



DEVOTIONAL Guide



"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." *John 8:31*

JESUS IS LIFE

MONDAY

John 10: 7-10 – *Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

Heavenly Father, As I meditate on the gift of your son, Jesus Christ, my heart overflows with gratitude. I am humbled to be called a sheep of Jesus and comforted to know that Jesus came to give me life and that no one or nothing can steal that life from me. As Hope Waukee becomes my green pasture, may my heart be filled with love for you God and for those I will share life with at Hope Waukee.

TUESDAY

John 14: 6-7 – *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”*

Heavenly Father, Thank you for providing me full access to you with the gift of your son, Jesus Christ. In this complicated and unsure world, it is comforting to know that I have been given the truth and through the truth I have life. I desire to know Jesus and I am excited to have the opportunity to strengthen my spiritual journey and relationship with Jesus Christ alongside other Christians at Hope Waukee. As we become stronger as a church, may we bring this truth to the world around us.

WEDNESDAY

1 Peter 1:3 – *All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation,*

Heavenly Father, May praise for you God be forever on my lips as I soak in the true gift of life through your son Jesus Christ who died so we could have eternal life with you. Life this side of heaven can be heavy and frustrating at best but knowing that through Jesus we have much more than this life brings me peace beyond understanding. May I never take this gift of life for granted

and may the mercy you have shown me, I in turn show others. Now help me and all those who enter the doors of Hope Waukee, live in great expectation.

THURSDAY

1 John 5:20 – *And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life.*

Fellowship – companionship, company; a community of interest, activity, feeling, experience. Heavenly Father, Thank you for the companion you have given me in your Son Jesus Christ, and because of this relationship I am able to know You; the one true God. I thank you that I do not have to do this life alone and that Jesus walks alongside me through this journey – through the joy and the sorrows. I am also very grateful that I have a church family at Hope Waukee that I can do life with and fellowship with! Life is better together and life is awesome with Jesus!

FRIDAY

Ephesians 3: 16-20 – *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

Heavenly Father, I am in awe when I read this scripture verse – this promise – this affirmation of your deep love for us. I so pray that out of your glorious riches Lord that you strengthen me by the power of the Holy Spirit and that Christ takes up permanent residency in my heart!! It is then that through this power, I am able to do immeasurably more than I could ever ask or imagine in my life to further your kingdom. The kingdom starts at Hope Waukee and goes out into the world so desperate to hear your good news. May we be faithful servants at Hope Waukee as we come together to share your good news.

LOST PEOPLE MATTER

MONDAY

Lost: To no longer be possessed or known; lacking assurance of eternal salvation

Have you ever felt lost? Have you ever lost someone or something so valuable to you?

When our middle son was 7 years old, our family was in the mountains of North Carolina at a camp property. Our son was so excited for the adventure that he ran up the trail ahead of us to try and make it to the obstacle course first. When the rest of us got there we couldn't find our son anywhere. We spread out and searched the camp shouting his name. Finally, his Dad shouted his name and he responded in tears. Darkness was setting in and he was afraid. His Dad said, "I know you can't see me...just listen to my voice. It is OK. I am here." Finally our son was in his Father's arms again.

We have 3 sons, but the one we were attentive to and caring for the most in that moment was the one that was lost.

God calls us to come to Him.

God cares if we are lost.

Please read Luke 15: 3-7 The Parable of the Lost Sheep

So Jesus told them this story: "If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will he do? Won't he leave the ninety-nine others in the wilderness and go to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he will joyfully carry it home on his shoulders. When he arrives, he will call together his friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep'. In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!" (NLT translation)

Dear Lord,

I thank you that you continue to pursue us and call out to us when we are lost. Thank you, Lord, that when you find us you are filled with joy.

TUESDAY

What about the times when I stray and go my own way? Does God still care for me even when I am intentionally lost?

Please read all of Luke 15:11-31 The Parable of the Lost Son

A man had two sons. The younger son told his father, 'I want my share of your estate now before you die.'

...A few days later this younger son packed all his belongings and moved to a distant land, and there he wasted all his money in wild living.

...So he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. Filled with love and compassion, he ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him.

