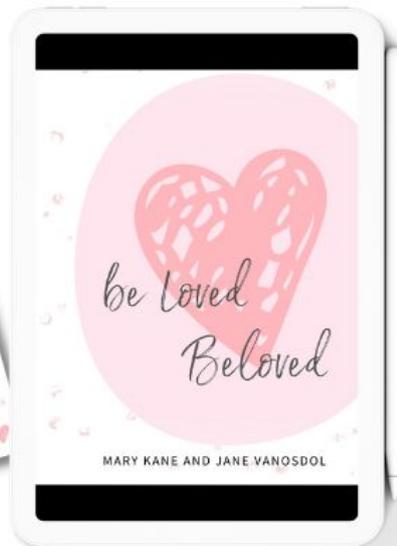


Does Your Head Know God Loves You But Not Your Heart?

GOD'S LOVE



go deeper
with Him



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

John 3:16 is one of the most well known Bible verses in the world. Perhaps you already know it by heart. I've had it memorized for a long time. But for years I had a problem:

The truth of that scripture wasn't penetrating into my soul. I had head knowledge but not heart knowledge.

Whenever I had a bad attitude, skipped my devotions, or sinned, I felt so guilty and was certain God was angry with me. I felt like I had to slink around Him, and sometimes I even avoided my Bible for a few days -which made me feel even worse!

God Loves You

I had to learn the truth that God's love for us is not conditional. It is not based on our behavior, on what we do or don't do, on how long we read the Bible, or how often we pray. God loves us because God is love. That is His nature and character. When we accept Him as our Savior, He becomes our Father, always and forever. His love for us does not change.

It can be hard trying to break a faulty mindset we've had for a while, but that's what we need to do when what we're thinking doesn't line up with scripture. How can you get the truth that God loves you into your heart?

5 Ways to Accept God Loves You

1. Make time in your day to spend with God. Pray. Read your Bible. The more this becomes a habit, the more His love will seep into you.
2. Pick one scripture about God's love and meditate on it. Read it over several times, emphasizing a different word each time. Take notes on what stands out to you about the verse. Put your name in the verse and read it aloud. Ask God to show you what you most need to understand about this verse and then listen for Him to respond. Write that down too.
3. Memorize your verse. Write it on a card or use a digital app like Verse Locker.
4. Monitor your thoughts. When you find yourself thinking

negative thoughts about God not loving you, self-correct. Affirm what is true by speaking “God loves me, and I am His child.” Then recite the scripture you’re memorizing.

5. Keep it up! The enemy will try to discourage you, but keep practicing the above steps.

Want More Teaching?

If you’d like more teaching on this topic, Mary and I have written a two-week Bible study about God’s love for us called *be loved, Beloved*. Click on the link for more information. If you’d like a sample of the study, click on Sample Day to download a day’s work of the study to try it out!

Our prayer is that your heart fully knows and grasps how much God loves you! Please let us know any tips or questions you may have about living fully in God’s love.



One Things



Welcome to a new year.

2017 brings new opportunities to use our gifts, develop our skills, deepen our walk with Christ, and impact the world for Christ. On TV the other morning, two ladies shared their New Year's resolutions—lists of things they wish to achieve in 2017. Good things. Worthy things. Resolutions are good, but they are often forgotten by January 2nd, when the busyness of life sets in again. But what if we tried one thing? One new thing, one old thing, one important thing, one critical thing to focus on for one year. Most of us can handle one thing. Below is a list of *one things* to spark your imagination:

One Things:

1. **One word:** I love the One Word movement. Simple. Quick. Effective. Follow the link to choose your One Word for 2017.
2. **One podcast:** Listen to one Christian podcast a day. I

love Breakpoint, Insight for Living, Turing Point, and Joyce Meyer Ministries. One Place is a good place to find Christian podcasts.

3. **One prayer:** Commit to pray for one important thing every week day this year.
4. **One habit:** establish one new good habit, or evict one old bad old habit.
5. **One relationship:** Work on one important relationship, partnership, friendship, or courtship.
6. **One study:** start or join one Bible study group this year. And. Finish. It.
7. **One project:** Focus on starting or finishing that one important project you've been dreaming about.
8. **One hour:** Devote one hour a day/week/month to prayer, ministry, Bible study, exercise, volunteering, studying etc.
9. **One composition:** Listen to one excellent piece of music a day. Start with Beethoven, Mozart, Vivaldi and Debussy. Enter a name in a Youtube search bar and listen for free!
10. **One book:** Read one excellent book a week. Please click on the link to find a few good books and get started! [10 Books Every Christian Should Read](#)

It's not too late to try one thing.

Take a moment to pray and ask God to show you what He wants you to focus on in 2017. Let me know what one thing you are going to work on this year. Leave me a comment below. I'd love to chat with you!

