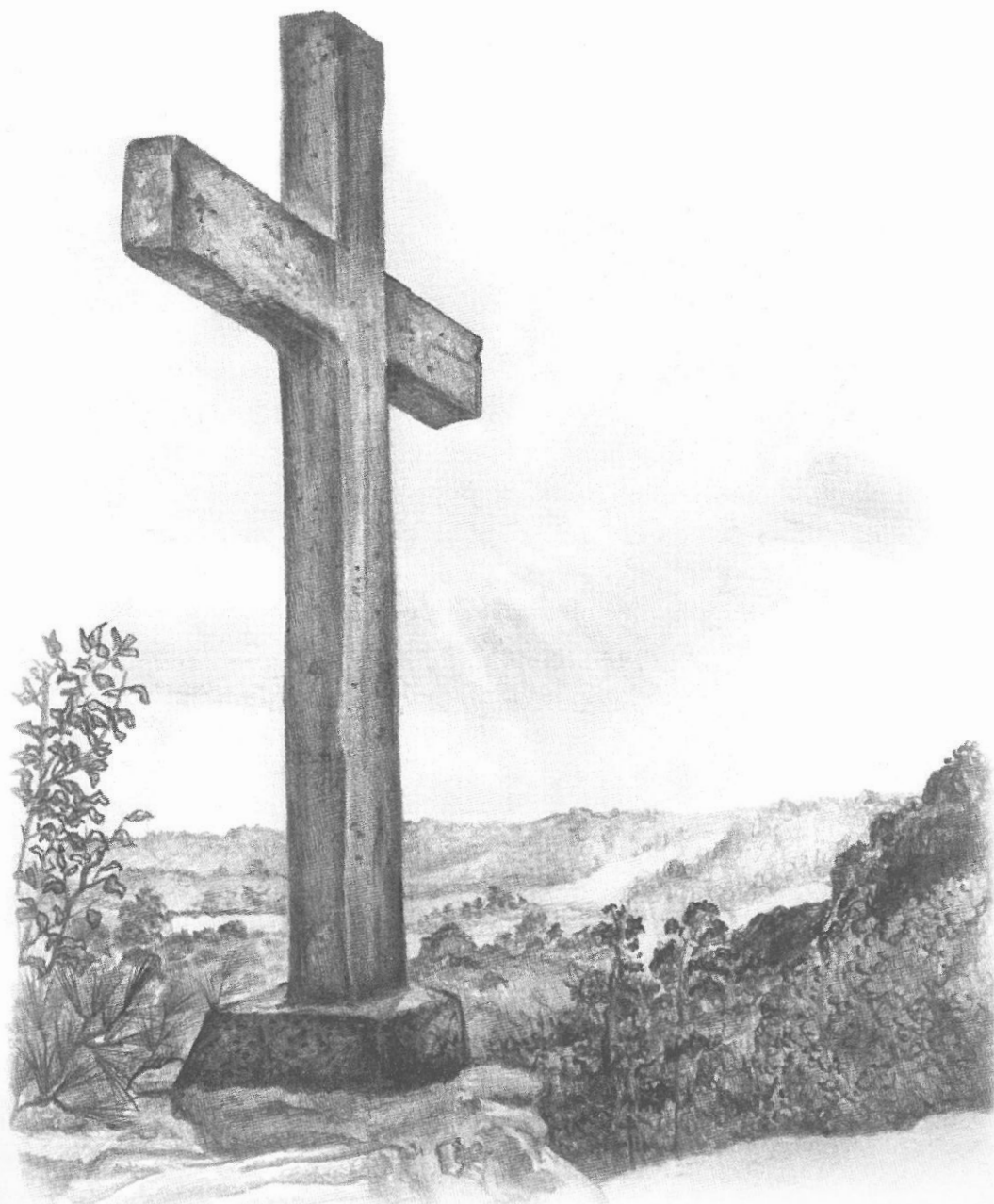


WOMEN OPENING THE WORD

THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS

CASANDRA MARTIN



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The Purpose

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is the cornerstone of our faith. Without His sacrifice on our behalf, we would have and be nothing. This study has humbled and convicted me. We must regularly return to the shadow of the cross, for it is here that we find power, peace, and purpose.

