

SUMMER DEVOTIONS WEEK #4: June 22-28

I received Christ into my life on January 1, 1978. Two months later, I had a strong sense that the Lord was calling me into the ministry. I shared this with our Youth Pastor, Bill Stewart. He told me to meet him the next day at the church, early in the morning. 6am I think. I imagined he was going to share some deep truth about God with me. Maybe lay out a plan for me to go to Bible College and seminary and become the next great thang.

I met him at the church at 6am and he walked me to the men's bathroom and said clean it. I spent 12 hours cleaning that bathroom that day. The next Saturday it was the women's bathroom. There were 12 bathrooms at our church and over 12 Saturdays, I cleaned them all. When I was done, Bill called me into his office. He asked me what I had learned.

I said, "I learned I don't want to clean bathrooms for a living." He didn't laugh. I said, "well then, I learned I'll do anything for the Lord that He asks me to." Bill said, "Amen" And so began my introduction to the ministry.

Service is mandatory for all followers of Jesus Christ. Regardless of your position in life, we are all called and commanded to serve. In this week of summer devotions, I want to share the passages from the Bible that God has used to teach me about service. I pray they will be a blessing in your life. Keep on keeping on.

Pastor Mike



Monday, June 22, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #22

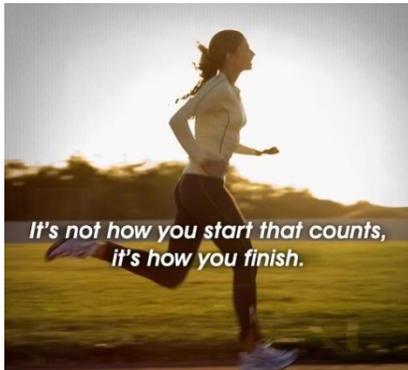
Ephesians 2:10 (NIV) *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*

For three weeks, Elvis' album of greatest hits has been the number one album in the nation, 25 years after the guy died! Now in spite of enormous success, Elvis was (according to friends) an unfulfilled and unhappy man. He died of obesity and drug dependency at 42. In an interview with his wife, Priscilla, she said this about her husband, "Elvis never came to terms with who he was meant to be or what his purpose in life was. He thought he was here for a reason, maybe to preach, maybe to serve, maybe to save, maybe to care for people. That agonizing desire was always with him and he knew he wasn't fulfilling it. So he'd go on stage and he wouldn't have to think about it." Elvis didn't have a clue where to begin to look. In a sense, he was lost.

Notice the word "workmanship" from **Ephesians 2:10** in the verse above? You were made to make a contribution, not just to consume. God made you to make a difference. And what matters is not how long you live, but how you live. What matters is not the duration of your life, but the donation of your life. On this planet nobody gets a free ride. We're all meant to give something back. We're all meant to make a contribution. The Bible says we're created to serve, we're saved to serve, we're gifted to serve, we're shaped to serve. We're commanded to serve God back. This is why you're alive.

You were put here to serve God and the way you serve God is by serving other people. Now, some people want to serve God; they just don't want to serve others. But you can't do that. The only way you can serve God is by serving others and the Bible has a word for this - it's called "ministry".

God wants you serving in some capacity in the ministry of the church. Jesus understood this truth. In Matthew 20:28, Jesus said, "*Your attitude must be like My own, for I did not come to be served, but to serve*" Don't you love that? I came to serve. I want that to be said about me. I want that to be said about the people of our church. How about you? So my question to you today is this - Are you serving? If so, I commend you and thank you. Keep on keeping on. If not, when will you start? Start today. Shoot an email to Pastor Matt or Pastor Mike and sign up.



Tuesday, June 23, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #23

1 Peter 4:10 (NIV) "*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*"

Your purpose in life is to be what God made you to be; And He gave you gifts and talents and abilities and background and experiences and all these things for the benefit of other people, to be used by God by serving others. If you're not serving others, you're out of the will of God. It's that simple.

