

# Quieting Your Heart

An Invitation to Dwell in His  
Presence this Christmas

Darlene Schacht



Time-Warp Wife Ministries

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## About the Author:



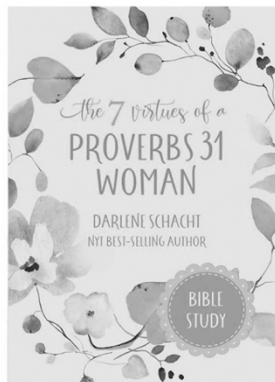
DARLENE SCHACHT is an award-winning and *NY Times* best-selling author. She is the founder of Time-Warp Wife Ministries, an online publication that encourages women to live Christ-centered lives. Her passion for scripture and hunger for truth is the driving force behind a unique ministry that offers Bible studies and daily marriage prayers.

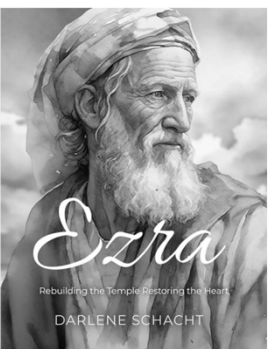
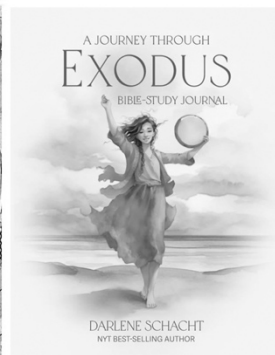
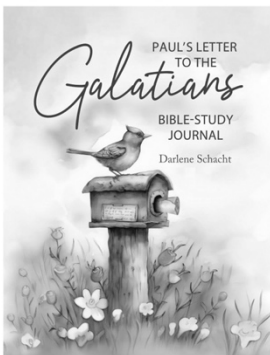
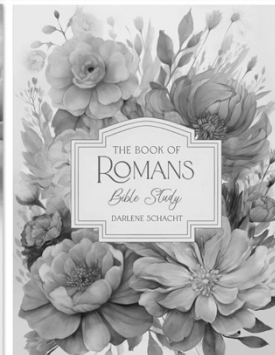
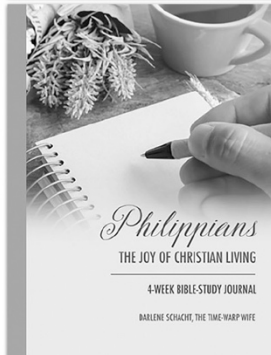
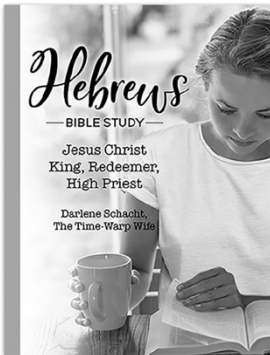
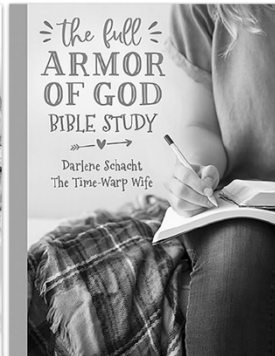
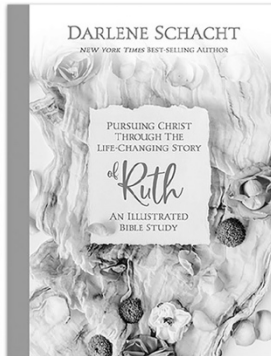
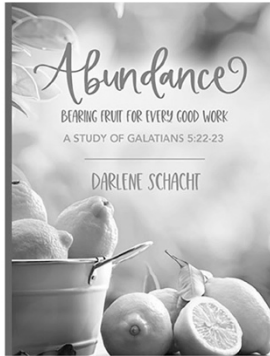
She began her publishing journey in 2011 working alongside actress/author Candace Cameron Bure to publish *Reshaping it All: Motivation for Spiritual and Physical Fitness*.

