

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

MAX LUCADO

— YOU ARE —  
*Never  
Alone*



*Trust in the Miracle of  
GOD'S PRESENCE and POWER*

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

# Questions for Reflection

PREPARED BY ANDREA LUCADO

# We Can't, but God Can

1. What do you think about miracles?
  - Do you believe the Bible's miracle stories?
  - Why or why not?
  - Do you believe that miracles occur in this present day?
  - Have you witnessed or experienced a miracle? If so, tell the story.
  - If not, do you know someone who claims to have witnessed or experienced a miracle? What were those circumstances?
2. Of the miracles recorded in Scripture, which is your favorite?
  - What about this miracle intrigues you?
  - What does this miracle say about Jesus' heart for others?
3. What does Max say is unique about John's gospel?

If you had been a disciple of Jesus and were recording your own gospel about his life, what would have been your focus, and why?

4. John 20:30–31 says, “Jesus performed many other 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 Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (NIV).

- Spend a moment imagining miracles that weren’t recorded in Scripture. Imagine the people healed, forgiven, saved. Who are you in that scene?
- According to Max what does “life in his name” look like?

5. What else do the miracles of Christ promise us?  
How does this affect your faith?

6. The woman Max describes at the beginning of this chapter said, “It’s just me, and I ain’t much.”

- Have you ever felt like this? If so, what circumstances caused you to feel this way?
- Is there any area of your life right now in which you feel alone? Describe the situation or events that led up to this. How has this loneliness affected you?
- How has loneliness affected your faith?
- What words would you use to describe this lonely season?

7. Max cites a study from Parkland Hospital in Dallas. What did that study discover?

- How did you react to this information? Did it surprise you? Why or why not?
- Have you witnessed loneliness in your family or on a

large communal scale in your city or neighborhood? Give some examples.

- The hospital study revealed that these patients ultimately wanted to know that someone cared. In what way can you relate to that sentiment?
8. Max asks, “Do you believe in a Jesus who has not only power but a passionate love for the weak and wounded of the world? Do you think he cares enough about you to find you in the lonely waiting rooms, rehab centers, and convalescent homes of life?”
- How would you answer these questions?
  - What personal experiences have led you to this belief in the Jesus of power and love?
9. Fill in the blanks: “And we will be careful, oh so careful, to see the signs as John designed them to be seen, not as entries in a \_\_\_\_\_, but as samples from God’s \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Explain the statement above.
  - What do you hope to learn about Jesus in this book?
  - What do you hope to learn about miracles?
  - What do you hope to learn about yourself?
10. The gospel of Matthew ends with these words of Jesus: “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20 ESV).
- Imagine you are John listening to Jesus telling you these words. How would you feel?
  - What does this promise mean to you today?

11. Revisit John 20:30–31.

- Which phrase in these verses is most meaningful to you?  
Why?
- When John promises that believing leads to “life in [Jesus’] name,” what do you think he is trying to convey? What does “life in his name” mean to you?

# He Will Replenish What Life Has Taken

1. Read the story of Jesus' first miracle in John 2:1–12.
2. What do you think was the purpose of this miracle?
3. Imagine the scene.
  - What did the guests in this story lack?
  - What was Jesus' initial response to Mary in verse 4 when she told him they had no more wine?
  - Why did he respond this way?
  - Why do you think Mary considered the lack of wine a problem urgent enough to bring it to Jesus?
4. Initially Jesus was hesitant to perform this miracle, saying, “Dear woman, that’s not our problem. . . . My time has not yet come” (John 2:4 NLT). What did Jesus mean by “My time has not yet come”? Mary responded by turning to the servants and instructing them, “Do whatever he tells you” (v. 5 NLT).
  - Why did Mary intervene?

- What do you think Mary knew about Jesus?

Regarding this passage Max says, “*Whatever* means whatever. Whatever he says, whatever he commands. Even if his ‘whatever’ is a *nothing whatsoever*, do it.” Have you ever been hesitant to bring a need to Jesus because you were worried about what the “whatever” might mean for you? If so, describe what that need was or is.

