



My Daily Devotion for
my family's
Spiritual Growth
Issue 5



"We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done." Psalm 78:4

How Does “My Daily Devotion for My Family’s Spiritual Growth” Time Work?

Welcome to My Daily Devotion for My Family’s Spiritual Growth, a weekly devotional designed to help your family reflect on a story from God’s Word, pray together, and connect. These devotions will take you through the Bible. The idea is simple: discover together how God’s Word is relevant to your family each week. We think the spiritual results in your family alone can impact generations to come.

We know your family is busy with work, school, ballgames, and all that life throws you, so the devotion is designed to be flexible and mobile. You can use this at the dinner table, before bed, or in your car. You decide what works best for you.

1. Decide on a time when your family can pull together for a few minutes each day.
2. My Daily Devotion for My Family’s Spiritual Growth is available at Freedom. They are free.
3. Family members can take turns reading the daily verses and devotion.
4. After the devotion talk about prayer requests as a family and spend a few moments praying for each other.
5. At the end of the week, reflect together on the discussion questions.
6. Finally, don’t be intimidated by having spiritual conversations as a family. This could easily be the most important few minutes you have all day.

We hope you enjoy this journey through God’s Word as a family. Our prayer is that it will transform your family spiritually in ways never expected!

In Christ,
Pastor Larry

Week 1

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

Why should I tell people about Jesus?

Jesus has a personal relationship with each of His followers, but that relationship isn't meant to be a secret. He wants us to tell our friends and family what He is like and how we met Him. Let's look at what the Bible says about why we should tell other people about Jesus Christ.

Take turns telling one another about a friend. How did you become friends? What is that person like? Why is he or she a good friend?

Wednesday

Telling your family about a good friend is fun, isn't it? Well, talking about Jesus brings us joy, too. As a matter of fact, Jesus gave His disciples the job of talking about Him. Look at what He told them in Matthew 28:18-20. Christ's followers still have the responsibility to share His story so other can follow Him, too. Check out what the Apostle Paul wrote about that in 2 Corinthians 5:20.

If you have made the decision to follow Jesus, then you are one of His representatives – you speak and act for Him in your school, neighborhood, and community. You might think that most people have already heard about Jesus, but many people still don't know that He can save them from their sin. How did Paul say in Romans 10:13-15 that people are saved from their sin?

Thursday

People can't believe what they haven't heard. That makes sense, right? They can't choose to follow Jesus unless someone tells them, so preachers must go and give God's message. Paul could not imagine anything more beautiful than the person who takes the story of Jesus to other people. Have you ever considered yourself a preacher? You don't have to stand on a stage in front of people to preach. You preach the good news of Christ every time you tell a friend that Jesus loves him or her and wants to be their Savior. Even before Jesus' death and resurrection, He modeled how to preach the good news of God's kingdom. How did He act toward people in Matthew 9:35-38?

Friday

Jesus was brokenhearted when he saw how helpless and aimless people were without Him. As His followers, we should have the same compassion for people that Jesus showed when he lived on the earth. When you leave home each day, you enter a mission field. As Christ's followers we should use our feet to go, our mouths to tell, and our hands to help people in need so they too can meet our friend, Jesus.

Christ gave His followers the responsibility to tell His story and to be His faithful representatives on Earth until He returns. Nothing else you ever do will matter as much as helping someone to begin a personal relationship with God. That's why friends of Jesus tell their friends about Jesus.

Saturday

1. Look again at the questions from Tuesday. This time answer those same questions about your friendship with Jesus.
2. How could your answers from question #1 help you to talk about Jesus with someone else?
3. What opportunities does your church offer for you to share Jesus' story and love in your community or in other countries? How can you help?

Which door does your family use most often to come and go from your house? Consider making a sign that says, "You are now entering the mission field" to hang over that door. Think about who is in your mission field, and make a list of people who don't know Jesus as their friend. These may be people that you see every day at school or at work. They might also be the people you see often because they work in your community at a grocery store, a hair salon, or a doctor's office. Remember, people can't choose to know and follow Jesus unless someone tells them. How will you look for God-given openings this week to tell others about Jesus and how they can know His as their Savior?

Week 2

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

What should I tell people about Jesus?

Most of us want our family and friends to know Jesus too – we just don't always know what to say. Let's look at two of the greatest sermons in Scripture to see what Peter and Paul told people about Jesus.

Take turns telling your family about good news you heard or received this week.

