

devote **365** *an engaging daily devotional for students*

This book is dedicated to students
everywhere.
It is our distinct honor to serve you.

THE DEVOTE 365 CHALLENGE

Humanity was created for the express purpose of having a relationship with God. The opening chapters of Genesis detail multiple conversations between God and Adam and Eve. He talked with them. He walked with them. It was the reason He formed man and breathed the breath of life into him. But sin changed everything. No longer did Adam and Eve enjoy those times in the presence of God in the cool of the day. They were banished from the Garden of Eden and mankind's relationship with God was altered by their rebellion against His Word.

Fast forward through several millennia of human history and God becomes a man. He literally walked in our shoes. He felt what we feel and faced what we face. He was tempted with the same temptations, yet without sin. He was despised, beaten, crucified, and resurrected to pay the penalty for our sin and to restore His relationship with humanity. Because of the work of Christ on Calvary and the outpouring of His Spirit you have the opportunity to have a relationship with God like Adam and Eve. You too can walk and talk with God and enjoy the nearness of His presence.

The purpose of *Devote365* is to encourage and facilitate your personal relationship with God. This relationship must be defined by more than the occasional conversation on Sunday morning at your local church or during a special service at a youth event. God desires more than that. You need more than that. God wants all of you, and He desires to spend time with you every day. We challenge you to devote your entire life to God. 24/7. 365. Spend time with Him every day. Lay down your mobile device or tablet, grab your Bible, and find a quiet place to read your daily devotion, meditate on the Word of God, and talk to Jesus Christ—your Creator, Lord, and Savior. If you will listen closely, He will also talk to you.

“But nothing that a person owns and devotes to the Lord—whether a human being or an animal or family land—may be sold or redeemed; everything so devoted is most holy to the Lord” (Leviticus 27:28, NIV).

Nothing devoted to the Lord could ever be taken back or used for another purpose. Devote yourself wholly to a relationship with God and to the purpose He has designed for you, and don't ever look back. Go ahead, He's waiting for you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Ensey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Ensey
General Youth President, UPCI

INTRODUCTION

Above every acclaim, title, and accomplishment possessed by the apostle Paul, his chief pursuit was the knowledge of Christ Jesus. As we read in Philippians 3, to know Jesus in all of His power and glory, the richness of His love for us that would drive Him to sacrifice, and the promise we have of eternal life through His blood, became Paul's ultimate prize. *Devote365* exists as a resource for students all around the world to discover the God that loves them, calls them, cares for them, places promises upon them, and allows Himself to be pursued and known.

Comprised of 365 individual devotionals written by experienced and called laborers, *Devote365* serves to reveal the way in which Jesus Christ desires to be involved in your daily life as your personal Lord and Savior. Each day of every calendar week will feature a Scripture and illustration to demonstrate this according to the following schedule:

Theme	Focus
God Is	The general nature of God: His character and qualities
God Desires	What God is longing to see in His people
God Moves	How God is active in the lives of His people
God Calls	The manner in which God appoints His people to service
God Responds	The way in which God answers His people
God Promises	God's promises unto His followers
God Hears	God's willingness and capacity to attend to the voice of His people

To accomplish the goals listed above, Devote365 will use the full breadth of scripture, beginning in Genesis and ending in Revelation, with each month highlighting certain areas of the Bible as follows:

JANUARY – GENESIS-DEUTERONOMY

FEBRUARY – JOSHUA-ESTHER

MARCH – JOB-SONG OF SOLOMON

APRIL – JOB-SONG OF SOLOMON

MAY – ISAIAH-DANIEL

JUNE – HOSEA-MALACHI

JULY – MATTHEW-MARK

AUGUST – LUKE-JOHN

SEPTEMBER – ACTS

OCTOBER – ROMANS-COLOSSIANS

NOVEMBER – I THESSALONIANS-HEBREWS

DECEMBER – JAMES-REVELATION

GOD RESPONDS

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January

God Responds to Obedience

GENESIS 22:13

Devotional: One night I was in a service when an evangelist began to speak about reaching the city with the gospel. But the local church was simply too small to hold the hundreds of people that were gathering there on a weekly basis. Suddenly a young man walked down the center aisle and handed the registration for his vehicle to the minister and said, “The Lord told me to give my truck.” His act of obedience caught fire. People began bringing cash and checks, and within a matter of minutes over fifty thousand dollars had been raised. Someone even bought the young man’s truck and gave it back to him. I can’t imagine what must have been going through Abraham’s mind when God spoke to him to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice in Genesis 22. However, there seemed to be no hesitation as Abraham followed the request of the Lord. The words of a father had never been weightier than when he told Isaac, “The Lord will provide.” Can you hear the sigh of relief that came from Abraham’s lips when the angel of the Lord called out to him and revealed the ram in the thicket?

Prayer: Dear Lord, Thank You for being a God that provides for me. There will be times in my life when You ask me to do things that I might not understand in the moment, but help me to always listen to Your voice. I trust and believe that if I obey Your Word, that all things will work together for good as a result. When I do not understand, if it is Your will, help me to obey.

GOD PROMISES



Regardless of Your Circumstances

EXODUS 1:11-12

Devotional: When I was a kid, our neighborhood, probably like most others, had a bully. His name was Jason. He was big and he was mean. I will never forget the day when Jason was picking on me and my friends and I ran and got my older brother to come and “take care” of him. We were about thirty feet from Jason when my brother decided to tell him I was tough enough to whip him by myself. I’m not quite sure how Johnny convinced me, but the next thing I knew I was on my back with Jason’s knees on my arms. That’s when my brother reached down and pulled that bully off of me. My brother taught me that day that he would always fight for me if I was willing to fight for myself. The children of Israel were living with a promise for deliverance, but they were living in what seemed to be an unpromising situation. However, Exodus 1:12 tells us that the more they were afflicted by the taskmasters, the more the Israelites multiplied. God’s promises cannot always be measured by your current circumstances. Just stay faithful to Him.

Prayer: Dear God, help me to remain faithful regardless of my current circumstances. Help me to rely on You and trust Your promises even when things in my life seem confusing or overwhelming. There will always be elements in my life that are beyond my control, but help me to keep my faith in You consistent. I declare this day that I will believe and receive the promises of God for my life. Amen.

GOD HEARS

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January

God Hears . . . and So Should We

GENESIS 27:22

Devotional: When I was younger it was pretty common (and dumb) to do “prank calls” to one of our friends—nothing malicious, but something funny (or so we thought). Recently one of my childhood friends did this to me with a make-believe story about my kid kicking his dog. I countered with the all-time backfire because I recognized his voice and called him out. Anyone that reads Genesis 27 has to ask themselves how Jacob pulled this off. Didn’t Isaac recognize the voice of his own son? Well, of course he did. Verse 22 makes a point of telling us he recognized the voice as Jacob’s. So why did he consent to blessing Jacob instead of waiting on Esau? It was the “feeling” according to the words of a blind father. We live in a world that is constantly marketing for us to “follow our feelings,” to do what “feels right.” But we can’t trust our feelings. God knows our voice when we talk to Him. We must stay close enough in our relationship with Him that we trust His voice over our feelings.

Prayer: Dear God, Help me to know Your voice and trust Your Word. I can’t achieve clear direction for my life by altering my direction every time my feelings change. Some people will try to manipulate me based on my feelings, but let my relationship with You be unwavering. You said in John 10:27-28, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” I choose to know and trust Your voice.

God Is the I AM

EXODUS 3:13-14

Devotional: On my first day of high school as a freshman I had that nervous feeling in my stomach. However, I walked into the gym where all the students gathered before school looking as calm as possible. That's when some large dude came, towered over me, and asked, "Who is your older brother?" Standing there looking at this giant upperclassman my life flashed before my eyes. I'll never forget when I told him who my brother was and his response. "Before your brother graduated he told me you were coming and to watch out for you. If anyone bothers you come and tell me." My situation pales in comparison to that of Moses. Can you imagine how he must have felt walking into the throne room to face the mighty Pharaoh and tell him to let God's people go? Sure, he may have felt intimidated at first. But He knew his "older brother" was there to back everything he said. He knew God would do exactly as He promised and triumph in the end. The strength of the miraculous Exodus was Moses' confidence in being able to say, "The I AM has sent me." Nothing compares to knowing God is your I AM.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me remember that I am not alone. You are the I AM in my life every day. There will be situations in my life that seem overwhelming but help me to remember that You are with me. Moses could not do it by his own ability, but when he went with Your help, nothing was impossible. Help me to be received by the people that I respect like Moses was. He was able to go to the children of God and declare, "the I AM has sent me." Send me, Lord, for Your purpose.