5. Fill in the blank: “Be anxious for nothing, but in \_\_\_\_\_ by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6). Based on this verse, what should we *not* bring to God in prayer?
6. What is something you lack right now? Time? Health? Funds? How does this lack affect your daily life, your relationships with others, and your faith? Have you brought this need to Christ? Why or why not?
  - If you have brought this need to Christ in prayer, what has been the response?
  - If you haven’t, consider what might be preventing you from doing so. What holds you back?
7. Jesus eventually met the need of the wedding guests that night. What is Max’s explanation for Jesus’ decision to provide the miracle-produced wine?
8. What was the quality of the wine Jesus made? (See John 2:9–10.)
  - Jesus could have made less wine. He could have made a

poorer quality wine. As the master of ceremonies said, “A host always serves the best wine first. . . . Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!” (John 2:10 NLT). Many probably didn’t notice how good the wine was that night, so why did Jesus perform this miracle in the way he did?

- What does this story tell you about how Jesus will respond to your needs?
9. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul wrote, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Eph. 3:20–21).
- Have you ever given more than was asked by a loved one? Perhaps you gave your grandchild two cookies instead of one, or you gave your son the cash he needed for gas *and* a soda, or you helped a friend move and then stayed around to hang curtains and get her settled.
  - Why did you give in abundance? What prompted you to exceed the request? How did the gift make you feel?
  - If you can give in abundance to those around you with the resources you have as a human, what do you think the God of the universe is capable of giving you when you bring your needs to him?

# The Long Walk Between Offered and Answered Prayer

1. Are you waiting for an answer to prayer? Explain your prayer, and consider what could be God's reasons for giving you a season of waiting.
2. Imagine you are on a road. The starting point is your offered prayer. The destination is that prayer answered. What part of the road are you on today? What has this journey been like for you?
3. Read John 4:46–47.
  - What was the distance from Capernaum to Cana?
  - Why do you think the official traveled that far to see Jesus?
  - What did the official do to Jesus in verse 47?
  - Have you ever begged God for something? What was it? Why did you feel desperate enough to beg?
  - If God didn't answer your prayer as you wanted, did it affect your faith? Why or why not?

4. How did Jesus respond to the official's plea in John 4:48?
  - What does Max give as a possible reason for Jesus' response?
  - How did the official respond to Jesus in John 4:49? Would you have responded this way? Why or why not?
5. John 4:50 says, "Then Jesus told him, 'Go back home. Your son will live!' And the man believed what Jesus said and started home" (NLT).
  - What emotions or thoughts would you have experienced on that eighteen-mile journey from Cana to your home in Capernaum?
  - What emotions or thoughts have you experienced on your current journey since your prayer was first offered?
  - What is the difference between your journey and the official's?
6. Based on your experience, how would you answer this question: "How do we walk by faith when we are thus far blind to the solution?"
7. Psalm 46:1 says, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (NIV).
  - What kind of help does God provide us during trouble?
  - Describe a time you were aware of his being ever present. How did you experience his presence? How did it affect your strength or confidence or joy?
  - If you have not experienced the ever-present God, has a friend or loved one been by your side during a difficult

time? How did it strengthen you to have that person's presence in the midst of trouble?

8. Read the rest of the official's story in John 4:51–53.
  - In addition to healing the official's son, what did this miracle accomplish?
  - Have you ever seen a greater purpose for your journey from offered prayer to answered prayer?
  - Or has God ever revealed a different plan as you waited for him to answer your prayer? If so, how did you initially react to that plan? In hindsight do you see his purpose in that plan?
9. Jesus told the official, “Go back home. Your son will live!” (John 4:50 NLT). How did the official respond? How could you respond to Jesus in a similar way? Not knowing what's ahead on your journey of waiting, not knowing if God will answer your prayer as you wish, how could you believe what Jesus said in Scripture and continue your journey home?

# Stand Up, Take Up, and Walk

1. At the beginning of this chapter, Max suggests that we've all been stuck: "Mired in the mud of resentment, bogged down in debt, trapped in a dead-end career, up to your waist in the swamp of an unsolvable conflict. Stuck."
  - Is there an area of your life today where you feel stuck?
  - If so, in what way are you stuck, and how long have you felt this way?
  - Why are you stuck in this particular area of your life?
2. Matthew 9:35–36 says, ". . . wherever [Jesus] went he healed people of every sort of illness. And what pity he felt for the crowds that came, because their problems were so great and they didn't know what to do or where to go for help" (TLB).
  - Have you ever felt like the crowd described in this passage—that you were facing a problem so great you didn't know what to do or where to go? If so, describe what that was like for you and how it affected your feelings of being stuck.

