





As you begin your journey serving alongside Casas por Cristo we want to provide you with something to both challenge you and call your attention to Christ as you serve. We have put together this Devotional Guide in order to help you draw close to God as you serve His children abroad. Thank you for your willingness to serve.

We are praying for you!

W E A L L H A V E S O M E T H I N G T O G I V E

## INTRODUCTION

Each day there are four parts to the devotional.

**PART 1** - Daily Challenge - Read to your team before leaving for the site each morning to enhance your team's experience and connection to the family and where you're serving.

**PART 2** - Morning Start-up - A quick thought to challenge your team and for them to think about during the day.  
(You can use this along with the Daily Challenge)

**PART 3** - Devotional - A different lesson each day with Scripture references and application for your time here.

**PART 4** - Response Questions - easy questions to help promote reflection/discussion at the end of the day.

**Daily Challenge:**

Learn the names of the family, their ages, and what they do.

**Morning Start-Up:**

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash. - Matthew 7:24-29

The work you are about to do is some of the most important for the entire week. Pouring concrete is long, hard, and tiring work, and so is laying the foundations to our character and faith. Although both are difficult, when they are done well, they have a long lasting effect.

**Devotional:**

In 1870, construction of the Brooklyn bridge began. This iconic landmark would span the East River to connect Manhattan and Brooklyn. Even though it is a beloved structure now, a controversy arose when it was being constructed. To the general public, who had been keeping an eye on the progress, it seemed that there had been little to no progress on the New York tower - the Manhattan side of the river. However, on the other side of the river the Brooklyn tower rose 100 feet above the water. The top of the New York tower was still 78 feet below the river where no one could see it.

In June 1872, the chief engineer of the project wrote in the newspaper: "To the general public that might imagine that no work has been done on the New York tower, because they see no evidence of it above the water, I should simply remark that the amount of the masonry and concrete laid on that foundation during the past winter, under water, is equal in quantity to the entire masonry of the Brooklyn tower visible above the waterline." It is worth noting that most bridges built around that time have been replaced, but the Brooklyn Bridge still stands today.

Gordon MacDonald says, "The chief engineer and his construction team did their most patient and daring work where no one could see it: on the foundation of the tower below the waterline." For any follower of Christ, we have to set a firm foundation and that work is largely done below the waterline, meaning in your character. It would have been easier in the short-run to not pour the concrete and do all the hard work necessary to make sure it is correct and level, but we all know this would be disastrous for the long-run. Jesus' words in Matthew 7:24-29 are about obedience to God so that when trials come, you have the foundation to weather them well. If you skip out on the arduous work of laying a proper foundation for your life, your faith and character will be too small, too thin, or too weak to support what God is wanting to build upon in your life. Both the wise and foolish man built a house, and from a distance, they may not have looked all that different from one another. But what determined their outcome was not that one went through trials and the other didn't. What made all the difference was the work the wise man put in underneath it all on the foundation. Can the same be said about you and your character and faith? What does your foundation look like?

# DAY ONE

1. What did you see God move today?
2. What trials or challenges have shaped your character?
3. In what ways is God's Word forming the foundation of your life?

*Journal in the space provided*

**Daily Challenge:**

Make sure the family knows your name. Tell them what brought you here.

**Morning Start-Up:**

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. - 1 Corinthians 12:12-13

Today and for the rest of the week, the work day will be different than the first day. There are going to be many different tasks going on all at once as everyone works for a common goal of building a home for this family. This is a perfect picture of what the body of Christ, the church, should look like. We all work for one goal, even though each of us is doing a different task. Though everyone has a different role and each of the jobs require different talents, no job is more important than the other. All individual tasks must be completed in order to finish the house and bless this family!

**Devotional:**

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul talks about spiritual gifts and how they all play a role in the body of Christ. He says that all the different parts work together, and each part is indispensable. But then, at the end of chapter 12, he says this, "And now I will show you the most excellent way." You can imagine that the early readers of this letter were leaning in, wanting to know what Paul would say is even more excellent than spiritual gifts? What could be higher than finding out what you've been given to advance God's Kingdom? What Paul says next is far beyond merely finding out what your strengths are in serving others.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 says, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing." You can have all the sense of duty and reverence in the world, but that is not the goal. You can have all the abilities and talents and the force of personality that can move mountains, but if you miss out on love, it counts for nothing. You can stack up and keep track of all of your good deeds and acts of service and build dozens of houses, but if you do them without love, you didn't gain anything.

Remember who is saying this. This is coming from the guy who divinely inspired, performed miracles, has seen the Lord Jesus, taken beatings and count for very little. This is coming from a man who has changed the world, and yet he says love is the most excellent way.

