

Household Devotional Guide

Chapter 1 – GOD

KEY VERSE: “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14).

DEVOTIONAL VERSE: “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands” (Psalm 19:1).

HOUSEHOLD DISCUSSION: Google some of the beautiful pictures of the Hubble Space Telescope. The grandeur of a nebula or comet or distant galaxy can be truly breathtaking. Discuss your favorite parts of God’s creation: things like the stars, sunsets, animals, mountains, or beaches. Ask each other: what is your favorite part of God’s creation? (for some extra fun and hands-on learning, perhaps you could print off images of each family member’s favorite part of creation and make a collage of creation together)

Read the following devotional reflection together:

The same God who created the stars also created you! And he loves you, too! Romans 1 says that God invisible attributes are made visible in His creation. Yet, so often our hearts are so focused on the here and now, the visible, that we fail to make time for God. So much of scripture invites us to use visible elements of our everyday world to remind us of God.

Even the smallest things in creation can point us to God! Proverbs 6:6 invites us to “consider the ant” and follow its example of hard work. Jesus encourages us to consider the tiniest of seeds, the “mustard seed” as an example of God’s Kingdom, where the tiniest amounts of faith can produce great things. How is God speaking to you today in nature? Where is the beauty of creation proclaiming the beauty of its Creator?

TANGIBLE FAITH ACTIVITY: Purchase or print something off Pinterest (like this image: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/135741376253330270/>) of the following verse: “But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15). Put this somewhere prominent in your home where you will see it every day, like the mirror where you get ready or the fridge or by the door. Make this a tangible reminder of God’s call for us to have all of our household serve the Lord.

Chapter 2 – PERSONAL GOD

KEY VERSE: “I lift my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the maker of heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:1-2).

DEVOTIONAL VERSE: “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?” (Psalm 8:3-4).

HOUSEHOLD DISCUSSION: Let’s get personal! Who is the person you are most honest with? Who do you trust enough to tell even your deepest secrets? Have you ever thought about how the God of the Universe cares about you? The God of the Stars is also the God of your everyday life! How does this change how you think about yourself and your relationship with God?

Read the following devotional reflection together:

C.S. Lewis once said, “The most valuable thing the Psalms do for me is to express the same delight in God which made David dance.” The psalms give us a window into what honest and deep connection and transparency before God really looks like. We not only learn how to bring our joyous worship to God from the psalms (like Psalm 98:4), but we learn to bring our pains, sorrows, and loneliness as well (Psalm 22:1). Joni Eareckson Tada, a quadriplegic and advocate for others with disabilities declares that “the Psalms wrap nouns and verbs around our pain better than any other book.” I can think of no greater pathway to deeper intimacy with God than not only reading a psalm, but praying it aloud.

TANGIBLE FAITH ACTIVITY: Worshiping together as a family can be really unifying. I recommend you worship to a song based on a Psalm, like Chris Tomlin’s “Forever” (based on Psalm 136) or Jon Foreman’s “House of God Forever” (based on Psalm 23). If you don’t own either song, you can find them by searching on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6xxWGWpaUQ> & <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtDXHgTi-5s>.

Chapter 3 – SALVATION

KEY VERSE: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

DEVOTIONAL VERSE: “But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? OR are you envious because I am generous? So the last will be first and the first will be last” (Matthew 20:13-16).

HOUSEHOLD DISCUSSION: Have you ever experienced something really unfair? A grade in school you didn’t feel like you deserved? A bad call by a referee during a big game? Getting suddenly laid off at work? Getting punished for something someone else did? How did it feel to experience something unfair? Why do you think we care so much about things being “fair?”

Read the following devotional reflection together:

“It’s not fair!”

This phrase is so frequently on our lips. Jesus knew how much we cared about fairness. So, Jesus tells a story about a business owner and how he paid his employees (Matthew 20:1-16). The employer paid everyone the exact same salary—regardless of how much or how hard they worked. Jesus tells this “unfair” story in order to illustrate how the gospel is inherently unfair. And it’s a good thing! Even though we are sinners, God still loves us, gives us grace and chooses to not treat us as we deserve (Romans 5:8). We should celebrate the fact that Jesus does not treat us fairly. Instead, Jesus dies in our place and takes on the punishment that we deserve (Isaiah 53:5-6; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

TANGIBLE FAITH ACTIVITY: Watch the following scene from “Office Space.” This is a modern version of what this parable in Matthew 20 might look like:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8afqoDL3Qsk> (please watch 0:00-1:04 only in order to avoid a bad word later in the video). Discuss how getting something you don’t deserve can feel weird and hard to accept. How can you grow in accepting the free grace of God?