I pray this study will strengthen and bless you. More importantly, perhaps, I pray that these moments spent in the shadow of the cross will change you and challenge you.

May God richly bless you as you study His Word.

How to Use This Study

This Bible study was written with you in mind. It contains some special features designed to help and guide you through your study of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

- ✓ Check the WORD! You will see this symbol when you are to refer to Scripture. You will need your Bible for each lesson. Choose an accurate, reliable, and readable translation. This study specifically refers to the New International Version (NIV). New King James, New American Standard, and New Revised Standard are also excellent translations. Please be careful about using The Message, Phillips, or The Living Bible. While readable, they are not accurate translations.
- To the POINT! These are questions specifically designed to help you make God's Word applicable to your life today. These are "thought questions," meaning there is not one correct answer. Allow God to use these questions to strengthen your faith and more closely focus on Him.
- ♥ Indicates a message from the heart. Follow carefully these inspirational thoughts which have one purpose in mind: to make God's love more real to you than ever before.

Day 1
Day 4

Each lesson is broken into four parts. Each week as you sit down to do your lesson, begin with Day 1. The next day work on Day 2, and so forth. This way you will be able to complete each week's lesson comfortably. Spreading your work on each week's lesson over the four days will allow you to be in God's Word on a regular basis as well as help you glean God's blessings and life lessons for your heart today.

Study Group Formats

There are as many different ways to effectively use this study as there are people excited about learning God's Word. Below are three suggestions for group and/or individual study. Feel free to adapt the format to meet your group or individual study needs.

45-minute Bible Class Format

This book is an excellent tool for a Bible class study. I would recommend using the book in this setting in the following way:

1. Pray each time you begin that God's Spirit will guide you as you study and open your eyes to His Word.
2. Divide each lesson into two parts. Using the Day 1-4 markers, ask your class to study Days 1 and 2 on week one, Days 3 and 4 on week two, and so forth. There is enough material in each two-day block to meet the needs of your class time.
3. Each member of the class should be encouraged to do the lesson before the weekly class time. Your job as teacher is not to go through the material question by question but rather to organize the discussion around the central theme of that week's lesson. Choose several of the "● To the POINT!" questions that you find to be most relevant and make those the foundation of your discussion. These questions are designed to stimulate discussion and focus the class on the personal application of the lesson. Encourage the class members to share their impressions, questions, new insights, and challenges on a weekly basis.
4. Enjoy the richness of God's Word.

1 ½-2 hour Group Bible Study Format

This book is an excellent tool for a Group Bible Study. I would recommend using the book in this setting in the following way:

1. Pray each time you begin that God's Spirit will guide you as you study and open your eyes to His Word.
2. Do one lesson a week. There is enough material in each lesson block to meet the needs of your group study time.
3. Divide your Bible Study group into small discussion groups of 6-12 individuals. These small groups allow more active participation, enhance fellowship and a sense of belonging, and permit friendship and intimacy to grow as the groups share personal reflections of the Bible study and prayer.

4. Each small group should have a leader and an assistant leader. The responsibilities of the group leader are:
 - prepare for and lead the weekly discussion of the small group
 - encourage participation of all members of the group during the discussion

The responsibilities of the assistant leader are:

- contact group members weekly to encourage involvement and participation
 - be available to lead the discussion if the group leader must be absent
5. Each member of the group should be encouraged to do the lesson before the weekly class time. Your job as group leader is not to go through the material question by question but rather to organize the discussion around the central theme of that week's lesson. Choose several of the "● To the POINT!" questions that you find to be most relevant and make those the foundation of your discussion. These questions are designed to stimulate discussion and focus the class on the personal application of the lesson. Encourage the group members to share their impressions, questions, new insights, and challenges on a weekly basis.
 6. Another helpful tool is to have a group leader's meeting for approximately 30 minutes prior to the beginning of class. This gives the group leaders an opportunity to share their insights, answer questions, and make sure that everyone understands the central focus of the week's study.
 7. Enjoy the richness of God's Word.

