

A Lamp to My Feet: 100 Days in the Word

Author

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Endorsements

"This book is a gift to the church. I appreciate the simplicity and clarity of the short Bible expositions, the helpful application questions, the daily prayer, and above all, the pastor's heart that has produced these devotional thoughts and pervades each one. What a great way to encourage God's people to engage more deeply with the Word. It's a pleasure to commend *A Lamp to My Feet*." – **Stephen Witmer, Lead Pastor, Pepperell Christian Fellowship, Author, *A Big Gospel in Small Places***

"I have always loved expository teaching, verse by verse, and I believe Chris Taylor does this very well. He backs his teaching with Scripture and that helps me understand God's Word. His daily devotionals and "passage descriptions" are a blessing and keep me on track in my walk with Christ." – **Pete Vargas, Member of Marysville Community Church**

"Chris has a gift for teaching, and he teaches God's Word through these daily devotionals. These devotionals are unique to any devotional that I've read. I highly recommend them to anyone that wants to grow daily in their Bible knowledge, and have a deeper desire for the truth of Scripture." – **Michael Vohs, Senior Pastor, Living Water Church, Rocky Boy, Montana**

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Getting Started

If you've picked up this book, then it most likely demonstrates a desire on your part to get into the word of God more consistently. This is where most followers of Jesus struggle. For many believers, time in the word is more often than not hit or miss and few and far between. There are three important implications that need to be acknowledged with regard to inconsistency in our devotional life. First, we are missing out on the most incredible blessing of hearing from the One True God in His word. The Bible is a gift for God's people. It reveals Christ and His gospel. It shows us God! It shows us how to live in a manner pleasing to God. As Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, *¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* This book is unlike any other! There's nothing to compare it to. It comes from God! It's His gift of revelation to us. The fact that God speaks reveals so much about His character. He has graciously made Himself known. The Bible is proof of God's grace and love. The Bible really is God's word. Knowing this should move followers of Jesus Christ to regularly open up the Bible and pray, "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law" (Psalm 119:18). God's word is full of wondrous things. There is treasure to be mined in the Holy Scriptures. Second, if we are not regularly reading and studying God's word and coupled with that—praying God's word—then we are failing to invest in our spiritual life. We are not running the race of the Christian life well because we are not taking advantage of God's gracious training regimen—His word and prayer. Finally, there is a beautiful correlation between knowing, growing, and praise. The more we learn about God in His word, the more we will grow in our knowledge of Him, and as a result, the more we will worship Him. The more we learn of God's amazing character—His love, faithfulness, and grace—the more we will be in awe of Him. To refuse to open and read God's word is to place limits on our knowledge of God; it's to stunt our spiritual growth; and most importantly, it's a refusal to engage in meaningful worship.

This book was birthed out of a desire to help members of our church get into God's word every day. As a pastor, my job is to equip the saints for the work of ministry by teaching them the full counsel of God (Eph. 4:11-14). The best way I can care for God's flock is by giving them God's word (Acts 20:28-32). In order to help protect God's church against untruth, they need a regular diet of God's truth (2 Tim. 4:1-5). Therefore, these daily devotionals were provided with those goals in mind. Whenever God's people gather on Sunday for corporate worship, we gather to hear the word. This mustn't be a one and done activity. We need the word every day, and we need to read and study it on our own, with our spouse and children, and with our fellow believers. These devotionals are written to be done at either the personal level or with others.¹ Each devotional follows a simple structure: First, each devotional begins with a reading from God's word, either from the Old Testament or the New Testament.

¹ We live in a culture that prizes autonomy and privacy, and sadly, this has affected many Christians. We need the body of Christ. We need to belong to a local church where we can regularly gather with God's people under the word of God. These devotionals are not meant to take the place of God's primary means of growing His church, which is the gathered body of believers. It is my hope that this devotional will merely supplement what you are already doing, which I pray includes regularly gathering with God's church and reading and studying God's word. If you are struggling with either of these, it is my prayer that these devotionals will help you to see both the importance of regularly being in God's word and regularly gathering with God's church for the follower of Jesus. The New Testament was addressed to churches, gathered bodies of Christians committed to serving one another, helping one another grow in Christlikeness, and going out together to evangelize the lost. The Christian, then, must be about two things as he or she follows Jesus as King: the word of God and the people of God. These two are vital if we wish to follow and serve the Son of God well.

Next, there is a passage description. This represents the largest section in each daily devotional. In this section I attempt to unpack and interpret what the verse or verses are saying. After the passage description, I've provided several discussion questions. These can be done on your own or with friends or family members. These questions pertain to both what the passage means and how it applies in the life of God's church. At the end of this section is a challenge to share what you've learned with someone else. God's word is meant to be shared (Col. 3:16)! Finally, each daily devotional ends with a prayer based on the passage for the day. This prayer is meant to help guide you and teach you how to pray in line with and in response to God's word. I always encourage our church to pray God's word. Praying the word is simply responding to God. He talks to us through His Word, and we respond through prayer. We respond to what He's said to us in His word.

