

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

It's Personal / Week 4

"I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and **anyone who welcomes me** is welcoming the Father who sent me."

JOHN 13:20 NLT

DAY 1

Have you ever gone somewhere new and felt so welcomed? Do you remember what it felt like? Was there something specific that made you feel especially welcomed? On the other hand, have you ever been somewhere that didn't feel welcoming? In Revelation 3:20, Jesus says that He will eat with anyone who opens the door to welcome Him in. Sharing a meal with someone signifies a relationship and time spent together, meaning Jesus wants to spend time with anyone who welcomes Him in.

Is there something that is stopping you from welcoming God fully into your heart and mind today? **Have an honest conversation with God and tell Him what's stopping you from fully welcoming Him into your life.**

"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener."

JOHN 15:1 NLT

DAY 2

Has a parent ever told you that they were punishing you because they loved you? That seems a little bit confusing in the moment, but if your parent didn't care about you at all, they wouldn't care if you messed up or wouldn't want to help you get better. God, the Father, loves you no matter what, but He loves you so much, that He doesn't want you to stay as you are...He wants you to grow and get better.

Look up and read John 15:1-4. John uses the example of a vine and branches and God as the gardener. **He prunes us because He wants us to grow even more. What is one way that you think God wants you to grow right now?**

"Father, if you are willing, please take this cup of suffering away from me. **Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.**"

LUKE 22:42 NLT

DAY 3

From an early age, we can see the natural tendency of kids to focus on themselves, which unfortunately, often continues on into middle school and high school. We selfishly want everything to be about us and go our way. But Jesus models the exact opposite attitude. Even when He knew death was coming, He surrendered His own will and submitted to the Father because He knew the bigger picture: spending eternity with us.

Take some time today to reflect on what it must have been like for Jesus to let go of His own will and say yes to God's plan, even when He knew pain and suffering were coming. Thank Jesus for saying yes to God's will so that we can have a relationship with him today.

There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. **He tried to get a look at Jesus**, but he was too short to see over the crowd.

LUKE 19:2-3 NLT

DAY 4

We all make bad decisions sometimes, but we would never want those to define who we are or determine our entire reputation. When Zacchaeus is introduced, we're told about his biggest mistakes right away – he's the chief tax collector, which means he climbed the ladder by stealing from people and giving it to the Roman government. It says that he had become very rich, which means he was very good at his job and maybe took some extra for himself. But Jesus still saw him, loved him, and chose him anyway.

Jesus saw past his mistakes and saw his heart, just like we would want Jesus to do for us. **Read Zacchaeus' story in Luke 19:1-9 and note how his life changed after his interaction with Jesus. How has your life changed because of Jesus?**

Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that **we have all died to our old life.**

2 CORINTHIANS 5:14 NLT

DAY 5

Think about any great superhero story...there's always a moment that changes their lives forever, and they can't go back to the way things were. While they have the choice to do good or not, they can't go back to their old lives. In the same way, those that have said yes to Jesus have experienced something that changes them forever; they can't go back to the way things were. Although everyone's story is different, there's something powerful about each unique story.

Think about what your old life was like and how it looks different after saying yes to God's love. **Be bold and tell someone about your story and the differences that you see in yourself.** If you haven't made that decision yet, **be bold and talk to someone about what's stopping you from saying yes.**

Jesus responded, "**Salvation has come to this home today**, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham.

LUKE 19:9 NLT

DAY 6

This may be a weird thing to ask, but think about the last person that you would ever think would come to church (a name or a face probably popped into your head). Can you imagine if they asked to come to church with you this next week? What would that even be like? Sometimes we have preconceived judgments of who is open to God or not, or who is worthy of God's love or not. But God's love and salvation are for everyone, no matter what.

Think back to that person, and here's the challenge: **pray for that person by name every day this week and maybe even next week. Pray for God to soften their heart and yours. If the opportunity ever presents itself in the future, do something crazy and invite them to church!**

"For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

LUKE 19:10 NLT

DAY 7

Starting today, associate this verse with a daily habit, such as washing your face or brushing your teeth. Say the verse before and after your daily routine!