



ONE

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

WEEK 6 - DAY 1

SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 15:22

“Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”

OBSERVATION:

God graciously placed each of us so that we can live life together. One of the benefits of living in those communities is that we have access to the powerful resource of collaboration -- the ability to seek input and wisdom from others in order to make decisions, work together, and grow as Christ followers. When a person believes their opinion is the only one necessary in order to make a sound decision, they can be short-sighted, and once in a while even reckless. Sometimes, our pride keeps us from seeking counsel from those around us. Our pride will shut out the voices of wisdom; our pride will tell us that we can only trust ourselves. God doesn't want His children to be stubborn loners, figuring out life all alone. He wants our plans to succeed and trusts us to seek out wise counsel from trustworthy individuals in each of our communities.

APPLICATION:

How do you respond when people offer up advice? Do you take it to heart or immediately disregard it? Throughout Scripture, we are called to seek out wisdom like treasure and a key way of doing this is to seek out godly wisdom from those who are further down the road than we are. Who are some people in your life who possess tremendous godly wisdom? How can you be intentional about gaining wisdom from them?

PRAYER:

God, help me to desire wisdom, help me to seek it like treasure. Father, I pray that You would place people in my life who are filled with Your wisdom. Help me to be receptive to wisdom regardless of who it is coming from. God, teach me to understand that by doing it together I will never lack for counsel and I will find success in life.



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DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

WEEK 6 - DAY 2

SCRIPTURE: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

OBSERVATION:

The book of Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon – a man who had all the world could ever offer but still felt unsatisfied. Many of his observations about life illustrate how bleak and wearisome life without God can be. Similarly, as Solomon notes in this passage, life without relationships is also hard but we can find great strength when we do life together. For some people, though, relationships are so challenging that it is easier to live without ever having to rely on others. Past relational hurts tend to stay with us for a very long time and can seriously harm healthy relationship development. In the name of self-preservation, people will shut themselves off from others so that they are never hurt again. However, God has designed us to be in relationships and to live in an environment where we lean on others as they lean on us for help and support.

APPLICATION:

Do you work better on a team or by yourself? Are you quick to turn to others for help when you need it or do you tend to rely on your efforts? What past hurts might you still be holding onto that hinder you from forming deeper relationships? What is one thing you can do to allow God to redeem your past hurts so you can move into healthier relationships with other Christ followers?

PRAYER:

Jesus, help me find healthy relationships that will enable me to live life how You designed it to be lived. Father, I ask You to heal my heart of any and all past relational hurts. Teach me to pursue relationships in a healthy manner and show me how to walk with others so that we can go further together. God, may all of my relationships be three strands strong, with You, others and me, and may it be evident that each of us rely on You for support and strength.



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DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

WEEK 6 - DAY 3

SCRIPTURE: John 17:20-21

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in me and I am in You. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that You have sent me.”

OBSERVATION:

In John 17, Jesus prayed for His disciples right before He was taken away to be crucified. Jesus knew He was leaving and the Gospel message was to be carried to the world by these men He had spent considerable time developing. Jesus asks for supernatural unity among His followers because there is no other way for the mission to succeed otherwise. After spending so much time with each of His individual disciples, Jesus knew their propensity to sometimes work in a way that did not demonstrate unity. Jesus prays for unity because there is a great task to be accomplished. When Christ followers live united, they demonstrate God’s love and power and this then serves as a witness to others who have not yet come to faith.

APPLICATION:

Knowing that Jesus prayed specifically for His followers to be united, how can you start working towards unity with other believers? Is there a current relationship that comes to mind that is suffering from disunity, and if so, what can you do to begin mending that? What do you think could happen if Christ followers, united by the Holy Spirit, worked together to connect people with God through authentic relationships to serve communities?

PRAYER:

Jesus, teach me what it means to live united. Help me to desire unity and fight against division. Father, help me to understand that the message of the Gospel is communicated best when believers are united. Strengthen me by your Holy Spirit to bring a spirit of unity everywhere I go so that the world can see that You love them.



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DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

WEEK 6 - DAY 4

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 1:27

“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel.”

OBSERVATION:

When Paul wrote this passage, he was imprisoned, but he continued to work for the advancement of the Gospel, specifically through the church in Philippi. It is possible that there was some level of suffering or persecution facing that church, and yet in spite of that, Paul prayed for their health and that they would be united for the sake of Christ. Paul models that preaching the Gospel is more than just a transfer of information. Those sharing the Gospel must be living examples of God’s beautiful and transformative power. The unity of the Philippian church would be one the most powerful messages they could ever preach. Paul’s words also apply to us today as it gives expectations for Christian conduct not as citizens of Philippi but as citizens of Heaven. There is a different standard of living for those who follow Christ, and seeking unity serves to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION:

We know the power of unity through events that happen in our culture. In the wake of 9/11, our country became overwhelmingly united in the midst of a great tragedy. If you have ever been on a team, you know how vital it is for everyone to have the same objective and to be moving in the same direction. Have you ever been on a team or part of an organization that had a strong sense of unity? Reflect on how it helped to have a singular purpose. How can you better conduct yourself as a citizen of Heaven? How can you help Newbreak become more united?

PRAYER:

Jesus, thank you for calling me to live in the spiritual community of the Church. Help me to live a life worthy of the Gospel. Give me the energy and endurance to strive together for the faith of the Gospel. God, give me opportunity to live as one in our community so that our words and actions can proclaim that a relationship with God is possible through Jesus.



ONE

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

WEEK 6 - DAY 5

SCRIPTURE: Nehemiah 4:6

“So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.”

OBSERVATION:

The walls of Jerusalem had been destroyed during Israel’s exile to Babylon. Nehemiah had been given special permission to return to Jerusalem so he could survey the damage the city had taken. Upon arriving at the city, he discovered the one great wall had been torn down and the gate had been burned. Initially, those who were rebuilding the wall were mocked for their efforts, but over time, as they made significant progress, the mocking turned to insults and eventually to threats of violence. The only way to overcome these hardships was through unity. The work of rebuilding the wall was done so quickly because they were united in purpose and strategy.

APPLICATION:

There are places in our community that desperately need to be rebuilt, and we can’t do it on our own. For us to accomplish the work God has called us to, we must do it together. Anytime something significant is undertaken, obstacles emerge internally and externally. Internally, we may fear we aren’t able to complete the task. Externally, there will be people who will come against us trying to discourage and dissuade us from continuing the task. What walls do you want to see rebuilt in your community? How can you mobilize those in your community to join you in becoming people who rebuild and restore?

PRAYER:

Jesus, thank You that You are in the business of rebuilding people and places that have been destroyed. Father, we ask that You give us a vision to be about building up our communities instead of tearing them down. Help us learn to partner with those in our community to rebuild ruins so that we can be known as people who do things together.