



DEVOTIONAL CHALLENGE



Week One

DAY ONE: GOD, I'M HERE. . . .

In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.

Mark 1:35 NASB

Jesus had busy days. The beginning of one day was filled with teaching in the synagogue. During the middle of His message, Jesus was interrupted by a demon-possessed man. In a display of His authority over even the demonic realm, Jesus rebuked the demons, and they came out of the man. Following this, Jesus went to the house of Simon and Andrew. He was asked to pray for Simon's mother-in-law, which He did, and she was healed. Then the crowds began to bring to Him those who were sick, and demon possessed. Jesus served until evening. All of this in a single day. Jesus didn't seem to have one spare second. You can imagine that when He finally laid down that night, He would have had no problem going to sleep.

But the next day, Jesus rose early to spend time with His Heavenly Father. He prioritized His time alone with the Lord and gained spiritual strength for each day. He is our example.

Isn't it true that oftentimes when we are exhausted and completely loaded up with the busyness of a given day that we put the most important relationship we have on the back burner? I'm talking about our relationship with our Father. In doing so, we lose our spiritual stamina and are not nearly as sensitive to His divine leadership of our lives. But in our text for today, we can learn how to prioritize our time alone with the Lord.

Jesus had a set time, early in the morning. When we set appointments, we typically keep them and make sure nothing else gets in the way. Why not set an appointment with the Lord? Set aside time for uninterrupted fellowship with the Lord. Jesus also exercised an act of the will. He got up. Even after an exhausting day, He got up to meet with the Lord. He had a place that was secluded. He made sure that He was in a place that was distinctly quiet.

DAY TWO: GOD, YOU ARE MY MESSAGE.



Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” *Mark 1:14-15 NASB*

What do you want people to remember you for? Being a nice person? Having a good job? Always being there? These are noble ambitions, but God has a higher calling in the life of His disciples. The calling is to give ourselves to the gospel of Jesus. In fact, we are described by Paul the Apostle in 2 Corinthians 5:20 as “ambassadors for Christ.” A disciple of Jesus should be remembered for the message he or she spoke. The main message of Jesus was the gospel. It stands to reason if we are following Him, then the main message of our life is to be the gospel.

As a disciple, the Lord has sovereignly planted you where you live, work, go to school, and play. He put you there so that His message could be spoken and lived out in front of those who are far from Him. He is not desirous for people to perish, but rather wants everyone to come to everlasting life (2 Peter 3:9). The primary way the Lord gets His message to others is through disciples like you.

Think for a minute about the categories previously mentioned: live, work, school, and play. There is no doubt that at least one of these areas in your life has people present who do not know the message of your Savior Jesus. It could be a family member, a neighbor, a co-worker, a classmate, or even someone you see at the ballfield. God wants you to share the message of Jesus with them.

I know that strikes fear into the hearts of a lot of people. You may even feel your pulse rising now. But the Lord doesn’t call us to do something that He will not empower and equip us to do. Someone gave you the message and you came to faith in Jesus. Now, you can give someone else the message of Jesus’ death for sin’s penalty, His burial, and His resurrection. You get to tell someone that they can know the Lord personally by admitting their sin, turning from their old way of thinking, and living, **by** trusting in Jesus.

Think of the disciples we know in Scripture. What do we remember about their lives? We remember that the gospel of their Savior Jesus was their main message in life. Live resolved to make the gospel of your Savior the main message in your life.

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DAY THREE: GOD, GIVE ME BOLDNESS.



For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

Mark 8:38 NASB

In the first century, those who were ashamed of Jesus were those who denied Jesus in times of persecution. This carried with it great consequences. Jesus was not seeking to attract fair-weathered friends on His mission to make disciples. Instead, He was looking for people who would lay down their lives for the sake of the gospel of Jesus.

You are called to live boldly for Christ. You should not be embarrassed of Jesus, His Word, and the Gospel. You must be willing to speak up and out for Jesus where He has planted you. The great news is that God empowers us with boldness through the Holy Spirit. You must ask God to provide boldness for you to share Jesus with others. God will answer this prayer.

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DAY FOUR: GOD, PLEASE ACT.



When He came into the house, His disciples began questioning Him privately, “Why could we not drive it out?” And He said to them, “This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.” *Mark 9:28-29 NASB*

They had met their match. The disciples had been doing ministry and seeing unbelievable works of the Lord. But there was one incident that left them dumbfounded. A father had brought his son to the disciples so that they could cast out the evil spirit which was in him.

The young boy was often possessed by an evil spirit that made him mute. Whenever the spirit seized the boy, he would be thrown to the ground, begin foaming at the mouth, grind his teeth and stiffen out. The sight must have been horrendous and like any father, he would do anything for his son to be healed.

