



Week One: Student Devos

Student Devo #1

“Consider how much love the Father has given to us,

that we should be called children of God.”

1 John 3:1 (MEV)

You’ve probably heard this verse before! But you may have never read it like this...

Can you read that verse again, but this time, can you read it out loud? Actually, can you read it out loud several times, following these instructions?

The first time you read the verse out loud, read it putting special emphasis on the word **CONSIDER**.

“**CONSIDER** how much love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God.”

Read it out loud again, this time, putting a good loud voice to the words **HOW MUCH**.

Again, read the whole verse, but this time only emphasize the word **LOVE**.

Now, again, read it, emphasizing only the words **THE FATHER**.

Follow this pattern, reading it again, each time with emphasis on a new word: **GIVEN, US, WE,** and **CHILDREN OF GOD**.

Thanks for doing that! I love to take a familiar verse and repeat it like this; I always see new and amazing things about God when I do!

Let’s take a minute and talk about God.

God is the Creator of the Universe, the One who made all of nature, and also the One who keeps the sun and moon and ocean tides where they are supposed to be...and He also has another very important title: Father.

His heart is overwhelmed with love when He looks at His children, and YOU are one of those children!

Student Devo #2

"We love Him because He first loved us."

1 John 4:19 (MEV)

Let's do our little pattern again today! Begin reading this verse out loud, emphasizing the first word. Then repeat the whole line, only emphasizing one word of the verse each time you repeat.

Yes, I'm waiting! Go ahead...

Did you do it?

OK, awesome. I did it, too.

Which time was your favorite? Which emphasized word meant the most or brought new meaning to you?

It was God's idea, and to His greatest pleasure, to first love us - to really love us!

You might have some thoughts already about what love means or how it feels, or maybe you have never really thought about it.

But God's love means this:

We are chosen, wanted, sought after.

He knows us and calls out our names.

He imagines ways to bless us and help us.

We always have a friend, helper, comforter, and Father.

He thinks of us...all of the time.

We always have a home and family with Him.

That's a lot of ways He loves us! Let's pray together.

Student Devo #3

"You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free."

John 8:32 (MEV)

Have you ever heard this verse before?

Even though it is a scripture right out of the Christian Bible, this verse is actually used out in the world quite a lot. Why? Because it is a concept that can be related to many circumstances. For example, let's say you were really worried about whether or not you made the basketball team. You were brave to sign up and show up, but you don't know yet if you're going to get to lace up. When you learn the truth that you made it, you were automatically set free from your worry, right?

In this passage originally, Jesus was talking to Jews in Israel who believed in Him. First, He said, "If you remain in My Word, then you are truly My disciples." Then the very next verse is the familiar one: "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set You free."

So the truth that was supposed to set His friends free was His Word. Awesome! We know His Word! We know from all of scripture that Jesus came with a clear message, and that was: "I am here to show the love of the Father to anyone who will believe in Me."

In Genesis, He created us in His image and He called us "very good." (Gen. 1:31) In Psalm 139, we see over and over in detail how He thoughtfully handcrafted each one of us. The fact that Jesus died for us; the fact that there is not a day that goes by that He is not thinking of us...this is enough to set me free from worry, fear, and dread.

Of all the truth in the Word of God, we have to begin with this one: The Father loves us.

It's really all we need to know right now. His love is enough to calm our hearts, to assure it's all going to be okay because He is on it, He has not left us alone, He cares. Let's let the truth of that set us free.

Dear Jesus,

Thank You for coming so that I could know my identity as a child of God. My feelings and relationships can be really hard sometimes. I confess that I have bad thoughts sometimes. But I want this truth to be a guide in my life. I need it. May this truth, that You love me, make a big difference in how I think about myself. Thank You, Lord. Amen.



Week Two: Student Devos

Student Devo #4

"Sing, o heavens! And be joyful, o earth! Break forth into singing, o mountains!

For the Lord has comforted His people and will have mercy on His afflicted.

But Zion said, 'The Lord has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me!'

Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb?

Even these may forget, yet I will not forget.

See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands..."

Isaiah 49:13-16 (MEV)

Hi there! How are you doing today?

Really, how are you doing? What's on your mind? Take a moment to make a list of what you can't stop thinking about. This is a great thing to do as you learn how to have a quiet time with God as you grow up and study His Word and pray on your own. There are so many things on our minds. Did you know God cares about each and every one? Hand them over to Him for a minute. Write them down below if you want to.

Okay, let's dive into our scripture now!

This passage from Isaiah is really meaningful because it is God saying that His people (the Jews in Israel back over 2000 years ago and also all of us who choose to follow Him today) should rejoice because we might feel forsaken and forgotten, but we absolutely have not been!

God is declaring, as He does so many times in scripture, that He never runs out of love! He never runs out of mercy!

This passage tells us He has written our names on the palms of His hand. That makes me think, too, about how Jesus took nails in His palms for us.

Can you name 3 or 4 people that you love?

How does it feel to think their names are written on God's hand, that He loves them?

How does it feel to think your name is written on God's hand, too?

Through God's love and Jesus's sacrifice, we are now 100% invited to the table, the house, the family of God! Romans 10:13 (MEV) says, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Being saved means we understand we are sinners and need His help. It means we are saying yes to His invitation to be in His family. It also means we are submitting to God's leadership over the rest of our lives, too. When we submit to His leadership, He removes our sin and guilt, and He wipes our slate clean. He holds nothing over our heads. We become full members of His family and His team for, literally, forever.

If you have never prayed to submit your whole self to Jesus and accept His gift of forgiveness and new life, I am praying for you right now that you will talk with a believer in Jesus soon and make that decision!

What's most important is that you know you are loved and you are invited.

God,

We can't thank You enough for the warm welcome we didn't deserve. You are the best! You hold our cares and our lives in the palm of Your hand. You've made a way for us to start fresh and new anytime we want to come and bow before You. All who call on the name of Jesus will be saved. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

Student Devo #5

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

For those whom He foreknew, He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He might be the firstborn among many brothers."

Romans 8:28-29 (MEV)

Okay, friends. There are some big words in our passage of scripture today! We aren't going to get too caught up in every single one of those big words, but let's break it down, piece by piece, because I promise there are some hidden treasures in there. These are my personal definitions and explanations below!

