



# 30 Days to a More Rooted Life

**A devotional guide for your rooted journey**

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May be used alone or along with *rooted (IN): Thriving in Connection with God, Yourself and Others*. Find more rooted resources at [susancarson.net](http://susancarson.net).



Welcome to the journey (IN)!

We are all on a journey of becoming who we already are...

We are already fully loved, created with intention to live with joy and significance. To thrive in spirit, soul, and body. To live deeply connected with God, with our true selves, and with others.

But something is in the way.

I've experienced it, too. Shame, pain, and disappointments leave you isolated and separated from God, yourself, and others. You end up going through life outside yourself, striving for acceptance, longing for love and grace.

You are invited on a journey out of shame into love. Spiritual paths and practices open the way to living rooted and grounded in the healing, restoring love of Christ. Over decades and as director of Roots&Branches Network, I've had the honor of praying with hundreds of people, helping them do the same. Can I help you experience this, too?

In my new book, *rooted (IN): Thriving in Connection with God, Yourself, and Others*, I offer principles and prayerful practices you need to stop being stuck and start living a life full of joy and meaning. This 30-day journey is one way to enter into these practices and open the way to deep healing through personal encounter with God.

This journey is based on the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius. (I know, this may all be sounding a bit religious, but hang in there with me.) Said another way, Ignatius gave the Jesuits and all of us a way

to journey the long distance from our heads to our hearts. To help us draw closer to God and to discern God's call in our lives.

In the words of Kevin O'Brien, author of *The Ignatian Adventure*, "...the purpose of the Exercises is very practical: to grow in union with God, who frees us to make good decisions about our lives and to 'help souls'....Ignatius invites us into an intimate encounter with God, revealed in Jesus Christ, so that we can learn to think and act more like Christ." These Exercises are, in fact, a school of prayer and a pathway to greater interior freedom. I've referenced O'Briens book, cited below, to help form this particular 30-day journey.

So what's ahead? Each day, we'll look at a different aspect of God's nature and the life of Jesus. And we'll engage with scripture in ways that open encounter. Let me be clear. This is not a Bible study. The questions offered are not questions to answer systematically as much as they are prompts for listening within and listening to God. This is a pathway to personal encounter as you, each day, take a few minutes of silence and solitude to Rest, Receive, Respond, and Remain in the love of God.

Each day, I encourage you to set aside at least 10 minutes in a space that feels comfortable and safe. A quiet space where you won't be interrupted. Maybe light a candle. You may want to have a journal on hand so you can write your thoughts and responses as we go. And you'll want to have a Bible on hand, either in print or online.

OK, that's a long intro. Ready to jump (IN)?

*Source: Kevin O'Brien, The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius in Daily Life (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2011), p13.*

## DAY 30: GOD'S PERSONAL LOVE AND CARE FOR YOU

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### PSALM 23

**REST:** Settled into your space? Take a few deep, slow breaths. Let your body relax and invite Holy Spirit to guide this time. Don't rush this part. It's every bit as important as what comes next.

**RECEIVE:** Read Psalm 23 slowly. Engage your imagination. What images come to mind? What do you notice about the care of the shepherd? How does it feel to be cared for in this way?

**RESPOND:** Do you sense an invitation from God to receive his love and care in a new or different way? How would you like to respond to that invitation? Express this to him and thank him for the ways you've experienced his care in your life.

**REMAIN:** Take a few more moments in silence to consider God's care and love for you. Rest. Breathe. Be renewed.

## DAY 29: GOD'S ONGOING CREATION OF YOU AND THE WORLD

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### GENESIS 1:26-2:9

**REST:** Take a few deep, slow breaths. Let your body relax and invite Holy Spirit to guide this time.

**RECEIVE:** Read Genesis 1:26-2:9 slowly. Engage your senses. How do you see God engaging in creation of the world, of man and woman? How does he respond to his creation?

**RESPOND:** Imagine opening your eyes for the first time, taking that first breath, and gazing into the face of your Creator who calls you very good. What's your response? Express this to God and thank him for his creative work in your life.

**REMAIN:** Take a few more moments to rest in silence. Consider, how is your Creator making all things new in your life today?

## DAY 28: THE INTIMACY OF PRAYER

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### EPHESIANS 3:14-21

**REST:** You know the drill. Get comfy. Take a few deep, slow breaths. Let your body relax and invite Holy Spirit to guide this time.

