

HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL...

(based on Mastering Life by Ron Keller)

In order to get the most out of this devotional, the reader needs to spend at least 12 minutes each day on the designated step and exercises. Six minutes in the morning and six minutes at night are ideal.

This devotional contains the following:

1. An important passage to read each day. Memorize it. Read it out loud. Talk about it to others. Do not rush through the reading. Read only the designated passage for the day, even if it seems brief.
2. A page for your personal reflections. At the end of each day, indicate on this page:
 - how many times you read the passage;
 - the degree to which you applied the passage to your life today. (Rate yourself on a scale from one to ten, ten being the highest.)
3. One or two blank pages for your personal journal entries. Write, draw, or scribble on these pages. Use them as a diary or make entries about the designated passage and the influence it is having on your life.
4. An evaluation chart at the end of this booklet. Chart your growth and progress day by day. Indicate your rating for the day by placing a dot on the chart provided. When you have completed that section, connect the dots. When you finish the book, review the four charts to discover the cycles, seasons and patterns in your life.

Learn to act on what you read. Do what you sense the passage is telling you to do.

STEP ONE

We admit our need for God's gift of salvation, that we are powerless over certain areas of our lives, and that our lives are at times sinful and unmanageable.

For most people, the first step is the most difficult. It is the step that they keep going back to. The readings for the next 14 days will help in the continuous struggle to admit the way things really are, acknowledge powerlessness, and recognize that our lives are at times unmanageable.

Days 1 and 2 The act of surrender

Days 3 and 4 Embracing the passage of time

Days 5 and 6 Evaluating your habits

Days 7 and 8 Accepting yourself as you are

Days 9-11 Managing your life

Days 12-14 Having your life filled with God's presence

Step One reminds us of our need to surrender, to trust, to Let Go and Let God.

Reading for days 1 and 2

(To the reader: Read this passage several times during the day. Don't rush through it. Think about it, and maybe even talk about it to others.)

I, Jesus, am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and what kind of clothes you are to wear. Surely life means more than food, and the body more than clothing! Look at the birds in the sky. They don't sow or reap or gather into barns; yet the Lord feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are? Can any of you, for all your worrying, add one single minute to your life span? And why worry about clothing? Think of the flowers growing in the fields; they never have to work or spin; yet I assure you that not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these. Now if that is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will the Lord not much more look after you, you of little faith? So do not worry; do not say, "What are we to eat? What are we to drink? How are we to be clothed?" It is the pagans who set their hearts on all these things. Your heavenly Master knows you need them all. Set your hearts first, on the Lord's kingdom and righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well. So, don't worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Based on Matthew 6: 25-34 (JB)

(To the reader: This format will continue for 70 days. Be sure to reflect on the reading and record your reflections each day.)

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS The act of surrender

Day 1

(Be sure to make daily entries on the chart at the end of this devotional.)

Number of times the passage was read: _____

Today, I trusted. I was not anxious. I did not worry. I realized that worrying adds nothing to my life.

Degree to which I applied the passage to my life today (10 highest, 1 lowest): _____

Day 2

Number of times the passage was read: _____

Today I lived as if it was the last 24 hours of my life. I surrendered, relaxed, and enjoyed life.

Degree to which I applied the passage to my life today: _____

Step One is a reminder that we are more content when we gracefully embrace the passage of time.

Reading for days 3 and 4

There is a season for everything,
a time for every season under heaven:

a time for giving birth,
a time for dying;
a time for planting,
a time for uprooting what has been planted. a time for killing,
a time for healing;
a time for knocking down,
a time for building up.
a time for tears,
a time for mourning,
a time for dancing.
a time for throwing stones away,
a time for gathering them up;
a time for embracing,
a time to refrain from embracing.
a time for searching,
a time for losing;
a time for keeping,
a time for throwing away.
a time for tearing,
a time for sewing;
a time for keeping silent,
a time for speaking,
a time for loving,
a time for hating;
a time for war,
a time for peace.