- Is there an area of “stuckness” in your life today?  
Explain.
- Considering where you feel stuck in your life today, or perhaps when you felt stuck in the past, where could you go for help?

3. Read John 5:1–6.

- How long had the lame man been an invalid?
- How would you feel about your circumstances if you had been suffering from the same illness or plight for thirty-eight years?
- What is the longest season of suffering or illness you have endured? What caused this period of suffering?
- How has suffering affected your life, your emotions, and your faith?
- What question did Jesus ask the lame man in verse 6?
- How did the lame man respond?
- If Jesus asked you the same question about a situation you have felt stuck in, how would you answer him?

4. Max poses Jesus’ question a different way: “Are you ready to get unstuck?”

- What are some reasons a person might want to remain stuck?
- Have you ever remained stuck even though you knew there was a way out? Why did you choose to stay stuck?

5. What did Jesus tell the lame man in John 5:8?

6. Max breaks verse 8 into three actions to take when you feel stuck. What does Max say these actions mean?

*Stand up:*

*Pick up your mat:*

*Walk:*

- Considering an area where you feel stuck today, how could you . . .  
stand up?  
pick up your mat?  
walk?
  - Which of these three steps is most difficult for you, and why?
7. Max tells the story of Barbara Snyder, a talented gymnast who fell chronically ill and was miraculously healed. Max writes, “Christ performed the miracle. Christ intervened.” But what did Barbara have to do?
  8. Fill in the blank: “believe in the Jesus who believes in \_\_\_\_.” Often our “stuckness” becomes our identity. We are afraid to move on because who are we without our problem, pain, or sickness? But as Max says, “[Jesus] believes that you can rise up, take up, and move on. You are stronger than you think.” Do you believe this about yourself? Why or why not?
  9. Like the widower that Max writes about at the end of this chapter, write down some of your “I can’t’s on a piece of paper. Consider your list.

- How long have some of these “I can’t”s been part of your life?
- How many of them do you have the power to change?
- How many of them are you afraid to change?
- Now bury your list or burn it or trash it. Do something that physically symbolizes you are not held back by your “I can’t”s. You can surrender them to God.

# We Can Solve This

1. What small or mundane problem easily overwhelms or frustrates you? Traffic? Piles of dirty laundry? A full inbox?
  - How do you typically respond when you're facing this overwhelming scenario?
  - What is it about this situation that overwhelms you?
  - In the past what strategies have you used to counter an overwhelming situation?
  - Now think about a serious problem in your life that currently feels overwhelming.
  
2. In this chapter you read about the miracle of Jesus' feeding the five thousand. Max points out that while five thousand men had gathered that day, this didn't include the women and children, meaning the crowd could have been as large as fifteen thousand.
  - What's the biggest crowd you've fed? Or what's the biggest gathering you were part of in which people were fed?
  - List all the steps you can think of that would be required to plan for and to feed a large crowd.

- Now imagine you had to feed fifteen thousand people. What additional work, planning, and money would this require?
3. In John 6:5 Jesus asked Philip, “Where can we buy enough bread to feed all these people?” (Bruner translation). Philip responded, “Several thousand dollars’ worth of bread wouldn’t be enough to give even a tiny bite to all these people!” (v. 7 Bruner translation). Andrew responded, “There is a boy here with five loaves of barley bread and two fish. Oh, but what are these things when there are all these people?” (v. 9 Bruner translation).
- Why do you think Philip responded the way he did?
  - Why do you think Andrew responded the way he did?
  - If Jesus knew what was going to happen, why do you think he asked this question?
  - What do the disciples’ responses indicate about their understanding of Jesus’ power?
4. Andrew and Philip faced different obstacles in trying to feed that large crowd in Galilee.
- What obstacle did Andrew address?
  - What obstacle did Philip address?
  - What obstacles are you facing in your overwhelming situation?
  - What needs to be moved out of the way in order for you to overcome these obstacles?
  - Do you believe you have any power over these obstacles? Why or why not?

