



*7 Days of
Centering on Jesus*

A DAILY DEVOTIONAL SERIES



"I love Jesus. I love ice cream."

This is the ardent confession I scribbled in crayon on my mom's church bulletin when I was six-years-old. As I'm now in my mid-thirties, you can see that Jesus and I go way back.

It may surprise you to hear, then, that I didn't really know him until my late-twenties. After two decades of Bible studies, prayers, and mission trips, it was barrenness that finally made the introduction.

When the doctors told my husband and I that we were unlikely to ever have children, my relationship with God, whom I'd worshiped and followed for years, crumbled. Arrested with anger and hurt, I found myself unable to span the gap between God and me.

It felt like breaking up.

This was where Jesus found me. Heartbroken and alone, he reached out.

"I know things are tough between you and my Father," he said, "but I can stand in the gap if you want."

It was a defining moment; he showed up when I needed him most, and I've never been the same.





It surprised me that in all my years as a Christian, I'd never gotten to know Jesus. I mean, I knew his story and received his salvation, but it was predominately God whom I pictured and prayed to. So when Jesus stepped in during that rough patch, he was a revelation.

I started picturing him sitting next to me at work or church or in the car.

I began having conversations with him like he was really there, asking him questions and pausing to hear what he'd say.

And he came alive from the pages of the Bible. Sometimes he'd do funny things--crack little jokes that made me laugh. (I never thought I'd have inside jokes with Jesus, but I do.)

Frequently he would challenge me to think differently about something or someone, pointing to how he did things on earth.

