

# Immerse

**WE NEVER KNOW**

**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.

## A Dirty Joke

I was 12 years old and one of those, “did your son eat fertilizer the last couple years,” sized kids. If you have ever watched the Little League World Series in August of every year, you know what I am talking about. I was that kid who no one believed was 12 because I was a foot taller than all my teammates and I threw the ball really hard and hit the ball really hard and far. I was a pitcher and because I could throw really hard I became pretty good.

To say the least, I still had my moments. Let’s just say that at 12 years of age, I didn’t always have the best mental approach and didn’t always stay focused like I should. There was one game I will never forget. We were playing the second-best team in the league (we were the best) and I was pitching in the late innings. As I started the next inning, I couldn’t seem to find the strike zone. I am sure my mom yelling, “throw strikes,” didn’t help. I mean, it wasn’t like I was trying to throw balls. I managed to throw 12 straight balls walking 3 straight batters to load the bases with no outs.

My dad called time out and came out to the mound. I knew it was serious because usually our other coach, my best friend’s dad, would come talk to me and my dad would always be the one to talk to him. Somehow, we listened better that way. Anyway, my dad gets to the mound and he is smiling. I didn’t think things were very funny. He asked me if I wanted to hear a dirty joke. My father is a pastor and trust me, the last thing I thought he would ever ask me is if I wanted to hear a dirty joke. I didn’t know he even knew one.

He looked me in the eye and said to me, **“a horse fell in a mud puddle.”** You got it. That was his version of a dirty joke. Believe it or not, it worked. I laughed, and he laughed and then he said, “relax and throw the ball.” Still chuckling as he returned to the dugout, I couldn’t help but wonder what was going through the minds of all the fans, especially my mom. I focused back in on the next batter and in three pitches, struck him out. I managed to throw just 6 more pitches in that inning, striking the next 2 batters out and leaving the bases loaded.

**What now?** Whether you are a coach, player, referee, parent, or fan, remember that these are just games. The next time the temptation is there to take things too seriously, think of a dirty joke. It might just pull you out and get you back on track. At the very least, it will relax you and help put things in perspective.

## “We Never Know”

Initial Thought: Research has shown through the years that a teenager needs at least 5 adult mentors in their life outside their parents: including coaches, teachers, youth leaders, pastors, family friends, extended family, and coworkers. One of the most effective ways we grow is to learn from others. Therefore, as coaches, teachers, pastors, etc, we never know just how much we are passing along and the impact we are having.

### Read: Proverbs 22:6 and Ephesians 6:4

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

Caution: Proverbs 22:6 is not a guarantee or a promise for a life of ease or great success. Life is life and sometimes things happen. Sometimes parents and coaches and teachers do all the right things, and the student doesn't follow the exact path they know they should. Still, our children wouldn't know how to even take the first step in life without the proper guidance and direction. It is hard, but we just never know what could happen. We do know what we can do and we must stick to that.

**Reflection:** There is a tale of an old German schoolmaster who, when he entered his class of boys in the morning, used to remove his cap and bow ceremoniously to them. One asked him why he did this. His answer was: “You never know what one of these boys may someday become.” He was right- because one of the boys was named Martin Luther.

**What now?** If a Sunday School teacher slowly brings a child to Christ, no man knows what that child may someday do for Christ and his Church.

### Read: John 6:1-14

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

Andrew brought the boy to Jesus, and by bringing him made the miracle possible. No one ever knows what will happen and what will come out of it when we bring someone to Jesus. If a parent trains up his or her child in the knowledge and the love of God, no one can say what mighty things that child may someday do for God and for others. Andrew didn't know what he was doing when he brought that boy to Jesus that day, but he was providing material for a miracle. **We never know** what possibilities we are presenting when we do all the things necessary to point someone to God.

**Reflection:** The whole “Doctor” thing didn't hit me until a class I took with a professor who called everyone in the class “Dr.” so and so. After being called Dr. Thompson for a couple weeks, I really began to believe it. Through this practice, our professor willed us and believed us into what he believed we already were, “Doctors in Ministry.” His leadership style in doing this set a powerful example for us who would in turn have the opportunity to do the same for others.

**What now?** We all need to pay attention and lead others to the right water fountain to drink from, feed them the right foods, and surround them with the right influences. We never know what will become of them. However, the chances of them becoming the products of their teachings and practices is much better than not.

## **“We Never Know”**

Initial Thought: Coaching is leadership in ministry. Not all of us are called to preach in the pulpit or teach in the classroom. Some of us are meant to coach; in the classroom, on the field or court, at home, in the office, in the studio.

### **to COACH:**

*a person who teaches or trains an athlete or performer;  
a person who translates specific knowledge of a skill to a protégé  
and helps them grow in their ability to use that skill successfully*

**Read: Titus 2:7-8**

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

## **A Special Coach**

**A coach is a molder of lives,  
a shaper of dreams,  
a teacher, a helping hand,  
a loyal friend...**

**A coach brings out our best,  
inspires us to achieve,  
shows us the need to believe in ourselves,  
and in others...**

**A coach is someone  
to respect,  
to admire, to trust-  
someone like you...**

**What now?** Be a coach, teacher, parent, youth leader, pastor, or mentor that sets the right example. There are enough negative examples to learn from. All kids and students and people need positive guidance to really know the right paths to take in life.

**Notes:**