

10-DAY DEVOTIONAL

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The
GOD
of the
WAY

A JOURNEY INTO THE
STORIES, PEOPLE, AND FAITH
THAT CHANGED THE WORLD FOREVER

DESCRIPTION

This reading plan includes ten daily devotions based on Kathie Lee Gifford's and Rabbi Jason Sobel's book *The God of the Way: A Journey into the Stories, People, and Faith That Changed the World Forever*. This study will explore how the world-changing lives of key men and women in the Bible can offer life, hope, and direction for your life today.

DAY 1

THE GOD OF THE HOW AND WHEN

Bible Verses

“This I recall to my heart—
therefore I have hope:
Because of the mercies of *ADONAI*
we will not be consumed,
for His compassions never fail.
They are new every morning!
Great is Your faithfulness.
‘*ADONAI* is my portion,’ says my soul,
‘therefore I will hope in Him.’
ADONAI is good to those who wait for Him,
to the soul that seeks Him” (Lamentations 3:21-25 TLV).

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have boldness to enter into the Holies by the blood of *Yeshua*. He inaugurated a new and living way for us through the curtain—that is, His flesh. . . . So let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and body washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the unwavering confession of hope, for He who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:19-20, 22-23 TLV).

Devotional Content

KATHIE

The stories of Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Joshua, and Mary the mother of Jesus all had one thing in common: each story represented a promise from God. Some of those promises, however, took centuries before they were fulfilled, requiring a great deal of waiting from the one who had received the promise. And, as any believer can tell you, waiting on God is one of the hardest things to do. Trusting Him in the process is equally difficult, but it's in the *believing* that we truly please the God who made the promise.

In the case of Abraham and Sarah, the Bible tells us in Genesis 12:2 that God told Abram (his name at the time) that He would make him the father of a great nation. To do this, he of course would have to have an heir, though it seemed impossible because his wife Sarai (her name at the time) had been barren for many years. In fact, Sarai actually laughed when she

heard that she would become pregnant and bear a child.

Sure enough, though, decades after God's initial promise to them, their son, Isaac, was born when Abraham was one hundred years old and Sarah was ninety (see Genesis 17:17; 21:5)! Of course, this was the beginning of the great nation of the Hebrews. This story continued through enslavement in Egypt and God's promise to deliver them and take them to a land of their own—the "promised" land—with Moses in the lead. After Moses died, his faithful follower Joshua lead the Hebrew nation to the Promised Land. Again, God's promise took awhile to be fulfilled, but forty years after leaving Egypt the Hebrews eventually entered the "land flowing with mild and honey" (Exodus 3:8 NASB).

Many centuries later a young Hebrew virgin named Mary was visited by an angel who told her she had found favor with God and would bear a child she would call Jesus, which means "God saves." Through Jesus the Eternal Deliverer, God fulfilled His promise that Abraham's seed would be a blessing to all nations. And when the Savior of the world came into the physical world He had created with His Father in the beginning, the God of the How and When continued to build His Kingdom through the lives of the billions of followers of Jesus (Yeshua), the Savior of all humankind.

As a follower of Jesus, you "live and move and have [your] being" in the One who created you and loves you with an everlasting love (Acts 17:28 NIV). You are part of this Kingdom-building promise of God, and as you trust in God's timing and in His faithfulness to fulfill His promises you participate in God's plans to redeem humankind. Be patient, know that He who promised is faithful, and rest in the Savior who gave everything to share His promises with you. Blessed be the holy name of the God of the How and When!

Respond

How have you responded to God's promise of forgiveness of sin and eternal life through Jesus' death and resurrection?

In what ways have you seen God's faithfulness in the past?

What does it look like for you to trust in God's timing and participate in His plans to redeem people in your realm of influence?

DAY 2

ABRAHAM: BELIEVING THE PROMISE

Bible Verses

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV).

“ ‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,’
declares the LORD.
‘As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts’ ” (Isaiah 55:8-9 NIV).

“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him”
(Hebrews 11:6 NKJV).

Devotional Content

RABBI JASON

Abraham is one of the most influential figures in the Bible. God called him and his family to migrate approximately six hundred miles to Haran. Later in another bold step of faith he left Haran with his nephew Lot “not knowing where he was going” (Hebrews 11:8 TLV). Instead of trying to figure out where and how, he chose to trust God’s guidance as he moved his caravan farther into the unknown.

