: God, Philip, or the official.*

BRING IT HOME

Join Before You Redirect

Philip ran alongside before he sat inside. In conversation, start by understanding what the other person is already thinking. Ask what they have read, experienced, or wondered about. Avoid dragging every topic toward a rehearsed speech.

When an opening comes, connect their real question to Jesus naturally and clearly. If no opening comes, stay a respectful friend. Faithfulness means responding to the moments God gives.

> **PAUSE** *What question or interest might God already be stirring in your person?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **How well do you understand your person's spiritual background?**

02 **What signs of curiosity have you noticed?**

03 **What keeps you from speaking clearly about Jesus?**

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Ask a Spiritual Question

Use a natural opening to ask a respectful question: Did faith play a role in how you grew up? What gives you hope? Have you ever wondered what Jesus is really like?

Choose one question and commit to hearing the answer without correcting or debating.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Holy Spirit, make me attentive to what You are already doing. Give me courage to come alongside, humility to listen, and clarity when it is time to speak about Jesus. Keep me from forcing what You have not opened. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Sometimes your job is simply to recognize the opening God has already made.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against CSLewis.com, “Lewis on Tolkien,” and Lewis’s 1931 correspondence.

Listening with Love

READ | James 1:19-20

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *People feel safe enough to explore faith when they know they will be heard.*

THE STORY

Grandmothers on a Bench

In the early 2000s, Dr. Dixon Chibanda was one of only about ten psychiatrists in Zimbabwe, a country of thirteen million people. One of his patients, a young woman named Erica, lived far from the hospital. She could not afford the bus fare to come back for help, and she died.

Chibanda knew he could never train enough doctors to fix the problem. So he turned to the people already in every neighborhood: grandmothers. In 2006, he trained fourteen of them to do one thing very well. Listen.

They set up wooden benches outside local clinics. People came and sat down, and a grandmother listened to their story without rushing, judging, or taking over. At first it was called the "Mental Health Bench," and almost no one came. The grandmothers suggested a new name: the Friendship Bench. People started showing up.

Today thousands of trained listeners on Friendship Benches help hundreds of thousands of people every year, and the idea has spread to other countries, including the United States. It started with people who simply knew how to sit down and listen.

GO DEEPER

The Patience to Receive Another Person

Most of us listen with divided attention. While someone else talks, we plan our reply, compare their story to ours, diagnose the problem, or think about what is next on our list. Our body stays in the conversation while our mind has already left.

James, the brother of Jesus, wrote that we should be "quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry." The order matters. Listening slows down the speed at which assumptions become words and words become conflict.

Anger often grows when we feel threatened, dismissed, or eager to defend something we care about. James knows some concerns are real. He also knows human anger never produces the kind of life God wants. People receive love most easily from someone who feels like a friend.

Jesus spoke with authority, yet His conversations were full of questions. He asked people what they wanted, what they believed, and why they were afraid. His confidence made room for honest conversation.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read James 1:19-20 again. Which of the three, listening, speaking, or getting angry, is hardest for you right now?*

BRING IT HOME

Listen for the Story Beneath the Opinion

An opinion may be shaped by grief, disappointment, fear, or a painful experience with hypocrisy. Ask how the person came to see things that way. You can ask and still hold firmly to your own beliefs. Asking helps you care for the person in front of you.

Before responding, try repeating what you heard: "It sounds like..." or "What I hear you saying is..." Then let the person correct you. Feeling understood can change the whole tone of a disagreement.

PAUSE *What kinds of comments make you defensive, and what happens inside you when you hear them?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 When have you felt deeply heard?

02 How do you react to criticism of Christians or the church?

03 What would make you a safer person for honest questions?

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Practice a Listening Rule

In one conversation today, do not interrupt. Before sharing your view, sum up what you heard and ask whether you understood correctly.

Try: What I hear you saying is

. Did I understand you?

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Father, make me quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Calm my defensiveness. Help me honor another person's story without compromising truth. Let my patience make room for honest exploration. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Before people trust your answers, they often need to trust your listening.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against CBS News, "The Friendship Bench: Bringing Talk Therapy into Underserved Communities," and Friendship Bench Zimbabwe.

The Power of a Personal Story

READ | Acts 26:1-23

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *A clear story connects the truth about Jesus with a life that has actually been changed.*

THE STORY

A Watchmaker Tells What Happened

During the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, Corrie ten Boom and her family used their home and watch shop in the city of Haarlem to hide Jewish people and members of the resistance. They built a secret room behind Corrie's bedroom wall.

The family was betrayed and arrested in 1944. Corrie and her sister Betsie were eventually sent to the Ravensbrück concentration camp, where Betsie died. Corrie survived and was released near the end of that year.

After the war, Corrie traveled the world telling what her family had done, what they had suffered, and how her trust in God had survived. She spoke from experience, after those beliefs had been tested inside a prison camp.

