

90 Days in
John 14-17, Romans,
&
James

EXPLORE BY THE BOOK

John 14–17, Romans, & James

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Studies in Romans:

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90 DAYS IN

John 14–17, Romans,
& James

— with —

Timothy Keller
& Sam Allberry

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Introduction

“The words of the LORD are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.”

(Psalm 12 v 6)

This book is not an end in itself. It is a means of accessing the treasures of a far greater book. Its words are valuable only to the extent that they help you to enjoy the infinite value of words that are perfectly true, gloriously beautiful, and utterly wonderful—the words of the LORD.

It is a magnificent thing, in a world which is used to mistakes, to deceit, and to confusion, to be able to read flawless, pure, refined words. And that is what you do each time you open your Bible. God does not make errors in anything he says. He does not obscure the truth, by accident or by design. He does not fail to do anything he has said he will do.

That is why this devotional is an “open Bible devotional”—that is, you will need to keep your Bible open, on your lap or on your screen, as you use these studies. You’ll be asked questions that bring you to examine and think hard about the text. The aim of the authors is to cause you to spend more time thinking about God’s words than their words.

So, rather than seeing these devotionals as snacks, view them as meals. Set aside half an hour in your day to work through the study, and to respond to what you have seen. They are best done daily—but the most crucial thing is for you to find a pattern that is sustainable—better five studies a week for life, than seven studies a week for only a week!

Further, since every word of the Lord is flawless, we need to read every word in the Scriptures, rather than sticking to our favorite passages, or to an author's favorites. So *Explore by the Book* works, verse by verse, through whole books or large sections of the Bible. You will be moving through both famous books and not-so-popular ones, and within each book through much-used passages and less traveled parts. Expect to discover new favorite passages and memory verses that you had never read or noticed or appreciated before!

At the same time, God's word is not always easy to understand. Whether we are completely new to reading it, or have mined its riches many times, all of us still experience "huh?" moments as we struggle to grasp its meaning! So in this devotional series, some of the greatest Bible teachers in the evangelical world help you to dig up the Bible's treasures, and explain their more opaque aspects. They will show you how what you are reading fits into the great overall story of the Scriptures, and prompt you to apply what you have read to your life.

God's word is not simply pure—it is also purifying. It is the way his Spirit works in his people to challenge and change us. It is designed to move us to worship him with our lips, in our hearts, and through our lives. Each day, you will see one (or both) of these headings: *Apply*, and *Pray*. Use these sections to turn what you have read in God's word into words to speak back to God, and into ways you will change your life in response to God.

At the end of each study you'll find a journaling page, for you to record your response to what you have read, either in words or in drawings. Use these pages as you are led to—we all have different ways of making sure we remember what we have seen in the Scriptures, and of responding to those Scriptures. But here are a couple of very straightforward suggestions that you might like to try:

Before you work through the study, read the passage and record...

The Highlight: the truth about God that has most struck you.

The Query: the questions you have about what you have read (and your best attempt at answering them)

The Change: the major way you feel the Spirit is prompting you to change either your attitudes, or your actions, as a result of what you have read.

After you have done the study, record:

One sentence summing up how God has spoken to you through his word.

A short prayer in response to what you have seen.

INTRODUCTION

I hope you enjoy these 90 days listening to the flawless words of the LORD. Be sure that they will excite, change, challenge and comfort you. Be praying that God would be using his word to bless you. There is literally nothing like the words of the LORD.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Laferton', with a stylized, flowing script.

Carl Laferton, Editorial Director
The Good Book Company

Note: This devotional is based on the NIV2011 (John 14 – 17, James) and NIV1984 (Romans) Bible translations, but it will also work well with the ESV translation.

Meet the Authors



TIMOTHY KELLER was educated at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Westminster Theological Seminary, and is Senior Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, New York City. He is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *the Reason for God*, *The Prodigal God*, and *The Meaning of Marriage*. Dr. Keller is married to Kathy, and they have three children.



SAM ALLBERRY is a pastor based in Maidenhead, UK, a global speaker for Ravi Zacharias Ministries, and an editor for The Gospel Coalition. He is the author of a number of books, including *James For You*, *Why Bother With Church?* and *Is God Anti-Gay?* He is founding editor of *LivingOut.org*, a ministry for those struggling with same-sex attraction.

