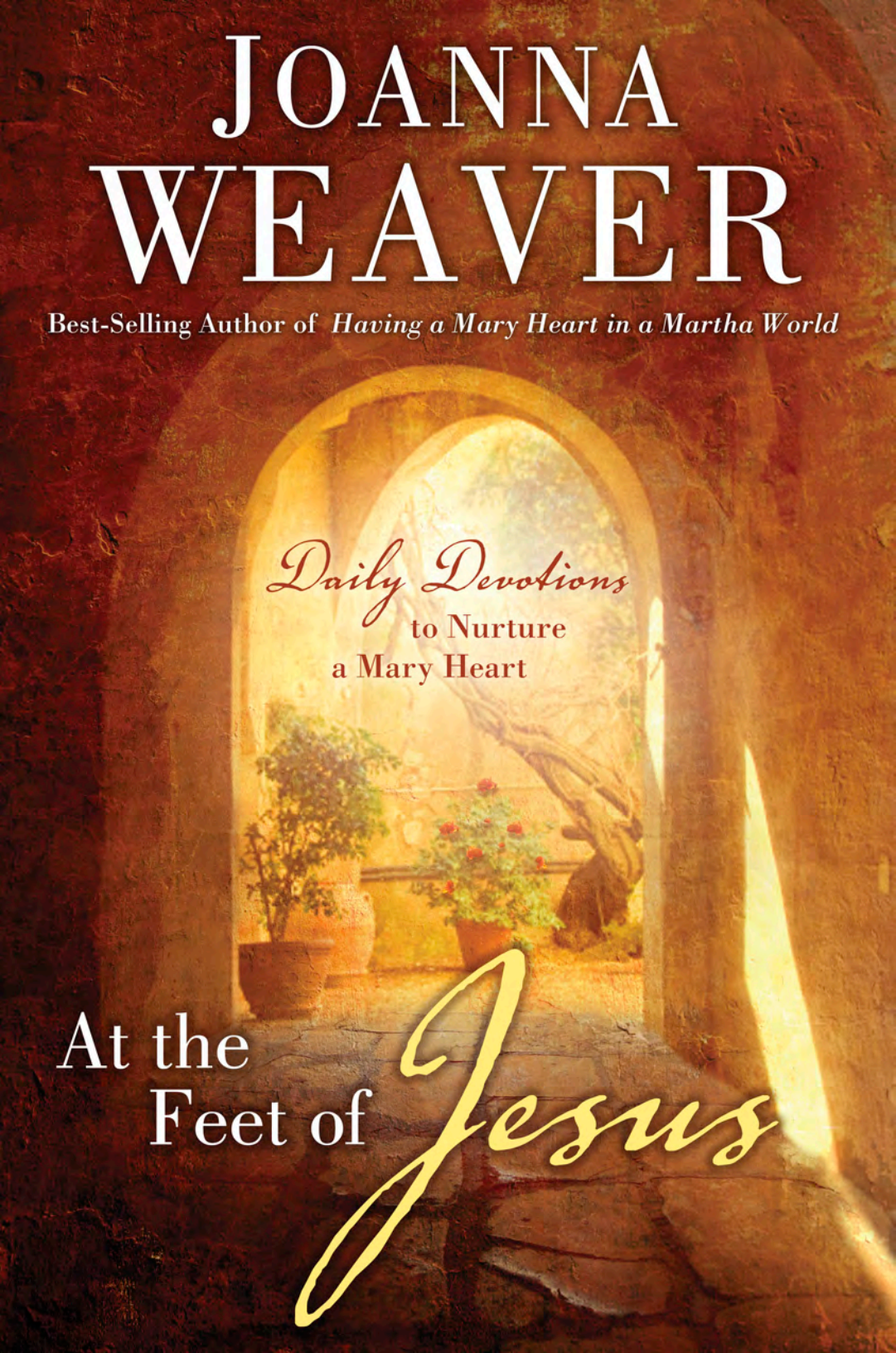
JOANNA
WEAVER
Best-Selling Author of *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*
*Daily Devotions*
to Nurture
a Mary Heart
At the
Feet of
*Jesus*

# At the Feet of *Jesus*

*Daily Devotions*
to Nurture
a Mary Heart

JOANNA
WEAVER
Compiled with Angela Howard

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*To my dear friend and writing companion,*
*Angela Howard.*
*Thank you for loving God and loving people in such*
*a passionate yet winsome way!*
*This book truly would not have been possible without you.*

*And to Patty Strellnauer:*
*You have been Jesus to me, my sweet sister.*
*Your wise friendship has sheltered my heart*
*as well as challenged my soul.*
*I am forever grateful.*

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# A Note from Joanna...