The thing that binds the members of the body of Christ together and makes it all work is not that we all believe the exact same doctrine or have everything in common, it's the love of Christ that holds us all together. Love is the most excellent way because it is what brings our spiritual gifts and service to completion. There are a lot of reasons why people come to build houses, but they are not all equal. There will come a time when we lay down our gifts and are no longer able to carry out the tasks and duties of the faith, but there will never be a day when we have to lay down our love for Christ and those He died to save.

Most of the time, we focus on the things we want to do or feel we should be doing. But how often do we ask ourselves, "How have I loved?" How have you loved those you go to school with, your coworkers, family, your church, etc? Go back and reread 1 Corinthians 13 and read it in that way. Have you been using the gifts that God has given you to love people, as Paul describes, in the most excellent way?

1. What was the highlight of your day?
2. How did you see your team working together?
3. What motivated you to come on this trip? Was there something other than love that motivated you?

*Journal in the space provided*

**Daily Challenge:**

Learn something about the community. What are the local jobs, churches, sports, etc.?

**Morning Start-Up:**

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. - Ephesians 2:8-10

It is no small thing to consider how God long foresaw you, your salvation, and the good works that you will do, including what you will do today. All of those flow from the grace of God. Even the work that we get to do is part of the gift. God has prepared today for you - enjoy it as His workmanship.

**Devotional:**

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." - Matthew 28:16-20

If you were to sit down and read through all of Matthew's Gospel, it would not take you long to recognize that one major theme running throughout is the topic of "Kingdom." In Jesus' first public words in Matthew 4, He preaches that the kingdom of heaven is near. No less than 32 times Matthew uses the phrase "kingdom of heaven" as he writes his gospel. Jesus is constantly saying things like, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, or the kingdom of heaven is like a hidden treasure, or a pearl of great price, a net let down into a lake, or a landowner in his vineyard." Jesus spends a great deal of time telling people about the kingdom of heaven. Fast forward to the end of Matthew and Jesus' parting words to His Disciples. He tells them that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him and now He wants them to go out and make disciples of all nations. After all that kingdom talk, what Jesus is really telling them is, "Go conquer the world!"

That may seem like a very tall order and overwhelming task, but remember that what you've done so far this week is a part of that kingdom building work. The other thing to keep in mind is that Jesus tells us that He will be with us the entire way, and if He has been given all power and authority, and He is with you, you therefore have power and authority as well. God brought you here to do a work in your life so that He could send you back to the place where you have the greatest influence. So, how are you going to use what God has given to you? How are you going to go back and conquer the part of the world God has placed you in? Have you thought about this? Do you have a plan? He didn't say it would be easy, but He did promise that He would be with you to the very end of the age.

1. What part of this week did you enjoy the most?
2. How have you been building up God's kingdom before this trip?
3. Is there something or someone that God brings to your mind that you need to minister to when you get home?

*Journal in the space provided*

**Daily Challenge:**

Pour yourself out completely. Prepare yourself to share something with the family at the dedication.

**Morning Start-Up:**

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. - Colossians 3:23-24

It may be that at this time, you are tired and sore from the previous days' work, but press on knowing that what you are doing here is part of a grand inheritance that the Lord has in store for you. Make today a sweet act of worship and devotion between you and Jesus. "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." - Matthew 25:40

**Devotional:**

Psalm 16:11 says, "You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand." It's pretty safe to say that David lived an epic life. He was the young boy who killed a lion and a bear to protect his family's flock. He watched the entire Philistine army retreat as he stood over Goliath's body. When he played his harp for Saul evil spirits fled. He was king over Israel and Judah - he had access to all the earthly pleasures and desires you could imagine at that time and yet he says God is his source of joy and satisfaction.

John Piper says, "God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in Him." It is coming to the realization that the things of this world are not going to satisfy us for very long, and our joy is the evidence of our satisfaction and delight in God. In fact, it is evidence that you have the Holy Spirit as it is a fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22). The Christian life and faith demands that we delight in God over all things, and we do that by seeing the supreme value of God in our lives.

In Matthew 13:44, Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven like a treasure hidden in a field. "When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold everything he had and bought that field." Notice that it does not say, "A man found a treasure in a field and then he sold everything to buy that field." Jesus' teaching is way more radical than that! Lots of people sell things and do all kinds of sacrificial things in life for all sorts of ulterior motives with no delight in the treasure and no sense of satisfaction in Christ. This is like a marriage where there is no delight or love or desire for the other person. What is your measure of joy in Christ? Is that what brought you here this week? Or has something else taken His place as the source of your joy and satisfaction?

1. What do you think your inheritance looks like in the kingdom of heaven?
2. What has this trip done for you regarding your joy in Christ?
3. What has been the biggest takeaway or memory of this week?

*Journal in the space provided*

Thank  
— YOU —