Her story held both beauty and pain. It was a story about a love she believed had reached her even in the darkest place she had ever been.

GO DEEPER

A Story Shaped for the Listener

Paul, who wrote much of the New Testament, once hunted down and arrested followers of Jesus. Then Jesus met him on the road to a city called Damascus, and his life turned completely around.

Years later, Paul stood on trial in front of King Agrippa and used the moment to tell his story.

He started with what he and the king had in common. He described who he used to be, explained how he met Jesus, and told how his life changed afterward. Paul told the truth about his past. God's forgiveness let him be honest about what he had done, and his new life showed how completely Jesus can change a person.

Paul also shaped his words for the person listening. Agrippa knew Jewish customs and Scripture, so Paul spoke in that familiar world. Sharing your story means being honest while paying attention to the person in front of you.

Paul still struggled after he met Jesus. An honest story can include ongoing weakness. Our hope is that Jesus forgives us, stays with us, and keeps changing us.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Acts 26:1-23 again. Find the three parts of Paul's story: who he was, how he met Jesus, and what changed.*

BRING IT HOME

Prepare a Story You Can Share Naturally

Take the story you wrote on Day 16 and sharpen it: one clear before, one moment or encounter, and one present difference. Aim for a few minutes, not your whole life story. Protect other people's privacy and skip details that distract from Jesus.

Practice it out loud until it feels familiar. Then hold it loosely. In a real conversation, you may share only one sentence. God can use a small, honest piece of your story.

> **PAUSE** *Which part of your story might connect most naturally with your one person's life?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **What part of your story do you tend to hide?**

02 **Where can you describe change without pretending to be perfect?**

03 **How will you keep Jesus at the center?**

> **MY ONE** *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Practice Out Loud

Tell your two minute story out loud, either to yourself or to a friend you trust. Listen for confusing church language, unnecessary detail, or places where Jesus disappears from the story.

Revise it until it sounds like you.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Jesus, You are the center of my story. Give me courage to be honest about where I have been and humble about who I am becoming. Use my story to make Your grace understandable and inviting. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

The most compelling story is grace made visible.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against the Corrie ten Boom House and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Truth Wearing Skin

READ | 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *The message of Jesus is heard most clearly when truth and a shared life stay together.*

THE STORY

The Medic Who Carried No Weapon

Desmond Doss joined the United States Army during World War II convinced that he could not carry a weapon or take a life. He still wanted to serve, so he trained as a combat medic. Some of the soldiers in his unit mocked him and questioned his courage.

During the Battle of Okinawa in 1945, heavy fire forced Doss's unit to retreat from the top of a steep cliff. Wounded soldiers were left behind. Doss stayed and began lowering injured men to safety, one at a time.

By the time he was done, he had rescued an estimated seventy five soldiers, including men who had once ridiculed him. He later received the Medal of Honor, the first conscientious objector to receive it.

Doss lived out every conviction he asked others to respect. His refusal to kill went hand in hand with a willingness to risk his life for the wounded. What he believed became visible in what he carried, where he stayed, and whom he refused to abandon.

GO DEEPER

A Message Carried in a Life

Paul reminded the church in the city of Thessalonica that his team shared "not only God's Good News but our own lives, too." They were gentle, affectionate, hardworking, and encouraging.

The message arrived through relationships close enough to be watched.

People naturally want to know if following Jesus actually makes a difference. They notice how Christians treat servers, talk about people they disagree with, handle money, admit mistakes, and act under pressure. Over time, our behavior either backs up what we say or undercuts it.

Imperfect people can do this well. Taking responsibility, apologizing, and repairing harm can be some of the clearest evidence of real change. Following Jesus is a new way of living for imperfect people who are still growing.

That is how God reached us. Jesus came in a human body, ate meals, touched people, got tired, and gave His life on the cross. Truth showed up in person.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12 again. Paul compares himself to two family members. Which ones, and why?*

BRING IT HOME

Close One Gap Between Words and Life

Ask where the people closest to you might see a contradiction. Maybe you talk about grace but stay harsh, talk about trust while living in constant worry, or ask for honesty while hiding every weakness. Do not respond with shame. Just bring one gap into the light.

Choose one concrete act of integrity: apologize, keep a promise, tell the truth, be generous, or set a needed boundary. A believable follower of Jesus keeps bringing their whole life to Him, failures included.

> **PAUSE** *Would your person say your interest in them is real, even if they never came to church?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **Where do your words and your behavior send different messages?**

02 **What does sharing your life with someone look like in practical terms?**

03 **Is fear or love shaping your willingness to speak?**

> **MY ONE** *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Connect Truth to Real Life

Look for a natural place to connect something true about God with something you are already experiencing together. Keep it brief and personal.

Write one sentence that begins: One thing my faith has been teaching me lately is...

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Father, bring truth and love together in me. Keep me from treating people like assignments. Let my character support my words, and give me courage to speak because I truly care. Make Your love visible in the life I share. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

People need to see what the message of Jesus is making of you.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against the United States Army, “Pfc. Desmond Doss.”

The Most Loving Thing

READ | Mark 2:13-17

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Inviting someone toward Jesus is an act of love.*

THE STORY

The Substitute Preacher in the Snow

On a snowy Sunday in January 1850, fifteen year old Charles Spurgeon was trying to get to church when the weather forced him into a small Methodist chapel in Colchester, England. Only a handful of people had shown up.

The regular minister never arrived, so a man from the congregation stood up to preach. He had no polish and kept repeating one simple invitation from the book of Isaiah: “Look unto me, and be ye saved.” Then he looked straight at the young visitor in the back and urged him to look to Jesus.

Spurgeon later called that morning the turning point of his life. Within a few years, he was preaching to thousands every week in London. The man who gave him that clear invitation was an ordinary church member whose name we do not even know.

He simply made the next step clear. A teenager walked in from the snow confused and walked out knowing what he was being invited to trust.

GO DEEPER

A Call Across a Dividing Line

Levi sat at a tax booth collecting money for the Roman government. To his neighbors, that booth meant greed and betrayal. Religious leaders had already decided what kind of

person he was. Jesus walked up to the booth and said, “Follow me and be my disciple.”

Jesus gave a clear invitation, and Levi said yes. Soon afterward, Levi threw a dinner where Jesus sat with other tax collectors and people the community had written off.

The religious leaders asked why Jesus would eat with people like that. They believed staying good meant keeping a safe distance from anyone considered sinful. Jesus answered, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor, sick people do.” Healing requires moving toward the people who are hurting.

Jesus’ invitation offered both welcome and change. He met Levi right where he was and invited him to leave the booth behind. Our invitations can have the same tone: clear, warm, and free. We can say that following Jesus matters while giving people room to answer for themselves.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Mark 2:13-17 again. What two words did Jesus say to Levi, and what did Levi do right afterward?*

BRING IT HOME

Make the Invitation Personal and Honest

A general announcement is easy to ignore. A personal invitation says, I would like you there with me. Explain why it matters to you and why you thought of them. Offer to sit together, meet them at the door, and answer practical questions ahead of time.

Then leave room for a real answer. Avoid repeated pressure or guilt. The most loving invitation stays an invitation. If the person says no, keep loving them the same way you did before you asked.

> **PAUSE** *What feelings come up when you imagine inviting your person to take a spiritual step?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **What invitation helped you take a step toward Jesus?**

02 **How can you make an invitation feel personal and safe?**

03 **How will you respond if the answer is no?**

> **MY ONE** *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Offer a Clear Invitation

Invite your person to a service, group, meal, or conversation connected to faith. Be specific, and offer to go with them.

Try: I have been part of

, and I thought of you because

. Would you like to come with me?

PRAY FOR THE ONE

> *Jesus, thank You for inviting me to follow You. Give me courage to offer a clear, gracious invitation. Remove pressure from my words and fear from my heart. Help me honor the response and keep loving faithfully. Amen.*

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Love invites and leaves the other person free.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against the Spurgeon Library, “Who Was Charles Spurgeon?”

The Courage to Ask

READ | John 1:43-46

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Sometimes the best answer to an objection is simply, "Come and see."*

THE STORY

How Can You Hate Me?

In 1983, Daryl Davis was a twenty five year old Black musician playing piano at the Silver Dollar Lounge in Frederick, Maryland. After one set, a white man came up, amazed. He told Daryl he had never heard a Black man play like that. As they talked, the man mentioned that he was a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

Daryl stayed and got curious. Over the years that followed, he sought out Klan members and leaders and asked to sit down with them. He listened. He asked questions. His central question was simple: "How can you hate me when you don't even know me?"

Some of those conversations turned into real friendships. And some of those friends eventually walked away from the Klan. By his own count, about two hundred people have left and given him their robes.

Daryl says those people converted themselves. He just kept showing up, kept talking, and let people get close enough to see him clearly.

GO DEEPER

An Objection Met with an Open Door

Philip found his friend Nathanael and told him he had found the one the Scriptures promised: Jesus from Nazareth. Nathanael was skeptical right away. “Nazareth! Can anything good come from Nazareth?” It was a small, unimpressive town, and Philip’s claim did not fit Nathanael’s expectations.

Philip kept it simple: “Come and see for yourself.” His invitation was confident, but it left Nathanael free to check it out on his own. A personal encounter could go farther than any debate.

When Nathanael walked up, Jesus showed that He already knew him. Jesus welcomed the honest question and drew him closer.

Questions can be a good sign. The Gospels, the four books in the Bible about Jesus’ life, invite readers to look carefully at what He said and did. Confident faith can say, “Let’s look at it together.” And when we don’t know an answer, we can say so.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read John 1:43-46 again. What was Nathanael’s objection, and what was Philip’s whole answer?*

BRING IT HOME

Trade Defensiveness for Curiosity

When someone objects, ask what they mean and how they got there. The same sentence can carry an intellectual question, a painful church experience, grief over an unanswered prayer, or fear of change. Find the real question first.

Practice a few calm phrases: That’s a fair question. I don’t know. I would be glad to look into it with you. Humility makes the conversation safer, and your beliefs stay just as strong.

> **PAUSE** *Which possible objection makes you most hesitant to invite your person?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **How do you react when someone challenges your faith?**

02 **What can you confidently share without pretending to be an expert?**

03 **What "come and see" experience could you offer your person?**

> **MY ONE** *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Practice Three Honest Responses

Get ready to respond to skepticism calmly: That's a fair question. I don't know, but we can explore it together. Come and see for yourself.

Write down the question you are most afraid of, and the gracious response you want to practice.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Jesus, replace my fear with quiet confidence. Keep me from getting defensive and help me welcome honest questions. When I do not know an answer, make me humble. Help me point people toward You. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

A simple "come and see" can open a door.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against NPR, “How One Man Convinced 200 Ku Klux Klan Members to Give Up Their Robes” (2017).

When the Answer Is Not Yet

READ | Mark 10:17-22

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Jesus lets people walk away, and He keeps loving them.*

THE STORY

Two Friends Choose Different Roads

In the 1940s, Billy Graham and Charles Templeton were gifted young preachers who traveled and worked together. Many people thought Templeton was the more naturally talented speaker of the two.

Then Templeton began questioning the core beliefs of the Christian faith. The more he studied, the deeper his doubts grew, and he eventually walked away from ministry and from faith. Graham wrestled with many of the same questions but made a different decision. He chose to trust God and the Bible.

Their friendship did not lead to the same ending. Graham had to let his friend make his own choice. Each man went down the road he believed he had to take.

Love stays real whatever answer the other person gives. Sometimes faithfulness means speaking honestly, grieving what changes, and respecting someone else's freedom.

GO DEEPER

Love That Does Not Take Control

A wealthy man ran up to Jesus, knelt down, and asked a serious question: What do I need to do to have eternal life? Jesus moved the conversation past a checklist to the thing that had the strongest grip on the man's heart. He invited him to sell what he

owned, give to the poor, and follow Him. That was a cost the man was not willing to pay.

Mark includes an important detail: “Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him.” The challenge came from care.

The man walked away sad, and Jesus let him go. He kept the invitation clear and respected the man’s freedom to choose.

For this man it was money. For someone else it may be approval, control, ambition, resentment, or relying only on themselves. Jesus points out what controls us because He loves us and wants us to be free.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Mark 10:17-22 again. Find the sentence in verse 21 about how Jesus felt. When did He feel that way: before or after the man walked away?*

BRING IT HOME

Keep Loving When the Answer Disappoints You

A “no” can feel like a personal judgment. Bring that feeling to God before it turns into pressure, embarrassment, or pulling away. Your part is being faithful. The response belongs to them and to God.

Keep the friendship real. Keep caring about their work, family, joys, and struggles. Let your friendship be real for its own sake. Love keeps the door open without standing in the doorway demanding an answer.

> **PAUSE** *How have you responded in the past when someone turned down a spiritual invitation?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **What makes rejection feel personal to you?**

02 **How can you show that your friendship is not going anywhere?**

03 **What outcome do you need to hand back to God?**

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Prepare a Gracious No

Decide ahead of time how you will respond if your invitation is turned down: Thanks for being honest. No pressure at all. I am still really glad we are friends.

Pray for the freedom to keep loving without pulling away or pushing harder.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Father, teach me to love as Jesus loved: honestly and without control. When someone says no or not yet, protect me from shame, frustration, and withdrawal. Keep the door of friendship open and help me trust You to keep pursuing them. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

God's invitation keeps going after your person says no.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details drawn from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, "The Tree Stump Prayer," and Charles Templeton's memoir.

Make Room for Questions

READ | John 20:24-29

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Honest doubt needs a patient community.*

THE STORY

A Course Built Around Questions

Alpha began at Holy Trinity Brompton, a church in London, in 1977 as a course for people already inside the church. In 1990, a pastor named Nicky Gumbel began reshaping it for people outside the church who wanted room to explore Christianity.

The format was simple and relational. People shared a meal, heard a short talk, and then talked about what they really thought. Questions were the whole point of the group.

Over time, Alpha spread across churches, cultures, and countries. Millions of people have been part of it. But the basic setting stayed ordinary: a table, a conversation, and permission to be honest before reaching a conclusion.

Christians can make a safe place for questions and still be clear about what they believe. It takes enough patience and security to let someone else examine those beliefs without being rushed, embarrassed, or pushed out of the room.