The disciples of Jesus were told by the father to cast the evil spirit out of his son. They apparently tried but could not do it. Jesus, on the other hand, commanded the spirit to leave the boy and he was healed on the spot. The occasion called for rejoicing, but the disciples wanted to know why they couldn't cast the evil spirit out. Jesus' answer sheds great insight on the importance of prayer. He said, “This kind cannot come out by anything but prayer.”

Pray? You would think this would be the first step they would have taken before seeking to cast out the enemy. However, would you believe that you can be actively involved in doing ministry for the Lord but never actually call upon the Lord's power? How many disciples of Jesus are just going through the motions of ministry and mission for Jesus, but not truly asking the Lord to do great things among them. This is the equivalent of expecting a refrigerator to keep something cold, but never plugging it into the wall.

Prayer is your opportunity to ask God to act. If you want to see people come to faith in Jesus, you have to call on the power of God to move.

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DAY FIVE: GOD, BURDEN ME.



Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. *2 Corinthians 5:20 NASB*

You get to speak on God’s behalf to others. Let that sink in. God uses you as His representative to those who don’t know Him. He encourages and urges others through you to live in harmony with Him. What an awesome privilege.

A key step in living as an ambassador is being intentional about who you are going to reach with the good news of Jesus. Once you have clarity on who you are seeking to reach with the gospel, you can then begin to focus on praying for those individuals. When we talk to God about others, we are more open to talking to others about God.

Take a moment and write down the names of five people you know who don’t have a relationship with Jesus. You may consider those who are in your family, your neighborhood, your friends, and your co-workers. List their names in the provided spaces. This week, you will learn how to pray specifically for their salvation.

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Week Two

DAY ONE: GOD, USE ME.



I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.

1 Corinthians 3:6 NASB

Agricultural images are found throughout the Bible. Paul is using this imagery to describe the ministry he was involved in. He notes that he planted the seed of the Gospel, Apollos watered that seed, but it was God who was causing the harvest. This is important for us to remember when it comes to reaching others with the Gospel.

You are part of the harvesting process. Your sharing may be planting, or it may be watering, but the harvest is up to God. The bottom line is that you are to be in the field working. Therefore, when you consider those you are seeking to reach, know that you are not alone in the field.

Spend time this morning praying specially that God would use you to plant or water the seed of the gospel in each person's life. God use me.

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DAY TWO: GOD, OPEN HEARTS.



A woman named Lydia was listening; she was a seller of purple fabrics from the city of Thyatira, and a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

Acts 16:14 NASB

On the Sabbath day, Paul and his friends gathered at a riverside where they had planned to pray together. Seeing a group of women who had assembled, they began speaking to them. Within that group was a woman named Lydia.

Lydia was seeking truth. While she joined in and displayed a reverence for God, she had not yet been introduced into a relationship with Him. Through the gospel being shared, God opened her heart, and she trusted in Christ.

This text reveals a way in which we can pray for those who don't know Jesus. You can ask God to open their hearts to the truth. That is your challenge for today, pray for God to open the hearts of the five people you have already identified as needing Jesus.

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DAY THREE: GOD, OPEN EYES.



“Open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.” Acts 26:18 NASB

Every person on the planet is under the dominion of light or darkness. Those who are without Jesus, are in the dark. They are under the authority and power of Satan. Reality is, most would never admit to this because most don't believe this to be true. The deception of Satan is great and far reaching.

Paul the apostle was going to be used by God to open the eyes of the gentiles. The desired outcome was that the spiritual eyes of unbelievers would be opened, and they would turn to Jesus. In so doing, they would be pardoned from the penalty of their sins which was death, eternal darkness, hell. They would also share in the Kingdom of Light, heaven, for eternity.

As you pray for your identified individuals today, pray God would open their eyes. Pray that they would turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. Pray for each of them by name.

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DAY FOUR: GOD, OPEN MINDS.



In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they will not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:4 NASB

When you want to surf the internet, you can click on the internet explorer icon on your computer. By clicking on the appropriate icon, you get access to the world wide web. Everything at your fingertips. To get access to God, you must click on Jesus. He is the image of the invisible God.

However, the little 'g' god of this world, Satan, has blinded the minds of the unbelieving. He fills the eyes of the world with anything and everything to distract them from looking to Jesus. This can be done with false ideologies and theologies as well as deceptive pursuits of the heart.

The minds of those you want to reach have been blinded. You must pray for God to open their minds to the light of the Gospel. Pray that they would experience the full weight of the honor and praise that is due to Jesus. Pray for each of them by name.

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DAY FIVE: GOD, FREE THEM.



But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to *that* form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and after being freed from sin, you became slaves to righteousness. *Romans 6:17-18 NASB*

Imagine a master whose name is Mr. Sin. He rules and reigns the lives of those who don't know Jesus. He tells them what they are to look at, how they are to think and feel, and where they should go. All the while, Mr. Sin convinces people they are charting their own course. The outcome, however, is chaos and death.

Through faith in Jesus, a person is set from the slave master, Mr. Sin. A new ruler is installed, Mr. Righteousness. He leads them to right thinking and living which is in harmony with Jesus. The outcome is peace and life.