Everyone likes to share and hear good news. When Peter preached the first sermon after Jesus' death and resurrection, he gave the crowd good news. Read Acts 2:22-24 and 36-41 together to see what Peter said to the people in Jerusalem.

Wednesday

Jews had come from all over to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem. Even though they were religious people, they had not placed their faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Peter warned the crowd that their dishonest and wicked behavior displeased God. He pleaded with them to ask the Lord to forgive them, and he promised that the Holy Spirit would help them live to please God. That day, over 3,000 people accepted Peter's message that Jesus died and came back to life, proving that He was God's Son and the Savior they had been waiting for. Now that really good news, isn't it?

After the day of Pentecost, the story of Jesus began to spread. The Apostles and other believers shared the same message – Jesus died, was buried, and was raised from the dead for the forgiveness of sins. Before you continue, look to see what word Paul used for this message in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8. The word gospel means "good news." After all, learning that Jesus paid the prices for sin is great news!

Thursday

As a missionary, Paul took long mission trips to share the message of Jesus with people in other nations who worshiped false gods. Ask a family member to read part of Paul's sermon to the people of Athens, Greece, in Acts 17:22-34. Since these men were not Jews, they didn't know about the God of Israel as the crowd in Jerusalem did. Starting with creation, Paul filled them in on who God is and why he is the only One who deserved their worship and loyalty. Paul begged them to ask God's forgiveness for their sins, because God will judge each person for either receiving or rejecting his Son. Even though some of them laughed at his message and only a few people in Athens decided to follow Jesus, Paul didn't stop sharing it wherever he went.

Friday

When you tell friends about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, you are giving them good news. Our families and friends need to know that their sins can be forgiven, and they can have a relationship with God, who created them and loves them, isn't that the best news you can give anyone? Let's discuss it.

1. How would you share the good news of Jesus with a friend who doesn't know about the Bible or God?
2. Discuss ways you can start conversations about the Lord with friends.
3. Brainstorm short phrases you can use to share your faith while waiting in line, checking out, or getting a haircut. Where else can you be a witness for the Lord?

Saturday

The best news in the world is that God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus to die for our sins. Write our John 3:16 on index cards or sticky notes and place them where family members can see them throughout the week. If you don't already know that verse from memory, make an effort to memorize it this week. Then you'll have the good news on the top of your tongue, ready to share with the people you met.

Week 3

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

How can I help other people meet Jesus?

Meeting Jesus is exciting and so in introducing Him to other people. The Bible tells us that Jesus' followers brought people to meet Him. After Jesus returned to Heaven, His followers sent missionaries who were excited to spread the gospel so more people could meet Jesus. Let's see what we can learn from their examples.

Have each family member think of a famous person; then take turns introducing him or her to the group. How would you arrange the meeting? Describe how excited you would be to meet that person in real life.

Wednesday

The disciple Andrew is known for introducing people to Jesus. Let's learn how Andrew heard about Jesus and what he did as a result. Open your Bibles to John 1:35:42, and ask a family member to read those verses.

Andrew heard and believed John the Baptist's messages that Jesus was the Christ, the Savior Israel had been waiting for. Andrew was so excited that he brought Peter to meet Jesus. Later we learn that Andrew brought other people to Jesus, too (John 6:8-9; 12:20-22). Do you remember what happened when he introduced the boy with the fishes and the loaves to Jesus? Jesus turned that little lunch into a meal that fed over 5,000 people! All the people saw Jesus do something only God can do. Because Andrew brought the boy to Jesus, they both had a part in showing the crowd the Jesus truly is the Son of God. Can you imagine how excited they must have been?

Thursday

We've already learned that Jesus gave His followers the responsibility to go and share His story all over the world. We've also learned that the Apostle Paul was a great missionary, but he couldn't have traveled far or stayed long in the places he went without the help of other Christians. Check out what Paul said about one group of believers in Philippians 4:15-19.

The Philippian church helped Paul by sending money so he could continue to share the gospel of Jesus. The Philippians didn't help him just once – they made it a habit. In fact, they were so generous that Paul had more than enough to stay on the mission field. Even though Paul was the one who received the gift, it was really an offering to God because it went to God's work. The Philippians were excited to help Paul introduce more people to Jesus.

Friday

Yes, the Bible is full of examples of different ways to share Jesus with people who do not know Him yet. You can bring people to Jesus by inviting them to church so they can hear God's Word taught. You can also share Jesus by supporting missionaries or by going on missions trips. Your faith may start a chain reaction that points others to Jesus, just like what happened with John the Baptist, Andrew, and Peter. Now that's exciting.