- 1: "All things": Everything we go through, the good, the bad, and the ugly
- 2: "Work together for good": Will come to a good end
- 3: "For those who are called according to His purpose": For followers of Jesus, those who want to do God's will
- 4: "For those whom He foreknew": The people God knew in advance would accept Him
- 5: "He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son": He planned that these people would go through specific things in order to mold and make them more like Jesus
- 6: "So that He might be the firstborn among many brothers": Because of that beautiful work God is doing in Christians, Jesus can be called their older brother

We get a clean slate when we become a Christian and ask Jesus to be our Lord and Savior. This event is actually another really big word: Justification! A great definition of "justification" is "just-as-if-I'd-never-sinned." Isn't that awesome?

But we all know that time goes by, and we mess up again. We are going to have to ask forgiveness again. That can feel so disappointing, but it is okay! God already knows, and He has a plan for this. We will not have to be saved and justified again. Instead, now we are in the daily process of (oh, dear!) another big word:

Sanctification.

Student Devo #6

“Both the One who makes people holy

and those who are made holy

are of the same family.

So Jesus is not ashamed

to call them brothers and sisters.”

Hebrews 2:10-12 (NIV)

If you have any siblings, take a moment and think about them. What are their names and ages? You can write this down or just think about it in your mind.

Are you proud to be in the same family as them?

Do you feel like your family is proud to have you in their family?

If so, what do they do that shows they are proud to have you in their family?

If not, can you give an example of something that has happened that makes you think they are not proud to have you?



Week Three: Student Devos

Student Devo #7

"I will not leave you fatherless.

I will come to you.

Yet a little while and the world will see Me no more.

But you will see Me.

Because I live, you will live also."

John 14:18-19 (MEV)

We have talked about Jesus as our brother. In this passage of the Bible, we see Jesus being a very serious brother! He knows He is going to die soon, as He says these words to His closest followers. He tells them that while they are new to the family of God, and while He will be dying and going away soon, He isn't going to leave them lonely and lost. He had a plan.

This plan had two parts.

Here's the first part of His plan. After His death, He was promising to send the Holy Spirit, who is Jesus in spirit form- able to move right in wherever we are! If you are a believer in Jesus, the Holy Spirit actually lives inside of you; He quite honestly can't get any closer to you than that, could He? When Jesus says He is with us, He means it! There is much more about the Spirit He promised in the rest of John 14. I hope you will read it all!

The second part of His plan revealed in this part of the passage was that He would someday return to the earth. We often call this the Second Coming or the Second Advent. Christians have been longing for His return for over 2,000 years, ever since He left the earth the first time!

Student Devo #8

"So again I ask, does God give you His Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?"

So also Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Galatians 3:5-6 (MEV)

No one ever said it would be easy, but being in the family of God requires believing in what you simply cannot see...yet.

This verse explains that we did not receive the Holy Spirit (remember, that's Jesus in a form that is able to live in all of His followers even today) and see miracles because we were so awesome. His gift of the Spirit and miracles were not because we obeyed His rules so perfectly. No, the Spirit coming and the miraculous things He has done for us are simply a result of us believing God.

Abraham was also a person that God called into His family. He made promises to Abraham, and Abraham believed God! This was way before Jesus came, but God called Abraham "righteous", or you could say Right-With-God, because of one thing: Abraham's decision to believe what God told him was trustworthy.

God is offering that same Right-With-God-ness to you and me. It comes through believing in Him.

So far in these devos we have learned that:

- God loves us, and in fact, He loved us first.
- Our names are written on the palm of His hand.
- He calls us His children, and Jesus is proud to be our brother.
- We have a Friend and Comforter, the Holy Spirit, with us at all times.
- Jesus is coming back for us someday.

Now, the question is: Will you choose to believe these things?

Write or say aloud your own prayer today. Tell God what you are thinking and feeling. Ask Him for what you need. If you're having trouble believing, talk to Him about it! If you do believe, thank Him for His precious promises that will be a strength to you the rest of your life.



Student Devotional #9

"By faith Enoch was taken to heaven so that he would not see death.

He was not found, because God took him away.

For before he was taken, he had this commendation,

that he pleased God.

And without faith it is impossible to please God.

for He who comes to God must believe that He exists

and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Hebrew 11:5-6 (MEV)

Perhaps the most important words of the whole chapter of Hebrews 11 are "by faith". That phrase is repeated 19 times in the chapter, if I am counting correctly. The first Bible hero the writer mentions is Enoch.

Enoch lived before the Great Flood and he was a man who walked with God very closely. He lived 365 years! And when it was time for him to go, the Bible says he basically just disappeared. He was "no more". What??? I know! And the one main thing we really know about Enoch is mentioned here in Hebrews 11:5: We are told Enoch pleased God.

Enoch pleased God by his faith in Him.

These were the times before the Flood. Remember why the Flood happened? The world was so evil! There was no one left who wanted to please God by the time Noah and his family came on the scene, three generations after Enoch. But even in the evil world, God saw Enoch's faith. Then He saw Noah's faith. Then Abraham and Sarah's faith. Then Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph's. On and on through the Bible, and now to us...



Week Four: Student Devos

Student Devo #10

Allow me to summarize the story of King Hezekiah in 2 Chronicles 29, 30, and 31.

A long time ago, in a land far, far, away there was a group of people called the Israelites that God dearly loved. However, these people and God had a difficult relationship! He was constantly having to pull them out of trouble and plead with them to stay committed to Him. They would turn to Him for a little while, receive all the blessings of His commitment -or covenant promises- but then forget Him entirely. This had recently happened again when King Hezekiah came on the scene. And this King intended to change things quickly.

I mean, as soon as he got on the throne in Jerusalem, he opened the doors of the church, got the ministers back in there, and got the praise band ready. He declared a major cleaning day, purging anything that defiled their place of worship, and sent letters to all of the tribes of Israel. The letters said that the King wanted everyone to drop what they were doing and consider getting serious about God and His Word again. He wanted them to come and finally observe Passover again, an important feast that helped them remember God's miracles of the past.

They came. Yes, some laughed and mocked, but many, many people came. The worship of the Lord was restored, and not only that, all of the routines that helped people grow with God got put into motion again.

