

Immerse

LIVING A LEGACY

On the Go Devotional Guide

By Rev. Peter A. Thompson

Pastor- First Presbyterian Church (Lynchburg, VA)

Fundamental Notes:

Purpose: Explore, discover. Grow. The purpose of this devotional is to provide another way for us to engage God and God's Word, reassuring us that God is with us wherever we are, no matter what we might be doing. This devotional is not a substitute for church. This devotional is not meant to replace the focus or importance of being in community with others in our faith exploration, discovery, and growth.

Goal: The last time I checked, none of us have all the answers. The goal of this devotional is to wrestle with God's word and open the door (window) for God to speak to us. When we wrestle, we provide a platform of opportunity to be shaped and formed (like a potter at the wheel) to God's intended purpose. Asking questions on our own, rather than simply take another person's word for it, helps us develop our independent character and grow stronger in self.

Structure: At the front end of this devotional guide are things meant to center your focus. You may read them one at a time and one each day, or you can dive in head first and double team them. The one activity I would like to encourage everyone to take time on, is "Yes And." This activity gets at the core of validating the importance of all we learn through our faith and involvement in church and all we learn by participating in extracurricular activities.

One a Day. Two a Days. Two sides of the coin: As you reach the core lessons, you will find that they are labeled as A and B. Sometimes, there is even a "Consider This" addendum. There are many consistent themes throughout scripture and as we might already know, there are often two sides to consider within each theme. The layout of this devotional is meant to give the flexibility to explore the devotions one each day, if you are away for a weekend, or if you have a group gathered, you are welcome to take each topic in its entirety. The "Consider This" addendum provides further thought to consider and dig deeper. In essence, the hope is for you to use how it works best for you.

Initial Thought: This thought comes at the beginning of each devotional as insight to what and where the devotional topic might be leading. This thought is meant to give you a taste of what is to come and make you hungry to dig deeper.

What Now? This thought comes at the close of each devotional as an ending challenge or question. What we explore and discover through the devotions should not end with the turning of each page. Our growth through this journey will be dependent on our ability to listen and learn and leverage our knowledge throughout our lives. This thought will work to help us build a bridge back to the church or worship community that grounds us. It will remind us of how we can stay connected when we are away, and if the opportunity presents itself, challenge us to come back and share our experiences and discoveries with others. We are all called to be the light and a candle is only as good as the light it shares.

Consider This: This section is for digging deeper. None of these devotions cover everything there is to know about the topic. This section provides additional scripture references, reflections, or stories to consider.

Practice: The scripture readings for each devotional are cited, but you are strongly encouraged to open the good book, open an app, look in the top drawer of the hotel dresser, or pack a bible-to-go.

“Living a legacy”

Initial Thought: In my short 36 years, working with many wonderful people, and building relationships with thousands more through church, school, sports, civic organizations, boards, and family ties, it is clear that life is a RACE and a FIGHT. The most important thread holding it all together, providing the necessary strength for it all, is FAITH (trust and belief in the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the empowering strength of the Holy Spirit).

Read 2 Timothy 4:3-8

Take notes or underline key words or phrases in your bible as you read

Paul writes these words to Timothy, his protégé, reflecting on the end of his life. Like much of Paul's writings, his intention is for those who are listening to his words to implement them early and often in life, so that their life can be lived to the fullest now.

Reflection: At the conclusion of middle school, one of my coaches signed my yearbook: Run the Race, Fight the Fight, Keep the Faith- Coach. I never thought a simple signature in a yearbook, in which most of the time we read only once and move on, would play such an important motivational role throughout my life. There was something about those words that resonated with me and I have never forgotten them. As a matter of fact, I have borrowed them often as my own signoff and subtle encouragement to others. Here is more of what I have come to learn from 2 Timothy 4:7.

Life is a race. It is not a 40, 60, or 100-yard dash. It is not even a 5K or 10K. It is more like a marathon. The race has everything from hills to turns to climbs to sprints. If you start off too fast, you may not have enough to finish, but if you don't start off well enough, you could fall so far behind even the best closers can't catch up. You will likely need to refuel along the way and pitstops are necessary as well (even if it is to pee in the bushes). Everyone running the race with you is moving along at different speeds. Some are taking long strides and others are barely moving. Some are breathing heavy and methodically, and others don't seem to be breathing hard at all. Some have perfect form and others flap around like wounded birds. Some will need a wrap at the finish line, others will need an ice bath, and still others act as though they could keep running. Life is a race. The most important thing is that we keep running it.

