

# Following Christ in Nursing

*A look at Jesus in the Gospels*



**Bible Studies and Resource Guides**

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## Following Christ in Nursing

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## Introduction to Bible Study

People in healthcare face many challenges. We need reminders of why we are doing this work. Where do we turn for encouragement and direction?

God's Word guides us as a "lamp to our feet, a light to our path" (Psalm 119:105). The life of Jesus Christ provides a foundation for ministry in healthcare. But how do we discover the deep treasures in the Bible and allow God's Word to speak to us and change us?

Studying the Bible is more than gaining cognitive information. God's Word is "living and active" (Hebrews 4:12). The intent of this guide is to serve you through questions that help you go deeper to interact with God's Word and respond to his life-giving voice.

### Steps of Discovery

Questions in the guide help you to move through a process of discovery. These steps toward discovery can be used any time you read Scripture:

**1. Observation**

*What does the passage say?* You will see words such as "identify, describe, list, contrast" that will help you to examine facts in the passage.

**2. Interpretation**

*What does the passage mean?* Define words, ask "why" questions, and explore the significance of observations to understand what God is saying. The Holy Spirit will guide you.

**3. Application**

*What does the passage mean to me?* Study of God's Word must go beyond information. We need to hear God's Word and obey, allowing Scripture to transform us. Each study guide has questions to guide you into personal application and bring God's perspective into healthcare.

As you spend time in God's Word, listen to the Holy Spirit speaking to you and guiding you in how to respond. Write your responses and prayerfully review them later. Prayer is a conversation with God that is vital throughout the discovery process.

### Suggestions for Use

1. For all nurses and students, Bible studies on the life of Jesus Christ can be an important aspect of your spiritual and professional development. Along with your personal study, consider inviting a friend to use the study guide with you. You also are a *vital link* to Christian resources

for nurses, healthcare professionals and students. Christ-followers in healthcare can make a difference in the whole-person care of people in our communities.

2. The guide can also be used for mentoring or discipling nursing students and healthcare people in your church and community. This can include people just beginning their journey toward discovering a relationship with Jesus Christ.
3. Ideas for using the guide with a group:
  - Prayerfully anticipate what God is going to teach you and allow the questions to guide you in responding to God's Word personally.
  - Remember that your role as a group leader is to guide others into the text by asking questions. Allow them the joy of discovery rather than giving the answers yourself. Learn to be comfortable with active silence.
  - The questions relate to one idea from the text. Proceed with one question at a time; you don't need to use every question in the guide. Let the discussion flow toward the main points.
  - Be aware of the time and pace of the study so you will have adequate time for application and prayer.

## Encouragement

Following Jesus Christ in nursing and healthcare is a privilege. Jesus invites us to come to him and learn from him (Matthew 11:28-30). I pray that interacting with Jesus through passages in this study guide will assist you to:

- deepen your relationship with Jesus Christ as you learn new things about him by discussing God's Word with others.
- discover ways to follow Jesus in nursing and healthcare as you apply God's Word to ministry in healthcare settings, the church and the community.
- respond to God's call to represent Jesus Christ in his mission in the world.

Enjoy your journey as you explore these Bible studies on [Following Jesus Christ in Nursing](#).

--by **Mary Thompson**, RN, MSN, FCN

*Mary Thompson is a former national director of Nurses Christian Fellowship.*



## Who Do We Follow? Matthew 11:28-30

As we prepare to care for others as nurses, it is helpful to assess stressors in our own lives (physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual). Reflect on personal, school, and work challenges you are facing this week. How do they affect your stress level?

Thankfully, Jesus Christ is present to walk with us in our journey, personally and in nursing. Jesus has already experienced the challenges we face because he cared for people in need when he was physically present on earth.

### Hearing the Word

1. Read [Matthew 11:28-30](#), noting invitations Jesus gives to us:

“Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens 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.”

Also read [The Message](#) paraphrase of these verses:

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

2. Underline some phrases in the text that get your attention.

What may Jesus want to say to you considering the stressors or burdens you identified?

3. What may be factors that keeping you from responding to Jesus’ invitation, “*Come to me... learn from me?*”
4. Jesus says, “*I am gentle and humble in heart.*” This may be a description of the Lord that is different from your own experience. Talk with Jesus about this. Ask God to release you from inaccurate perceptions of who Jesus is.
5. Unrealistic expectations from others, and ourselves, can lead to feeling burned out in different areas of our lives. What steps can you take to “*learn the unforced rhythms of grace*” in your own life?

6. Give examples of different kinds of rest (physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual) that would be helpful for you.

## Responding to the Word

- Read the passage again, noting what you underlined, and your reflections on the questions above.
- Think about what you have seen about Jesus' care for you. What difference will this make as you follow Jesus in caring for others through nursing?
- Listen to ways the Holy Spirit is prompting you to receive and respond to what Jesus is saying in this passage.
- Write 1-2 actions you will take to apply God's Word to your life. Share your plans with a friend who will support you in prayer and accountability.

*Note:* The Bible study series, [Following Jesus Christ in Nursing](#), invites us into a relationship with Jesus where we learn to follow him as disciples. Jesus provides resources to help us to care for ourselves and grow spiritually. The Bible study series helps us learn from Jesus as he cared for people with many different needs. You will meet people like those you see in clinical settings.

Following Jesus in nursing helps us view ourselves, our colleagues, care of patients and families, and issues in healthcare from a biblically based, Christian perspective. These foundations are life giving—for us, and for our profession.

Enjoy the journey as you meet and follow Jesus through the Bible passages in this series!



## God's Call to Ministry

### Isaiah 61:1-4 and Luke 4:16-21

These passages from the Bible help us see God's compassion for people and serve as a foundation for our call to follow Jesus Christ in caring for people today.

Jesus describes his mission in [Luke 4:18-19](#). It is rooted in God's Word to Isaiah the prophet. Read the following verses and pray that God's Word will speak to you.

### Hearing the Word

1. Read [Isaiah 61:1-4](#) and [Luke 4:16-21](#). What types of people are mentioned? Describe ways people today express these characteristics. Give examples from your work in healthcare.
2. From the Isaiah text, describe the different actions of the "anointed and sent" person. How can nurses reflect these characteristics today?
3. In Isaiah 61:3-4, identify results or outcomes of God's ministry among people. Describe what these outcomes could look like today, including examples of "oaks of righteousness."
4. God anoints and sends people to bring his compassion and justice to others. What is your experience of being "anointed and sent?" What steps can you take to enhance your growth in this reality?

### Responding to the Word

As followers of Jesus Christ, these verses from Isaiah and Luke can help to shape our mission, calling and priorities in nursing and healthcare. How do you sense God is calling you to respond to His Word in these passages?

Write your response in a prayer. Consider sharing it with a friend.



## Becoming Part of Christ's Team

### Luke 5:1-11

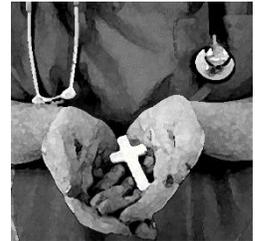
Simon Peter personally discovered the occupational risk to being around Jesus. What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus as a nurse? How do we allow him to direct our nursing practice?

### Hearing the Word

1. Read [Luke 5:1-11](#). Describe the people, setting and events in this story.
2. Trace the progressive involvement of Simon Peter with Jesus. How much commitment was required for Peter to get into the boat and then put down the fishing nets? What may have been some of Peter's thoughts and feelings?
3. Describe the catch of fish. How does Luke record its significance? What effect does the miracle have on Peter? Describe his response in verse 8. Compare with verse 5. What is the difference between "Master" and "Lord?"
4. How did Peter's relationship with Jesus change in this story? Why did he leave everything to follow Jesus? What effect would Peter's action have on his life?
5. Identify what you have learned in these verses about Jesus Christ and how he relates to people. How does Jesus respond to the needs Peter expresses in verse 8?
6. Nursing for us is similar to fishing for Peter. How can you "get into the boat" and allow Jesus to affect your daily work as a nurse? What does "fishing for people" look like in your life?
7. Think about people you know who are on a journey toward discovering who Jesus is. How can you encourage them, like Jesus did with Peter?