5. Regarding the doubting disciples, Max says, “They counted the hungry people, the money in their bag, and the amount of bread and fish. They did not, however, count on \_\_\_\_\_. ” Fill in the blank.
- Even though the disciples knew Jesus, believed in him, and had seen him perform miracles, why do you think they didn’t turn to Christ for the solution in this situation?
  - Think of a time you turned to Christ for a solution to your overwhelming problem. Explain the problem and solution.
6. Read John 6:11–13.
- How did Jesus meet the needs of the crowd?
  - How much was everyone able to eat?
  - What does the fact that there were leftovers tell you about Jesus and this miracle?
7. Max says this miracle proves that “what we cannot do, Christ does! The problems we face are opportunities for Christ to prove this point.”
- What do you think about this statement?
  - In the past has Christ solved a problem for you in a way you couldn’t have done yourself? If so, how did Christ do this?
  - Do you believe he can solve your problem today? Why or why not?
8. Believing that Christ will solve your problem requires creativity, as all problem-solving does. It requires that you see

things not simply as they are but as they could be. Do an exercise in creativity with whatever overwhelming situation or problem you are facing today. List below the possible outcomes that feel impossible today. List good, profitable, positive things that could happen as a result of your problem. It doesn't matter how crazy it is—a healed body, a reconciled relationship, a new job you love. Just write it down, and open your heart and mind to what is possible through Jesus.

# I AM in the Storm with You

1. Max opens this chapter with a heartbreakin story of abuse from his childhood. When he took Communion in his kitchen that night, what gave him a sense of peace?
  - Have you felt the presence of God during a dark moment?
  - If so, how did you know it was the presence of God, and how did his presence make you feel?
  - If you haven't sought God's presence during a dark moment, where did you turn for help? What kept you from seeking God's help?
2. Fill in the blank: "Jesus comes in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the torrent." The miracle you read about in this chapter proves this, literally. Read John 6:14–17.
  - What were the disciples doing in these verses?
  - Where was Jesus?
3. Now read John 6:18–19. How far had the disciples rowed when they saw Jesus approaching?

According to Matthew 14:24 (NKJV) the disciples had rowed to the middle of the Sea of Galilee. There was no turning back to get safely to shore. They had to stay in the storm or hope they made it to the other side.

- What storms have you endured?
  - How did you feel in the midst of them?
  - How were these storms eventually calmed?
  - Perhaps you are in a storm right now. What is the source of your storm? Like the disciples, are you in the middle of a lake, helpless as the seas rage around you? Or has this storm just started? Or are the waters beginning to calm?
4. Max points out three different struggles we encounter in a storm: too far from shore (the solution), too long in the struggle, and too small against the waves (the problem). Which one of these have you struggled with before or are struggling with today in your storm?
5. John 6:19 says, “They saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened” (NIV). Put yourself in this scene. Imagine you are a disciple trying to row the boat to safety. How would you feel on a small boat, in the middle of a big lake, in the middle of a storm?

Now imagine you see your beloved rabbi. But he is not in the boat or on the shore. He is on the water. Walking.

- What mix of emotions would you feel at the sight of Christ in this moment?
- What kind of thoughts would be going through your head, and why?

6. Jesus, anticipating the disciples' confusion, announced himself by saying, "It is I; don't be afraid" (John 6:20 NIV).
  - What does Max say is the literal translation of "It is I"?
  - Why is this significant?
  - Right after Jesus told the disciples who he is, what did he tell them?
  - How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus told them not to be afraid?
7. What does Max say is our greatest need during a storm? Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
8. Read John 6:21. What happened when the disciples let Jesus onto their boat?
9. Max suggests an interesting scenario in this chapter. Imagine welcoming Jesus into a turbulent period of your life. What would Jesus notice? What do you think he might say or do?
  - In the past have you asked Jesus to join you in your storm?
  - If so, how did the presence of Jesus alter your chaos, despair, or pain?
  - Have you hesitated to invite Jesus into your difficult moments and seasons?
  - What would you need to believe about Jesus, his character, or his power in order to welcome him into your storm?

10. Max tells the story of Katherine Wolf, a former model who suffered a massive stroke that left her severely debilitated. Although she still struggles with her health, she has encountered God in her storm, and her heart and mind are stronger than ever. If the circumstances of your storm stayed the same but you welcomed Christ in the midst of them, would anything change for you? If so, what?
11. Read Isaiah 43:1–3, 5 again. Which of the promises made in this scripture do you need most today, and why?

# He Gives Sight to the Blind

1. Compared to the other miracles recorded by John that you've read so far, what is different about the way John wrote the miracle story discussed in this chapter? Why would John have done this?
  