With a passion for Jesus, Darlene continues to write, sharing the gospel with countless women around the world.

Visit Darlene's blog at [TimeWarpWife.com](http://TimeWarpWife.com) to find Bible studies, devotionals, and daily marriage prayers.

## Other Bible Studies by Darlene Schacht:





We're delighted to offer supplemental videos for many of our Bible studies. To discover if this study is one of them, please visit YouTube and search for "Time-Warp Wife Bible Studies."







## Letter from the Author

Dear Friends,

What is it about Christmas that sweeps us up in its beauty and charm? Is it the inviting scents of nutmeg and cinnamon? Is it the warmth of flickering candles and a cup of steaming hot chocolate? Or, maybe it's the sound of bells in the distance that has us decking the halls, dragging out boxes, and dusting off our Bing Crosby records.

There's a comforting embrace to the season that reaches deep into our souls—a patchwork of traditions, lovingly stitched together by generations gone by. The smell of gingerbread cookies fresh from the oven, the sound of laughter by a crackling fire, and the simple joy of togetherness mark the memories we've shared. These moments resonate within us, reminding us of grandma's recipes, grandpa's stories by the fireside, and mom's home-made stuffing.

Yes, there's a beauty and charm to the holiday season, but amid the gifts and the glitter, the goose and the garland, this world has lost sight of God's only son.

That's why I've written this book: "Quieting Your Heart: An Invitation to Dwell in His Presence This Christmas." So that we prepare room for Him in our hearts and our homes. It's an invitation to rediscover the profound love of God, revealed in the humble birth of our Savior.

Unlike many traditional Advent books that prompt us to focus on ourselves, this book takes a different path. We go straight to the heart of the matter—God's Word—sidestepping our fleeting emotions to focus on

eternal truths. In other words, we're cutting through the noise to listen intently to what God has to say.

The structure of the book reflects this objective. Spread over 28 days—four weeks leading up to Christmas—we'll journey through four integral themes: Love, Joy, Hope, and Peace. Each week is an expedition through Scripture, taking us from the enduring love story of Jacob and Rachel to the triumphant resilience of Paul and Silas, among others.

Each day, we'll unwrap a portion of scripture specifically chosen to illuminate that week's theme. But let's be clear, **the Scripture reading is not a mere supplement; it's the core of each day's lesson.** The subsequent article elaborates on the Scripture, not the other way around. There are also a few questions added to each day's study—not to provoke a casual skim, but to invite you to dig deeper, to really engage with God's Word.

If I could impart one wish, it would be this: May you find yourself immersed in the Word this Christmas. Slipping away here and there for a quiet time with the Lord, to focus on Who and what really matters.

With a heart full of Christmas warmth,

*Darlene Schacht*

The Time-Warp Wife

P.S. You'll find an answer key at the end of this book. While it's tempting to jump ahead, I encourage you to spend time in prayer and scripture first. The journey to the answers can often be as enlightening as the answers themselves. The answer key is there as a companion to your exploration, a way to confirm your insights and offer additional perspectives. If however, you feel that you need help understanding what you've read, then by all means flip to the back of the book, take a peek and then try to answer the question in your own words.

