

engage

Welcome to the third issue of **engage** — Bible notes that fly into your hands every three months, packed full of stuff to get you excited about God's life-changing Word. In this issue...

★ **DAILY READINGS** Each day's page throws you into the Bible, to get you handling, questioning and exploring God's message to you — encouraging you to act on it and talk to God more in prayer.

THIS ISSUE: seek justice with **Micah**; seek the real Jesus in **John's Gospel**; seek God's promises with Jacob and Joseph in **Genesis**; seek a return to God with **Zechariah** and seek forgiveness with **Philemon**.

★ **TAKE IT FURTHER** If you're left wanting more at the end of an **engage** page, turn to the **Take it further** section to dig deeper.

★ **STUFF** Articles on stuff relevant to young Christians. This time the topic is **death**.

★ **TRICKY** Tackling some of those mind-bendingly tricky questions that confuse us all, as well as questions that our friends bombard us with. This issue: **Don't all religions lead to God?**



★ **ESSENTIAL** Articles on the basics we really need to know about God, the Bible and Christianity. This time we focus on **Jesus – God's Son**.

★ **REAL LIVES** Amazing true stories, revealing God at work in people's lives. This time — **the story of an ex-crack dealer**.

★ **TOOLBOX** will give you tools to help you wrestle with the Bible and understand it for yourself. This issue we look at **a novel idea**.

All of us who work on engage are passionate to see God's Word at work in people's lives. Do you want God's Word to have an impact on your life? Then open your Bible, and start on the first engage study right now...

HOW TO USE **engage**

- 1 Set a time you can read the Bible every day
- 2 Find a place where you can be quiet and think
- 3 Grab your Bible, pen and a notebook
- 4 Ask God to help you understand what you read
- 5 Read the day's verses with **engage** taking time to think about it
- 6 Pray about what you have read

BIBLE STUFF

We use the NIV Bible version, so you might find it's the best one to use with **engage**. If the notes say '**Read Micah 3 v 9–16**', look up Micah in the contents page at the front of your Bible. It'll tell you which page Micah starts on. Find chapter 3 of Micah, and then verse 9 of chapter 3 (the verse numbers are the tiny ones). Then start reading!

In this issue...

DAILY READINGS

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ENGAGE EGGHEADS

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John

Sign language

Tom wants to get to the city centre. His sat nav keeps sending him down the same one-way street. The wrong way. Someone kindly gave him directions, but he can't remember if it was the second or third left after the bridge...

Finally Tom sees a signpost marked CITY CENTRE. Now he's on the trail, following the signs until he gets to his destination. Simple.

In his book about Jesus, John gives us loads of signs, all pointing to who Jesus is and showing us the way to eternal life.

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and

that by believing you may have life in his name.

(John 20 v 30–31)

In the last two issues of *engage*, we've seen loads of Jesus' miracles, which are signs revealing who He is and what He came to do.

This time, John tells us about one amazing, death-defying miracle. And then he gives us some of Jesus' jaw-dropping, life-changing teaching.

John wants us to meet the real Jesus. He wants us to have life with God, now and forever. He wants us to see that it's Jesus who gives us this life — by His death and resurrection.

If you want to head in the right direction, you'd better follow the signs...



1

Deadly serious

The Jewish leaders are out to kill Jesus. They hate His claims about being God. So Jesus and His disciples are staying away from Judea. Until Jesus receives a desperate request...

Read John 11 v 1-6

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- What was the crisis?*
- What did Jesus say was the reason for Lazarus' sickness? (v4)*
- What surprising decision did Jesus make? (v6)*

Jesus' friend Lazarus was dying. Yet Jesus remained calm. He claimed that Lazarus wouldn't end up dead. In fact, the reason Lazarus was sick was so that people would see God's glory and see the amazing power of God's Son. Confident claims.

Bizarrely, Jesus didn't rush to heal Lazarus. He stayed where He was for two whole days.

Read verses 7-16

- What were the disciples worried about? (v8, 16)*
- What was the shocking news? (v14)*
- Why did Jesus allow him to die?*

The disciples (especially Thomas) thought that going back to Judea was heading towards certain death. But Jesus was in control and knew it wasn't time for Him to die yet. God would decide when that would happen, not the Jewish leaders.

