

# Daily Scriptures and Reflection Questions

***“Only the Word of God can profoundly change the heart of man,  
The need for such conversion is great in today's confused society...”***

*Pope Benedict XVI – October 5, 2008*

**Each question corresponds with the reading of the day for 40 days.**

## **Day 1: Matthew 1-7**

On the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus describes some of the qualities of being a disciple — a follower of Jesus. The Apostles John, James, Peter, and Andrew responded to Jesus' call as His first followers. In what ways do you respond to Jesus' call today?

## **Day 2: Matthew 8-12**

This section of Scripture draws a portrait of Jesus, the miracle worker and healer, through different stories. With which story do you most identify? Why?

## **Day 3: Matthew 13-18**

Jesus used different methods to convey His message of the present reality of God's Kingdom, including the unique form of storytelling known as parables. The Parable of the Sower suggests different kinds of soil. How can you cultivate your own soil so that the seed of God's Word can grow in you?

## **Day 4: Matthew 19-24**

One of the Pharisees (a scholar of the law) tested Jesus by asking, “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” Jesus' response reveals the two great commandments of love. What does it mean to you to love God with your whole heart, soul, and mind? What do you do to demonstrate that love?

## **Day 5: Matthew 25-28**

Jesus told his disciples the Parable of the Talents. In what ways have you put your talents to work? With which of the three servants do you identify the most? Why?

## **Day 6: Mark 1-6**

Throughout these five chapters, Mark shows Jesus as being very active in reaching out to those around Him who were hurting or marginalized. He frees those who are bound in any way. He is of and with the common people. Yet this same Jesus of community is pictured in Mark 1:35 as going off “very early, before dawn” to pray alone. In your own life, how do you find a balance between the activity that comes with living your particular vocation and the need for quiet prayerful reflection?

## **Day 7: Mark 7-11**

The disciples show how easy it is to get caught up in the wonderful things that come from being with Jesus and seeing all things transfigured by the light of grace in a way that can lead to grandiosity. Yet Jesus reminds us that His way is the way of humility,

the way of children, and the way of the cross. In your own life, how do you keep yourself in touch with the costs of discipleship while maintaining an attitude of humble and willing service?

**Day 8: Mark 12-16**

When questioned by the Scribes on which commandment of the law is the greatest, Jesus reduced the entire law to two: love God with everything that you are, and love your neighbor as yourself. Not long after uttering these words, Jesus showed the length He would go to live them out through his passion and death. Upon seeing the way in which he did this, even the Roman centurion cries out, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" Does your life exemplify this dual command enough that others around you recognize it and declare that you too are a child of God, committed to loving God with everything you are, and your neighbor as yourself?

**Day 9: Luke 1-4**

These stories of Jesus' infancy and childhood point to the fact that, from the very beginning, the stage was set for Jesus to be extraordinary. The lessons that Jesus learned as He grew up prepared Him to move forward with His ministry. At His baptism, He heard a voice say, "You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased." Looking back over your own life, can you see signs and hints of the extraordinary things that God has planned for you? Are you ready to respond to the call of the Father who tells you that you are in fact His beloved and He finds great pleasure in you?

**Day 10: Luke 5-9**

This section of Luke's Gospel is dedicated to the idea of discipleship: from the call of the first disciples, to the selection of the 12, to the women who accompany Jesus and provide for Him, to the commissioning of the 12 to proclaim the Kingdom of God, and to cure the sick. Are you prepared, no matter how unworthy you might feel, to follow Jesus, to leave behind boats and nets and careers for the sake of being His disciple? Are you prepared to offer up what you have of yourself for the sake of the mission of making sure that "the poor have the good news proclaimed to them?"

**Day 11: Luke 10-13**

Jesus told Martha that she worries about too many things; and that her sister Mary, in choosing to sit at the feet of the Lord and listen to his teachings, had chosen the better part. How much time do you spend at the feet of the Lord? Could you do better?

**Day 12: Luke 14-19**

Here, Scripture focuses on the Kingdom of God. We are told that to be a disciple requires total dedication to the Kingdom; living Kingdom values requires attention to the poor; the Kingdom belongs to those with a total trust in God the Father; the Kingdom has everything to do with God's love, mercy, and forgiveness. Reflect on how well you are living Kingdom values. What are your areas of strength? How can you do better?

**Day 13: Luke 20-24**

The disciples on the road to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus until he broke bread with them. Do you think you would have recognized Him? Are you able to see Christ in all people?

**Day 14: John 1-5**

The first words of John echo the first words of the Book of Genesis, "In the beginning." This is the Gospel writer's way of telling us that Jesus is a new beginning for God's people. Jesus came into the world but the world did not know Him, people did not accept Him, His words, or His works. We can say the same today. As a disciple, do you know Jesus intimately? What can you do to tell the "good news" about Jesus, the Word of God, to others?

**Day 15: John 6-9**

John Chapter 9 tells us the story of the Man Born Blind, whose faith deepened as the story progresses. First, he refers to Jesus as "the man called Jesus." Then, he declares that Jesus is a prophet. When the man witnesses to the Sanhedrin, he tells them that Jesus is from God. When he again meets Jesus, he declares his faith and says to Jesus, "I do believe." Have you ever been blind to Jesus' presence in your life? Does the faith journey of the Man Born Blind in any way echo yours?

**Day 16: John 10-14**

It may seem strange to us that the Book of Glory begins with Jesus washing his disciples' feet. What is glorious about that? In the book *The Gospel According to St. John* (Barrett, 1955), we are told that Jesus' public act of crucifixion on Calvary and this private act of washing the feet of his disciples are alike in that each is an act of humility and service. Each act shows the glorious love of God. Jesus then gives us the command to go and do likewise. What glorious acts of love and service have you performed for others? How have you followed Jesus' command to go and do likewise?

