

# WALKING *with* JESUS

Devotions for  
Autumn &  
Thanksgiving 2024

**SNEAK  
PEEK!**

Take a look  
inside

Editors of *Mornings with Jesus*

A GUIDEPOSTS DEVOTIONAL

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# WEDNESDAY

## OCTOBER 2

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*Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!*

PSALM 100:4 (ESV)

I'VE READ SEVERAL ARTICLES ABOUT the benefits of thankfulness. Studies show that cultivating feelings of gratitude leads to improved mental and physical health. Increased optimism helps us handle stress better, which in turn boosts our immune system. These studies always remind me that the Bible urges us to make a deliberate choice to have a grateful spirit.

Jesus exposed our human tendency toward a lack of gratitude in Luke 17. Ten lepers begged Him to heal them. Jesus told them to go to the priests; as they walked, they were healed. Only one man returned to thank Jesus. When I read Jesus's question, "Where are the nine?" I can't help wondering: Do I remember to thank Him for my blessings only one time out of ten?

I decided to be more intentional about developing the right attitude. I bought a journal to write down things for which I'm thankful. At first, I wondered if it might be hard to think of something to record every evening. But God helped me kick-start this habit the very first day. That morning I had prayed that I would hear from my children over the weekend. It had been a while since I'd talked with my sons; they hadn't returned my latest phone calls. Early in the evening, both of them phoned while I was talking with my daughter. I was able to merge the calls and talk to all three of my children at the same time.

Whenever I hesitate to write in my journal at bedtime, all I have to do is read that first entry. Then I think of all kinds of reasons to be grateful.

DIANNE NEAL MATTHEWS

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## FAITH STEP

Why not develop the habit of beginning or ending your day with gratitude for your blessings? List as many specific reasons to thank Jesus as you can think of.

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## SUNDAY OCTOBER 6

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*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come.*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 (HCSB)

**M**Y SON PIERCE'S FIRST BASKETBALL season after we moved to Florida was wonderful. The coach was a longtime resident and former local star, a seasoned pro who skillfully affirmed the kids, bringing out their best. He and Pierce built a nice rapport, and we looked forward to having the same coach next season.

But when the draft came around, Pierce was picked by another coach, who was just plain different than his beloved first coach. Seeing Pierce's disappointment, I tried hard to conceal my own, urging him to keep an open mind and reminding him that he'd have a lot of different coaches over time. Still, Pierce was sad and anxious about the change.

As the season went on, I made a point to avoid the subject, not wanting to pick a scab. Finally, a few weeks into

the season, I asked Pierce how the new coach was working out.

“Oh, he is so great,” he said with sincere enthusiasm. “He’s just really nice and has taught me so much.” He went on and on about his new coach’s outstanding qualities and impact. Indeed, the team gelled and made it to the championship game, losing only by a few points to the reigning champions. As awesome as his former coach was, Pierce’s new coach was an even better fit.

Kids deliver so many lessons! How often have I dreaded a “last season” loss and dreaded the “new season” only to find the new season was better than ever? Can I trust that Jesus knows best with matters of greater importance? Yes!

ISABELLA CAMPOLATTARO

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## FAITH STEP

Are you facing a disappointing change to the unfamiliar and unexpected? Thank God for last season and trust God with your new season. In Christ, the new has come!

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## SATURDAY OCTOBER 19

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

JOHN 7:37–38 (NIV)

I LOVE BEING NEAR WATER. Whether I’m at the coast, a creek, or a lakeside, it settles me. But my favorite place is along the banks of the river running through my town. The Willamette is wide, with beautiful old trees and countless birds calling it home.

As I watch this river, I sense Jesus’s peace and power while the massive flow moves past with barely a ripple. Picking up stones to toss in, I feel my transformation as He smooths away my rough edges. When I spot fish struggling upstream, I understand the challenges they face. Jesus teaches me to push forward, to never give up.