At the feet of Jesus.

I don't know what those words do to your heart, but they stir something deep within me. My spirit longs for time with the Lord, but life often interferes. So many responsibilities to take care of. So many duties to be done.

Sitting at Jesus's feet was a choice Mary had to make the day He came to her family's home in Bethany (Luke 10:38–42). It is a choice you and I must make as well. Laying aside our busyness—even our busyness for God—so that we might focus our hearts on spending time alone with Him.

I hope you will find this devotional a helpful companion on your journey into God's presence. I've interwoven excerpts from my three Bethany books: *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World, Having a Mary Spirit,* and *Lazarus Awakening.* I've also included previously unpublished material that didn't make it into my original books, each of which I've labeled "outtake." A "Read and Reflect" section will help you dig into the life-changing Word of God for yourself, giving you opportunity to find the "better part" Mary enjoyed and the "one thing" I believe her sister Martha discovered as she received the rebuke of the Lord and found life for her soul.

Sprinkled throughout the year are "Going Deeper" sidebars to help you develop a daily quiet time, and in the back of the book you'll find a unique one-year Bible reading guide that takes you back and forth between the Old Testament and the New (check out the downloadable format at www.becominghis.com). It is my prayer that you'll fall in love with God's Word in a brand-new way as you discover the message of grace woven throughout the Bible from beginning to end.

Down at the feet of Jesus. That's where it all begins.

Lord Jesus, I give You my life.
I invite You to have Your way in me.
Take me and break me. Shake me and make me.
Fill me and spill me. Change me and rearrange me.
But whatever You do, Lord, don't leave me the same.
Spirit of wisdom and revelation, I welcome Your work.
Open my eyes so I can see… my ears so I can hear…
I choose truth over comfort, challenge over complacency.
Lord, make me forever Yours.
And most of all, make me like You.
Amen.

*Teach us to number our days aright,*
*that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*
Psalm 90:12

# January 1

I've always dreamed of being much more than I am. More organized, more disciplined, more loving…much more "much more," if you know what I mean! Each January I set out on a new self-improvement program.

This year I'll get in shape.

This year I'll keep my house clean.

This year I'll send out birthday cards. On time.

This year—really—I'll be the loving, forgiving, obedient woman of God I long to be instead of the willful, stubborn, disobedient Christian I sometimes see staring back at me in the mirror.

All noble goals. Truth be told, I am much more at peace when my house is clean. And I believe that if you really love people, you ought to care enough to send the very best—or at least one of those ninety-nine-cent cards from Wal-Mart! And I know that genuine happiness only comes from living close to God and obeying Him.

I really do want to be different. I want to be changed.

As the saying goes, "There's a skinny woman inside me just struggling to get out." Unfortunately—as the saying continues—"I can usually sedate her with four or five cupcakes."

Maybe you've discovered, as I have, that most New Year's resolutions have little effect on day-to-day life except to add a burden of guilt and a feeling of failure. Continually striving, yet never arriving.

I'm so glad we have a Savior who loves us just as we are, but loves us too much to leave us that way. Jesus will do whatever it takes to return to us the glory of God that we were meant to reflect in the world. So that, through our lives, people might see who God really is.

*—Having a Mary Spirit*

Read: Hebrews 4:14–16
Reflect: What does it mean to know that you have a high priest who understands your weakness?

# January 2

*May [God] give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.* EPHESIANS 1:17

Perhaps no passage of Scripture better describes the conflict we feel as women than the one we find in the gospel of Luke. Just mention the names *Mary* and *Martha* around a group of Christian women and you'll get knowing looks and nervous giggles. We've all felt the struggle. We want to worship like Mary, but the Martha inside keeps bossing us around.

Here's a refresher course in case you've forgotten the story. It's the tale of two sisters. It's the tale of you and me.