**RECEIVE:** Read Ephesians 3:14-21 slowly a few times. What words and phrases in this prayer stand out to you? What do you find your heart longing for as you read? Do you sense anything in the way of receiving God's love for you?

**RESPOND:** Now turn this prayer into your prayer. Use the words from these verses or use your own words to express the desires of your heart. How do you respond to the high, wide, long, broad, and deep love of God for you?

**REMAIN:** Take a few more moments to rest in silence and receive the love of God for you.

*You might also try engaging with this prayer by video or audio through my podcast. Episode 1 features this prayer! Check it out here: [www.susancarson.net/podcast](http://www.susancarson.net/podcast).*

*One of the spiritual practices we'll engage in on this journey is an Ignatian practice called imaginative prayer. In this practice, we engage all our senses to enter into the scenes and stories of Scripture. Place yourself in these stories, less to analyze and more to experience. Allow the Word to come to life in a fresh way guided by Holy Spirit.*

## **DAY 27: GOD'S INVITATION TO GREATER FREEDOM**

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### **LUKE 1:26-38**

**REST:** Breathe. Release any distractions. Invite Holy Spirit to speak.

**RECEIVE:** Read Luke 1:26-38 slowly. Engage your imagination to help you see this scene. What do you notice? Ponder Mary's response to the angel and her freedom to give her "yes" to God.

**RESPOND:** Do you sense an invitation from the Lord today? How is God inviting you to greater freedom? What is your response? Is anything in the way of your "yes" today?

**REMAIN:** Take a few more moments to rest and ponder God's invitation to you today.

## **DAY 26: WE ARE MADE WITH INTENTION**

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### **EXODUS 3:1-15**

**REST:** Breathe. Release any distractions. Invite Holy Spirit to guide this time.

**RECEIVE:** Read Exodus 3:1-15 slowly. Place yourself in this scene, perhaps as Moses or as an observer. What emotions rise as you consider Moses' encounter with God? Can you relate with Moses' response? How does God meet Moses in his questioning?

**RESPOND:** How have you sensed a call to serve (big or small) in your own life? Do you sense anything holding you back? Spend a few moments talking with God about this.

**REMAIN:** Take a few more moments to rest and consider how God goes with you today.

## DAY 25: HEARING GOD'S CALL

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### JOHN 1:35-39

**REST:** Breathe. Release any tension in your body and mind. Invite Holy Spirit to guide this time.

**RECEIVE:** Read John 1:35-39 slowly. What compelled these men to pursue Jesus? What do you notice about Jesus's response to their question? What do you notice about their response to him?

**RESPOND:** How do you respond to Jesus' question: "What do you want?" He invites you to "come and see." How does this invitation feel to you today?

**REMAIN:** Spend a few more moments in silence with Jesus.

## DAY 24: THE REALITY OF OUR BROKENNESS

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### LUKE 15:11-32

**REST:** Settled into your space? Take a few deep, slow breaths. Let your body relax and invite Holy Spirit to guide this time.

**RECEIVE:** Read John 1:35-39 slowly. Engage all your senses as you place yourself in the story. What do you see, smell, hear, feel? What do you notice about the Father? What do you notice about these two sons? What do you notice about your response to the story?

**RESPOND:** Neither of these sons realized the goodness of their father. Their image of father was marred, and this resulted in brokenness in their lives and relationships. How are you invited to see Father differently? How have you responded to him and to others from a place of brokenness? Is there a turning or returning He's inviting you to today?

**REMAIN:** Take a few more moments to rest and remember the Father's words: "You are always with me. Everything I have is yours."

## DAY 23: YOUR STORY OF SIN AND GRACE

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### LUKE 7:36-50

**REST:** Take a few deep, slow breaths. Let your body relax and invite Holy Spirit to guide this time.



**RECEIVE:** Read Luke 7:36-50 slowly. What do you notice about Jesus in this story? What do you notice about the woman? What stands out to you as you read this today?

**RESPOND:** Hold the story of your life before the Father. Is there a place you've missed his grace in your life? A place you need to turn and receive forgiveness? A place you need to recognize the forgiveness already given? Respond to God's invitation to grace to you today.

**REMAIN:** Take a few more moments to rest and express your gratitude to God.

## DAY 22: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

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### PSALM 51

**REST:** Take a few deep, slow breaths. Open your heart and mind to Holy Spirit.

**RECEIVE:** Read Psalm 51 slowly. This is the prayer of a man (Israel's King David) very much in touch with his own brokenness and the effects of his sin. What do you notice about the character and nature of God? What do you notice about David's response to God? What part of his prayer stands out to you today?

**RESPOND:** Craft your own prayer of confession as you are led. Be as honest as you can be about any brokenness or sin that may have come to mind. Invite God to meet you right in the middle of the situation--whatever it is. What do you want to ask? What new grace is God inviting you to today?

**REMAIN:** Take a few more moments to rest and receive God's grace.

## DAY 21: GOD'S MERCIFUL LOVE

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### JOHN 8:2-11

**REST:** You know what to do.

**RECEIVE:** Read John 8:2-11 slowly. What do you see? What do you feel? What do you notice about how Jesus responds to the men? What do you notice about how Jesus responds to the woman?

**RESPOND:** Do you sense an invitation from the Lord as you read this? Where is He inviting you to new grace today? Where might you need to experience His mercy today? Respond as your heart leads.

**REMAIN:** Take a few more moments to rest and receive God's mercy and love.

*These next days, we'll journey with Jesus through his life, from incarnation to resurrection. Many of these stories may be familiar. Ask Holy Spirit to help you engage in a new, fresh way as you encounter the one who is the full expression of God, the full expression of love.*

## DAY 20: THE INCARNATION

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### **JOHN 1: 1-5, 14-18**

**REST:** Breathe deep, beloved.

**RECEIVE:** Read John 1: 1-5, 14-18 slowly. Which words and images resonate with you? How do John's words expand your image of Jesus? How do they expand or change your image of God?

**RESPOND:** He comes to you today, fully God and fully man, the fullness of grace and truth. How does your heart respond today to this Jesus? What invitation do you sense as you consider the One through whom you and all things were made?

**REMAIN:** Contemplate the beauty of God displayed in Jesus.

## DAY 19: THE BIRTH OF JESUS

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### **LUKE 2:1-20**

**REST:** Take a few moments to release distractions. Slow down. Breathe.

**RECEIVE:** Read Luke 2:1-20 slowly. Engage your imagination to re-see these familiar scenes. What stands out to you today? Who do you relate to in these scenes? What emotions do they feel? What emotions do you feel?

**RESPOND:** Ask Holy Spirit to make this familiar story new to you today in some way. How does your heart respond to this baby's arrival? What invitation do you sense?

**REMAIN:** Ponder with Mary today and hold the treasure of God's presence in your heart.

## DAY 18: THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

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### **LUKE 2:21-38**

**REST.** Be still and know.

**RECEIVE:** Read Luke 2:21-38 slowly. What strikes you about the responses of Simeon and Anna to this baby? Spend a few moments pondering Simeon's blessing and his words to Mary.

**RESPOND:** What is your response to this child today? Is there something you've been longing for, waiting for, praying for? Release the longing to God and contemplate the joy of a longing fulfilled.

**REMAIN:** Rest in the presence of God.

## DAY 17: THE HIDDEN LIFE OF JESUS

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### **LUKE 2:39-50**

**REST.** Invite Holy Spirit to clear away the clutter and speak with you.

**RECEIVE:** Read Luke 2:39-50 slowly. Go on the journey with Jesus to the temple. Imagine this young boy among the older men, listening and asking questions. What might he be experiencing? Consider his

response to his mother and father, and how this young boy is beginning to step into his calling.

**RESPOND:** What stirs in your heart and mind as you read this passage? Do you sense an invitation to respond in some way? Do you sense a connection between your younger self and this young boy?

**REMAIN:** Linger in the presence of God in silence.

*As we continue on this journey, remember the space we're opening together is a listening space. He speaks with grace and truth, never accusation, never condemnation. This is safe space to speak what's in your heart and to listen to the living word spoken to you today by Jesus. Does a thought come to mind? A picture? A memory? A prompting? What do you sense from him?*

## DAY 16: JESUS AND HIS KINGDOM

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### **MATTHEW 4:23-5:12**

**REST.** Settle into the quiet.

**RECEIVE:** Read Matthew 4:23-5:12 slowly. Now we see Jesus as a man, stepping into his public ministry, announcing the Kingdom of God. Imagine him in the crowds, healing, teaching. What stands out to you today about this Kingdom? What stands out to you today about this Jesus?

**RESPOND:** How does your heart respond today to the teaching of Jesus? Do you sense a call or invitation as you read the Beatitudes?

**REMAIN:** Sit with the crowd and listen to Jesus.

## DAY 15: JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY

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### MARK 1:21-39

**REST.** Breathe deep. In and out. In and out. Slowly.

**RECEIVE:** Read Mark 1:21-39 slowly. Walk through this day in the public life of Jesus. What do you observe about him? What is he doing? How is he feeling? Who is he with? What seems important to him?

**RESPOND:** What does your heart move toward as you see Jesus? Is there something you want to ask him for? Something you want to do with him?

**REMAIN:** Receive the compassion and healing mercy of Jesus for you today.

## DAY 14: THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

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### MATTHEW 16:24-26

**REST.** Wait for a few moments in the quiet.

**RECEIVE:** Read Matthew 16:24-26 slowly. This same Jesus you've been watching and walking with these past days now calls you to follow him. What expression do you see on his face as he speaks? What's the tone of his voice? What emotions rise? What thoughts?

**RESPOND:** How does your heart respond today to this call? Have an honest conversation with Jesus. Tell him how you feel. Ask him your questions. Wait. Listen. What does this call mean for you today?

**REMAIN:** Sit with Jesus for a few moments longer remembering his love for you.

## DAY 13: WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE

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### LUKE 19:1-10

**REST.** Simply be.

**RECEIVE:** Read Luke 19:1-10 slowly. Imagine this scene--Zacchaeus in the tree, straining to see Jesus. How did he feel when Jesus, surrounded by people, called to him? How did the crowd respond? How did Zacchaeus respond? What do you notice about Jesus here?

**RESPOND:** Zacchaeus responds to Jesus as one who has encountered love. Place yourself in the scene. Imagine you are the one Jesus is calling to. How does his call feel to you? How do you respond? Do you sense an invitation to move forward in love today?

**REMAIN:** Sit with Jesus for a few moments longer remembering his love for you.

## DAY 12: JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY

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### LUKE 10:38-42

**REST.** Ask Holy Spirit to help you stay present in this moment.

**RECEIVE:** Read Luke 10:38-42 slowly. Place yourself in this scene as a friend of Jesus. What do you notice about Martha? About Mary? About Jesus?

**RESPOND:** What is Jesus inviting Martha to? What is he inviting you to? How does your heart respond to the invitation? Have an honest conversation with Jesus.

**REMAIN:** Rest in his grace for you, remembering his love and acceptance.

## DAY 11: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

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### LUKE 10:25-37

**REST.** Remember to breathe, beloved.

**RECEIVE:** Read Luke 10:25-37 slowly. Consider how Jesus answers this man's questions. What do you learn about the nature of God's Kingdom from his answers? What does love look like in this Kingdom?

**RESPOND:** Do you sense an invitation today to respond in some way to this call to love? Does a "neighbor" come to mind? How might you show mercy today?



**REMAIN:** Rest in God's mercy toward you.

## DAY 10: JESUS, HUMAN AND DIVINE

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### **JOHN 11:1-44**

**REST.** Slow down. Release every hurried thought.

**RECEIVE:** Read John 11:1-44 slowly. Place yourself in this story with Jesus. Engage all your senses. What emotions rise as you watch Jesus interact with his friends? How do you see his humanity? How do you see his divinity?

**RESPOND:** How does your heart respond to the man Jesus? How does your heart respond to the divine Jesus? Is there a dimension of Jesus you'd like to experience in a new or fresh way? Ask Holy Spirit to reveal more to you today.

**REMAIN:** Rest in the presence of Emmanuel, God with you.

## DAY 9: IN THE GARDEN

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### **MATTHEW 26:36-46**

**REST.** God is with you.

**RECEIVE:** Read Matthew 26:36-46 slowly. Place yourself in the garden with Jesus. What do you observe about his emotions? About his struggle? About his conversation with his Father? What made Jesus's surrender to the Father's will possible?

**RESPOND:** Do you sense an invitation to a place of surrender today? If so, be honest with your Father about your struggle. Or simply express your gratitude for the “yes” Jesus gave in the garden.

