



7 DAY Devotional

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In one week, I was able to count the number of spots on the common ladybug, the numbers of colors in a rainbow, the number of bones in the human neck, and the number of sides on a heptagon. I was also able to learn about all the wonders of the ancient world and the fundamental natural catastrophes that exist while studying the notes in a traditional western music scale. Did you catch the common factor of those things? If not, hopefully this next sentence will reveal the answer. I went to the 7-Eleven gas station and bought \$7 worth of gas and a large 7UP to drink while I watched the movie *7 Pounds* later that night. What is the common factor? Ding, ding, ding. You are correct! The answer is the number 7.

What does the number 7 have to do with you? Our goal is that you would use the 7 day resources we will be providing you (or any other resource you may have) to begin developing healthy spiritual habits. Don't worry! We are going to take it one week at a time.

For the next 7 days, we are going to provide you with 70 seconds of Bible reading material. We will include extra reading for those who may want to do a little bit more. Are you ready to begin this journey with us?

If so, start with this seven word prayer- God, I commit 7 days to You.

Day 1: 7 days of creation (process)

READ PHILIPPIANS 1:16

In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth (Genesis 1:1). That is how the bible begins. If you were to read the entire creation story, you would find that God didn't do it all in one day or with one snap of His fingers. It was a process.

What would have happened if God would have cut the process short? How would the story be different if God stopped on day four and never added bird, fish, animals, or man? What would the results been if He skipped day three and never added dry land? Would it be a water world? The good news is that God followed through and completed the process.

Just as creating the earth was a process, your spiritual development will be a process. There is no shortcut to a healthy relationship with God. You must take it step by step, day by day, moment by moment.

What steps have you taken in your walk with Christ?

What is the next step you need to take?

What is keeping you from taking the next step?

READ MORE: GENESIS Chapter 1 and 2

Day 2: 7 days in a boat (faith)

READ HebrewS 11:1

“God, are you serious?” The bible never records Noah saying these words, but I wonder if he said them or thought them. I would have. If you are not familiar with Noah’s story, the bible sums it up this way - It was by faith that Noah built a large boat to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him **about things that had never happened before...** (Hebrews 11:7)

What are those things that had never happened before? According to some sources, Noah was building a boat at a time when the people had never even seen rain. That is debatable, but what is not questionable is that no one had ever seen a flood or a boat. According to historians, this was the first boat ever created. Would it float? Noah would find out in around 120 years because that is how long it would take him to build the boat.

God, are you serious? You want me to stick up for that kid in my class who gets picked on? You want me to obey my parents? You want me to tell the truth and risk getting in trouble? You want me to stay pure? You want me to be holy (set apart) like you are holy? You want me to put others before me? You want me to tell my friends about you? God, are you serious?

Without faith, it is impossible to please God. (Hebrew 11:6) Noah built a boat because he believed God would do what He said He would do. Noah had faith, how about you?

What is God asking you to do that doesn’t make sense?

What is stopping you from doing what God is asking?

READ MORE: Genesis chapter 7 and HebrewS chapter 11

Day 3: 7 promises (hold things loosely)

READ GENESIS 12:2-3

This was the promise that God gave to Abraham, but there was one condition. Abraham (also called Abram) had to leave his family and friends and his neighborhood and go the place God wanted.

It is hard to leave security and comfort for the unknown. If God promised to bless you and make you famous, would you leave your friends, your school, your family, your favorite restaurants, and move to another country? Some of you would jump at this opportunity, but there are some of us, who would nicely decline and ask God if we could get the same promise, but continue to stay where we are – in our comfort zone.

Abraham obeyed God and left his place of comfort for God's promise of an even greater future and he never turned back. God may be trying to lead you to a place of greater impact and usefulness for Him. Don't let the security and comfort of your life make you miss the plans God has for you.

What are you holding onto that is not allowing you to receive God's promises?

When it comes to the decisions in your life, which do you choose more often – your way or God's way?

What have you given to God that you have tried to take back?

