

Immerse

STEP BY STEP

On the Go Devotional Guide

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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.

“Step by Step”

Initial Thought: The only way to make it through life, is taking one step at a time. Making each second and minute and hour count of every day, builds the foundation for a week, a month, and a year. Making each year of our life count, builds the foundation for a fruitful life.

Read: Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

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

Tucked in between Proverbs and the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes is a book that often gets lost amidst the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. The author of Ecclesiastes, particularly in chapter three, focuses on time and seasons. For every matter under heaven (aka: everything, because God created the heavens and the earth and all that it is in them) there is a time and a season. God ordered creation out of chaos and gave purpose to each time. There is a time to be born and there is a time to die; a time to plant and a time to harvest; a time to cry and a time to laugh; a time to play and a time to rest.

God has ordained every element of time and our role, is to find purpose in that time, whether we agree with it or not. One of the first things we must do is accept time as God's and not ours. Time belongs to God. Our lives are a gift from God; therefore, everything we do, and all the time we have to do it, belongs to God.

The good news for us comes in verse 12, when the author makes a statement of assurance as to God's hope for us: "I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil."

Reflection: How many times have we commented that there is not enough time in the day? Time is something we all wish we had more of. Ask yourself whether that is because you aren't making the most out of the time you do have or whether you have too much going on to really enjoy what time you do have. It is easy to fall into the trap of overloading ourselves. When we do, we want others, God even, to bail us out. It doesn't work that way. We need to focus on the gift of time we do have, because it is the only time we get, and make the most of it.

What Now? To make the most of your day, and stay focused on God and what really matters, consider starting with three simple steps outlined in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians:

Rejoice always

begin each day focused on things that bring you joy

Pray without ceasing

live every moment in prayer, talking to God and keeping an open line

Give thanks in all circumstances

close each day, giving gratitude to God for the opportunities of the day

(1 Thessalonians 5:16)

Consider This:

Found in the billfold of Coach Paul Bear Bryant (Alabama) after he died in 1982.

THE MAGIC BANK ACCOUNT

Imagine that you had won the following *PRIZE* in a contest:

Each morning your bank would deposit \$86,400 in your private account for your use. However, this prize has Rules:

The set of Rules:

1. Everything that you didn't spend during each day would be taken away from you.
2. You may not simply transfer money into some other account.
3. You may only spend it.
4. Each morning upon awakening, the bank opens your account with another \$86,400 for that day.
5. The bank can end the game without warning; at any time, it can say, "Game Over!" It can close the account, and you will not receive a new one.

What would you personally do? You would buy anything and everything you wanted right? Not only for yourself, but for all the people you love and care for. Even for people you don't know, because you couldn't possibly spend it all on yourself, right? You would try to spend every penny, and use it all, because you knew it would be replenished in the morning, right?

ACTUALLY, THIS GAME IS REAL!

Each of us is already a winner of this *PRIZE*. We just can't seem to see it.

The PRIZE is "TIME"

1. Each morning we awaken to receive 86,400 seconds as a gift of life.
2. And when we go to sleep at night, any remaining time is not credited to us.
3. What we haven't used up that day is forever lost.
4. Yesterday is forever gone.
5. Each morning the account is refilled, but the bank can dissolve your account at any time WITHOUT WARNING...

SO, what will YOU do with your 86,400 seconds?

Those seconds are worth so much more than the same amount in dollars. Think about it and remember to enjoy every second of your life, because time races by so much quicker than you think.

So, take care of yourself. Be happy, love deeply and enjoy life! Start spending....

"DON'T COMPLAIN ABOUT GROWING OLD, SOME PEOPLE DON'T GET THE PRIVILEGE!"

“Step by Step”

Initial Thought: “Step by Step, I can’t see any other way of accomplishing anything.”- Michael Jordan

“Make Every Moment of Every Day Count with these 7 Spiritual Steps”

1. **Wake Up**- It is important for us each day to wake up and decide to have a good day. “This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.” (Psalm 118:24) Every day is another opportunity for us to live fully and enjoy the gift of life God has given us.
2. **Dress Up**- I don’t mean to put on a costume or even to get fitted in your finest attire. One of the best ways to dress up is to put on a smile. “I will forget my complaining; I will change my expression and smile!” (Job 9:27) It is a joy to be around those who wear a smile and are filled with joy. Everyone looks good with a smile on their face.
3. **Show Up**- It is one thing to show up and be present and another to show up and be pleasant. We should show up every day ready to be nice to others and listen with an open ear. “Listen to advice and accept instruction, so you may grow wise in the future.” (Proverbs 19:20) We can all learn a lot from each other if we allow ourselves to be open to the process of learning.
4. **Stand Up**- Yes, we should all stand and not be lazy, but that is not what I am suggesting. We should all be ready every moment of every day to stand up for what we believe in! “Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9) We are presented every day with several opportunities to witness to others through our actions. We all need to own our faith and our beliefs in everything we do.
5. **Look Up**- It is hard to see where you are going if you are always looking down. We all need to look up to the Lord! “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:13) God is always there for us. All we must do is turn to God and trust. It is true that we still must do our part, but God knows exactly what we need when we need it.
6. **Lift Up**- We are all presented with countless opportunities every day to lift up our prayers to God. Do not worry about anything, instead, pray about everything! “Pray at all times.” (Ephesians 6:18) The more we are in communication with God the more we are sync with God and the more we are in sync with God, the more fulfilling our lives will be.
7. **Sum Up**- When we do our best to do the first 6 steps, we won’t be able to do anything but sum up our day with thanks and praise. “Enter His gates with thanks, enter His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name.” (Psalms 100:4) We all have so much to be thankful for and we all need to take the appropriate amount of time to stop and show our gratitude to God.

Wake – Dress – Show – Stand – look – lift – Sum

UP