### Responding to the Word

Talk with the Lord about the things he has shown you during the Bible study and write down what God is saying to you. What actions will you take? Pray for one another in your group about specific applications.



## Setting People Free

### Luke 13:10-17

Think of a time you saw a patient healed and discovered that not everyone was happy about it. What was most surprising about the situation?

In this Bible story, Jesus encounters pushback when he heals a woman with a deformity.

### Hearing the Word

1. Read [Luke 13:10-17](#). Describe what happened as if you were an observer in the room.

Do an assessment on the crippled woman. What are some of the physical, emotional and spiritual needs she may have had? How might she have responded when Jesus noticed her, called her over, spoke to her and touched her?

Describe some ways people today can be “bent over” emotionally and spiritually, as well as physically.

2. Describe the attitudes and behaviors of the synagogue rulers and other opponents of Jesus. What may have been some of their beliefs and values? In what ways were their perspectives “crippling?”

What are examples of traditions and policies that block care for people in healthcare, in our communities, or in our churches?

3. List all the qualities you see in Jesus as you observe what he did and said. What values underlie Jesus’ statements in vs. 15-16? How is his perspective in contrast with the religious leaders?

Based on what you have seen, how can Jesus care for people today who are “bent over” by personal needs and other burdens they are carrying? What are ways Jesus sets people free?

4. Reflect on how Jesus is able to touch our lives today. What may be causing you to feel “bent over” or bound? What are ways Jesus notices, calls, speaks and touches you? How will you respond?
5. Think about Jesus’ values and actions evident in the passage. What difference can it make to know that Jesus Christ can bring healing, advocacy, justice and freedom to people today?

How does Jesus bring his presence to situations where people are not valued or where “traditions” block care for people with needs? How can you advocate for them?

## **Responding to the Word**

Listen to the Holy Spirit guiding you in discovering how Jesus is speaking to you through this passage. What are you learning from Jesus, and how will you respond?

Write down some actions you will take and share with a friend who can pray for you and help you to be accountable to what you are hearing from the Lord.

Reflect on what the Lord has already done in your life to heal, encourage, and set you free. Share this with a friend and praise God for his love for you.



## Living with a Full Schedule

Mark 1:35 - 2:17

What does a really busy day look like for you? What helps you cope when there are too many demands on your time? In this story, we see how Jesus demonstrates tireless compassion for people with a variety of serious needs.

### Hearing the Word

1. Read [Mark 1:35-2:17](#). What were some of the demands placed on Jesus in his work among people? Describe some of the decisions he faced.

What is the significance of Jesus spending time in prayer (v. 35)? What happens in our lives when we do—or do not—take time for solitude and prayer?

2. Discuss Jesus's attitude and behavior as he related to the man with leprosy (vs. 40-45). What is significant about how Jesus responded to the man? What are ways in which people, including us, may feel like lepers today?
3. Identify the various needs of the paralyzed man (vs. 2:1-12). How did Jesus give the man physical, emotional, and spiritual healing?

How would you describe the friends of this man? What characteristics caught the attention of Jesus?

Like the four friends in the story, how can we bring other people to Jesus, including colleagues and patients in nursing and healthcare?

4. What do you observe about Jesus in vs. 2:13-17? Give some examples of “tax collectors and sinners” and “Pharisees” in our communities today. How can we follow the example of Jesus in our relationships with them?

### Responding to the Word

How will Jesus' example help you to assess and meet the needs of patients?

Which people do you identify with most in this story: the leper, paralytic, friends, sinners, or Pharisees? How have you experienced similar needs? Ask Jesus to heal your physical, emotional or spiritual needs.

What physical, emotional or spiritual needs would you like Jesus to heal in others? Pray for them and “bring them to Jesus,” like the four friends of the paralyzed man. Listen to the Lord’s prompting about how he may want you to be involved and list specific actions you can take.