The people you are praying for are slaves to sin. You must pray for God to set them free that they might become slaves to righteousness. God, free them. While the prayers from this week are simple, they are powerful. Trust God to do what only He can do. God, use me. God, open hearts, minds, and eyes. God, free them.

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Week Three

DAY ONE: YOU ARE NOT AN ACCIDENT. . . .

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. *Colossians 1:16 NASB*

As you think about how to share Jesus, there are some key conversational steps that will help you. The first step is to let someone know they are not an accident. They were created by God and for God. Some may have heard that they were an accident, but that is not true. God created them.

Paul makes this clear in our verse for today. Everything has been created through Him and for Him. Think about the five individuals you have been praying for and consider for a moment that God is their creator. The greatest purpose in life is to know why you were created. Your opportunity is to help each of those individuals discover why God made them.

Pray for God to use you in sharing Jesus with each of those individuals.

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DAY TWO: WE ARE APART FROM GOD BECAUSE OF SIN. : : :

No one is without sin. God's standard is perfect and holy. No one meets that standard. In fact, we don't even meet our own standards, much less the Lord's. Sin is what separates us all from God. God's perfect law exposes our sin and counts us guilty.

Romans 3:23 NASB states:

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

For a person's hard work of sinning, they get a paycheck. That paycheck is made out to them in the amount of death. Death is eternal separation from God is a real place called hell.

Until an individual understands sin, they will not grasp their need for a savior. It is vital and necessary for a person to see themselves under the judgement of God's law. This reality is what calls for their response to Jesus' saving powers.

Pray for the weight of sin and judgement to fall upon those you are seeking to lead to Christ. Pray for each of them by name.

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DAY THREE: GOD APPROACHED US IN JESUS.



But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. *Romans 5:8*

Jesus is God in the flesh. He came to show us the invisible God. His ultimate purpose was to pay the penalty for our sins. We should die for our sins, Jesus died in our place. When Jesus was placed upon the cross by Roman soldiers for execution, God the Father was pouring out His just wrath against sin upon Him.

God the Father treated Christ His Son on the cross as if He had committed all our sin. This occurred for God's love to be made manifest to the whole world. This happened so that you and those you want to reach with the Gospel might have a visible sign of God's great love. There is no greater love than the love of God. To shun God is to shun the ultimate expression of pure love toward others.

Those you are seeking to reach with the Gospel desperately need to hear and see the love of God toward them. That is why it is so vital they understand why Jesus died for them. Share of His death but don't leave out the glorious miracle of the resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus was our way of knowing His death satisfied the wrath of God. Had He not been raised Jesus would have just been another man crucified by Roman soldiers. His resurrection from the dead proves His power to forgive our sins and bring us to eternal life. Pray the eyes of those you are sharing Jesus with will be opened.

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DAY FOUR: YOU MUST ACCEPT HIM BY FAITH.



If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; *Romans 10:9 NASB*

Once a person is broken over their sin and has a desire to put their faith in Jesus, you can help them. Perhaps you have heard this before, but it is as simple as **ABC**.

A- Admit you are a sinner.

B- Believe that Jesus died for your sin and was resurrected.

C- Confess Jesus as Lord of your life.

This occurs in a person's life through prayer. This is often referred to as a 'sinner's prayer'. There is nothing magical in the formula, it is only a simple prayer prompt for the person who is repentant. This helps guide them in turning to God from their sin. This describes the act of repentance. Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of action. A person changes their mind about sin and Jesus and they put their faith in Jesus for salvation.

Spend time praying for those you want to reach. Ask God to use you to share this simple but powerful message of Jesus with them.

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DAY FIVE: THIS IS MY MISSION.



“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” *Matthew 28:19-20 NASB*

This is the great commission for every believer. You have been given a mission by Jesus, make disciples. In order to make disciples they must come into a relationship with Jesus. Therefore, the first step in making a disciple is encouraging a person to put their trust in Jesus.

Many disciples have never made a disciple. Why? Because they have chosen not to share Jesus with others. Be encouraged today not to be that kind of disciple. Open your mouth and share. God has put people in your path who need to know Jesus. You have written their names down and you have prayed for them. Believe God is already at work and open your mouth to share Jesus with them. Pray today for God to help you live out this mission.

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DAY SIX: ENCOURAGE BAPTISM.



“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” *Matthew 28:19-20 NASB*

The New Testament knows nothing of an unbaptized convert. Baptism is a person going public with their faith in Jesus. Baptism is identifying with Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. Baptism is initiation into the family of God the church. Baptism is the first step for a new follower of Jesus.

One of the great privileges of being an ambassador for Christ is the opportunity to see a person you have prayed for and shared Christ with be baptized. Help the new follower of Jesus see that baptism is their first step. Help them in the context of your local church walk the appropriate pathway to baptism.

Pray for God to use you in His mission.

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