# Week 1 - Love

Day 1 – Love Was Born in a Manger

Unwrapping: Luke 2:1-7

Day 2 – Love is Uniquely Expressed

Unwrapping: Luke 10:38-42 & John 12:1-8

Day 3 – Love is a Selfless Gift

Unwrapping: 1 Samuel 18:1-4 & 1 Samuel 19:1-7

Day 4 – Love Puts Others First

Unwrapping: Ruth Chapter 1

Day 5 – Love is Patient and Enduring

Unwrapping: Genesis 29:15-30

Day 6 – Love Reflects the Compassion of God

Unwrapping: Hosea 1-3

Day 7 – Love Shatters Barriers

Unwrapping: John 4:1-42

## Week 2 - Joy

Day 8 – Joy Manifests in Actions  
Unwrapping: Matthew 2:1-12

Day 9 – Joy Welcomes You Home  
Unwrapping: Luke 15:11-32

Day 10 – Joy Stems from Within  
Unwrapping: Acts 8:26-40

Day 11 – Joy is Rooted in Our Certainty of God  
Unwrapping: Acts 16:16-40

Day 12 – Joy Strengthens a Weary Soul  
Unwrapping: Nehemiah 8:1-12

Day 13 – Joy Doesn't Wait for Answers  
Unwrapping: Luke 1:26-45

Day 14 – Joy is an Expression of Our Faith  
Unwrapping: 2 Samuel 6:12-23

# Week 3 - Hope

Day 15 – Hope Waits on God's Timing  
Unwrapping: Luke 1:5-25

Day 16 – Hope is Alive in Seasons of Waiting  
Unwrapping: 1 Samuel 1 & 2

Day 17 – Hope Blossoms in Miraculous Ways  
Unwrapping: Exodus 2:1-10

Day 18 – Hope is an Enduring Legacy  
Unwrapping: Job 19 and 42

Day 19 – Hope Anchors the Soul  
Unwrapping: Genesis 37, 39-45

Day 20 – Hope is the Breath of Renewal  
Unwrapping: Ezekiel 37:1-14

Day 21 – Hope Ushers in The Miraculous  
Unwrapping: Mark 2:1-12

## *Week 4 - Peace*

Day 22 – Peace on Earth Good Will Toward Men  
Unwrapping: Luke 2:8-20

Day 23 – Peace is Found in God's Presence  
Unwrapping: Psalm 31

Day 24 – Peace Calms the Raging Sea  
Unwrapping: Mark 4:35-41

Day 25 – Peace Takes Practice  
Unwrapping: Philippians 4

Day 26 – Peace is Found in the Gentle Hush  
Unwrapping: 1 Kings 19:1-13

Day 27 – Peace is Knowing God is With Us  
Unwrapping: Matthew 1:18-25

Day 28 – Peace Uplifts the Weary  
Unwrapping: 2 Kings 4:8-37



*Love*

WEEK ONE





DAY ONE

# Love Was Born in a Manger

Unwrapping: Luke 2:1-7

Christmas carries the scent of warm cinnamon and the gentle whisper of distant bells. But let's be real—sometimes it comes with a side of stress.

One year, I set out to recreate the magic of my childhood, inspired by my mom's heartwarming traditions of baking, wrapping, and decorating. She made it look easy, filling our home with joy and the inviting aroma of freshly baked cookies. But when I tried to emulate her, my efforts were more like "Pin the Tail on the Donkey" than anything Pinterest worthy.

After a few weeks wearing myself down, it hit me. What I really missed about my mom and the Christmases she gave us was the love and warmth that she brought into our home. Pretty ribbons don't make a good Christmas; it's the gifts of love that they're wrapped around that makes the difference. If the coffee's on and the door is open to your guests, you're embracing the Spirit of Christmas.

This Christmas let's take a moment to remember Mary and Joseph. Even in the humble surroundings of a Bethlehem stable, they welcomed the Savior of the world. What they lacked in material wealth, they more than made up for with immeasurable love and a divine purpose.





The Bible tells us, "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:2, NIV). Here are 7 heartfelt ways to extend God's love and warmth to others during this season:

- 1 Open Your Home for Fellowship**  
Invite neighbors or church members over for a simple dinner, focusing on meaningful connections.
- 2 Share a Meal**  
Cook or bake for someone who could use a little extra love and companionship this season.
- 3 Be Present**  
Give the gift of time and emotional support to those who need it, embodying God's enduring love.
- 4 Be Generous**  
Consider gifting to families in need or donating food to local shelters. Cheerful giving honors God.
- 5 Show Empathy**  
Send a heartfelt note or call to someone who may be grieving or facing challenges.
- 6 Volunteer**  
Serve your community through church events or local organizations, offering God's love in action.
- 7 Pray**  
Lift others up in prayer, bringing their needs and concerns before God as the ultimate act of love.