## Receiving Forgiveness

Luke 7:36- 50

Think about someone you know who has a difficult time extending forgiveness to others. How is this person's life affected by their unforgiving nature?

In this story, we see how Jesus breaks the stereotypes of who should be forgiven—and why.

### Hearing the Word

1. Read [Luke 7:36-50](#). Describe the woman who met Jesus in this story. What was her reputation? What may have motivated her to intrude on the dinner party?

What does her behavior indicate about her? What may have been some of her strengths and needs?

2. How would you characterize Simon, the Pharisee? Paraphrase what he may have been thinking in v. 39. Contrast Simon's relationship with Jesus and the woman's relationship (vs. 44-46). What was the difference between them?

Why do you think Simon invited Jesus to dinner? In what way does Simon's life reflect a need for forgiveness? What may have motivated his critical attitude?

Think about your own response to Jesus Christ. Compare your attitude and behavior to those of Simon and the woman. Talk with the Lord about what you discover.

3. How did Jesus respond when the dinner was interrupted? What does this show us about him? What lesson was Jesus trying to communicate about forgiveness?

How did the woman demonstrate that she had faith? What is the relationship between faith, love and forgiveness?

How did Jesus communicate to the woman (verbally and non-verbally) that she was forgiven?

4. Many of us experience a lack of freedom in expressing love to God and other people. Do you think there is a connection with not being able to accept or appreciate Christ's forgiveness, or perhaps an inability to forgive ourselves? Other reasons?

## **Responding to the Word**

Summarize what you have seen through this passage. What do you want to learn about forgiveness and acceptance from God? What are some ways that Christ's forgiveness can affect your attitudes and behavior as you relate with people?

Forgiveness is a significant emotional and spiritual need. Think about colleagues and patients in your healthcare setting. What are ways people express guilt and the need for forgiveness? How can you encourage them through Jesus' example and his teaching in this passage?

Write some actions you will take as you apply this story from God's Word. If you are studying this passage in a group, the topic of forgiveness may raise issues of emotional pain. Jesus offers healing when his followers love each other and support one another in prayer.



## Facing Challenges in Ministry

### Mark 9:14-29

Think about a situation when employees are having a heated discussion about an issue and then the supervisor appears. How might people react to the person in authority?

In [Mark 9:14-29](#), Jesus meets up with his disciples to find them arguing with the religious authorities. In this story, Jesus demonstrates leadership, the power of faith, and compassionate care in a critical situation.

### Hearing the Word

1. Read [Mark 9:14-29](#). Imagine you are an observer in the drama that unfolds. How did people respond when they saw Jesus? What does Jesus' response reveal about his character?
2. What do you observe about the interaction between Jesus and the boy's father? What feelings undergirded the conversation? How did Jesus encourage the man's faith?

Think about a current challenge in your life. Can you honestly express your feelings to God? What steps can you take to let him bring change and develop your faith?

3. Describe what happened in vv. 25-27. How does Jesus' care for the father and his afflicted son demonstrate God's compassion and power?

How does this story of Jesus's compassionate care strengthen your faith for difficulties in your family, or in other families you know, including the healthcare setting?

4. Examine Jesus' statement in v. 19. To whom was this directed? Paraphrase the content.

Think about how you have reacted when someone you've taught has made an error (a supervisee, student, or child). What can we learn from Jesus' ability to express what he is thinking, but without shaming anyone in front of others? How does his example affect your own feelings about making mistakes, or your relationship with others who have failed?

5. How does Jesus continue to teach the disciples in vs. 28-29? What does this show us about Jesus?
6. Note verse 29. Contrast what Jesus meant by prayer with what the disciples may have been doing in their attempt to heal the boy. What may have been their problem?

In what ways can we go through the activity of praying without really communicating with God? Reflect on the significance of prayer in your life and ministry and ask God for faith to believe that all things are possible in the challenges you are facing.