**REMAIN:** Spend a few more moments in the presence of Jesus.

## DAY 8: THE ARREST OF JESUS

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### **MATTHEW 26:57-75**

**REST.** You’ve got this now.

**RECEIVE:** Read Matthew 26:57-75 slowly. Engage your emotions as you place yourself with Jesus in his arrest. What human emotions might Jesus be experiencing? How does he respond?

**RESPOND:** What emotions rise in you as you watch Jesus? What emotions rise in you as you watch Peter? Do these emotions or experiences of suffering and rejection connect with you in some way? Express your thoughts and emotions in prayer.

**REMAIN:** Spend a few more moments in the presence of Jesus.

## DAY 7: THE DEATH OF JESUS

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### LUKE 23:26-49

#### REST.

**RECEIVE:** Read Luke 23:26-49 slowly. Engage your emotions as you place yourself with Jesus in his death. How are the people around him responding? What human emotions might Jesus be experiencing? How does he respond?

**RESPOND:** How are you responding to this scene? What emotions rise in you? How do you relate to his suffering? Express your thoughts and emotions in prayer.

**REMAIN:** Spend a few more moments in the presence of Jesus.

## DAY 6: THE WAY OF JESUS

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### PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

#### REST.

**RECEIVE:** Read Philippians 2:1-11 slowly. Reflect on these last days as you've journeyed with Jesus. What scenes and stories come to mind as you read these verses? What stands out to you today as you consider the way Jesus lived and died?

**RESPOND:** What speaks to you today from these verses? Do you sense an invitation to follow the example of Jesus in some way today? Or perhaps to respond in gratitude or worship?

**REMAIN:** Spend a few more moments taking in the presence of Jesus.

## DAY 5: RESURRECTION

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### JOHN 20:1-18

#### REST.

**RECEIVE:** Read John 20:1-18 slowly. Place yourself in the scene. Engage your senses and emotions. What do you notice about how Peter and John respond? What do you notice about Mary's response? What do you notice about how Jesus responds to Mary?

**RESPOND:** How does your heart respond today to the risen Jesus? What does his rising mean to you today? Do you sense an invitation?

**REMAIN:** Spend a few more moments in the wonder of the resurrection.

## DAY 4: THE RISEN LIFE

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### LUKE 24:13-35

#### REST.

**RECEIVE:** Read Luke 24:13-35 slowly. Imagine you are walking the road with these disciples. What emotions are they feeling before

Jesus approaches them? How might they have felt as they listened to him? As they recognized him?

**RESPOND:** How does Jesus want to be present with you, right now? Invite him to sit with you. What is on his heart for you today? Have a conversation with the risen Christ.

**REMAIN:** Sit for a while with Jesus.

## DAY 3: THE LOVE OF GOD

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### I JOHN 4:7-21

#### REST.

**RECEIVE:** Read I John 4:7-21 slowly. What in these verses stands out to you? How does it feel to be called “beloved”? How do you receive these words today?

**RESPOND:** How does your heart respond to this kind of love? Do you sense anything in the way of receiving God’s love for you today? Ask Holy Spirit to help you connect more deeply with God’s love for you.

**REMAIN:** Rest in God’s perfect love for you.

## DAY 2: ABIDING IN LOVE

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### JOHN 15:1-5

#### REST.

**RECEIVE:** Read John 15:1-5 slowly. Contemplate the connection between a vine and branch. What is the vine's part? What is the branch's part?

**RESPOND:** Read the verses again and imagine yourself as the branch. You in Christ. Christ in you. You are invited to abide in this intimate, life-giving flow. How does your heart respond to this kind of connection? What invitation do you sense?

**REMAIN:** Abide.

## DAY 1: LIVING IN FRUITFUL FLOW

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### JOHN 15:9-17

#### REST.

**RECEIVE:** Read John 15:9-17 slowly. You are invited into an ever-deepening friendship with Jesus. All that he's received from the Father he shares with you. He simply asks that you remain in his love. This is the place of fruitful obedience. The place where we love God and love others as we know this love.

**RESPOND:** Consider your journey over these past 30 days. How have you encountered Jesus? How has he encountered you? How is he inviting you to grow in love? What would you like to ask him for today?

**REMAIN:** Abide.