As Abraham and his caravan set up camp some 400 miles past Haran, God appeared to him speaking comforting, covenantal words and promises. God chose Abraham to receive physical and spiritual blessings. On the physical side, Abraham would become the father of the Jewish people through a son, Isaac. Out of this line, Messiah would be born. On the spiritual side, Abraham had a unique relationship with his Creator.

Did Abraham sometimes mess up? Of course he did. Yet God quickly forgave this man He had called to be the father of a great nation. God continued telling Abraham to expect to have heirs even though, by this time, he and Sarah were well past the childbearing years. What God

was doing did not always make sense to Abraham's natural mind, but his faith did not waver because he trusted and rested in God's faithfulness and timing.

God's timing in our lives is one of those things that often trips us up. We sometimes wonder what He is doing and question if He is even listening. We struggle like Job: "I cry out to you, God, but you do not answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me" (Job 30:20 NIV). But in the end, faith recognizes that God is wiser than we are and that He is outside of time. He sees the whole picture and is doing something bigger than we can imagine. As we acknowledge Him, trust Him, and lean not on our own understanding, He lights the path for us to follow (see Proverbs 3:5-6). Abraham recognized this and trusted God's faithfulness. As hard as it is at times, so should we.

Like many people, my life has had its ups and downs. Looking back, I can now appreciate those lingering seasons of wrestling and waiting, but I'm not going to try to sound all super-spiritual and say it's easy. I knew God had a plan for me and that He always provided, yet my endurance was wearing thin. I was weary, and nothing seemed to be happening. At times the silence was indeed loud. *How much longer, Lord? How long?*

When Abraham and Sarah were weary from wrestling and waiting, God renewed Abraham's faith with a new vision. Abraham realized God was in control and there was nothing he could do outside of believing God's promises. God's promises are never in doubt. When we endanger God's promises, there will be consequences, but that doesn't stop God from moving forward with His purposes. We can still trust Him when our field of vision is narrow. Sometimes when things seem impossible, we need to let God cast a new vision for us.

Respond

How do you respond when you are weary of waiting on God to answer your prayers?

How can time in God's Word renew your vision of God's plans for you?

How can your trust in God's timing and purposes impact your seasons of waiting on Him?

DAY 3

MARY: GOD'S HUMBLE SERVANT

Bible Verses

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.
For He who is mighty has done great things for me,
And holy is His name” (Luke 1:46–49 NKJV).

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage” (Philippians 2:5–6 NIV).

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:6–7 NIV).

Devotional Content

RABBI JASON

God chose perhaps His most unlikely vessel to set into motion the salvation of mankind: a teenage girl named Mary. Mary thought she was waiting for a wedding to a carpenter named Joseph, but something came to her that was far different—an improbable event she never would have dreamed of. A holy interruption. Much about Mary and her relationship with God is revealed when we read about her response to the angel when she was told she would give birth to the promised Messiah (see Luke 1:26–38). Mary showed tremendous humility of heart—the same humble quality we find in Yeshua (see Philippians 2:6–11).

A characteristic of humility is receiving. Probably understanding some, though not all, of the misunderstanding and scorn that would surely come, Mary embraced God’s new vision for her life without complaining or sarcasm. First Peter 5:5 tells us that “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (NKJV). You want God’s grace? Become humble. Mary was humble in spirit.

Being willing to decrease so that others can increase is the essence of humility (see John 3:30). It’s important to note, however, that I’m not talking about self-abasing. A truly humble person is secure and confident in God’s love. They know who they are. Genuine humility is not

thinking less of ourselves. It's thinking of ourselves less.

It also takes humility for us to be completely transparent before others, allowing them to speak into our lives, encourage us, sharpen us if needed, and help us in our own journeys. Notice that when the angel ended his time with Mary, he said, "Nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37 TLV). Mary needed to be transparent to receive that word and then live by it. She responded by humbly worshiping and magnifying the Lord (see verses 46–55).

Think of what obedience meant to this young girl. She needed to confront Joseph and risk a divorce. She had to face her neighbors, whose imaginations must have run wild. She had to confront her parents and Joseph's parents. But through all this confrontation and gossip, she was able to cling to the angel's promise to her and to Joseph's loyalty to her after his own angelic visit (see Matthew 1:18–25).