1. Have you thought about inviting someone to church service or church activity, but haven't done it yet? Why did you put it off? What can you do to change that?
2. Ask any members of your family who have been on a mission trip to tell where they went and how they helped to share Jesus with the people there.

Saturday

What activities or worship services do you plan to attend this week? Come up with a plan for family members to invite and bring people with you to church services and church activities. Post your Family Share Plan where everyone can see it.

To help you save for a mission trip or to be more generous in giving to mission work, decide on something you can give up or do without for a period of time. For example, instead of eating out on the weekend or going to a movie, set that money aside for a month. Then remember to pray during your family devotion for the mission work you're saving for. Your generosity will bless another believer and help introduce someone else to Jesus.

Week 4

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

Last week we learned how exciting it is to introduce people to Jesus. But there are so many people – where should we start? The Bible gives us examples of the people that the early Christians told about Jesus. Let's see what we can learn from Andrew and Peter, two brothers who helped to spread the Gospel of Christ.

Who is the first person you want to tell when something really good has happened? Why do you tell that particular person?

We begin this week with a passage we looked at last week. Check out John 1:35-42 again to remind you who Andrew first told about Jesus.

Wednesday

The first thing Andrew did after meeting Jesus was to tell his brother Peter. That's how the Gospel began to spread. Jews who believed Jesus was the Savior Israel had been waiting for started telling the people closest to them. However, God had something much bigger in mind. He wanted the Jews to share His love with more than just the people they loved and shared common interests with. Who did God send Peter to talk with in Acts 10:19-23? Why does the Acts 10:27-35 passage say this was so unusual?

Thursday

God sent Peter to a group who were very different than he was. You see, out of all the nations on Earth God had chosen Israel to be His special people. In the Old Testament he gave them commands and laws to follow. Certain animals, people, and situations were considered unclean according to Jewish law (Leviticus 11), but the blood of Jesus shed on the Cross made it possible for both Jews and Gentiles to be clean before the Lord. By sending Peter to the Gentiles, God was showing that He loved all people and wanted to have a relationship with them too.

Friday

Andrew and Peter were faithful to share Jesus with the people they were the closest to and people who were very different than they were. In both passages we looked at this week, God used one person's salvation to affect more people for His kingdom. Think about it. Over 3,000 people in Jerusalem received Jesus as their Savior when Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost – all because Andrew told him about Jesus. Then every person in Cornelius' house received Jesus, and the Gospel began to spread to the Gentiles. God cares about the people who are closest to us, and He cares about people who are different from us. That means we should care about them too!

1. Who first told you that Jesus loves you? Who was the first person you told?
2. Think of people at school, work, or in your neighborhood who are very different from you. How can you show them this week that God loves them?

Saturday

Just like Andrew, the best place for us to start sharing Jesus is with the people we love the most. Who in your family doesn't yet know Jesus as their Savior? Decide right now to pray for them regularly, and then look for a time to tell them how you met Jesus and how knowing Him has changed your life.

Will you also pray for the courage to witness to someone that you don't have as much in common with? Make an effort this week to pay attention to people that you might not have noticed before – like someone who eats lunch alone or who others don't talk with much. God loves that person just as much as He loves you. If you don't tell him or her about Jesus, who will?

Week 5

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

So far this month we have learned why we should talk about Jesus, what to say about Him, how to share His story, and who to share it with. Let's tackle two last questions this month: when and where should we share the gospel? Take turns describing your normal daily routine. How do you respond when your routine is interrupted somehow?

Wednesday

Have you noticed that we've spent a lot of time reading the book of Acts this month? That's because Acts tells us how Christians first began to tell the story of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Let's explore two more true stories of early believers who shared the gospel. Read Acts 8:26-35 to find out what God directed Philip to do.

Even though Philip didn't know why God was sending him down that particular road, he didn't ask, "Why?" or "When should I go?" He just went immediately. As Philip obeyed, the Holy Spirit guided him to an Ethiopian man who was a long way from home. He was passing the time in his chariot by reading from the book of Isaiah, but he didn't understand what he was reading. God put both men in the same place at the same time so Philip could explain the good news of Jesus. If Philip hadn't gone or waited before obeying, he might have missed a divine appointment! God sent Philip on a journey to meet just one man, but that man took the gospel message back to a whole country.

Thursday

Followers of Jesus come across people every day, right where they are, who don't know the Lord. Take a look at Acts 16:6-15 to read about another divine appointment.