...We must celebrate with a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has now returned to life. He was lost, but now he is found.' (NLT translation)

Where do you see yourself in this story? Imagine if you were there...what you would hear...see...smell...taste.

Dear Lord,

Thank you that you love me even when I stray and go my own way. Help me Lord to surrender and always come home to you. I thank you that when I do return home, you celebrate and run to me with open arms.

WEDNESDAY

At what lengths is God going to go to find us and meet with us?

What do we gain from an encounter with God?

John 6:35 – Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." (NLT translation)

Please read about God's concern for one of His lost daughters.

John 4:1-42 – The Samaritan Woman at the Well

...Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

...Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

"Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water!" (NLT translation)

God cares about His lost daughter. If He cares about her.....does He care about me?

Can God really love me that much to go out of His way to find me and offer me fullness in Him, so that I can leave behind what the world offers?

Dear Lord,

I thank you Lord that you do care about me. Thank you that you go out of your way to find us and that we don't have to continue to search after things that leave us still feeling thirsty. I want to drink your water of life, Lord; in fact, I want to dive deep into it. Help me Lord to live for you.

THURSDAY

Whether or not you have already committed your life to Christ, can you look back on your life and think of any moments when you knew that God was reaching out to you? Please take some time of silence and ask God to remind you of those moments when He was pursuing you.

Please read Psalm 139: 1-24

O Lord, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.

You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I am far away...

...You go before me and follow me...

...If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me....

...even in darkness I cannot hide from you... (NLT translation)

God knows the details of our lives. He knit us together in our mother's womb. No matter where we are, what time of the day it is, what season of life we are in, or whether we are in the light or the darkness....He is there with us!

Dear Lord,

What a blessing it is Lord to know that you created us and know everything about us. I have felt lost Lord, but how beautiful to know that you have been there all along. Help me Lord to be in tune enough to sense your presence in my life.

FRIDAY

God sent us His son Jesus Christ to enter our world and rescue us from sin and death.

God desires for us to be in a relationship with Him.

God cares about those who are lost.

How can I love God's lost?

Please read 1 Corinthians 9:22-27

To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. (NIV translation)

Paul encourages us to run the race with intention and urgency in order to win as many as possible for Christ.

Please take time to consider:

What does my race look like?

Have I found myself walking lately?

Who or what am I running after?

Dear Lord,

I don't want to walk anymore. I want to run. Help me Lord to run the race for you....for what matters. I pray Lord for adults and kids in this community to know you and to be found by you. Thank you Lord for your love for them... and for me.

Additional reading: John 13:34-35

So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples. (NLT translation)

WE WORSHIP GOD, NOT TRADITION

MONDAY

Psalm 115:1 – Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your Name, goes all the glory for your unfailing love and faithfulness.

Not to us, but to YOUR Name, Lord. As I think about this verse, I wonder if this is the posture that we use when we enter into a worship service. We were created to Worship our God. It is in our DNA. Isn't it so easy to get trapped into making a worship service about us and our own feelings rather than truly making it about God and offering our praise to Him? Not to us? Really? It is easy for any of us to leave a worship service and begin to assess our level of personal enjoyment. The sermon was okay today, but I've heard better.... That clapping and raising hands, what is THAT about?!... I would feel better if the preacher wore a robe... I'm not a big fan of the music today... Why are there no hymns?... When we leave a worship service with these thoughts as the primary focus of our hearts, we have missed it. Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your Name be the glory.

When we enter a time of worship during a service, if we are truly worshipping our God, we are offering our entire beings to Him in praise and honor. We are there for Him and because of Him, returning the praise that He so greatly deserves. He wants ALL of each one of us. There is no specific music style or routine or any other tradition that is more important than our God. We worship Him, not tradition. There is nothing wrong with having traditions. The problem comes when our traditions become our god. God's presence is the reason that traditions were created, and not the other way around. We must maintain this order. When our hearts are focused on our own entertainment during a worship service, our posture needs to be changed. We are not here for us, but instead as this verse clearly states, we are here for His Name.

