



DAILY DEVOTIONAL

THE WORD FOR YOU TODAY

DEC - JAN - FEB



COMMUNITY CHURCH

YOURCHURCH.COM

A LETTER FROM PASTOR STEVE RILEY

Dear Friend,

As we seek to move closer to God and fulfill His purpose for our lives, we must make room for spending time in His Word each day. This devotional will help you and your family to do that.

In addition to reading your Bible daily, this book is designed to help you find fresh insights in your Bible. It offers practical, down-to-earth advice for daily living.

It is also our way of saying "thank you" for your prayers, support and commitment to Community Church. We pray that each time you open these pages, you will find a God-inspired word for your day!

Sincerely,



Steve & Debby Riley

COMMUNITY CHURCH
103 MAIN STREET
ANYWHERE, USA 22046
(123) 456-7890
YOURCHURCH.COM



“Ezra...stood on a platform...which they had made for the purpose.”
Ne 8:4 NKJV

PLATFORMS

Standing on a specially built platform within Jerusalem’s newly built walls, Ezra the scribe read God’s Word to the people for six hours. As he read it they wept, worshipped, and went home rejoicing. Think: God’s Word is so powerful that all you have to do is expose people to it and their lives are changed. Notice the words, “Ezra...stood on a platform...they had made for the purpose.” When the printing press was invented, one of the first books produced was the Bible. It gave birth to the Reformation, influenced the Industrial Revolution, and changed the world. Now fast-forward to the age of the Internet. Today we have a “platform” capable of reaching every level of society, all the way to the most remote corners of the earth. Instead of complaining about the garbage on the Internet, become an Internet evangelist, teacher, counselor, or encourager. Don’t let the Enemy monopolize it! “Those who turn many to righteousness [will shine] like the stars forever and ever” (Da 12:3 NKJV). A geologist-turned-missionary was asked by a large oil company to go to work for them in the country where he ministered. His annual salary would be more than he’d make in his entire lifetime as a missionary. But he said no. When they asked, “Isn’t the salary big enough?” he replied, “The *salary’s* big enough; the *job* isn’t!” Jesus said, “When I have been lifted...I will draw all people toward me” (Jn 12:32 GWT). And we have been given a platform to reach the world—let’s use it!

“Master...because you say so, I will.”

Lk 5:5 NIV

“MASTER”

The disciples were overwhelmed by a sense of failure: “We have toiled all night and caught nothing” (v. 5 NKJV). Look at them, washing their nets—the last thing fishermen do before they pack up and head for home. And that’s when Jesus showed up! He waits until you’ve reached the end of your rope, then He steps in. Why? Because as long as you think you can solve the problem on your own, you won’t reach for Him. Do you feel overwhelmed by failure today? Are you saying, “Lord, I tried so hard, but look at my marriage, my finances, my career. I’ve been mistreated and overlooked. Perhaps they’re right about me; maybe I’m not supposed to be blessed.” No, Jesus can turn your situation around if you’ll go to Him and say what Peter said: “Master...because you say so, I will.” Obedience, even when it doesn’t seem to make sense, is what leads to blessing. Notice what happened next: “They caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break” (v. 6 NIV). On the other side of your decision to obey God waits a blessing so great that it’ll also touch the lives of those around you. One word changed everything—“Master.” It’s an expression of worship. It’s an acknowledgment that He’s in control of the circumstances you’re facing. Master over weakness. Master over fear. Master over lack. Go ahead and say it: “Master, take control of things. Better still, take control of *me*.” Jesus had bigger things in mind for the disciples. After this miracle we read, “They...left everything and followed him” (v. 11 NIV).

“Lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares.”

Heb 12:1 NKJV

IS THERE “JUNK” IN YOUR LIFE?

Picture a big ship being worked on in dry dock. Beneath the waterline is all the “junk” it has picked up during its voyages. Nobody can see it, but an experienced captain can feel it because his ship lacks the “oomph” it once had. As a result, companies complain that it takes too long to get goods for their customers, and the ship’s owners are unhappy because it hurts their bottom line in a competitive market. The effort required to remove the “junk” is backbreaking and time-consuming, but there’s no other way to do it. Finally, after months of hard work the dry dock is flooded with water, the gates open, and the big vessel heads out to sea and back into the profit column. Writing to the believers at Corinth, Paul says, “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves” (2Co 13:5 NKJV). Let’s be honest; it’s easier to examine your neighbor than to examine yourself, or to talk about what you once accomplished rather than what you’re accomplishing now. Are you slowing down? Are you losing spiritual momentum? Are you in the profit or loss column? You’ll find the answer under the waterline where only God and you can see. Carelessness, a critical spirit, compromise, conformity to the world, and coldness of heart: that’s the “junk” that builds up and slows you down. These are the subtle sins you must deal with in order to be everything God called you to be and enjoy the blessings He has in store for you.

