



## Next Steps

### The Year of Inviting

[John 4.39-42](#) :: [Listen to Sermon](#)

I don't know about you, but I get a lot of invitations. Every time I turn around it seems like I am being "invited." And you know, those invitations to dinner, out to coffee, or even to the random birthday party are but the tip of the iceberg for me. I get so many invitations I am drowning. Every time I turn on the television somebody is personally inviting me to try their product or to tune in to a program that will revolutionize the way I think. . .or is it baste my turkey? I can't ever really remember. There are so many invitations coming at me they all run together. When I drive down the road I am bombarded by invitations to turn in for a special on pancakes or an oil change. Personally, I am holding out for the special on pancakes while I get my oil changed. I can't walk through the mall without being peppered with invitations to step into a store because they are having the biggest sale EVER! And just the other day as I was sashaying through the airport, a young fellow invited me to take part in the credit card deal of a lifetime. I guess you could say I am something of a big deal, you know, with all the invitations and all. Most of the invitations I get hold the promise of a life I could only imagine. If only I would but give my Social Security Number and sign on the dotted line for a daily compounded interest rate of twenty six percent, I could get two round trip tickets to the destination of my dreams, as long as that place is south Florida or Death Valley on the hottest day of the year on every other Leap Year but not in years in which the average temperature is thirty Centigrade in Belfast or Brussels—I can't remember—and the Dow Jones multiplied by the Nikkei is not less than. . .You get the point.

I don't want to brag, but I hope you get the idea that I am a big deal when it comes to getting invitations. I get so many invitations that I have to ignore most of them. I mean, how could I possibly accept them all? A fellow has to draw the line somewhere. How many life-changing experiences can a guy handle, really? I am getting pretty good at ignoring invitations. Most of the time, they don't faze me. It used to be that I felt obliged to say "No thank you" or "I have other plans." But now, I have so many invitations, I can just walk on by and pretend I never heard it. That, friends, is skill.

However, there is one invitation that I can't seem to shake. It beckons me. No. Pursues me. It calls out to me. It doesn't shout. It is never demeaning or demanding. It doesn't try to compete with the other invitations in my life, and yet it readily stands out. Like the rest it promises life-change. But, this

invitation is different. It is different both because of the one who is giving it and because of what I have seen it do to those who have accepted it. The invitation isn't to the credit card deal of my dreams. It is an invitation to the life I have been too afraid to dream of altogether. It is an invitation to fix this broken-down mess I call my life, to put it back to sorts again. It is an invitation to life as it was always meant to be, to love as I long for it to be. And those that accept it, they can't stop talking about it. It seems that the more I listen the more I realize it is an invitation that you don't accept just once. It is an invitation you accept every single day, and in so doing it delivers a little bit more life-change every single day. So, I don't know about you, but me. . . I am taking Jesus up on his invitation.

A fellow traveler,

Blake  
Spiritual Formation Pastor

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## My Next Step

We encourage you to consider doing the following as a way of handing off faith to your family. . .

- **Extend Jesus' invitation:** Those who have accepted Jesus' invitation to life in turn offer the invitation they have received to others. This week, as a family, have a discussion about someone you know who has not accepted Jesus' invitation. This might be a friend or a family member. Begin praying for that person every night as a family. Pray that they might know they are loved and that the Holy Spirit would open their heart to receive Jesus' invitation to life. You might consider asking for an opening to speak to this person or to invite them to a service or fellowship event at Browncroft. You might also consider asking this person to attend with your family on Sunday, February 5 as this is a day where we will be extending Jesus' invitation to everyone present in the congregation.

We encourage you to consider taking the following next step on your faith journey. . .

- **Consider Jesus' invitation:** This week, take some time and consider Jesus' invitation to life. You might consider memorizing this invitation found in John 4.13-14. After you memorize it, ponder it as you go through you week. Ask Jesus what he is really inviting you to participate in and how he wants you to respond.
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