All of the glory and honor and praise goes to Him. The simple revelation that we are at a 'service' indicates the posture that we should have. We are there to serve, to serve our God and to reach out to the world around us, sharing His love with others. We were made to worship and to offer ourselves completely to our God who provides us with unfailing love and faithfulness, even in the midst of our struggles. How can we not worship? How can we not approach His throne with praise and awe? He is worthy!

Prayer

God, we praise you and give you all glory and honor because of your unfailing love and faithfulness. Please remind us that it is not about me, but rather it is all about you! I pray that as I offer my worship to you, that my heart would be aligned with yours. I pray that my focus would be on your glory as I seek to draw closer to you and deepen in my relationship with you. Thank you for loving me! In Your Name I pray. Amen.

TUESDAY

Colossians 3:23-24 – Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.

What is on your schedule today? As you look at your calendar, your agenda, what types of things are filling your time? We are living in the midst of a worn-out, beyond busy culture that somehow, seemingly gives praise and earthly reward to the most-stretched warriors. Such busy-ness is worn like a badge of honor as we compare our schedules to those around us. Is it wrong to be busy? What about all of the things that we are required to do for our jobs, our families? This all has to get done, right?

Whatever you do, work at it with ALL your heart... God wants us to pour what we have into the things that we are passionate about and things that we are called to do. However, it is important that we must also check our motive. Why are we doing these things? What are we seeking to find? What things on our schedule are really about our own desires? Whatever you do, work at it with ALL your heart... as though you were working for the Lord! The Lord wants us to be hard workers. He also wants us to have margin, to rest. If we truly want to connect to our Creator and grow in our faith, we must intentionally take control of our schedules. We must create space for our relationship with Him to grow deeper. We must set aside time to worship Him, to spend time in His Word, and to have conversation with Him.

Our Creator worked 6 days and then He rested! Don't you think that maybe that is how He wired us as well? How are you doing with your schedule? What if we started each day, week, and month by scheduling our appointments with God first and then filling in the other spaces with our own agendas and plans? If we want to go deeper in our

faith, which is God's desire for each of us, we need to look at the time we spend, creating space for God to work in our lives. This time is Holy. It is transforming!

Prayer

Father God, thank you for your love and faithfulness. I ask today that you would reveal to me changes that I need to make in my schedule so I can draw closer to you. I want to grow deeper in my faith. Please give me the discernment to control my schedule so that I protect my time with you faithfully. In your Holy Name I pray. Amen .

WEDNESDAY

John 3:27-30 – To this John replied, “A person can only receive what is given them from Heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of Him.’ The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits & listens for him, & is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, & it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less.

I find it amazing what this world tells us, and how much it so sharply contradicts the message we receive from God's Holy Word. The world keeps pushing. It pushes us to be the brightest, the best, to be number one. We live in a culture that believes that only the strong survive, and our response to this belief should be that we do whatever it takes to get to the top. It does not matter who is hurt along the way as long as we win.

But God! Jesus tells us that the first shall be last and the last shall be first. He tells us that we must become like children, a classification of people who were not valued at all in His time. He tells us that we must deny ourselves, and that we must be a servant to all. Now THAT is radical teaching! In the scripture for today, John the Baptist is pointing his followers to the Messiah. People believed that John was the one to follow because of the things they had observed. How easy it could have been for John to accept this praise and go with it. After all, this would satisfy the culture, right? But this isn't about John. It's about the Messiah, and John faithfully points these people to the ONE.

And then my favorite part... “He must become greater; I must become less.” What?! Become less? That is not what I've been taught and have observed in this culture. We need to become a big deal, the best, number one. As Ricky Bobby states, “If you ain't first, you're last.” And as

crazy as it seems, maybe Ricky Bobby is on to something. We don't need to be first. Being last is okay. Becoming less is important because it is then that we can put God in His proper place in our lives. Being last is rewarded by God.

What if we stopped trying so hard to establish ourselves for our own purposes in this world? What if we truly worked to become less so that God can become greater in our lives? What if instead of stepping on people or ignoring the people that our society so easily disregards, we loved and served ALL of God's children? Do you allow space for God to work in your life? Does he have room to help you to grow? He must become greater; I must become less. May we all be less today and everyday as we surrender to God's purpose for our lives. Who does your life point to? Yourself or your Messiah?