Hezekiah praised the Lord because of four things:

1. He praised God that He was so merciful and compassionate. He was grateful that God would take them back after years of offending Him! (2 Chronicles 30:9)
2. He praised God that God had prepared the peoples' hearts, and he acknowledged that this transformation happened so quickly there was no way it could be anyone but God who did the true work. (2 Chronicles 29:36)
3. He praised God because even though they were having the Passover on the wrong date, Hezekiah knew God wanted them to do it anyway. He praised God that the people and the date of the feast didn't have to be perfect. (2 Chronicles 30:2-3 and 18-20)
4. He praised God that after God had forgiven and shown mercy to the people, the people realized more and more sins they should confess and bad altars that needed to come down. (2 Chronicles 31:1)

I don't know where you are in your relationship with God. Maybe you think He is judgy or nit-picky, hard

Student Devo #11

“What then shall we say to these things?”

If God is for us, who can be against us?

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all,

how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”

Romans 8:31 & 32 (MEV)

So, three of my children are adopted.

One was adopted as a little baby, and two were adopted as 4 and 5 year olds.

One thing we discovered as we welcomed these precious girls into the family was that their expectations were set really high; yet at the same time, they didn't know what they wanted. Sometimes people would think they were being ungrateful, but eventually, I saw that it was not ungratefulness.

I believe they were simply worried that they wouldn't get “enough”.

There are deep places in our hearts, especially after grief and loss, that feel like they can never be truly filled. We grab onto possessions and experiences or maybe try to be someone's favorite in order to fill that hole.

When people and events don't fulfill our expectations and we are disappointed, the enemy (Satan) begins to lie to us and tell us things like:

“See, they don't really love you.”

“You're always going to be on your own; it's up to you to get what you want.”

“You'll never really belong to this family.”

“There's no way you'll ever feel complete.”

But the truth of Romans 8:31 and 32 tell us the opposite, as does all of Scripture! God is FOR US, not against us! If He was willing to give His Son to die on the cross for us, He surely is willing to give us everything we need when we need it. We can stop trying to “get enough” to fill this empty place in our hearts. When we trust in Jesus, He begins to fill it and then all that He gives in our lifetime is just extra.

Student Devo #12

"But God, being rich in mercy,

because of His great love with which He loved us,

even when we were dead in sins,

made us alive together with Christ

(by grace you have been saved)."

Ephesians 2:4-5 (MEV)

What does it mean to be "alive"?

Well, we know it means that our heart is beating and our lungs are breathing, right? Those things have to be happening for us to be alive.

But there is more to being alive than just our physical body.

Think of a person you know who is alive but is grumpy all of the time, does nothing to help anyone else, or has no vision or purpose for their life. Unfortunately, this is the path a lot of older people go down when they begin to have chronic pain, lose family members, or have to be put in a home for the elderly. It would be hard to have an alive and happy spirit in such circumstances, right?

But it is possible. In fact, God's Word tells us to give thanks in all circumstances, to continually lift up a shout of praise, and to bless the Lord at all times. When we walk with God, starting each day with a commitment to follow Him, He brings us joy that makes no sense in the middle of our current problem.

You aren't an elderly person, but you do have struggles that are hard to bear up under sometimes. There are arguments. There may be bullying. There are comparisons. There is pressure. But God is calling you to recognize what He has given you by believing in Jesus for your daily LIFE.

Can you begin to thank Him and praise Him for His mercy and how far He has carried you?

Can you begin to lift your sins and worries to Him, and leave them there at His feet?



Week Five: Student Devos

Student Devo #13

"One will say, 'I am the LORDs:

another will call himself by the name of Jacob:

and another will write on his hand, 'Belonging to the LORD.

and name himself by the name of Israel."

Isaiah 44:5 (MEV)

When I first really heard and understood this verse, it was when I was a young teenager, just about 14 years old. I had just had my poor heart broken in two, smashed to smithereens, and then danced upon. It was not pretty. But truly, God Himself became the Love of my Life through that time. I honestly and earnestly believed, by faith in the Word of God, that I was special to Him. His love saved me and put me back together.

God made covenants with the people we have talked about in Scripture, like Noah, Abraham, Jacob who was given the name Israel, and more. Well, God has a covenant - a relationship, a blessing, and a commitment - He wants to make with you, too. This verse tells us we can be assured that if we want to, we can belong to Him, and He will never forget or forsake us, or leave us for another.

At that time of pain in my life, right at the age where I was leaving childhood and becoming what I think of as "me", God showed me that the covenant He wanted to make with me went beyond my wildest dreams. He wanted to be my constant Friend, Love, Hope, Joy, Counselor, and Home. I found there was an inner secret place in my mind and heart where I could be with Him and be renewed for the challenges of my life.

God is so good that He keeps up His end of the covenant no matter what we do, but the real Life comes when we join Him in an ongoing, daily relationship through being in His Word, praising Him, praying to Him, and spending time with other real believers. Sometimes we sit in silence with Him and sometimes we get restored through a big loud time of worshiping Him with our voices!

Student Devo #14

"Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.

Old things have passed away. Look, all things have become new."

2 Corinthians 5:17 (M&V)

It is easy to think sometimes that once we have messed up, things will never be the same. Maybe it was something embarrassing that happened at school, and you feel like you can't bear to go back. Perhaps you disappointed yourself or your parents when you made a big mistake, like cheating or lying.

Have you ever seen a whiteboard, like at church or school, with the markers in the tray that are supposed to wipe off easily? Have you ever seen a whiteboard where people didn't use the right markers? Maybe they used a Sharpie or some other kind of permanent marker, rather than a dry erase (easy off) marker. Some people who are really particular may call that whiteboard ruined; I mean, in some ways, it'll never be fully white again, that's true.

Have you ever felt like that whiteboard, full of messy scribbles? Words you shouldn't have said, thoughts you shouldn't have thought, actions you shouldn't have done? Imagine your life as that whiteboard...but just for a moment, because I have good news for you.

What the verse above is telling us is that yes, we have horribly messy scribbles staining our white board, our one life, BUT anyone who puts their faith in Jesus for their forgiveness has those marker stains erased. The love of God, the blood of Jesus on the cross, has that power.

Your mistakes, when you are "in Christ", are dry erase marker messes NOT permanent marker stains. All because of Jesus. Only because of Jesus.

No, we are not good on our own. We will never be. But we can be clean, we can be new, and in God's eyes, we can be perfect, by knowing our need for a Savior and trusting in Jesus for our forgiveness and hope.

Will you need Him to keep wiping off your whiteboard? Yes. But there is no shame in that. He delivered us from shame as well as from sin. Our repentance (admitting our sin and turning from it to the best of our ability, as we call on Him for true heart change) is all He is asking for. While we don't take His grace for granted, we do know that we will mess up and need Him to cleanse us again and again. We are human, and He uses these challenges to mold us to become more like Him each and every time we confess.