And here's the deal. God doesn't care what you haven't done up until this point in your life. Maybe your whole life you've been a selfish clod. Who cares? From this point forward, allow God to change you. It's not how you start that counts, it's how you finish. Whatever time you have left on this side of eternity, use it to serve others.

A lot of people spend much of their time searching for self-esteem, for self-worth, and significance. They want to feel good about themselves. But they're looking in all the wrong places! You don't get your self-worth from success, because there's always somebody else who does a better job. You don't get your self-esteem from status. You don't get your self-esteem from sex. You don't get your self-esteem from your salary. The Bible says you get your self-esteem from service. Jesus said to give your life away in order to find it.

Luke 9:24-25 (NIV) "*For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?*"

The greatest thrill in life is to be used by God, to be used in serving Him. And what does it take to be used and to learn to serve like Jesus? Number one is serving like Jesus, means being available. You gotta make time to serve. It's got to be a priority in your life.

Here was John Wesley's (the great English Preacher) motto: "*Do all the good you can by all the means you can by all the ways you can in all the places you can and at all the times you can to all the people you can as long as you ever can.*" That, my friends, is greatness.



Wednesday, June 24, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #24

2 Timothy 1:9-11 (LB) *“It is He who saved us and chose us for his holy work not because we deserved it but because that was his plan long before the world began—to show his love and kindness to us through Christ. And now he has made all of this plain to us by the coming of our Savior Jesus Christ, who broke the power of death and showed us the way of everlasting life through trusting him. And God has chosen me to be his missionary, to preach to the Gentiles and teach them.”*

Notice that first sentence – *“He saved us and chose us for His holy work...”* His *holy work* is service, Ministry in the church. I first read this passage when I led my first mission trip a lifetime ago. Sharon and I took 30 junior high kids into inner city Washington DC - Rough area. We served each day in a local soup kitchen. After we served food and cleaned the kitchen, I taught a message from the Bible to the kids.

This was the passage I taught through. Out of the 30 kids who went with us that week and heard the teaching on this passage, at least 25 of them are still walking with the Lord and all are serving in the church in some capacity. Occasionally I'll get a note from one of those kids sharing how this passage impacted their lives.

And as I share this passage with you, I say to you – if God has chosen you (and He has) for His holy work, service within the church, where are you serving? Where are you investing? Who are you impacting? This is big important stuff. This is your legacy. This is the heritage you pass on to your kids someday, your life example of serving others.

And let me remind you of what 1Corinthians 15:58 (MB) says, *“Throw yourselves into the work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for Him is a waste of time or effort”*. Notice the word “nothing”, that means all the service you render unto the Lord matters - even the little stuff. Why? Because in God's economy, there is no little service. He said, *“even if you give a cup of cold water in my name to a child, that counts”*.

In God's eyes there is no little service. Do not let this week pass without getting ahold of a pastor or ministry leader at COV offering your service. Do it today. Tomorrow never comes.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 (NIV) *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.”*

Make this verse one of your life goals. How great would it be, at the end of your life of service, to be able to say this about yourself?

A BAD ATTITUDE IS
LIKE A FLAT TIRE,
YOU CAN'T GET
VERY FAR UNTIL
YOU CHANGE IT.

Thursday, June 25, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #25

Philippians 2:14-15 (NIV) *“Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe...”*

This has been a mantra of mine in life and ministry for 35+ years. *“Do everything without complaining or arguing.”* Especially serving. We must serve with joy. We must live with joy. We must work with joy. Complaining, griping, grumbling – it is from the pit. It robs the people you serve with, of their joy. It is never appropriate – ever.

Here’s the truth. No one has the spiritual gift of criticism or complaining. You know why? Those things are not from the Lord. They are not spiritual gifts. Anyone can complain. It doesn’t take any brains to complain. But to go the other way, the way of joy – that takes faith. And this passage says, that when God’s children choose to go the way of joy, we stand out and shine – like stars in the universe.

My impassioned plea with you today is to immediately adopt this passage of scripture and apply it in all areas of your life. From today forward, no complaining about anything or anyone. Can you imagine what would happen in your family and marriage and workplace if you applied this passage to your life?

