



# ONE

## DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

### WEEK 7 - DAY 1

#### SCRIPTURE: Philippians 4:7-9

“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable...if anything is excellent or praiseworthy....think about such things.”

#### OBSERVATION:

Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Philippi while he was in prison. This letter demonstrated how Paul was able to be full of joy in spite of his circumstances. He encouraged the people in how they could be transformed by the renewing of their minds, teaching them to not be anxious with worry, but instead to choose what to dwell on that which is good. He further encouraged them to practice gratitude and offer praises to God for what He has done and for who He is.

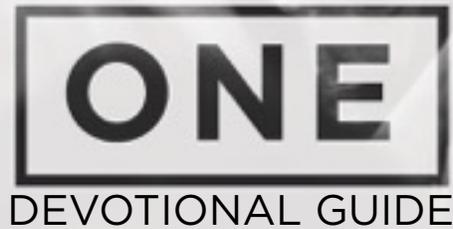
#### APPLICATION:

We are no different from the Christians long ago in Philippi. We worry, fret and can be anxious about our circumstances in life. At times, we can be completely self-absorbed and full of negative self-talk. God can help us choose what to dwell on in our minds. We need to identify and avoid the sources that fill our minds with “junk”-- whether that be from books, television, the internet, etc. It is also important to choose relationships that draw us closer to God, not away from Him. We want to find others who can encourage us and hold us accountable – people who truly desire God’s best for us.

#### PRAYER PRACTICE:

Here is a simple spiritual practice that will help with negative self-talk. It is a form of meditation with focused breathing. In your journal or on a piece of paper, make two columns. In the left hand column, write down what is making you spin mentally or the things that have you anxious, worried and fretting. Don’t judge or edit that list; just write what is really going on inside. In the right hand column, write down whatever is noble, true, lovely, admirable, excellent, praiseworthy, and something you are grateful for. Then, sit quietly in silence and solitude and focus on your breathing. Ask God to help renew your mind. Breathe in whatever you listed in the right hand column and breathe out whatever you have listed in the left hand column. In closing, offer thanksgiving and praises to Him.

Lord, God, I am so grateful for You. Please give me Your insight as to the thoughts that are displeasing to You. Show me what I fill my mind with that I need to eliminate so I can experience more of Your peace inside of me. Help me choose to dwell on whatever is true, lovely, excellent, and noble. I praise You for loving me as I am, and I am forever grateful to You for renewing my mind.

The logo features the word "ONE" in a large, bold, black sans-serif font, enclosed within a black rectangular border. Below this, the words "DEVOTIONAL GUIDE" are written in a smaller, black, all-caps sans-serif font. The background of the entire page is a soft-focus image of hands clasped in prayer.

# ONE

## DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

### WEEK 7 - DAY 2

#### SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 6:1

“Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death and of faith in God.”

#### OBSERVATION:

When building a home, the foundation is the base from which the house grows to completion, or maturity. Christ-followers can grow in the same way. The author of Hebrews exhorts the reader to leave the basics of knowledge about Christ and grow to maturity. It seemed that so many Christians, who by this time should have been mature leaders in the faith, were still behaving like new believers. They should have been growing more mature, but instead were stagnating. Lack of growth was a common theme addressed by many other New Testament letters to the early church. Without growth and maturity, Christ-followers cannot discern truth from lies and risk falling to false teachings.

#### APPLICATION:

As children, we go to school to learn how to read and write. We learn how to follow rules and socially interact with our peers. As we grow, we continue to learn through college, trade school, or life experience. Even after settling into our careers, continuing education extends the learning process. The same is true for our spiritual growth; it is a lifelong process. After we begin our relationship with Jesus, we get to know Him by spending time with Him. As we begin to understand His extravagant love and grace for us, we will desire to get to know Him more. How do you make time to nurture your faith and grow in Christ? Are there time-wasting habits that can be replaced with faith-building habits? Do you spend time with people who do more to sap your energy than build your faith? What changes can you make – even today – to intentionally pursue growth in your spiritual journey?

