

Learn it  
Love it  
Live it  
Teach it!

A Daily Devotional through the  
Bible for Children (alone)  
or Families (together)

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## INTRODUCTION

**DAILY DEVOTIONALS** come in all shapes and sizes, and they have been used by Christians for generations. Taking time each day to reflect on God's Word, applying His truth to life, is an essential part of the Christian walk. Many classic devotionals have enriched my life over the years—some pretty old and some fairly new. I also have many fond childhood memories of my father and mother using various devotional guides to teach us both God's Word and biblical principles on various subjects. As a child and teenager, I was also regularly encouraged to have my own quiet time, using a devotional to spend time alone with the Lord.

This daily devotional is a bit of a hybrid. Using a different scripture verse as the foundation of each day's entry, it offers thoughts and reflections for the day, interpreting and applying that text. The selected verses are in canonical order from Genesis to Revelation. While not being an exhaustive study of God's Word, it is comprehensive. With this devotional method also comes a mini-Bible commentary, introducing various books of the Bible to the reader. So, consider this a devotional intended to increase your knowledge of God's Word, your love for God's Word, and the application of God's Word to your life.

Another major distinction of this devotional is that it can be used in two ways: either as a personal devotional for children (ages 8-13) or as a family devotional for parents to do with their children.

### **FOR CHILDREN USING A PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL. . .**

One of the best habits you can form as a young Christian is to read through the Bible every year. The Bible isn't a book that you just read once and then put on your shelf. Since it is the perfect inspired Word of God, it has been given to you for your training as a believer in Jesus Christ. It teaches you about God and about what He expects of you as His adopted child. It is the one big story of redemption in Jesus Christ, told in hundreds of smaller stories and taught in principles of truth. My hope is that by introducing you to a large part of the Bible, you will be inspired to read the Bible from beginning to end—often—as you live your life as a follower of Jesus!

## Introduction

A personal daily devotional like this one allows you to focus on a verse or two each day, digging down deep into what it means and how it applies to your life. This method is more like walking through the Bible instead of running through it. You learn to take smaller “bites” of God’s Word, chew on them, and swallow them as food for your soul. Since this devotional uses verses from all through the Bible, in order from beginning to end, it enables you to sample parts of the entire Bible. This devotional will help you to take time to read God’s Word every day on your own.

There are three essential activities for you to do as you read through God’s Word. First, **Learn it**. All people are born into this world with the need to learn. When you are born again as a Christian, you have the need to learn God’s Word. The Bible is not just a reading book to flip through for entertainment. It is to be studied and memorized to give you knowledge you need to live. Without God’s Word, you would not have the most important education you can ever have. Each day, this devotional will help you learn things about God, about yourself, and about His world that you need to know!

Next, you read God’s Word so you can **Love it** more each day. The Bible is such an amazing book, unlike any other book that ever has been or ever will be written. When the Spirit of God opens your eyes to its beauty and majesty, you will fall in love with everything about the Bible. Loving God’s Word is different than loving your pet, your favorite food, or some sort of activity. You will love God’s Word because it tells you how much God loves you. You will love God’s Word because it changes you to be more like Jesus. You will love God’s Word because it will capture your heart and mind!

Finally, reading the Bible on your own will help you **Live it** more each day. If you haven’t figured it out yet, this life can be tough. Our sin, the temptations of Satan, and the evil in this world all work against God’s way of living. Since He created you, it should make sense that the Bible can be like an “owner’s manual,” filled with life instructions. You learn God’s Word and love God’s Word more each day in order to live out what it teaches. Every day of your life, you will either live according to God’s Word or against God’s Word. Living God’s way is what you as a follower of Christ are always called to do!

**Learn it, love it, live it.** While you learn, love, and live the Bible, remember the ultimate subject of the Bible is Jesus. When you are learning God’s Word, you are learning Jesus. As you grow in love with

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God's Word, you are loving Jesus more as well. And living out God's Word is simply living for Jesus, in Jesus, and as a follower of Jesus. Now, read each day with your mind set on Jesus Christ, your Savior, your Redeemer, and your King!

### **FOR PARENTS USING A FAMILY DEVOTIONAL. . .**

As a parent, you have the high calling of bringing your children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). From the very first day your child enters your life, this daily task is always daunting as well as exciting. Bringing up your children biblically requires many important tasks, including passing on God's Word to them. Just as you make sure they have food and drink each day to keep their bodies healthy, a daily feeding on and drinking of God's Word is an absolute must. This devotional can either be given to your child for personal use or used as a family devotional together. You may even choose to use it both ways through the years.

By using this devotional, your child will be encouraged to **Learn it. . . Love it. . . Live it. . .** every day. While the "it" stands for God's Word, "it" also is a reminder to learn, love, and live for God Himself, as well as the Lord Jesus Christ. We always need to learn and teach God's Word in a Christ-centered way, with the gospel front and center. If you choose to use this book as a family devotional, reading it to some or all your children together, there is an additional "**Teach it**" component at the end of each entry. This interactive section provides questions you can use to reinforce what was just read. In this way you can use the devotional to teach through God's Word in a year's time.