> As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"
>
> "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:38–42)

Instead of applauding Martha, Jesus gently rebukes her, telling her Mary has chosen "what is better." Or, as another translation puts it, "Mary has chosen the better part" (NRSV).

"The better part?" Martha must have echoed incredulously.

"The better part!" I say to God in the midst of my own whirl of activity. "You mean there's more? I have to do more?"

*No, no,* comes the answer to my tired heart. Jesus's words in Luke 10 are incredibly freeing to those of us on the performance treadmill of life.

It isn't "more" He requires of us.

In fact, it may be less.

*—Having a Mary Heart*

READ: Matthew 23:1–4

REFLECT: What do you struggle with most—expectations put on you by others or those you put on yourself?

*If only I knew where to find him…*
Job 23:3

# January 3

I'll never forget crying in the darkness one night many years ago. My husband was an associate pastor at a large church, and our lives were extremely busy. The size of the church meant there were always people in need. I would go to bed at night worried about all the things I didn't accomplish and should have, about all the things I'd accomplished but not very well.

I remember clinging to my husband that night as he tried to comfort me. "What's wrong, honey?" he asked, caressing my hair. But I couldn't explain. I was completely overwhelmed.

The only thing that came out between sobs was a broken plea. "Tell me the good news," I begged him. "I honestly can't remember… Tell me the good news."

Perhaps you have felt the same way. You've known the Lord your whole life, and yet you haven't found the peace and fulfillment you've always longed for. So you've stepped up the pace, hoping that in offering more service, somehow you will merit more love.

Or perhaps you've withdrawn from service. You've gone the route I've described above and, frankly, you've had it. You've stopped volunteering, stopped saying yes. You're out of the loop and glad for it. And yet the peace and quiet holds no peace and quiet. The stillness hasn't led to the closer walk with God you'd hoped for, just a sense of resentment. You go to church; you go through the motions of worship, then leave and go home the same. And at night, sometimes you wonder, "What is the good news? Can someone tell me? I can't remember."

If you're struggling to remember what makes the gospel so priceless, so precious, bring your questions to Jesus. You have a Savior who stands ready to share the good news of hope for your weary heart.

*—Having a Mary Heart*

Read: Matthew 11:28
Reflect: How would your life be different if you took Jesus up on His offer of rest?

# January 4

*He chose us…to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.* Ephesians 1:4, 6, NKJV

The good news is woven through the New Testament in a grace-filled strand that shines especially bright in the gospel stories of Mary and Martha. The message is this: salvation isn't about what I do; it's about what Jesus did.

The cross did more than pay for my sins; it set me free from the bondage of the "shoulds" and "if onlys" and "what might have beens." And Jesus's words to Martha are the words He wants to speak to your heart and mine: "You are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed" (Luke 10:41).

The "one thing" is not found in doing more.

It's found by sitting at His feet.

Catch that: Mary sat at His feet. She didn't move a muscle. She listened. She didn't come up with clever responses or a doctrinal thesis. Her gift was availability. (In the end, I believe that was Martha's gift as well.)

The only requirement for a deeper friendship with God is showing up with a heart open and ready to receive. Jesus invites us to come and rest, to spend time with Him in Living Room Intimacy. Intimacy that allows us to be honest in our complaints, bold in our approach, and lavish in our love. Intimacy that allows us to hear our Father's voice and discern our Father's will. Intimacy that so fills us with His love and His nature that it spills out to our dry, thirsty world in Kitchen Service.

In the Living Room. That's where it all begins. Down at His feet.

*—Having a Mary Heart*

Read: Jeremiah 29:12–13

Reflect: What does God promise will happen when we seek Him?

*God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each of us.* Acts 17:27

# January 5

Intimacy with God. What does it mean to you—and how do you achieve it? Is it some mystical level of consciousness attainable only by the deeply devout?

Some religions say that it is. According to Hinduism, a religion based on the *karma* of good works, one lifetime isn't enough for the soul to achieve spiritual enlightenment. Hindu mathematicians calculate it takes 6.8 million rotations through reincarnation for justice to mete out enough punishment that it finally balances the wrongs we have done so that we can receive the ultimate spiritual level of nirvana.[1]

In the Far East, during religious festivals, men often have hooks inserted under the skin of their backs. These hooks are then tied to wagonloads of rocks, which the men drag through the streets, hoping to obtain forgiveness for their sins. In certain areas of Mexico, the devout crawl miles on their knees in pilgrimage.