“We share in his sufferings...that we may also share in his glory.”

Ro 8:17 NIV

CHRISTLIKENESS

God’s number-one goal for you isn’t comfort, it’s Christlikeness! And to reach it you’ll have to undergo some of the same experiences that Jesus went through—like being misunderstood by your family, ridiculed by church folks, rejected by the world, and disappointed by the people who say they love you. The Bible says we’ve been called to “share in his sufferings...that we may also share in his glory.” So how do we do this? In three ways: (1) *Stay focused on God’s plan, not your pain.* “Let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith” (Heb 12:1-2 NLT). Corrie ten Boom said, “If you look within you’ll feel depressed, if you look without you’ll be distressed, but if you look to Christ you’ll be at rest.” (2) *Don’t give in to short-term thinking.* Look at Jesus, “Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross” (v. 2 NLT). Keep your eye on the end game. You don’t get the trophy until the race is over, so make up your mind to “stay the course” and finish strong. (3) *Start praying the right way.* When you understand that God’s objective is to make you more like Christ, you’ll start praying fewer “comfort me” prayers and more “conform me” ones. Instead of asking, “Why me, Lord?” you’ll ask, “What do You want me to learn, Lord?” James writes, “Let the process go on until...you have become men [and women] of mature character” (Jas 1:4 PHPS). *That’s* how you become more Christlike.

“Not my will, but yours be done.”

Lk 22:42 NIV

BROKENNESS

If your goal is to be used by God, don't be surprised when He permits seasons of adversity and brokenness. Jesus experienced it, and He said, "A servant is not greater than his master" (Jn 15:20 NKJV). One Bible teacher points out: "God's intent isn't to hurt us, but to expand our capacity to carry His love to a world in need of compassion...Sorrow clarifies our thinking. In the school of Christ, brokenness is a good thing. It's impossible to become intimate with God unless we're broken of independence, pride, and our insistence that our way is better than God's. Brokenness is the last stop before we finally confess, 'I can't; God can.' It's Paul confessing, 'What a wretched man I am. Who will rescue me from this body of death?' (Ro 7:24 NIV). It's the Prodigal fighting with the pigs over food (Lk 15:11-32). It's Joseph, still in prison, forgotten by the cupbearer (Ge 40:23). It's Jonah in the whale's belly confessing the consequences of running from God (Jnh 2:1-9). It's Peter weeping bitterly outside Jesus' trial (Lk 22:62). It's Jesus abandoning everything to God, praying, 'Father...not my will but yours be done' (Lk 22:42 NIV)...God in His ruthless, loving pursuit will break us of pride, sin, folly, and independence (Mt 21:44). Like Jesus serving bread at the Last Supper, God takes us, breaks us, blesses us, and uses us." Are you going through a season of brokenness? Be encouraged; in God's kingdom brokenness is the path to blessing. Watchman Nee put it this way: "To have God do His own work through us, even once, is better than a lifetime of human striving."

“Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe...and it will be yours.”

Mk 11:24 NIV

PRAYER (1)

When you pray: (1) *Use your faith.* William Ward says: "We stamp and address an envelope and send it on its way with complete confidence that it will reach its destination. Yet we wonder, and even doubt if our prayers will be heard by an ever-present, ever-loving God." Wrap your prayer in expectation. God doesn't respond to your need, He responds to your faith. (2) *Don't worry about using the right words.* Jesus said of the Pharisees, "They think they will be heard because of their many words" (Mt 6:7 NIV). Ever heard the lawyer's version of "Give us this day our daily bread"? (Mt 6:11). "We respectfully petition, request and entreat that a due and adequate provision be made, this day and date first above and inscribed, for the satisfying of petitioners' nutritional requirements, and for the organizing of such methods of allocation and distribution as may be deemed necessary and proper, to assume the reception by and for said petitioners of such quantity of cereal products (hereinafter and herein called "bread"), and shall in the judgment of the aforesaid petitioners constitute a sufficient amount." That's eighty words! Jesus used only seven! Sometimes the most effective praying is brief and to the point. (3) *Be specific.* Jesus said, "You will be given whatever you ask for in my name" (See Jn 16:23). The great thing about being specific is that whenever God answers, you know it. The loved one you prayed for got saved. The sickness got healed. The more explicit you are, the more alert you'll be for answers—which means you can be more specific with your thanks to God.

