

INTRO

Growing up, I spent the first 10 years of my young life wanting a girlfriend. Every time I heard a love song, watched a tv show, or saw a movie about love, my heart was filled with desire for a girlfriend. Finally, my time had come.

I was messaging a girl online and she was hinting that she liked me. I finally worked up the nerve to make a bold move... "Will... you... be... my... girlfriend?" SEND!

After a few painful moments of waiting, as my heart was beating out of my chest, she finally replied. "YES!"

My life was now complete.

However, I was left with this thought: "What do I do now?!?"

As silly as this story may sound, this is very similar to how you may feel when following Jesus. You have made a giant decision to turn from your old self and give yourself completely to Christ, but just like me with my first girlfriend, you may have some questions about what to do next.

Placing your faith in Jesus is not the finish line; it is just the beginning. God wants you to know that your relationship with Him is eternal, not a small decision that you get excited about and then run away from once the newness wears off.

Now that you've given your life to Jesus, my hope for this devotional is that it would help you connect with the One who matters more than anything or anyone else, Jesus!

**D
A
Y
1**

**ABIDE
IN
JESUS**

Read: **John 15:1-11**

Do you know anyone with a busted up phone?

One of my best friend's phone was so busted that it wouldn't keep a charge for more than an hour. It had cracks all over the screen and was hard to use even when it was charged. When it was connected to the power source it had life, but shortly after he took it away it was useless.

In John 15:5, Jesus tells us that we are like this phone. He says, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." Jesus is our source of life! When you remain connected to Him, you will enjoy Him and live the fruitful life He's promised.

When we don't stay connected to Jesus and try to live our lives on our own power, we will be like a phone without a charge - so much potential, but no power to activate it. Lifeless. Jesus uses very strong language to describe what happens when we aren't connected to Him - "If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned."

The Gospel gives us access to connect with God. The way we continue to follow Jesus is to stay connected to Him.

- What is one way you can connect with Jesus today?
- What is one way you can remain connected with Him all day long?
- How can you make this a daily rhythm in your life?

**D
A
Y
2**

**GODLY
COMM
UNITY**

Acts 2:37-47

Have you ever been to a bonfire?

It's a beautiful thing to watch a giant bonfire burn on a cool, dark night in the middle of the woods. The logs are piled up keeping the massive flame roaring with life, giving warmth to everyone close by. What happens when you take one of the logs out of the fire and isolate it away from the others? It may burn for a little while, but eventually the flame will go out.

This is how it is for the Christian, especially a new believer. When we isolate ourselves from other Christians, our white hot faith will begin to smolder and may go completely cold.

In Acts 2, we get a glimpse of God's plan for His people. Right after Peter preaches a sermon and 3,000 people are saved, we see these new believers doing life together. It says, "And all who believed were together and had all things in common... and day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes." After they were saved, they began to do life together in community. They went to church together, ate good food together, encouraged each other, and were open and honest with each other. We need this, too!

Now that you are saved, you have been adopted into God's family. When you stay connected to community, the flame in your heart will continue to burn bright forever.

- What is one way you can get connected with other Christians on a regular basis?
- What church will you get plugged into?
- Who is one Christian friend that you can do life with?

**D
A
Y
3**

**SPEND
TIME
WITH
JESUS**

Matthew 6:5-14

Psalm 19:7-11

Can a relationship be successful if you never communicate?

Before I got married, dozens of people stressed the importance of communication. They told us our relationship would suffer without it. I realized that if my wife and I never talked, we would still technically be married, but our intimacy would suffer.

This is also how it is with our relationship with God. We are in an eternal relationship with Him. Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, nothing will ever be able to separate you from His love. However, your intimacy with Him is contingent on the time you spend with Him. If you spend a lot of time communicating with God, your relationship will be close, sweet, and life-giving. On the other hand, if you never set aside time to be with God and talk to God, your relationship will most likely be cold and distant.

How can you talk to God? PRAY. Just like any other loving father, He is eager to hear from His kids.

How does God talk to us? He speaks to us through the beauty of creation, the wisdom of more mature Christians, and the Holy Spirit. However, the best way to hear clearly from God is by reading the Bible. It is God's Word. Anytime you read the Bible you are literally hearing the voice of God.

The best part of the Gospel is we get to know God personally. Let's not just put the wedding ring on our finger and live separate lives, but rather, let's live in close connection with God by spending time communicating with Him.

- When are you going to spend time with God each day?
- What book of the Bible are you going to start reading each day? (*If you're not sure, John is a great place to begin.)
- How can you talk to God throughout the day?

**D
A
Y
4**

**LIVE
LIKE
GOD
SAYS**

James 1:19-27

Psalm 16:11

Have you ever seen a fish flailing around out of water?

When a fish is in water it is truly alive, flourishing, and at peace, but when you take that fish out of the environment it was made for, it begins gasping for life and violently flails around desperate to get back into the water.

We are not much different than this fish. When we live according to God's Word we are fully alive, but when we live outside of God's will in any part of our lives we will feel like a fish out of water, desperate for life. Psalm 16 says, "He makes known to me the pathway of life." Whatever God tells you to do will lead to greater life and richer joy. God's commands are not there to hinder our joy, but to lead us into the fullness of it!