GO DEEPER

Doubt Held Inside Community

Thomas, one of Jesus' twelve closest followers, missed the first time the risen Jesus appeared to the group. His friends told him what they had seen. Thomas wanted proof, and he named exactly what he would need to see. His words were blunt, but they were honest.

A week later, Thomas was still with the group. That detail says something beautiful about them. They kept him in the group while he doubted, and he kept showing up. His doubt stayed close enough to faith for something to happen.

Jesus came and spoke to Thomas personally. He showed him the very wounds Thomas had asked about and invited him to believe. Thomas answered, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus met the doubter with kindness.

Jesus’ risen body still carried the scars of the cross. Christian hope looks pain in the face and points to a Savior who suffered, overcame death, and is strong enough to handle our questions.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read John 20:24-29 again. Where was Thomas when Jesus showed up the second time?*

BRING IT HOME

Be a Place Where Honesty Can Stay

People hide their questions when they expect a quick correction or alarm. Respond first with gratitude: Thank you for trusting me with that. Then gently ask what experiences or concerns sit beneath the question.

Take your time with the answer. Offer to read, look it up, pray, or talk with someone you both trust. The goal is to keep the person close to truth, love, and the possibility of meeting Jesus.

> **PAUSE** *Which questions have been hard for you to admit around other Christians?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **How do you feel when someone else expresses doubt?**

---

02 **What may be beneath your person's questions?**

03 **How could you explore a hard question together?**

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Ask What They Really Wonder

Give your person clear permission to ask: If you could ask God one honest question, what would it be?

Listen to the answer without rushing. If it fits, offer to look into it together.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Jesus, thank You for meeting honest people in their honest questions. Make me patient and unafraid. Give me humility when I do not know, wisdom to seek truth, and compassion for the story beneath every doubt. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

In a patient community, questions can become doorways.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against Alpha UK, "About Alpha," and Alpha USA, "What Is Alpha?"

Bring Them into Community

READ | Acts 2:42-47

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Sometimes the next step toward Jesus is meeting people who make His welcome real.*

THE STORY

A Church for People Left Outside

In 1865, William and Catherine Booth began working among the poorest people in London's East End. William preached on the street outside a pub, and the movement that became the Salvation Army started in streets and rented halls.

Many of the people who responded did not feel welcome in the established churches of the day. Poverty, addiction, criminal records, and bad reputations followed them through the doors. The Booths realized they needed to build a place ready to receive them.

So they built a community that worshiped together and also met practical needs. Meetings took place in dance halls, bowling alleys, and outdoors. The setting itself told people they could come near just as they were.

Community became a bridge because someone prepared it for the people who were actually coming. The welcome was built into the room.

GO DEEPER

A Family That People Could See

After Jesus rose from the dead and returned to heaven, His followers in Jerusalem formed the very first church. Acts 2 describes what their life together looked like. They learned

together, ate together, prayed together, and shared what they had with anyone in need. They met in the temple courts and in each other's homes.

Notice the last line: "each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved." People were drawn in by what they saw. They watched ordinary people share meals, care for each other, and worship with joy. Community gave the message of Jesus a face.

Healthy Christian community is a family where grace is practiced in front of people who are still deciding what they believe. Christian communities have their flaws, and still they are meant to show the welcome of Jesus across every difference.

Sometimes a person begins to understand forgiveness by watching an apology, generosity by receiving a meal, and hope by watching people walk through grief together.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Acts 2:42-47 again. Make a list of everything this community did together. Which of those could your person experience with you?*

BRING IT HOME

Choose the Bridge for the Person

People are ready for different settings. One person may welcome a Sunday service. Another may feel safer at dinner, a service project, a small group, or a cookout. Love thinks about the individual.

Introduce your person to a few friends who welcome people well, and stay by their side. Explain anything unfamiliar without embarrassment. Afterward, check in with a simple question: What was that like for you?

> **PAUSE** *What part of your church community would feel most approachable to your person?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **What makes walking into a church feel intimidating?**

02 **Who in your community welcomes people naturally?**

03 **How can you stay attentive after your person arrives?**

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Plan a Bridge Experience

Choose one community setting that fits your person's comfort and interests. Invite them personally and plan to stay with them.

List the practical details that would remove guesswork for them: time, location, how long it lasts, childcare, what to wear, and who will be there.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Jesus, thank You for bringing me into Your family. Help our church reflect Your welcome. Show me the right setting for my person, and make me attentive to every detail that can help them feel safe, known, and included. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Belonging can become the bridge that belief travels across.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against Salvation Army International, “History.”

Planting for a Future Harvest

READ | 1 Corinthians 3:5-9

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Faithfulness matters even when someone else sees the harvest.*

THE STORY

A Victory with Thousands of Hands

William Wilberforce became the public face in Parliament of the British campaign to end the slave trade, and he was one of thousands of people in it. Thomas Clarkson gathered evidence. Granville Sharp helped organize. Olaudah Equiano, who had been enslaved himself, wrote about what he had lived through. Ordinary people signed petitions and refused to buy sugar grown by enslaved people.