Life is also a fight. It is not a street fight in the side alley or under the bleachers. It is not a lightweight or welterweight match. It is not a bout in the hexagon. It is more like a heavyweight title fight. Sometimes you need to fight to get off the ropes and sometimes you will be dancing freely in the middle. Most of the time you will need to have your gloves up protecting from jabs but other times you will need to be the aggressor and land a few. Endurance and perseverance will be the key to making it another round and the difference between winning and losing might just be whether you can get up one more time than your opponent. As Rocky Balboa told his son in the last Rocky movie, "It is not how many times you get knocked down that matters, it is that you can get up one more time than you have been knocked down." Life is a fight. The most important thing is that we keep fighting.

The one variable that gives us the strength to run and courage to fight each day is our faith. When we keep our faith, the race we run and the fight we fight become enriched and fulfilling. Believing and following God doesn't guarantee an easy ride with no work or no struggle, but believing and following God will give us the strength and courage and hope we need to run and fight no matter the work and struggles that are sure to arise. We can and should run. We can and should fight. We must, no matter what, KEEP THE FAITH.

Consider This:

Hebrews 12:1

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

“Everyone is an athlete, but some of us are training and some of us are not.”

George Sheehan
(Runner, Writer, Philosopher)



Active Listening Exercise:
Download and Listen to: “Only Jesus” by Casting Crowns

“living a legacy”

Initial Thought: We all want to be remembered. Not just when we have passed on to eternal glory, but now. We want to be someone people look up to and respect. We want to do things people admire.

Read Philippians 3:10-16

Take notes or underline key words or phrases in your bible as you read

Reflection: The EC Glass High School Boys Lacrosse Team has developed a healthy reputation of being a force to be reckoned with. Their 2017 season marked a career year for a group of players that had spent much of their lives playing lacrosse together. They had a complete team with quick and agile attackers, fierce face off skills, effective communication, and undeniable team defense. They had good senior leadership, passionate coaching, and as you might expect, a growing fan base made up of much more than parents and siblings. Their playoff run seemed like destiny as they marched into the State Championship with momentum and high hopes. The game was played well but at the end of the game they were just 2 goals short. The lingering thought of defeat and unfinished business would have to wait for another season.

Fortunately for Glass, most of their team was going to return in 2018. With a chip on their shoulders and burning desire in their hearts, their 2018 season lived up to all the hype. They successfully concluded their regular season undefeated, earning them the top seed in the upcoming playoffs. Glass knew the importance of making a statement and they did just that in both the first and second rounds. In the third round, with a bullseye on their chest, Glass took hit after hit from a physical opponent seeking to derail their dreams and goals once again. The toughness, skill, and endurance of Glass prevailed, paving the way to another Regional Final game. Late news of a change of venue, causing the home field advantage to shift against Glass, could have been a good excuse, but Glass was not in the business of making any excuses. They had a goal and they weren't about to let location come in the way. With passion and purpose, Glass took care of business in the Regional Finals, earning them a spot in the State Championship with another shot at glory.

As I arrived at the stadium for the championship game, the banners for Glass Lacrosse read “Unfinished Business.” The players were primed and ready, their hearts beating out of their chests, and one could have said the same for the fans. Glass prided themselves on teamwork, momentum, and sheer confidence in their ability. Their mentality focused on winning and winning big. The game started, and it didn't take long for Glass to strike first with a goal. All sports fans know how important that first and lead goal is, especially in a big game. Their ruthless defense wasn't giving anything up easily and at the end of the first half, Glass had a commanding lead. The beginning of the third quarter brought pressure and a major momentum shift. Glass got caught on their heels and the other team poured it on with impressive shots and physical play. Soon, the score was tied and the tension mounted. On the next face off, Glass took possession and pressed in for a much-needed goal. The ball was knocked loose and was left waiting for the first aggressor. Opportunity was taken by Glass and their risk became great reward as they scored a goal to shift the momentum back in their favor. That goal proved to be the key, as Glass pressed on scoring three more goals and leaving no doubt as the time clocked out. EC Glass Boys Lacrosse won the State Championship and accomplished their ultimate goal.

What now? In order to be remembered, you have to be someone of great character and you have to accomplish some accolades. Perhaps the only thing that may create a legacy beyond character and accolades is how you finish. What are you doing to develop great character? How can God help?

Notes: