

Your
Next Steps
with Jesus

Devotional



Welcome to the family of Jesus Christ!

Pastor Brenda and I are so proud of you!
By giving your heart and life to the Lord,
you have made the **BEST** decision of your life.

As a new believer, your life starts now
with your next steps, and we want to walk
with you. It's critical not to go at it alone.
You are part of the church family where you
are wanted, needed, and loved. Before diving
into the following pages, I encourage you to
sign up for our **Discovery 101** class to learn
more about Grand Rapids First and join
others walking the same journey.



Sign up for Discovery 101!
grfirst.org/discovery

This devotional was created with you in mind,
drawing from a few of my teachings, to help you
begin your walk with Jesus. Now, let's walk
together for the next six days and beyond.
The best is yet to come!

Mega blessings,

Pastors Sam + Brenda

Day One | *Monday*
Salvation: Giving Your Life to Jesus

*“But God showed his great love for us by sending
Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”*

Romans 5:8 NLT

The cross is not just a symbol—it's a turning point. It marks the moment when guilt was exchanged for grace, and worthlessness was transformed into divine worth. Jesus knew you were worth dying for on the cross! We needed Jesus to die for us because no matter how good we might think we are, the Bible is clear that "everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard" (Romans 3:23). When you trust in Jesus for forgiveness and new life in Him, He washes your slate clean! Your past sins are erased, and you have a fresh start.

However, we often carry the weight of guilt, haunted by past failures and hidden shame. At times, we may feel unworthy. **But the cross speaks louder than our past.** It declares: "You are forgiven." Romans 5:1 reminds us, "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And you can have peace knowing God's power in you will keep changing you to become the person God designed you to be (Ephesians 2:10).

But the cross doesn't stop at forgiveness—it goes deeper. It reveals our **true value.** God does not love you because you are valuable; you are valuable because God loves you.

Romans 8:3 tells us that God sent His Son in a body like ours to end sin's control. Why? Because we were worth saving, and you are worth living in freedom through Jesus. The price paid—Jesus' life—shows how much we matter to God.

You are worth more than you ever imagined.

**“The cross speaks
louder than our past.”**

Reflection Questions

- How do you feel knowing that Jesus gave his life for you?
- Do you see your worth through the lens of the cross?
- Are you walking in freedom, or still trying to earn what's already been given?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for the cross. Thank You for taking my guilt and giving me grace. Help me to live not in condemnation, but in the freedom and worth You purchased for me. May I walk in Your forgiveness and reflect Your love. Amen.

Going Deeper in Reading the Scriptures

- Further explore the scriptures referenced above
- 1 Timothy 1:14
- Luke 7:36-50

Day Two | *Tuesday*
Living for Jesus: What does it look like?

“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”

2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT

When Jesus began His ministry, He cast a bold vision for His followers in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), calling us to “be perfect” (Matthew 5:48). That can feel overwhelming—but Jesus isn’t demanding flawlessness. The word “perfect” in Greek is *teleios*, meaning mature, complete, whole. He’s inviting us into spiritual growth, not perfectionism.

God’s standards convict us not because they’re hard, but because they’re right. They reveal our need for grace and challenge us to rise—not to be condemned but transformed.

We’re not looking for perfect people. We’re looking for people who are willing to let God perfect them.

Like a home that’s renovated after a change in ownership, our lives are transformed when Jesus takes over. **His perfect life in us changes how we live.** We live this way not to become Christians, but because **we are in Christ.**

God wants us to grow, and growth is intentional. Healthy followers of Jesus stay connected to Him—the Vine (John 15:5)—and bear fruit (Galatians 5:22-23). God prunes us (John 15:2), cutting away what drains life through misplaced dependencies, such as money, status, or relationships. Though pruning may be painful, it’s purposeful. Those who stay connected to Him through pruning become **stronger, wiser, more compassionate, and more fruitful.**

Jesus is committed to your greatness—not worldly success, but **spiritual maturity** and **Christ-like character.** Let’s grow, reflect Him, and remain connected to the One who is perfect—Jesus.

“We’re not looking for perfect people. We’re looking for people who are willing to let God perfect them.”

Reflection Questions

- In what areas of your life do you feel God is inviting you to grow more intentionally?
- What does “staying connected to Jesus”—the Vine—look like in your daily life?
- What misplaced dependencies (e.g., money, status, relationships) might be draining life from your spiritual walk?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for calling me to grow and be perfected in You. Help me stay connected to You—the Vine, reflect Your character, and embrace the pruning that leads to fruitfulness. Make me more like You, day by day. Amen.