2. Fill in the blanks: "What Jesus did physically for the blind beggar, he desires to do \_\_\_\_\_ for all people: restore our \_\_\_\_."
  - Have you experienced this type of spiritual sight? Perhaps when you were converted or understood a deeper truth about Jesus? If so, describe what that moment was like.
  - What had you been blind to until that point?
  - What was it like to see in a new way?
  - Maybe you haven't experienced this in your faith but elsewhere in your life. Have you ever come to a deeper understanding about something or someone that opened your eyes? If so, explain what that experience was like.

- What did it take for you to see clearly?
  - How can that experience guide you to a deeper faith?
3. Read John 9:1–2. What is the difference between how the disciples viewed the blind man and how Jesus viewed him? Max says this difference presents the first lesson we can learn from this miracle. What is that lesson?
4. Read John 9:3–7. How did Jesus heal the blind man?
- Why do you think he chose to heal him in this way?
  - What “mud moments”—difficult lessons that led to better understanding—have you experienced in your life?
  - How did you feel while the metaphorical mud was on your eyes?
  - How did you feel when it was removed?
  - Why do you think God teaches us in this way?
  - Perhaps you are in a “mud moment” right now. What do you think Jesus could be planning to reveal to you?
5. Jesus continued this healing miracle by asking the blind man to wash his face in the pool of Siloam (John 9:7). Max points out that the walk to the pool for a blind man would have been difficult. Why do you think the blind man went anyway?
- Has God ever asked you to do something difficult and you didn’t know why?
  - If so, did you obey or resist? What happened as a result?
  - What does this part of the story tell you about the character of the blind man?

6. Read John 9:13–20. How did the Pharisees respond to the blind man's healing?
  - How did the blind man respond to the Pharisees?
  - When you've had your eyes opened spiritually, have people in your life been skeptical of your new worldview or understanding?
  - If so, why do you think they were skeptical?
  - How did their doubts make you feel? What did you say, if anything, to defend yourself and your experience?
7. The Pharisees eventually threw the blind man out of the synagogue. This was significant and would have affected the blind man's ability to worship in his community. Why do you think the Pharisees took it this far?
  - Can you think of any examples of church leaders shunning someone for telling a truth that was uncomfortable or threatening to them?
  - Why does the truth sometimes feel offensive?
8. Read John 9:35–41. Ultimately how did this miracle affect the blind man beyond giving him physical sight?
  - Even though he had been cast out of his religious community for talking about Jesus' power, the blind man still talked to Jesus when Jesus found him, and the blind man believed in Jesus as the Son of God. Why do you think he believed in Jesus?
  - According to Jesus in verse 41, what made the Pharisees guilty?
  - Have you been guilty of claiming you understood

something only to realize later that you didn't understand? If so, what did you misunderstand? What or who opened your eyes?

- Is God challenging you on something in your life today? Perhaps you think you understand something or someone but God is pushing you to a deeper or different understanding. Explain. Could you ask God to help you understand this through the perspective of Christ?
9. Of the lessons you learned from this miracle, which one was most helpful to you today, and why?

# The Voice That Empties Graves

1. Death is a reality that affects everyone. When you think about death, what is your perspective? Are you afraid of it? In denial of it? At peace with it? Curious about it? Trying to beat it? Why?
2. Has someone close to you passed away? If so, how did this affect your attitude and thoughts about death? Did it cause you to consider your own eventual passing?
3. Read John 11:1–6.
  - How did Mary and Martha refer to Lazarus in their message to Jesus?
  - What do you think they were hoping Jesus would do in response to their message?
  - What did Jesus do instead?
  - What was Jesus' reason for his action?
4. Have you ever asked God to do something—heal someone,

change your circumstances, or something else—and he didn’t do it?

- How did that make you feel about the circumstances?
  - How did that make you feel about God?
5. Read John 11:11–15. Jesus knew what was happening with Lazarus. It wasn’t ignorance that kept Jesus from visiting sooner. He was not surprised by Lazarus’s death. What do you think it was like for Jesus to allow his dear friend to die when he could have stopped it?
- What does this tell you about the purpose and importance of this miracle?
  - What does this tell you about the circumstances you are praying for but haven’t received an answer for yet?
6. John 11:20 says, “When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house” (NLT). Why would Mary have stayed in the house instead of going to greet Jesus?
- What would you have done if you were Mary or Martha?
  - Has Jesus responded to one of your prayers with an answer you considered too little and too late? What had you been praying for, and how did you hope Jesus would answer it?
  - Did Jesus’ response affect your faith? If so, in what ways?
7. Read John 11:28–33. What did Mary say to Jesus when she finally went to him (v. 32)?

