

FIRST things FIRST

Daily Devotionals

for September 1-7, 2025

Devotions prepared for you to use in your Quiet Time with the Lord and are designed to prepare you for the sermon next Sunday.

Monday, Sept. 1 The Narrow Gate Requires Empty Hands

Read Scripture: Matthew 7:13-14

Jesus speaks of two gates—one wide and popular, the other narrow and rarely chosen. The narrow gate leads to life, but it requires us to travel light. Discipleship isn't about adding Jesus to our already full lives; it's about letting go of what doesn't fit through the gate. Pride, comfort, self-preservation—these weigh us down. It's the path of surrender, of trusting that what we release will be replaced by something far better: deeper peace, clearer purpose, and eternal joy.

Prayer: Lord, help me release what weighs me down.

Tuesday, Sept. 2 Living Sacrifice, Daily Offering

Read Scripture: Romans 12:1-2

Paul's call to be a "living sacrifice" is both radical and routine. It's a daily decision to offer our bodies, minds, and souls to God. Discipleship isn't just about what we give up; it's about what we give and are willing to hand over to God. This kind of surrender transforms us. It renews our thinking, reshapes our desires, and aligns our lives with God's will. It's not about losing identity—it's about finding it in Christ.

Prayer: Father, I offer You my whole self today.

Wednesday, Sept. 3 Building with Wisdom

Read Scripture: Proverbs 24:3-4

"By wisdom a house is built," says Proverbs. Whether we're building a home, a ministry, or a life of faith, the foundation matters. Discipleship isn't impulsive—it's intentional. Jesus invites us to count the cost, not to discourage us, but to prepare us. What will this require? What will I need to let go of? What will keep me going when the work gets hard? When we build with understanding and knowledge, we build something that will last.

Prayer: God, grant me wisdom as I build my life in You.

Thursday Sept. 4

The Armor of Commitment

Read Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-17

A Discipleship can be hard. Some might even call it warfare. When we choose to follow Christ, we step into a place where the enemy will attack. We are seen as a threat. Paul's description of armor reminds us that we're not left exposed. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the Word—these are our defense.

Armor needs to be put on daily. Commitment to Christ means choosing to be spiritually prepared, and ready to stand your ground.

Prayer: Lord, clothe me in Your armor today.

Friday, Sept. 5

Losing to Gain

Read Scripture: John 12:24-25

Jesus uses the image of a grain of wheat falling to the ground and dying before it bears fruit. It is something that makes you raise an eyebrow. We lose our life to find it. Surrendering to God isn't the end of our life. It is the start of something so much bigger than we are. When we try to stay in control, God is limited, but when we hand it all over to Him, we can begin to see how we can grow.

Prayer: Jesus, help me let go and trust You with the outcome.

Saturday, Sept. 6

Freedom in the Yoke

Read Scripture: Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus tells us to take up our yolk. That seems like hard work. Jesus offers this not so that we can be weighed down, but so that we can be guided on the right path. The cost of discipleship is real, but the relationship we gain in Christ is so worth it. The yoke of Christ is not freedom from responsibility—it's freedom within responsibility. It's the rest that comes from walking in step with the One who knows the way.

Prayer: Jesus, I choose Your yoke today. Teach me to walk with You in peace and rest. Lead me in Your way.

Sunday, Sept. 7

Serious Faith

Worship at 10:00am

Luke 14:25-33

by Pastor Clint Phillips