Wilberforce brought bills to end the trade again and again, and Parliament voted them down again and again. Years went by while the campaigners kept documenting the trade, changing public opinion, building support, and trying again.

In 1807, Parliament finally abolished the British slave trade. Slavery itself continued in British colonies for decades, and freedom came only through further struggle. Even the celebrated victory was one stage of unfinished work.

No single person could claim the harvest. Some researched, some spoke, some organized, some voted, and many never saw the full result.

GO DEEPER

Different Hands in the Same Field

The church in Corinth had started choosing sides between its leaders. Some said they followed Paul. Others said they followed Apollos. Paul shut the competition down. He said he and Apollos were just servants with different jobs. One planted. Another watered. Neither one could make anything grow.

Farming takes patience and teamwork. The person planting the seed may not be there at harvest. The person watering depends on work that came before. Every stage matters, and the field belongs to God.

This brings freedom to our relationships. You may be the first Christian someone trusts, the person who answers one question, the friend who repairs damage someone else caused, or the one who offers an invitation after years of unseen preparation. Accept your part without needing to see the whole story.

Only God gives new life. Remembering that keeps us humble when someone responds and hopeful when nothing seems to be happening. Our part still matters, because God chooses to work through our words, prayers, and friendships.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 again. According to verse 7, what really matters?*

BRING IT HOME

Celebrate the Work You May Never See

Thank God for the people who played a part in your story at different stages. Some may never know what their faithfulness became.

If another Christian connects well with your person, celebrate it. Make introductions, share the load, and step back when it makes sense. The goal is for your person to flourish with Jesus.

PAUSE *Are you willing to be one faithful chapter, even if you never read the ending?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 Who planted or watered truth in your life?

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02 What role may God be giving you right now?

---

03 Where do comparison or a sense of ownership affect your motives?

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Thank Another Worker

Thank someone who helped shape your faith or who is investing in your one person.

Write a short message naming the specific thing they did that you are grateful for.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

God of the harvest, thank You for every person who planted and watered in my life. Help me receive my part with joy. Free me from comparison and ownership. Use my faithfulness, and receive all the credit for the growth. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

You may plant a seed whose shade another generation enjoys.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against the UK Parliament, “1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade.”

Believe What Grace Can Do

READ | Acts 9:26-28

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Sometimes a person needs someone willing to believe that grace is writing a new story.*

THE STORY

The Captain Who Faced His Past

John Newton spent years in the business of trafficking enslaved Africans and captained slave ships. His first steps toward Christian faith did not immediately pull him out of the trade or make him see how evil it was.

Over time, his life changed. Newton left the sea, became a pastor, and wrote hymns, including “Amazing Grace.” He also became a friend and mentor to a young member of Parliament named William Wilberforce, who was thinking about leaving politics for ministry.

Newton urged Wilberforce to stay in public life. Later, Newton published a firsthand account of the cruelty of the slave trade and supported the campaign to end it. He named his own responsibility and used his experience to fight the system he had once served.

Experiencing God’s forgiveness made Newton see his past more clearly. Even a terrible history can give way to real change, and that change has to show up in how a person lives.

GO DEEPER

A Reputation Grace Had Begun to Rewrite

Saul, who would later be known as Paul, arrived in Jerusalem with a terrifying history. He had arrested and hurt followers of

Jesus. Now he claimed to be one of them. The believers were afraid of him, and that fear made sense. Grace and wisdom can work together.

A man named Barnabas stepped into that tension. He took Saul seriously, listened to how Jesus had met him, saw real evidence of change, and brought him to the church leaders. Barnabas used the trust others had in him to open a door for Saul.

Sometimes people need someone in their corner. They need a person willing to say, "I see what God is doing in you, and I want to help others see it too." Barnabas's name actually means "Son of Encouragement."

Every one of us needs this same grace. Saul's past was unusually public, but all of us need forgiveness, change, and a new future. Because God's kindness tells the truth about us, we can learn to recognize real change in others.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Acts 9:26-28 again. What three things did Barnabas tell the apostles about Saul?*

BRING IT HOME

Speak Hope with Wisdom

Encouragement grows from truth, and trust can grow at a healthy pace. Point to specific signs of growth, like honesty, consistency, humility, or a willingness to be corrected. Specific encouragement is more believable than big claims.

Offer to help open a next door through an introduction, a group, a mentor, or a place to serve. Keep healthy boundaries along the way. Kindness and wisdom work together.

> **PAUSE** *Who believed grace could change you before others could see it?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **Whose past makes it hard for you to hope for them?**

02 **What evidence of grace can you name in that person?**

03 **What door could you help open?**

> **MY ONE** *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Name the New Story

Encourage someone by naming a specific change or quality you see growing in them. Speak hope they can believe.

