



Teen God & I Time

5 Steps For Successful Devotions

STEP ONE: Pray. *Psalm 5:3 “My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.”*

1. Praise God for His character (who He is) and for His works (what He does).
2. Ask God to help you to understand His Word.

STEP TWO: Study. *II Timothy 2:15 “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”*

1. Learn about your God.
2. Learn how to live obediently.

STEP THREE: Memorize. *Psalm 119:11 “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”*

1. Memorizing God’s Word is the most powerful tool for fighting off temptations to sin.
2. Memorize today’s key verse, and then choose others from your list of passages.

STEP FOUR: Meditate. *Psalm 19:14 “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.”*

1. “How do I meditate?” Think about the verse often until you understand it and can use it to help you.
2. Three tools for meditation:
 - a. Try to define each major word.
 - b. Recite the verse several times emphasizing a different word each time.
 - c. Consider how this verse could help you at home, at school, or in other situations.

STEP FIVE: Pray. *Philippians 4:6 “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”*

- P** - Praise – Thank God for daily blessings.
- R** - Repent – Confess your failures to the Lord.
- A** - Ask – Make your requests known to God.
- Y** - Yield – Express your willingness to obey Him.

Day 1

Running with Endurance, Lap #1

Read: Hebrews 12:1-3

According to Hebrews 12:1, what activity is the Christian life compared to?

Have you ever run or attended a race? You probably noticed a few things about those who are racing. First of all, runners don't look like those in the crowd. Runners have conditioned their body for the task that is before them. Secondly, runners only carry or wear what they absolutely must, to make sure nothing is slowing them down. Runners do these things to give themselves the best chance of winning. Your life is a race and the winning is the goal.

Hebrews 12:1 instructs us to run the race “with _____.”

We usually think of patience as waiting, like waiting in line at Wal-Mart or at stoplights. Although this is often true, a more accurate definition would be “to endure.” In fact, the word *patience* (vs. 1) and word *endured* (vs. 3) are the same Greek word. So, the phrase “run with patience” could actually be read as “run with endurance.”

An effective marathon runner must continually build up his endurance level or “stamina.” How does he do this? Obviously, by running! How does this running stuff apply to the Christian life? Remember, the Bible compares the Christian life to a *race*...not just a 100-yard dash, but a *marathon*.

Endurance is something developed rather than something you get at once. And, endurance can be only be developed with resistance.

What types of things does a runner do in order to run further and develop endurance? _____

According to *James 1:3*, what develops endurance/patience? _____

According to *Hebrews 12:2-3*, who is our example that we are to pattern our lives after in the race of life? _____

So, What Is Our Goal for Running?

Read *Philippians 3:7-12*.

According to verse 8, what did Paul want to win? _____

What did Paul want to know according to verse 10? (You may recognize this verse as the camp verse!)

- That I may know _____
- And the _____ of His resurrection
- And the fellowship of His _____

How do you “win Christ”? By *knowing* Christ, and His power and His suffering. That doesn’t seem like a goal we would naturally have in life! What are some goals people have for their lives?

Money Happy family Successful job Fulfillment

None of these things are bad in and of themselves, but they should take a backseat to the main goal of a close relationship with Christ—just like Christ said himself in *Matthew 6:33*- “Seek ye _____ the kingdom of God and His righteousness and _____ these things [needs in your life] shall be _____ unto you.”

In case you need more convincing that this is a worthy goal for your life, read David’s take on it in *Psalms 16:11*- “Thou wilt shew me the path of life, in thy _____ is fullness of _____, at Thy right hand, there are _____.”

Knowing Christ truly is the best goal you could have for your life!

How Should We Run the Race of Life to Achieve This Goal?

Read *Mark 12:30* and notice what Jesus says in regard to the way we live (or *run*) our Christian life (or *race*).

We should love the Lord our God:

With all thy _____

With all thy _____

With all thy _____

With all thy _____

In this verse, what 3-letter word describes how much God wants us to give in each of these areas? _____

Any runner will tell you that running with endurance requires ENERGY and there are two different kinds of ENERGY required to run a race:

1) Physical energy

2) Mental energy

An energetic runner must be strong both mentally and physically. This kind of runner is said to have “heart.”

1) P_____ **Energy:** Most people understand that it takes a great deal of physical effort to run a race. Running is not easy. Runners must condition their body.

How does a runner prepare or condition himself to run long distances?

- Eat healthy
- Eat whatever they want
- Run if you feel like it
- Run consistently
- Push yourself
- Stay comfortable

It takes discipline and hard work! Each time you run, you’re building up energy and strength for your body to run the next time. But those who run long distances will tell you that it takes more than just *physical* energy...

2) M_____ **Energy:** We need to run the race with a mental

effort that looks at the example of the Lord Jesus. We should consciously determine to give our all and continually press on in spite of the discomforts.

- **Hebrews 12:3**- Is this verse warning the runner about a physical hindrance or a mental hindrance? _____

Runners that drop out of the race, usually lose the battle *first* in their minds, which then causes them to lose the physical energy necessary to finish the race.

