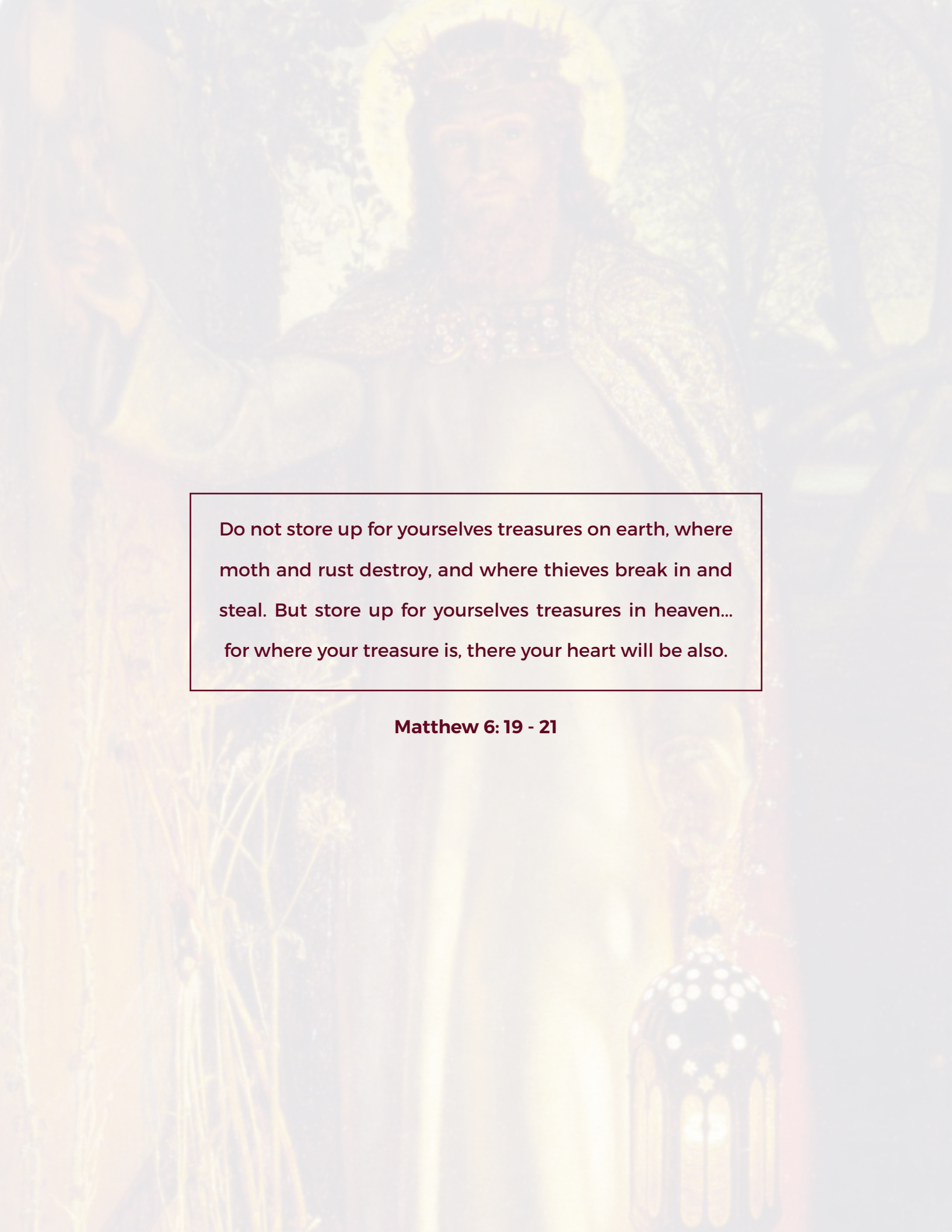


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School of Prayer

Meditation Guide



Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven... for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6: 19 - 21

Do you ever get overwhelmed

or anxious by all the demands of your daily life? Maybe you're juggling athletics and making the honor roll (not to mention your family commitments). Or, maybe you've set your sights on getting into the best college and finding the perfect career while building those friendships that are going to last forever. Or, maybe you're just hanging on day-to-day trying to figure out how to manage what's right in front of you. Whatever the case may be, where does God fit in to your story? Jesus was born so He could be the main character in every life, but is He even playing a lead role in yours? Jesus doesn't want you to spend your life anxiously trying to figure things out. He wants to be involved in the details and help give you the answers. "My peace I give you," He says. This peace of Jesus is a gift which He gives to those who are His intimate friends.