- What do you think of Mary's words to Jesus?
  - How did Jesus respond to Mary?
  - Why do you think Jesus was angry?
  - When you read of Jesus' weeping, what does that reveal about his depth of compassion for you?
  - What do Jesus' emotions in these verses tell you about who he was and is?
8. Max describes the moment Jesus told Lazarus to come out of the grave as a command, not an invitation. In what ways did this moment display Jesus' power?
9. Max points out that besides Jesus' power to raise the dead to life, this miracle makes us another promise. What is it?
10. Lazarus is described as Jesus' "dear friend." You may not think Jesus considers you to be his dear friend too, but read the following verses that describe our relationship to God through Christ:

1 Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

Romans 8:15–17: “So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, ‘Abba, Father.’ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God’s glory” (NLT).

- Underline each word that describes how God sees us.
- Which of these descriptions resonates with you the most? Why?
- Which of these descriptions are hard for you to believe about yourself? Why?
- Since Jesus raised his dear friend Lazarus from the dead, how eager do you think he is to include us—God’s workmanship, children, and heirs—in the resurrection one day?

11. Jesus made a bold proclamation and asked a pointed question in John 11:25–26: “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?” (NLT). Replace Martha’s name with your own. Do you believe this? Why or why not?

# Paid in Full

1. Before reading this chapter, what did you know about the crucifixion of Christ? What did you believe was the purpose of Jesus' dying on the cross?
2. Why does Max say the crucifixion can be considered a miracle?
3. Jesus' final words from the cross were "It is finished!" (John 19:30). The Greek word translated as "it is finished" is *tetelestai*. What is significant about Jesus' using this particular word in this context?
4. Max poses the question, "Exactly what was finished?" How would you answer this?
5. What sin or circumstance from your past still makes you feel guilt or shame? Why is this guilt or shame so strong?
6. Citing Hebrews 10:14 ("For by one offering He [Christ] has

perfected forever those who are being sanctified”), Max says, “No further offering is needed. Heaven awaits no additional sacrifice.”

- What thoughts arise when you read those words?
  - Do you fully believe in the power of Jesus’ final offering?
  - Does the way you feel about your own sin reflect this belief? Why or why not?
7. It is easy to forget the promise “It is finished.” We often try to earn our forgiveness by making our own offerings. Have you ever done this? If so, how have you tried to make your own offerings for your sin and mistakes?
  8. Some people find it difficult to accept Christ’s atoning sacrifice. Guilt hinders a ready acceptance. Have you readily received this gift, or is guilt holding you back from accepting “the great miracle of mercy”?
  9. Read the following verses:

1 Corinthians 6:18: “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.”

Galatians 5:19–21: “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness,

revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Colossians 3:5–7: “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.”

- What is the common warning in these verses?
- Do you feel tension or confusion with any of these verses? If so, which ones, and why?

Now read the following verses:

Psalm 103:10–13: “He doesn’t treat us as our sins deserve, nor pay us back in full for our wrongs. As high as heaven is over the earth, so strong is his love to those who fear him. And as far as sunrise is from sunset, he has separated us from our sins. As parents feel for their children, GOD feels for those who fear him” (THE MESSAGE).

Romans 8:38–39: “For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able

to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 6:6–7: “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin” (NIV).

- What is the common theme in these passages?
  - How do we balance accepting the full forgiveness of our sins while still, as Scripture encourages us to do, striving not to sin?
10. Return to your answer to question 5. Do you feel any different about this sin, mistake, or circumstance in light of understanding more about the crucifixion? If so, how? If not, why not?
11. Max tells the story of his granddaughter Rosie seeing the ocean for the first time. She asked when the ocean would turn off. Max said, “It doesn’t, sweetie.” If you truly believed that God’s grace was never-ending like the oceans’ tides, how would it affect your life?
- How would it change the way you interact with others?
  - How might it alter the way you view yourself?

# He Saw and Believed

1. Which of the following best describes you and your faith today, and why? (FYI: There is no wrong answer.)

**Fervent believer:** You are a firm believer in Jesus as God's Son, who was crucified, buried, and rose again to new life.

**Hopeful skeptic:** You're not entirely sure about Jesus and the resurrection, but you are seeking and hopeful about faith and spirituality.