Individual Study

This book is an excellent tool for a personal Bible study. I would recommend using the book in this setting in the following way:

1. Pray each time you begin that God's Spirit will guide you as you study and open your eyes to His Word.
2. Each lesson is broken into four parts. Each week as you sit down to do your lesson, begin with Day 1. The next day work on Day 2, and so forth. This way you will be able to complete each week's lesson comfortably. Spreading your work on each week's lesson over the four days will allow you to be in God's Word on a regular basis as well as help you glean God's blessings and life lessons for your heart today.
3. Enjoy the richness of God's Word.

God bless you! You are about to take an exciting journey—into the shadow of the cross!

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The Cross

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is the single most important event in human history. The cross stands as the delineating line between the old and the new, the past and the future, between helplessness and hope, death and life. It casts a long shadow even as we stand two thousand years removed from the actual historical event because what happened to and through Jesus during those four days is the foundation of our faith. With His death and His resurrection, Jesus secured salvation for our souls, purchased peace for our hearts, reconciled us to the Father, and healed the gaping wounds of sin. If not for His death and resurrection, we would have His great teachings but no final answer for our sin. By submitting to death on the cross, His righteousness bore the consequences of our sin. By rising on the third day, Jesus conquered death and opened the gates of heaven giving us a promise and sure hope of eternal life.

Since the crucifixion and resurrection stand at the heart of all that we as Christians believe, it is important that we take the time to once again focus on the events, and more importantly the Man, that shape the foundation of our hope. Join Jesus in the garden as blood-sweat glistens across His brow. Stand in the shadows as the betrayer approaches. Warm your hands by the fire as you listen to denials flow from those who knew and loved Him best. Feel the scourge on your back and the weight of the beam on your shoulders. Hear the cries of the women and the derision of the crowd. Listen to the gentleness in His voice as pain spreads like fire through His body. Weep as death closes Jesus' eyes. Feel your muscles strain as you push the rock in front of the tomb. Let your heart explode with joy as the resurrected Savior speaks your name.

Write Philippians 3:10-11.

Now go back and write your name by the word "I." Circle the ways in which you want to *know* Christ.

Lay your burden of sin down in the shadow of the cross and see with new eyes the terrible price He was willing to pay to save you. Kneel in the shadow of the cross and recognize once again His holiness and your unworthiness. Stand in the shadow of the cross and let humility, thanksgiving, and praise flow from your heart as you gaze into the eyes of the One who loved you more than His own life.

Shadow of Submission

Thank you for choosing to make this journey. Nothing is so precious to the hearts of Christians as the story of Jesus and His great love for each of us. Nowhere is this love seen more profoundly than in the shadow of the cross. As you begin this study, ask God to prepare your mind for the lessons He wants you to learn. Ask Him for the vision to see these moments in Jesus' life with freshness and clarity. Ask Him for a heart that depends on the power revealed in the shadow of the cross.

Day 1

Back in 1872, Elizabeth Clephane penned the words to the beautiful and now much-loved hymn *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*. As its familiar melody plays through your mind, remember the words of the last verse of Elizabeth's song.

*I take, O cross, thy shadow For my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than The sunshine of His face,
Content to let the world go by, To know no gain nor loss,
My sinful self my only shame, My glory all the cross!*¹

How many times have you sung those words? How have you allowed them to impact your heart?

Go back and slowly read the words to this beautiful hymn again—really let them sink in.

The question with which we must begin is this—are you living in the shadow of the cross? So many times we sing our songs with half an ear and listen to the Gospel in the same way. It is easy for our hearts to become dulled when the shadow of the cross is a daily reality. We move in and out of the cross' shadow in the same way that we walk through the doors in our houses. We remember the cross on Sundays, but often times, don't let it impact our lives as we go to the store or make dinner for our families.