## Love is Uniquely Expressed

Unwrapping: Luke 10:38-42 & 1 Cor. 12:4-11

Every Christmas morning is a flurry of activity: gifts unboxed in a hurry, breakfast savored quickly, and then the ticking clock as the day's tasks line up, each begging for attention. Amid the hustle and bustle of the day, my father-in-law always arrived early. And what happened when the doorbell rang? Michael would grab two cups of coffee, pull up a chair beside his dad, and settle in for a long conversation. I couldn't be happier to see them bond, but let's just say, the chores didn't pause for sentimentality.

On days like that, I see the Martha in me, a woman focused on ensuring everything runs smoothly. Michael, on the other hand, is a bit more like Mary, choosing the simplicity of soulful connection over the complexity of holiday tasks. It's tempting to think that Martha got it wrong, and Mary got it right, but that's not what Jesus is saying. He's gently letting Martha know that her priorities are misplaced: "Few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42, NIV). The point isn't that Martha's service is unimportant or not appreciated; it's that her distractions were keeping her from something "better"—the spiritual nourishment and peace found in Jesus' presence.

With that in mind, there's a second lesson we can take away from this story, which is that Martha and Mary each loved Jesus in their own unique ways. Martha expressed love in the way that she served, while Mary spent quality time with the Lord. They spoke different voices of love, and yet, both sang harmoniously to the same heart: Jesus'.

Similarly, when Michael settles into those deep conversations with his dad, he's expressing his love in his own unique way. While I'm peeling potatoes and preparing the meal, I'm expressing my love in another way. Neither is less valuable; they're just different expressions of the same deep-rooted love.

This Christmas let's celebrate these unique love languages. Whether you find yourself hustling in the kitchen like Martha or deeply engaged in conversation like Mary, know that both forms of love are holy and pleasing to God. The key is to recognize that while our expressions of love may be different, they converge as we honor the One who loves us.

Why was Mary's choice "better," and how can we apply this truth to the choices we make?

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## Did You Know?

The Greek word for "distracted" in this passage is "perispao", which means to be pulled or dragged in different directions. This paints a vivid picture of how Martha was feeling—something we need to be cautious of in the busy season of Christmas.

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Both Martha and Mary loved Jesus but showed it in different ways. What does this tell us about the diversity of spiritual gifts within the body of Christ?

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DAY THREE

## Love is a Selfless Gift

Unwrapping: 1 Sam. 18:1-4 & 1 Sam. 19:1-7

The Christmas season invites us into a world of wonder and love. It's a time when marshmallows and hot cocoa warm our souls. Amid the sparkle and warmth, the essence of this holy time is, at its core, selflessness—a virtue illuminating the friendship between David and Jonathan.

Jonathan, next in line for the throne, recognized that David was chosen for something divine. This realization could've sparked jealousy, but Jonathan chose a different path. He gave David his robe, weapons, and even his royal accessories—a tangible offering of love and humility.

What lessons can we glean from Jonathan as we step into the holiday season? Well, he showed us the beauty of humility. Unlike the jealousy that consumed his father Saul, Jonathan's humility shines as a beacon of light, guiding us back to the heart of Christmas. His story challenges us to set aside our egos and self-interests as we elevate others, offering them a place to shine.

As we prepare our homes for Christmas, let's also prepare our hearts to be like Jonathan—selfless, loving, and humble. It's not about securing the best seat at the Christmas table or outshining others with picture perfect decorations. It's about wrapping our gifts—and our lives—with genuine love and humility. It's about the selfless acts that echo the humble birth in Bethlehem that forever

changed our world. Let's focus on making room for others. By doing so, we not only embrace the spirit of the season, we also invite the love of God to shine brightly through us. And isn't that the greatest gift that we can give?



The enduring friendship between Jonathan and David offers us a roadmap for nurturing meaningful, Christ-centered relationships. Below are five principles gleaned from Jonathan's actions.