I find it interesting that Mary obeyed without hesitation. Obedience was her delight. Looking back at the times God has called me to do something, I have to ask, *Did I react like Mary?* Not all the time. There were moments of hesitation. I wonder what blessings from God I lost. Today, we often regard obedience as a weakness. Mary's example should correct our thinking. In Scripture, we can almost see that His will became her will. She willingly yielded to what God wanted for her instead of fighting for her self-defined life direction.

As in Mary's experience, faith and humility together will lead us to God's favor. To walk in our divine assignments and sing our unique songs, we will need to seek God's presence, understanding that He is the source of favor to open the doors that only He can open—doors that no man can shut. Humility is knowing that you are in God's control and, when the situation calls for it, having the bold faith to do what God has asked you to do.

Respond

How can following Mary's example of humility transform your relationship with God?

What has God asked you to do for Him? How have you responded in the past?

Where in your life do you need bold faith to do what God has asked you to do?

DAY 4

THE GOD OF HIS WORD

Bible Verses

“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path” (Psalm 119:105 NIV).

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1, 14 NIV).

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12 NIV).

Devotional Content

KATHIE

As I've grown in my knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures through decades of study and rabbinical trips to the Holy Land to deepen my experience, I've grown ever more passionate to pass along what many teachers, who have vastly more knowledge and insight than I do, have shared with me. One essential thing I've learned is that the entire Bible is one magnificent love story about the God who created all things and sustains all things and longs for all He created to return to Him.

RABBI JASON

I love God's Word. It encourages and, at times, it cuts like a sharp knife. It rebukes Satan, and it calms the churning waters of my soul. A healing, soothing balm, God's Word strengthens my heart and lengthens my days. It gives me the courage to walk in His ways. Filling us with hope, God's Word is the best news we will ever hear!

Jesus, who is the living Word, and the written Word, are both key to overcoming chaos (see John 1:1, 14). The idea of God's Word being part and parcel of the spiritual, immaterial part of Creation is essential to dealing with and defeating chaos in our lives. When we ignore God's Word, even out of ignorance, we experience chaos and emptiness. God's Word makes known the spiritual precepts and principles that bring wisdom, life, and blessing.

God's Word is the blueprint for our lives. When we understand and follow the wisdom of God's Word, which contains His divine design, we find life and blessing! God's Word is powerful. It can cut like a surgeon's knife, removing the unhealthy and ungodly thoughts, emotions, and habits (see Hebrews 4:12). It has the power to renew and restore. The Word of God is truth, and as Yeshua-Jesus says, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free!" (John 8:32 TLV).

God's Word provides wise counsel throughout our lives. It illuminates our next steps in the darkness. God doesn't always lay out the whole plan, but He shows us the next steps to take in faith. We can trust Him to continue guiding our path. God's Word also uncovers the shadows—the hidden faults or strongholds in our lives—and is powerful to show us His way and how we can grow in Him (see Psalm 119:105).

God's Word and the wisdom and divine promises contained within can empower us to overcome depression, fear, and anxiety. God's Word is a fantastic weapon that helps defend us against the attacking lies of the world and the devil. When used as God intended, it can help us kill the flesh, strengthen our spirit, and bring victory.

When we get inside the pages of the Bible, the Word of God gets inside us. It is powerful and creates change. Read it, study it, and learn about God, Yeshua, and the Holy Spirit. Discover how He worked through ordinary, flawed people like you and me. Soak in every word and let the Holy Spirit illuminate how the truth applies to your life. God's Word is alive and everything in it is for your benefit.

Respond

What has reading God's Word taught you about living God's way?

What are the consequences of living in defiance of God's Word?

In what ways can you experience freedom in knowing the truth of the Word?

DAY 5

YESHUA AND THE WOMAN: COME IN FAITH

Bible Verses

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30 NIV).

“[Jesus] said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering’ ” (Mark 5:34 NIV).

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (John 3:16-17 NIV).

Devotional Content

RABBI JASON

As John the apostle wrote, Yeshua is the Word, and He dwelt among us. As He traveled about touching the lives of those around Him, He encountered both critics and followers. There are numerous accounts in the Gospels of how Yeshua changed lives and even raised the dead. One such story stands out as a throng of people surrounded Him. A woman with a flow of blood for twelve years—a ritually unclean woman—reached out in faith and touched Jesus’ clothes, hoping to be healed.

