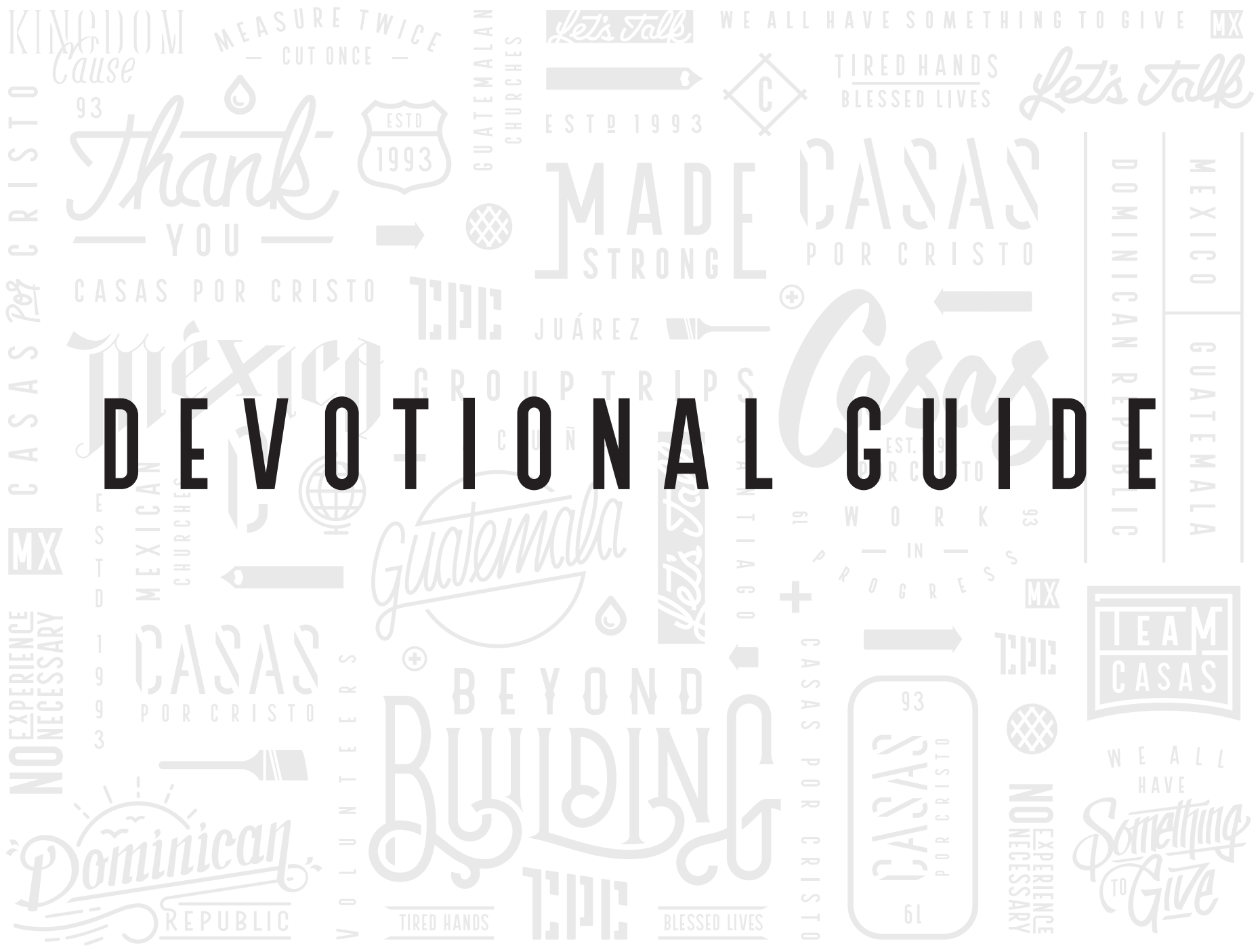


DEVOTIONAL GUIDE





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!

WE ALL HAVE SOMETHING TO GIVE

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.

DAY ONE

Daily Challenge:

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

Morning Start-Up:

Philippians 2:13 - "For it is God who works in you to will and to work according to his good purpose."

As you start this week's build, take a moment to think about how the God of all the universe is choosing to use you. You are the means by which God is working out His good purpose and through you His will is being accomplished.