Going Deeper in Reading the Scriptures

- Further explore the scriptures referenced above
- Ephesians 4:15-16
- John 15:1-8

Day Three | *Wednesday*
God's Plan for Your Life

*“For I know the plans I have for you,’ says the LORD.
‘They are plans for good and not for disaster,
to give you a future and a hope.’”*

Romans 5:8 NLT

Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.” This verse reminds us that we were not created by accident. You may be asking yourself, “Why am I here?” or “What’s my purpose?” Everything God made has a purpose—including you. **You were created to know Jesus and make Him known.**

As a believer, Jesus calls you to live with a Kingdom mindset. We don’t exist for ourselves—we exist to make a difference and leave a Kingdom impact. Sometimes, we mistake our purpose for approval, paychecks, possessions, power, or popularity, but it’s not about that. God sees through the performance. Whatever you do for a living or wherever you live, **let everything you do point back to God** (Colossians 3:23-24).

He’s looking for **surrendered hearts**. “The LORD doesn’t see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). You were **created for more**. You are God’s masterpiece, **handcrafted with intention and value**, designed for a higher purpose.

So today, step up! Don’t settle for distraction or delay. Step into the purpose God designed for you before you were born. Let go of lesser pursuits and align your life with the good works He prepared in advance. **Your purpose is calling; it’s time to answer.**

**“You were created to know
Jesus and make Him known.”**

Reflection Questions

- How can you cultivate a heart surrendered to God?
- What distractions or lesser pursuits are keeping you from stepping fully into your God-given purpose?
- What is one step you can take today to align your life with the good works God prepared for you?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for creating me with purpose and calling me Your masterpiece. Help me to see myself through Your eyes and to live with a Kingdom mindset. Strip away distractions and lesser pursuits that keep me from walking with You. Give me a surrendered heart, and may everything I do point back to You. Amen.

Going Deeper in Reading the Scriptures

- Further explore the scriptures referenced above
- Psalm 139:13-16
- Psalm 37:23

Day Four | *Thursday*
Sharing Your Story

*“We loved you so much that we shared with you
not only God’s Good News but our own lives, too.”*

1 Thessalonians 2:8 NLT

There's power in your testimony! Your story matters because it reveals what God has done and is doing in your life. It's often said your story isn't just for you, but for others. Your story **cannot stay only in you.**

People today crave authentic relationships, not religious performances. When we live relationally—sharing meals, hobbies, and everyday life—we reflect Christ's heart. Friendship builds trust, and trust opens the door for truth. Romans 12:16 reminds us, "Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people." Find common ground, love sincerely, and **let your life invite others to know Jesus.**

You don't need to be a scholar to share Jesus—just share your story. In John 1, Andrew told Simon, "We have found the Messiah." Philip told Nathanael, "Come and see." **Sharing your story is simply telling what Jesus has done in your life.** Like the blind man who said, "I was blind, but now I see" (John 9:25), your testimony carries power.

Wondering how to share your story? It's easier than you think. Write it down, keep it short, and share it with those around you. People are more open than you realize, especially when they see the change in you.

Here are some practical steps:

- Keep it brief—2 to 3 minutes.
- Describe your life **before Christ**. Use three words or phrases to complete: “This was my life before Jesus...”
- Share your **turning point**—how you encountered Jesus and what you asked Him to do.
- Describe your **life after following Jesus**. Use three words or phrases to show the transformation.

Jesus said in John 4:35, “Open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.” The time is now. Souls are ready. **Don’t wait for the perfect moment—create it.** Eternity is real, and every day is an opportunity to bring someone closer to Christ. Partner with us to live out the mission of Grand Rapids First, of **“Bringing people to Christ and equipping them to be like Him.”** Sign up for **Discovery 101** to learn more about GRFirst and how we can help equip you to reach those around you.



Sign up for Discovery 101!

grfirst.org/discovery

Be intentional, bold, and quick to obey the Holy Spirit. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few (Matthew 9:37). Let’s be among those who say, “Here I am, Lord. Send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

Reflection Questions

- Who in your life might benefit from hearing your testimony?
- What fears or hesitations do you have about sharing your story?
- In what ways can your everyday life be an invitation to know Jesus?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for the story You are writing in my life. Help me to see the power in my testimony and the urgency of sharing it. Give me the boldness to speak, the wisdom to listen, and the love to connect with others genuinely. May my words point others to Jesus and bring hope to those who need it. Here I am, Lord—send me. Amen.

Going Deeper in Reading the Scriptures

- Further explore the scriptures referenced above
- 1 Peter 2:9-10
- Colossians 4:3a

Day Five | *Friday*
Getting to Know God's Heart

"Every word of God proves true. He is a shield to all who come to him for protection."

Proverbs 30:5 NLT

God desires to share His heart with you—and He speaks primarily through His Word. Though He may speak through people, circumstances, and the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit, Scripture remains **the standard by which all other voices are tested**. The Bible is not the words of men, but the inspired Word of God. As 2 Timothy 3:16-17 reminds us, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work.”