Before we join Jesus as He approaches Golgotha, we must peel away the layers of apathy and boredom that sometimes accompany familiarity. We must look with renewed awe at our Savior and cement our faith in the salvation He provided for us on the cross.

Shadow of Submission

Why do you think people lose their interest and excitement sitting in worship services week after week?

● How do you listen with freshness each time you hear the story of the cross?



The cross should cast a long shadow over every aspect of our lives. The paradox is that living in the shadow of the cross means that we live in perfect light—the light of the Savior’s love. Anything in our lives that is not defined by the shadow of the cross, not transformed by our relationship with the Lord, lies in the shadow of the world and thus in true darkness.

Of course, the cross itself is not holy or magical—it is an instrument of death the same as a gallows, an electric chair, or a needle used in lethal injection. The One who died on the cross is holy and our salvation is secured, not by magic or hocus-pocus, but by love and sacrifice. It is what He did for us on that cross that must demand our full attention.

As we begin our journey with Jesus from Gethsemane to Golgotha, let us marvel again at the blessings and privileges that are ours because of Jesus and renew our awareness of the price He paid to make us His own.

Complete the chart by looking at the Scriptures in the right-hand column and write on your heart and in the space provided what Jesus endured to give you a name and a future.

We have...	Because Jesus...
Peace (Romans 5:1)	Isaiah 53:5
Hope (2 Corinthians 3:12)	Matthew 27:46
Joy (1 Peter 1:8)	Mark 14:34
Acceptance (Romans 15:7)	Luke 17:25
A Home (2 Peter 3:13)	John 6:38
Love (1 John 4:10)	John 15:18
Life (Colossians 2:13)	Romans 5:6-8
Forgiveness (1 John 2:12)	2 Corinthians 5:21
Fullness (Colossians 2:10)	Philippians 2:7
Victory (1 Corinthians 15:57)	Revelation 5:5

The blessings of being a child of God are innumerable. The privileges are staggering. Our hearts must never become hardened to all that is ours because we wear the name of Christ. Calluses and complacency creep in when we become too comfortable with our own righteousness. As we sit in our comfortable twenty-first century homes, surrounded by luxury and technology, it is easy to see the cross as only a distant silhouette. We see the basic outline, occasionally acknowledge its significance, and go about our daily lives wearing the name of Christian like a designer label.

It is only as we near the cross, stand in its shadow, and gaze at the One who gave His life there that the hardness of our hearts melts away. That is why the journey of this study is so powerful — not because of anything that is written in this book — but because this is where the powerful love of our powerful God is most powerfully displayed.



When we stand in the shadow of the cross and truly behold all that transpired — when we hear the conversations of the people standing by His nailed feet and recognize our own voices, when we see His agony and experience His mercy, when we watch in wonder as the eternal plan of God unfolds before our eyes — our hearts will be forever transformed.

As we end our time together today, you stand at a crossroads. Choice #1: You can go through this study, hold the cross at a safe distance, and pat yourself on the back for participating in another Bible study. Choice #2: You can commit to living in the shadow of the cross and prepare your heart for the wondrous truths God has prepared for you. The journey will not always be easy — there are many difficult and painful moments we must witness — but He has promised that those who choose this path will never be the same.

Use the space below to talk with God about your decision. Ask Him to prepare your heart.

Go back to the words of Elizabeth's song at the beginning of this lesson and read them again. Now write Galatians 6:14.

Day 2

As we put on our shoes for this journey, we join Jesus in Jerusalem on the eve of His death. Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Man, was born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth by Mary and Joseph. Prior to the age of thirty, we know little of our Lord's life. At thirty years old, we see Him leaving His life in Nazareth and taking on the full mantle of His ministry and purpose. For three and a half years, Jesus ministers publicly among the people of Israel. He proclaims the good news, performs countless miracles, and is the object of adoration and derision by the masses. Through it all, whether feeding the five thousand or walking on the water, Jesus has lived in the shadow of the cross knowing this is the reason He came to earth. Now the moment has come. Our burden of sin must be lifted and carried to the cross.