Rest assured, Jesus desires to be in a relationship with you. He delights in you and wants you to know His heart, hear His voice, live confidently as His friend. You grow in your friendship with Him as you open your heart to Him in prayer. Through prayer, God gains access to you, revealing more about Himself and the immeasurable love He has for you. In the heart is where you come to believe there is someone greater than you and you start to trust that He has the answers. For when God created every person, He created them in His image and likeness, gifting the human heart with a way for each person to know Him.

If your heart stays focused only on this life, you lose sight of the bigger picture and what God has in store for you now. And He has so much for you! Our peace comes in knowing there is a heaven where God reigns as Creator; where Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father interceding in all the details of your life, and the Holy Spirit is giving you grace to overcome every challenge that comes your way. God has provided everything you need through His Son, Jesus Christ, but you have to make a choice whether or not to receive the grace. The purpose of this guide is for you to be on the journey with Jesus giving Him a leading role in your story. By opening your heart to His, you can learn what He has in store for you. You've got everything to gain from a life with Jesus. What are you waiting for?

Each meditation will give you a....

- **New Way of Thinking:** a focus for you to think about in your relationship with God.
- **God's Word in Scripture:** a meditation in the Word of God on the theme as Jesus is revealed to you.
- **Reflection from the Heart of Jesus:** a word from the heart of Jesus to deepen your relationship as He has an intimate conversation with you as a friend.
- **What It Means to Me:** a chance for you to reflect on what Jesus is saying and discover what He is doing in your own heart.

MEDITATION ONE

What does it mean that you are a son or daughter of God?

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." **Matthew 16: 13 - 16.**

REFLECTION FROM THE HEART OF JESUS

It is important you know Me, know My Name. I know you. I know everything about you. The things which have disappointed you, hurt you, brought you joy, I even know every fear, every hope, and every desire. I want you to know Me just as well. It is I who am your present, your future, your every hope, and every dream. I long for you to see yourself through My eyes. You are my beloved one and I delight in you. You do not have to earn or prove your love to Me. I love you just as you are and long for you to know Me. And who do you say that I am? Whatever your response, I want you to know I love you, and from the beginning, I came for you. Let Me love you! Let Me be a part of your life. Let Me be your Jesus and fill every emptiness of your life.

WHAT IT MEANS TO ME

Imagine you are one of the disciples with Jesus in Caesarea Philippi and He looks directly at you asking the same question. What is your response to His question? Ask Jesus to tell you who you are to Him. In your journal, write your responses to who Jesus is to you and who you are to Him.

MEDITATION TWO

How would you respond to Jesus if you met Him in person for the first time?

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

*As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him. **Matthew 9:9***

REFLECTION FROM THE HEART OF JESUS

I notice every heart which is longing to know Me, know what is true about love, and know the contentment which only I can give. I ask everyone to follow me, but to those desiring more, I have only to look and make the invitation, follow Me, and they do. Follow me. In your heart, leave all which doesn't satisfy you, which leaves you empty and follow Me. Break free of your areas of temptation, seek My hope where you are in despair and spend time with Me. I will show you the ways to live a better life. Follow me and I will be there to lead you every step of the way.

WHAT IT MEANS TO ME

Have you encountered Jesus and chosen to follow Him as Matthew did? Talk to Jesus about your response to follow Him. Why or why not would you follow Him. Let Him know your fears, your hopes, your desires.

JOURNAL

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MEDITATION THREE

Is God a part of your daily life and do you have faith He is in all the details?

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

*Then he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone. Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and they cried out in fear. At once [Jesus] spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how [strong] the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying, "Truly, you are the Son of God." **Matthew 14: 22 - 23***

REFLECTION FROM THE HEART OF JESUS

I am here with you during every moment no matter how big the waves of life are. I come to calm the waters and free you from all fear. I am here. I have been with you during every storm of your life, calling you out of the darkness and extending My hand to pull you from the deep water. I love you with my very life and would have you walk upon the waters of faith trusting in Me to show you the way. You do not need to be afraid. When you seek my grace, I can give you the courage to make it through the storms. Place your life and all your life circumstances in My hands. Let Me be with you. Surrender to me all of your fears for the future and let me direct your life.

WHAT IT MEANS TO ME

Have you had moments when you have gotten out of the boat like Peter and surrendered all fear to God? Talk to Jesus about the struggle to have faith and the area of your life in need of Him to give you courage to come to Him. Write a surrender prayer to Jesus, giving Him control over this area of your life. Here's a start...*Jesus, I surrender (fill in the blank with an area you need to surrender) and ask You to take control over this issue as Lord.*

MEDITATION FOUR

How do you live with Jesus as one of your friends?