Try: I have noticed

in you, and it encourages me because

.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Jesus, thank You that my past does not have the final word. Give me eyes to recognize Your grace in others. Make me wise, hopeful, and willing to encourage the person who needs help stepping into a new chapter. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Encouragement helps people believe that grace may be telling the truth about them.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against the Cowper and Newton Museum, "John Newton," and the National Portrait Gallery.

Love People, Not Projects

READ | John 13:1-17

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

ONE TRUTH *Love like Jesus serves people for their good.*

THE STORY

Nothing Stops a Bullet Like a Job

In 1986, Father Greg Boyle became pastor of Dolores Mission, the poorest Catholic parish in Los Angeles. The neighborhood of Boyle Heights had more gang activity than almost anywhere in the city. Young people were dying on the streets around his church.

Most people treated the gang members as a problem to be removed. Boyle treated them as people to be known. In 1988, he and members of his church started finding jobs for young people who wanted out of gang life. That work grew into Homeboy Industries, now the largest gang rehabilitation program in the world. Its motto: “Nothing stops a bullet like a job.”

Today Homeboy runs a bakery, a café, and other businesses, and offers tattoo removal, counseling, and job training. Former rivals work side by side.

Boyle often describes the goal as kinship: people on both sides of the line becoming simply “us.” He has buried many young men he loved, and he still treats every person who walks through the door as family.

GO DEEPER

The Towel and the Unsettled Room

In Jesus' day, washing someone's dusty feet was a servant's job. On the night before His death, Jesus got up from dinner, wrapped a towel around His waist, and knelt in front of His followers. The one they called Teacher and Lord chose the lowest job in the room.

Jesus knew exactly who He was serving. Peter would deny knowing Him that same night. The others would run away. Judas had already agreed to betray Him. Still, Jesus washed their feet. John says Jesus "loved them to the very end."

When people become projects, our service starts keeping score. We count attendance, gratitude, agreement, and visible progress. Jesus picks up the towel because love comes from who He is.

Peter at first refused to let Jesus wash his feet. Jesus told him he needed to receive it. Following Jesus begins with receiving His care. Then He tells us to do for others what He has done for us.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read John 13:1-17 again. Jesus washed Judas's feet too. What does that tell you about the kind of love He is asking us to give?*

BRING IT HOME

Serve Without a Hidden Contract

Ask yourself what you quietly expect in return for caring. Do you grow cold when the person doesn't come to church, respond, or change? Bring that disappointment to God and let go of the deal.

Serving freely still leaves room for limits. Jesus sometimes stepped away, said no, and refused demands that did not fit His purpose. Healthy boundaries keep care from turning into resentment. Give what you can give sincerely, and let love stay free.

PAUSE *Would you keep caring for your person if you never saw a spiritual response?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 What result are you most tempted to demand?

02 How can you honor your person's freedom?

03 What healthy boundary will help your love stay sincere?

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Serve with No Strings

Do one thoughtful thing that creates no obligation and expects no spiritual response. Let it be complete the moment you give it.

Afterward, resist checking whether it produced the result you hoped for.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Jesus, You loved and served without manipulation. Purify my motives. Help me see a person, not a project. Teach me to offer truth, invitation, and care while honoring freedom and keeping healthy boundaries. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Love leaves the response to the other person.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against Homeboy Industries, “Our Story”; Loyola Marymount University, “Father Gregory Boyle, S.J.”; and America Magazine’s review of Tattoos on the Heart.

One Person Can Reach Another

READ | Acts 9:10-19

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

> **ONE TRUTH** *God often answers one person's prayer through another person's obedience.*

THE STORY

You Teach Him

In the early 1930s, a young man named Dawson Trotman began meeting with a sailor named Les Spencer in Southern California. They spent hours praying, reading the Bible, and memorizing Scripture together. It was personal and small enough to fit into ordinary evenings.

When one of Spencer's shipmates noticed the change in his life and wanted to learn too, Spencer brought him to Trotman. He expected Trotman to start the same process with the new sailor.

Trotman had a better idea. He told Spencer, "You teach him." Spencer did, and soon those sailors were helping others. Eventually, more than a hundred men aboard the battleship USS West Virginia were involved. That simple pattern grew into a ministry called The Navigators.

It spread because Trotman kept handing the work to others. Trotman helped Spencer, Spencer helped another sailor, and that sailor could help someone else. One faithful friendship became a chain of ordinary people reaching each other.

GO DEEPER

Courage with a Street Address

Right after Saul met Jesus on the road, God spoke to a believer named Ananias. The instructions were specific enough to scare

him: go to Straight Street, find the house of Judas, and ask for Saul from Tarsus. Ananias knew who Saul was. Saul had come to town with authority to arrest people like him. Ananias told God plainly what he had heard.