Even in laughter the heart finds sadness, and joy makes way for sorrow.

Based on Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8 and Proverbs 14:13 (JB)

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: Embracing the passage of time.

Day 3

Number of times the passage was read: _____

Today, I accepted the flow of life, the passage of time, the seasons and cycles. I recognized that there is an appropriate time for everything.

Degree to which I applied the passage to my life today: _____

Day 4

Number of times the passage was read: _____

Today, more than ever, I acknowledged God as the Master of time and the Lord of life. I gave thanks for my birth. At the same time, I embraced my coming death.

Degree to which I applied the passage to my life today: _____

We admit that our lives are at times sinful and unmanageable.

Step One reminds us to evaluate and surrender our habits.

Reading for days 5 and 6

It is God who puts both the will and the action into you.

There is nothing I cannot master with the help of Jesus, the one who gives me strength.

All I can say is that I forget the past and I *press on* toward what is still to come.

The person who looks steadily at the perfect law of freedom and makes that the habit---not listening and then forgetting, but actively putting it into practice--will be happy in all things.

You have stripped off your old behavior with your old self, and you have put on a new self which will continually be renewed in the image of your Creator.

Based on Phillipians 2:13; 4:13; 3:13b; James 1:22-25; Colossians 3:7-10 (JB).

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: Evaluating your habits

Day 5

Number of times the passage was read: _____

Today, I acknowledged that God is at work in my life. I will be given both the desire and the ability to do what God wants me to do.

Degree to which I applied the passage to my life today: _____

Day 6

Number of times the passage was read: _____

Today, I trusted Jesus Christ. I am convinced that in faith I can do all things. I believe old habits can be conquered and new ones developed.

Degree to which I applied the passage to my life today: _____

Accepting life, the passage of time, and the unmanageable parts of our lives, and accepting ourselves just as we are, this is the message of Step One and the pathway to peace and serenity.

Reading for days 7 and 8

My brothers and sisters, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: *Offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to God.* This is the true worship that you should offer.

For it is not as if we had a *high priest, Jesus Christ, who was incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us*; but we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin. Let us be confident then, in approaching the throne of grace through him, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in need of help.

Those who are in Christ Jesus are not condemned. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Based on Romans 12:1; Hebrews 4:15-16; Romans 8:1 (TEV and JB)

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: Accepting yourself as you are

Day 7

Number of times the passage was read: _____

Today, I take comfort in the truth that Jesus Christ came as a human being and is capable of empathizing with me, my feelings and experiences. I accepted his ability to carry me through or deliver me from discouraging human experiences.

Degree to which I applied the passage to my life today: _____

Day 8

Number of times the passage was read: _____

Today, I will accept myself as I am.

Degree to which I applied the passage to my life today: _____

Many parts of our lives seem unmanageable. We may feel powerless about these areas. It is these feelings that remind us of our need to surrender the management of our lives to God as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.

Reading for days 9, 10, and 11

Jesus says, *Come to me*, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and *I will give you rest*. Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest. For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is not heavy.

Jesus says, Listen, *I stand at the door* and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into your house and eat with you and you will eat with me.

The Lord is my shepherd.

I shall not want. You make me lie down in green pastures.

You lead me to still waters.

You restore my soul and lead me in the paths of righteousness. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil, for you, Lord are with me.

Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

In the presence of my enemies, you prepare a feast before me.

You anoint my head with oil. My cup runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. And afterwards, I will dwell in your house forever and ever.

God's plan is to make known a secret, a rich and glorious secret for all peoples. And the secret is simply this: *Christ is in you*, which means that you will share in the glory of God.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on what you think you know. Remember the Lord in everything you do, and you will be shown the right way. Never let yourself think that you are wiser than you are; simply obey the Lord and refuse to do wrong.