Read Matthew 26:30-35.

As they leave the upper room where Jesus dined with His disciples, what do Jesus and His disciples do before departing? Where does the group head?

What warning does He give them on the way? Why? What promise does He make?

How do Peter and the other disciples respond to Jesus' words?

● Why does Jesus tell Peter of his imminent denials?

All in all, it has been a difficult day for Jesus. Even as the melody of their hymn echoes through the night, the moment of His death is rapidly approaching. As night falls and the blanket of darkness enwraps Jerusalem for sleep, the darkness of the hours that lay ahead of Jesus stretch out before Him. A blanket of sorrow wraps itself around Jesus' heart and isolation makes the shadows darker, as those closest to Him still fail to understand the purpose and nature of His kingdom.

Shadow of Submission

In fact, just hours earlier, about what topic had the disciples been arguing? Luke 22:24

Now as night is falling, the events that are about to unfold begin to weigh heavily on Jesus' mind. Having eaten what we refer to as the Last Supper with His disciples in an upper room in the southwestern part of Jerusalem, Jesus and His eleven companions walk toward the Mount of Olives on the northeastern side of the city. As they walk, Jesus once again tells them what lays ahead—the Shepherd will be stricken and the sheep will be scattered.

- In what way is Jesus your Shepherd?
-

This is where you just have to love bold, passionate, impulsive Peter. He declares that even if he must die, he will stand with Jesus and, much to their credit, the other ten disciples make the same declaration. As Jesus looks into Peter's intense eyes, He tells him that not once, but three times, denials will fall from his lips. The kingdom will not be declared by pie-in-the-sky zeal, but by faith refined in the fire of trial.

- How does Peter's experience here help you understand his words in 1 Peter 1:6-7?
-
-

✓ Read Luke 22:31-34.

What other information does Jesus give Peter?

- What do you learn about Satan here?
-

- What great comfort do you find here?

Write Romans 8:34.

Even in this darkest hour, Jesus tells Peter, and us, that God is in control. Not only is God in control, but Jesus Himself is interceding on our behalf. It is interesting that He doesn't shield Peter from the sifting anymore than we are shielded from life's pressures and stresses. Instead He prays that Peter's faith will not fail.

Why does Jesus pray for Peter's faith?

- In what way does your faith help you in times of sifting and distress?

Write Ephesians 6:16



Our faith and trust in God is what will uphold us in the darkest days and shield our hearts for His glory.

Day 3

✓ Read Mark 14:1 and Exodus 12:12-14, 17, 23-27.

What time of year is it? What are the people remembering and celebrating?

As we join Jesus hours before His death, we must take note that it is the time of the Passover celebration in Jerusalem. The city is crowded with the faithful as they come from all over the world to remember God's deliverance of their nation from Egyptian slavery. On our calendars, Passover falls in March or April. As Jesus walks the streets of Jerusalem under the evening sky, His mind and heart turn toward the rescue He is now called upon to make—a mission to rescue us from the slavery of sin.

✓ Read Matthew 26:36-38.

Where do Jesus and the disciples go upon leaving the walls of Jerusalem?

What does Jesus want to do? Who does He take with Him?

Describe Jesus' emotional and spiritual state.

● In your own words, what does it mean to be "*overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death*"?

Have you ever been overwhelmed with sorrow? What did you do in those moments?

● Why is Jesus' heart troubled and sorrowful?

Have you ever experienced a moment of intense dread? How does this feeling affect you physically? Emotionally? Mentally? Spiritually?

As Jesus and the disciples leave the Upper Room, they head for the Mount of Olives and the garden of Gethsemane. As they pass through the gate north of the temple, they enter the narrow Kidron Valley that lies between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. Their feet crunch on the ground as they cross over a small streambed about 6-7 feet wide. The stream which runs through the Kidron Valley is known as a winter brook which means that it remains dry most of the year except during the winter rains.² As they make their way across the valley, the Mount of Olives rises before them. The Mount of Olives is so named because it is covered with fruitful olive trees. Gethsemane is a garden located at the foot of the Mount of Olives. The name Gethsemane means, "oil press" because the garden is equipped with a press used by the laborers to squeeze the profitable oil from the fruit.³ As they enter the garden, close your eyes and imagine the picture the moonlight paints for you.