One last thing before you get started. As we read the Bible, we need to keep one very important thing in mind. All Scripture bears witness to Jesus Christ and His saving work—His perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection from the dead. In Luke 24:44 Jesus declare, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." If we wish to see Christ, then we must be in the Bible. If we wish to know Christ more and help others to know Christ more, then we must be in the Bible. It's my hope and prayer that the Lord would use these daily devotionals to ignite a greater passion in your life for the word of God, and most importantly, for the glorious Savior, Jesus Christ, revealed in the word of God! Let's get started!

Day 1

Psalm 46:1-3 – ¹ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, ³ though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah

Passage Description:

Most of us are familiar with this psalm. The psalmist begins by acknowledging several great truths about God. God is our *refuge*! God is our *strength*! God is our very present *help* in trouble! Following these great theological truths, the psalmist draws a remarkable conclusion in vv. 2-3. Even if the world falls apart, we will not fear. Even in the face of a global pandemic, economic uncertainty, or political chaos, we will not fear! Why? Because God is our refuge! God is our strength! God is our very present help in trouble! In the face of uncertainty we can be certain that God is present with His people. There is no greater joy than knowing the presence of God. For Christians, we know the joy of God's presence by the indwelling Holy Spirit. No matter what comes our way we can be confident in God's presence. We can rest in His presence. We can find joy in His presence.

Lastly, in vv. 2-3 we see that God is in control. The earth doesn't give way, nor are the mountains moved, without the permission of God. Nothing happens outside of His sovereign control. Let us not forget that He who created the cosmos can still the storm. God is in control. Come what may, the Lord will hold up His people. He will cause us to persevere. He will be with us!

Discussion Questions:

1. What does vs. 1 teach us about God?
2. Throughout Psalm 46 the psalmist repeats the promise of *God's presence*. Where does he do this, and how does this promise encourage you?
3. How does Jesus end the Great Commission and why? See Matthew 28:18-20.
4. In vs. 10, God speaks these words, "Be still, and know that I am God." The verb "be still" means "to relax." What enables God's people to relax even when the world "seems" out of control? What does God promise in vs. 10, and how should this affect the way we pray?
5. Take time today to encourage one believer with the truths of this passage either through a phone call, text, or email.

Prayer:

Father, we are reminded of your presence and sovereign control in Psalm 46. What a much needed reminder for us today and every day! Thank you! Help us to not fear but to find rest in your presence, sovereignty, and the promise that you will be exalted in the earth! We thank you that because of Jesus and His work of salvation, we will one day be with you forever in a New Heaven and New Earth, where there will be no more sadness, pain, sickness, or death (Revelation 21:1-4). Help us to live differently in light of this future hope; apply the truths of your word to our hearts today; and use us to encourage our families and your church with these glorious truths. Amen.

Day 4

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 – ²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶ So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Passage Description:

In our passage Paul compares the Christian life to a race. The original audience of 1 Corinthians was very familiar with athletic competition. Every two years the Isthmian Games were held near Corinth. The athletes who competed underwent rigorous training to prepare in hopes of gaining a perishable wreath composed of wild celery for national pride and personal glory. If these athletes disciplined their bodies in hopes of winning a crown that wouldn't last, how much more should Christians train for their eternal reward.

Paul is not advocating salvation by works here. For Paul, the gospel message was the good news of what Christ had accomplished for His people through His death and resurrection—a message of salvation by grace to be received by faith alone (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Instead Paul wants us to see that the Christian life must be lived with purpose. The Christian must be self-controlled and disciplined. We must avoid sin and spiritual laziness, anything that will hinder us from running our race well, and we must keep our eternal reward ever before us—eternal life with our King and His people. Know this: If you are a follower of Jesus, then you are running a race. Tim Challies writes, “You’ve got just one life to live, one race to run. So live it with all your might, and run to win!”²

Discussion Questions:

1. How are you currently training to run the Christian race well? How can you train better? See 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Hebrews 12:1-2.
2. How are you helping others to run the Christian race well? How can you grow here?
3. Why are self-control and discipline important for the follower of Jesus? Who helps us with this? See Galatians 5:22-23.
4. How often do you think about the eternal reward promised for those who trust in Jesus? What can you do to focus your thoughts on this more and more?
5. Take time today to encourage one believer with the truths of this passage either through a phone call, text, or email.

Prayer:

Father, we thank you that Christ ran the race perfectly in place of His people, achieving for us an eternal reward. Help us to run our race well by remembering our reward and by seeking to honor King Jesus! Help us to be disciplined and self-controlled and to fight hard against sin by enlisting the help of other believers and by training hard through regular times of bible reading and prayer. Help us to run the race for your glory and the good of your people! Amen.