## **Responding to the Word**

What qualities of Jesus do you see in this story? How can you develop a more active trust in Jesus and his involvement in your life?

What have you learned about ministry, and mentoring others, by seeing how Jesus relates with his first followers?

Pray with one another about ways to live out what God has said to you through this story.



## Modeling Spiritual Care John 4:1-42

For Christian nurses, care of the spirit is a high priority. We start by addressing our own spiritual needs and then look for ways to care for the spiritual needs of others. In this story, Jesus identifies and addresses spiritual thirst in a marginalized person. As you begin, reflect on a time in your life when you were spiritually dry or thirsty. What did this feel like? See how Jesus offers life-giving water to thirsty souls.

### Hearing the Word

As you read [John 4:1-42](#), notice the clues given by the woman that indicate areas of need in her life, and the manner in which Jesus relates with her.

*Background information:* Jews and Samaritans detested one another. Because of this tension, the Jews avoided Samaria in their travels. It was the custom for women to get water from the public well early in the morning (before it became too hot) and socialize with one another. Also, it was not considered proper for a Jewish man to talk with a woman in public. The “sixth hour” is around noon.

1. What do you observe about the woman in this story? What may be some reasons she came to the well alone, and how may she have felt about this?
2. Imagine what this woman’s life was like. What may have been some of her emotional and spiritual needs? (Spiritual needs include love, purpose, hope, and meaning in life.)

In what ways is the woman like us, our peers, or people we serve in healthcare? Give examples.

3. Note how Jesus creates the setting for his conversation with the woman. Describe the scene. How does Jesus begin to build trust when they were so different?

Think about your nursing practice. What are ways you can be “real” in personal and professional relationships to avoid communicating an attitude of superiority or judgment? How can you demonstrate that everyone has value and something to offer?

4. Throughout their conversation, how does Jesus help the woman stay engaged?

Discuss ways in which you can initiate and carry out conversations about spiritual issues with people you know, especially in your healthcare setting.

How can we learn from Jesus about not getting defensive when people challenge us?

5. Why do you think Jesus said what he did in vv. 16-18? How did he respond to the woman's unwillingness to share the entire truth about herself?

How can we learn to help another person identify and express his or her real need?

6. What does Jesus do when the woman gets off the subject in the conversation?

Some people may talk about "religion" rather than their actual spiritual concerns. How can we direct the conversation to the real need?

7. Look at vv. 39-42 and describe some of the effects from this woman's encounter with Jesus.

Pray this example will help us see "fields ripe for harvest" (v. 35).

### **Responding to the Word**

Summarize this story by listing some principles that Jesus demonstrated for relating with people.

What do we learn about evangelism and witness through Jesus' example?

How can we apply Jesus' example to spiritual care of patients?

Pray for specific people you know who may be "thirsty," but are not yet followers of Jesus. Identify steps you will take to share the "living water" of Jesus with them.

Share your plans with a friend who will support you in prayer and accountability.

## Resources on Spiritual Care

When Jesus interacted with the woman at the well in Samaria ([John 4:1-42](#)), he provided a role model for identifying and addressing spiritual needs in others. Here are some principles for spiritual care that follow the example of Jesus:

- Jesus *became involved* and skillfully crossed barriers of race, gender, religion and culture.
- Jesus *was authentic* by admitting his physical thirst and need for water.
- Jesus *communicated availability* to talk by sitting down in the woman's presence.
- Jesus *provided privacy* for the conversation by sending the disciples away.
- Jesus *communicated worth and acceptance* of the woman by receiving what she could give.
- Jesus *used dialogue* to develop trust and break down barriers to the relationship.
- Jesus began the conversation on *common ground*: the need for water.
- Jesus *avoided defensiveness and condemnation*.
- Jesus recognized that *areas difficult to discuss* indicated underlying needs.
- Jesus *guided the conversation* to identify and meet the woman's spiritual needs.

### A Word About Spiritual Care

"Spiritual care means putting people in touch with God through compassionate presence, active listening, witness, prayer, Bible reading and partnering with the body of Christ (the church community and clergy). It is never coercive or rude."