Habakkuk 3:18-19 (NIV) *“Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength...”*



Friday, June 26, 2015 • Summer Devotions Day #26

Colossians 3:2-3 (NIV) *“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”*

Building off of yesterday’s devotion about serving with joy and never complaining, today I want to share with you how you do that. You build a life of joy by applying Colossians 3:2-3 to your life. You set your mind on things above. You set your mind on the Lord and His goodness and His plan and His purposes for your life.

You set your mind on how much the Lord has done for you. On how much He has forgiven you of. You set your mind on the Eternity. You set your mind on heaven. You look up the Lord and whenever you do that, your heart is lifted. Your spirit is lifted. Your passion is lifted. Your purpose is lifted.

There is no doubt that some things here on earth seem like hell. Work can seem that way. Drudgery. Marriage can seem that way at times. You're in a rut and you just see the negative. Apply Colossians 3:2-3 to your life. Look up. Set your mind on things above.

This is how winning is done. This is how you rise to the top. When you set your mind on things above, you see what it can be. You see people for what they can be. You see the workplace for what it can be. You see your spouse for what they can be. When you set your mind on the Lord, He does this kind of work in you and for you.

Here's one practical way to set your mind on things above. Memorize scripture. Take for example **Joshua 1:9 (NIV)**, which says – *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”*

What if you set your mind on that verse today? (This is the memory verse for July) Instead of only seeing the hard stuff in life you have to deal, what if you set your mind on the glorious and the eternal? Try it. Do it.

**Give it to God
and go to sleep.**

Saturday, June 27, 2015 · Summer Devotions Day #27

Philippians 4:6 (LB) *“Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don't forget to thank him for his answers.”*

I was getting ready to head off on a three week missions trip and just couldn't get to sleep. I was fretting all that I had to do and all that lay before me. My mind was racing and I was unraveling a bit. Then Sharon gave me a card and wrote this verse in it - *“Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.”*

It was exactly what I needed to hear. From that day forward right up to this day in my life, that has been one of my life verses. Pray about everything. Pray about everything. Pray about everything. What could happen in our lives if we did just that? If we applied Philippians 4:6 to our lives.

As parents, there is so much out of our control when it comes to our kids. Am I right? Sickness, Friends, Influences in their lives. Where will they go to college? How will we pay for college? Who will they marry? Will they ever grow up and mature? Have we built into them all they need to make in life? And there are literally hundreds of other concerns. Right?

“Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.” The Lord has them. The Lord will build them. The Lord will protect them. The Lord will provide for them.

What every has you concerned today – whatever is weighing you down today, quit worrying about and start praying about it. **Psalms 34:18-19 (NIV)** *“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all.”*

My favorite teams are the
Giants and whoever is
playing the dodgers.

Sunday, June 28, 2015 · Summer Devotions Day #28

Zechariah 4:6 (NLT) *“This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, his man: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.”*

There will be times in your life, more often than you can imagine, when you’re at the end of your won power and strength. You’re at then of the rope and you don’t know how to move forward, let alone thinking about adding service and ministry unto your plate. You need to know about **Zechariah 4:6**.

I’m convinced we have infinitely more capacity in our life for works of service if we just tapped into the power of the Lord; Because he has enough power for all of us. He has enough resource for all of us. He never gets tired or weary. That’s the great promise of **Isaiah 40:30-31 (NIV)** *“Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”*

Do you need that kind of might and power in your life? Of course you do. We all do. **Isaiah 40:28-29 (NIV)** says,

“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.”

How do you tap into The Lord’s power and might? You admit your need to the Lord. In humility, you cry out to the Lord - “Lord, I’m weak. I’m at the end of my power and I need Your power. I need Your help.” **James 4:6 (NIV)** says, *“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”* Grace is God’s power to keep moving forward – to keep pushing ahead. Grace is God strength to not quit and give up. Grace is God’s might in your life. Trying tapping into God’s power right now.