Devotional:

Luke 19:9-10 - "Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.'" (Read Passage)

One thing that sets Christianity apart from all the other religions of the world is that with Christ, we see God pursue man. Every other belief system is always some version of "follow these principles, obey these rules, and then you'll be accepted or approved." Only with our God do we see the King come down from on high and seek out mankind, not the other way around. God has sought us out and called us by name. Romans 5:8 - "But God demonstrated his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Before we ever did anything to try and earn the approval of God, He already had it in mind to pursue us. The story with Zacchaeus is a great example. Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector and would not have been a top choice for any Jewish leader. In fact, he would have been the least likely of candidates, and yet out of all the people crowded around to see Jesus that day, he calls upon this lost son of Abraham up in a tree. From that day forward, Zacchaeus' life changed from being self-serving to being someone who served others by the will of God.

It is an overwhelming thought to think that God has pursued us and made His love and grace known to us. But God's love doesn't stop there. God brings us even further in by making us a part of that very same pursuit of others. God has chosen to use you as the means by which He would pursue this family. It's by His good pleasure that He is working in you and through you to show others the love He has for them.

Ephesians 2:10 says that we are created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. He has made you into His supply line for good so that others might come to that they too are loved and pursued by God. Take some time this week to reflect on how God has sought after you and how He can use you this week to show His love for the family.

DAY ONE

1. What did you see God do today?
2. What interaction did you have with the family?
3. What was one thing you will never forget about today?

Journal in the space provided.

DAY TWO

Daily Challenge:

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

Morning Start-Up:

Galatians 6:9 - "Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Sometimes doing good works can feel good and energize us, but other times it requires a lot of effort. Pour yourself out today for the sake of God's glory and His good work for the harvest is coming.

Devotional:

On May 22nd, 2011, an EF5 tornado ripped through the city of Joplin, MO. It took the lives of 161 people and caused over three billion dollars in damages (the most costly tornado in U.S. history). While the city was reeling and in shock from the devastation, a semi-truck from Arizona rolled onto the parking lot of College Heights Christian Church just thirty-six hours after the tornado had struck. The truck was opened up and it was filled to the brim with food and clothing supplies and relief aid. The staff at the church couldn't believe what they were seeing and they asked the driver how it was possible to get all this together in such a short time? The driver of the truck simply said, "We heard, and we went to work."

In Joshua chapter 10, the news reaches Joshua that the Gibeonites, friends of Israel, were under attack and calling for help. Five kingdoms had rallied against them and unless aid comes their way, they will be crushed. So Joshua marches from Gilgal to Gibeon with his entire army to take their enemies by surprise, but in order to get there, they had to march all night long. You may remember this story because this is when God made the sun stand still in the sky as the Israelites ran down their enemies. We tend to focus on the miraculous and make that the headline of the story, but don't miss the effort and zeal of Joshua and his army. Before there was a miracle, there was an all-night march.

We would all love to see God do something miraculous. We get excited about miracles because we can't do them. But what God loves the most is when His people are willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish His purposes; nothing communicates love to God more than this. Joshua could have taken his time and marched his army out in the daylight when it was easier, but he knew that the situation called for more than just what was easy. His zeal for the Lord caused him to make the harder, but better choice.

What you are doing this week has required a lot of travel, time, and energy so far with still more to give, and on the receiving end of that, is someone who is in need of aid and the work of God in their lives. Does your zeal for God and your passion to do His will resemble Joshua's? How willing are you to do whatever it takes to accomplish the tasks God has placed before you? When we hear of others in need, are we the kind of people who will show up and say, "We heard, so we went to work."

DAY TWO

1. How did you feel when you first heard of this opportunity to build a home for a family in need? What did you need to do in order to be here this week?
2. What has been the biggest challenge so far this week?
3. How much of Joshua's zeal do you see in yourself?
4. What do you hope to see happen this week?

Journal in the space provided.

DAY THREE

Daily Challenge:

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

Morning Start-Up:

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 - "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

At this point, you might be feeling sore and tired, but be reminded that God is at work in and through you. He is doing things that can be seen and things that can not be seen, and all of it is working for you in eternal weight of glory. Keep going, be encouraged, and let God renew you as you work for Him today.

