

The Chosen devotionals are like *The Chosen* series in that they help God's Word jump off the page for me. I appreciate anything that moves Scripture from information I consume to divinely inspired words I apply and live by. That is what these devotionals have done.

—Mandisa, recording artist and speaker

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The CHOSEN

BOOK TWO

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40 DAYS WITH JESUS

By

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BroadStreet
P U B L I S H I N G

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FOREWORD

I remember the first time I watched *The Chosen* series. I had heard about it from some of the crewmembers who had worked on the set. Many of them had helped me produce our own films, so I knew that their endorsement of this biblical series deserved my attention. I'll admit that when I finished viewing it, I rewatched the whole thing again with my family. Not only was it well made, but it also ministered to me. I found myself wondering what I would have acted like had I been there with Jesus. Would I have freely given my opinion like Peter? Would I have tried to calculate His actions like Matthew? Or would I have followed Him in awe like Mary, clinging to His every word?

I imagined walking with Him daily, watching His kindness, His patience, and the way He displayed His love to others. Yes, I would have felt thrilled to see a miracle up close, but to sit and eat with Him the way His followers did or to have a one-on-one conversation with Him to share my questions, thoughts, and concerns...well that would have been unbelievably amazing!

And yet, we can *still* do that.

The fact that this same Jesus who walked the earth with the disciples is *still* alive today and wants to spend personal time daily with each of us is *still* amazing! He sent His own spirit to dwell in us, to guide us, and to help us. He *still* longs to hear our questions, thoughts, and concerns. He *still* wants

to love others through us. He *still* wants to do miracles! And He *still* says to us, “Follow me.”

As you read these devotionals, don't forget that the One who loves you so much that He gave His own life wants a growing relationship with *you*. He wants to walk with you, to love you, and to show you more of who He is. And He patiently waits for you to respond to His invitation.

So find that quiet place each day where you and Jesus can meet. Worship Him from your heart. Thank Him for all He's done. Listen for Him to speak in that gentle, quiet voice as you read His Word. And take comfort in the fact that He *still* sees you, loves you, and has chosen you.

Alex Kendrick
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Writer, Director

NEW BOOK, NEW QUESTION

For our first book, the questions governing each devotional were:

1. What don't we know about these people?
2. What should we know about these people?

3. How will going from not knowing about these people to knowing about these people change us and other people?

Answers: Plenty. Everything. A lot.

As the stories of Mary, Peter, Nicodemus, and Matthew unspooled and intertwined, we came to appreciate this obvious truth in a whole new way: every detail matters. Every exchange is deserving of thorough examination and deep contemplation, as well as the setting and context in which they reside. Without exception, every aspect of their no-picnic lives offers us another breadcrumb along the trail.

Out of the four, Nicodemus was who we knew the least. Studying him was like finally connecting with a complicated uncle. We feel like we get the guy now and look forward to

seeing him at family gatherings. Matthew and Peter are our brothers now. And Mary! Mary's our girl. We're very close.

As serendipitous as knowing about and relating to certain Bible characters can be, it doesn't hold a candle to understanding the lengths to which Jesus will go to relate to us so we can know Him. That's the purpose of every person's story in the Bible: to aid in the supernatural revelation of Jesus Christ.

In other words:

- Because we know Nicodemus better, we now know Jesus better.

- Because we know Matthew better, we now know Jesus better.

- Because we know Peter better, we now know Jesus better.

- Because we know Mary better, we now know Jesus better.

That's it. That's what makes these folks so wonderful. Through their stories we're able to see Jesus' compassion, patience, mercy, love, and redemption. Because of these guys (and so many others), we can start to wrap our brains and hearts around how Jesus feels toward us. And, of course, it's a tremendous help knowing they were all such a mess—through them we can see more clearly the only Way to be whole.

So now, with this second devotional book, we're switching gears a bit. Instead of three overarching questions about the people around Jesus, this new batch is predicated on one penetrating question: *What does it mean to reeeeeeally follow Jesus?*

Not just showing up periodically, hoping to get a meal or a healing, but going all in and following Him wherever He may lead...like, say, to a cross.

We hope you, too, will appreciate and contemplate the details in a whole new way, as we have. And we humbly pray this devotional will aid in your supernatural revelation of Jesus Christ, as it has for us.

Amanda, Kristen, and Dallas

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DAY 1

IDENTITY

When Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

MATTHEW 16:13–18

Not every miracle was jaw-droppingly epic. There were levels. One miracle was so low-key it would've gone undetected had Jesus not pointed it out. It happened during a private conversation between Jesus and the disciples.

He asked them who they thought He was.

Simon Peter answered that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Boom. Miracle.

Compared to watching Jesus multiply fish, heal lepers, and exorcise demons, this miracle might've lacked some of the wow factor they'd grown accustomed to. Nevertheless, what transpired during that short conversation was profoundly more life changing. It wasn't Jesus demonstrating His authority to the masses. It was the Father revealing His Son's identity to the individual.

Jesus hadn't yet explicitly taught them the fullness of His identity. Hence, Peter's answer was not a foregone conclusion. Nor was it a go-big-or-go-home guess. It was a supernatural revelation imparted by the Maker of the universe—a miracle so personal and powerful that nothing in Peter's life would ever be the same.

Conversely, let's look at the other folks' answers. John the Baptist was a decent guess since He, too, was a homeless, radical preacher. Elijah performed some pretty mind-blowing miracles. And, like Jesus, Jeremiah preached boldly and prophesied in the temple courts. These weren't the worst theories ever, but the supernatural revelation part was clearly lacking.