- ① **Selflessness:** Jonathan willingly gives up his robe and armor, even knowing David will likely succeed his father as king instead of him.
- ② **Loyalty:** Despite the risk to his own standing with his father, Jonathan stands up for David, actively working to protect him.
- ③ **Truthfulness:** Jonathan speaks truthfully to Saul about David's character, reminding his father of David's loyalty and contributions.
- ④ **Advocacy:** Jonathan doesn't just passively hope things will get better; he steps in and advocates for David's life and character.
- ⑤ **Love:** All of Jonathan's actions stem from a place of deep love and respect for David, as stated in the Bible, "Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself" (1 Samuel 18:1, NIV).





## Love Puts Others First

### Unwrapping: Ruth Chapter 1

I used to think that the best gifts were the ones under the tree, but as I matured, I discovered that the most cherished gifts are the sacrificial choices we make for love.

A heartfelt example of this is found in Ruth Chapter 1, where Ruth's extraordinary devotion to her mother-in-law offers us an enduring lesson in the art of putting others first.

Ruth echoed the sacrificial love of God when she declared, "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16, NIV). More than sweet words, this profound statement was a pledge to put aside her own comfort, her own future, and her own people, for the sake of someone else's well-being. Like Jonathan, this choice parallels the love Christ demonstrated when He left the splendor of heaven to enter the humble surroundings of a Bethlehem stable. Her decision to stay with Naomi reveals a depth of love that elevates others and prioritizes their well-being.

Some days the holiday season beckons us to step out of our comfort zones, while at other times, it highlights our self-centered desires. An example of this might be choosing to visit a distant relative who is spending the holidays alone. Perhaps it's not the easiest or most comfortable option, but it's an act of love that can make all the difference for someone else.



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## Did You Know?

The timing of the barley harvest (v. 22) in Ruth's story is important because it aligns with the Feast of Firstfruits, a celebration symbolizing rebirth and renewal. This providential alignment not only marked a new beginning for Ruth but also prophetically mirrored the hope and redemption Christ would bring through His resurrection.

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Does the cultural backdrop at that time make Ruth's decision to stay with Naomi more challenging? Why or why not?

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## Love is Patient and Enduring

Unwrapping: Genesis 29:15-30

Christmas is a season wrapped in love. We see it in the charitable acts around us, in the gifts under the tree, and in the joyful reunions with family and friends. But at its core, Christmas celebrates the greatest love story ever told: that of Jesus Christ coming into the world to redeem us.

Another beautiful love story found in the Bible, though lesser celebrated, is the one between Jacob and Rachel. Jacob's love for Rachel wasn't just a fleeting emotion; it was a resolute commitment. He agreed to work seven years to marry her, only to be deceived into marrying Leah, her older sister. Undeterred, he committed to another seven years of labor for the woman he loved. Amid the tinsel and lights of our modern Christmas, Jacob's story calls us back to the fundamental elements of love—sacrifice, patience, and commitment.

Ask yourself this Christmas, what are you willing to invest for love? Are you giving love as freely as you're receiving it? Are you working to keep your relationships strong?

As you gather around the Christmas tree, think of it as a symbol of love's enduring light. Just as Jacob was willing to patiently light the lamp of love for fourteen years, so we are reminded to illuminate our



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## Did You Know?

In biblical times, it was common practice to pay a bride price. It involved the groom or his family giving a payment or gift to the bride's family as a sign of respect and compensation for the bride's contributions. Jacob's seven-year labor for Rachel exemplified this tradition.

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As we reflect on the story of Jacob and Rachel, let's consider three ways his love echoed God's love for mankind:

- ① **Price Paid:** Just as Jacob paid a significant "bride price" to marry Rachel, Christ paid the ultimate price on the cross to redeem His bride, the Church.
- ② **Covenant Commitment:** Jacob's willingness to work additional years to marry Rachel shows his covenant commitment, which parallels the everlasting covenant Christ has with His Church.
- ③ **Enduring Love:** Jacob's love for Rachel compelled him to work for many years, illustrating a love that endures hardships. This is mirrored in Christ's love for the Church, which endured the agony of the crucifixion.