#### PRAYER:

Lord, my heart overflows with gratitude for who You are and what You have done for me. Show me how I can draw closer to You. Show me what stands in the way of me becoming mature. Grant me relationships with others I can encourage and who can encourage me to grow. Thank You for promising that You are here with me always and I will never be alone on this journey.



# ONE

## DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

### WEEK 7 - DAY 3

#### SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

#### OBSERVATION:

The Corinthians were familiar with the foot races in their own Isthmian games. Back then, they were racing for a prize that was a perishable wreath. Paul used the analogy of a race to explain that just as athletes train their bodies to make themselves physically better, Christ followers must train themselves to maintain a singular focus on Jesus. Everyone is running after something; everyone is chasing some prize. It takes great mental focus and inner determination to finish the race. So too spiritually, Paul encourages all of us to focus on God and finish this life “well.”

#### APPLICATION:

Notice that Paul talks about long distance running where the runner keeps going, perseveres and does not give up until he/she reaches the finish line. He also mentions the boxer who is fighting off another person and must always be ready to defend from attack. How can you guard against the things that might keep you from reaching the finish line? If you look at your spiritual journey as a race, what “strict training” are you undergoing to reach the finish line? What are you doing to make sure you finish “well?”

#### PRAYER:

Equip me Father to be laser-focused on Jesus Christ. I know there will be many snares along the way so please grant me wisdom. Guide my training as I strive to grow deeper and closer to You. I know You have created me uniquely for a purpose. Lord, sometimes I just want to give up. I get tired of running and tired of fighting. You promise to give me strength and I’m asking for that now. Help me keep going. Help me get through the challenges that keep me from finishing well.



# ONE

## DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

### WEEK 7 - DAY 4

#### SCRIPTURE: James 1:6-8

“But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.”

#### OBSERVATION:

The book of James emphasizes the importance of growing in maturity as a follower of Christ so that our faith may be displayed in our lifestyle. What a believer says should be reflected by his/her actions. One of the greatest hindrances to spiritual growth is doubt. James was concerned that the young church was losing its focus and being distracted by worldly cares. Mature faith is displayed by confidence in the promises of the Lord and the desire to walk in them.

#### APPLICATION:

When we ask God for His wisdom, we sometimes believe He won't give it to us or we don't deserve it. We may doubt what we receive from God, causing lack of commitment, responsibility, and joy. We often become impatient and doubt because we want answers right now and/or our way. Too often, we allow our doubts to keep us from growing. What are some doubts you have that act as wind and waves to distract you from growing more mature in Christ? How do you allow those distractions into your life? What can you do to rid yourself of them?

#### PRAYER:

Holy Father, I know I have doubts and often struggle to have a mature faith. Please forgive me for this weakness and give me strength and wisdom to overcome these doubts. I trust You to guide me and watch over me as I grow in my faith and relationship with You. Though I know this will not always be easy, it is an adventure I look forward to experiencing with You.



# ONE

## DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

### **WEEK 7 - DAY 5**

#### **SCRIPTURE: Colossians 1:28**

“He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.”

#### **OBSERVATION:**

Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians to address false teachings. He told them to focus on the Truth, which is found in the life and message of Christ Jesus. Paul knew that false teachers, looking for ways to warp the gospel, would invade the church in order to gain followers for themselves. For that reason, Paul filled the letter with the Gospel truth so that the Colossians could grow in wisdom and would be able to discern truth from heresy for themselves.

#### **APPLICATION:**

To admonish someone is to speak the truth in love. Who speaks truth into your life? Who can you speak truth to? God loves us dearly and has forgiven our sins through the blood of Christ, but He wants so much more for us than our current situations. He desires us to grow into maturity, not stagnate where we are today. What do you use to get the Word of God inside of you? God has given us several ways to grow in Him, how can you make these practices better in your life?

#### **PRAYER:**

Father, thank You for Your Word and all that it teaches. Thank You for loving me and accepting me just as I am. I am so thankful that You want me to become a fully mature follower of Christ and not remain a spiritual baby. Please continue to tenderly guide and protect in my life. Help me trust You and trust the process as You continue to make me more like You.