

ONE

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

WEEK 4 - DAY 1

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 10:1-2

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these signs of mine among them that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and you may know that I am the Lord."

OBSERVATION:

When the Lord spoke these words to Moses, God was in the midst of an all-out display of His power. The Israelites were living in slavery in Egypt and God was about to deliver them from Pharaoh. But Pharaoh was incredibly stubborn and God used that opportunity to demonstrate His power both to His people and to the surrounding nations. God told Moses what He was going to do so that His people would have front row seats to what was happening. God explained His reasoning beforehand so that the Israelites would understand how they fit into God's story. They became a part of God's story and what He did became a part of their own story. Exodus 13:14 "In days to come, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'With a mighty hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.'" God told the Israelites to watch how He was working not just in them, but in the community in which they lived so that they would turn around and share these miracles with their children and grandchildren who would then come to know that He is Lord.

APPLICATION:

God did not deliver the Israelites from Egypt and then start working in their lives once they were in a community by themselves. Rather, He worked through their existing circumstances in their existing community to show others His power and glory. No matter where we are, God will provide for us and He wants us to remember His provision by sharing our God story with others. Do you have the habit of remembering God's provision? What is God doing in your life right now that He wants to become a part of your God story? Where have you seen His faithfulness in the past? Reflect back on a time you were going through a hard time. How did God help you through it? If you are currently in a difficult circumstance, how can you trust God with this? Where is He leading you in this? Who in your life is going through a hard time and needs the encouragement you can provide by sharing how God has provided for you?

PRAYER:

God, thank you for working in my life regardless of my circumstances, regardless of where I am, and regardless of what is happening in the community around me. Forgive me for not always acknowledging Your amazing provision and help me to see how faithful You always are. Father, help me to build a history of faith in the community where I am presently located so that I can share with others and point them to you.



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DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

WEEK 4 - DAY 2

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 66:19

“I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations to Tarshish, to the Libyans and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations.”

OBSERVATION:

Throughout the Old Testament, God showed concern not only for His people, the Israelites, but also for the entire world. God was concerned with all nations, and the message of the Old Testament transcended Israel’s borders. Thus, even when God allowed the Israelites to be taken into captivity, He still had plans for them. He expected the story of His glory to be told to even the most treacherous and fierce nations. Israel had been commissioned by God to bring His light to the world. No matter how much difficulty Israel faced, God provided for them and enabled them to survive and He wanted the story of what was happening to His people to transcend Israel’s borders and make an impact in the lives of the nations surrounding them.

APPLICATION:

Just as God’s care in Old Testament times extended beyond His people, the Israelites, so too His care now extends beyond just Christians. We are called to serve and share our God story to the world and communities in which we live. Everywhere we go and everyone we come in contact with should hear our God story. How can you share your God story with your actions? With your words? In times when no one seems to listen or care? How are you showing your community that God is alive and at work in your life so that they can see the possibility that exists for them as well?

PRAYER:

Help me Lord to get it that the “mission field” is everywhere I set my feet. Remind me that You care not only for those who already know you, but for all people. Help me see my community the same way You do – full of people who all need You. Use me in my neighborhood, at my school, at my workplace, and wherever I may be, to make You known to others. Lord, give me the strength to share my God story to the world and community in which I live.



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DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

WEEK 4 - DAY 3

SCRIPTURE: Daniel 1:8-9

But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel...

OBSERVATION:

During this time in Israel's history, many were removed from their homes in Jerusalem and taken into captivity to Babylon. Daniel was among those in exile in Babylon. He was given a Babylonian name by King Nebuchadnezzar called Beltshazzar, meaning "protect his life". He was immersed in their pagan culture, and began training in their customs, theology, and life. Yet, Daniel still chose to make a stand for God, even when it seemed he was all alone and the odds were against him. Daniel found a congenial way to honor God with his beliefs without arguing and judging his leaders and in that way, was able to make his God known to unbelievers around him.

APPLICATION:

In our world today, we may be faced with environments where a leader or employer asks us to do something that is not in agreement with our values. Or perhaps even more frequently, we simply live and work and function in environments where people really do not embrace our same thoughts and beliefs. When confronted with these situations, what does it look like to honor God with our beliefs and still be respectful to those who are in authority? How do we live out our values in a way that does not alienate others? Are there things we do in living out our Christian faith that turn others against God instead of turning them to Him?

PRAYER:

Help me honor you in all I do, even in my thought life and in my heart. Grant me wisdom, Lord, to be a witness for You while being respectful of others – especially those who are in authority. Please help me be the best witness for you that I can be. Continue to build in me the strength to stand firm and yet lovingly point others to You.



ONE

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

WEEK 4 - DAY 4

SCRIPTURE: 1 Timothy 2:1-4

“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”

OBSERVATION:

Paul wrote these words in a letter to his protégé Timothy and to the church in which he was a leader. Paul urged praying for the leaders of the community regardless of whether or not their views and values line up. The ruler of Rome at the time was quite likely Nero who committed terrible atrocities to Christ followers. This makes Paul’s teaching all the more powerful knowing that his awful circumstances were directly related to Nero’s administration. Paul exhorts that prayer should be the first step we take when engaging our culture. Scripture is clear that organized government for a nation and community is a gift from God (Romans 13:1-2). Our prayers for our leaders are not dependent on whether we agree with their values or decisions. Paul knew the importance of prayer and wanted to pass that habit down to another generation of Christ followers.

APPLICATION:

Our prayers place us in the gap for decisions, laws, and affairs that directly affect the world in which we live. Sometimes, though, it is a real challenge when the ones we are to pray for do not share our same morals, values, and beliefs. How can you pray more specifically and consistently for those who are in a leadership position? What about those with whom you disagree? Even when our leaders make poor choices, God wants us to pray for them. How can you seek the welfare of, extend grace to, and pray for your current employer/ leader? What are you thankful for with regards to your leader/employer/government?

PRAYER:

Lord, I pray for all of the men and women that you have placed in positions of authority in my life, my country, and my world. Please give them wisdom, knowledge, and sound decision-making abilities. Bless their lives and the lives of those they govern. Help me pray for my leaders/employer even when I don’t feel like it. Help me trust you with them and my situation. I pray for them, Lord, that they would seek and find You.

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DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

WEEK 4 - DAY 5

SCRIPTURE: 2 Timothy 2:2

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”

OBSERVATION:

In the previous chapter Paul had instructed Timothy to hold the faith and guard the deposit, but this is not the end goal, Timothy is now to pass it on. As Paul had developed Timothy into a leader he should be doing the same thing with others. Paul knew someday (possibly very soon) he wouldn't be around and instead of despairing he made sure the Gospel message would continue long after he was gone. Paul took Timothy who was a new Christian and over time developed him into a pastor and leader of the church. The message of Christ continues to spread and flourish around the world because people are developed into leaders who then develop more leaders.

APPLICATION:

Looking back on your own life share a story of a time when you were developed. Who developed you and what did the process look like? As a Christ follower we should always have someone who is ahead of us who is showing how they got to where they are. Next we should have someone who is next to us that is in a similar place in life and can encourage one another as peers. And finally someone who is behind us that we are teaching and showing how we got where we are today. What is keeping you from developing others? Is there an area in your life you would like to be developed but are afraid to ask? If so, what is holding you back from asking?

PRAYER:

Jesus, thank you for the people you placed in my life to help me get to where I am today. Help me always be on the look out for people with whom I can entrust that which was entrusted to me. Father, put people in my life who can develop me. Father, make me to always be teachable no matter how far along in life I am.