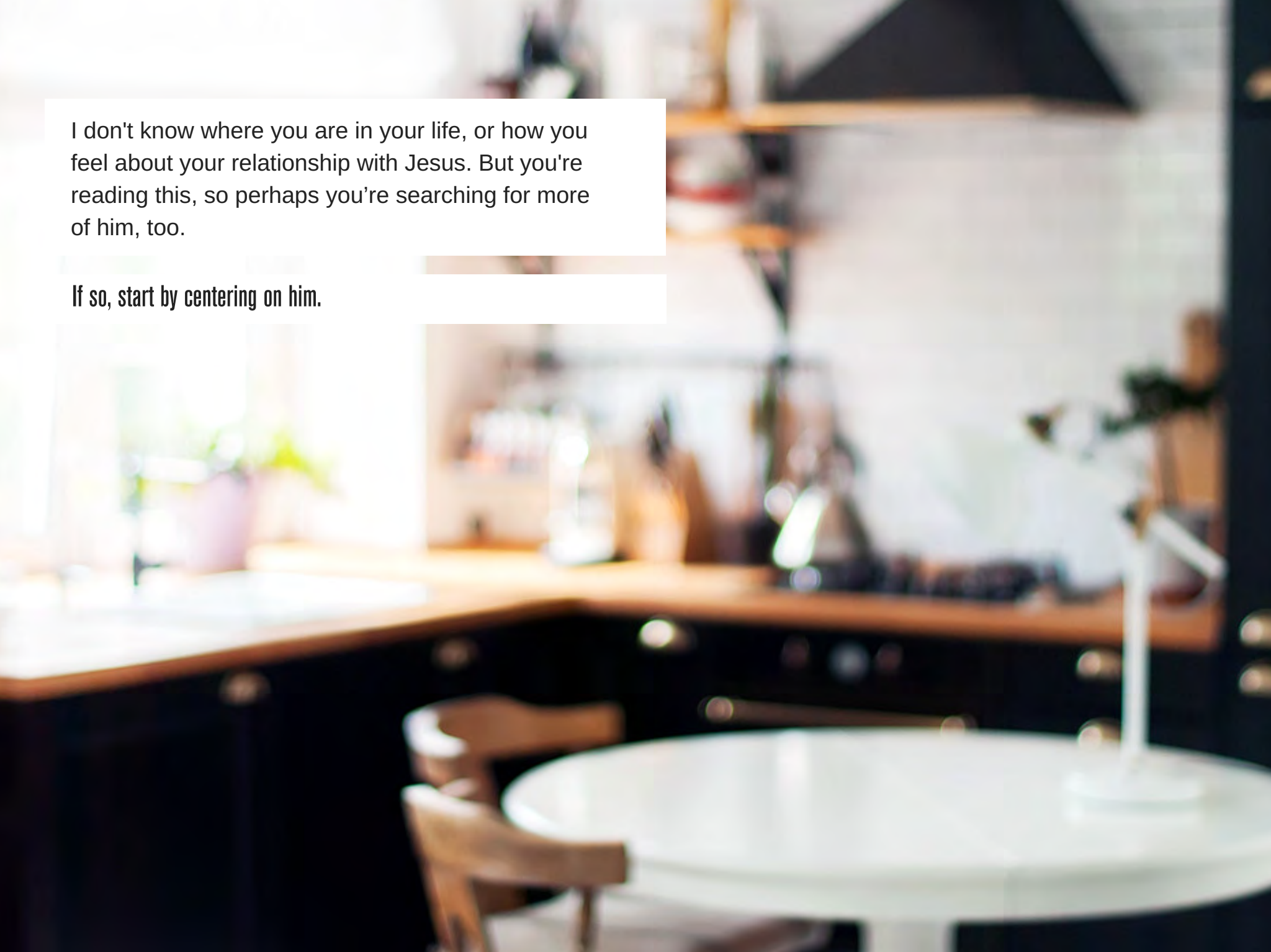


Years later, the relationship continues. It's become so habitual that I wake up in the morning and start my journal entries with, "Good morning, Jesus," as if picking up where we left off the night before.

When I'm really overwhelmed, I stop everything and ask him what to do next and then wait to hear what he says.

And when my husband and I get into arguments, I silently invite Jesus to join us, praying that he'll show me what to say (or *not* say, as is usually the case).

I wish I did all of these things every minute of every day. **Because the moments I have right now with Jesus are not enough. I want more.**



I don't know where you are in your life, or how you feel about your relationship with Jesus. But you're reading this, so perhaps you're searching for more of him, too.

If so, start by centering on him.

Centering isn't a program, a self-help challenge, or a marketing gimmick. And it's not hard the way a diet or exercise plan is hard.

Mostly it starts with a fresh "Yes!" to him every day, plus time.

Jesus does the rest because he's cool like that.

While it's true that each of us follows our own path to Jesus, there are some universal things that open our hearts and minds. These "things" include good-old-fashioned prayers and Scriptures, and also little daily experiments. I'm sharing 7 of them here and through daily emails. They'll help us focus more on him and get to know him better.

And because listening to Jesus is the baseline for all 7 days, **they'll be life-changing.**





Ready to say yes to 7 days of centering? Good.

Before we start, here are some tips:

Tips:

- Say a fresh "Yes" to Jesus every morning. **If you do nothing else, do this.** It's amazing what he can do with a Yes.
- Ditch the pressure of perfectionism. If you start the day strong and then fizzle by lunch, receive his grace instead of beating yourself up. Listening and following Jesus is like exercise--we all start somewhere and grow from there.
- Frequently you'll be asked to listen and then go with what you hear. Follow through even when what you hear seems silly or you feel like you're making it up. The more you listen and respond, the better you'll get at tuning into the true voice of Jesus.

Expect the Holy Spirit to speak, so keep a journal or digital notebook handy to jot down things you hear throughout the day.

Just one rule: NO writing/typing while driving.



