

# Spikenard Surrender



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Moving along the [Plants of Jesus' Path](#), we come to a deeper linger in worship of Lord Jesus. Worship the Lord—has this command ever seemed a bit elusive to you? What does it mean to worship the Lord? Of course, there is singing; yet a hint of mystery resides beyond the sound, something more. A pursuit for our hearts, a betrothal, a surrender? Such haunting affection is symbolized in a hard-to-reach plant, spikenard, *Nardostachys jatamansi*, inviting us to a spikenard surrender.

Native to the northern mountains of India and Nepal, spikenard or nard yielded a luxuriant perfume, moved along trade routes for thousands of miles to reach the Holy Land, explaining its costliness. Mary poured out this earthy extravagance on the feet of Jesus while he reclined at her family table days before the crucifixion.

Mary picked up an alabaster jar with nearly a liter of extremely rare and costly perfume—the purest extract of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet. Then she wiped them dry with her long hair. And the fragrance of the costly oil filled the house. John 12:3 TPT

This uncomfortably intimate encounter showed Mary's attentive reverence for the preciousness of the Lord's presence. We first glimpse her budding devotion in the commotion of hosting dinner for Him:



*The [Plants of Jesus' Path](#) is a 7-week study of plants as a way of cultivating a deeper appreciation for our Savior in the days leading to His crucifixion*

Jesus continued from there toward Jerusalem and came to another village. Martha, a resident of that village, welcomed Jesus into her home. Her sister, Mary, went and sat at Jesus' feet, listening to Him teach. Meanwhile Martha was anxious about all the hospitality arrangements. Luke 10: 38-40 VOICE

While her sister fussed, Mary fostered her relationship with Jesus, saturating in what He had to say, as if she had heard the Words of the Father, [“Listen to Him! \(Luke 9:35\)”](#) And how much more she cleaved to Her Savior now that He had revived the life of her stricken brother:

Mary came to the place where Jesus was, and as soon as she saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”...“Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with linen bands, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Then Jesus said to them,

“Untie him and let him go free.” John 11: 32, 43-44 NCB

The nard that might have been a family inheritance readied for Lazarus’ burial was no longer needed, *Hallelujah!* Perhaps moving Mary in overflowing joy to pour out the perfume on the Savior instead.

Ironically, Martha fretted over the stench from Lazarus’ dead body that Jesus would unleash when He ordered the stone rolled away from the tomb (v. 39)! Death-to-life, stench-to spikenard—what a story showing us the heart and power of God’s turnaround.

Mary seemed to cultivate a long-ago charge for the Lord’s priests:

Aaron and his descendants were set apart to dedicate the most holy things, to offer sacrifices in the Lord’s presence, to serve the Lord, and to pronounce blessings in his name forever. 1 Chronicles 23:13 NLT

Aaron was set apart for holy work, he and his sons forever. They were to burn special perfume before the Lord, and do His work. And they were to pray for good to come to the people in the Lord’s name forever. 1 Chronicles 23:13 NLT

Aaron, along with his descendants, was set apart forever to consecrate the most holy things, to burn incense in the presence of Yahweh, to minister to Him, and to pronounce blessings in His name forever. 1 Chronicles 23:13 HSCB



These three translations show the nuances of priestly devotion. As the attentive sister sat at Jesus’ feet, fell at His feet, and anointed His feet, showing her growing surrender in love for her Lord, is it amazing to consider that Mary ministered to the Lord (see HSCB translation)?

Let’s look at this elusive plant for more hints of the Lord’s love and what Christ has done for us.

## Spikenard Surrender



Spikenard is a member of the honeysuckle family, hinting to its fragrant potential from the start! However, this low-growing species is not a vine; it spreads and fills the ground through its rhizomatous rooting, the way iris do. Somewhat nondescript, the

*spikenard perfume is made from the plant’s roots*

plant sends up small, bright pink spires, though the beckoning scent is not in its blooms, but in its roots...we could say the “feet” of this plant supplies its savor, reflecting Mary’s constant place at Jesus’ feet. I love the Bible’s horticultural hints!