God answered Ananias's fear with a clear purpose and repeated the instruction. Saul still seemed dangerous, but God's direction became bigger than the risk.

So Ananias went. He walked into the house, put his hands on Saul, and said, "Brother Saul." With those two words, he welcomed a former enemy into a new family before Saul had proven anything. Saul's sight came back, he was baptized, and he got his strength back.

Jesus chose to send Ananias. God often answers prayer through ordinary people who are willing to go. Ananias played his part and then disappears from the story. Sometimes obedience means being essential for a moment and unnoticed afterward.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Acts 9:10-19 again. What were the first two words Ananias said to Saul? Why do you think those words mattered so much?*

BRING IT HOME

Turn Intention into an Appointment

Good intentions can stay imaginary for months. Give your obedience a name, a time, and a place. Put the call on the calendar. Send the text. Pick the day. Being specific turns desire into movement.

If your fear is reasonable, use wisdom. Bring a friend, meet in a good setting, and stay safe. Courage is a clear and wise yes to what God has asked.

> **PAUSE** *What specific step have you kept vague because making it concrete feels uncomfortable?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **What fear do you need to name honestly before God?**

02 **What is your next specific action?**

03 **How might grace change the way you talk to your person?**

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Put an Address on Obedience

Turn one good intention into a concrete action with a person, a place, and a time. Send the message, schedule the meal, make the apology, or offer the invitation.

Complete this sentence: I will

with

on

.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

Lord, I bring You my honest fear. Make Your voice louder than my hesitation. Show me the specific step in front of me and give

me courage to take it. Use ordinary obedience in ways only You can see. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

Stories that change the world often begin with one person walking to one address.

SOURCE NOTE | Story details verified against The Navigators, “History of The Navigators.”

There Is Always Room for One More

READ | Luke 15:1-7

Tap to read it in the free Bible App (NLT) ›

> **ONE TRUTH** *The search for one is fueled by the joy of a God who welcomes people home.*

THE STORY

Rejoice with Me

Thirty days ago, you started with this same story. Jesus told it because religious leaders were complaining that He welcomed sinners and ate with them.

A shepherd discovered that one sheep was missing. He left the ninety nine in a safe place, searched until he found the lost one, put it on his shoulders, and carried it home with joy.

The story ends with a party: “Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep.”

For thirty days, you have named, prayed, noticed, listened, served, shared, and invited. The journey keeps going after the calendar ends. The Shepherd’s heart keeps making room for one more.

GO DEEPER

The Joy at the End of the Search

Joy changes the way we care for people. Pressure makes us anxious about results. Joy helps us stay hopeful, patient, and present. We can take each person seriously and still leave the outcome in God’s hands.

Notice that the sheep comes home on the shepherd's shoulders. The shepherd provides the strength and carries the weight. That is what Jesus does for us. He takes the first step toward us and keeps carrying what we could never carry alone. He went all the way to the cross and rose again so there would be room for us in the Father's house.

Luke 15 keeps going after the sheep. Jesus tells about a lost coin, and then about two lost sons. In every story, something precious is found and someone throws a celebration. Jesus invites us to come home to God and to share His joy when someone else does.

You may have seen real progress over these thirty days. You may have noticed a small opening, run into resistance, or seen nothing change at all. Every one of those calls for the same response: keep caring, stay available, and trust God with what comes next.

> **READ AGAIN** *Read Luke 15:1-7 one more time. Read it as the person who was carried home. How does it feel different now than it did on Day 1?*

BRING IT HOME

Let the Calendar End Without Ending the Love

Look back at what God has grown in you. Maybe you listen more patiently, pray more specifically, or feel less need to control. Those changes are part of the fruit. Thank Him for them.

Choose a next rhythm for this friendship that you can keep up, and stay open to another name God may put in front of you. "Go One More" is a way of seeing people through Jesus' joyful heart.

> **PAUSE** *Look back over the last twenty nine days. Where did you notice God at work in your person, your friendship, or your own heart?*

NAME THE ONE

Make It Personal

01 **Which step of obedience are you most grateful you took?**

02 **What have you learned about loving without control?**

03 **What ongoing commitment will you make after today?**

MY ONE *Write one name or one next step here:*

TAKE ONE STEP

Write the Next Chapter

Choose one commitment for the next thirty days that you can actually keep: continued prayer, a regular meal, another invitation, reading the Bible together, or simply staying a faithful friend.

Write your commitment and one date when you will look back at it with God.

PRAY FOR THE ONE

God, thank You for searching for me and welcoming me with joy. Thank You for the person You placed on my heart. Keep working in both of us. Keep me attentive, courageous, patient, and free from control. Make my life a place where there is always room for one more. Amen.

ONE TRUTH TO CARRY

The calendar ends here. The Shepherd's search goes on.

SOURCE NOTE | Biblical story and teaching from Luke 15:1-7.