Chapter 4 – THE BIBLE

KEY VERSE: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (1 Timothy 3:16).

DEVOTIONAL VERSE: “Jesus answered, ‘It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4).

HOUSEHOLD DISCUSSION: Talk about learning “the basics” of something that you really enjoy. It can be anything: sports, cooking, sewing, carpentry, reading, or something else entirely. The interesting thing is that it is often helpful to return to the basics in all of these different fields. This week, we are going to talk about the basics of what the Bible is and how to use it. Discuss with your household what parts of the Bible you know well and feel comfortable in. Discuss which parts you are struggling in. How do you think you could feel more comfortable reading the Bible?

Read the following devotional reflection together:

Can you imagine going toe to toe with Satan? Can you then imagine that the only tool to fight Him was the Book of Deuteronomy? I don’t think I would do very well!

Jesus was ready to overcome Satan’s lies by being well versed in the truth. Jesus was even able to overcome Satan warping and twisting God’s Word towards selfish and misleading ends. It is very important that we live our lives based on the truth.

Jesus tells a parable about how we are part of His flock, we are His sheep and He is the Good Shepherd. The key to this parable is that we as His sheep need to know His voice, what His Word sounds like. My prayer today is that you and your household would learn to listen and believe the voice of truth that is found in the Bible.

TANGIBLE FAITH ACTIVITY: Casting Crowns has a song called, “Voice of Truth.” You can listen to it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwsvqVmFV6Y>. I would encourage you to set aside a little extra time to read God’s Word as a family and have some silence and quiet time as well. We live such busy and chaotic lives, silence can help center and focus our souls and bring us great peace.

Chapter 5 – IDENTITY IN CHRIST

KEY VERSE: Key Verse: “Yet, to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become Children of God” (John 1:12).

DEVOTIONAL VERSE: “If we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory” (Romans 8:17).

HOUSEHOLD DISCUSSION: When was a time when you felt most honored, most special? When was a time when you felt like “somebody,” like the center of attention? It could be your wedding, receiving an award, getting a promotion, or winning a game or competition. Discuss how we are “somebody” to God and that God sees us as His children. How awesome is that?

Read the following devotional reflection together:

This could be the most important concept of this series. When we fully understand and incorporate our identity in Christ in everything that we are and everything that we do, we become more joyful, content, peaceful and discover a more abundant and rewarding life. Yet, so much of this world desires to steal this identity.

As we discussed last week, Satan wants to drown out the voice of truth and the primary truth Satan attacks is our identity. When tempting Jesus in the wilderness, the first words Satan are intended to cause Jesus to doubt His own identity: “If you are the Son of God” (Matthew 4:3). The crazy thing about this attack is that Jesus just heard who He was declared at His baptism just a few days before: “This is my Son, whom I love, with whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

TANGIBLE FAITH ACTIVITY: I would like to suggest you listen to another Casting Crowns song, “Who am I?” You can listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBcqria2wmg>. I also recommend Matthew West’s song, “Hello my name is.” Check it out here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuJWQzjfU3o>. There are many days when we feel insignificant and alone. Please take some time to encourage those in your household. Talk about how each of you is not defined by your actions (good or bad). Remind each of the simple gospel. Say this out loud to each other every day this week when you get up: “I am Child of God! I am loved by God!”

Chapter 6 – CHURCH

KEY VERSE: “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Ephesians 4:15-16).

DEVOTIONAL VERSE: “Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many” (1 Corinthians 12:12-14).

HOUSEHOLD DISCUSSION: The yellow companion book tells a story of how two horses pulled 30,000 pounds together, when they couldn’t even pull 10,000 individually. Think about a time when you collaborated with someone or a group to do something awesome or exciting?