Student Devo #15

*"I am confident of this very thing,
that He who began a good work in you
will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."*

Philippians 1:6 (MEV)

I love this verse so much!

Are you the type of person that is really hard on themselves or are you the type of person that doesn't really care if they made a mistake?

Ooh, to get even deeper, could you possibly be the kind of person who is super hard on themselves but *pretends* that they don't care if they made a mistake?

It can get tricky. But I think deep down all of us want to be good, do good, and be known for doing good! However, sometimes our stains and messes (like we talked about in Student Devo #14) can turn into opportunities for the enemy (the Bible calls him "Satan", which means "the accuser") to lie to us about our potential. We can think it is useless to try to do better or make amends when we mess up. But those are lies.

It's so important to realize that while it may feel natural to beat ourselves up for making mistakes, God doesn't need or want us to do that. The verse above is explaining that God began a very good thing when He made you, chose you, and started working in your life. And just as He alone began that good thing in you, He alone will take the responsibility of perfecting and completing it.

It's like He took a blank canvas and started painting a portrait, one little step at a time, knowing exactly how the full picture was going to turn out. Day by day, through hard times and through fun times, He is finishing the portrait and calling it good all the while. We can listen to all Satan has to say about us, and we can choose to hate ourselves through the process, too, but all that is quite unnecessary, don't you think? God has a plan and loves us so much. He calls us a work of art, and even while we are in progress, He already calls us good. Not later, but now.



Week Six: Student Devos

Student Devo #16

"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.

because fear has to do with punishment. Whoever fears is not perfect in love.

We love Him because He first loved us."

1 John 4:18-19 (MEV)

One of my daughters came home from her grandparents' house in a really bad mood the other day. She was carrying a full to-go box of pancakes from IHOP as well as her suitcase, but even after dropping those things to the floor, she was still dragging herself around the house as if the weight of the world was on her shoulders. No smiles, and barely a hello. Eventually I was able to coax it out of her: She had broken her glasses. She was scared of being punished for it.

While I wasn't happy about the problem, and while it very well might have been her fault, I didn't punish her for it. We found a way to work it out and I didn't get angry. That's not always the case. Sometimes I do get angry. Sometimes I do punish. Sometimes, as parents, we really want something to change and often us showing our emotions and having a plan to create responsibility in our children is absolutely the right thing to do. But in this scenario, I was calm, and she was not "in trouble."

I bet you can imagine the relief she felt. All of a sudden, her headache and exhaustion were gone. Her smile and vibrant personality came back. She was ready to tell us all about her time with her grandparents and she got her appetite back for those pancakes she couldn't stomach earlier.

Her fear of punishment and rejection had given her a headache and made her lose her appetite completely! She had been miserable! Have you ever felt that way when you knew you had messed up? Have you ever felt like the worst part of messing up is waiting to see what your parents will say, what the looks on their faces will be, or what punishments they will give?

It might be really hard to accept right now, but I'm here to tell you two things:

Student Devo #17

"A soft answer turns away wrath. But grievous words stir up anger."

Proverbs 15:1 (MEV)

"The tongue is a fire, a world of evil...

All kinds of beasts, and birds, and serpents, and things in the sea

are tamed or have been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue.

It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father,

and with it we curse men, who are made in the image of God.

Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing!

My brothers, these things ought not to be so."

James 3:6-10 (MEV)

The Scripture passages really speak for themselves today, don't you think? It could not be more clear: Our mouths have great potential, either for good or for evil. And while animals all around the world can be put under control, the tongue - still - is wild.

You've been on both sides of the problem, I am sure.

Have you ever heard someone say things to you or about you that really hurt?

Have you ever been the person saying hurtful things?

Student Devo #18

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom,

teaching and admonishing one another

in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,

singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

Colossians 3:16 (MEV)

Let's take a minute and have a little English Grammar lesson. Fun, right? Yeah, I know. Just bear with me for a moment though. Can you find the verbs in this passage of Scripture?

Here's a list of the action words, the verbs, found in the verse above:

Dwell

Teach

Admonish

Sing

And what or who is actually doing these things?

First of all, the word of Christ is dwelling, or making its home, in us. That's the first action mentioned. That means God's Word and its promises, truth, and conviction can live inside of us. We can take it in and make it a part of who we are. Our understanding of God living in us when we become Christians grows as we take in and love more of His Word. When we become Christians, we are never meant to be done, as if accepting Jesus was a one-day experience. No, we continue to let His character and presence through being in His Word abide in us.

The second group of actions are to teach, admonish, and sing! And who is doing these things? We are. You might be thinking, "I am just a kid" or "I am just a teen"! Well, you've been invited into this action as well, my friend, whoever you are!

Once the word of Christ is dwelling in you, you will be full and ready to overflow in communicating - in a



Week Seven: Student Devos

Student Devo #19

"I thank God,

whom I serve with a pure conscience as my forefathers did,

as I continually remember you in my prayers night and day,

greatly desiring to see you, remembering your tears,

that I may be filled with joy, remembering the genuine faith

that first lived in our grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice

and that I am persuaded lives in you also."

2 Timothy 1:3-5 (MEV)

I love how this passage of Scripture begins. There is a lot about family and relationships from the beginning so we are going to talk a little about that in our devotion today.

First of all, this book in the Bible, 2 Timothy (pronounced Second Timothy), is a letter from Paul to Timothy. Paul was an older man who had been serving Jesus for many, many years as a missionary preacher and Timothy was a young man. Paul calls Timothy in verse 2 "his beloved son", even though they were not related by blood at all. Paul writes to Timothy as he would a son or a young brother, with care and affection.

Then Paul talks about Timothy's grandma and mom, how much it blesses his heart when he thinks of them, because they cried and carried on the last time he was there visiting. (Ok, I added in the drama, but I am using my imagination a bit!) When he prays for this family, he is filled with joy because he is reminded of their faith, their genuine faith.

Timothy was a young man who had grown up most likely with his grandmother and mother's Christian teaching. Do you think he may have taken it for granted, not realizing that he had a real advantage to begin hearing the Gospel at a young age? Do you think he may have felt scared that he would not be able to live up to the expectations of Paul or of his believing mom and grandma?