It would have been socially and spiritually scandalous for an unclean woman to reach out and touch Yeshua. Still, this woman was in such a state of desperation that she risked doing the unthinkable. The woman in this story also knew Scripture and recognized Yeshua as Messiah. Her awareness of Him most likely came from her study of the Torah and other biblical writings available at the time. She was healed the moment she touched His garment—both physically and spiritually. Shame erased, she now knew her Savior personally.

In the middle of the pushing and shoving crowd, Jesus stopped and paid attention to her. He could have easily ignored her, but He didn’t. Once Yeshua felt her touch on His garment, He stopped. There’s also something special in Yeshua’s approach to this woman—and to all women for that matter. His interactions with women, inclusion of women, and treatment of women were a radical departure from the cultural norm of that day where the role of women

was minimal. The first followers of Yeshua followed His example by including and empowering women as leaders in the church (see Romans 16:1-4, 7; Acts 18:26; 21:9; and 1 Corinthians 16:19).

I believe women have a crucial role to play in the next move of God and the redemption of Israel. Women played a foundational and essential role in New Testament times, and they will once again in our day as we approach the return of the Lord. All followers of the Messiah, especially men, have a responsibility to encourage and support women as they pursue the call of God at this critical time in history.

When you place your faith in Yeshua-Jesus and order your life around Him and the Word of God, you can experience His living, delivering, glowing, ever overflowing, miraculous healing power. His death on that tree for you and me broke the power of the curse of the Fall so that God might bless you. Don't wait. Believe, receive—just come to Yeshua-Jesus, who is God in the flesh!

KATHIE

Jesus' miracles are certainly a huge part of the reason thousands began to follow Him and listen to Him. Many no doubt needed a personal miracle. Others were curious about this remarkable, young, and powerful teacher. Many of the miracles were physical healings of the body. Others were healings of the mind. Still other miracles involved the healing of the soul. And finally, the spectacular physical miracles. My point is that Jesus worked miracles because He was God *incarnate*, and, even as He said, "All things are possible with God" (Mark 10:27 NIV).

Respond

When have you displayed or witnessed a desperate act of faith in Jesus?

In what ways does Jesus personally meet your needs?

God's Word describes Jesus as God incarnate. How will you respond to this truth?

DAY 6

THE GOD WHO SEES

Bible Verses

“She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: ‘You are the God who sees me,’ for she said, ‘I have now seen the One who sees me’ ” (Genesis 16:13 NIV).

“ ‘For I,’ says the LORD, ‘will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst’ ” (Zechariah 2:5 NKJV).

“For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’ ” (Hebrews 13:5-6 NKJV).

Devotional Content

KATHIE

Ephesians 3:20 tells us that God will do “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (NIV). Although I had memorized that Scripture and prayed on it for years, it always surprises me when He actually does it! (Oh, me of little faith!) God not only shows up in every aspect of our lives; He shows off too!

I’ve often heard it said, “If you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans!” During a song writing session with Nicole C. Mullen, we originally intended to tell the story of Hagar, the handmaiden of Sarah, Abraham’s wife (you can read her story in Genesis 16 and 21). Hagar is the one who referred to God as the God Who Sees. What Nicole and I assumed we would end up with was a three-and-a-half-minute song. But as I sat down to finish it the Holy Spirit inspired me to continue and add the story of Ruth, of David, and of Mary Magdalene at the cross and at the tomb of Jesus. I realized that the God Who Sees delivered them all from despair. And this same God who never changes delivers us, too, from ours.

RABBI JASON

Part of my spiritual journey involved my friend John and his invitation to me to join him one evening at the messianic congregation led by Rabbi Jonathan Cahn. I had just turned twenty, had grown up Jewish, and had never attended a Christian church, so I did not know what to

expect.

Because I was searching for spiritual enlightenment and figured I needed all the help I could get, I was more than happy to join in as they prayed. It was the first time I had prayed to Yeshua-Jesus, and that night I prayed to receive Yeshua. I was given my first New Testament. Still unsure of what had just occurred, I took the small Bible home and hid it in my room. It would have been catastrophic if my parents had found out. Of course, my all-seeing mom, who had some sort of inner radar system honed in on her son's affairs, did just that. "What is this?" she confronted me, waving the Bible around like a red flag. "Don't tell me you're a Jew who believes in Jesus!" The lesson here is, don't try to hide anything from your mother—she sees everything!

