



Individual Devotional
Study Guides
Week #6

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 6: "Freedom" March 19-24

Monday – March 19

Freedom

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 #6

Jesus said, "It is finished." John 19:30

Thoughts of a Fellow Sojourner

For all of us, death is inevitable. At some point, our mortal life will come to an end, and we will move forward in the direction we have chosen. All too often, we tell people around us to live with purpose that life is short, and we never know what may happen. This fact, leaves a nagging question in my heart. "How often do we tell people to die with purpose?" You see, I fully believe that Jesus lived with purpose, but he also died with purpose. He knew that his entire life was lived for one reason: To glorify his father. Everything he did was a direct command from God. Even his death was so that his father could be elevated and once again have relationship with his greatest creation.

Jesus' purpose was that we might find freedom in the glory of a God who loved us so much that he gave his ultimate gift for us; His only son. Jesus knew his purpose. He lived his purpose and he died with a purpose. His words, "it is finished" were nothing more than a declaration of that purpose. All of his pain, all of his suffering, all of his trials were over. He was experiencing freedom with his mission accomplished. He was reuniting with his father, but it was not just a homecoming for him, but a homecoming for all the saints. Jesus' death brought freedom to us all. His simple phrase was nothing more than a declaration. Evil had lost, Good had won, and his purpose had been fulfilled. His father was the most powerful being in the universe, and Jesus had proven it. He brought freedom to the captives, he removed the chains, and he paid our fee. As a result, He has freedom in the Father, we have freedom in the Father, and the world has freedom in the father. These two words were the most powerful Jesus ever said because he declared freedom over the powers of evil, he declared victory and he established new life built on the foundation of freedom from sin, evil, and darkness. He died with a purpose. FREEDOM!

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 You, death has lost its sting and evil has lost its hold. There is great liberty in knowing our chains have been released and to this day and forevermore the same power that conquered the grave lives in us;

Thank You Jesus for not only living with a purpose but dying on the cross for the purpose of your people; Teach us how to live in the freedom we have been given by You;

Lead us where Your freedom is utmost vital;

Open our eyes to the captives who need to hear Your freedom proclamation;

Amen.

Tuesday – March 20

Freedom

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 23:44-46 slowly a few times (Lectio)

*⁴⁴ It was now about noon. The whole land was covered with darkness until three o'clock. ⁴⁵ The sun had stopped shining. The temple curtain was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Jesus called out in a loud voice, "**Father, into your hands I commit my very life.**" After he said this, he took his last breath.*

2. Ponder the text (Meditatio)

What words stand out to me?

Have I committed my very life to God?

What does it mean to commit to Him?

What do freedom and commitment have in common?

3. Speak to God (Oratio)

May I know the fullness of the freedom I have as I abide in You. Strengthen and refresh me Lord. Take me in Your arms and help me hear Your Words of Truth. May lies run away as I hold tightly to You. May harmful memories be banished forever more. There are no words that truly describes how thankful I am for the freedom I have in You. Please help me to truly live out that gift of being free. As I sit before Your throne and gaze upon Your beauty, please take my burdens and encourage my heart. I wait on You, my Lord. I wait on You. Amen

4. Find a quiet place (Contemplatio)

*Quiet my heart, O God.
Let me feel the warmth of
your embrace. I feel free to
not just stop sinning,
But to be in your presence right here, right now.*

Speak Lord, for your servant in listening.

Wednesday – March 21

Freedom

Individual Reflection

Intro:

How are you experiencing freedom in Christ today?

Items needed:

A bible, a journal, a pen.

Directions:

Today's task is to be aware of how you are experiencing freedom in Christ throughout your day. Take time and write what God brings your attention too throughout the day.

Thursday – March 22

Freedom

Individual Prayer Guide

John 19:30 - When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and released his spirit.

This moment is one that often comes to mind when we think of the crucifixion. Jesus lifting his head up and announcing to the world that he had accomplished his mission. In short, he was finished. However, this also a very profound moment in the life of every person that ever lived. Why? This was the moment where every soul in the world found the thing that we all long for. The thing that drives our hearts is simple but unique, it is freedom. We all want it, and luckily for us Jesus made it so that it was attainable for us. The question is. . . What will we do with it?

Prayer:

We all have a choice. We can embrace Jesus or reject Jesus. Freedom as it pertains to our relationship with Christ comes in two parts. We have the freedom to choose how we engage him and the freedom that comes when we choose to accept his gift. The freedom that comes with a life dedicated to him, is a free gift. However we ultimate have the freedom to choose to accept it. Where do you fit in this picture?

1. Embrace the silence around you. Take this time to clear your mind, and remove any distractions from your presence.

2. Thank God for his gift of Freedom. Make a choice about what your are going to do with this freedom.

3. Again embrace the silence around you. Breathe in, then breathe out. Now go and live in the freedom that God offers us all. Take the rest of

the time today to do whatever you need to do to best embrace the freedom that God offers. Today is “free” embrace it.

Friday – March 23

Freedom

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 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 slowly a few times (Lectio)

¹⁶ But when anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Holy Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, freedom is also there.

¹⁸ Our faces are not covered with a veil. We all display the Lord's glory. We are being changed to become more like him so that we have more and more glory. And the glory comes from the Lord, who is the Holy Spirit.

Ponder the text (Meditatio)

What is true freedom?

Where is the Spirit of the Lord?

Does being more like Him bring more freedom?

How does my freedom in Christ bring more glory to Him?

Speak to God (Oratio)

*Jesus, I know the Spirit of the Lord is on you.
And that The Father has anointed you to tell the good news to me. He has sent you Lord to announce my freedom from my imprisonment by sin and injustice
God has sent you so that I will truly be able to see He wants you to free all of us who are beaten down.*

*And to announce that today I am set free!
Luke 4:18-19 (paraphrased)*

Find a quiet place (Contemplatio)

*Let your Good News wash over me
today. Open my eyes that I may see
clearly.*

*Announce again that I am free in you
And may my spirit rejoice because of it.*

Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.

Saturday – March 24

Freedom

Individual Reflection

Intro:

One of the great things about freedom is how it relieves pressure and stress from our lives. One of the greatest times in our life and probably the time we experience the truest freedom from stress is when we are children. Today is a day set aside to bring out the child in you, even if it's just for a little bit.

Items needed:

A game of some kind. Whether you play a sport outside, a board game, the choice is yours. You just have to play it with a group of friends.

Directions:

Get a group of friends together and spend some time together. Kickback, have some fun, and don't worry about life for a little while. Just enjoy the freedom to be who you are as God's child!