If you are adopted or in foster care right now, you might not have known your first family or you might have had to make a very big transition to be where you are today. I want to assure you, that just like Paul did for Timothy, someone is lovingly praying for you, too! Whether it was your first family or the caretakers you have now, do any of them love the Lord and teach you how to live according to the Bible?

Just like we wondered about Timothy, do you ever feel scared that you won't be able to be "good enough" as the Christians who are wanting you to follow God?

I want you to know that if you have heroes of the faith living in your house (which means anyone who is getting up everyday and choosing to follow Jesus with their whole heart), you are indeed blessed. They won't be perfect, but they will bring you joy as you remember them in thankful prayers, just like Paul. And someday, that hero of the faith leading a household can be YOU. So don't give up. The pressure isn't on you, the pressure is on the Lord who works powerfully IN you to desire and accomplish all good things.

Let's pray together.

Father.

Thank you for my earthly family or families. Help me see that they are trying to obey you in how they parent me. Help me pray for them, realizing they are real people with feelings and problems also. Make me able to have a strong faith that can be passed down for generations, too, in Jesus' name. Also, Lord, would you please put a Paul in my life? Someone to show me my gifts and help me grow personally in my faith? I entrust this request to you, Lord. Amen.



Notes

Student Devo #20

"For God has not given us the spirit of fear,

but of power, and love,

and self-control."

2 Timothy 1:7 (MEV)

So, we are still in 2 Timothy, Paul's letter to a young guy named...Timothy, of course!

In this particular verse, a really important truth is revealed - we are going to set our flashlight on this one alone today! Super short, but super powerful!

First of all, as we have talked about before, God doesn't want us to live our lives in fear. He protects us in many, many ways! The beginning of this verse states once again that God is never the one putting fear into our hearts and minds- except for godly fear or natural fears that actually tell us when something is wrong! These are good kinds of fears! But when it comes to worry, anxiety, thinking everything is going to go terribly, fears that you will mess up, that someone will leave you, that you will not have what you need - these are the kinds of fears that are not from God and that make us feel sick to our stomach, confused, and just plain lost sometimes.

God does not give us these fears but He DOES give us what we need to fight them. He will never leave us stranded with our scary thoughts and worries! He has given us weapons and tools for such moments.

Here are three of those tools that have already been given to us if we put our trust in Jesus and choose to walk with Him!

1. Power
2. Love
3. Self-control

When I think of power, I think: Strength, Ability, Winning. What words come to your mind?



Student Devo #21

*"...share in the sufferings of the gospel by the power of God,
who has saved us and called us with a holy calling,
not by our works, but by His own purpose and grace..."*

2 Timothy 1:8-9 (MEV)

The first line of this verse reveals 3 very valuable things, right off the bat:

1. That there will be suffering in life for the gospel
2. Based on the words "share in", we will not be suffering alone
3. In our suffering, we will endure by the power of God

Maybe you have already had a lot of grief or suffering in your life, maybe you haven't, but either way, God wants us to know from His Word that it is normal and to be expected to have loss and hard times. However, those sufferings are never random or useless...let's discuss!

Salvation is the free gift that God gave to us through Jesus. Through no good works or perfect behavior of our own, God loved us. He chose us to be in His family and sent Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins, making a way for us to be with Him and close to Him (literally) forever!

Let me be really clear.

This God Who created the universe loves, chooses, and brings YOU close to Him. That is HIS idea. He did pretty much all the work to make it possible, and is asking you to turn to His love and draw near to that warm flame. His flame both comforts us and refines us, burning away the stuff that is not good; it also catches our hearts on fire for the things for which His heart blazes!

That's where we get back to our verse...He called us with a holy calling, by His own purpose and grace.

What does this statement mean to you?: God saved you because He loves you.



Week Eight: Student Devos

Student Devo #22

*"The fear of the Lord
is the beginning of wisdom,
but fools despise wisdom and instruction."*

Proverbs 1:7 (MEV)

Hi Friend! How are you doing today? I pray that you are able to take a deep breath, settle in somewhere comfortably, and read this devotion with an open mind. God wants to take you into some new territory today!

This verse, and so so so many verses in scripture, help us to see how God works. He loved us FIRST. He sent His Son to die for us FIRST. He makes the first move over and over, in making covenants, in calling disciples, and in drawing our hearts into a relationship with Him even though we cannot yet see Him! And then there are responses and results that blossom from that love...

I hope you believe me when I say He wants a relationship with you, and I hope you believe me when I say that there are others in your life that want a good relationship with you, too. Believing that can make some really amazing differences in your life!

For example, when you know you are already loved and thought highly of, you may start to feel like you really want to give your best to your schoolwork. When you open your eyes to your parents' love and grace for you, you might start to feel like you don't want to say things that purposely upset them! When you acknowledge all you've been given, you might start to realize the house you live in isn't cleaning itself, if you know what I mean!?

And that's what I think this verse is saying to us, if you take it apart and think about it.

The fear of the Lord simply means honoring and valuing God, recognizing His love deserves a response. Does His love for us create fear of Him? Well, no, that would be weird! But His love does create respect and a certain seriousness in how we talk about Him and live our lives. Let's make sure we understand what this kind of fear is.

Student Devo #23

"Since your souls have been purified by obedience to the truth

through the Spirit unto a genuine brotherly love,

love one another deeply with a pure heart.

for you have been born again..."

1 Peter 1:22-23 (MEV)

I hope you don't find it to be tricky that God's gift of salvation was free, YET God is saying, if you are saved, you have to be nice to people! (Ha!) You probably have never really heard it said quite like that before, but it is kinda true! Salvation is a free gift, but unlike a Christmas gift sweater you wear and take off, or even a birthday cupcake you eat and eventually...well, I won't go there...salvation doesn't come and go. When His love gets ahold of us, it goes in deep and doesn't let go, and will produce more love for others.

So this verse is saying, "Hey! Since you have been purified, since you have the spirit of God in you, since you have experienced brotherly love with other believers (hopefully!), now you have a part to play here, too! It's time for you to learn to really love people."

Who in your life do you love? Name a few people.

How do you show that?

How would you like to start showing your love to them?

Student Devo #24

"My son, do not despise the discipline from the Lord,

nor grow weary when you are rebuked by Him;

for whom the Lord loves. He disciplines

and scourges every son whom He receives.

Endure discipline: God is dealing with you as with sons.

For what son is there whom a father does not discipline?"