## Love Reflects the Mercy of God

Unwrapping: Hosea 1-3

**I**n this beautiful story of incomparable love, we're introduced to the prophet Hosea, a man instructed by God to marry a woman named Gomer. Despite the fact that Gomer was a promiscuous woman with a bad reputation, Hosea's love was steadfast. After she left home to chase after her lovers, God explicitly instructed Hosea to take Gomer back. In chapter 3, we see that Hosea buys her for "fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley."

God's heart for us is revealed—similar to Jacob, the act of "purchasing" her back is symbolic of the lengths to which God is willing to go to redeem His people. It's a love that reaches out to the sinner, while it also calls us to a transformation that begins with repentance.

At a time of the year when love is the heartbeat of every gift and every sweet song, the story of Hosea and Gomer reminds us that love doesn't come in a box. It's the grace we extend to a friend who has hurt us; it's the understanding we offer a challenging family member; it's the compassion and grace we show to those who have let us down. It's forgiveness. It's mercy. It's grace.

It's time to honor the grace we've been given by extending that same grace to others. Not because they deserve it—but rather



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## Did You Know?

The story of Hosea and Gomer is often referred to as a living parable, which means that it serves as a real-life, tangible illustration of deeper spiritual truths.

Other living parables in the Bible are stories such as the Jesus washing the disciples' feet, Jesus cursing the fig tree, and the prophet Jeremiah, who wore a yoke as a symbol of Judah's submission to Babylon.

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What does the story of Hosea and Gomer teach us about extending mercy and grace to others?

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# Love Shatters Barriers

Unwrapping: John 4:1-42

Christmas is God's love letter to the world, composed with compassion, sealed with grace, and delivered through the gift of His Son. It's the kind of love that shatters barriers, embraces the marginalized, and reaches out to the lost.

One of the most moving examples of this divine love can be found in John Chapter 4. Here, Jesus approaches a Samaritan woman, during a time when societal norms would have dictated distance rather than intimacy. Jesus defies these norms, illustrating that love doesn't stop to consider one's ethnicity, their gender, or their social standing.

While society saw this woman as marginalized—perhaps even disregarded—Jesus saw her. He knew her past, her complexities, her struggles, and yet, He spoke to her with kindness, respect, and understanding. This wasn't a fleeting interaction; it was a moment of profound connection. Without judgment or condemnation, Jesus offers her the living water of eternal life.

In this interaction, we come face-to-face with the magnificent breadth of God's love—a love that doesn't look at where we've been, what we've done, or how others see us.

This Christmas, as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, let's remember to meet Him at the well of our hearts. Don't look at this holy time of year as just another holiday, view it as an invitation to



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## Did You Know?

The encounter at the well of Sychar is one of the longest recorded conversations Jesus had with anyone in the Gospels. It's also one of the first recorded instances that He revealed Himself as the Messiah.

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What does Acts 10:28 indicate about traditional Jewish views concerning associating with people from different backgrounds, including Samaritans, and what does this reveal about Jesus' character?

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# Questions and Answers

## Day 1

**In what ways does Luke 2:1-7 illustrate the truth found in 2 Corinthians 8:9?**

Jesus was born in humble circumstances—no room at the inn, swaddled in simple cloths, and laid in a manger. These details show how He willingly left the riches of heaven to embrace earthly poverty. His humble beginning serves as a powerful illustration of His sacrifice: giving up His heavenly throne to offer us eternal life and spiritual abundance.

## Day 2

**Why was Mary's choice "better," and how can we apply this truth to the choices we make?**

Mary made a "better" choice by focusing on eternal things; a choice that has lasting value and won't be taken away from her.