How familiar was this garden to Jesus and the disciples? Luke 21:37; 22:39

Since the city is crowded with visitors for the Passover remembrance, it is not unusual at all to find the countryside around Jerusalem filled with travelers finding accommodations amidst the fields and the stars. Evidently, this is what Jesus and the disciples do as well, finding a quiet retreat among the olive trees in Gethsemane. They enter the garden that normally provides rest and sanctuary, yet tonight it will hold nothing but sorrow and treachery.

Knowing what is soon to happen, Jesus becomes troubled and sorrowful. This is, perhaps, His most difficult moment. The reality of the pain and agony He is about to endure, the weight of the burden of sin that He must bear, and the knowledge that He must walk this path alone, converge in Jesus' heart and mind and overwhelm Him with sorrow. We must understand that while Jesus walks into the shadow of the cross willingly and lovingly, there is nothing easy or trivial about this journey. His divine nature shudders with the understanding of the heinousness of our sin. His purity recoils from the filth of our unrighteousness. Being divine, He knows the physical agony necessary for our salvation and His young man's body shrinks back from this picture of death.

It is difficult for us to grasp how deeply this moment impacts our Savior. Jesus is intensely sad with grief and anxiety overwhelming His sorrowful soul.⁴

With the horror of what will soon take place pressing in all around Him, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John and withdraws from the rest of the group.

What does Jesus choose to do at this moment?

● What valuable lesson do you see in His example?

He prays. Before we ever talk about the content of this prayer, we must stop and see the beauty of our Lord on His knees. When His soul is overwhelmed, He bows His head and talks to His Father.



He bids you to do the same. When you are overwhelmed, whether by worry, grief, fear, or stress, you must learn to fall on your knees. Watch the Savior. Pour out your heart to your Father. Know that you are not alone.

- Where in your life do you feel overwhelmed?

Write Matthew 11:28.

Day 4

Night covers the land and Jesus and His friends are in the garden of Gethsemane. As darkness steals across the sky sorrow covers the heart of our Savior. Peering between the branches of the olive trees covering the hillside, we see our Lord facing grief and pain as the horror of His imminent death floods His heart.

- ✓ Read Matthew 26:37-46.

What does Jesus ask Peter, James, and John to do? What do they do instead?

What does Jesus do? Describe His body position.

- What is the cup to which Jesus is referring?

- Since Jesus came to earth for this purpose, why does He ask for the cup to be removed?

Shadow of Submission

How many times does Jesus pray this prayer?

What important differences do you notice between prayer one and prayer two? Matthew 26:39,42

- How do Jesus' words in verse 41 apply to Peter and the other disciples? How might they apply to Jesus Himself? In what way do these words apply to you?

All that He can teach them has been said. He has warned them about what is to come. He has tried to prepare them for what lies ahead. Now as the hour draws near, Jesus seeks to prepare Himself for the horrors He must face alone. Leaving His three beloved friends, He goes about a stone's throw away from them and falls down with His face to the ground and pours out His anguish to His Father. "Is there another way? Is there any other option? Does it have to be this path of pain and humiliation?" The temptation is there. He can walk away. Then we are allowed a glimpse straight into the heart of Jesus.

Write the last sentence of verse 39.

How do you define submission?

- How do we learn to bow our hearts before God with this kind of submission? What difference will it make if we do?



Jesus put God's will and your need before His own sorrow and pain.

He returns to find the disciples sleeping. They evidently have little understanding of the world altering events soon to unfold. Jesus feels the weight of loneliness even more heavily and returns to His place of prayer.

It seems from the language of His second prayer that Jesus has had an answer from His Father. "It is not possible to remove the cup. There is no other way." Jesus struggles to bring His will into complete alignment with the Father's.