Devotional:

(Reread 2 Corinthians 4:16-18) In Genesis 42, we read about Joseph while he is in power over all of Egypt. Joseph's life, however, had been a hard and complex one up to this point. He'd been sold into slavery by his brothers, accused of a crime he didn't commit, spent years in prison, interpreted dreams for Pharaoh, risen to power, and now has saved Egypt from a seven-year famine. Certainly, there had to have been many times when Joseph wanted to lose heart or felt overwhelmed by the troubles in his life. He was being moved around by God and having things happen to him long before he could understand why. So when Joseph's brothers come back into his life, it causes Joseph to have to make a very important decision. All the trouble in Joseph's life was because of these men before him, and for several chapters, it is unclear what Joseph will do with them.

In chapter 45, Joseph finally reveals his identity to his brothers. At that time, it would have been custom for anyone in power to eliminate former rivals and enemies. However, Joseph chooses to look a little further into the future. He sees how God has been at work in his life and the part he has to play now. Perhaps he even recognized that if he kills his brothers here, he would sever the line through which one day the Messiah would come. There is so much riding on Joseph to make the right decision and see the bigger picture that God has been developing his entire life. If you know how the story goes, Joseph chooses to fix his eyes on the hope of what is unseen instead of simply what is right in front of him.

Like Joseph, you have a part to play in God's bigger picture. He has been working and moving in your life, not just to bring you here this week, but so that you could see the impact that your actions have in the lives of others. This week, you built a house for a family in need, and that is significant, but ultimately the house is temporal. A day will come when all the houses we've built will no longer be around or needed, but the work you've done to show people the love of Christ is eternal. God has placed you where He has for a reason. The things you've experienced and how He's moved you around were for a purpose. Can you see the bigger picture God has been developing in your life? Can you imagine how your words and actions could have an eternal impact on those around you?

DAY THREE

1. What stands out to you the most about Joseph's life?
2. What are some ways God has moved you to be in the right place at the right time? What was one thing you will never forget about today?
3. What are some unseen possibilities that you hope will come from this week?

Journal in the space provided.

DAY FOUR

Daily Challenge:

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

Morning Start-Up:

Romans 8:17 - "Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ" From time to time, it is good to be reminded that we have been elevated to a position far beyond our worthiness. The King of kings has not only made you part of His royal court, but He has brought you in and declared you as part of His family. J. I. Packer says, "What is a Christian? The richest answer I know is that a Christian is one who has God as Father." Take time today to reflect on how God has elevated you in His Kingdom and family.

Devotional:

If you've ever read the book of Esther, you might notice that God is never mentioned by name, but His providence and the work of His hands is clearly seen throughout. God takes a young, Jewish orphan girl, and through a beauty contest, places her in the royal court of Xerxes, the king of Persia. She's chosen to be queen out of 400 candidates and therefore gains access and influence with perhaps the most powerful person on the planet. It just so happens that during that time a man who was also close to Xerxes devises a plan to make an enemy of the Jews and declares a day and time for their complete annihilation.

When this happens, Esther's cousin, Mordecai, tries to persuade her to beg the king for mercy and to reverse this decree. Esther responds back to Mordecai that it's not that easy. There are very real and scary consequences when approaching the king. She knows that she could lose her life if this doesn't go well. She sends her reasons for not being willing to act back to Mordecai. He responds by saying, "If you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to this royal position for such a time as this." Esther realizes that she's been given a high position for this very reason. Esther finds her courage, takes action, and saves her people.

Over and over again in the New Testament, we read that we've become sons and daughters of God, which in turn, elevates us to a high position. Regardless of who you are, what you look like, or what your qualifications are, God has brought you in and lifted you up for a reason. This week was about more than just building a house. God has brought you here so that you could experience this build, and now He is sending you back to the place where you have the most influence. Esther's temptation was to keep quiet and hope someone else would bring about the desired result for her people. That may also be your temptation as well. There might be some real and scary obstacles that hold you back, but can you find the courage to put your faith into action when you go home? Who knows, God may have brought you here for such a time as this so that you could bring something back that others truly need.

DAY FOUR

1. What has been the highlight of the week for you?
2. What comes to your mind when Scripture tells us that we are children and heirs of God?
3. What has God shown you this week that you want to share with others when you get home?
4. How are you going to share that with them?

Journal in the space provided.

Thank
— YOU —