God and His Word can be trusted. For followers of Jesus, reading the Bible isn't optional—it's essential and life-giving. Just twelve minutes a day can take you through the entire Bible in a year. **When you align your life with His Word, blessings follow**. Transformation begins when you stop trying to fit Scripture into your life and start shaping your life around it. If you're unsure where to begin, start with the book of John in the New Testament. As Charles Spurgeon said, “A Bible that is falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn't.”

Your prayer life is equally important. Prayer is simply **communion with God**. Scripture encourages us to pray at all times (1 Thessalonians 5:16). Prayer isn't just for moments of crisis or need; it's about connection with your Heavenly Father.

Jesus modeled this beautifully in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). He didn't give it as a formula to recite mindlessly, but as **a guide for a relationship with Him**. Before teaching how to pray, He showed how not to pray—warning against performance and manipulation. True prayer begins with intimacy: "Our Father." These words affirm our identity as adopted children and heirs of His kingdom.

Before presenting our needs, we align with His will: "May Your name be holy. May Your kingdom come." Prayer doesn't change God—it changes us. When we seek Him first, our hearts find peace and purpose. So today, step out of the role of trying to control everything. Stop saying, "My kingdom come," and start praying, "Your will be done." That's where peace begins.

Reflection Questions

- Am I trying to fit Scripture into my life, or am I shaping my life around Scripture? What would change if I did the latter?
- What role does prayer currently play in my life? Is it more of a routine, a rescue line, or a relationship?
- What does “Your will be done” mean to me personally, and how can I surrender more fully to God’s plan today?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for the gift of Your Word, which teaches me what is true and right. Help me to treasure Scripture, not as a task, but as a lifeline to Your heart. Teach me to pray with sincerity and intimacy, seeking Your will above my own. May Your truth shape my life, and may Your peace guard my heart as I surrender control. Let Your kingdom come, and Your will be done in me today. Amen.

Going Deeper in Reading the Scriptures

- Further explore the scriptures referenced above
- Psalm 46:10
- James 1:22

Day Six | *Saturday*
Created for Community

*“Two people are better off than one,
for they can help each other succeed.”*

Ecclesiastes 4:9 NLT

We really need each other! Romans 12:4-5 says, “Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.” God designed life to be lived in community. From the very beginning, He declared, “It is not good for man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). Even in a perfect world, Adam needed connection. That truth still stands today. Our culture often celebrates independence, but God calls us to interdependence. The key to spiritual growth and joy **isn’t isolation—it’s relationship.**

You were created for connection. The church is not just a crowd; it’s a family. In God’s family, **we learn to love, serve, and support one another.** Hebrews 10:25 reminds us not to neglect meeting together, because encouragement happens in community. Growth doesn’t happen in rows—it happens in circles.

Small groups are where real-life change takes place. They teach us how to love deeply, share burdens, and uplift each other. Galatians 6:2 says, “Share each other’s burdens,” because life is too heavy to carry alone. Like geese flying in formation, we go farther and stronger when we travel together.

Community also protects us. Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, “A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.” Who’s got your back spiritually? We all need people who will encourage us, challenge us, and keep us on track. Isolation leaves us vulnerable, but **connection makes us strong.**

Don’t settle for being a spectator. **Join a small group,** build relationships, and experience the joy of belonging. Our Growth Track is tailored specifically to help you **grow within the community of Jesus followers.** In our Discovery 101 class, you will learn more about Values 301, where your community begins to form, so don’t delay finding your community!



Sign up for Discovery 101!
grfirst.org/discovery

Life is about relationships, not achievements. Earthly success fades, but Kingdom relationships last forever. **You were made for community; you belong here!**

Reflection Questions

- Why do you think God designed us for community instead of isolation?
- How have you experienced encouragement or protection through relationships in the past?
- What burdens are you carrying right now that you could share with others in a small group setting?

Prayer

Lord, thank You for creating us to live in community. Help me to embrace the relationships You've placed in my life and to seek out opportunities to love, serve, and encourage others. Protect me from isolation and remind me that I belong to Your family. Teach me to share burdens and to grow stronger together with my brothers and sisters in Christ. Amen.

Going Deeper in Reading the Scriptures

- Further explore the scriptures referenced above
- Acts 2:42-47
- Proverbs 27:17

Day Seven | *Sunday*

Worship God with Your Church Family

*“Worship the Lord with gladness.
Come before him, singing with joy.”*

Psalm 100:2 NLT

There's **no better place to be on a Sunday than the house of the Lord**, alongside other believers, worshipping and growing in Jesus Christ together!

We look forward to seeing you at our Sunday morning service. **Your seat is waiting for YOU**, and we look forward to seeing you at **Discovery 101!**



Sign up for Discovery 101!

grfirst.org/discovery

Sundays 10 AM

Join us in person or online
at grfirst.org/live.



GRANDRAPIDSFIRST



2100 44th Street SW, Wyoming, MI 49519
616.531.2100 | hello@grfirst.org | grfirst.org