From Jesus, we learn three important steps of submission.

First, we must *ask* to know God's will. It is difficult to submit to the will of God when we have not taken the time to know the will of God. We must commit ourselves to prayer and Bible study, for this is the avenue by which He reveals Himself to us. It is not wrong to bring our requests and desires to our Father. Jesus certainly did. We must, however, approach God with humility—as a servant approaches his master, or a child approaches a parent—with full understanding that though the answer may be different than what we want to hear, it is given in love.

Second, we must *accept* God's answer. How many times have you seen someone ask for advice and then turn around and do exactly what they want to do anyway? Asking and accepting are not the same thing. Accepting God's direction acknowledges Him as Lord of your heart and mind.

Third, we must *align* our wills with His. It is not God who must change. You and I must be conformed into the image of His Son. Being conformed means that pressure must be applied to change and transform our hearts so that we might more be like Him. This is not easy, but each time we submit to His will, we come closer to walking in the footsteps of Jesus.



Submission is taking our own will or mission and making it subject or subordinate to God's will and mission.

It is important to note as we watch our Savior struggle with sorrow that this moment of submission is not an isolated one. Jesus submitted to the Father's will by leaving heaven and coming to earth in the form of a man. Throughout His ministry, He did exactly what the Father told Him to do. He resolutely set His face toward Jerusalem when the time of His death drew near. Even this moment in the garden displays the humble heart of Jesus. It would have been easy, and from human eyes of little consequence, for Jesus to avoid the garden on this night and go elsewhere for the evening. Instead, knowing that His betrayer is coming, Jesus again submits to the eternal plan, enters the garden, and places Himself in the hands of His Father.

By observing the beautiful example of our Lord, we learn that submission to the Father is a daily, continual exercise of bending and stretching our will in obedience to God. We may wonder how we can face big moments and tests of submission, but here in the garden we find the answer. We must daily practice submission in all things—kindness to the rude person who crosses our way; generosity of time, spirit, and talents as we see needs; patience with those closest to us. By daily bending in submission, our spirits learn to seek His face in all things. When moments of great testing come upon us, our daily practice will make it easier to bend our knees and our hearts to God's will even when it is most difficult.

Think of a situation in your life where you need to practice submission to God's will and Christ's example. In the space below, use the following four-step plan to move towards allowing God's will to control your actions in this situation. First, what is God's will and plan for dealing with this person or situation? Second, spend time in prayer asking God for His direction and strength as you conscientiously tell Him "Thy will be done." Third, when the moment arrives or the person crosses your path, focus on God's plan for you. React to Him and not your own emotions. Fourth, don't forget to praise Him and thank Him for being with you.

Luke gives us some additional information about Jesus' time in the garden.



Read Luke 22:39-46.

What two new pieces of information are we given by Luke?

● In what way do you think the angel strengthens Jesus?

What is the significance of the blood-sweat?

Doctor Luke gives us another glimpse into the anguish and horror that Jesus suffers in the garden. The severe anxiety overwhelming our Lord is having physical consequences in addition to the emotional turmoil. Luke tells us that His “*sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground*” (Luke 22:44). The phrase “drops of blood” is translated from the Greek word *thromboi*, which means “clots of blood.”⁵ Luke seems to be referring to a medical condition called hematidrosis that can occur in situations of extreme stress. The unbearable stress causes the small blood vessels under the skin to bleed into the sweat glands. What then exudes from of the body is blood-tinged perspiration. While the amount of blood that Jesus loses at this time is minimal, hematidrosis does cause the skin to become sensitive and tender.⁶

Look at Genesis 3:19. What is one of the punishments laid on man for his sin?

As the sin of mankind is laid on Jesus, He too sweats, but not just any sweat. His sweat is mingled with the blood that will cover our sin.

1 Clephane, p. 314

2 Clarke, p. 946

3 Davis, p. 268

4 Strong, p. 324

5 Coffman, *Luke*, p. 431

6 Strobel, p. 195