

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Do Something / Week 3

Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.

PSALM 82:3 NIV

DAY 1

Sometimes we read Scripture and imagine the same world we live in, just a lot older. But the truth is, the world as it existed thousands of years ago was a lot different from how it is now. And not just because there were no cars, electricity, or internet. But because the values we hold on to, the things we care about today, just weren't as important then. The verse we just read from the book of Psalms seems like it would be a no-brainer to us. Of course, you want to take care of the weak! Why wouldn't you help the poor? Thousands of years ago, that just wasn't the way the world worked. The strong survived and the weak didn't. You sided with the powerful, because it benefited you to look out for yourself. But in the psalm, God is telling the people of Israel they are to be different. If the rest of the world sided with the strong, they were to look out for the weak. If everyone else was racing to the front, they were to look out for the left behind. God has always been a God who cared about the cause of those no one else took the time to consider. This was one of the ways God's people were supposed to stand out.

Today, look for a way to stand up for someone others may have overlooked. And when you do, remind yourself, you are participating in a long line of God followers who have looked out for the interest of others, above themselves.

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

EPHESIANS 4:32 NIV

DAY 2

Have you ever heard you are "supposed" to do something for someone? Like, share with a younger sibling. Or give up your place in line. Or apologize first. When we are asked to do something that feels unfair our first response tends to be, "But why should I??" Even if we never say it out loud, we've all felt it. In this letter to the church in Ephesus, the apostle Paul goes ahead and answers the question we've all asked. Why should we be kind and compassionate to others—when they don't deserve it, or we don't feel like it, or any other reason? Because that's what God has done for us. God leads the way. He acted first. And because he set the example, we know exactly what is asked of us. To live and love as Jesus did.

Next time you are challenged to do something kind or compassionate for someone else, before talking yourself out of it, what if you reminded yourself, that Jesus set the example in this, and we can follow? No matter how difficult it might appear. You got this.

Justice is a joy to the godly, but it terrifies evildoers.

PROVERBS 21:15 NLT

DAY 3

In Scripture, God is often described as a God of justice. Meaning, He looks out for those whose cause is ignored—people who are have been wronged but don't have anyone in their corner fighting for them. God not only pays attention, He is making sure these people know He is there to defend them. And we are asked to do the same thing. Standing up for injustices can be exhausting. It means working to bring attention to people and causes that for too long have been overlooked. And it is hard work. Which makes it tempting to want to call it quits. But this proverb reminds us it is joy to pursue justice. That doesn't mean it isn't difficult. It just means there is more going on than we realize.

This week remember that there is a joy in the work of making things right. And that you are partnering with God in participating in work that makes the world right. And that is no small thing.

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

GALATIANS 6:2 NIV

DAY 4

When you hear people talking about the law, you probably think about things like, wearing your seatbelt when riding in a car, not stealing, or breaking the speed limit. But in this letter, the apostle Paul refers to "the law of Christ." And the law of Christ actually has nothing to do with speed limits, seatbelts, or using your turn signal. The law of Christ is referring to what Jesus talked about, preached, and ultimately demonstrated with his life. The highest law, the most important law, isn't about not doing something. It's about looking out for each other. Loving each other as Christ has loved us. It's not about staying out of trouble. It's about getting to work and taking care of each other the best way we know how. And a lot of times that simply means, being there for someone going through a tough time. Carrying their burden. Letting them know they are not alone.

Sometimes obeying the law of Christ means doing something big. And sometimes it means being a good friend to someone who's dealing with something difficult. **Today, look for a way you can fulfill the law of Christ by serving someone nearby.**

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

EPHESIANS 4:3 NIV

DAY 5

People are the best *and* people can be the worst. They can be exactly what you need *and* the last thing you need. Sometimes all in a matter of minutes. If you have ever had conflict with someone, then you know that being in agreement and living in peace is hard. Sometimes we have different ideas of what the best idea is. Sometimes we have different recollections of how something went. Sometimes we just seem to be unable to reach any kind of truce. Because we are all different and see the world differently peace can feel impossible. But in this verse Paul reminds us that peace isn't a command. The effort to make peace and be unified through God's Holy Spirit is. In other words, we don't give up easily. We don't just walk away from difficulties. We work for unity and for peace. We make the effort. Not because that will make sure we will get it. But because that is what God knows will make us better. The effort of making peace and keeping unity. We can't force it. But we can do our part in it.

Today, when faced with a challenge, conflict or a disruption of peace, look for the ways you can do your part and measure your success by your effort and not the outcome.

Evil people don't understand justice, but **those who follow the Lord understand completely.**

PROVERBS 28:5 NLT

DAY 6

The book of Proverbs is filled with *principles*. That means, they are ideas that are generally true, but not always true. (For example, "If you put coins into the snack machine, you'll get a snack." That's a principle. It's true, but not *always* true. Sometimes it steals your coins and keeps the Cheetos, but most of the time it works the way it's supposed to. You get the idea). Proverbs aren't promises or guarantees, but more like, what someone older and wiser wrote down for someone younger just starting to figure out what the world is like. The writer of this proverb says that those who follow God understand justice. That means, this is generally something true about people who love God. They love justice too. They seek it out. They look for opportunities to find it when it doesn't seem obvious.

As we grow in our relationship with God and learn more about Him and what He is like, our desire to see justice done—wrongs made right, people often overlooked, treated with care and concern—will grow. It's supposed to. That means we are doing it right. **Today, take time to pray and ask God to open your eyes and help you to become the kind of person who sees, understands and pursues justice.**

I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ.

PHILIPPIANS 3:7-8 NLT

DAY 7

Break this verse down into three sentences. Try memorizing one sentence a day for the next three days.