



Individual Devotional Study Guides Week #2

Using the Devotional

Each week is designed to help you focus on the 7 final statements of Jesus on the cross. For seven weeks starting on February 12th, you will have a daily devotional and exercise that will take you through a variety of spiritual disciplines to help you grow spiritually. Here is what your week will look like:

Monday - Main devotional

Tuesday - Reading and
Listening. (Lectio Divina)

Wednesday - Question /
Reflection / Application.

Thursday - Devotional
Prayer guide.

Friday - Reading and
Listening. (Lectio Divina)

Saturday - Question /
Reflection / Application.

Sunday - Guided Journaling
and worship in community

What is Lectio Divina?

Lectio Divina is a way of studying and praying the Scriptures so that the Word of God may penetrate the heart and lead to acquiring God's perspective and love for the world. Through Lectio Divina, a person gradually let's go of their own agenda and becomes open to what God is communicating to them. Developed in the 12th century by Guigo, a Carthusian monk, Lectio Divina, a Latin term meaning "divine reading", consists of four steps.

The **first stage** is lectio (reading). One reads a passage in the Word of God in an unhurried manner several times to become familiar with it. Any text of Scripture may be used, but it should not be too long. (Bible reading plans

with a daily set of passages for a year, while worthwhile in themselves, work against this approach.)

In the **second stage**, meditatio (reflection), one ponders the text and thinks about how to apply it to one's life.

The **third stage**, oratio (response), involves responding to the Holy Spirit, inspired by one's reflection on God's Word. Here one speaks to God from the heart – acknowledging woundedness, asking for forgiveness, giving thanks, praising God, rejoicing, and so on.

During the **final stage**, contemplatio (rest), one rests in silence and solitude. It means listening to God by opening one's heart and soul, and letting go of one's own ideas, plans, and meditations.

Week 2: "Redemption" February 19-24

Monday – February 19

Redemption

Individual Reflection

Prayer of Preparation

Heavenly Father,

I offer you my life today. Help me to slow down and listen to You. Please speak into my very being whatever you want me to hear today and transform me more into your likeness from our time spent together. Help me to be obedient to follow through with whatever you ask of me.

Amen.

Statement from the Cross #2

Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43

Thoughts of a Fellow Sojourner

I remember as a little boy scouring through back alleys and ditches with my friends in search of aluminum cans, but we were less concerned with recycling than we were with the thought of redemption. We knew that the grocery store would give us money for our cans. As an adult, another group of friends taught me that the business of "scrapping" discarded items could be quite lucrative and rewarding. The key is finding the items that people are looking for. There are scrap metal plants and vintage clothing stores that offer "scrappers" pretty fair return for their finds. However, the real reward comes through finding a unique item that someone is specifically looking for. The people who "scrap" for these items are usually found combing through yard sales or thrift stores. They tend to keep a list of items that people are searching for. One of the most common of these tends to be someone who owned something earlier in life and is now looking to reacquire it. They have either lost it, had it stolen, or perhaps it was thrown out or given away by mistake. No matter the case, these "collectors" are the ones who are willing to pay whatever it takes to buy back that which they previously owned.

On the Cross, Jesus hung between two criminals. Most of us would have seen them as two men who were simply getting what they deserved. We really don't know a lot about their story, but Jesus did. He knew all about them. For, he had been searching for them for a very long time. You see, Jesus is the ultimate "collector." Since Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden, a plan was set in motion that would redeem or "buy back" God's most treasured creation...humanity. Little did the criminals know that while Jesus was being crucified there between the two of them, He was actually paying the price to redeem all of humanity, even the two of them. When Jesus heard the words, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom," his heart must've just about burst. More than any "collector" who had ever been reunited with a lost treasure that had cost him so much to regain, Jesus looked into the man's eyes and saw the very reason he was paying such high a price. With eyes on his precious treasure, he answered him, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." The man had been redeemed.

Moment of Reflection

Take some time in silence for reflection, meditation, or simply to listen to what God wants to speak into you.

Written Response

Close your time by writing to God a response or plan for application.

Prayer of Consummation

Lord Jesus,

In our self-imposed blindness we are lost people; Yet You, the Ultimate Collector, passionately pursue us;

In doing so, You have paid the most costly price that we might return to You. Thank you Jesus for Your act of redemption on the cross.

Teach us how we can take part in Your reconciling of the lost to You; Lead us where reconciliation and redemption are most needed; Open our eyes to whom we may reach out to in Your name;

Amen.

Tuesday – February 20

Redemption

Individual Reflection

Lectio Divina: (**Lectio Divina** is a traditional Benedictine practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's Word. It does not treat Scripture as texts to be studied, but as the Living Word.)

1. Read Luke 23:39-43 slowly a few times (Lectio)

39 *One of the criminals hanging there made fun of Jesus. He said, "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself! Save us!"* ⁴⁰ *But the other criminal scolded him. "Don't you have any respect for God?" he said. "Remember, you are under the same sentence of death."* ⁴¹ *We are being punished fairly. We are getting just what our actions call for. But this man hasn't done anything wrong."*

42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." 43 Jesus answered him, "What I'm about to tell you is true. Today you will be with me in paradise."

2. Ponder the text

(Meditatio) What is a fair punishment for my sins? Did Jesus deserve punishment? What does Jesus mean when he says something is true? What is paradise?

3. Speak to God (Oratio)

Lord, I believe you. I may not have all the answers, but I trust that you do. Even though I have not yet seen paradise, I know it will be glorious because you will be there. Thank you that you took my place for punishment of my sins. Thank your for purchasing me from death and hell. The love you showed me on the cross beckons me closer to you. Even though I long for paradise, I am content in you in the here and now.

