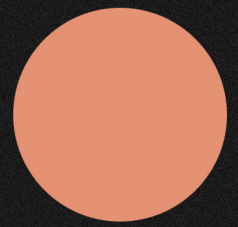


YM360



10

**AWESOME
EASTER
DEVOTIONALS**

DAY 1

Biblical Truth: Hundreds of years before He was sent to Earth, Jesus was God's plan to rescue us from the punishment of our sins.

My Response: Focus on Jesus' sacrifice He made for me and how this makes me feel.

There is great power in unconditional love.

Think about how unconditional love was on display in these three movie scenarios:

- What caused Rue to help Katniss escape from the angry career tributes?
- Why did Sam follow Frodo even when things got testy on the way to Mount Doom?
- Why did Natasha Romanoff (Black Widow) sacrifice herself in Avengers Endgame so that Clint Barton (Hawkeye) could live?

Compassion, loyalty, and love are powerful connectors. These three relationship builders make for great entertainment. Movies utilize them to tug at our heartstrings through fictional tales costing millions of dollars to produce. But long before movies existed, Jesus' mission on earth was planned.

Take a moment to read today's passage, Isaiah 53: 5-7, 12.

In today's passage, the prophet Isaiah speaks of a coming Savior capable of delivering the people from the sin that had wrecked their culture and strained their relationship with God. This coming Savior would be insulted, beaten, and crucified even though He had not sinned even once. Because the people ran headfirst into sin like a flock of sheep without a shepherd, this Messiah would carry their sins through a public trial, countless abuses, and ultimately a criminal's death. He would do this so they could have forgiveness and eternal life.

Compassion for hurting people, devotion to His mission, and unconditional love for all humankind propelled Jesus toward sacrificing His own perfect life for our sinful lives. His sacrifice bought us life. His pain purchased our freedom. He willingly endured the cross for the sake of rescuing humankind . . . for the sake of rescuing you.

Think about these questions now and throughout the day:

- How far would you go to save a friend from imminent death?
- Who do you know that would willingly sacrifice his or her life for yours?
- What blows your mind most about Jesus' sacrifice for you?

DAY 2

Biblical Truth: The angel told Joseph that Jesus was going to take away people's sin, confirming that Jesus was, for sure, God's long-awaited Son.

My Response: Express what it means to me that Jesus made it possible for me and God to be in a relationship with each other.

Begin today by taking the time to read Matthew 1:17-25.

Reread the passage and note how the angel told Joseph that his son would take away the sins of the world. Why is this important? Because it confirms Jesus was truly God's Son!

For Joseph to follow through with marrying Mary, he had to completely trust God. Marrying a pregnant girl was a huge disgrace, but God had told him to stay with her. Joseph might have asked, "why me"? And what will people think? Clearly, Joseph was a man who maintained an active relationship with God through prayer and a life of obedience to God's commands. Joseph knew God well enough to believe that the girl he was pledged to marry was carrying the Son of God in her womb.

Joseph's deeply rooted relationship with God withstood many trials and attacks. It carried him on a mission beyond anything he had ever imagined for his life.

Meditate throughout the day today on the following quote:

"The most important aspect of Christianity is not the work we do, but the relationship we maintain and the surrounding influence and qualities produced by that relationship. That is all God asks us to give our attention to, and it is the one thing that is continually under attack." -- Oswald Chambers

DAY 3

Biblical Truth: Jesus gave the disciples a visual picture of how His sacrifice on the cross would purchase forgiveness for their sins.

My Response: Consider how the new life Jesus' death bought for me is different from the life I would have been left in.

There's a YouTube video of a guy who lives near Johannesburg, South Africa. The reason for the video is to document this guy's "friends." All 38 of them. See, this guy lives each day with 38 African lions! Have you ever heard the old saying, "If you play with fire, you're gonna get burned?" Would it surprise anyone if one day this guy made the news because one of his 38 friends has betrayed his trust and turned him into dinner?

Grab your Bible or Bible app and read Matthew 26:17-30.

Betrayal is a harsh reality in life. In this passage, Jesus reveals His betrayer while reminding His disciples that His soon-to-be bloodshed would purchase forgiveness for their sins. The betrayer, Judas Iscariot, would turn on Jesus and choose not to accept His free gift of grace.

Most people will experience a moment where a friend betrays them. Maybe you have already experienced this. If you have, you know it hurts. But does the fact that it hurts to be betrayed mean that you should stop opening yourself to trust or to love? Of course not. Jesus didn't. And neither should you.

Think about these questions now and throughout the day:

Does your life reflect Jesus' willingness to love even in the face of great sacrifice? Or do you take His free gift of grace for granted?

Are you willing to risk loving even those who might betray me?

DAY 4

Biblical Truth: Out of love for us, Jesus willingly embraced the suffering He was about to go through.

My Response: Reflect on what Jesus' sacrifice says about how valuable I am to God.

Spend a few moments reading John 18:1-14.

Now, grab a pencil, or open up a drawing app and draw the scene you just read about. (Here's some space for you if you want to do it here.)

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing the scene from John 18:1-14.

Consider these questions about the passage and your impressive new work of art:

How did Jesus react to His arrest?

What does His reaction say about His feelings for you?

Sometime when you get a moment, do a web search for "How He Loves," performed by the David Crowder Band or John Mark McMillan. Listen to this song as a reminder of what you mean to Jesus.

When the song ends, pray and tell Jesus what He means to you.

DAY 5

Biblical Truth: Jesus, God's Son, who was totally innocent, was tortured and murdered for wrongs He didn't do.