READ MORE: GENESIS chapter 12 and ROMANS chapter 4

Day 4: 7 laps (obstacles)

READ JOSHUA 1:9

I can picture it like a movie, Joshua standing confidently and proudly before his troops. “Men, this is the land that God promised our families years ago, and today we have the opportunity to enter this land. We will enter it as men, we will conquer it as warriors. Who is ready to fight?!” Following the inspirational speech, the men probably started screaming and hollering and took off running into the Promised Land looking for a fight. Instead of a fight they found an obstacle, a big obstacle – the walls of Jericho.

Why is it that whenever we get excited about doing something for God, there always seems to be obstacles – things that slow us down or things that keep us from pursuing what God desires?

Joshua and his men had to decide what to focus on – God or the obstacle. The walls were tall and the chance of getting inside this great city seemed bleak, but God was with them and He had a plan. For 6 days they silently marched around the city one time. On the seventh day, they marched around the city seven times while blowing trumpets. At the end of the seventh lap, when the trumpets were blown, everyone screamed and the walls fell down and they went in and conquered the city.

They chose to remain focused on God not the obstacle and as it is commonly phrased, the rest was history. Be strong and courageous. God is with you wherever you go.

What obstacles stand in the way of what God wants for your life?

What will you focus on – God or the obstacle?

Remember, the walls didn't fall the first time they marched around them, it was a process. Conquer the city!

READ MORE: JOSHUA chapter 1 and 6

Day 5: 7 times 70 (forgiveness)

READ Matthew 18:21-22

Forgiveness is not easy, but it is also not optional. When Peter asked Jesus if forgiving someone seven times was enough, he was actually trying to be better than most. You see, Peter lived in a culture where the religious leaders (the rabbis) told people they only had to forgive someone three times (after three strikes, you are out).

But Jesus answered, “No, not seven times, but seventy times seven,” meaning that we shouldn’t even keep track of how many times we forgive someone. We should always forgive those who are truly sorry, no matter how many times they ask.

This may seem a little extreme to some of us, but there is something about forgiveness that we can’t miss. When we refuse to forgive others, it affects us. We grow in bitterness, anger, and resentment. Lewis Smedes put it this way: to forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.

If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matthew 6:14-15)

Are you holding on to any bitterness or refusing to forgive someone?

What steps do you need to take on the road to forgiveness?

What sins do you need to take to God?

READ MORE: Matthew chapter 18

Day 6: 7 words (love)

READ JOHN 3:16

Love. What comes to your mind when you hear that word? Falling in love, being in love, making love (yes, we just said that).

The BIG question: Do we really want to be in love or do we want to be in lust? True love (in God's eyes) is all about others and putting their needs ahead of our own. Lust, on the other hand, is selfish and all about getting what I want.

God loves us so much that He gave. He gave His life, His resources, His time, and His heart to us. God didn't just give a little for us; He gave His best. He gave himself. True love requires sacrifice.

For God so loved _____ (put your name in that blank) that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.

God loves us and longs for us to love Him back. And our love is shown by how we live our lives. (Jesus said) If you love me, obey my commandments. John 14:15 (NLT). According to this verse, if we love, then we obey. Period.

Are you in love with God or just His stuff?

What are you doing to show God your love?

READ MORE: 1 CORINTHIANS chapter 13 and JOHN chapter 3

Day 7: The 7th day (perfection)

READ GENESIS 2:2-3

Once upon a time a woodcutter got a job cutting down trees. He wanted to please his boss so he worked as hard as he could. The first day, the woodcutter cut down 18 trees. The next day, he worked hard again, but was only able to cut down 15 trees. The third day he tried even harder, but he only could cut down 10 trees. Day after day he was cutting down less and less trees. He went to the boss and apologized, saying that he could not understand what was going on. "When was the last time you sharpened your axe?" the boss asked. "Sharpen? I haven't had time to sharpen my axe. I have been too busy trying to cut down trees..."

When was the last time you sharpened your axe? When was the last time that you stopped and rested? When was the last you listened to the words of Jesus – "Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10.

For those of you who are tired listen to the words of Jesus...Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly. Matthew 11:28-30 (MSG)

Congratulations on completing seven days with God. Remember, this is a process. It will take time and discipline to make it a habit, but don't forget the word we started with...

And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. (Philippians 1:16)

MORE DEVOTIONS:

<http://www.iosh.org/resources/daily-devotional/todays-youth-devotional/>

<http://dailydevos.org/>