Read the following devotional reflection together:

I don’t know about you, but I always struggled with “group work” in school. As the nerd/overachiever, I always found myself doing a majority of the work (partly because I cared too much, partly because I had lazy peers). I didn’t like the idea of working together for the same grade. It didn’t feel fair.

My fear is that we often treat the Christian life like “group work” at school: sometimes we work together, but most of the time we find it’s easier to just go it alone. We were not created to live solitary lives and we were not called to serve Jesus by ourselves. Jesus is the head of the church and each of us serve as members, body parts, of Jesus. Some of us are serving hands and feet, others serve as voices of love and listening ears. We all have different roles to play, but we are all in the same body.

TANGIBLE FAITH ACTIVITY: Have everyone in the family think about how a single body part might represent their role in serving the church. If you like serving others, perhaps your role is being the merciful HANDS of Jesus. If you like being there for those who suffer and struggle, then perhaps a listening EAR. If you enjoy speaking words of truth and encouragement, then perhaps your role is a mouthpiece of God. Once you choose a body part, draw a small picture and label yourself as that body part/role. Cut that body part out and combine each of the parts within a single person. That way you can see how each of your gifts complement each other and how they all fit together in your household and also in the church. Finally, feel free to watch this video by Casting Crowns, called “If we are the body”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAWeHo8E70E&list=RDkAWeHo8E70E&t=81>.

Chapter 7 – HUMANITY

KEY VERSE: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

DEVOTIONAL VERSE: “Then Jesus said to his host, ‘When you give a luncheon or dinner do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous” (Luke 14:12-14).

HOUSEHOLD DISCUSSION: Think about one of the greatest parties you have ever attended or participated in. When was it? Was it a wedding, an anniversary, a holiday, a birthday, or something else entirely? What made it special (people, food, activities, location)?

Read the following devotional reflection together:

Jesus talks about throwing a party—a dinner party in particular. But, Jesus is wondering if we would be willing to allow Him to amend our invite list. Would we be willing to invite strangers, the disabled, the poor and homeless? Before you answer, think about some of the consequences. First, it will be awkward and uncomfortable. Second, they won’t probably be able to return the favor (no reciprocity). Third, it will be scandalous to some of your other friends, family, and neighbors. Fourth, and best of all, you will be getting an opportunity to serve Jesus and be His hands and feet.

In America, our home has become our castle. With our giant privacy fences and rear entry garages, we almost never even see our neighbors. Here’s my challenge! What if we invited one neighbor or coworker over for dinner, knowing that it is a huge risk and knowing anything could happen!

TANGIBLE FAITH ACTIVITY: So, let’s make some plans! If you are going to invite someone over, then you might need to get a simple meal prepared (don’t stress out over doing something crazy you saw on Pinterest). Also, don’t stress out about the house being perfect and tidy! Just clean up a little and make it a welcoming environment. Finally, don’t feel like you have to talk about anything super spiritual. If the opportunity arises naturally, great! If not, that’s cool as well! Just have a good time getting to know a neighbor or coworker. Find some shared interests and figure out ways to connect as fellow humans. We can’t be a light to our neighbors without actually knowing their names and stories, so consider this a step in the right direction.

Chapter 8 – COMPASSION

KEY VERSE: “Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked” (Psalm 82:3-4).

DEVOTIONAL VERSE: “Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?” (James 2:15-16).

HOUSEHOLD DISCUSSION: When was a moment when you really needed help fixing something? It could be a broken A/C unit, a broken-down car, or a broken toy. Many of us are so relieved when a mechanic or technician reports, “All done. Everything is fixed.” What a sigh of relief!

Read the following devotional reflection together:

“I don’t want you to fix it!”

Anyone who has been in a romantic relationship knows these words. As a man, I struggle with the temptation to fix a problem and propose a solution instead of simply listening to my spouse’s struggle. How about you? Do you struggle with the temptation to fix things? Where could you learn to be more compassionate (to “suffer with or alongside” someone)? How can we really learn to be patient and understanding with those who are struggling?

Yet, there are times when we can bring hope and healing to a friend or family member’s pain and suffering. The passage from James above reminds us to care with BOTH our words and actions. Sometimes we need to be patient and compassionate and act slowly. Sometimes we need to be bold and courageous and act quickly.