The Remedy for Troubled Hearts

John 13 v 21 – 14 v 1

John 14 – 17 begins with Jesus telling his disciples not to let their hearts be troubled. His teaching over these chapters is all they need to accomplish this. To set the scene, we need to reach back into chapter 13. Jesus is with his disciples in an upper room. It is the hours before his arrest, and the night before he dies. Jesus has shared a meal with his friends, and he has shocked them by washing their feet, a hugely demeaning act for a teacher to do.

Read John 13 v 21-38

Betrayal

Jesus drops a bombshell. What's about to happen (v 21)?

He has been hinting at this before (see v 18), but now he is explicit: one of this number will betray him. This sends the disciples into a tailspin, so they nominate someone to ask Jesus who the culprit is.

In verses 26-30, it becomes clear. Judas is the betrayer.

Departure

But then Jesus drops an even greater bombshell...

What does Jesus say is about to happen (v 33)?

This is devastating. They have been with Jesus for three years. Some of them have left jobs to follow him. Jesus is their world. He is the figurehead. Without him they are nothing.

Denial

What will happen to Peter (v 37-38)?

How would this make the disciples feel, do you think?

Peter, for all his bravado, is going to deny knowing Jesus. Not just once, but repeatedly. This, too, is devastating. Peter has always been the strong one. If he can't pull through for Jesus, what hope do the rest of them have?

Do Not Be Troubled

Read John 14 v 1

This triple-whammy is the backdrop for the start of John 14. We can now see why the hearts of Jesus' friends are deeply troubled. Their world has fallen apart in the space of a few minutes. The Jesus they have come to depend on seems to be abandoning them.

Have you ever felt as though God had abandoned you?

Many Christians have. There are times when we feel spiritually alone—when God seems very distant and far removed.

What does Jesus tell them to do?

But not just any belief. Specific belief. Belief, or faith, in God. More than that, they are to have faith in Jesus. Belief in God isn't enough. Vague monotheism isn't going to help them. Jesus is. So they, and we, need to listen carefully to all that he's about to say.

☺ Pray

Ask God to use these devotionals to soothe your anxieties. Pray that God would help you to understand Jesus and to be changed by what he has to say.

Day
2

We Will Be with Him

John 14 v 1-4

Here is a wonderful promise for you to hold on to every day of this life, including today: Jesus gives you the wonderful prospect of joining him as part of his Father's household.

A Home with God

Read John 14 v 1-2

What does Jesus tell us about God's home?

"Rooms" can also be translated "abodes." The idea is that there are many places in the Father's house for people to come to and live in. Jesus underlines that this is no trivial point; he has told his followers this deliberately. It is about to have direct relevance for them!

Why does Jesus say he is going there?

Jesus is leaving his disciples (which is why their hearts are so troubled in verse 1), but for a positive reason: to prepare a place for them in this wonderful home. He is offering the prospect of them being part of God's immediate family. His going—via his death, resurrection, and ascension—is all for the extraordinary and eternal benefit of his disciples. He is going to procure lodgings for them.

A Home with Jesus

Read John 14 v 3-4

What does Jesus now add to this?

Jesus' going is not permanent. He is going and preparing so that he can return to collect his disciples and personally bring them to the place he has prepared for them.

Why is this such good news?

Not only does it mean they will see Jesus again, but they will get to be with him forever, living with him in his Father's house. This is comfort for the troubled heart!

☺ Apply

It is very easy for us to imagine heaven in materialistic terms. We think of all the physical things of this world that we want to enjoy—health, comfort, tranquility, pleasure. We imagine the perfect home in the perfect setting, with nothing to spoil it. But Jesus reminds us that what will ultimately make heaven perfect is being with him and his Father. The Bible does promise us eternity in a new creation (Revelation 21 v 1-4), but what matters most is that we will finally be at home with our Creator. Too often, when our hearts are troubled, we look to many other things to cheer us up. Jesus points us to the full and permanent presence of God that we will one day enjoy. This is where true hope is found.

Has this devotional reshaped your excitement about your eternal future? How?

With whom could you share this comfort for troubled hearts today?

☹ Pray

“That you may be where I am.”

Pray that this prospect of being with Jesus would become what you most long for.