Hebrew 12:5-7 (MEV)

Let's start our time together today by defining some words, shall we? These are not official definitions, just my own thoughts, but I think we'll be close enough.

Son - not just a boy (!); anyone who considers themselves to be in the family of God

Discipline - correction; instruction; a re-do or chance to try again; could be a punishment or loss of privilege; a natural consequence (like if you share a sucker with someone who has strep throat, you're gonna get strep throat or you drive crazy and your parents take your car away for 3 months, while you practice driving under their supervision again); something that creates change and makes things better in the end for you

Weary - exhausted; eye-rolling and groaning; don't act like you don't know!

Scourge - the allowing of suffering for a purpose

Endure - persevere; keep going; don't give up; stick with it

Okay, I think that'll do it! Are we all on the same page?

What we really want to get from this passage of Scripture today is that God wouldn't bother helping us

through correction and discipline if we weren't His kids. He wouldn't waste His time on us if we weren't special, important and beloved to Him. If He loves, and He does, He WILL be at work in our lives and it WILL hurt sometimes. While no discipline is pleasant in the moment, be it sweating and training for a marathon or having to do an extra chore every day because of a bad decision we made, the fact that someone is instructing us to be better is a gift from God and a sign of love.

Let's read my adapted version as our prayer today:

I choose to not despise the discipline from the Lord,

I won't grow weary when I am rebuked by Him;

for I am whom the Lord loves,

and He disciplines me and scourges me,

whom He has received as His own.

I will endure discipline

knowing that God is dealing with me as His beloved child.

I have a good Father

And He believes I am worth His attention and time.

I can trust Him.

He isn't trying to frustrate me or make me think I have to be perfect to please Him.

He just knows what is best and that I need His intervention.

Thank You, Lord. Amen.

Notes



Week Nine: Student Devos

Student Devo #25

"As I was with Moses, I will be with you.

I will not abandon you. I will not leave you.

Be strong and courageous.

for you shall provide the land that I swore to their fathers

to give them the inheritance for this people."

Joshua 1:5b-6 (MEV)

"this Book of the Law must not depart from your mouth.

Meditate on it day and night so that you may act carefully according to all that is written in it.

For then you will make your way successful, and you will be wise.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous.

Do not be afraid or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:8-9 (MEV)

Student Devo #26

"Joshua set up in Gilgal those twelve stones that they took from the Jordan.

He said to the children of Israel,

'When your children someday ask their parents, 'What do these stones mean?' then you shall explain to your children, 'Israel crossed over the Jordan here on dry ground!

For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you crossed over,

as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea when He dried it up before us until we crossed over,

so that all the peoples of the earth might know the hand of the Lord,

that it is mighty, and you would fear the Lord your God always."

Joshua 4:20-24 (MEV)

In our last devotion, we talked about Joshua's calling to be courageous, obey the Lord by staying committed to scripture, and step out in faith by leading his entire tribe to another country.

As Joshua did this, the children of Israel had to once again stop at a large body of water and await instructions. There was no bridge, no boat, no ferry. They were carrying everything they owned, and the priests were carrying the Ark of the Covenant as well all the pieces of their desert tent church! The priests went first, and just like Joshua said would happen in chapter 3 of this book, when they stepped foot into the flooded river, the water that flowed freely all of a sudden began defying gravity, making a wall of water on one side of their bodies and dry ground miraculously at their feet.

Joshua's parents and all the older people had seen the Red Sea parted; they had even seen the crazy plagues that God used to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt. But now those people were deceased, and a new generation of God-followers had emerged, literally spending their childhood (and longer) in the desert, going to church in a tent, and following clouds. Look it up!

And Joshua is basically saying: "You Guys! It is time for US to know this God. It is time for US to experience

His might. You see what He just did for us? Well, He has told me He is going to do a lot more. Get some stones from this dry ground path He made and carry them with you; today is a day to remember forever.”

He was not just asking them to grab a pebble as a little keepsake. In Joshua 4:5, he tells one man from each of the twelve tribes to lift a stone upon their shoulder. Talk about “putting your back into it!”

God is giving us a chance to do the same.

Do you believe God has done anything for you? Has He been with you at a really hard time?

Can you write or share what happened?

It's easy to forget sometimes what He has done, because every day brings new troubles and we tend to focus more on the bad things, to be honest. But God is calling us to SEE how He has helped us, and decide today to thank Him for His faithfulness. Maybe He is even asking you to be creative and find a way to remember something specific He has done. What could your rock of remembrance be?

Father,

I haven't crossed any oceans on dry ground lately, but I do know that everything I have is because of You. Help me learn to put more focus on the good things You have done! Let gratitude start to well up in my heart. There is a timeline of my life just like there is a timeline of all the people's lives I read about in the Bible. Those timelines show me You have a plan for me, too, and I want to remember Your faithfulness, so that I will trust You again and again. Amen.

Student Devo #27

"The Lord said to Joshua,

'See, I have given Jericho, its king, and the mighty men of valor into your hand.

All the men of fighting age shall march around the city. Circle the city once. Do this for six days.

Seven priests shall carry seven ram's horn trumpets before the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets.

When they blow a long blast on the ram's horn and when you hear the trumpet sound, all the people shall shout a loud battle cry.

The walls of the city will fall down, and the people will go up, every man straight ahead."

Joshua 6:2-5 (MEV)

And that is exactly what happened.

Never before and never again, anywhere on the face of the earth, do we hear of a city whose strong walls were torn down simply by singing, instruments, shouting, and prayer-walking. Nope! That doesn't usually do it. If it did, I would have been in a lot of crumbling cities by this point in my life! But this was God's way of tearing down those walls and letting His people walk in and own the place. He did exactly what He said He would do, and finally, after many, many years of waiting, He was able to give the people of Israel what He had promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua! He was faithful, and in fact, in Joshua 23:14 (MEV), Joshua says, "Now, I am going the way of all the earth. You know in all your hearts and souls that not a single word has failed out of all the good things that the Lord your God has said concerning you. All came true for you. Not a single word among them failed." As he was dying, he was begging them to remember the faithfulness of God.

I wish I could say "and they lived happily ever after", but they didn't. The people continued to forget God and His Word again and again. Even though it broke Joshua's heart (and God's), the people gave themselves over to false gods and other religious practices that were against the special plans God had for them.