TANGIBLE FAITH ACTIVITY: So, if you have spent much time around me (Pastor Will), then you know one of my great passions is Metro Relief, a ministry to the homeless in downtown Dallas. I would like to invite your family to join us on one of our monthly service projects as we give away soup, socks, and the love of Jesus to our brothers and sisters who happen to live on the streets of downtown Dallas. I cannot recommend this ministry enough and I know that it will reshape how you feel about the poor and how you feel about how much God has blessed you.

Chapter 9 – STEWARDSHIP

KEY VERSE: “The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters” (Psalm 24:1-2).

DEVOTIONAL VERSE: “I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship” (Romans 12:1).

HOUSEHOLD DISCUSSION: Have you ever been “volun-told” to do something (like being forcefully volunteered for something)? How did it make you feel? How would it have been different if you were given more freedom to serve in a way that you felt called to serve? Would you have done the service if you weren’t forced to? What can you learn from that circumstance?

Read the following devotional reflection together:

Nothing is truly ours. God has created us. God has redeemed us, meaning He paid our spiritual debts and purchased us out of slavery.

I love the metaphor the author uses in the yellow book, that God is like a big corporation buying out our struggling small business: “You ‘own’ your life, but your ‘business’ is quite dysfunctional and deeply in debt. Christ comes to you and says, ‘I’m offering to buy you out. Redeem your life. Pay off all your debt that you could never repay. I will give you all of my resources, and you can then manage what I give you.’”

When we look at our lives, our time, our resources, and our talents as God’s property that He allows us to manage, then we become more generous and gracious. I would like to encourage you to take some time as a household to thank God for all the small and big ways God provides for you and how God is calling you to share some of those blessings.

TANGIBLE FAITH ACTIVITY: Take a walk or hike in nature this week as a household (I strongly recommend the Arbor Hills Nature Preserve if you haven’t been there yet). Enjoy the trees, the animals, the streams of water and the bright blue sky. Enjoy all the sights and sounds and come together as a household and pray this simple prayer: “God, the earth is yours! We are yours, too!” Then, listen to and watch this excellent song by Gungor, “The Earth is Yours” that they filmed out in the woods: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRUCV78IULQ>. Here’s a fun lyrics and word art video of the same song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kG4SKwTG9 k>.

Chapter 10 – ETERNITY

KEY VERSE: “Do not let your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?” (John 14:1-2).

DEVOTIONAL VERSE: “And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say,
‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come’” (Revelation 4:8).

HOUSEHOLD DISCUSSION:

Get a coin and have someone in your household call “heads” or “tails.” Then flip the coin. Maybe reward the person who calls the right outcome with a candy or a little something sweet. Here’s the point. On pages 88-89 of the yellow book, we see “Pascal’s Wager.” Either God exists and believing in Him is of the highest priority and worth wagering our eternal lives on, or He doesn’t exist and even believing in Him would not be such a great loss as not believing in a God who indeed exists and therefore spending eternity without Him. Discuss as a household how all of us benefit from trusting in God and wagering our life based on the truth that God alone loves us and saves us.

Read the following devotional reflection together:

The song, “Holy, Holy, Holy,” has been sung in heaven for a very long time. Isaiah gets a vision of angels singing this same song in Isaiah 6. John sees the same angels singing the same song almost a thousand years later and it is promised that they will still be singing when we enter eternity. I am comforted by the truth that Jesus has indeed prepared a room for me that will be within earshot of this heavenly chorus. And Jesus will let me sing along (even though my present earthly voice leaves much to be desired)!

I am so eager to have my faith be sight, to see my Lord face to face. I long for God to make all things new, for there to be no more crying, death or pain. I long for Jesus to finally make into His image and to cast off my struggles with sin and temptation. I long for my friends to have the same eternal bliss. I pray for more longing in your soul. I pray that you long for Jesus’ return like the saints of old. Who knows, He could come any day now...

TANGIBLE FAITH ACTIVITY: I want you to make a list of friends, neighbors, coworkers, and family members that do not know Jesus yet. I would like to encourage your whole household to pray for each of these people by name each day this week.