I'm poking fun at loving moms, but God does see and know all things concerning us. God's eyes are always on us and He never leaves or forsakes us—God gives us the power through the Spirit to do what He's called us to do. He sees in the desert. He sees in the empty spaces. He sees you and me right where we are, whatever the circumstance. In all our pain and joy, we are never out of His sight. He hears our desperate cries and our joyful thanksgivings. Because He loves us so much, when He sees us, He doesn't just leave us. He touches us in ways that bring healing and transformation to our lives, and in many cases, the lives of those around us.

Respond

What does it mean to know God sees you? When has God shown up in your life?

What does God promise to those who are in despair and need assurance from God?

What needs and offerings of thanksgiving can you lay out before the Lord?

DAY 7

DAVID: FREEDOM FROM FEAR

Bible Verses

“I will bless *ADONAI* at all times.
His praise is continually in my mouth.
My soul boasts in *ADONAI*.
The humble ones hear of it and rejoice.
Magnify *ADONAI* with me
and let us exalt His Name together.
I sought *ADONAI*, and He answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears” (Psalm 34:2–5 TLV).

“Be gracious to me, O God!
For man has crushed me,
fighting all day he oppresses me.
My foes trample me all day.
For many are fighting me arrogantly.
In a day when I am afraid,
I will put my trust in You.
In God—I keep praising His word—
in God I trust, I will not fear.
What can mere flesh do to me?” (Psalm 56:2–5 TLV).

“Fear not, for I am with you,
be not dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you.
Surely I will help you.
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand’ (Isaiah 41:10 TLV).

Devotional Content

RABBI JASON

Have you ever found yourself just going along, doing life the best you can? Things are clicking, you’re making progress, and then *boom!* It seems everything begins to backfire. David surely experienced it. There he was—a faithful shepherd boy, picked by God and anointed to be the future king of Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him. He was clearly God’s man, which meant

smooth sailing ahead, right? Not even close. David found himself a fugitive. David was low. Fear can do that to us. There was a moment in 1 Samuel 21:11-16 when David had allowed fear to dominate him, depleting his faith.

Too many of us see God's promises as far off. We want to enter all that God has for us, but our fear reveals our lack of faith and stops us cold. Our doubt leads to disbelief, and we're caught in a trap. Our disbelief leads to disobedience, and disobedience leads to dismissal from God's blessing and presence. Faith, however, leads to trust. Trust leads to obedience, and obedience leads to blessing. When David was alone, his mind wandered, and fear crept in, causing his faith to waver. We must be careful what we allow into our minds. Fear is the currency of the world. Faith is the currency of God's Kingdom. Faith is an agreement with truth and what God says.

When David was at his lowest, he realized that God saw him in his distress. The God Who Sees brought the power of His presence. David wrote Psalm 34 to describe his recovery from his fears and anxiety. We can choose to project either fear or faith. When we maximize fear, we minimize God. When we maximize God, we minimize fear. David set his fear aside and chose to praise God, seek the Lord, place his faith and trust in God, and move forward with confidence in God's deliverance.

KATHIE

Like so many in the Bible, David was forced to wait for many years for God's promise to him to be fulfilled. During that time, he spent much of his energy running for his life and hiding from King Saul, who was jealous of him and wanted to kill him. David was forced to flee and hide in the wilderness and the caves of Judea. No longer celebrated. Now a hunted animal. Many of the psalms he wrote came about as he despaired in the desert. *Where is God?* he must have wondered. *Where are You, Lord?* We know he cried out in abject terror.

David was like so many of us today who are hiding in fear, terrified of our enemies. But just as David's story wasn't over yet, neither is ours. Fear is our most common adversary. But God wants to fight our battles for us. He wants to release us from our covers of darkness into His glorious light. If only we would follow God's commandment to "fear not." (See Genesis 15:1; Joshua 10:8; Psalm 46:2-3; Isaiah 41:10.)

Respond

When has fear compromised your faith?

What does God want to accomplish in your life that is hindered by fear?

How can David's choice to praise God, seek the Lord, place faith and trust in Him, and move forward with confidence in God's ability to deliver inspire you to face your fears with faith?