Yesterday evening, I walked the bank. The heat of the day was gone, replaced by a coolness hinting at autumn’s glory. A gentle breeze carried the welcome scents of dust and falling

leaves. As I rounded a bend, sunset lit the water's surface with a soft white glow, resembling molten silver. The image was emblazoned in my mind, depicting the way my soul is being refined.

But the picture I hold close is of the living water that flows within me. Like a stone in that river, I'm following the course He's set for me through my obedience, rejoicing within the freedom of His boundaries. I trust His guidance around every bend, secure in the knowledge He knows the way. I'm willing and ready to guide others I meet along the curves of my life, leading them to Jesus and praying they need never thirst again.

HEIDI GAUL

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## FAITH STEP

Visit a body of water near you. Listen and watch as Jesus speaks to you in the stillness of a lake, the rush of crashing waves, or the babbling of a brook. Offer a prayer of thanks.



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# MONDAY

## OCTOBER 28

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*“What then shall we do?”*

LUKE 3:10 (ESV)

THE APPLES ON THE TREES lining our south yard were small. Even from a distance, my husband, Bill, and I could see that many on the middle tree were worm-eaten or scar-skinned, unlikely to produce food for those of us who care about fresh fruit and applesauce.

We looked at each other and asked, “What should we do?”

Three groups of people asked the same question of Jesus when He taught about the importance of producing good fruit—fruit that shows changed hearts and lives. Jesus told them that if a tree doesn’t produce good fruit, it would be chopped down and tossed into the fire. It wasn’t an outrageous pronouncement. That’s what my husband seriously considered doing with our row of unproductive apple trees.

The people listening to Jesus asked, “What should we do?”

“And he answered them, ‘Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do

likewise” (Luke 3:11). Jesus expected good fruit and generosity to follow.

“Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, ‘Teacher, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Collect no more than you are authorized to do’” (vv. 12 and 13). Jesus expected fairness and integrity.

“Soldiers also asked him, ‘And we, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages’” (v. 14). Jesus said that a sign of good fruit is to be content with our pay.

Specific and practical advice. If we expect something loftier, we miss what good fruit looks like.

CYNTHIA RUCHTI

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## FAITH STEP

If a piece of fruit is part of your nutrition plan today, pause a moment before eating it and consider the fruit of your life.

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## SATURDAY NOVEMBER 9

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*Jesus also said, “The Kingdom of God is like a farmer who scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, while he’s asleep or awake, the seed sprouts and grows, but he does not understand how it happens. The earth produces the crops on its own. First a leaf blade pushes through, then the heads of wheat are formed, and finally the grain ripens.”*

MARK 4:26–28 (NLT)

**L**AST WEEK I FELT AS if I accomplished nothing. Interruptions and distractions kept me from my plans. Like a farmer who has scattered seed and keeps peering at the field for a sign of life, I felt disheartened. What difference had I made for God’s kingdom?

On the same day that I berated myself on my lack of harvest, a friend shared that she had been encouraged by my email to her. A reader wrote that one of my books had made a difference for her. My husband reminded me how often I make him laugh. It was as if Jesus was telling me that He is

at work even when I am not seeing the results. In His parable in Mark, He shows us that the crops are growing even as the farmer sleeps. In fact, even though the farmer participates by planting seeds, the earth “produces the crops on its own.”

Our job isn't to see how the crops are doing. Jesus invites us to generously plant our seeds of faith, and trust Him to bring the growth. He seems to accomplish most when we keep our focus on Him, not results. I like to imagine that in Heaven, Jesus will open a scrapbook and show us the marvelous things He was doing behind the scenes when we felt like our lives were barren fields. I still ask Him for glimpses now, because I find it so encouraging, but I'm gradually learning that I can trust that He is producing something of value in my life even when I can't see it.

SHARON HINCK

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## FAITH STEP

Think about the most empty field in your life.  
Tell Jesus that you trust Him to produce  
a harvest there and thank Him for that.