--by Judith A. Shelly and Arlene B. Miller, [Called to Care: A Christian Worldview for Nursing](#), p. 265.

### A Word About Spiritual Needs

"A spiritual need is anything required to establish and maintain a dynamic personal relationship with God. Examples of basic spiritual needs:

- to be loved and to love in return
- to experience forgiveness and extend it to others
- to find meaning and purpose in life and hope for the future.

Spiritual needs are ultimately met only by God, but when we receive from him, the benefits overflow into our human relationships. We become channels of God's love, forgiveness and hope."

--by Judith A. Shelly, [Spiritual Care: A Guide for Caregivers](#), p. 29-30.

### [Spiritual Care: A JCN Collection](#)

Care of the spirit, a hallmark of good nursing, is a high priority for Christian nurses. What is known about spirituality and spiritual care? How do nurses go about offering spiritual care? Learn from the [Journal of Christian Nursing](#) what researchers, patients, and other experts say makes for good spiritual care. See the JCN collection of articles on [Spirituality and Spiritual Care](#) which are free for [NCF members](#) and [JCN subscribers](#). Also available for purchase.

Find out more about Nurses Christian Fellowship at [www.ncf-jcn.org](http://www.ncf-jcn.org). Explore how you can [get involved](#) in God's expanding work among nurses and in nursing.



## Facing Death with Peace John 14:1-7

Think about people you have known who were dying. What feelings or fears did they express? What are some of your own feelings or thoughts about death and dying?

### Hearing the Word

**Read [John 14:1-7](#).** Jesus gave this teaching during his last meal with the disciples before his death. It was a time of intense anxiety and dashed hopes for the disciples. Notice the specific instructions Jesus gives in verse 1. The verses that follow reveal more about God and his Son, Jesus Christ. We learn why Jesus can confidently say to his anxious followers, “Let not your hearts be troubled.”

1. List the statements Jesus makes concerning his activities and identity in John 14:2-7.
2. Describe each of the following statements from the perspective of a person facing death.

- *“I go to prepare a place for you” (v. 2).*

Some people feel anxiety because they think that when a person dies he/she disappears into the unknown. How would believing that Jesus prepares a place where we can go after death affect anxiety about the unknown?

Think about the characteristics of Jesus Christ seen in these Bible studies and other texts. What type of place do you think he would prepare for people?

- *“I will come again and take you to myself” (v. 3).*

How do you feel about going *alone* into a completely new situation? For some people, an underlying source of anxiety in facing death is their fear of being alone. What clues do people with serious illness give that they do not want to be alone?

What difference would it make to know that Jesus will escort the person who believes in him to a place he has prepared, and will remain with the person?

What do you think it will be like to be with Jesus Christ after you die?

- *“I am the way, the truth, and the life” (v. 6).*

Think about a time when you were driving and were lost or confused about the direction you were going. What were some of your feelings?

Define *way*, *truth*, and *life*. What is Jesus really saying about himself? What implications does this statement have for people searching for meaning and fulfillment in their lives?

Many people believe there is a place called heaven but are uncertain about the way to get there. What is Jesus' answer to this uncertainty?

- *If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well" (v. 7)*

What is Jesus saying about how a person can know God? What does it mean to know someone?

During a conversation with a nurse, a patient said that he was afraid of surgery because he thought that he probably had cancer and he was afraid of dying. The nurse asked what it was about death that made him feel afraid. He replied, "I'm afraid to meet God." What are ways that people you know, and those you serve in healthcare situations, express anxiety and fear about death and dying? How can you offer them hope from verses 6-7?

3. Summarize vv. 1-7 by restating the promises that Christ makes in your own words. Which promise stands out to you? Why can Jesus say, "Let not your hearts be troubled" (v. 1)?