My Response: Reflect on the emotions I feel when I read the Crucifixion account and how I can re-direct these emotions as praise toward God.

Imagine yourself as a videographer capturing the entire passage you'll be reading today for a documentary on Jesus' final hours on earth. As you read the passage, imagine what it would be like to take in the sights, sounds, and raw emotions of the people around you. Watch how some mourn and others mock. Let your feelings come out as you capture these harsh moments in your imagination.

Clear your mind. Prepare yourself. Now read Mark 15:1-38.

Were you more aware of the sensory elements of the story?
Could you see the scene in your mind's eye?

Offer praise to Jesus for His amazing perseverance as you relive the moments from your documentary throughout the day.

DAY 6

Biblical Truth: Many times in the Bible, things seem most hopeless in the moments just before God breaks through.

My Response: Think about what this narrative teaches me about having hope when I face situations that seem hopeless.

Movie Flashback: Remember the scene in Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back where Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader are battling in Cloud City? This is the scene where Darth Vader famously says, “Luke, I am your father.” It’s probably a Top 10 on your bad day list when you are fighting the most evil man in the universe in a lightsaber battle only to find out he’s also your dad! It gets worse. Darth Vader proceeds to lop off Luke’s arm off with his red saber.

All appears lost for Skywalker as he falls deep down into a disposal chute only to end up clinging to a weathervane on the underbelly of Cloud City.

Remember what happens next?

Han Solo’s ship, the Millennium Falcon, shows up just in time to retrieve an exhausted Luke. If you’re a fan of the Star Wars trilogies, then you know the rest of the story.

In Matthew 27:55-66, Jesus has been crucified and is soon to be buried. Spend a few moments reading the account.

Think about your darkest day. It probably still hurts to think about it. Take your memory one step farther by thinking about how God was there for you on that painful day.

Spend some time writing a prayer giving thanks to Jesus for giving you hope when you felt most hopeless.

DAY 7

Biblical Truth: Jesus showed His power over death as He came back from the dead three days after the crucifixion.

My Response: Reflect on Jesus' complete control over all things and how this gives me the confidence to live as a Christ-follower.

Begin today by meditating on this quote:

"When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, my richest gain I count but lost. And pour contempt on all my pride." – Isaac Watts

There is no power in the cross, but rather the one who died on it. There is no power in the empty tomb, but rather the one who got up and walked out of it. There is no real power in a person's life except the power of Jesus Christ within.

Take a few moments to read John 20:1-18.

Allow time to let it sink in.

Now take this challenge:

Find three different crosses in three different places today. Snap a picture of them with your phone. Let the three crosses remind you that after three days in the grave, Jesus arose and defeated death.

Once you find all three, share your photos on social media and tell the world that Jesus is alive!

DAY 8

Biblical Truth: We can confidently believe that Jesus was who He said He was. Through this belief, we gain life.

My Response: Reflect on and express thanks for the life God made possible to me through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

Several eyewitness accounts of a resurrected Jesus spending time with His followers are found in the Gospels.

Take time to read John 20:26-31.

Get up close and personal with one of the biggest doubters among Jesus' disciples. Perhaps you can relate to him?

Object Search:

Look around your room. Find a gadget of some sort lying around that, although it does its job quite well, you could have never invented and have no idea how it does that thing it does. Pick it up and hold it.

Now imagine how Thomas must have felt when Jesus showed him the scars in His hands. A real human being is back from the dead! It was probably on the threshold of being too much for the mind to comprehend! Science could not explain it. Thomas' mind certainly could not solve this mystery.

As you continue to hold the object in your hand, spend some quiet time thanking Jesus for defeating sin and death.

Even though your mind may struggle to comprehend the caliber of love Jesus demonstrated, you can experience it in just as real a way as the reality of holding that object in your hand!

DAY 9

Biblical Truth: *Jesus ascended to heaven, returning to the Father, and will one day return to gather all of His children.*

My Response: Evaluate my life and what, if any, changes I need to make to be more on mission with God.

Begin by reading today's passage, Acts 1:1-11.

Consider this:

If you were there that day, how would you have felt as Jesus rose into heaven?

Contemplate the following quotes:

"God doesn't ask your ability or your inability. He asks only your availability." -- Mary Kay Ash

"God doesn't call people who are qualified. He calls people who are willing, and then He qualifies them." -- Richard Parker

With Jesus' words fresh in your mind, come up with three words you can repeat throughout the day that will remind you to be available for God to use you for His purposes.

DAY 10

Biblical Truth: The new life we have in Christ motivates us to be vocal and visible messengers to the world around us.

My Response: Thank God that He has called me to be a messenger of His story, and ask God to help me be more effective in doing so.

Go outside and look at the sky. Notice its massive expanse. See how you can't help but notice it when you are outside. Pause and take it all in.

Jesus is calling you to be vocal and visible messengers to the world around you. He wants you to live life in such a way that people can't help but see Him when they are around you. Like the sky to the outdoors, He wants your life to be an obvious reflection of His love.

Take a few moments and read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

The passage refers to a person who is a “new person,” who is “Christ’s ambassador,” and has been “made right through Christ.”

Today is the day to make a declaration—and make it loud!

Create a video of yourself declaring your loyalty to Christ. Put into your own words what it means to be called the three things listed above. Then take it a step farther.

Upload your declaration to YouTube or your favorite social media platform. After you get your new masterpiece uploaded, ask God to bless your efforts to be a messenger for His great story in such a personal and public way.