Yes, the entire plant must be surrendered to harvest and produce the special aroma. Spikenard speaks to the sacrifice of our Savior, giving up His life to set us free.

For before him he grew up like a young plant, like a root out of dry ground. He was not well-formed or especially handsome; we saw him, but his appearance did not attract us. Isaiah 53:2 CJB

From the Savior’s portrait in Isaiah 53, could “root out of dry ground” reveal a measure of spikenard prophecy?

## Closing Prayer

*O Lord, let me learn to linger with You! I know that You know the pressures, time demands, and performance-procedures of this world pressing against me. I praise You that You are bigger, stronger, and more powerful than anything I have “to-do.” Let me set aside time to adore You. You will make a way for me to sit at Your feet AND meet my responsibilities, like You did for Mary (AND soothe whoever may be like an anxious sister near me!). After all, You surrendered Your life for me. You keep me grounded. Lord, I am humbled to think that in my devotion, I am ministering to You (1 Chronicles 23:13), when all the while You are everything to me.*

*Let me rejoice in all the ways that my life reveals Your death-to-life power and pours out the fragrance of Your salvation and love to fill my house! Your presence is precious, Lord. Let me continually say “thank You” and pronounce blessings in Your Name. I love You, Lord! In Jesus’ Name, Amen.*



spikenard growing in its native landscape from the [Plants of the World Online website](#)

And continue to walk surrendered to the extravagant love of Christ, for he surrendered his life as a sacrifice for us. His great love for us was pleasing to God, like an aroma of adoration—a sweet healing fragrance. Ephesians 5:2 TPT



The [Plants of Jesus' Path](#) is a 7-week study of plants as a way of cultivating a deeper appreciation for our Savior in the days leading to His crucifixion. These botanical touchpoints are met through tangible, scent-filled, tasty or intriguing branches, fruits, roots, trees or shrubs that give us something to grasp in a story hugely ungraspable. They are planted in key places to reveal the immensity of our Savior's grace, showing us converging prophecy and backstory to understand who He is and what He has done for us. Imagine the Stations of the Cross coming to Passover Dinner! Encounter palm branches, wheat & grapes in bread & wine, fig tree, spikenard, olive trees, thorns, and hyssop with the garden as your guide to a refreshed heart, ready to celebrate the Resurrection.



Read more about spikenard in Song of Songs from [The Bride's Garden](#) series, [Fragrance Everywhere in the Bride's Garden](#) – with suggestions on what to grow in your garden instead!



New to the [Garden in Delight Plant Guide](#)! Learn more about [spikenard](#), *Nardostachys jatamansi*



Do you enjoy connecting your garden work to God's Word? [My Father is the Gardener](#) is a devotional book for you, treat yourself for Lent (oops!). Additionally, read "What is Cultivating? What is Worship?" on pages 120-21, Chapter 9 as a deeper dimension of this post



Read more on spikenard in the devotions series on **En Gedi** from the **Garden Tour** section, beginning on page a-16 in [God's Word for Gardeners Bible](#)



Plant information for spikenard gathered from two of my favorite Bible plant books: Lytton John Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh* (Portland, Ore., Timber Press, 2007) pages 201-02 and Winifred Walker, *All the Plants of the Bible* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1957) pages 196-97. Dr. Musselman wrote: "Nard is rhizomatous and the parts used include the rhizome and sometimes the leaves, which means the entire plant is destroyed." Praise God that our Jesus is not destroyed but lives! Also visit the [DoTerra webpage on spikenard](#) and watch their video on harvesting this rare mountainside plant.

**Photo Credits:** botanical illustration of *Nardostachys jatamansi* by T.F.L. Nees von Esenbeck and M.F. Wijhe (Weyhe), *Plantae medicinales*, Supplement (1828-1833) Plate 58. From [www.plantillustrations.org](http://www.plantillustrations.org); rhizomes of spikenard, also called muskroot [Photo 16618283 | Nardostachys Jatamansi © Ziprashantzi | Dreamstime.com](#); spikenard flowers in their native landscape ©Bing Liu from [Plants of the World Online by Kew, Royal Botanic Gardens Nardostachys jatamansi](#) – Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan, China. Please see Kew website for copyright information.

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