**Nonbeliever:** Jesus is a respected historical figure, but he was not raised from the dead.

2. At the beginning of this chapter, Max confesses a time when he doubted the resurrection of Christ. If you consider yourself a “fervent believer,” have you ever doubted this or something else about the Christian faith? If so, what have you doubted, and why?

If you identify as a hopeful skeptic or nonbeliever, what do you doubt about the story of Jesus, and why?

3. In your faith or church background, was it permissible to have doubts?
  - How did these feelings and doubts affect your faith journey?
  - Do you think it's okay to doubt your faith or for others to doubt? Why or why not?
4. Read John 19:38–41. How was Jesus' body prepared? Where was his body placed?
5. Now read John 20:1–8. What did John and Peter find in the tomb? Why is this significant?
6. When was the moment John first believed that Jesus had been raised from the dead? (See John 20:8.)
  - Why did John believe Jesus had been raised from the dead even though he hadn't yet seen Jesus alive?
  - What evidence did John have that Jesus was alive?
7. When was the moment you first believed in Jesus' resurrection?
  - What caused you to believe? Evidence? Faith? Both?
  - What did this belief mean for you?
  - How did this belief change you?
  - What did it feel like to believe?
8. How many times did John use the word *believe* in his gospel?
  - Why do you think he used it so often?
  - Max says, “*Believe* means more than mere credence. It

signifies \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.”

Fill in the blanks.

- Would you say you have this type of belief in the resurrection? Why or why not?
9. Why is belief in the resurrection of Christ so important to the Christian faith?
- Do you consider the resurrection central to your belief? Why or why not?
  - Do you think it's possible to be a Christian but not believe in the resurrection? Why or why not?
  - First Corinthians 15:17 says, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless and powerless” (AMP). Why is that? Do you feel any points of tension with this passage?
10. What further evidence for the truth of the resurrection does Max suggest?
- Why is the number of witnesses to Christ's death and resurrection so significant?
  - Think about how history has been recorded over the years through eyewitness accounts and documentation. We believe what we read in history books. What keeps us, or others, from believing what the Bible says about the resurrection?
  - Is there any difference between believing in the history you were taught in school and believing in Christ's resurrection? If so, what is that difference?

11. John first saw the risen Christ on the evening he was resurrected. Read John 20:19–22.
  - What were Jesus' first words to the disciples?
  - What did he show them?
  - How did this make the disciples feel?
  - Having seen the empty tomb and burial linens, what was John probably thinking and feeling in this moment?
12. Max writes, “Faith is not the absence of doubt. Faith is simply a willingness to keep asking the hard questions.” What hard questions do you need to ask God today? Maybe you have some questions about the resurrection or perhaps about something happening in your life. Or maybe you have some doubts about other areas of your faith. Whatever it is, bring your questions and doubts to the Father. Bring them without shame or fear, because he understands and wants to listen.

# Breakfast with Jesus

1. Have you broken a promise to a loved one?
  - What promise did you break?
  - How did your loved one respond to the broken promise?
  - If he or she forgave you, how did that change your relationship?
  - If he or she held it against you, what actions or changes resulted?
2. We've all hurt the people in our lives. And we've all hurt God. As Max writes, "We, too, have fallen flat, fallen hard, and fallen enough to leave us wondering how in God's name God names us as his own. I'm not talking about minor sli-pups. . . . I'm calling to the surface the Jonah moments in which we turned from God, Elijah moments in which we ran from God, Jacob moments in which we dared to make a demand of God."
  - When you read this, what comes to mind about a time you fell and fell hard?

- How do you think God feels about this event or time in your life?
3. Max describes Peter's relationship with Jesus as a Rocky Mountain friendship. Read Luke 5:1–11.
- How did the relationship between Peter and Jesus begin?
  - How did Peter react to Jesus in verse 8?
  - What did Peter and the other disciples do in verse 11?
  - How would you describe Peter's relationship with Jesus, based on this passage?
  - Describe a time, if any, that your relationship with Jesus was like this—new, exciting, and real, so real that you were willing to do anything for him.
4. Read Mark 14:27–31.
- What did Peter vow to Jesus in this passage?
  - Do you think Peter meant what he said? Why or why not?
  - How would you describe Peter's relationship with Jesus, based on this passage?
  - Have you ever made a similar promise to Jesus? If so, what was the promise, and why did you make it?
5. Read Mark 14:66–72.
- Why do you think Peter denied his relationship with Jesus?
  - What did Peter do after the cock crowed and Peter recalled Jesus' words?