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will." When he returned to his disciples he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "So you could not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again, "My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!" Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open. He left them and withdrew again and prayed a third time, saying the same thing again. Then he returned to his disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand when the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. Look, my betrayer is at hand." **Matthew 26: 36 - 46**

REFLECTION FROM THE HEART OF JESUS

I would keep you close to Me and show you the way to pray during difficult times. When you feel weak, it is when My grace can fully strengthen you. This is why prayer is so important. It is a time for your heart to be silent so that we can speak to each other. I speak in the heart. In the Garden at Gethsemane, I wanted to speak to My Father, sharing My heart and gaining confidence from Him. As you experience challenges in life or have to make decisions, bring these to Me. I will stay awake with you and give you peace as to My will. In my heart I care about what you are going through and want to be in every decision you have to make. Every time you are disappointed by friends, family or the circumstances of life, I want to console you. In your greatest trials, I will be faithful; I will remain with you and even when you don't think I'm there, I am. I long for you to know the grace which the Father gives you through Me. I will show you the way to the Father if you remain in Me as I remain in you.

WHAT IT MEANS TO ME

Go with Jesus into the Garden of Gethsemane. Put yourself in the scene as one of the disciples. What do you learn about Jesus both in His prayer and in His relationship to you as one of His closest friends? Reflect on how you handle the moments of sorrow and distress in your life and pray about them. Tell Jesus how you can stay awake with Him throughout your life and what you need Him to stay awake with you through.

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MEDITATION FIVE

*Are you confident that Jesus loves you,
all the time and no matter what?*

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written, "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS." Therefore many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews'; but that He said, 'I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven [m]in one piece. So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be"; this was to fulfill the Scripture: "They divided My outer garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." Therefore the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own household. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. **John 19: 17 - 30**

REFLECTION FROM THE HEART OF JESUS

I love you! Everything I did throughout My trial, torture and crucifixion was for you. The same way you thirst for water on a hot day, I thirst for you. I thirst, though, for your love, your heart, every part of you! Even the parts of you which you want to stay hidden from others, I desire to know and love. I love you so much that even as the guards were scourging Me with whips, I had you on My heart knowing that as God, I could be an instrument of healing for your pain by allowing it in My own body. There is no part of you that is not beautiful to Me. Even in your weakness, your fears, your struggles, the darkness of your life, I come to claim you as your Savior and King. Through My life, death and resurrection, I can make all things new in you. Your life is worth every drop of My Precious Blood and so I give it to you freely and of My own will, all of Myself, at every Altar and Banquet of My Eucharist. What has been accomplished in Me is for you, so you would know My love. There is no length I would not go to as your Savior and Lord!

WHAT IT MEANS TO ME

Reread the crucifixion of Jesus reflecting on what He endured for you. What change does it make in your life knowing that you have a God willing to die for you? Talk to Jesus about how you can live in response to the gift He has given in His death and resurrection. If there are still wounds in your life which you need to surrender to Him to heal, do it now. Say, "Jesus, I surrender (fill in the blank) and ask you to nail it to your cross and give me freedom and healing from it."

MEDITATION SIX

Do you ever tell Jesus that you love Him?

GOD'S WORD IN SCRIPTURE

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead. So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep." **John 21: 12 - 17**

REFLECTION FROM THE HEART OF JESUS

I delight in loving, seeking and forgiving you. All you need to do is to turn to Me. Even if you are angry with Me, tell Me what you are feeling. Or when you become distracted or afraid and walk away from Me, turn around and meet My gaze. I am still there. Do not just walk away and keep walking away, but let Me enter into your heart and heal you. There is nothing you can do to have Me deny you. I will always forgive you, always extend my hand to you, always chase after you. When you struggle, I still come to you, waiting for you to meet My gaze and see My love for you. Be confident in Me in My forgiveness, in My love for you. I wait for you to give Me the words on your heart. I love you!

WHAT IT MEANS TO ME

Gaze into the eyes of Jesus as Simon Peter did and allow Jesus to ask you, "Do you love Me." How will you respond? What makes it so hard to give and receive love from Jesus? Talk to Jesus about the resolution you can you make to grow in confidence of this love.