GOD DESIRES



God Desires Your Company

GENESIS 3:8-9

Devotional: When I was in college I had the opportunity to join one of my friends on a special trip. Our responsibility was to drive the president of the school to St. Louis. My friend and I drove alternately while the president spent the whole time working in the back. To be honest, I couldn't believe how kind and interactive that highly esteemed gentleman was. He was genuinely thankful that we would take the time to assist him. After spending several hours with him I began to feel comfortable enough to carry on a conversation. It amazes me that the God of infinite wisdom, who knew the fall of Adam and Eve, still came to spend time with them that fateful day. In fact, God did not wait on them; He called after them and sought them out. Why? Because it has always been His desire to spend time with His people. The more time you or I spend with any person, the easier the conversation becomes. The same is true with God, He desires your company and enjoys your conversation.

Prayer: Dear God, Help me to remember that there is no one who is more important for me to spend time with than You. It amazes me that You desire my company and enjoy our time together. I know that the more time we spend together the closer our relationship will become. Let me continue to seek after You, and allow our relationship to grow closer than ever before. Amen.

GOD MOVES

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January

God Moves But Will I?

GENESIS 12:1-4

Devotional: I was praying one Sunday morning around the altar when God spoke to me about praying for someone else who was up at the altar. I was nervous because what was I supposed to say? I had seen them around but I didn't really know them. After questioning God for what seemed like forever, I finally surrendered and walked toward the person. As soon as I laid my hands on them God quickened to me the words to speak to them. I spoke with clarity and authority and felt the boldness of the Holy Ghost on me. The person came to me afterward and confirmed that what God spoke to them through me were answers to questions they had asked God in prayer. God was willing and ready to move that morning but was I willing to? Imagine the questions Abram must have had in Genesis 12:1, yet in Genesis 12:4 we see no questions asked—just obedience to God's moving. I don't believe Abram was the only one that God called out of his country or from his kindred or from his father's house or from his comfort zone, but I do believe he was the only one to move.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Thank You that I can call on You at any time and You will hear my cry. Remove fear and doubt from me. Lead me and direct my paths. I put my trust in You and will go where You ask me to go and do what You ask me to do. I will be obedient to Your will and way for my life. I will decrease so You can increase in me.

GOD CALLS



Looking for God's Call?

EXODUS 3:3-4

Devotional: There's one thing I can't stand about going to the mall: the twenty-five kiosks that are in the way and the attendants that jump out at you to pressure you into buying something. It's hard not to notice the ones that fly their helicopters over your head. And when you can't stop looking, that's when they pitch their product. That's what God wants as well. In Exodus 3:4, we find God calling a man. There was Moses, busily herding the sheep of his father-in-law when he came across a burning bush. Moses didn't just glance at the burning bush; he became interested in why it didn't burn up and went over to investigate. It is important to recognize what happened before God called out to Moses. In verse 3, Moses turned aside to see the great sight. It wasn't until Moses chose to actually turn and look that God called out of the bush to him. God is trying to get our attention from our own personal "burning bush." But God waits to call us until we recognize that bush and go over to investigate. We must be constantly looking for Him to speak! So, what's your "burning bush?"

Prayer: Dear Lord, As I walk with You from day to day, it is sometimes easy to get distracted with all that life brings. I can get so caught up with busyness that I lose my focus on You. Even when I'm busy doing things for You I can lose my focus on what is most important: Your voice. Help me to be looking for Your voice in everything I do so I can know You better, and know Your perfect will for my life. Help me to be aware of You today with every step I take.