## Responding to the Word

Reflect again on thoughts and feelings about your own death. Think about patients and others you know who are anxious about dying. Apply what Jesus said in these verses to specific situations. Pray together for one another, and for your patients and friends

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## For More Discussion

Death is the ultimate crisis of our lives. Death is often the last thing we talk about. Our society denies death. Here are reflection questions about life and death to facilitate personal discussions with a family member, a friend, or in a healthcare situation:

1. When I think of death, I . . .
2. The thought of dying makes me feel . . .
3. My first experience with death was . . .
4. If I were told I would soon die, I would want to . . .
5. Ways I would want to be remembered . . .
6. What is important to me about living life now . . .



## Comforting the Grieving John 11:17-44

What feelings did you experience when you lost something significant, experienced a change in a relationship, or lost someone close to you through death? What were some helpful and unhelpful responses from people as you grieved your loss?

In this story from John's Gospel, we see how Jesus not only comforted grieving friends, but took on death itself through a life-giving miracle.

### Hearing the Word

1. [Read John 11:17-44](#). Compare the responses of Martha and Mary to the death of Lazarus. What did each of them do when Jesus arrived? What may this indicate about how they were feeling?
2. Why did Jesus respond differently to the same question by each sister? How did these conversations meet each of their unique needs for comfort and hope?

Think about people you know who are experiencing loss, or the potential loss of someone or something. Also think of grieving people in your healthcare setting. What are ways you can follow Jesus' example and care for them in their need?

3. Jesus has a unique perspective of death. What does he say about himself in vv. 25-26? What do you think he means by "resurrection" and "life?" How is death a contrast?

How does a person obtain the life that Jesus speaks about?

4. What does it look like to "believe" in the person of Jesus Christ?

How would you answer the question Jesus asks Martha in v. 26b? How does believing in Jesus affect your life now and eternally?

5. Review John 11:38-44 and describe what happened at the tomb of Lazarus in your own words. Why do you think that Jesus publicly talked with his Father? What may have gone through your mind if you had heard this prayer?
6. What may have been some of the thoughts and feelings people may have experienced when Jesus said, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Though we have not seen resurrections, Jesus is bringing new life (physical, emotional, spiritual) to people around us, and he involves us in his ministry. What are ways we can "unbind" people who are paralyzed and confined by fears and anxieties, doubts, spiritual darkness, or unhealthy perspectives about God or life?

What are factors that block us from being involved in Jesus's efforts to bring physical, emotional or spiritual life to others? Reflect on ways Jesus offers release and new life to you.

## **Responding to the Word**

Prayerfully reflect on how God may be calling you to respond to this life-giving passage. Focus on one of these ideas and share with a friend who can pray for you:

- What are ways you can receive Jesus' comfort in a loss you are experiencing now?
- How you can care for others in their loss as a representative of Jesus?
- Review the resources on the next page for coping with grief and death. What words or ideas offer hope or understanding for you?
- How you can be involved in what Jesus is doing to bring life and freedom to people around you today?

## Resources for Grief and Death

### Some Perspectives About Death

In John 11:17-44 we see how Jesus Christ relates to people experiencing sorrow. Jesus was “deeply moved in spirit and troubled”—not only in response to these women, but also in response to the tragedy of death itself. Death comes to human beings because of our sin and rebellious response to God (Romans 6:23). In vv. 38-44, we see Christ’s power over death in raising Lazarus. This miracle shows the divinity of Jesus Christ and illustrates how Christ creates life in people who are spiritually dead. Christ came to set us free from the power that evil has over the world. Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins (Romans 6:6-11). Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and lives today to be involved in the lives of people he loves. He offers everlasting life to anyone who believes in him (John 3:16). For additional study about death and resurrection, see 1 Corinthians 15. Also see 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 for a description of finding hope in the present of death.

### Some Perspectives about Grief

Life is filled with a variety of losses – of relationships, health, jobs and position. Grief is the natural response to loss. We experience loss and grief in large and small and ways.