Jesus directed Paul, Timothy, and Silas to the exact place He wanted them to go on this mission trip. Paul and his friends were looking for a place to pray on the Sabbath. Most likely they would have asked the Lord for opportunities to tell someone about Jesus on their trip. They could have gotten so caught up in having their prayer time that they might not have noticed this group of women. Instead, they recognized an opportunity to share the gospel right where they were. God interrupted their routine, but He also answered their prayers before they asked! Turn to 1 Peter 3:15 to read how Peter encouraged early believers to share the gospel right where they were.

Friday

Every follower of Christ has a personal testimony about faith in Christ. Believers can share Jesus every day by simply being ready to tell people who Jesus is and how they came to know Him. The people in today's passages paid attention to the people they met along the way. The message of Jesus didn't spread across the ancient world by accident. Jesus' followers shared their faith with anyone, anywhere, at any time.

1. Think back to the way you described your normal day. How can you show the love of Christ, right where you are, every day?
2. When has God put you in the right place at the right time to either tell someone about Jesus or to do something that showed His love?
3. Take turns sharing your personal testimony of how you met Jesus. Make sure to include how knowing Him has changed your thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

Saturday

We often ask God to give us opportunities to talk about our faith in Christ. The truth, however, is that we are surrounded by opportunities to share the love of Christ each and every day. As we've learned how to share this month, what person has the Holy Spirit prompted you to talk with? Brainstorm with your family how to start the conversation.

As you go out this week, look for natural opportunities to tell someone how He has changed your life. Are you willing to talk about Jesus to anyone, anywhere, and at any time? Close your devotion time by praying for your family members to recognize opportunities to share Jesus and when an opportunity comes...to take it!

Week 6

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

Music is usually the first thing that comes to mind when we hear the word “worship.” While it’s true that we can worship God through music, the act of worship is so much more than singing songs on Sunday morning. Let’s look at what God says in His Word about what worship really is.

Have you shown love for someone this week by doing something that pleased him or her? How has someone shown love to you?

Moses gave the Israelites a simple definition of worship – love God. It’s a two-word command packed with the secret to living a life that pleases the Lord. Turn to Deuteronomy 6:5 in your Bibles and see how Israel was instructed to love God.

Wednesday

God’s chosen people were to love Him with all of their heart, soul, and strength. That meant loving Him with all that they had, with every part of their being, with everything they said, and with everything they did. What a big responsibility! If you are a follower of Christ, then you have that same responsibility. As a matter of fact, Jesus quoted Moses’ words when He was asked which commandment was the greatest. Read Matthew 22:36-40 and Mark 12:28-30 to hear exactly what Jesus said.

The most important thing you can do is to love God with your entire being. But how do you know if you truly love God? Let’s explore the four parts of your person that Jesus mentioned. Your heart and soul are your feelings and desires. They reveal your true inner character. Giving your will to God helps you to follow His instructions instead of your feelings. God’s instructions in Scripture never change, but our feelings change all the time, don’t they?

Thursday

Your mind is the center of your thinking, remembering, and processing of information. It gives you the ability to make decisions about what you will and will not do. Your strength supplies the energy to carry out those decisions. When your thoughts please God, then your actions will please Him as well.

God wants to create a desire inside of you to honor, glorify, and praise Him with your whole life – the parts that everyone sees as well as the parts of you that only He sees.

Friday

True worship shows up in how you live life each day, not just by what you say and do at church. Eagerly obeying God's instructions without complaining or delaying is evidence of your love for God. Every moment, every decision, and every relationship should reflect how much you love God – that's worship!

1. How can you use each part of your being – heart, soul, mind, and strength – to please the Lord?
2. Discuss how you can live out the words in your favorite praise and worship songs by what you think, say, and do this week.

Saturday

When the most important thing in your life is to love God, you'll want to please Him. If you do your very best at school or at work because you love God, then that is worship. If you obey your parents because you love God, then that is worship, too. When you put someone else's wants and needs ahead of your own because you love God – it is an act of worship. But it's impossible to truly love someone if you don't spend time with that person. Spending time with Jesus through personal and family devotions will help you to know Him better and fall deeper in love with Him. Do you set your mind on loving and pleasing God first thing each morning? Try to put at least one verse of Scripture into your thoughts as each day begins. Consider playing praise and worship music as your family gets read for the day. Then make every effort to live out what you have put in. Start this week to develop a lifestyle of worship.

Week 7

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

We learned last week that real worship is loving God with all that we are, and that it's the most important thing we can ever do. That brings up a big question. Why should we worship the God of the Bible instead of gods we hear about in other religions?