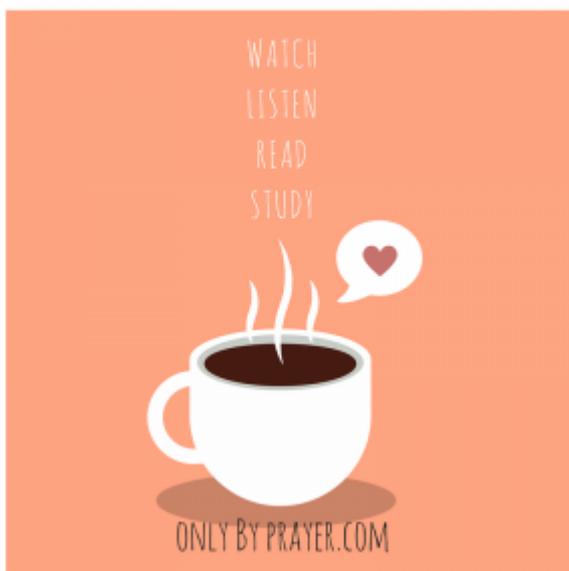
8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with

you.

Mary Kane

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Watch, Read, Listen, Study



We need God and we need His word.

If we want to impact our world for Christ and take His to the lost of the world, we must fill our hearts and mind with God's truths and precepts. Sometimes we need to mix it up a bit. Something new can breath new life into our relationship with God.

In order to help you to continue to seek God, we have provided

a few resources for you—something to watch, something to read, something to listen to and something to study. Get a drink, your Bible and a journal then choose one, two or three resources and dig in!

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

1. Something to Watch: A great video from ***For the Life of the World*** about the gift of creation and how to live a thankful life.

“What is the song of all creation? What is our Salvation for? In this scene from Episode 1: Exile, Evan unpacks the essence of God and his mission in the world.” To see more, click on the play button below.

2. Something to Read: An excellent article by Beth Moore, ***Because Any of Us Can be Had***

“I penned the creative writing below a number of years ago as I reflected on my own miserable season of sifting by Satan. I was wrecked almost beyond repair by what I’d experienced because I’d never been taught that a believer could love Jesus deeply with a pure heart and serve Him with sincere devotion and yet be flabbergastingly seduced by the enemy. 2 Corinthians 11:3 had said it all along but I’d missed it.” To read more click on the link below.



Because Any of Us Can be Had

3. Something to Listen To: A podcast from Erik Metaxas at Break Point, ***When the Sky is Really Falling***

“When Chicken Little said the sky is falling, we all laughed. Well, maybe it’s time we stopped laughing. It seems Chicken Little may be on to something.” To hear more click on the link below.



When the Sky is Really Falling

4. Something to study: ***The Outcasts: Giving Your All.***

“Rebels...backsliders...children...senior citizens...the handicapped...uneducated...homeless. Thankfully, God looks upon the heart and sees us for what we

can become; beautiful witnesses for the Gospel of Christ. It is my prayer that through these Bibles studies you will be blessed and gain a clear vision for how the God of the Universe sees you; incredibly precious and valuable.” To study more, click on the link below.



The Outcasts: Giving Your All

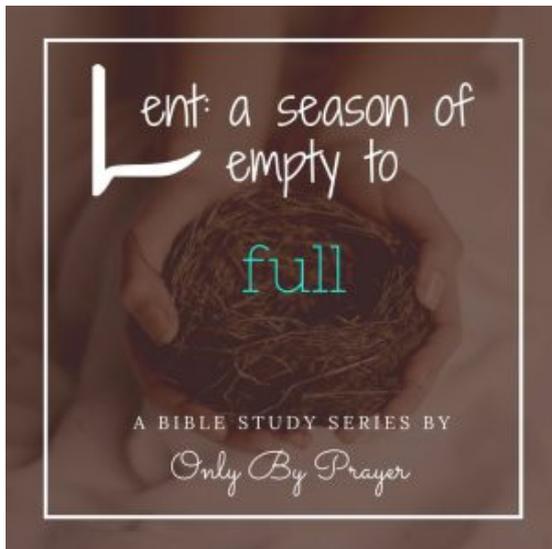
Jane and I pray these resources will encourage you and strengthen your walk with Jesus! Let us know what you think in the comment section below!

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**Lent: empty to full, Ash
Wednesday**



Lent is a season of opposites.

We weep so we may rejoice. We sacrifice so we may receive. We empty so we can be filled. In Hebrew the word for empty transliterates as *reyqam*, which means *in vain, empty, idle, without affect*. I must admit I have been *reyqam* – vainly focused on myself, idly wasting my time and talents so my life was without affect. Empty. Longing to be full.

Reyqam also means to be *poured out* or *hungry*. Does this season find you hungry for something different? Have you poured yourself out for that which does not satisfy, chasing the wind? Are you ready to be full?

Come to the cross. Give Jesus your empty heart; taste and see that the Lord is good and be full.

From empty to full.

