

DAY 6

But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"

Romans 10:14-15 NLT

When you think about your faith journey, are there specific people who stick out to you? Maybe someone invited you somewhere, mentored you, encouraged you, or taught you how to pray in a more meaningful way. These verses, from a letter Paul wrote to the Roman church, remind us that every person who played a role in our faith journey was a messenger carrying good news about God's love, kindness, and care for us. They may not have even known they were doing it, but they were helping us see what God is like in all sorts of different ways! Guess what? YOU can be someone who shares this kind of good news with someone else.

What has God shown you lately? How have you seen God work? And who can you tell about it?

DAY 7

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

John 10:10 NIV

This verse is important to memorize because Jesus is saying the more familiar we get with His voice—through Scripture and with the Holy Spirit's help—the more likely we will be to recognize it when we hear it. Sheep know their shepherd. And memorizing Scripture helps us, as people following Jesus, to know the voice of our Good Shepherd.

Use it in your prayers when you pray for others. When you're in school and see someone you can include, say this verse in your head to remind yourself to include others.

Memorizing scripture reminds you of the way God thinks. Memorizing Scripture helps you fight against your own thoughts, especially negative ones!

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

FOR AN
everyday faith.

START THE PARTY / WEEK 3

DAY 1

Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?" When Jesus heard this, he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do." Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."
Matthew 9:10-13 NLT

This story about Jesus sounds like something that would happen at your cafeteria at school. It seems like who you sit with, associate with, are seen with, has always been a big deal. Why? Because status and popularity and power have always been a big deal. This is why Jesus' response is so powerful. Jesus didn't get caught up in what people thought of Him because of who He ate with. He didn't care that the Pharisees—the religious

leaders—looked down on them. In fact, Jesus thought the religious leaders were the ones missing the point. To Jesus, the social status of the dinner guests at Matthew's home, wasn't a big deal. Their hearts mattered a lot more.

Think about your own life and relationships. How much do you let status determine what you think about someone or how you act toward them? What would it take for your actions to match Jesus' actions from this story?

DAY 2

But those who obey God's word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.
1 John 2:5-6 NLT

In this part of an ancient letter from one of Jesus' best friends, a guy named John, we're told two things: To love God, we should obey God; and we obey God by living like Jesus. Sometimes knowing exactly how to practice your faith can feel complicated. But, to one of Jesus' closest

friends, it was simpler than we might think. All we have to do is follow the example of Jesus. His life, which we can read about in the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), shows us how we should live every day. Living like Jesus means loving like Jesus, treating other people the way He did, and seeing ourselves as valuable. When we follow Jesus' example, we wind up experiencing life the way we were created to.

Today, take some time to pray and ask for God's help as you set out to live and treat other people like Jesus did.

DAY 3

Therefore, [continue to] accept and welcome one another, just as Christ has accepted and welcomed us to the glory of [our great] God.

Romans 15:7 AMP

A big part of why we don't include everyone is because sometimes we judge people. This verse from Romans reminds us that the opposite of judging is to accept and welcome. In other words, don't act like you're better than everyone else. Instead, you can choose to accept and welcome others. Don't just think of them differently, make space for them. When you do, you'll discover your actions change your thoughts and your thoughts change your actions. And because of both, you will have more love for other people.

DAY 4

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.

Matthew 9:9 NLT

Isn't it true that we often put people in categories? In our minds, there are the people we consider "in" and the people we consider "out." But as Matthew, one of Jesus' closest followers, reminds us, this isn't the case with God. Matthew was a tax collector—someone the world would've seen as an outcast at the time. But Jesus invited Matthew to follow Him just the way he was. Matthew didn't have to do anything but accept the invitation. Just like that, he was "in".

Think about the people in your life you may be seeing as "out." Ask God to change your heart toward them, reminding you that in Jesus, we're all "in" at the party.

DAY 5

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze."

Isaiah 43:2 NIV

Written by Emily, age 22, from Cleveland, Tennessee, USA

Living life to the full is to enjoy life fully, to gain all that we can from the life we live. But what do we do when it's a struggle to live life to the full? Reality is that life isn't always what it seems, and unfortunately, life isn't always feel like it's full of sunshine. Sometimes life feels full of storms. Life can be difficult, that's no surprise to us, but what do we do when life doesn't seem to be all that full? We live life with others! The author of Genesis, the first book of the Bible tells us that God makes all of creation, including Adam. But God then creates Eve, showing us that God didn't create us to be alone but wants

us to be in relationship with each other. When we live in community, we can unite with one another during difficult times, and together, we can support each other in living life to the full. But God didn't create us to only live in community with others, we're also supposed to go through life connecting with God. In difficult times, looking to God for guidance, comfort, and care can help us continue to see how we can have full life in good times and in tough times. Living life to the full can be done in good and bad times when we live life in community with others and go through life connecting with God. Full life isn't perfect, but it's full of things like joy, peace, and love no matter what we face.

Today, think about the people who point you to full life even when times are tough. Take a moment to thank God for those people and for God's consistent presence in your life.