Take turns saying one true statement and one false statement about yourself. Have the other members of the family guess which is true and which is false. Have you ever taken a "true or false" test? The false statements are sometimes easy to spot because they are so silly. Well, that's exactly what God's people – the Israelites – should have seen about giving their worship to anyone or anything other than the Lord. The first answer to the question, "Why should we worship God?" is found in the Ten Commandments. The Lord wanted the Israelites to worship Him alone as the One true God. Go to Exodus 20:2-7 in your Bibles and have a family member read what God expected of His people.

Wednesday

The first three commandments instructed the Israelites to stay away from the gods and idols that other nations worshipped. These so-called "gods" were not real gods at all. They were false. The Lord gave his people a purpose – to recognize Him as the One and only God. Of course, that meant worshipping Him the way the only true God deserves to be worshipped and using His name only in an honorable way.

God designed us to recognize who He is so we can have a relationship with Him. Anything that turns your attention and affection away from God and His Word has become like a false god in your life. God's instructions in the first three commandments teach us to worship Him alone and to treat His name with the respect that it deserves.

Thursday

Scripture also says that God deserves to be worshiped because He is holy and has power over everything He created. Take a look at the amazing vision of worship that John saw in Revelation 4:1-11. The book of Revelation looks into the future. Even though the events haven't happened yet, we know they are true because God put them in His Word. One day, the whole world will recognize that God is the only true God. Chapters 4 and 5 of Revelation give an awesome description of the worship that will take place around His heavenly throne when God's people and all of creation worship Him together.

Friday

The God of the Bible is the Creator of everyone and everything that exists. No one created Him or has power over Him. God is eternal, which means that He has always been and always will be. Every other so-called "god" is false. Worshiping the Lord as the One true God is the reason we exist and is the one thing we will do forever in Heaven.

1. Ask each person to make a true statement about God. What false beliefs about God have you heard?
2. How do those true and false beliefs affect a person's worship of the Lord?
3. What do you think you would do if you saw God in all of His glory, as John described in Revelation 4?

Saturday

God's created us with the desire to worship, but if you have false beliefs, you'll worship something or someone other than the only true God. Each person has to choose whether he or she will give the Lord the worship He deserves. Is your worship true or false? Ask God to show you if another person or activity has become like a false god in your life. Talk about ways that your family can give God the devotion He deserves. True worship is centered around the Lord God Almighty and His Son, Christ. He is the One and only God.

Week 8

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

Every family has different traditions – ways of doing things that are handed down from one generation to the next. Traditions in our church family are great, too. But by themselves, religious habits and activities aren't true worship. What are your favorite family traditions and why?

Wednesday

Traditions can make the time you spend together as a family more enjoyable. The same thing is true in your church family. However, participating in religious activities doesn't automatically mean you are offering worship to God. Religious habits are just empty actions if they aren't backed up by obedience to God's commands. That's exactly what the Israelites did when they entered the Promised Land. Check out Jeremiah 7:22-23 to see what message God sent to His people.

Israel wrongly thought that worship was limited to the sacrifices they made at the temple. Their offerings to the Lord couldn't be accepted as true worship because they were disobeying God's instructions at the same time. We also sometimes confuse our church activities and religious habits with worship. Those things certainly can be worship if we're living the way God has told us to live. The Apostle Paul said something very important about worship in Romans 12:1-2. Ask a family member to read those verses.

Thursday

Did you catch that? Worship becomes an everyday activity when you choose to give what you do to God as an offering. The starting place is in your thoughts and attitudes. It's much easier for your behavior to please God if you've allowed His Word to change how you think. Everything we've talked about today can be wrapped up in one verse. Who is ready to read 1 Corinthians 10:31? Please go ahead and read that verse now.

Friday

Worshiping God isn't limited to what we do at church. The things that make up your ordinary life can have new meaning when they are done for God's glory. When you think about bringing glory to God with everything in your daily routine, then you've started to develop a lifestyle of worship.

1. Name ways that your family enjoys worshiping God together at church.
2. What everyday activities can you offer God as worship?

Saturday

Do you remember what we've learned so far this month about worship? Worship isn't just singing praise songs to God or attending a church service. True worship begins by recognizing the Lord as the One and only God and loving Him with every part of who we are. Now we've learned how to participate in worship anywhere and at any time. Have you ever thought about the fact that anything you do can be an act of worship? By simply offering God each thought, attitude, and behavior, your life will be an offering that pleases the Lord. Decide on specific ways each member of your family can use what we've learned today to worship God this week.

