

# Christmas To Do-ers List, Day 6: Protect Him



## Christmas To Do-ers List

### Day 6: Protect Him

*Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." Matthew 2:13*

Often times, Joseph's role in the Nativity is overlooked. But God chose Him just as carefully as He did Mary. Had Joseph been any less the humble, prayerful, courageous man he was, Mary and Jesus would have been in serious trouble.

## If Ever There Was a Righteous Man

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First of all, we see in Matthew 1:19-25 that Joseph is a righteous man. When he finds out Mary is pregnant, he could have made a spectacle out of her to protect his own reputation. He does not want to disgrace her, however, so he decides to divorce her quietly. Before Joseph can do this, God sends an angel who explains through a dream that Joseph should not be afraid to take Mary as his wife. Even though he surely knew his reputation would be in tatters from the village gossip, Joseph does exactly what the angel says. We see the tangible hedge of protection he casts around Mary and her unborn child.

When King Herod orders a census, Joseph packs up a very pregnant Mary, and they set off for his hometown of Bethlehem. Joseph's next test comes upon arrival in the city, which is packed to capacity and beyond. Mary is already in the active stages of labor, but every inn Joseph frantically inquires at has no room. In the nick of time, one innkeeper offers an animal stable, and Joseph becomes midwife by ushering Jesus into the world.

**Joseph is the type of man you want around in an emergency.**

Finally, in Matthew 2:13 Joseph again protects his little

family as God sends another angel in a dream to warn him of danger, as Herod is diabolically bent on snuffing out the lives of every baby boy in Bethlehem. He bolts up in the middle of the night, gathers his family, and leaves for Egypt.



Through Joseph's example, we can see the importance of protecting our relationship with the Lord. Had Joseph not been a righteous man who made his relationship with God the biggest priority in his life, this story could have turned out much differently. But as it was, Joseph prayed and believed and had so nurtured his relationship with God, that when God called upon him, he was ready. He humbled himself and he displayed true grit and courage that helped save the lives of Mary and Jesus. His is a true story of protection, love, and obedience, one that we should emulate.

## How Can We Protect our Relationship with God?

In order to display the grit and courage of Joseph, we need to protect and guard our connection to Jesus.

1. **Make Jesus your top priority.** The only way you'll get to know Him is in the same way we get to know any other person in our lives: by spending time with Him. Show up each day to read the Bible, pray, and listen for the Holy Spirit's direction.
2. **Be obedient to the direction the Holy Spirit gives you.** He is our helper, teacher, and guide. By tuning in to His voice, we will be living under the protection and

direction of the Holy Spirit.

3. **Make sure you're growing and changing.** If you're still at the same spiritual level you were ten years ago, something is not right. We need to be in the process of transformation.
4. **Try something new.** Explore a spiritual discipline, such as [silence and solitude](#). Attend a retreat. Try walking through a [labyrinth prayer walk](#) (the link contains a search that will locate the ones closest to you.) Just don't stagnate.

Enjoy the music of the season and let us know your thoughts on how you will protect your relationship with Jesus.

Jane

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## Scripturegraphic Humble: Who's the Boss?



Sometimes it can be hard to tell who's supposed to be the boss. God's Word tells us to **humble** ourselves one to another. Being **humble** is very difficult, but God will bless us when we submit to His perfect plan. To learn how to **humble** yourself before the Lord, please click on the link below.

## Scripturegraphics: Who's the Boss?

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# Lent Day 16, Humble Yourself



Welcome to Lent Day 17 devotional! Today we are going to look at Jonah and the city of Nineveh and their fascinating experience with fasting. What can we learn from this story to apply to our own lives? Just click on the link below to see.

## Lent Day 16 Humble Yourself

Thanks for joining us today!

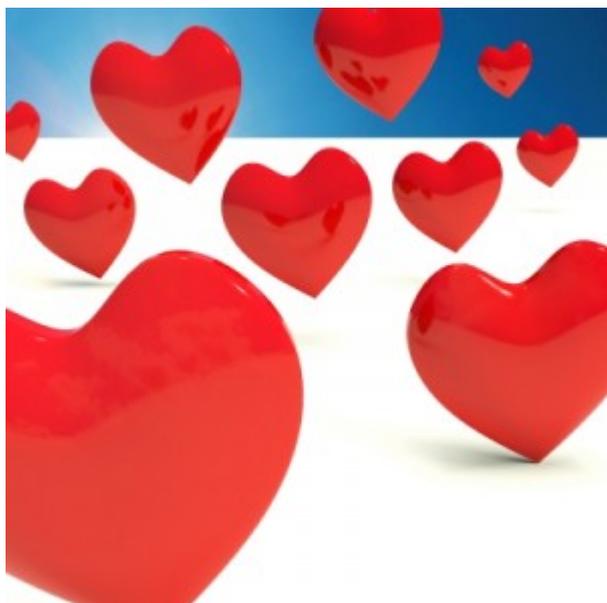
*Jane*

Jonah and the Whale

Jan Brueghel the Elder, 1887 [freechristimages.org/](http://freechristimages.org/)