DAY 8

THE GOD OF THE OTHER SIDE

Bible Verses

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’ ” (Matthew 28:18-20 NIV).

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16 NIV).

[Paul writing to Timothy] “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:12-17 NIV).

Devotional Content

KATHIE

Since I was a teenager, I'd been traveling to the Holy Land to take part in intense rabbinical study trips. I was always hoping to learn more truth about the Scriptures and gain an even deeper understanding of what the Word of God said in its original Hebrew and Greek texts. On one trip led by Rod VanSolkema and his wife Libby, Rod began telling us the story from Matthew 14 when Jesus told to His disciples to get into their boat and meet Him on the other side of the lake, before He came walking to them on the water.

I had always assumed that Jesus meant “the other side” to simply mean the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Once Rod taught us that “the other side” also meant something very different from and more profound than just a physical location, the story took on much deeper

meaning. The area Jesus was telling his disciples to meet him was the Decapolis—villages inhabited by people who worshiped many gods and idols. They sacrificed babies to the gods Moloch and Chemosh and others and participated in all manner of sexual perversion. They were the opposite of a devout Jew and were considered unclean. We can only imagine how the twelve disciples reacted when they heard Jesus basically tell them to go to the ancient-day equivalent of Sin City!

What would we do today if Jesus asked us to do the same? Would we be as confused and terrified as the disciples were two thousand years ago? Or would we trust that He had a purpose for everything He said and did, and maybe if we followed Him He'd lead us on the adventure of a lifetime?

RABBI JASON

I went into bustling downtown Manhattan with my parents when merely walking along the crowded sidewalks, or at the subway station, or crossing the street, was overwhelming—especially to a waist-high six-year-old. Yet, because my dad or mom had a firm grip on my hand, I knew I was safe. We would make it to the other side. I kept a clenched hold on their hands, never wanting to drift from their sides, not taking any chances.

My parents guiding me was a shadow of Adonai guiding us. All-loving, all-knowing, and all-seeing, He takes us by the hand and goes to the other side with us. It might be a dangerous journey or through a dark storm, but as we clench our hands in His with trust, He will faithfully lead us. And not wanting to drift from His side, we gain a deeper intimacy with Him.

In another way, Yeshua went to the other side for us, and He calls His followers to meet Him where all the broken, lost, and desperate souls are and to serve them with His love. This calling is bigger than us. We can't do it on our own. Yet, while Yeshua calls us, He also takes our hands and guides us. Yeshua is the God of the Other Side. He is the one who never passes by but crosses over to meet us where we are. As we mature in Him and decide to go with His plan and not our own, He always goes with us to the other side.

Respond

What has Jesus done to prepare you to bring the gospel to “the other side”?

How does Jesus’ promise to be with you as you share His good news of salvation with the world motivate you to step out in faith?

How does sharing your faith in Jesus strengthen your faith?

DAY 9

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN: GOD OF THE OUTCAST

Bible Verses

“Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never be thirsty. The water that I give him will become a fountain of water within him, springing up to eternal life!” (John 4:13-14 TLV).

“On the last and greatest day of the Feast, *Yeshua* stood up and cried out loudly, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture says, “out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water’ ’ ” (John 7:37-38 TLV).

Devotional Content

RABBI JASON

Yeshua-Jesus crossed over accepted religious and cultural boundaries of His day to meet needs—literally face-to-face. He had love and compassion for outcasts and misfits. The Bible tells us that Yeshua came to a Samaritan town called Shechem, the location of Jacob’s well. The encounter between the Samaritan woman and Yeshua took place at Jacob’s well (see John 4:1-42).

Both the Jews and Samaritans had failed to see each other as God saw them. Yeshua saw the value and worth in the woman at the well and in the Samaritans as a people. Learning to see people like Yeshua sees them is essential. It means not focusing on externals like race, gender, religion, or socioeconomic class but instead on the reality of God’s image in each person. Viewing people through the lens of Yeshua makes it worth taking the risk to cross over to reach those who are different from us.

Most Jewish travelers avoided Samaria like the plague. They did not want to interact with the Samaritans who lived there. Conflict had existed between them for many centuries before Yeshua was even born. Based on their divisive differences, you can imagine how astonishing it was for the Samaritan woman to have a Jew and holy man like Yeshua conversing with her about spiritual things.