Week 9

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

We need to think about what we've learned so far about worship. Each of us should love God with our entire being; with everything we say and do each day. Anything can be an act of worship if it's done to honor the Lord. Wow – each, every, any, entire – those words leave nothing out!

In your own words, try to define always, continually, and constantly. Look up those words afterwards to see how similar your definitions are to the dictionary meanings.

Wednesday

Every word has a meaning. Since God carefully chose each word in the Bible, it's important for us to know what those words mean. When words with the same or similar meaning show up in more than one place, then we should really pay attention. Check out Hebrews 13:15 and point out which word tell us when to praise the Lord.

Did you say, "continually" or "constantly?" We just learned that those words mean to do something again and again without stopping. But this verse tells us more than when to worship; it gives the reason why our worship should never end. "Through Jesus" the Old Testament sacrifices aren't needed anymore! Because of his sacrifice on the Cross, we should offer praise to God over and over again each day without stopping. We should worship the Lord without any interruption.

Thursday

The next word we're going to look at is Philippians 4:4. Read that short verse together and find the word that answers, "When?"

God didn't use the word, "always" by mistake. There is always a reason to rejoice and praise the name of the Lord – as we learned in Hebrews 13:15. Still, when something happens that makes us feel sad, angry, or disappointed, it can pull our focus away from God. So how should we react when bad things happen? Can we really praise God in everything? Let's look at Habakkuk 3:17-18 to see what the prophet Habakkuk did.

Can you imagine a worse situation than having no food and no way to earn money? Yet during the most difficult time of his life, Habakkuk chose to focus on his Savior. We can learn an important lesson from Habakkuk. You see, our ability to be joyful and worship the Lord isn't connected to what happens to us. We should praise Him at all times because of who He is – not what He does or does not do.

Friday

Since He is always the same, we can always praise Him. Since Jesus' death paid for every sin, we can honor him every moment. Since each situation is under His control, we can devote each day to His glory. Since He has absolute power over all things, we can rejoice at all times – even in our very worst moments. Always, continually, and constantly are great words- aren't they?

1. How has this week's devotion changed your thoughts about a situation that makes you feel sad or disappointed?
2. Ask family members to share how they reacted during their best and worst moments from the past week. Discuss how God could be honored, praised, and worshiped in each situation.

Saturday

Do you praise God when you're happy but complain when you don't get your way? If we're going to praise God continually, then we need to start and end each with thoughts about Him. Do you give yourself time in the morning to read God's Word, or do you rush out without setting your thoughts on Him? How many times during the week do you have a meal as a family and talk about what you can spend more time as a family to help each person focus on worshipping the Lord throughout the day – continually.

Week 10

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

For several months, now we have explored ways we can love God and love people. We've learned that truly loving God means being committed to His Word, making prayer a part of your daily life, and worshipping Him continually. God then gives you a desire to love other people by connecting with a community of believers and sharing Jesus with nonbelievers. There is one more piece of the puzzle though. This month we'll discover ways to live out our love for God and other people by having the heart of a servant. Let's begin by looking at the greatest example of a servant – Jesus.

What recent achievement are you pleased with? If you can't think of one right away, ask your family to name something you've accomplished.

Wednesday

There are lots of reasons to be proud of your family and of yourself. Working hard and having strong character are just a few things that we can be pleased with because they also please the Lord. There's a big difference, however, between being satisfied with a job well done and being prideful. The sin of pride creeps in when you take credit for your accomplishments rather than recognizing how God helped you to do it. Pride causes you to think you're better than someone else.

If anyone ever had reason to think highly of Himself, it was Jesus. He is the perfect, sinless Son of God. Yet the Bible tells us that Jesus was humble – the exact opposite of being prideful. Have a family member read Philippians 2:1-11, and make note of the ways Jesus humbled Himself when He lived on the earth.

Thursday

Even though He is Lord, Jesus became a human being, knowing all the time that He would be humiliated on the Cross. Not only that, but He lived each day with attitude of a servant. He looked out for the needs of other people – the same people He would die to rescue from sin. A great example of His servant's heart is found in John 13:1-17. Check out what Jesus did in this passage that shocked His disciples.

People in the Bible usually walked everywhere they went, so they needed to wash their feet when they went inside. Can you imagine how dirty your feet would get if you walked down dirt roads in sandals every day? The servant with the lowest position had the job of washing the feet of whoever came into the house. No servants were present because Jesus wanted to be alone with His disciples. Instead of humbly volunteering for the job of washing feet, the disciples had been disagreeing about which one of them was the greatest (Luke 22:24)! Jesus modeled humility as a servant and washed their feet – even the feet of those who would shortly deny and betray Him.