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## Love Those Verses



*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8*

As we celebrate Valentine's Day this week, I wanted to look at some of the verses in the love chapter of the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13. These verses are wonderful for us to aspire to. **Lest we become discouraged of ever being able to live up to the standard that God gives us in these verses, however, I wanted to take a look at what these verses could look like in the real nitty-gritty details of life.** I know that we all have times where we fail in trying to keep this high standard of love; after all, Jesus was the only One who ever loved completely unselfishly, but let's look at some possible ways we could live out each verse.

#### **Love is patient, love is kind.**

- I will keep my voice in a kind tone when disciplining my children.
- I will not talk in a sarcastic manner to my spouse.
- I will listen with my full attention.

#### **Love does not envy, does not boast, is not proud.**

- I will be content with my house, with my furniture, with my clothes.
- I will not boast about all my children's latest

accomplishments to everyone within hearing.

- I will try to maintain a humble spirit when I do get something new or take that next vacation.
- I will regularly count my blessings.

**Love is not rude; it is not self-seeking.**

- I will control my temper when I am driving.
- I will be courteous to slow checkout-lane clerks.
- I will wait my turn in the exit lanes of the highway and not speed up, hoping to wedge myself in at the last second so that I don't have to wait in the long exit line.

**Love is not easily angered; it keeps no record of wrongs.**

- If my spouse responds crankily to me, I will attempt to keep my temper.
- I will not remember everything my spouse or children have ever done to hurt me. I will not hold grudges. What if God did this to me?
- I will strive to have a good relationship with my in-laws.

**Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth.**

- I will speak the truth in love to my family and remember to show them the same grace that I would want extended to myself.
- I will be truthful in my conduct at work, including how I spend my time there. Am I wasting time on Facebook or personal e-mail?

**Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.**

- I will choose the decision that aligns itself with God's word. I will remember to honor my family and not speak badly about them.
- I will not lose hope in God's ability to work in every

situation with myself, my family and my friends.

- I will persevere in prayer.
- I will remember that God loves me.

### **Love never fails.**

- God's love never fails. SO, I will extend grace to others and myself when people fail and disappoint me, or when I disappoint myself.

Do any of these verses speak to your heart? **What are some ideas you could share with us on living out the love verses from I Corinthians 13?**

Happy Valentine's Day, and pray on!

*Jane*

[Image: Stuart Miles / FreeDigitalPhotos.net](#)

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## **Easter Week-Thursday: Do As I Do**



Jane VanOsdol

*Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God,*

*rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded himself. After that He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. John 13:3-5*

So many things happened on this day. Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Passover meal together, which we know as the Last Supper. During that time Jesus reinterpreted the bread and the wine of this meal as pertaining to His body and blood in light of the sacrifice He was about to make.

That same evening after the meal, Judas left to betray Him. If you've ever suffered through a friend's betrayal, you know how heart wrenching that is. Still later in the evening, Jesus goes to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray and asks His friends to pray for Him—but they all fall asleep. And, of course, we have the harrowing scene of Jesus' arrest.

What I want to focus on today is what happened after the supper before they went to the garden. Jesus gathered all his friends together to wash their feet. I think it's easy to gloss over this part of the story and not see the significance of the example Jesus was setting for believers today.

You see, footwashing was not a part of the Passover Meal. In Bible times, even a Jewish slave could not be made to wash his master's feet. The only person who could be forced to do this was a non-Jewish slave. So when Jesus stooped to do this service for His friends, it was an extreme humbling of Himself—no wonder Peter objected to it!

Jesus was introducing a new order of things here—that people should serve each other and not consider themselves better than others. It was a way of life that He expected His followers to copy.

I know that I need to evaluate my actions in light of Jesus' example. Am I living out a life of service, or am I letting a "better than thou" attitude creep into my life? I need to pray that I will have a humble spirit and one that is quick to serve, rather than waiting for someone else to come along and pick up my slack.

Tomorrow we will look at the events of Good Friday—until then,  
pray on!