

# appnotes

## DAY 1 READ MATTHEW 11:25-30

1

“It shouldn’t be this hard!” Have you ever said that? Have you ever struggled to make new friends, talk to customer service, reset your password, or fix something small? We can get so frustrated and fed up. Sometimes we even give up. That’s what was happening in Jesus’ day. The religious leaders had made it so difficult for people to find God that they were weary and worn out (Matthew 23:4, 13). But, Jesus offered a different way. Instead of giving us an impossible list of rules, Jesus gave us an invitation: to trade His perfection for our imperfection. You know what? Walking with God doesn’t have to be so hard. Accept His invitation to rest in what He has done for you today.

## DAY 2 READ GALATIANS 1:1-10

2

Do you remember that children’s game “telephone”? You whisper a sentence from person to person until the message gets garbled in the end. “The ocean has big waves” becomes “Don’t open brown graves.” It’s funny. If a sentence can get distorted in four minutes, what do you think could happen in forty years? The Apostle Paul wrote Galatians soon after Christ’s time on earth to combat distorted messages about the Gospel. The Gospel is simple: Jesus in my place. When we add anything to the message, we change the message. Mixing up the message messes with our lives. We end up with all sorts of spiritual silliness. We can try to earn God’s love, beat ourselves up when we fail, get cocky when we succeed, and give up when we don’t. But when we understand the Gospel, God’s kindness leads us to repentance, His mercy refreshes us, and His grace motivates us.

## DAY 3 READ EPHESIANS 2:1-10

3

I hate to be the one to break it to you, but dead people don’t dance. They don’t do anything, really, because they are dead. I can tell that you’re not shocked. The Apostle Paul made the same point in today’s passage. We all come into the world spiritually dead. That means we have nothing to offer God, because, well, dead people are dead. But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, made us alive together with Christ. It is an act of God. We cannot save ourselves just like patients in cardiac arrest cannot resuscitate themselves. That’s what is so amazing about our salvation. It’s not us. It’s all God. And that should get you dancing!

## DAY READ TITUS 3:3-8

4

How weird would it be to pick the perfect gift for a friend only to have them pay you for it? You spend months agonizing over the right present. You wrap it up just right. Then you give it to them. You relish their surprise and delight as they open it. And then they set it down and pull out their wallet. Weird, right? So why do we do that with God? He has given us a lavish gift we could never purchase ourselves. But instead of being delighted and assured of His love for us, we attempt to work for it. We mix things up. The Bible says the only thing we have earned is death (Romans 6:23). But because God is merciful and He wanted to, He gave us life! Why not just stop for a moment today and say “Thank you?”

## DAY READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-10

5

What drives you to do good? Compassion or guilt? Peer pressure or love? To feel better about yourself or to make someone else’s day better? Maybe a mix of all that and more? Sometimes our motivations are harder to read than a map covered in mud. The Apostle Paul makes an interesting statement in today’s reading. He claims that he worked harder than every other leader in the early church (which history tells us is true). But then he doesn’t take credit for it. Why? Because the one thing that got him going was grace. When Paul received God’s undeserved forgiveness and acceptance, it changed the trajectory of his life. Before grace, he was building quite an impressive resume for himself (see Philippians 3:1-14). But when grace found him, none of that mattered anymore. Love motivated him.

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