² Tim Challies, *Run to Win: The Lifelong Pursuits of a Godly Man* (Minneapolis: Cruciform Press, 2018), p. 10.

Day 6

Mark 2:5, 10-12 – ⁵ And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” ¹⁰ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic— ¹¹ “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home.” ¹² And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

Passage Description:

This has always been one of my favorite stories in the gospel of Mark. In Mark 2 Jesus returns to Capernaum, and the excited crowds gather to hear Him teach and to watch Him work miracles. Jesus had already demonstrated His healing power in Capernaum back in Mark 1:21-34, so expectations were high. In vs. 3 we find four men bringing a paralytic to Jesus so that he might heal him. Because of the crowd, the men are not able to enter the home where Jesus is teaching. Desperate times call for desperate measures. The four men take the paralytic to the roof of the home, make an opening, and lower the paralytic down before Jesus.³ The paralytic’s physical need is apparent to all. He is completely dependent upon the four men. Of course at this point everyone is expecting Jesus to heal the paralytic, for that would appear to be the man’s greatest need. But it’s not! In vs. 5 Jesus addresses the greater need, the need for forgiveness of sins. Jesus’ declaration of forgiveness is met with the incredulity of the scribes. They were aghast that a “mere man” would have the audacity to pronounce forgiveness, for this was God’s prerogative alone. In vv. 10-11 Jesus does cause the paralytic to walk! However, forgiveness of sin is fronted in our passage because it represents the greater need! By doing the second thing, Jesus proves that He has the authority to do the first. He proves His authority to forgive sin! The invisible act of forgiveness is verified by the visible act of healing!

In this incredible passage Jesus reveals that He is God and that He came to bring forgiveness to sinners and meet our greatest need. Early on in the gospel of Mark the Cross is foreshadowed, the climactic moment in salvation-history when sin would be dealt with and forgiveness for sin provided for God’s people. Of course we all have many important need, but none of them compare to the need for forgiveness and reconciliation to God. As those who have *trusted* in Jesus we can rejoice in the fact that our greatest need has been met! As Christians, when money is lacking or our health is subpar may we be reminded of the great truth that in Christ our greatest need has been met. We have forgiveness and thus right standing before God because of our faith in Jesus Christ. As we saw in Philippians 4:10-13 (Day 5), knowing Christ and the blessings of the gospel is the key to contentment and joy.

Discussion Questions:

1. The Bible clearly teaches that we receive Christ and His saving benefits by faith alone. Sinners are justified by faith alone (e.g., Romans 3:28; Philippians 3:9). What does Jesus respond to in vs. 5, and what is His response?
2. What do passages like Romans 3:23 and Romans 6:23 reveal about the significance of mankind’s greatest need that Jesus came to meet?
3. What does this passage reveal about Jesus?

³ Most homes during this time had stairs outside leading to the roof. The roof was a place where people could work or rest.

4. How are you currently demonstrating gratitude for the forgiveness Jesus came to provide for sinners?
5. Take time today to encourage one believer with the truths of this passage either through a phone call, text, or email.

Prayer:

Father, we thank you that Christ came to meet our greatest need. We are reminded of Jesus' beautiful words in Luke 19:10, where he announced that He came to seek and to save the lost! We thank you that we are justified by faith alone in Christ alone! We rejoice in the gospel! Help us to share this good news boldly and joyfully with others and to always rest in who you are and what you've provided! Amen.

Conclusion

Well, you did it! Praise God! I hope and pray that God has given you a greater passion for His word as a result of these daily devotionals. Maybe you're wondering, "What now?" If you are a follower of Jesus, then you need to continue to read and study God's word every day. There are numerous bible reading plans that range from reading a chapter a day to several chapters a day.⁴ The important thing is to find or create a plan and to stick with it! Let me end with a few passages from God's word to both challenge and encourage you to make reading, studying, and praying through the Scriptures a daily habit.

Matthew 28:19-20 – ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

John 6:66-68 – ⁶⁶ After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,

John 15:10-11 – ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

Acts 20:32 – ³² And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Let me quickly summarize what we learn from these passages and how it relates to the importance of regularly being in the word of God by providing a few questions:

- Where must we point one another to learn to observe all that Jesus has commanded us for the purpose of discipleship? The Bible.
- Where do we find Jesus' life-giving words? The Bible.
- Where do we find the commandments of King Jesus, the very commandments of which our obedience to demonstrates our love for God? The Bible.
- What did Paul commend to the elders in Ephesus for the purpose of building up God's church? The Bible.

In sum, without the Bible God's people simply cannot be built up and disciplined; they cannot demonstrate their love for God; and there will be no life! We need the Bible! Praise God for the wonderful gift of His word!

⁴ <https://www.navigators.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/navtool-5x5x5.pdf>; <https://media.thegospelcoalition.org/static-blogs/tgc/files/2010/12/TwoYearBibleReadingPlan.pdf>; <http://www.bible-reading.com/bible-plan.pdf>