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# MONDAY NOVEMBER 11

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*In every thing give thanks: for this is the will  
of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 (KJV)

**N**OVEMBER IS NOT MY FAVORITE month. It starts to get dark early, and I hate the dark. I also hate the cold. Both of these things make me want to stay in my pajamas all day and cuddle on the couch with my dog, but I must face my life. I have four human beings who depend on me to be sane and kind and responsible and wise. I feel my inadequacy in this child-rearing area every moment of every day. I see my time with them slipping through my fingers, and I get scared it won't be enough—I won't teach them enough or give them all they need to navigate life.

Like my kids, my parents are getting older, which I also hate. I don't see or talk to my friends enough and I miss them. My skin is awful. I've gained weight. Then there are my students and my job. And I won't even go into finances—always a fun topic this time of year.

People on social media have started the annoying practice again of posting things they are thankful for each day. *Even though I love Thanksgiving, I'm in no mood for thankful thoughts.* Thus went my grumpy inner dialogue on the way to work today, till I remembered Jesus and the fact that I really am thankful He loves me no matter what.

It seems that one glimmer of thankfulness opened the door to more things I am thankful for. I started to compose a mental list. And guess what? My grumpy anxiety gave way to peace, which was followed by joy.

GWEN FORD FAULKENBERRY

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## FAITH STEP

Grab a pen and paper and start writing down things you are thankful for, in no particular order. Don't stop till you feel His peace flowing like a river in your soul.

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## SUNDAY NOVEMBER 24

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*All of us! Nothing between us and God, our faces shining with the brightness of his face. And so we are transfigured much like the Messiah, our lives gradually becoming brighter and more beautiful as God enters our lives and we become like him.*

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 (MSG)

**T**HIS MORNING I SPENT MORE time than usual watching the fire in my little woodstove. I love to watch fires. I didn't have enough kindling so it took a little longer to get it started. Burning paper helped the cold chimney draw, and fat lighter wood eased the transition to the smallest available pieces of wood.

The fire caught with, first, a hiss and a wisp of smoke, and then finally a flicker of flame. It took more tending than usual so I spent some of that time on my belly, feet up behind me, my head on my hands like a kid.

Finally hot, the logs at the bottom maintained their form but gradually changed color. They abandoned their browns

and began to glow, undulating orange. The color rippled like northern lights, occasionally allowing a glimpse of red or yellow.

Fine gray ash coated the logs, but the light shone through. Each finally reached a point where it wasn't what it had been before. The log shapes had become nearly weightless containers for heat and light. When I put dry, cold wood near them, the heat set the new pieces ablaze.

When I was finally forced to make room for more wood, I hated to reach for the poker. The oldest of the coals dissolved into ash with the slightest touch, while newer ones broke into pieces, still carrying their treasure, ready to pass it on.

We transition too. Because Christ is in us, we can't stay the same. Daily, with our assent, we are changed into His likeness.

SUZANNE DAVENPORT TIETJEN

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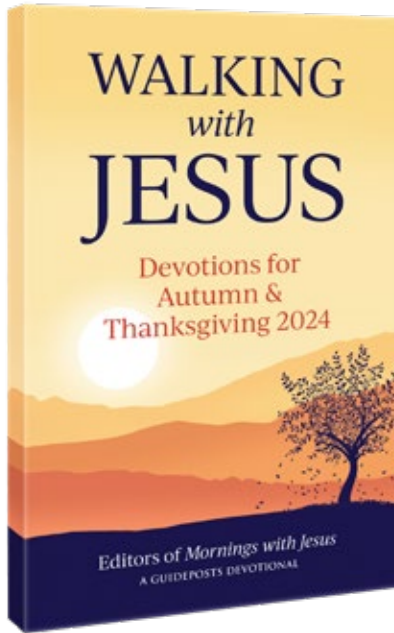
## FAITH STEP

Old paintings of Jesus sometimes show His burning heart.

See your heart aflame like His. Let Him change you.



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Gratitude and Faith  
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