Whether reading and studying as a family or on your own, developing the daily habit of learning God's Word, loving God's Word, living God's Word, and teaching God's Word will set an example for your children to follow for years to come.

## STARTER GUIDE

### HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL ON YOUR OWN . . .

- Read the day's Bible verse and the commentary.
- Read the **Learn it** scripture passage.
- Answer the **Learn it** question.
- Think about how to **Love it** (the message God teaches in the passage).
- Think about the question or thought in the **Live it** section and ask God to help you apply it to your life.
- Talk with your parents about what you read and learned.

### HOW TO USE THIS DEVOTIONAL AS A FAMILY . . .

- Read the Bible verse and commentary together.
- Discuss the questions in the **Teach it** section.



# January 1

*In the beginning,  
God created the heavens and the earth.*  
– Genesis 1:1

I absolutely love origin stories. They are typically background tales of heroes or villains from a comic book or a similar type of story. For example, do you know the origin story of Peter Parker, also known as Spider-Man™? From what I remember, some kind of radioactive spider bit him, giving him all the strength and qualities of a spider (without his becoming a spider)! You may have also seen movies telling the origin stories of your favorite fictional characters. Learning these backstories helps us understand more about the good guy or bad guy, making his or her actions more relatable.

Our universe has an origin story as well. Unfortunately, there are several different, conflicting versions of that story. But there is only one true story you can totally trust—you will find it in God’s Word, the Bible. God Himself has given us the true story of how everything began in the book of Genesis, which means “book of beginnings.” In the very first verse of the very first chapter of this very first book of the Bible, we find the words: *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.* Say those first four words slowly in your mind. In . . . the . . . beginning. . . God. The story of the universe—as well as your own origin story—begins with God. Simply stated, it was God who created the heavens and the earth. After that beginning, the next few chapters of Genesis tell us more of the story.

If you fast forward in your Bible to Hebrews 11, toward the end of the New Testament, you will find these words: *By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible* (Heb. 11:3). Our world was created by the perfect commands of God. He spoke, and all things came into being. This verse in the book of Hebrews also reminds us that God created all things out of nothing. Can you do that? No way! No human being can create something out of nothing. Only God can and did. He spoke, and the world—and everything in it—came into being. Can you picture it? What an incredible God we serve who created all things! That means that your origin story is completely rooted in the origin story of the universe—which begins with God.

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How does this original truth change the way you live? Be honest. Do you wake up each morning thinking about the glorious fact that God created the heavens and the earth? If you make an effort to think about this amazing truth regularly, you will find that you will look at your day in a much different way. You will praise God for this amazing world He alone created. You will give God more of your attention as you seek to care for His world in the way He commands. Hopefully, you will even learn the amazing purpose God has for you in His world as you seek to serve the God who created all things!

**- ON YOUR OWN -**

**Learn it.** . . . Read Genesis 1. What did God create on each of the six days?

**Love it.** . . . How does knowing God created the heavens and earth move you to love Him more?

**Live it.** . . . Since God created all things, you are responsible to treat all of creation with godly care, concern, and respect. Live as good stewards of God's creation!

**- AS A FAMILY -**

**Teach it.** . . . What did God create on each day of creation? Take a peek at Genesis 1 if you need help. What does creation teach you about God?



## April 7

*Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth;  
keep watch over the door of my lips!*  
– Psalm 141:3

Security guards have an important job. If you pay attention, you will see them almost everywhere. Banks have security guards to keep robbers away from people's money and important documents. Stores have security guards to keep away those who would try to steal from them. Schools have security guards to keep students safe from dangerous people. Very important people hire security guards to keep people away from them. Basically, the job of a security guard is to keep watch over valuable things or people, keeping away those who would steal, kill, or destroy. Most of the time you will feel safer when you look around and see a security guard—unless, of course, you are a thief or a killer!

The psalmist asked the Lord to set a security guard over his mouth. Why? Was he afraid that a thief would break in and steal his teeth? Or that someone might pry open his lips and pour poison down his throat? I don't think so. He didn't want a security guard to keep people or things *out* of his mouth; he needed a guard to keep things *in*! That's why he wrote, *keep watch over the door of my lips!* The psalmist knew the real problem we have is not what goes into our mouths but what comes out. Words that can hurt other people and us come from our sinful hearts. We need a security guard to watch over our words!

You may be thinking, "The best way to not sin with my words is to never speak again." While there are certainly times to keep your mouth closed, God's Word does not teach us to lock our lips forever. The Bible is full of instructions on how we are to speak. God expects His children to talk a lot—but in the right ways and at the right times. So, don't just keep your mouth closed in order to keep from saying the wrong things. Learn to speak the way God would have you speak. That's what the psalmist was praying for, a godly guard that would teach him to use his words wisely.

What would happen if the banker decided to send the security guard home early? Or the grocery store manager thought he didn't really need guards anymore? These would not be wise choices, since we live in a sinful world. What, then, do you think would happen if you told God that you didn't need a guard over your mouth anymore? You would



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say a lot of words which should never be said. Just as it wouldn't be safe to have a store or a bank without a security guard, it is not safe for the Christian to have an unguarded tongue. You can read more about this in the book of James in the New Testament. One of the wisest things you can do each morning is to ask God to set a security guard in front of your mouth!

