

LEVERAGE YOUR LIFE

LEADER GUIDE

DEEPEN DEVOTION

BIG IDEA: We will never rightly seek first the kingdom until daily we seek first the King.

DATE: Wednesday, April 22 and Sunday, April 26, 2026

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 3:13-14; Acts 6:1-4

CONNECT

Who in your life has been an example of devotion to a person or an idea? What have they taught you? What do you think people in your life would say you are devoted to? Why is that?

WATCH THE VIDEO

VIDEO OPTIONS:

- Watch the video together as a group using the YouTube app on the Roku streaming device in your LifeGroup room. The videos will be available on the Chets Creek Church YouTube channel. This week's video is about 17 minutes long.
- Or watch the video on your own, take notes and share the highlights with your group. A link to the video can be found here: www.chetscreek.com/adults/lifegroups

DISCUSS:

What stood out to you from today's video teaching?

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 11:28-30 (CSB)

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Mark 3:13-14 (CSB)

¹³ Jesus went up the mountain and summoned those he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴ He appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, to send them out to preach...

Acts 6:1-4 (CSB)

In those days, as the disciples were increasing in number, there arose a complaint by the Hellenistic Jews against the Hebraic Jews that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution. ² The Twelve summoned the whole company of the disciples and said, "It would not be right for us to give up preaching the word of God to wait on tables. ³ Brothers and sisters,

select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we can appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

DISCUSSION

READ Matthew 11:28-30

What parts of your spiritual life feel draining or exhausting at times? Why do you think this is so? Did you relate to Vance in his trying to measure up?

Recall this quote from Henry Blackaby from *Experiencing God*, "We are so activity oriented that we assume we were saved for a task to perform rather than for a relationship to enjoy." When have you felt especially connected to Jesus or especially aware of His presence or love for you?

What is the danger in equating spiritual activity with spiritual maturity? What is the difference?

READ Mark 3:13-14 & Acts 6:1-4

What was the primary purpose of these early followers of Jesus? (to preach the Word and devote themselves to prayer) Is that a priority in your life?

If we must seek first the *King* to rightly seek first the *kingdom*, how can you deepen your devotion through prayer and the Word each day? What may you need to give up to better prioritize prayer and the Word? (Bring in any thoughts from the Additional Notes section below. Remember this is not about a checklist. You will deepen your devotion to Christ when you talk with Him throughout the day. Each day. Share yourself with Him. Ask for advice. Ask for wisdom. Listen for His voice and believe He will speak. In other words, spend time with Jesus not as a task to perform but as a Person to love.)

Think of Vance's airplane analogy. Christians also need two wings to fly – prayer and the Word – both individually and corporately. How can our group give priority to prayer and the Word when we gather and how can we encourage one another to stay in the Word throughout the week?

PRAYER RESPONSE

Leaders: The Prayer Response is an important part of this series. Save time to complete this response:

When we seek God in prayer, He moves in power. Jesus gives rest to the weary. In the video Vance shared after reading Matthew 11:28-30 three words to sum up our Christian walk should be *rest, easy* and *light*. Yet, at one time Vance's three words were *work, hard* and *heavy*.

Turn to your neighbor and take a minute to share what 3 words you would use to sum up your Christian walk right now. Encourage one another to release any burdens to Jesus through prayer and Scripture as we deepen our devotion to Jesus and each other.

After a few minutes have the prayer leader or your LifeGroup leader close in prayer by praying Matthew 11:28-30 over the group: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give

you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Remember this is not about a checklist. You will deepen your devotion to Christ when you talk with Him throughout the day. Each day. Share yourself with Him. Ask for advice. Ask for wisdom. Listen for His voice and believe He will speak. In other words, spend time with Jesus not as a task to perform but as a Person to love.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

MAIN OVER MAJOR

What an incredible reality that we have a relationship with God! As lowly, created, sinful human beings, we have the privilege of knowing and being known by the almighty Creator of the Universe. It almost sounds absurd when you think about it. Not only are we friends with Jesus, but we can deepen that devotion every day of our lives.

The next question is, "How?" How do we actually deepen our devotion to Christ and increase our fellowship with Him? We're going to explore a few answers, starting with this principle: *We deepen our devotion to Jesus when we refuse to allow major things to become the main thing.*

Look at Acts 6:1:

Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.

Understand, this issue was major. Widows in the ancient world typically had no ability to work and nobody to care for them. So, this wasn't just some bureaucratic problem. Women were starving. Their lives were in danger.

And, importantly, the apostles didn't ignore that problem. The leaders of the church created a system that made sure everyone who needed help received help. They carried out the work of God's kingdom, and they did it well.

But the leaders of that same church also made it a point to prevent that major issue from becoming their main priority. In fact, Peter, James, John, and the other founders of the church made their priority clear in Acts 6:2-4:

It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

As a follower of Jesus, your main priority is Jesus. We will never rightly seek first the kingdom until daily we seek first the King. There will always be work to do in the kingdom. There will always be problems to solve and people to serve. But you must make the choice each and every day to put King Jesus first and then join in His activity out of the overflow of what He is doing in your life.

The same goes for your career. And your family. Your community. Your physical health. Your mental health. Your finances. All of those things are important. Yet if you want to deepen devotion, then none of those can be more important than Jesus.

Daily seeking first the kingdom begins by daily seeking first the King.

DITCH THE CHECKLIST

How do we deepen our devotion to Christ? How do we grow in our relationship with Him? We must always remember you cannot seek first the kingdom without seeking first the King. To join in His activity daily requires that your heart be passionate about what's on His heart and that only happens as you give priority to intimate fellowship with Him.

This means that the greatest thing you bring to the table to leverage your life for the sake of God's kingdom is daily time with Jesus. The only way to grow any relationship is with time. The same is true about your relationship with Jesus. We must give time daily to deepen our devotion to Him.

Recall what the church leaders said in Acts 6:4,

But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

We hear this all the time in the church, saying, "Pray and read your Bible. Read your Bible and pray." Everyone seems to understand that those two activities are connected to deeper intimacy with Christ both in your personal life and in community with other believers.

That being the case, why doesn't it always work? How many times have you sat down to "do your devotions" only to stand up and feel like nothing has been accomplished? Why do we often go to church on Sunday, pray together, listen to the preaching of God's Word, and then hop in our cars without any significant changes in our lives?

One reason so many Christians fail to deepen their devotion to Christ is that they approach these critical disciplines— prayer and engagement with God's Word—as items on a checklist. "Okay, I have prayed and read the Bible. Check. Now it's time for my coffee." It's so easy to allow our relationship with Jesus to become one part of a busy day. An important part, but just a part.

What's the alternative? *To abide in Christ*. To saturate ourselves in His presence and His Word. That doesn't mean you have to spend all your time "doing devotions." That doesn't even mean you need to spend more time than you currently do. Going through the motions of religious rituals is not the answer.

Instead, you will deepen your devotion when Jesus is constantly and consistently on your mind. When you read His Word and then meditate on it throughout the day. Think about it. Write it down. Respond to it.

You will deepen your devotion to Christ when you talk with Him throughout the day. Each day. Share yourself with Him. Ask for advice. Ask for wisdom. Listen for His voice and believe He will speak. In other words, **spending time with Jesus not as a task to perform but as a Person to love.**

What makes you feel loved and appreciated by the people closest to you? What is something you can do right now to remind yourself of Jesus' love and presence with you throughout your day? If you are a disciple of Jesus, then He counts you as a friend. And as His friend, what is on His heart will be on your heart. As His friend, you will leverage your life to join in His activity.

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