Prayer

Lord, I pray today that you would help me to become less. I want you to be the greater part of my life so that I can grow deeper in my faith. Please help me to live according to your words and not the messages that we are given by our culture. May we live in the culture and love in this culture, while understanding that we are not of this culture. It is only in you that I can find peace and true fulfillment. In your Name. Amen

THURSDAY

Romans 12:1-2 – As so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all He has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind He will find acceptable. This is truly the way we worship Him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

What is worship and how do we do this? Many believe that worship is the time we set aside on a Sunday morning to meet in a church. Yes, this is worship, but is that it? Some believe that worship is the time when we sing songs during the service. Yes, that is worship as well. As we broaden our understanding of worship, we realize that it encompasses SO much more! Everything we do can be worship to our Heavenly Father when we approach it as a mission that we have been given by God. Our jobs can be worship. The way we love our families, the way

we serve.... Everything we do in His name and for His purpose is our act of worship. And God smiles. When we worship God, we are offering our entire being to Him as a living and holy sacrifice.

We have all been given Spiritual gifts beyond measure so that we can use these gifts to return our worship to the One who has blessed us. When we find our rhythm, the one that God created us for, and we choose to live that way, Jesus receives honor and praise. When we truly surrender to God, we don't do these things because we 'got to'. We do them because we 'get to'! The love for God and others pours out of us. We offer ourselves as living sacrifices because of what He has done for us. His sacrifice was MUCH greater than this. How can we not give ourselves and the gifts He has given us back to Him as our act of worship?

Our surrendering to God means that we will be transformed. We will be changed, completely and forever. How can we be transformed? It's simple. Change the way that we think. How can we change the way we think? Grow in your faith. Spend time with your Creator. Make space for Him to work. Accept the Grace that He freely offers. Offer yourself as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to the Lord, and you will be transformed.

Prayer

Father God, I want to be transformed. You have blessed me in so many ways, and I praise you for all that you have done. I pray today that I return these blessings to you as I present myself as a living sacrifice for Your will and Your kingdom. Help me to draw closer to you. Help me to be transformed by changing the way that I think. Help me to find a consistent time to talk and listen to You. Thank you Jesus. Amen.

FRIDAY

1 Chronicles 16:23-27 –

Let the whole earth sing to the Lord!

Each day proclaim the good news that He saves.

Publish His glorious deeds among the nations.

Tell everyone about the amazing things He does.

Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise!

He is to be feared above all gods.

The gods of other nations are mere idols,

But the Lord has made the heavens!

Honor and majesty surround Him;

Strength and joy fill His dwelling.

We worship a God that is AMAZING in every way that we can imagine and also in ways that we are not able to wrap our minds around. The joy that is available to us each and every day is real, and it does not depend on our circumstances. God is faithful and He is at work all the time on every single detail of our lives. It is so easy to be pulled down by the struggles and the pain that we so often find in this world. We get distracted by our busy-ness and by our own agendas. We often fail to truly understand the power that is available to us through the Holy Spirit.

We often talk about how big our problems are. What if we realized instead how big our God is? Jesus told us that in this world we will have problems, but we are to take heart for He has overcome the world. The pain is real. The struggles are tough. But our God is much bigger, and He is faithful. God deserves our praise. When we take the time to pause, we can see, hear, and feel His presence.

Have you ever stopped to think how big God really is? Have you ever looked to the heavens as you stand outside and ponder the greatness of His creation and how far and wide His love extends? What if we woke up every morning with a heart focused on worship? When we start our day with God, it drastically changes the focus and perspective for the day. Yes, we will have struggle, but we have HOPE! Sing to the Lord. Proclaim His glorious deeds. Tell everyone about the amazing things He does. Great is the Lord. Worship HIM only!

Prayer

God, you are truly amazing. I am astounded by your works and the plans that you have made for each one of us. I ask that you would give me a heart for worship, that I may praise you in all circumstances. Please give me comfort in my affliction, but also knowledge of the hope that you are working through all the details of my struggle. Please shine your light into the darkness of this world. Thanks for your love and your protection. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

CHRISTIANITY IS A GROWING EXPERIENCE

MONDAY

John 11:17-26

Through acceptance of Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are given the gift of eternal life. We, as believers in Jesus Christ, have been called out to become disciples and proclaim His works and good news to all people and nations.