**- ON YOUR OWN -**

**Learn it.** . . . Read Psalm 141. From what do God's people need protection?

**Love it.** . . . God doesn't just leave you alone to protect yourself!

**Live it.** . . . Ask God to set a guard over your mouth so your words glorify Him.

**- AS A FAMILY -**

**Teach it.** . . . How are you most tempted to sin with your words? Ask God to be the security guard of your mouth!



## July 31

*“But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

– John 4:23-24

What do you do on Sunday mornings? If you are a member of a Christian family, I would guess you go to church. Christians gather on the Lord’s Day to worship God as the family of God. We enter a sanctuary or a worship center. The worship leader calls us to worship. We sing songs and hymns. We pray and read God’s Word. The pastor preaches a sermon, teaching us God’s Word. Then we all go home—or maybe stay for fellowship or Sunday school. We do it all again every Sunday. If you live a long time, you will worship God at church thousands of times!

Sadly, we can just go through the motions on Sunday morning. Have you ever found your mind far away from God when you are at church? It is easy to just mouth the words instead of really singing praise to God. Instead of praying with the rest of your church family, you might be daydreaming about other things. Instead of listening to the sermon and thinking about what it means, you might be thinking about things you would rather be doing. Just because you are sitting in a worship service doesn’t make you a worshiper, does it? You may look like one on the outside, but God knows what is going on in your heart and mind.

Jesus was talking to all of us when He said: *“But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.”* To worship God *in spirit* means at least a couple important things. It means that you are worshiping from your heart, from a true love for God. It means your worship is from the inside of you—from your spirit—and not just something you do on the outside. It means that the Holy Spirit is at work in your life so that He is drawing you into the true worship of God. Since God is a spirit, we must worship Him in our inner spirit by the Holy Spirit!

Don’t miss out on the second part of what the real worship of God is all about—spirit *and* truth. Since God is the Author of all truth, His worshipers are to be people of the truth. We are to know the

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truth. We are to believe the truth. We are to love the truth. We are to live the truth each day. True worshipers worship the one true God. We should worship God the way He says we are to worship. That's why the centerpiece of the worship service is the preaching of the Word of God! Your mind is to be fixed on truth when you are worshiping God. Listen to Jesus one more time: "*For the Father is seeking such people to worship Him.*" Are you that kind of person?

**- ON YOUR OWN -**

**Learn it.** . . . Read John 4:1-45. What did Jesus do for the Samaritan woman?

**Love it.** . . . Worship always shows what or whom we really love!

**Live it.** . . . Since God is spirit, worship Him in spirit *and* truth!

**- AS A FAMILY -**

**Teach it.** . . . How is worship something that starts inside of you rather than just being an outward behavior? How do you know if you are a true worshiper of God?



## September 27

*But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

– 2 Corinthians 12:9

You finish last in a race. You jump up and down shouting, "I am so proud of myself for finishing last! No one else is worse than I am! I am the biggest loser in the world!" You enter a weightlifting contest at your school with girls and boys. You can only lift five pounds, which makes you the weakest person in the class. Instead of hanging your head in shame, you are pumped up. "Wow! Did you see that? I am so weak I can't even lift as much as my baby sister. Give me the award for the weakest link!" If these scenarios really happened, I am guessing the other competitors would not know what to say!

No one boasts about finishing last or being weak. Only the winners—the fastest, the brightest, and the strongest—boast. The world praises them and is amazed by their accomplishments. The most powerful in the world show off, point to their muscles, and are very proud of themselves. So, what was the apostle Paul thinking when he wrote, *Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses*? Who does that? How can anyone be proud of being a loser, of being the worst, or of being weak? This doesn't fit with how things work in this world!

But it is how God works. Paul was the greatest apostle and missionary of his time. He could have been very proud of his accomplishments and of all the gifts God had given him. God sent Paul a thorn in the flesh to harass him. We don't know what that thorn was, but it filled his life with pain and suffering. As we all would do, Paul asked God to take the thorn away, but He would not. Paul realized God was using the thorn to humble him, to keep him weak, so he would not boast about his own strength. Jesus had told him, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness."* Paul learned that God gives us His strength when we are weak because He is so gracious to us!

Thus, Paul wasn't boasting that he finished last in a race or was the weakest in a weightlifting contest. His boasting was about how great God was in His life. He wanted Christ's power to be seen in his life, not his own power. How about you? Can you boast in this way too? Do you know God's power is made perfect in your weakness? Be glad that

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God will work to keep you humble, recognizing your need of Him every moment of your life. Then rejoice when you struggle in your weakness, knowing God's grace is sufficient for you too!

**- ON YOUR OWN -**

**Learn it.** , , Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10. How is God's grace sufficient for us?

**Love it.** , , God's grace is made perfect in our weakness!

**Live it.** , , Boast in your weakness so you can glory in the strength of the Lord!

**- AS A FAMILY -**

**Teach it.** , , How is God's grace sufficient when you are weak? What does it mean to be sufficient?