4. Find a quiet place (Contemplatio)

I love to be in your presence.
I love that your Truth has changed me from the inside out. Even though I could stay here in this solitude with you,
I know your love compels me to bring your love to others. How can I do that?

Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.

Wednesday – February 21

Redemption

Individual Reflection

Intro:

The application today is all about redemption. Redemption is a key aspect of the message of "Seven." Without redemption none of this means anything. Redemption is the gift that Jesus offers. It is the key to the gates of the kingdom. Everything else revolves around this.

Items needed:

A Mirror

Directions:

There is something to be said about hearing that we have received redemption. One way we can do that is to speak it to ourselves. Most of us, whether we like it or not, usually have some kind of dialogue running in our head. Yes, that means that we talk to ourselves. However when you look at someone and hear them offer a verbal form of redemption to you, it has a much different effect. So, here's what we want you to do: look at your self in the mirror, make eye contact with yourself, and say:

" I am a child of the most high God. I live in the unshakeable kingdom God and because of that I am a new creation, the old has gone, and the new has come. God has redeemed me and because of that, today I am new."

Repeat it a couple of times if you need or want to until it really sinks in.

Thursday – February 22

Redemption

Individual Prayer Guide

Luke 23:43 - *"And Jesus replied, 'I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.'"*

Paradise is a powerful word. When we think of paradise we usually think of a warm beach, or maybe a cabin in the mountains. Whatever the case paradise is something that we all seek and it meant the same thing to the thief on the cross that it means to all of us. The word Jesus

uses, παραδείσω, meant one specific thing to the people of the time. Somewhere better than earth, most assuredly to Jesus and to all of us, it means heaven. As Christians we believe that the only to get into heaven is to accept the gift of redemption that Jesus offers us.

With his one his last breathes Jesus offered this man that gift and with what I am sure was one the thief's last breathes, he gladly accepted and affirmed his belief in Jesus. He accepted the redemption, he recognized that no matter what he had done, Jesus still loved him and as result of that love nothing else mattered. He was redeemed, saved, and made new. We all have the option to embrace the same gift, its free, and it is the greatest gift the world has ever seen. The question is do we embrace it?

Prayer:

Redemption is a free gift that Jesus extends to every person who ever lived. We just have to be willing to reach out and take it. It may seem difficult at first, but what ultimately happens is we embrace Jesus and in turn embrace paradise. This prayer is one way we can engage with the offer of Jesus.

1. Sit in silence really focus on the Lord's presence. He is in the room with you right now.
2. Acknowledge him and thank him for the gift of life.
3. Picture yourself being there, as Jesus promises the man just before he dies, that he will be in paradise. Contemplate to yourself, is this something you too would like to hear?
4. If it is, embrace it. Ask Jesus to let you in. This could mean a number of different things. Maybe you ask Jesus into your life for the first time, Maybe you decide to re-up on our commitment, Maybe you ask him to redeem a specific part of your life. Whatever that looks like for you, take the step and go for it.
5. After taking action, again thank Jesus for his gift.
6. Take a moment in silence. Embrace the thought that you will be in paradise, a place better than earth, with Jesus. Then go on about your day.

Friday – February 16

Redemption

Individual Reflection

Lectio Divina: (**Lectio Divina** is a traditional Benedictine practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's Word. It does not treat Scripture as texts to be studied, but as the Living Word.)

1. Read Romans 3:22-25b slowly a few times (Lectio)

22 This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.

Ponder the text (Meditatio) What words jump out at me? How does the text make me feel?

What thoughts enter my mind about my new life in Him?

2. Speak to God (Oratio)

Jesus, I hear You calling me. I feel You loving me. I know about Your ultimate sacrifice for me. I come to You just as I am and with all that I am. My sins violated the Father and I am so sorry. I repent of them and ask Your forgiveness.

I love You because You are Love Itself and You loved me first.

I surrender my entire self and respond gratefully to Your invitation to live in You and have You live in me, now and forever. I pledge to You and announce to all that You are my Savior, Redeemer, Friend, Master and High Priest. Cover me with Your redemptive blood and fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Heal and transform me from being darkness to being light, the light of the world.

I am willing to let Your Spirit take over every part of me and pray for Your grace to help me let go of self-indulgence, self-

promotion, self-interest and rather make You the center of my life and complete obedience to You, as Your servant, my passion. I know Your friends are to be my friends, and Your enemies are to be my own. Your ways will be mine. I know You will discipline me for my own spirit's sake. I accept all this while I embrace You and am nurtured by Your infinite love and mercy and sustained by my complete faith and trust in You, in the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Come Lord Jesus, live in me as I live in You. I love You. I will follow You every day of my life, a life without end. Thank you for loving me into Your kingdom! Amen.

-Taken from prayergear.com

3. Find a quiet place (Contemplatio)

Be still and listen for God's voice

What is He saying to me about redemption?

What is He saying to me about my new life in Him?

Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.

Saturday – February 24

Redemption

Individual Reflection

Intro:

In the spirit of "go" today's application is simple. We all have people in our life that we either need to seek forgiveness from or whom we need to offer forgiveness. Today's exercise is simple, "Go find it."

Items needed:

People who you need to offer forgiveness to or the people you need to seek forgiveness from.

Directions:

Make a list of the people in your life that you either need to ask forgiveness from or those you need to forgive.

Then, either go see them or contact them and seek reconciliation.