As you continue to follow Jesus, God will point out next steps for you to take. He will convict you to change your attitudes and actions in certain areas. He will point out something in the Bible that He wants you to act on. You will hear something in church or from another Christian that will cut you to the heart. This is God inviting you into greater life and richer joy.

Jesus is now Lord of your life which means you obey what He says, trusting that He knows best.

- What is your next step in your walk with Jesus?
- What has God pointed out that He wants you to change?
- What does it mean for Jesus to be Lord of your entire life?

**D
A
Y
5**

**KILL
SIN!**

Colossians 3:1-17

Now that you're a Christian, what do you do with sin that won't seem to go away?

SEE IT - Sin is anything that's against God. It's disobedience to Him. It's loving anything more than Him. Like a surgeon who's about to cut a tumor out of a patient, we must be aware of the sin in us.

NAME IT - Rather than calling it a "bad habit," you must call it what it is—sin. When I was a kid, my front yard was full of weeds. When I would mow the lawn, it would actually look like grass for a while because it was all the same color and length, but it would soon grow again into a yard full of ugly weeds. I may have changed how it looked for a season, but because I treated it like grass and not what it really was, it soon grew back every time. Sin must be called sin and treated like sin in order for you to have lasting freedom.

KILL IT - In Colossians 3, we are given a list of sinful behaviors to watch out for and are told to put them to death. The Bible is clear that sin leads to death; therefore, we don't just mow over it, we pull it up by the root.

You now have the power to do this because of Jesus' death and resurrection. He conquered sin and death once and for all, now you have the power to walk in that freedom!

SEE IT. NAME IT. KILL IT.

- What sin needs to be killed in your life?
- Who can you confess your sin to? Ask them to pray for you and hold you accountable.
- What is one practical change you can make to put that sin to death?

**D
A
Y
6**

**SERVE
OTHERS**

Philippians 2:1-11

How can you live more like Jesus today?

When Jesus was asked what is the most important commandment, He responded with, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. And love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31). Most of the focus each day to this point has been about our vertical relationship with God, but this one is more about our horizontal relationship with others. How we treat other people is a direct reflection of how much we love God.

In Philippians 2, Paul tells us a very practical way to love others. He says, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant as yourselves. Let each of you not look only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." One of the best ways we can be like Jesus everywhere we go is to look for ways to love and serve others.

The more we focus on ourselves the more miserable we will become; but, the more we focus on serving others out of an overflow of joy in God, the more satisfied we will be in life.

Jesus modeled this perfectly for us, "...though he [Jesus] was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." We love others because Jesus loved us first.

- What is one way you can serve your family today?
- What is one way you can serve outside of your home today?
- Take note of the satisfaction that follows this selflessness.

**D
A
Y
7**

**RUN
BACK
TO GOD**

Ephesians 2:1-10 ***2 Corinthians 5:21***

What do you do when you mess up?

When one of my friends was in elementary school, he was walking home from school through the woods and was bitten by a giant spider on his rear end. He did not tell his dad because he was embarrassed. After a day or two the bite became so painful that he couldn't even sit down. Finally, he told his dad, and to his surprise, he was met with love. They went to the hospital and it was healed within a few days. My friend thought his dad was going to be frustrated and angry, but he just didn't want his son to be in pain anymore.

At some point we all fall short in our devotion to Jesus. When this happens, the normal human reaction is to hide our sin in shame and run further away from God, like my friend with his spider bite. That is the exact opposite of what God wants us to do. God is a Good Father who wants the best for us.

Jesus Christ has already paid for all of your sin on the cross. He has covered your shame with His love. Because of God's grace, we are completely forgiven of everything. Therefore, you do not need to run away when you mess up in fear of punishment, but rather you can run to God to expose your "spider bite" knowing that it's already been paid for!

When you fall short, don't run away from God, but run into the arms of your Loving Father!

- Is there anything in your past you've tried to hide from God?
- Is there anything that you're currently trying to hide from God? (*If there is, reach out to your pastor or a spiritual mentor for help.)
- Why are you able to run towards God when you mess up?

**NOW
WHAT?**

I am so grateful that you have finished this devotional. You are on your way to following Jesus for the rest of your life. Before you put this to the side and go about your life, take a few minutes to go back through the application questions at the end of each day. What church are you going to be a part of moving forward? When are you going to spend time with Jesus each day? Etc.

My final challenge to you is to not keep your faith to yourself, but rather, make your life about enjoying God and sharing Him with as many people as possible. Jesus commands, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19). He is inviting you to bring His Kingdom to earth everywhere you go.

Because of Jesus Christ's perfect life, His sacrifice on the cross, and His resurrection from the grave, you are a child of God. This is your identity. You are a new creation. You are loved. You are blessed. You've been chosen. You are holy and blameless. You have the Holy Spirit living inside of you. I can't wait to see what God has in store for you as you continue to follow Jesus for the rest of your life!