Jesus declared to the woman that He is the source of living water. The Samaritan woman was thirsty and needed water. Yeshua, knowing God’s will for that day, went to the “other side.” He intentionally visited her, understood her needs, and offered her living water. Yeshua’s living

water would wash away her past, cleanse her sins, and completely transform her. And the good news is, He is offering a drink of that same living water to us right now! And it's free! The only requirement is you must be thirsty like the Samaritan woman was.

KATHIE

We don't know what the Samaritan woman's name was, but we've all known women like her: soiled, abused, and ultimately discarded by way too many bad men in her life. She was an outcast among a people already considered outcasts by the Jews because they were of mixed blood. But she is the very person Jesus had on His mind and in His heart when He went to the well. He knew she would be there, and He had a personal message for her: "I see you and I know everything about the sins in your life. But I also see the beauty in you and the gifts inside of you that the world cannot see. Not yet."

Meeting Jesus changed her life. We must all ask the Lord to show us the people we look down on, the ones we feel superior to. The dirty ones. The ones who smell like cigarettes, whisky, and sex. Because there but for the grace of God go every one of us. Will our hearts be open to seeing the beauty in them as Jesus did? Will we be willing to invest our time and our treasure in their hidden gifts and unfulfilled dreams?

Respond

Who are you uncomfortable approaching with God's love and kindness? What is at the root of your discomfort?

What does it mean to see people as Yeshua-Jesus sees them?

How can you invest prayer, time, and treasure to open yourself to the beauty Jesus sees in others?

DAY 10

THE POWER OF UNITY

Bible Verses

[Jesus prayed,] “I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. . . . I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:11, 22–23 NIV).

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity” (Colossians 3:12–14 NIV).

Devotional Content

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The unity of God’s people, first on Sinai (see Exodus 19), then many years later in Jerusalem (see Acts 2), sparked the fire and wind of the Spirit, which then created a wildfire of transformation. I hold firmly to the fact that God’s *presence*, *power*, and *provision* are in direct proportion to the unity of His people. The book of Acts records incredible unity (see Acts 1:14; 2:1; 5:12), and the results were a great harvest (see Acts 2:41).

Jesus’ Great Commission can’t be fulfilled if we are apart from each other. Unity is the foundation and fruit of redemption. Unity began in Jerusalem, and then, over time, the Gospel went to all nations. The new believers (both Jew and Gentile) were in one accord, and then God moved.

Unity and oneness align heaven and earth, as we often pray in the Lord’s Prayer, “your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10 NIV). Wholeness and blessing come when God’s family loves one another and sacrificially unites to advance the Kingdom. The Kingdom we’re all waiting for won’t come if we, Jew and Gentile, are not united! Unity isn’t easy. For the Kingdom to come, we must surrender part of ourselves—our likes and desires—for the sake of the other person. We must be willing to listen to the other person and seek to understand them before we react. A house divided cannot stand, but a united house

can't be defeated. We need to act as one body of Messiah that doesn't take offense and that is defined by His love.

As we realize that the God of the Other Side reaches across boundaries to come to us, we must also reach across boundaries to reach each other (see Acts 10). Let's answer Yeshua's prayer and strive to be one—Jew and Gentile together reaching the world for Him (see John 17:11).

KATHIE

Let's be honest. It's easy to hurry by the homeless sleeping in the streets, cast judgment on the addicted shoving needles into their bodies, or the hookers on the street corners selling themselves to strangers to survive. We want to sit in our pews week after week, happy to pray for them and maybe send them some money, but certainly never venture into their stench to actually ask them their names and love them the way Jesus did. We want the government, or "someone else" to alleviate their suffering. Why isn't it working? Because we've left God out of the solution. We've provided a bed but not shared the hope that only God can provide. Serving in the name of Jesus and relying on His power and His Holy spirit to strengthen and guide brings His transforming power.

I don't want to be lukewarm. I want to be on fire to share God's love with the people who need it most. I want to meet Jesus at the "other side" and watch Him transform their lives, deliver them from their fears and their diseases and their hopelessness. We are supposed to tell them. Then we're supposed to show them by the way we live.

Respond

In what ways does unity express itself in the Body of Christ?

How is unity in Christ the foundation of reaching the world with His gospel of hope and salvation?

How will you show God's love to the other side by the way you live? Invite the Holy Spirit today to empower you to be part of God's plan to transform the lives of those who need Him.