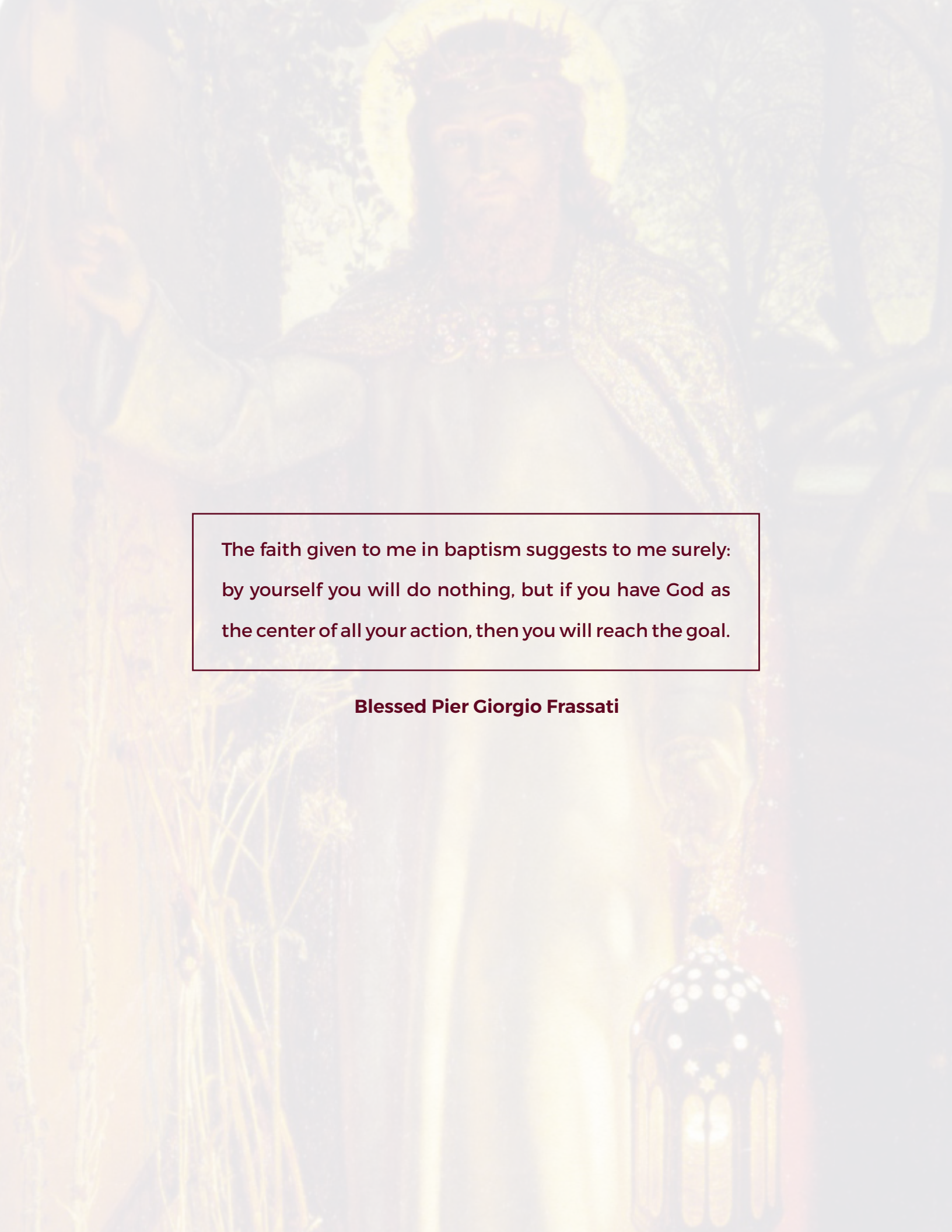
Every day you receive so many i-messages but none of them can build you up the way Jesus can. If all of the noise from your news feed is the center of your world, you stay stuck in the noise rather than hearing Jesus. Others will have more influence over who you are than God will. The voices of others and the world can rob you of the peace of Jesus Christ. Remember, Jesus speaks in the silence of your heart and is the guy who can tell you who you really are. Jesus knows your true identity; He made you. He knows your true potential and the gifts He has given you. He wants you to use them! Jesus has so much to give hearts which are open to a relationship with Him. This meditation guide is just a taste of the life Jesus wants to share with you through prayer.

Jesus desires to have a real relationship with you as a beloved son or daughter of God. This is not a virtual relationship where you never come into contact with the other person, but one where you will come to know Jesus in the depth of your heart. His love will never end but only continue to grow in you! One of the mysteries of life is that Jesus wants you to know Him this way. Through prayer, you can speak to Him and He can speak to you...and He wants to!

To be in this relationship with Jesus, you have work to do to grow in it. Similarly to your other close friends, you have to talk to Jesus. Once you start to spend time on your relationship with Him, you learn how Jesus talks to you and you will experience the overwhelming grace He gives you every day. Your challenge in the days and weeks ahead is to continue your personal journey of prayer growing in your own relationship with Jesus. Talk to Him. Make time to pray with Scripture, maybe read the daily readings, or spend time just in the Presence of Jesus, in church or at adoration. Your life will never be the same once you come to know Jesus and His love for you. May Jesus continue to speak to your heart!

NOTES

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The faith given to me in baptism suggests to me surely:
by yourself you will do nothing, but if you have God as
the center of all your action, then you will reach the goal.

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati



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