Outrageously, Jesus stayed where He was until Lazarus was dead. He wanted people to be sure that Lazarus was undeniably dead before He did something spectacular. And He wanted His disciples to see and believe (v15).

PRAY ABOUT IT

Jesus wants you to believe too. To believe that He is God's Son and has power over death. Ask God to reveal His Son to you as you read John's book. Ask Him to teach you and change you through Jesus' words.

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

Want a little more? Then go to **Take it further** on page 108.



2

Get a life!

The story so far: Jesus heard that his friend Lazarus was dying. Yet Jesus didn't rush to heal him — He stayed where He was for two days. Imagine how Lazarus' sisters felt when Jesus eventually arrived.

Read John 11 v 17–24

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- How did Martha show her faith in Jesus? (v21)*
- What was Jesus' amazing news?*
- How did Martha misunderstand?*

By the time Jesus arrived on the scene, Lazarus had been buried in a tomb for four days. Martha knew that Jesus could have healed Lazarus. And she still believed that Jesus could do something amazing. But she didn't think Lazarus would be resurrected until the day of God's judgment. How wrong she was.

Read verses 25–27

- Below, put v25–26 in your own words:*

What's great about Martha's reply?

Don't miss what Jesus is saying — this is vital stuff. Whoever trusts in Jesus will live with Him forever. Even though their physical bodies will die, Jesus rescues them from death and punishment in hell.

PRAY ABOUT IT

If you're not yet a Christian, ask God to help you understand this vital truth. Ask Him to lead you to eternal life with Him.

If you are a believer, you've got loads to be thanking God for right now.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

TAKE IT FURTHER

Choose life. Choose page 108.



3

Body of evidence

Yesterday we saw how Martha believed that Jesus could bring Lazarus back to life. But what about her sister Mary? And what's that smell?

Read John 11 v 28–37

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- ▷ *How did Jesus react to all the sadness? (v32–36)*
- ▷ *What does this tell us about Jesus?*

Mary threw herself at Jesus' feet, sobbing. Jesus was overcome with sadness at seeing His friends so distressed. And He was angry at the misery caused by death. He hates sin and He hates the fact that sin has brought death into the world.

Jesus is not distant from us. He feels and understands our hurt and sadness and anger. We can turn to Him with our feelings because He's felt such things too.

Read verses 38–44

- ▷ *How did Martha's doubts return? (v39)*
- ▷ *But what did Jesus do?*

- ▷ *Why did Jesus do this incredible miracle? (v40, 42)*

Martha thought that it was impossible to bring a stinking, four-day-old corpse back to life. But Jesus has power over life and death, and He raised Lazarus back to life.

This was the biggest sign yet. It showed everyone how powerful God is (v40), and that He sent Jesus to earth (v42) to rescue us from eternal death.

SHARE IT

- ▷ *How can you explain Jesus' power over death to your friends?*

PRAY ABOUT IT

What does this incredible miracle make you want to say to Jesus?

THE BOTTOM LINE

Jesus has power over death.

TAKE IT FURTHER

For more evidence, try page 108.



4

Double trouble

**‘You’ll be lucky to get this guy to work for you.’
This sentence has a double meaning. It can be read
two different ways. People responded in two different
ways to Jesus’ awesome miracles.**

Read John 11 v 45–46

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

▷ *How did many Jews respond to seeing Jesus bring Lazarus back to life? (v45)*

▷ *What about others? (v46)*

Read verses 47–57

▷ *What were the Jewish leaders most bothered about? (v48)*

▷ *What was Caiaphas’ shocking suggestion? (v50)*

They had seen all the signs. But instead of following Jesus, they saw Him as a threat. They were worried that Jesus would cause a war with the Romans and they would lose their own power and authority. They had missed the point.

So they plotted to kill Jesus. But Caiaphas missed the double meaning of his own words (v50–52). Jesus

would die for the people, but not in the way Caiaphas imagined. God would use this evil plot as part of His own perfect plan.

Jesus’ death wouldn’t rescue these small-minded Jewish leaders. It would rescue anyone who trusts Jesus to save them from sin and death. Brilliant.

PRAY ABOUT IT

Thank God that He’s in complete control. Thank Him that nothing could stop His perfect plan to save people like us.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Nothing stops God’s plans.

→ TAKE IT FURTHER

For a little bit more, turn to page 108.