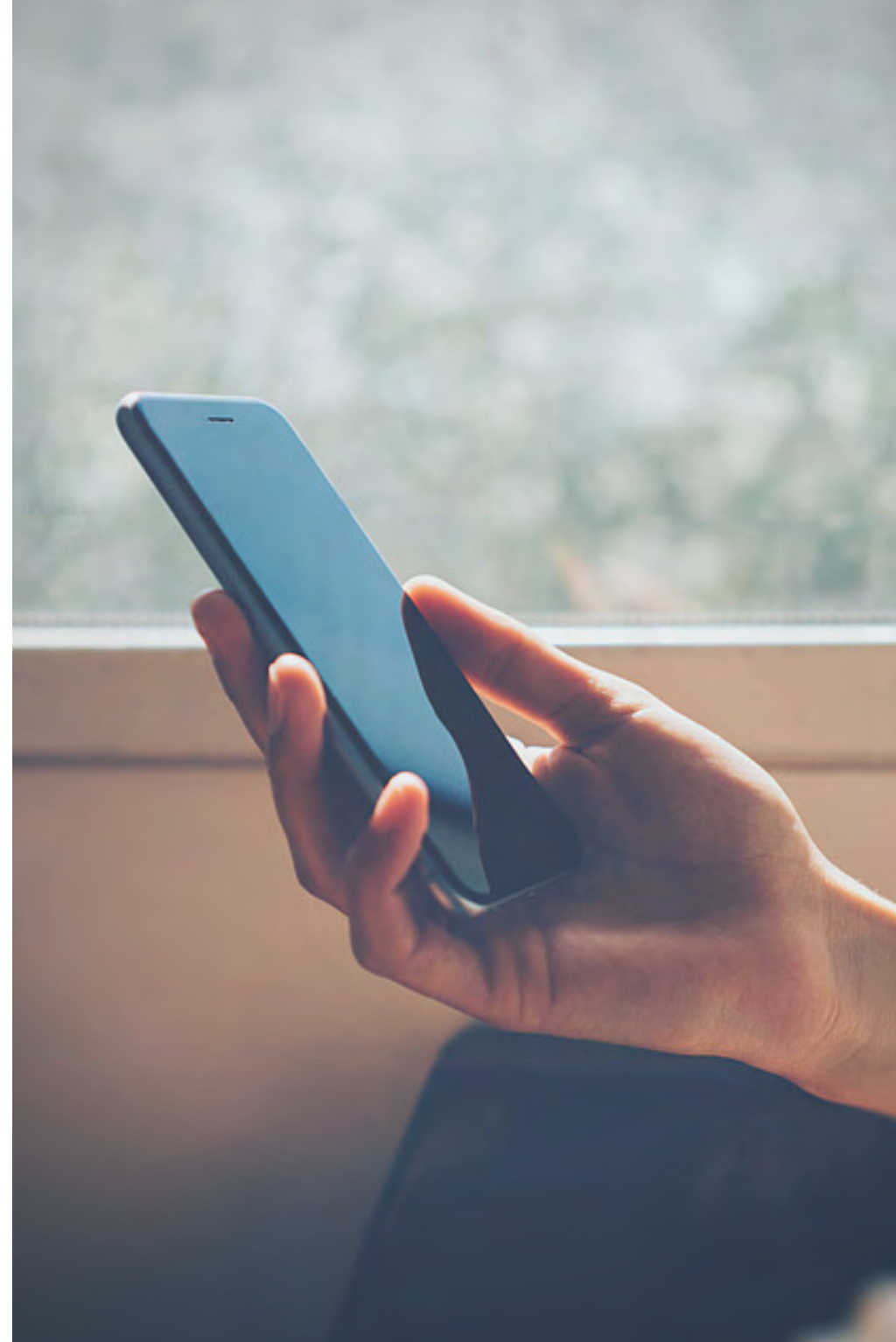


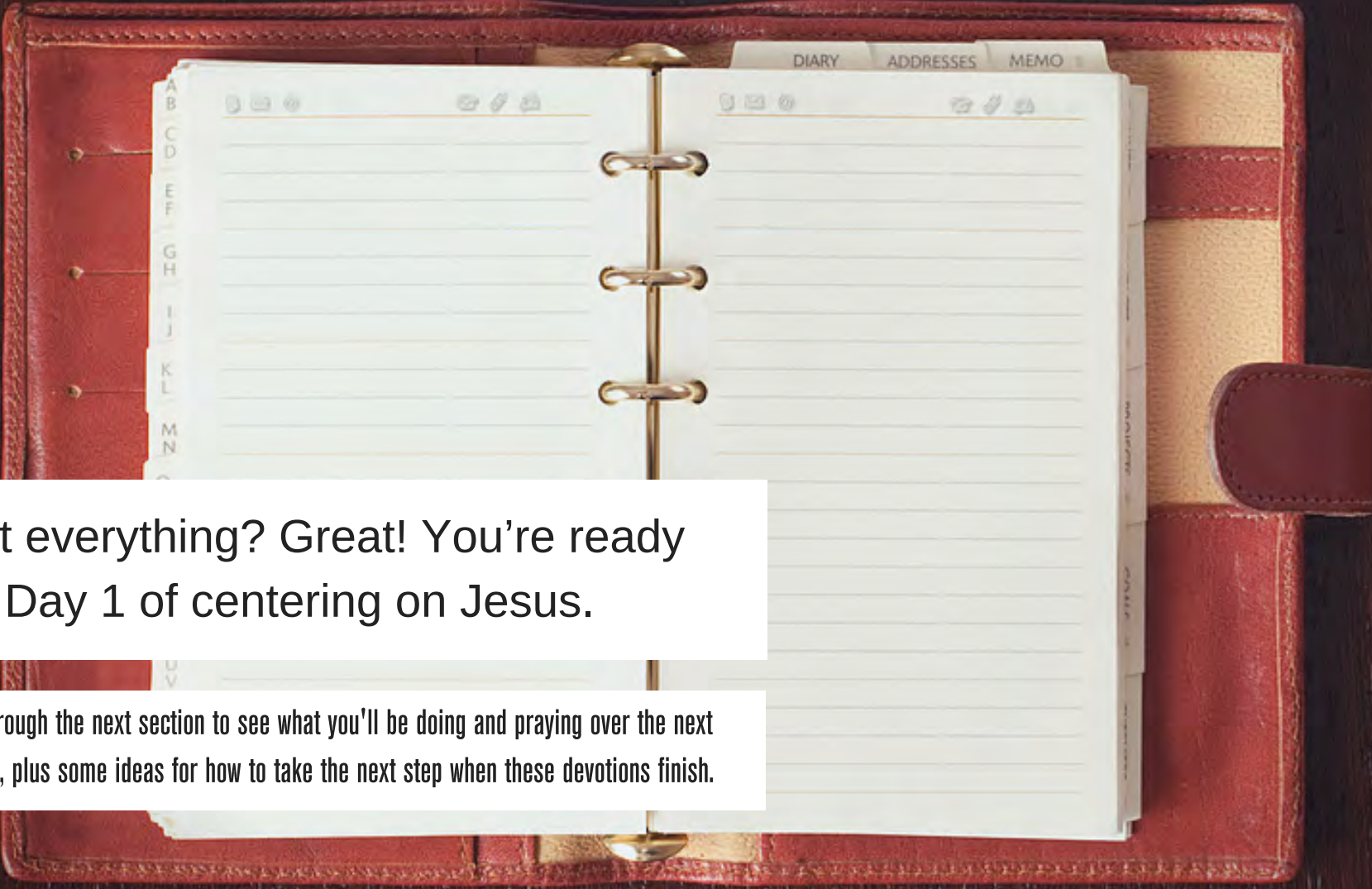
Tips (continued):

- Be prepared for interruptions. Sometimes these will be Jesus challenging you to stay open and flexible. Other times it will be the Devil seeking to distract you. Either way, turn your thoughts to the Holy Spirit and listen for how to respond.
- Feelings of frustration are normal. Sometimes you'll ask the Holy Spirit for a word and hear crickets. Rather than over-analyze or get down on yourself, let go and move on to the next thing. Eventually the Spirit will speak and you'll hear him.

Tips (continued):

- Stay open to the new and unexpected. This centering process is like thrift store shopping: frequently we don't find what we're looking for, but we encounter something better that wasn't even on our list. Trust that Jesus knows what you need today.
- Read the emails in this series in the morning and then revisit them once or twice more during the day. In our busy, distracting world, every reminder to re-center helps.