No one else could ever accomplish what Jesus accomplished. He paid the price for our sins on the Cross, and He did it with perfect humility. Every day that Jesus walked on Earth, He gave us an example to follow. He showed us how to live with the heart of a servant.

Friday

1. Think about the accomplishment you mentioned on Tuesday of this week. How could that accomplishment tempt you to be prideful?
2. We have different customs than the people in the Bible had. What tasks today would be similar to washing someone's feet?
3. Discuss ways that you can serve the people you spend time with each day.

Saturday

Followers of Jesus should follow His example – right? Well then, we should approach each day with the heart of a servant. That means looking for ways to help others instead of focusing only on your own interests. In order to follow Jesus' example fully, we need to be humble as well. Are you quietly competing to be greater than a sibling, a fellow student, or a co-worker? Or has someone hurt you and betrayed you? Name one way you can serve that person this week. Close your time together by asking God to give you true humility and the willingness to serve people as Jesus did.

Week 11

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

Think about the important people in your church, school, community, and nation. Would it surprise you to know that your list is probably very different from God's list? This week's devotion will challenge us to think differently about what makes a person great.

Name a person you think is important, and then tell your family what makes that person so great.

Wednesday

Your list of important people likely included some well-known and powerful people. But a person isn't great just because he or she is famous or holds an important position. Take a look at what Jesus said about greatness in Mark 10:35-45 when two brothers came to Him with a big request.

James and John were ambitious; they had a desire to rise above their fellow disciples to powerful positions in God's kingdom. Their request shows the same attitude we saw last week when the disciples were arguing over who was the greatest. Jesus challenged how they thought about what makes a person great. He explained that to be truly great they needed to serve, not be served. Do you think that Jesus' answer confused them? After all, the world thinks of servants as the ones who help the important people – right?

Thursday

This is where God challenges us to think differently, too. We often go to God with selfish prayers, asking for things that would make us look better in the eyes of other people. We have to remember that Jesus is our example. He never let someone's opinion stop Him from serving His Father, and he is the greatest leader the world will ever know. People in leadership positions can find their greatest success by following Jesus' example and humble service. Matthew wrote about this same event in the gospel, but he added an interesting detail we can learn from. Ask a family member to read the beginning of this story in Matthew 20:20-21 to find out what that detail is. What new detail did Matthew give us? It seems that James and John's mother shared their misguided ideas about greatness. Jesus challenged her thinking as well. Like most parents, she was proud of her children and wanted them to be successful. But to really help her sons become great men, she needed to guide them to be holy rather than just look for what would make them happy. Servants in God's kingdom should have different ideas from the world's ideas about what makes a person great or important.

Friday

1. What ideas does our society have about greatness? How are those ideas radically different from God's?
2. What position, role, or achievement are you trying to reach? Discuss how your motives for that accomplishment could either honor or dishonor the Lord.
3. What is the difference between giving your very best effort and feeling as if you have to be the best or greatest at what you do?

Saturday

Now that Jesus has challenged your thinking, make a new list of truly great people in your church, school, community, and nation. Talk briefly about how members of your family can follow their example.

Have a desire to do your very best honors the Lord. However, we have to guard against the prideful desire for others to think we are great or important. No matter what position you have, following Jesus means living to serve. Close your time together by reading 1 Peter 5:6 as a prayer for the members of your family. Ask God to guard your thinking against selfish desires for greatness.

Week 12

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

Jesus set the perfect example of living each day with the humble heart of a servant – always helping people. If we say we are followers of Christ, then of course we should follow His example. Let's find out how to serve our family, church, neighbors, and community by doing good deeds.

How has someone helped you recently? How did it make you feel?

Wednesday

Placing your faith in Jesus cannot be separated from doing good things. The Gospels tell us again and again how Jesus went out of His way to help people. It doesn't make sense for a Christian to talk about believing in Jesus and then not follow His example. James, the half brother of Jesus, understood the importance of putting faith into action. Read what he said about helping other believers in James 2:14-17.

Does saying, "Be warm" or "Be full" help a cold or hungry person? Of course not! Being Christ-like means looking for ways to help. For your faith to be healthy, you have to unselfishly act on what you believe. It might mean taking time away from something you want to do or giving something you have away. You can also help by sharing your God-given abilities to help family and friends (1 Peter 4:10).