**Both Martha and Mary loved Jesus but showed it in different ways. What does this tell us about the diversity of spiritual gifts and acts of service within the body of Christ?**

The story of Martha and Mary illustrates that there are diverse ways to express love and devotion to Jesus, reflecting the variety of

spiritual gifts and acts of service within the body of Christ. Each has its own value and place in honoring God.

There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. 1 Corinthians 12:5-6

## Day 3

**How do Jonathan's actions mirror the way Christ came into the world, beginning with His humble birth in a Bethlehem stable? (If you need help with this question, consider what Philippians chapter 2 teaches us about humility and selflessness).**

Both made a choice to put God's will ahead of their own. As Jonathan was the son of King Saul, he gave up his rights to the throne, and humbled himself as a servant before David. His actions mirrored Jesus' who gave up the comforts of heaven, and "made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant" (Philippians 2:7). Both examples illustrate the act of putting God's will ahead of personal gain or status.

## Day 4

**How does Ruth's choice in Chapter 1 to stay with Naomi mirror Jesus' instruction in Matthew 16:24 to 'deny oneself and follow Him'?**

Just as Jesus encourages followers to set aside their own desires to pursue a greater purpose, Ruth too denies her own comfort and familiar surroundings to remain loyal to Naomi. Her decision mirrors

the essence of self-sacrifice and wholehearted commitment embodied in Christ's teachings.

**Does the cultural backdrop at that time make Ruth's decision to stay with Naomi more challenging? Why or why not?**

Yes. Given the cultural context, Ruth's choice to stay with Naomi was indeed challenging. Widows like them faced significant economic hardships, and without male relatives, their security was at risk. Furthermore, as a Moabite, Ruth would potentially encounter prejudice upon entering Israel. Despite these adversities, her unwavering loyalty to Naomi stands as a testament to her profound faith and dedication.

## Day 5

**Drawing from the assurance in Romans 8:35-37, how does Jacob's enduring commitment to Rachel reflect the unwavering nature of Christ's love for His followers, even in the face of challenges?**

Just as Jacob was willing to sacrifice and persist in his love, Christ's love remains steadfast, conquering all obstacles and offering eternal assurance to those who believe.

## Day 6

**What does Romans 5:8 say, and how does this verse connect with the story of Hosea and Gomer?**

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." This verse illustrates the profound nature of God's love and the price He paid for our redemption. In

Romans, we see that God's love extends to us even in our brokenness and sinfulness. Similarly, in Hosea and Gomer's story, we witness Hosea's love for his wayward wife, reflecting God's enduring love for His people despite their unfaithfulness. Both passages emphasize the sacrificial nature of love, where God and Hosea are willing to make significant sacrifices for the sake of redemption.

**What does the story of Hosea and Gomer teach us about extending mercy and grace to others?**

Gomer did not do anything to deserve Hosea's love, yet he showed her mercy and grace despite her sinful actions. Similarly, we can apply this lesson by showing forgiveness and compassion to those who may have wronged us or strayed from the right path, recognizing that love and grace should be extended even when it's unearned. This story challenges us to reflect God's character by extending the same love and mercy that we have received from Him, regardless of the circumstances.

## Day 7

**2 Kings 17:24-41 provides historical context for the divide between Jews and Samaritans. What insights can we gather from this passage regarding the historical background of this division?**

From 2 Kings 17:24-41, we learn that the divide between Jews and Samaritans originated from the resettlement of foreign peoples in the land of Israel, resulting in a blending of religious practices and beliefs. This historical context helps explain the rift between the two communities and the distinctiveness of Samaritan identity and faith.

**What does Acts 10:28 indicate about traditional Jewish views concerning associating with people from different backgrounds, including Samaritans, and what does this reveal about Jesus' character?**

Acts 10:28 suggests that traditional Jewish views included reluctance to associate with people from different backgrounds, like Samaritans. This highlights Jesus' emphasis on loving and reaching out to everyone, regardless of their social status. He was more concerned about loving people than about people's perceptions of Him.