The people assumed that Jesus was a second act rendition of a former spiritual heavyweight. They couldn't conceive of Him being wholly original. But that's what people who don't know Jesus tend to do—they cobble together a sort-of plausible, albeit totally wrong, assumption regarding who or what He's like.

And the only remedy to our half-baked human explanations is supernatural revelation from God. He has to open our eyes.

And once He opens our eyes? It is only then we understand just how unrivaled He truly is. Simon Peter was the first disciple to see it; the Father revealed to Peter who Jesus was: The Christ. And then Jesus revealed to Simon Peter who Peter was: The Rock on which the church would be built. One identity affirmed the other.

He's eager to do the same for us. *Who do you say I am* is a question Jesus asks every single person. Once we can see that He is the Christ and we surrender our lives to Him, He affirms our identity: We are chosen. We have been redeemed. We have been summoned by name, and we are His. This miracle is so personal and so powerful that nothing in our lives will ever be the same. Low-key as the act may seem to be on the surface, there is nothing more jaw-droppingly epic than knowing Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

PRAYER FOCUS

Praise God that He is eager to reveal His Son to those who are seeking. Ask the Father to open your eyes to His identity if you don't yet know Him. Ask for a greater comprehension of it if you do. Thank Him for choosing you and for such a personal and powerful miracle.

MOVING FORWARD

- o Who do you say Jesus is?
- o If you know Jesus, describe the moment His identity was revealed to you and how you responded. If you don't know Jesus yet, describe what you've assumed or understood about Him thus far.
- o How does Christ's true identity impact, clarify, and solidify your own identity?

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DAY 2

AMONG US

There is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades.

In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be healed?” The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.” Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.

JOHN 5:2–9

The Sunday school reaction to this miraculous story is to think it’s awesome and wonderful and happy—the flannelgraph scene would, no doubt, be all smiles. But

perhaps a more appropriate response is heartbreak because thirty-eight years is a soul-crushing length of time. And this man's soul had been crushed.

The scene was brutal. A sea of sick and disabled people were all lying beside the pool of Bethesda, hoping to be healed in the water the way others were rumored to have been. Unpredictably, the underground spring that fed the forty-five-foot-deep pool would cause the water to well up. Bubbles would rise along with sediment from the basin floor—no doubt the minerals in the sediment, along with the fresh water, delivered health benefits. But over time, the people attributed the natural spring and its side effects to spirits, so when the water moved, the people rushed in hoping for a miracle.

But not everyone. Not the man who was so sick for so long that he'd given up even trying. He had no ability to help himself, no way to reach the water, and no one in his life who cared enough to get him there.

Enter Jesus.

What was it like for the Creator, Redeemer, and Healer to walk among the suffering? Certainly His heart broke, and not only because of the people's pain, but also because of their misplaced hope. Or total lack of hope.

“Do you want to be healed?”

What a strange question because of course the guy did. Every person with a physical affliction in that place wanted to be healed; it's why they were there. But no one seemed to take notice of the One who was actually able to heal them. Jesus walked among them—the sick and diseased, the deaf, blind and lame—while they focused their time and energy and

hope on the water. Which is what we all do to some degree. We focus on our struggles and the solutions we work out in our heads while our Creator, Redeemer, and Healer is among us.

“Do you want to be healed?”

The man answered Him, “Sir, I have no one to put me in the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going, another steps down before me.” In other words—*of course I want to be healed, are you nuts? But I gave up trying a long time ago because it’s impossible. I’m totally alone, and I’m going to live out the rest of my pathetic days on this mat.*

It didn’t upset Jesus that the sick man didn’t immediately understand His offer. We oftentimes don’t. Our human tendency is to underestimate Jesus—or to not estimate Him at all. We get so stuck in our circumstances and in how we see the world that we don’t notice or comprehend what’s being offered.

We don’t see that our rescuer is stooping low, and no doubt that’s exactly what Jesus was doing—kneeling at eye-level when He spoke to the man with no hope. No doubt the sound of His voice was kind. No doubt His demeanor was patient. Quiet. No doubt there was overwhelming compassion in His eyes as He extended Himself to the one who had no idea his rescue was imminent.

“Do you want to be healed?”

The only thing more heartbreaking than being sick and alone for thirty-eight years would’ve been for this man to walk home and forget the One who healed him. What a waste if his physical transformation didn’t result in a spiritual one. Because that’s the transformation that matters most and is

offered to all—the spiritual. How tragic that so many people forgo soul healing and on-going relationship with Jesus. And how unnecessary that even after we know the Savior, we continue to cling to the sick and diseased parts of our hearts instead of looking to Him for healing again and again.

Do you want to be healed?
Because He's still among us.

PRAYER FOCUS

Meditate on Jesus. Thank Him for being so near. Ask Him to show you how to get your eyes off your own solutions and to look to Him for help and hope.

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MOVING FORWARD

- o What circumstances are you managing in your own strength, power, or wisdom?
- o Read Jeremiah 17:14. Be specific with the Lord about what you think you need help with and healing from. Then ask Him to show you what *He* thinks because so often our thoughts are not His thoughts (Isaiah 55:8–9). While God doesn't say *yes* to healing every physical ailment, He promises us His presence and strength and the hope of a pain-free eternity. Talk to Him about what ails you and trust Him with it.

- o Once Jesus healed the sick man at Bethesda, He told him to “get up, take up [his] mat, and walk.” In what ways do you need to get up? Because once we’re healed, physically or spiritually, it’s time to act like it.

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