The mistakes of God's chosen people can be a warning to us. While we are saved by grace, and assured



Week Ten: Student Devos

Student Devo #28

"Be anxious for nothing,

but in everything, by prayer and supplication with gratitude,

make your requests known to God. And the peace of God,

that surpasses all understanding,

will protect your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7 (MEV)

Do you ever wonder what you are supposed to do when you are in the middle of a problem?

Well, I am going to point out to you how very simple your first step can be.

Look at the third line of the Scripture I shared today-

"Make your requests known to God."

I like to know what I'm supposed to be doing; that's very important to my peace of mind.

So what is our job? To make our requests known to God.

Getting more specific, the verse tells us to make those requests known by:

1. Talking to God (Prayer)
2. Asking God (Supplication)
3. Thanking God (Gratitude)

Are these three items part of your daily time with God? If not, you can start anytime!

Now, we get to the promise of God - the great news of what He will do if we will come near to Him and talk, ask, and thank!

Student Devo #29

It means a lot to me when someone I know, love, and trust tells me, “Everything is okay. You’re safe. Be at peace.” I can generally relax and I can have peace, as I hear their words and believe them.

But if someone I don’t really trust, or someone who I think doesn’t know enough, tells me, “Everything is okay. You’re safe. Be at peace”, I will still be panicking. Their words will not mean much to me, and I’ll still be thinking I need to do something to either fix the problem or at least get more information about what is wrong.

So in today’s devotion I want to talk about why we can have peace, the kind of peace that comes from Jesus. Peace, to me, is both faith and feeling. It is believing His Words and accepting His calm.

We will look at many verses in John 14 to simply answer the question:

“Based on this verse, why can I have peace?”

John 14:2-3 (MEV) tells us we can have peace because Jesus says, “I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am you may be also.” Jesus is declaring that He is literally going to Heaven to prepare our eternal Home because He wants us with Him. With a God and Father who has intentions such as these, we can have peace.

In John 14:13-14 (MEV), Jesus says, “I will do whatever you ask in My Name, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.” We can have peace because God hears our prayers and when they are in agreement with His plan (which we definitely want them to be) He will actually do what we ask. It really can’t get much better than that!

John 14:18-19 tells us Jesus will not leave us fatherless and alone in this world, but that He will come to us. He did that when He sent the Holy Spirit to live inside every believer, but He will also literally come back for us and take us to our eternal Home! We are His family and He did not abandon us! He also says in verse 19 (MEV), “Because I live, you will live also.” This means we will be brought up from the grave someday, just like He was, but also that every day here on this earth we can feel more alive and have more peace simply because He is alive!

Ultimately, we can have peace because of John 14:21 (MEV), which says, “...he who loves Me will be loved by My Father. And I will love him and will reveal Myself to him.” He loves us. When we are loved, we have nothing to fear.

We are not alone, we are not on our own, we are not being harshly judged, we are not trying to find a way to please the Father, we are not trying to find our way into the family. On the contrary, we are already loved, accepted, chosen, wanted, and seated beside Him in a place bought with His blood.

Lift a prayer of thanks to God for His love which brings us peace.

Student Devo #30

Hi there! How is everyone today?

In our last devotion, we talked about why we can have peace. His love, the way He hears and answers prayers, and the fact that He is preparing a Home for us in Heaven – reminding us that this life is not all there is – are some reasons why we can have peace and even stay in peacefulness through hard times.

Take a moment to think about if you are really choosing to believe these statements from Jesus in John 14 are true.

Do you believe He loves you? Do you believe He hears your prayers? Do you believe He will come back for you?

It's really good to ponder sometimes where we are in our faith. The truth can only set us free if we believe it!

Today, we are going to look at John 14 again, and this time we are going to answer a different question. Instead of “why can I have peace” based on scripture, we are going to answer “how can I have peace” based on scripture. If you can, read the whole chapter of John 14 sometime soon! But for now, I'm breaking it down into little bite sized pieces!

How can I have peace? John 14:1 - Believe In Father God and His Son, Jesus.

How can I have peace? John 14:6 - Go His Way; Choose His Truth; Accept His Life.

How can I have peace? John 14:11 - Believe Jesus's Words.

How can I have peace? John 14:21 - Keep God's Commands.

How can I have peace? John 14:27 - Receive It. Don't Be Afraid. Take What Is Yours In Christ!

How can I have peace? John 14:29 - Believe.

Believing is an abstract thought, a verb that isn't as simple as tying your shoe or walking across the room. So to understand the word “believe”, let's talk about the opposite of it.

If you do not believe something, that means you:

- reject it
- think low or less of it
- doubt it
- give it little or no regard



Week Eleven: Student Devos

Student Devo #31

"I am the Good Shepherd.

I know My sheep and am known by My own.

Even as the Father knows Me, so I know the Father.

And I lay down My life for the sheep."

John 10:14-15 (MEV)

Today, I have to tell you the story I heard from Sheila Walsh, a Christian singer and speaker, who was born and raised in Scotland. She says that growing up, her mother would work here and there in the sheep farms around her town. Because of this, at a young age, Sheila got to be around lambs and see what work for a shepherd was like.

One day, she noticed that a baby lamb had been completely abandoned by its mother. She simply could not believe it. For whatever unknown reason, this mother could not take care of the baby lamb and did not come around it anymore. It broke Sheila's heart, and she talked to her mother about it. Her mother said this actually happens sometimes on the farm, and that when a baby lamb is rejected like this, those lambs are called "bummer lambs." These lambs will literally walk around with their head hung low. It sounds terrible, and it is terrible, right?

However, when this sad thing happens, the shepherd gets to do something he rarely gets to do. He gets to be a father, friend, and comforter to the sweet little bummer lamb. He picks up that bummer lamb, and he takes it in his own house. He feeds it by hand. He may even let it snuggle with him at night. And when the lamb is no longer a baby, he releases it to the field with the others. The special connection between the shepherd and the so-called "bummer lamb" is unmistakable, because, Sheila said, when the shepherd comes calling for the sheep each morning and each evening, guess which lamb runs the fastest to get close to him? Guess which lamb has knowledge of the shepherd's home and table and even cozy covers? Guess which lamb really knows the shepherd's voice?

Yes, the bummer lamb.

Sheila felt like the bummer lamb, and I do, too. People and situations in our past (or even in our present) can make us feel like we don't belong, like we are not as good as others, like we are defective. But this

Student Devo #32

"I am the Vine, you are the branches.