1. Grief includes many kinds of emotions:
  - shock and disbelief
  - bargaining (maybe if I did xxx, the situation would change)
  - anguish
  - irritability, anger
  - sadness, depression
  - emptiness
  - loneliness
  - acceptance and moving on with life, but the emotions described above may still return.
2. Everyone’s experience with grief is different, and there is not one way to grieve.
3. Some guidelines about grief:
  - Grief is work, and it can be exhausting.
  - Cry out your grief; express emotions, including anger.
  - Give grace to yourself
  - Pay attention to basic physical needs.
  - Ask for support – and accept it.
  - Say no to major stressors in other areas of your life.
  - Move beyond regret for what you could have/could not have done.
  - Take care of unfinished business in past relationships.
  - Refocus your memory with your favorite picture or image of the person. Reflect on the qualities you cherish, or ways the person’s values still live on.



## Following Jesus in His Mission Matthew 12:1-21

The world is a messy place, full of tensions, sickness, injustice, and broken relationships. People are suffering and in pain, but what is the solution? In this story, Jesus confronts the people in power and declares that he is the solution to the problems of humanity, and we are also invited to be a part of God's redemptive and healing work in our world. If true, this is very good news!

### Hearing the Word

1. Read [Matthew 12:1-21](#) and list characteristics of the Pharisees. How did their focus on traditions and technicalities affect their relationships with others?

What are ways that we communicate attitudes and behaviors like those of the Pharisees? Do you see this attitude in healthcare, the church, or other organizations?

2. How did Jesus provide compassionate care for the people he encountered, including the disciples, the disabled man and the Pharisees?
3. In verse 7, Jesus quoted from Hosea 6:6: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings." Summarize how Jesus demonstrated this Scripture.

The Word of God shaped Jesus' values and actions. How can we allow God's Word to shape our expressions of mercy and justice, and our attitudes and behavior?

Identify ways you can follow Jesus' example of advocacy and care for people in your family, healthcare setting, church, or community.

4. In [verses 17-21](#), Jesus claims to be the fulfillment of God's chosen servant promised many years earlier in [Isaiah 42:1-9](#). Describe the identity and characteristics of the servant. How can these verses help to define characteristics of Christ's disciples?
5. What difference does it make that the servant knows he is chosen, loved, and brings delight to God (v. 18)?

Reflect on the extent to which you feel chosen, loved, and delightful to God. How can an awareness of your worth to God become more of a reality in your life?

6. Describe the images of "a bruised reed, a smoldering wick" (v. 20). Identify times you may have felt like a bruised reed or a smoldering wick. What difference does it make to know Jesus' qualities in vs. 19-20?

## **Responding to the Word**

Through our relationships and our work in healthcare, the church, and community organizations, we can bring God's mercy and justice to disenfranchised and vulnerable people. Give examples of carrying out Jesus' ministry that you have seen

How can you live out your unique role as a representative of Jesus in the world, including in healthcare and through your church?

Prayerfully listen to what God has been saying to you in this passage, and identify some actions you will take.

## Summary

Our journey of following Jesus Christ in nursing began by focusing on Jesus' invitation to come to him, learn from him, and receive rest (Matthew 11:28-30). Jesus cares for us as nurses!

Jesus also calls us to be his messengers (Luke 4:16-21 and Isaiah 61:1-2). We followed Jesus in his interaction with people facing different challenges, including death and grief. We learned about providing spiritual care in nursing from Jesus. In Matthew 12:1-21 and Isaiah 42:1-9 we considered ways that Jesus, and his followers, bring justice and hope to the nations.

This journey is only beginning. God's Word is filled with direction and encouragement as we follow Jesus in our profession. [Journal of Christian Nursing](#) provides biblically-based Christian perspectives to contemporary issues in nursing.

Jesus has also given us a Christian community to travel together in the journey. [Visit NCF online](#) to discover more about groups of students and nurses in your area, and resources to begin a group.

[NCF Membership](#) links us together to strengthen one another for influence in nursing. We also envision ways the NCF Bible studies and other resources can help to launch a mentorship network that will prepare the next generation of nurses to communicate the message of hope in Jesus Christ and increase God's influence in nursing and healthcare.

God is at work in our profession. We are part of the mission of Jesus Christ that will make a difference and bring glory to God!