All over the world, people go to unimaginable lengths to find God—which is sad when you consider the unimaginable lengths God has already gone to find *us.*

We don't need millions of lifetimes in order to be pure enough to see God. We don't need to stick hooks in our backs or tear the flesh off our knees in order to earn God's favor.

All we really need is Jesus. For He is all the evidence we need. The Father actually *wants* us close and is willing to do whatever is necessary to make sure it happens.

*—Having a Mary Heart*

Read: Romans 6:23
Reflect: Consider the difference between a wage and a gift. What kind of gift does God offer?

# January 6

*I will be your God and you will be my people.* Jeremiah 7:23

There had been a quiet restlessness about Yahweh for some time. A far-off look now and then revealed a yearning, a longing. Almost a sadness. Perhaps, then, it wasn't such a surprise when the Uncreated declared His desire to create.

"Let us make man in our image," said the Creator, stooping down to fill His hands with dust. With great care the Eternal One shaped His work. Then, bending over, He gently breathed into the lifeless clay, and a man was created… then a woman. The two were handsome enough, the angels thought, though a bit ordinary, especially when measured against all that had been created before. Yet God seemed quite pleased.

Perhaps, the angels pondered, this creation had some special talent they were unaware of, some unique quality that would make them useful to the kingdom. So they waited to see these humans perform.

But soon it became evident that all God's previous work—the soaring mountains, the lush green valleys, the glorious sunrises, and the watercolor sunsets—had been made for the pleasure and delight of man and woman, His last created works.

But not just for their pleasure. The shimmering world was a backdrop. A stage upon which the angels would watch creation's true purpose unfold. For all of it had been made to facilitate God's passionate pursuit of relationship with humankind.

*—Lazarus Awakening*

Read: 1 Peter 2:9–10
Reflect: How does it make you feel to realize you've been chosen by God?

*Jesus Christ…gave himself…to purify for himself a people that are his very own.* Titus 2:13–14

# January 7

Perhaps you've never considered how much your heavenly Father longs to know you and be known by you. We've been told that we were born with a God-shaped hole—a spiritual vacuum that can't be filled by anything or anyone except God Himself. But have you ever considered that God might have a *you*-shaped hole, an emptiness that only you can fill?

That's the overarching implication of the biblical message. From the book of Genesis to the Song of Solomon, from Ecclesiastes to Malachi, from Matthew to Revelation, the entire Bible records an epic story of the ever-reaching, always-pursuing, tenaciously tender love of God. I appreciate the way The Message expresses Ephesians 1:4–8:

> Long before he laid down earth's foundations, [God] had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son.
>
> Because of the sacrifice of the Messiah, his blood poured out on the altar of the Cross, we're a free people—free of penalties and punishments chalked up by all our misdeeds. And not just barely free, either. Abundantly free! He thought of everything, provided for everything we could possibly need.

Amazing, isn't it? God's gifts are all ours, just waiting to be received. The riches of heaven, the love of our Father, and a Savior who's obliterated the power of sin.

*—Lazarus Awakening*

Read: Ephesians 1:4–8
Reflect: Underline key phrases in these verses that speak most to you, then read these verses aloud, emphasizing those phrases.

*Going Deeper*

# The Invitation

There is no more important question than the one asked by a Philippian jailer over two thousand years ago: "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30).

Jesus answered that question once and for all by taking the punishment for our sins upon Himself. We simply have to accept the free gift of salvation He offers. How do we do that? The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association outlines four steps for receiving Christ:

- Admit your need. (I am a sinner.)
- Be willing to turn from your sins (repent).
- Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and rose from the grave.
- Pray a prayer like this: Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior. In Your Name, amen.[2]

In John 1:12, the Bible promises that "to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." What an incredible offer! What an amazing gift.

We simply have to accept it. For Jesus has done everything else.

*—Lazarus Awakening*

*And everyone who calls on the name*
*of the Lord will be saved.*

Acts 2:21

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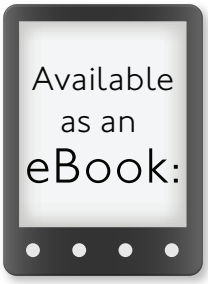


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