READ THROUGH

THE BIBLE IN A YEAR

DECEMBER

Dec 1: Genesis 1–4	Dec 12: Genesis 39–41	Dec 23: Exodus 24–27
Dec 2: Genesis 5–8	Dec 13: Genesis 42–43	Dec 24: Exodus 28–30
Dec 3: Genesis 9–12	Dec 14: Genesis 44–46	Dec 25: Exodus 31–34
Dec 4: Genesis 13–17	Dec 15: Genesis 47–50	Dec 26: Exodus 35–37
Dec 5: Genesis 18–20	Dec 16: Exodus 1–4	Dec 27: Exodus 38–40
Dec 6: Genesis 21–23	Dec 17: Exodus 5–7	Dec 28: Leviticus 1–4
Dec 7: Genesis 24–25	Dec 18: Exodus 8–10	Dec 29: Leviticus 5–7
Dec 8: Genesis 26–28	Dec 19: Exodus 11–13	Dec 30: Leviticus 8–10
Dec 9: Genesis 29–31	Dec 20: Exodus 14–16	Dec 31: Leviticus 11–13
Dec 10: Genesis 32–35	Dec 21: Exodus 17–20	
Dec 11: Genesis 36–38	Dec 22: Exodus 21–23	

JANUARY

Jan 1: Leviticus 14–15	Jan 12: Numbers 11–13	Jan 23: Deuteronomy 5–8
Jan 2: Leviticus 16–18	Jan 13: Numbers 14–15	Jan 24: Deuteronomy 9–11
Jan 3: Leviticus 19–21	Jan 14: Numbers 16–18	Jan 25: Deuteronomy 12–15
Jan 4: Leviticus 22–23	Jan 15: Numbers 19–21	Jan 26: Deuteronomy 16–19
Jan 5: Leviticus 24–25	Jan 16: Numbers 22–24	Jan 27: Deuteronomy 20–22
Jan 6: Leviticus 26–27	Jan 17: Numbers 25–26	Jan 28: Deuteronomy 23–25
Jan 7: Numbers 1–2	Jan 18: Numbers 27–29	Jan 29: Deuteronomy 26–27
Jan 8: Numbers 3–4	Jan 19: Numbers 30–32	Jan 30: Deuteronomy 28–29
Jan 9: Numbers 5–6	Jan 20: Numbers 33–36	Jan 31: Deuteronomy 30–32
Jan 10: Numbers 7–7	Jan 21: Deuteronomy 1–2	
Jan 11: Numbers 8–10	Jan 22: Deuteronomy 3–4	

FEBRUARY

Feb 1: Deuteronomy 33–34	Feb 11: Judges 4–5	Feb 21: 1 Samuel 8–12
Feb 2: Joshua 1–4	Feb 12: Judges 6–8	Feb 22: 1 Samuel 13–14
Feb 3: Joshua 5–7	Feb 13: Judges 9–10	Feb 23: 1 Samuel 15–16
Feb 4: Joshua 8–10	Feb 14: Judges 11–13	Feb 24: 1 Samuel 17–18
Feb 5: Joshua 11–13	Feb 15: Judges 14–16	Feb 25: 1 Samuel 19–21
Feb 6: Joshua 14–17	Feb 16: Judges 17–19	Feb 26: 1 Samuel 22–24
Feb 7: Joshua 18–20	Feb 17: Judges 20–21	Feb 27: 1 Samuel 25–27
Feb 8: Joshua 21–22	Feb 18: Ruth 1–4	Feb 28: 1 Samuel 28–31
Feb 9: Joshua 23–24	Feb 19: 1 Samuel 1–3	
Feb 10: Judges 1–3	Feb 20: 1 Samuel 4–7	