**Day 17: John 15-19**

One of the many stories in this section is the often quoted, "I am the vine, you are the branches." In order to bear good fruit, the branch must be connected to the vine which nourishes it and enables it to flourish. What kind of "fruit" are you producing? This will be a sign to you of how well you are attached to Jesus, the vine. Is it time to do a little pruning to strengthen the attachment?

**Day 18: John 20-Acts 4**

In the beginning of Acts, the Holy Spirit descends upon the Apostles and endows them with gifts, enabling them to proclaim Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, as the Savior of the world. Peter calls all those present to repentance and baptism, so that they could also receive forgiveness of sins and the gifts of the Spirit. Each of us today, who have been baptized and confirmed, has received all gifts necessary to witness for Jesus and the Kingdom of God. How well do you use the gifts given to you by the Holy Spirit to build up the Church?

**Day 19: Acts 6-9**

Here is the story of Paul's conversion. Paul was traveling to the synagogues in Damascus to find "any men or women who belong to the Way." (Followers of Jesus or disciples). When Paul encounters Jesus on the road to Damascus and asks, "Who are you Lord?" Jesus responds, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." Jesus identifies Himself with His Church. Echoing what Jesus told us in the Gospels: whatever we do to the least of His brothers and sisters we do to Him. How have you been treating Jesus lately?

**Day 20: Acts 10-15**

Throughout the Book of The Acts of the Apostles, we see the movement of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that bestows gifts, strengthens and encourages, and initiates the movement of the Kingdom through Paul's missionary journeys. How has the Holy Spirit been present in your life and how has the Spirit moved you toward God's will for your life?

**Day 21: Acts 16-20**

While Paul was in Athens, he grew exasperated at the sight of the city full of idols. Have you experienced a similar feeling? What kind of idols do you see around? Do these idols bring you conflict? Why?

**Day 22: Acts 21-26**

Listening to the story of Paul's conversion, we are called to reflect on our own journey of conversion. How has this journey been for you?

**Day 23: Acts 27- Rom 4**

Romans chapter 4 reminds us of the faith of Abraham: "He did not doubt God's promise in unbelief; rather, he was empowered by faith and gave glory to God and was fully convinced that what He had promised he was also able to do." Are you fully convinced of God's promise? If you are, how do you reflect it in the way you live?

**Day 24: Romans 5-10**

"We know that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose." Looking back over your life, do these words testify to any events that you have experienced?

**Day 25: Romans 11 – 1 Corinthians 1**

We are one body in Christ. Have you discovered what "part" you are in the Body of Christ? What is your function?

**Day 26: 1 Corinthians 2-9**

Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth to correct some of their misbehavior. He reminded them that Christ's ultimate sacrifice called them into one community. As followers of Christ, they are called to mature in their faith. As one body, there should be no rivalry or divisions. Paul calls us, in the name of Jesus, to be united in mind and purpose. Are you

united in mind and purpose with Jesus and his Church? Are there any ways to improve your union?

**Day 27: 1 Corinthians 10-15**

The theme of unity continues in Corinthians. Paul reminds us we are one body with many parts. Each of these parts is essential to the workings of the body as a whole. If one member is missing from the body, the body does not function properly. Do you know that you are essential to the Body of Christ and to your parish community? What are the gifts you bring to the Body of Christ? How do you share those gifts with the world?

**Day 28: 1 Corinthians 16 – 2 Corinthians 9**

“So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come.” What does it mean to know you are a new creation in Christ and that through him your sins are forgiven and you are reconciled to God?

**Day 29: 2 Corinthians 10- Galatians 4**

Paul tells us that it is our faith that justifies us. It is through this faith that we have become children of God and heirs to God’s promises. Think about the relationship between a parent and a child. Similarly, you are God’s adopted son or daughter. He chose you to belong to him. Reflect on God’s love for you. What is your response to that love?

**Day 30: Galatians 5 – Philippians 1**

Paul calls us to live a life worthy of the calling we have received with humility, meekness, and patience. How well do you live out these attributes?

**Day 31: Philippians 2- 1 Thessalonians 2**

How have the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love enhanced your journey of faith?

**Day 32: 1 Thessalonians 3- 1 Timothy 5**

Are you ready for the second coming of Christ when He will judge the living and the dead?

**Day 33: 1 Timothy 6- Hebrews 1**

Is your life as a Catholic a good example to your family and friends?

**Day 34: Hebrews 2-10**

Are you laying down your life for others just as Jesus laid down His life for us?

**Day 35: Hebrews 11- James 5**

How has the power of prayer helped you in your life?

**Day 36: 1 Peter 1 -1 John 1**

How do you remain steadfast as a follower of Jesus when you experience trials or suffering?

**Day 37: 1 John 2 – Jude**

What are some ways that you minister to others, especially strangers, through hospitality, generosity, and a welcoming spirit?

**Day 38: Revelation 1-7**

The Book of Revelation is a book of hope written for Christians who suffered under extreme Roman persecution. It tells that, despite all of the evils in the world, God will be victorious in the end and the Church, the New Jerusalem, will rise in glory as a sign of that victory. This first section is directed to each of the Christian communities to give hope or condemnation. Repentance is essential. When you hear God knocking at the door of your heart, how do you respond to His voice?

**Day 39: Revelation 8-15**

This section describes the terrible destruction of God's foes. Here the Emperor of Rome and his armies are described as "Beast." How have you experienced God and his followers fighting the forces of sin and evil in the world?

**Day 40: Revelation 16-22**

This book of hope for all Christians describes the beautiful "City on a Hill" that is God's promised Kingdom. How do you see yourself participating in the vision of God's triumph over sin, evil, and death?