Got everything? Great! You're ready for Day 1 of centering on Jesus.

Flip through the next section to see what you'll be doing and praying over the next 7 days, plus some ideas for how to take the next step when these devotions finish.



ENCOUNTER *Jesus* IN A FRESH WAY

You'll see where
Jesus appears,
cover to cover.



Day 1

Do a fast skim through John chapters 6, 8 & 10 and make a list of the ways Jesus describes himself using "I am...."
Which one speaks the most to you today? Why?



I tried it. Here's what happened:



Day 2

Write out your to-do list. Now scratch everything off. Ask Jesus to tell you what to do next. Write down whatever comes to mind, even if it seems silly. Then do it.

I tried it. Here's what happened:

I tried it. Here's what happened:

Day 3

Pay attention to your "waiting" moments all day. Anytime you transition from one thing to the next and there's a pause (computer loading, traffic light, waiting at the checkout), turn your thoughts to Jesus. What happened?



I tried it. Here's what happened:

Lined area for writing the response to the Day 4 prompt.

Day 4

Open your Jesus-Centered Bible (or Bible app) to one of the Gospels and find the first time Jesus says something about himself. What does he say? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you something new.



A close-up photograph of a person's hands using a smartphone. The person is wearing a green sweater. The phone is lying on a wooden surface. The background is blurred.

Day 5

Every time you get a text or email, pause before responding and ask Jesus how to pray for the sender.

I tried it. Here's what happened:

I tried it. Here's what happened:

Lined writing area for journaling or notes.

Day 7 - last day

Get to a quiet place and tell Jesus how you would describe him. Then ask him how he would describe you. Listen without interrupting.





You know Jesus, you think he's a nice guy, and you never forget his birthday.

But the truth is...**you want more than that.** You're bored. Exhausted. Tired of the grind.

You're done with hearing about Jesus in sermons. Reading about Jesus in devotions. You want to encounter Jesus—and know him for who he really is.

You want to experience Jesus' love, not just admire him. To become a follower, not just a fan.

Here's an invitation to the life you didn't think was possible, with the Jesus you never knew.

BUY THE BOOK HERE ⇒⇒

A person wearing a white shirt is sitting at a wooden desk, working on a laptop. In the foreground, a clear glass cup filled with coffee sits on a matching saucer. The background is softly blurred, showing the person's hands on the laptop keyboard and the side of the laptop screen.

Now what?

Ideas for your next steps



I finished the 7-day series. What should I do now?

Congratulations on finishing! Here are three ideas for your next steps:

1. Pray! Ask Jesus what he has for you now.
2. Share your experiences with others face-to-face. Use hashtag #JesusCenteredLife on social media.
3. Go deeper. Now that you've had a taste of experiencing Jesus in a fresh way every day, take the next step by diving deeper into the Bible and trying new, creative practices to connect with him. The next page has two resources that will propel you forward as you center on Jesus.



Two Resources To Go Deeper With Jesus

1. Continue centering on Jesus with a *Jesus-Centered Bible*. It's specifically designed to help you see Jesus in ways you've never seen him before, including unique blue-letter insights throughout the Old Testament.

Shop the Jesus-Centered Bible

2. Get a copy of *The Jesus-Centered Life*. Full of additional ways to encounter Jesus daily, this book is life-changing.

Get The Jesus-Centered Life

About the author:

Stephanie Hillberry is a marketing manager and writer for Lifetree (a part of Group). She lives with her husband in Colorado and enjoys the outdoors and *every hobby known to man* including blogging, photography, and sewing.

Reach her at shillberry@group.com.



About Lifetree:

Lifetree is part of Group, an inter-denominational organization passionate about connecting people to Jesus and each other.

Located in Loveland, Colorado, we create Jesus-centered resources for individuals, families, and churches. Learn more about being Jesus-centered at JesusCenteredLife.com.



The end. (Or is it just the start?)