Prayer

Lord, let my heart be like Martha's and believe that you are the resurrection and the life. Give me the words to speak and the courage to utilize every opportunity to proclaim your glory and spread the precious gift I have been given in the blood of your Son.

TUESDAY

2 Corinthians 4:7-12

Every day we experience trials and tribulations that challenge us and lure our souls to death, but it is death that has given us life. Jesus died so that we may live and be free. It is by His blood that we have been born again into life. Through our faith and relationship with Christ, our hearts transform the hurt and sorrow of this world into the life that is God's love.

Prayer

Lord, pour your spirit into me so I will have faith to transform the darkness into light. Through your Son's love I am forsaken but not abandoned, broken but set free. Let your love be revealed through me into my community so others may know and accept that You are the one true God that turns death into life.

WEDNESDAY

John 3:5-8

In order to receive the Spirit, we are to be reborn in the Spirit. We have been gifted this rebirth by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Everyone experiences his or her rebirth differently and it is not outward-apparent, but rather a rush of God's love and power within one's soul.

Prayer

Lord, let me be reborn daily so I may begin each day experiencing your grace and love to share with the world around me. Show me the path you have set for me and help me to resist the distractions Satan puts in my path so the whole world may proclaim your glorious name.

THURSDAY

Jeremiah 33:2-3

The Lord is all-knowing; He uses all things towards His plan. God's plans are revealed through prayer and meditation on His word. He is wisdom and truth. To seek His word is to seek wisdom. Without knowledge of His word, we are blind to truth.

Prayer

Lord, open my heart and mind so I can hear you. Let me experience your wisdom and share your love with the world around me. Let everyone I encounter be inspired by your work and power through me.

FRIDAY

1 Corinthians 9:6-15

God gives us permission to enjoy the fruits of our harvest, but we are also called to share these fruits with those that serve the Lord in the church and in missions. The Bible warns us against greed and handling our possessions with a tight fist and encourages us to give with a cheerful heart. If we invite God into all aspects of our lives, including our finances, He will provide clear guidance and direction and rewards us for our faithfulness.

Prayer

Lord, guide me to use the resources you have given me as you intend, for I know everything belongs to you. Help me, then, to manage these assets so your Kingdom will continue to grow and more hearts may be restored to you.

WE ARE ONE BODY

MONDAY

John 15:5 – Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.

Dear Lord, I come to you today seeking nourishment through your Son, the vine. I pray you fill me and work through me, so that I may produce fruit through you. Please, Lord, stay with me through the week, nourish me, because apart from you, I can do nothing.

TUESDAY

Colossians 1:18-20 – Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

Dear Creator Lord, I humbly lift my words to you today, recognizing the power of Jesus Christ to reconcile us to you. I pray that I no longer think of the church as a building alone, but as your people who form your body. Open my eyes to those around me, so that I may have relationship with them, just as you long for relationship with me. Amen.

WEDNESDAY

Ephesians 4:25 – So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body.

Dear Lord, Thank you for providing such grace that allows me to begin each day anew. Please refocus my heart and remind me that my thoughts, words, and deeds affect those around me. Let your Holy Spirit stir within me the desire to live in the light – as one of your children saved by Jesus' death and resurrection. Amen.

THURSDAY

Ephesians 2:18-19 – Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us. So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family.

Dear Lord, Thank you for bringing me into community with your children. I pray that you guide me to stronger relationships and understandings of what it means to be family. Please walk beside me as I reach out to those in my

community whom I do not know. Remind me that we are all your children, your holy people – we are family. Amen.

FRIDAY

I Corinthians 12:25-27 – This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.

Dear Lord, Thank you for creating me as part of your Son's body. Please open my eyes to those who do not yet know that they are a part of Christ's body as well. Help me to walk along side of them and speak your truth into them. Guide me in seeing others as you see them, reminding me that they are part of my family. Help me to find gladness for those who are honored and help me to not turn away when another is suffering. Dear Lord, I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.



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