- Have you ever broken a promise you made to Jesus?  
Perhaps the same promise you listed in question 4?
  - How did you feel when you realized you had broken your promise?
6. In Mark 16:7 the angel of the Lord mentioned Peter, and only Peter, by name among the disciples. Max says, “It’s as if all of heaven had watched Peter fall. Now all of heaven wanted to help him back on his feet.”
- What does this tell you about Jesus and how he felt about Peter?
  - What does this tell you about how Jesus feels about you?
7. Read John 21:1–9.
- What similarities are there between the story of this miracle and the story in Luke 5:1–11?
  - Now read John 21:15–17. How does this conversation parallel Peter’s denial of Christ in Mark 14:66–72?
  - What do you think is the significance of these similarities in Scripture?
  - What do they say about Peter’s relationship with Jesus?
8. Of all the scenarios of Peter you just read, which one most resonates with you today?
- Are you a new believer, willing to give up everything for Jesus?
  - Have you made a promise to Jesus?
  - Have you broken that promise and now are dealing with the shame?

- Or have you recently experienced the deep forgiveness of Christ and a restored relationship with him?
  - Regardless of where you stand today, what would you like your relationship with Jesus to look like?
9. Max tells the story of his wife forgiving him. What message of forgiveness do you need Jesus to write on your mirror?
10. Peter's duties were not done. Jesus told him, "Feed My lambs. . . . Tend My sheep. . . . Feed My sheep" (John 21:15–17).
- What work did Peter go on to do for Christ?
  - Have you let your failure keep you from believing you can continue working for Christ?
  - If so, what do you believe you aren't equipped to do anymore?
  - If you felt fully forgiven by Jesus, what work would you want to do in his name?
11. Max points out that Jesus offered Peter forgiveness, but Peter had to take a step toward it. Peter went to Galilee, he jumped into the water and swam to shore, and he talked to Jesus. Do you need to take a step toward Jesus today? If so, what would that look like for you?

# Believe, Just Believe

1. John recorded the reason for his gospel and for telling about the signs and wonders of Christ: “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31 NIV). How has studying the miracles of Jesus affected your belief in him as the resurrected Son of God?
2. What truth or promise did you take away from each miracle listed below? Which one seemed most in tune with your life today?

When Jesus turned the water into wine:

When he healed the nobleman’s son:

When he healed the lame man:

When he healed the blind man:

When he walked on water:

When he fed the five thousand:

When he raised Lazarus from the dead:

When he completed the work of redemption on the cross:

When his body was resurrected:

When he multiplied the fish in the disciples' net and gave Peter a second chance:

3. Max writes, "The message of the miracles is the Miracle Worker himself. He wants you to know you are never alone. You are never without help, hope, or strength. You are stronger than you think because God is nearer than you might imagine." Of the miracles listed above, which one most assures you of this promise, and why?
4. Max tells the touching story of Luke making a shot in a basketball game after his teammates and even the opposing team threw the ball to him again and again.
  - How are we like Luke in this scenario?
  - Think about the past week. Did you experience any miracles that you overlooked in the moment? If so, what were they?
  - What miracles have others around you experienced that you have failed to see as a miracle?
  - Why is it difficult for us to notice the miracles happening around us each day?
  - Do you typically call such events miracles or something else, like a coincidence or stroke of fate? Why?
  - What do these miracles in your life—big or small—tell you about God and his presence?
5. Max lists several passages of Scripture that assure us of the nearness of God. Which of these passages do you most need to believe today, and why?

6. The first question in the first chapter of these reflection questions was “What do you think about miracles?” Has your answer to this changed in any way, or has it stayed the same? Explain why.
7. What doubts do you still have about miracles, either in your own life or the miracles recorded in the gospel of John?
  - Why do you have these specific doubts?
  - What would you need to see or experience to overcome these doubts?
8. The ultimate promise of this book is the title: *You Are Never Alone*. How can this promise change you, your life, your faith, and your relationships?
9. Take any final thoughts, questions, prayers, or concerns to the Father. If you need a miracle in your life, ask for it. If you need more faith, ask for it. If you need forgiveness, ask for it. If you need to know you are never alone, ask God for a strong, peaceful sense of his never-ending presence.