Please scroll through the Sway below to access our Bible study content for this week.

Please comment on what you have learned in the comment section below or on our ***empty to full*** Facebook page.

Be full.

Mary Kane

and

Jane

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**Short & Sweet: Bitterness or
Betterness?**



Bitterness or Betterness?

“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.”

Matthew 12:34b-35

When I was little, I was fascinated by treasure and treasure maps. I loved reading books about buried fortunes (*Nancy Drew and The Quest of the Missing Map* was a favorite). How exciting to follow a parchment map to the foot of a tree, and with spade in hand unearth a treasure.

Buried. Beautiful. Valuable.

X marks the spot.

Treasure is a key word in Mathew 6:35. In the original Greek it transliterates as *thesauros*, which means *a place to collect things* and *the place in which good and precious things are collected and laid up*. Interestingly, *thesaurus* also means a *casket*. Think for a moment.

A container for good, precious things or a casket for dead, lifeless things.

In my living room I have a cedar chest, a place where I collect precious things. It holds treasures of the past. Corsages ... diplomas ... love letters ... a wedding bouquet ... baby booties ... scribbly pictures ... handmade Mother's Day cards ... funny little birthday presents from funny little sons.

Why do I store mementos in my cedar chest? So I can remember; so I can relive again and yet again the beautiful memories my keepsakes invoke. As I hold a treasure in my hands, it continues to move and change me, to mold my soul.

The heart is like a cedar chest—a place to collect things. We decide what to fill it with. Good things. Lovely things. Beautiful things. But, we can choose to fill the heart with bitter things, reliving them over and over, wounding ourselves afresh with every remembrance, shredding our heart and shattering our soul. Bitter memories will also continue to change and mold us.

It seems then we have a choice.

What shall we store in the heart? At times we choose bitterness. Why?

I prayed for insight and an answer came clearly to my mind. We treasure bitterness because we feel something is owed to us, something feels unfinished.

But, when Jesus said, "It is finished," bitterness died on the cross. It was never meant to be stored in the heart to taint and poison. Give bitter memories to Jesus and trust Him to use them for good. Then, fill your heart with His life-giving Word. Hide it deep in the soil of your heart. His Word becomes buried treasure.

Precious. Beautiful. Valuable.

The Cross marks the spot.

"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things." Matthew 12:35

The choice is yours.

Action Points:

1. Ask God to search your heart and remove any bitterness lurking there. He promises to *remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.* Ezekiel 36:26

2. Check your heart by examining your tongue. What are you saying? Are you speaking words of life into your relationships, challenges and trials or words of bitterness and death? *“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”*
3. Pray the Word. Find scriptures that address your current challenges and pray them into your life. *“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it.” Joshua 1:8*

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Christmas To Do-ers List, Day 8: Go Tell About Him



Christmas To Do-ers List

Day 8: Go Tell About Him

“When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.” Luke 2:17-18

The night started out just like any other.

At dusk, the shepherds settled themselves and their sheep in for the night, on the alert to possible attacks.

Extraordinary usurped ordinary when an angel and celestial choir burst upon the quiet night sky



Tweet This

Once the shepherds had gathered their wits about them and understood the angel’s message, they ran to Bethlehem to find the Savior. And find Him they did.

The shepherds surely shared with Mary and Joseph about the angels’ visit, and unable to contain themselves, they lost no time in sharing this hot-off-the-presses news about the baby King they found in a manger with anyone who would listen.

Jesus has that effect on people. He likes to stir things up. When the sacred intersects the ordinary, spectacular things happen. The lame walk. The blind see. Sinners are forgiven. Addictions are broken. And angels sing—and not just for Jesus’ birth. Luke 15:10 tells us that whenever another soul is won to heaven, heaven celebrates.

What About Us?



Tell about Jesus this Christmas

Perhaps your story isn't as flashy as a million-watt sky filled with angels. But the reality is, you're a different person than you were before Jesus, and that is a story that deserves to be told. In the way only you can tell it. Never underestimate the power of a changed life to reach others.

Like the shepherds, be alert to those God has primed for your story. **As a matter of fact, pray for God to send those who need a word from you.** Let's look at a few ways to share:

1. Practice your story. Write down a 1-minute version of your story. Your life before Jesus, your conversion and your life after Jesus. And share it when God opens the door for you to do so.
2. Give tangible help. Bring a meal to a family with a new baby or to a family going through a hard time. Pray that God opens a way for you to share with them, either now or in the future.
3. Volunteer to teach a class at your church or lead a neighborhood Bible study. Both children and adults need

to hear that Jesus loves them enough to have died for them.

4. Write out your story longhand or on your computer so that future generations of your family will have a copy. You never know when your story will be able to reach through time to influence others.

Mary and I appreciate you joining us over Advent for this series. Be looking for our New Year's podcast over the next week. **Merry Christmas to you and your family!**

Jane