He who remains in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit.

For without Me you can do nothing."

John 15:5 (MEV)

I want you to imagine a tree growing tall, maybe one that is in your backyard or one you have seen at a park.

The tree has big branches, green leaves, and maybe some fruit even. You see birds swooping in and out, and squirrels running up and down. You might notice that the bigger the tree, the more visible (and easy to trip over) are the roots!

Now, have you ever seen your yard or that park after a bad storm? Were there any branches or limbs on the ground? Sometimes it is a really large one that has fallen, and sometimes the branches are just skinny little sticks. But either way, the branches, which were at one point connected to the tree, are now dying on the ground. If there are still green leaves or fruit on those branches, now that it is laying on the ground disconnected from the tree, you can be sure that zero new growth will happen and the leaves and fruit that are there will soon wither and die.

Why? Because the sap, the juice keeping those branches alive and thriving, can no longer reach them. Might as well have a bonfire, because you can't glue the branches back onto the tree either!

Well, unlike those poor branches, when we find ourselves no longer close to God, we absolutely can come back to Him for connection again! The moment we realize we have stepped into a sin, the moment we see we are agreeing with the world's ways over His, the moment we feel no peace, no joy, we can look to Jesus and say, "I want to remain in You!"

Our power over sin, our power over our own negative thoughts, and our power over our behavior in general is 100% about our relationship with Jesus. When we believe He loves us and is with us, when we believe He is not punishing us but rather helping to correct and transform us, and when we believe He wants to work through us in beautiful ways to bless the world, we are the branch and He is the Vine and life is flowing from Him to us in a way the world cannot understand (yet can see!)

Student Devo #33

"I have given them the glory which You gave Me,

that they may be one even as We are one:

I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfect in unity,

and that the world may know that You have sent Me,

and have loved them as You have loved Me."

John 17:22-23 (MEV)

There is so much in this verse! Let's start by making sure we know who is saying this and who that person is talking to, and also who that person is talking about!

First of all, this whole chapter of the Bible, John 17, is a prayer. The person praying it out loud is Jesus. He is praying these words, talking to His Father in Heaven, shortly before His arrest and death on the cross. In His grief, knowing what is about to happen, He prays to the Father, rejoicing that He and the Father are so close and so unified and also asking to bring that same closeness and unity among us.

So, the chapter is all about Jesus praying to God for us.

We could say it like this - Jesus prayed:

"Father, I have given Christians on earth the glory which You gave Me,

that those who choose to follow me may be one even as We are one."

Jesus calls it "glory" for us to be unified with the Father and with each other.

Just as we saw in John 15 how God intends for us to remain with Him and never detach from Him, here in John 17 we see that God also intends for us to remain with other believers and never detach from them!

Jesus doesn't have a lot of out-loud specific prayers that are recorded in the Bible. We know He went away to pray a lot and was probably always praying in His heart and mind, to stay connected to the Father. So, for us to have this entire chapter of His out-loud prayer is important. He was going to the Father in His last days on earth about US, about OUR relationship with other believers and followers of Jesus. This says to me that it matters!



Week Twelve: Student Devos

Student Devo #34

*"For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,
that He would give you, according to the riches of His glory,
power to be strengthened by His Spirit in the inner man,
and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith:
that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints
what is the breadth and length and depth and height,
and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge:
that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."*

Ephesians 3:14-19 (MEV)

Whew! I know that was a lot of Scripture, but believe me, it was hard to stop there! The good news just keeps going and going!

Let's talk about it and see the treasures hidden inside for us! First of all, Paul, in this letter to Christians in the city of Ephesus, is saying he is praying that God would give them power! He wants them to feel courage and strength! Could you use some courage and strength in your life? Is there a problem you wish you could conquer? We might need to hit our knees like Paul did.

Second, Paul asks God to increase the believers' faith so that they will know that Christ lives inside of

Student Devo #35

"For this reason we do not lose heart:

Even though our outward man is perishing,

yet our inward man is being renewed day by day.

Our light affliction, which lasts but for a moment,

works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

while we do not look at the things which are seen,

but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal,

but the things which are not seen are eternal."

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (MEV)

Have you ever played a sport, run a race, or did something that absolutely wore you out to where you didn't think you'd be able to take another step?

Your throat was dry, your chest was hurting, maybe your head was pounding, and definitely your legs were burning.

But did something make you keep going? If you stopped, what made you get up and go again? I know you're not still laying out there on the ground!!

One of the things that I have seen and experienced many times is that before I got water to help my poor throat, before my chest stopped hurting, before I could lay my weary head, and before my legs could stop their burning, something was placed in my heart and mind that made me keep pressing forward. That something was usually a simple word or thought.

How could one simple word or thought bring an exhausted person back to their efforts?

Because human beings do not just have a body. We also have a soul. Just like our body can get a refreshing night of sleep, a cold drink of water, or a back rub to sort of bring us back to life, our soul can be restored and renewed again, too, often with just a word of encouragement, a bit of truth, or a reminder of why we

Student Devo #36

"Everyone who lives on milk

is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a baby.

But solid food belongs to those who are mature.

for those who through practice

have powers of discernment that are trained to distinguish good from evil."

Hebrews 5:13-14 (MEV)

My four daughters, myself, and even my husband, are crazy silly googoo gaga over babies! Show us a baby's nose crinkle when they yawn, or a cute booty scooting across the floor, and we go bananas with ooh's and aah's. It's ridiculous.

So, certain things were super cute and perfectly fitting when you were a baby, right? You had people saying how adorable your big cheeks were or maybe they commented on the rolls on your chubby thighs or how amazing it was that you were already crawling. Aw! I bet you were so precious!!!

BUT - it would be a weird uncomfy situation if people were to still be saying these things to you or about you! Because the time for baby things is over. It is time for those loving people in your life to be cheering you on in other things, like maybe your schoolwork or your sports team!

And if you are a follower of Jesus, it is time for you to move on to understanding God's Word and His love for you and others in a new way, too. It is time to learn to forgive others, to share your faith, and grow in hearing the Lord's voice. All of these things happen by:

- spending time in prayer, either alone or with others, out loud or in a journal
- studying the Bible, at church and at home
- praising and thanking God
- meeting with other believers

There are other ways to grow as well! As you do these things to get to know Him, the days add up, and your relationship with Jesus will be more and more mature. My favorite part of this passage is the end when it says what real maturity in Christ is...