Thursday

Acting on your faith not only helps people with their physical needs, it also helps them spiritually. Doing something good in the name of Jesus stands out like a light in the darkness. Check out how Jesus used that illustration in Matthew 5:14-16.

What do you do when you want to see in a dark room? That's right – you turn on a light. It's the same with your faith in Jesus. Followers of Christ should shine like a bright city on a hill that can be seen from far away in the darkness. We are the light of the world! Our good deeds bring a praise and honor to our heavenly Father and help unbelievers to see Jesus more clearly. That's why we do things like collecting canned food and coats for needs in our community. Every time you choose to help in the name of Jesus, you shine His light into the world.

You see, doing good deeds is simply finding ways to put your faith into action. Good deeds, can be small, everyday things or really big one-time events. Serving your family, church, neighbors, and community is something that every follower of Christ should do. Helping someone by sharing the blessings and abilities that God has given to you honors Him and points people to His Son – Jesus.

Friday

1. How can you serve members of your family through small, everyday good deeds?
2. What big, one-time good deed would help another person in your church?
3. How can you go out of your way this week to help people in your neighborhood or community? How can that good deed point them to Jesus?

Saturday

The best place to start doing good deeds is right inside your own home. Sadly, we're often the most selfish around the people we love the most. Be determined to help one member of your family each day this coming week. Before you know it, you'll have a new habit. Who knows – you might even enjoy your time together more!

Also pay attention to the needs of people outside your home. Take time to really listen when a friend has a problem, and then look for ways to help. If someone in your church or neighborhood is sick, your family might be able to take the family a meal. Or, you could help a widow or single mother with something like yard work. Jesus helped to meet both the physical and spiritual needs of all kinds of people. As His followers, we should do the same. Remember this upcoming week – YOU are the light of the world!

Week 13

Monday

Discuss what everyone learned at church.

Tuesday

So far, we have learned a lot about how to love God and love people. Now we have to take what we've learned and put our faith into action. Are you ready to discover whom we should serve?

Talk about what you've learned so far this year. How has it helped you to love God and love people more?

Everything we've talked about so far this year has led to this – serving. We have learned the Holy Spirit gives every follower of Christ at least one spiritual gift. Look at Ephesians 4:11-13 as a reminder of how to use those gifts.

One of the most practical ways we can truly love our brothers and sisters in Christ is to serve one another. Serving is as simple as sharing your God-given abilities to help another believer or to help your church. There are lots of ways to use each spiritual gift in everyday practical ways. If you have the gift of hospitality, for instance, you can take a meal to a sick friend or host a life group in your home.

Wednesday

Serving the family of God is more than helping one another; we also serve together in the common goal of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Using the gift of hospitality to take a meal to an unbelieving neighbor is serving – if it's done in the name of Jesus. Being a greeter for your class, main doors at the church, or in the parking lot is also serving. A welcoming smile can make a huge difference to visitors and members alike.

Serving the body of Christ extends beyond your local church family. An interesting thing happens when you choose to serve people in need. Check it out in Matthew 25:34-40.

Thursday

When Jesus lived on Earth, He related to people with great needs. As He met their physical needs, they turned to Him for their spiritual needs. When we follow His example – to serve those with the greatest needs – we are actually serving Him! You see, helping people opens the door to share the Gospel of Christ. Someone once said, “They don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” Think about that...it’s difficult for hungry or cold people to focus on what you’re saying about Jesus. However, if you give them food or blankets in the name of Jesus and then tell them how much He loves them, those same people will likely listen to every word.

What’s the answer to, “Whom should I serve?” Ultimately, we serve the Lord. You can serve Him each and every day by helping members of the body of Christ, His church, and the least in His kingdom. You can even spark the interest of those outside the body of Christ by meeting their needs in His name.

Friday

1. As a family, come up with practical ways you can use your talents and abilities to serve other believers as well as your church family as a whole.
2. How does your church help people in need? Discuss which of these programs or events your family can participate in at various times throughout the year.

Saturday

There are all kinds of ways to serve your church family, help fellow believers, and help people in need. Think about the things that you are especially good at doing. If you love to sort and organize, then talk to someone in your Children’s Ministry. There is always plenty to do in there! What other ideas did members of your family come up with earlier and how do you plan to put it into action?

As you read God’s Word this coming week, look for the Holy Spirit to guide you about where and whom you should serve. Look for ways to bless your family, neighbors, and community with your gifts and abilities. Let’s all commit to serving as Christ modeled for us to do.

Notes/Prayer Journal:



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