(Based on Matt. 11:28-30; Rev. 3:20; Ps. 23:1-6; Col. 1:27; Pro. 15-7)

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: Managing your life

Day 9

Number of times the passage was read: _____

Today, I came to Jesus Christ. I accepted his "yoke" for me. In doing this, I expressed my desire to have him manage my life.

Degree to which I applied the passage to my life today: _____

Day 10

Number of times the passage was read: _____

Today, I listened to his knock upon my door. I realized that only I can open the door. I let him in.

Degree to which I applied the passage to my life today: _____

Day 11

Number of times the passage was read: _____

Today, I acknowledged that Jesus Christ is my leader, shepherd and manager. Under the Lord's care, I have everything that I need. I surrendered the management of my life to Jesus today.

Degree to which I applied the passage to my life today: _____

.... and when we surrender our hearts, minds, and wills to Jesus Christ, then the Holy Spirit, Counselor, Comforter, Advocate, Helper and Bearer of gifts and fruits comes to reside within the surrendered one...

to heal,
encourage,
empower and
equip for life.

Readings for days 12, 13, and 14

God gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask.

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.

Jesus says, I shall ask God and *you will be given another Advocate to be with you forever.*

I have said these things to you while still with you; but the Advocate, the I Holy Spirit, whom God will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you.

Still, I must tell you the truth: it is for your own good that I am going, because unless I go, the Advocate will not come to you.

I still have many things to say to you, but they would be too much for you now. But when the Spirit of Truth comes, you will be led to complete truth; and you will be told of the things to come. The Spirit of Truth will glorify me.

Here is what the Spirit brings: fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control.

(Based on Luke 11:13; Acts 1:8a; John 14:16, 25;16:7-5; Galatians 5:22 JB and TEV)

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS: Having your life filled with God's presence

Day 12

Number of times the passage was read: _____

Today, I asked the Holy Spirit to come into my life more fully. I recognized that the Spirit is a powerful person working in, through, and around me.

Degree to which I applied the passage to my life today: _____

Day 13

Number of times the passage was read: _____

Today, I was thankful that I have been given another "advocate" to be with me forever. This "comforter" will teach me and lead me into complete truth.

Degree to which I applied the passage to my life today: _____

Day 14

Number of times the passage was read: _____

Today, I opened myself to receive the fruits of the Holy Spirit. These abiding fruits will be reminders of the continuous presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Degree to which I applied the passage to my life today: _____

Lord Jesus, I want to surrender my life. This is gradually becoming my heart's desire. I have come to understand that surrender is the cornerstone for growth. It is the platform on which all else in my life is built.

I realize now, like never before, that I must surrender. As hard as it will be, I intend to forfeit my rights. I want to surrender my habits. I want to give You my plans and the use of my time.

Honestly, I must admit that I am afraid. Please give me the courage to surrender. Give me the ability to give myself to you just as I am. I want to be willing to come stripped of all my personal desires, except one... the desire to serve you.

To you, Lord, I give my life... my feelings, schedule, resources, work load, gifts and ideas. To you, I give myself.

I understand that I am surrendering to you, a living God, a personal God. In surrendering to you, I am bound to find my freedom.

Lord Jesus, I want to do all this and more. I want to learn to love you.

Let your words become mine...

And going on a little further, Jesus fell on his face and prayed, "Lord, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Let it be as you, not I would, have it."

Then to all gathered he said, "If you want to be a follower of mine, renounce yourself, take up your cross every day and follow me. For if you want to save your life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for my sake, you will save it. What gain is it for you to have won the world and to have lost or ruined your very self."

Come near to God, and God will come near to you.

Based on Matthew 26:39; Luke 9: 23-25; James 4:8 (TEV & JB)

EVALUATION CHART

How surrendered is my life becoming?

- + Today I surrendered my life and did not try to control it.
- 0 Today I wanted to control my life.
- Today I controlled by life and did not consider surrendering it.

Day													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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