

People and Their Deepest Longings – 15 Examples from the Gospels

Who	Scripture Reference	Description of the Longing/Desire	Jesus' Response	Challenge I Face in making the Paradigm Shift
Zachaeus	Luke 19:1-10	Belonging: Intimacy, Closeness, Relationships, Friendship.	Jesus sees me, accepts me, is interested in me, challenges me, wants to be with me, helps me develop connections to other people.	I do not want to hide behind my social status, but I choose to step out in faith, even at the risk of embarrassing myself. I am ready to welcome Jesus in my life and to reorganise my life together with Him.
Disabled Man at the Pool of Bethesda	John 5:1-18	A New Perspective in Life: Hope that my destiny in life can be changed, longing for a «normal» life, hope for a better future.	Jesus sees me, my past and my entire life. He heals me from external and internal paralysis, enabling me to take responsibility for my own life.	I accept Jesus' challenge to make a change and decide not to wallow in self-pity and longer. I no longer want to be a victim. I will stand up for myself.
The «Sinful Woman» in a Pharisee's House	Luke 7:36-50	Acceptance: Appreciation, Recognition, Recovery and Restoration, Self-Esteem.	Jesus shows me love, acceptance and forgiveness and accepts me unconditionally, as I am.	I want to give my whole life to Jesus, all of myself from head to toe, regardless of what other people say or think about me.
The Crippled Woman	Luke 13:10-17	Dignity: Restoration, Self-Worth, Identity.	Jesus sees me, engages with me as a friend. He redeems my warped and oppressed personality. He restores my dignity, helping to stand tall.	I allow Jesus to heal me so that I can stand tall. I accept and «put on» my dignity and identity in Him.
The Samaritan Woman at the Well	John 4:1-54	Real Life: Fulfilment, Happiness, a «full» soul, Knowing who I am.	Jesus knows everything about me, including my deepest longings. He has truly seen me. He shows me the way to lead a fulfilled life.	I willingly open myself to have a fundamentally and radically honest experience with Jesus. I trust that He is the only one who can satisfy my desire for «real» life.
Peter	John 21:1-19	Reconciliation: Forgiveness, Renewed Trust, a New Start.	Jesus took all my failures, my guilt and my shame on Himself. He forgives me and enables me to start again and experience new life in Him.	I own all the failures and mistakes I have made in my life, and I allow Jesus to examine my heart to reveal all the sin and guilt I still carry. I trust that He will forgive me completely and turn even the bad things from my life into good.
The Woman Caught in Adultery	John 8:2-11	Set Free: Grace, Mercy, Defending my Life, Having an Advocate.	Jesus supports me, defends me, and saves me from the risk of death – even if the danger is my own fault.	I allow God to challenge me to change my ways and stop destructive behaviours that damage myself and others.
Nicodemus	John 3:1-21	Meaning: Recognising God's truth and the larger context of life.	Jesus reveals the secrets of life to me. He opens the door to God. He gives my life meaning and significance.	I humbly admit that there is more to life than what I can understand. I choose to take a step of faith to believe in Jesus, even if it means being ridiculed by so-called intellectuals.

The Woman with a Flow of Blood	Mark 5:25-34	Healing: Health, Renewed Life-Energy, Strength, Comfort.	Jesus allows me to touch Him, heals me, and gives new strength for life. In Him, I can experience new life wherever I have lost me way.	I have to admit that I have used up all my options and that I no longer know what to do; only Jesus can help me at this point. I open myself to Him and am ready to receive help.
The Disciples in a Storm	Mark 4:35-41	Security: Protection, Safety, Preservation.	Jesus is with me, we are «in the same boat». He carries me through the storms of life and preserves my life.	I need to trust that Jesus is always with me, ready to help, and prepared with a solution to bring me safely to my destination.
The Father of a Possessed Boy	Mark 9:14-27	Liberation/Freedom: Supernatural Help, Release, Freedom, Restoration.	Jesus has the power to free me from bondage, imprisonment and helplessness. He liberates me from inward and outward circumstances that limit or imprison me.	I must confront my disbelief and mistrust toward Jesus – and perhaps toward life in general – and come to Jesus with my requests and needs despite these obstacles.
Paul	Philippians 3:7-9	Justice/Righteousness: Reconciliation with God and myself, a new, merciful understanding of God's righteousness.	Jesus revealed God's righteousness and justice through His life, death and resurrection. He guarantees that God will judge the world and establish His Kingdom of freedom one day.	I choose to stop trusting in my own righteousness, achievements and merits, and place my trust in the righteousness that God gives me by faith. This righteousness will allow me to live and act out of a sense of grace and mercy.
Mary (Sister of Lazarus & Martha)	John 12:1-8	Beauty: Feeling inwardly touched or moved; being overcome by God's presence; perceiving God's holiness; losing my heart to God; longing to find ways to express truth, beauty and goodness.	Jesus resonates with me. I have an overwhelming sense of awe, and I feel deeply known and captivated by His beauty and holiness. Although I can hardly express this feeling, I want to invest my whole life in Him.	I reject utilitarian thinking and human reason and stop allowing these to dominate my life. Instead, I will follow Jesus with everything I am and have, and I will seek to increase His glory.
The Disciples and the Holy Spirit	John 14:25-31	Peace: inner Calm, Serenity, Steadfastness, Confidence.	Jesus gives me an inner peace that the world cannot give and fills my heart with a supernatural trust that He will make everything turn out well.	I will be careful not to confuse peace with freedom from problems or challenges. Instead, I want to stay close to Jesus, who gives me peace amid chaos and leads me through it.
Mary Magdalene, the Disciples, Paul and 500 Witnesses	John 20	The Eternal: Perceiving the eternal, supernatural dimension; appreciating the transcendent nature of God and being moved to worship; awareness of the eternal dimension beyond our world, ourselves, and our earthly lives.	Jesus has overcome death. He is risen, and He is alive. He allows me to experience His presence and fills my life with a living hope for God's new world.	I choose to open myself for God's eternal dimension, which is ready to be revealed in my life today, so that I can view my earthly life as a preparation for something better.