- **Ecclesiastes 9:10** - How should a Christian perform every activity for His God? “with _____ thy _____”
- **Isaiah 26:3**– I will have perfect peace when my... “ _____ is _____ (focused) on Thee.”
- **Ephesians 6:10**– “...Be strong in the _____ and in the _____ of _____ might”
- **Philippians 2:13**– God is the only one who can work in you “to _____ (desire) and to _____ of his good pleasure.”
- **Philippians 4:13**– “I can do _____ things through _____ which _____ me.”

D. L Moody said, “*I work as though it all depends on me and I pray as though it all depends on God.*” Herein lies the balance.

God is not looking for half-hearted runners; He needs young men and women that determine in their mind and heart that they are going to give it all they’ve got. You must realize your strength alone is not sufficient, but what energy you have is from the Lord. Trust Him to supply all you will need to finish the course.

Application:

If the goal of running the race is to know Christ and to one day dwell with Him, what are you doing to get to know your God?

- Listening in church/youth group
- Reading Christian books
- Reading the Bible regularly
- Praying regularly
- Having Christian friends who encourage you spiritually

What obstacles have caused you to not reach your goal of knowing Christ more and more?

- Not being faithful to church/youth group
- Not reading the Bible regularly
- Bad friends
- Bitterness against an authority
- Not praying

Can you think of a time that you ran with more energy and zeal than you are right now? _____

If so, what were you doing that you need to start doing again?

Reflect on times in your life that you were excited about the things of God and experienced victory over sin. There is likely a direct relationship between your excitement for the things of God at that time and your Bible-reading, church attendance, prayer time, godly friendships/influences, etc. These disciplines of the Christian life cause you to know God better and will put in you a love and desire to please Him. What step(s) do you need to take to grow in the areas that have slowed you down spiritually?

Day 2

Running with Endurance, Lap #2

Read Hebrews 12:1-11.

The Christian life is a long-distance race that we continue to run until we meet “the _____ and _____ of our faith”, the Lord Jesus Christ (vs. 2).

The starting line in your race is the day you are saved, and the finish line is the day you die or the day the Lord comes back to take us to Heaven.

To run a marathon, runners will train for months, enduring hours of painful and difficult training. Expect challenges—It’s not easy to be a champion!

· *James 1:2* warns us that we will fall “into divers (various) _____ (trials)”

· *James 1:3* says that the “_____ of our faith worketh _____ (endurance)”

· *Hebrews 12:2* shows us that Christ is our ultimate example: “who for the _____ that was set before Him, endured the _____, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the _____ of God.”

He endured the most painful suffering and was victorious, sitting now at the throne of God in Heaven!

Endurance only grows through trials, whether they are daily inconveniences or tragic events. Sometimes we convince ourselves that if we do right (have daily devotions, witness, obey, pray, etc.), then God will not allow problems to come our way. However, as long as there is sin in the world, there will be trials.

· *1 Peter 4:12* tells us to think it “not _____”
when we go through fiery _____”

· *John 15:20* says “if they _____
Me (Christ), they will also persecute you.”

Christ lived a perfect life, yet was He able to escape pain and difficult situations? _____

So, when these problems come into your life, what should you do?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid them | <input type="checkbox"/> Complain about them |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Be in denial | <input type="checkbox"/> Endure them |

What does the Bible say we should endure?

- *2 Timothy 2:3*- “endure _____ (hardship) as a good soldier.”
- *2 Timothy 3:11*- Paul endured _____ and _____
- *2 Timothy 4:5*- Paul instructs Timothy to be alert or watchful and to endure _____
- *Hebrews 12:7*- Endure _____ (scolding). All true children of God are scolded or disciplined since we are all imperfect.
- *James 1:12*- “Blessed is the man that endures _____;”
You will then “receive the _____ of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love him.”

What are some specific temptations or trials that God has asked you to endure?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult home life | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Temptations at school | <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of a loved one | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Hang in There! God doesn't leave us without hope!

· *James 1:12* says we are _____ (happy) if we endure temptations

· *John 16:33*– Christ encourages you that in Him, “you might have _____.” Though we “shall have _____,” we should “be of _____” because Christ has overcome the world!

· *1 John 4:4*– John reminds us that we have the victory because “_____ is He (Holy Spirit) that is in _____, than he (Satan) that is in the _____.”

· *Philippians 4:13*– Christ strengthens you to “do _____ things”

If They Can Do It, You Can Do It!

Hebrews 12:1 says that we are surrounded by a “cloud of _____” Who are these witnesses?

Look at the previous chapter, *Hebrews 11* which is sometimes called the “Hall of Faith.” List five of the names mentioned in the “Hall of Faith” (*Hebrews 11:4-8, 20-24, 32*)

There are countless other Christians, whether in Bible times or more recent times, that are looking down on us as we run the race. Be encouraged that there are others that have run the race successfully! Who are some people that are examples of how you want to live the Christian life?

If could ask those people how they've been able to be victorious over sin and endure the hardships of the race, what would they say?

They, like you, are just sinful human beings that have been given new life in Christ! They've claimed the promises of Scripture and have taken the time to have a close relationship with their Heavenly Father.

Where or when have you been most tempted to slow down or give up running the Christian life? _____

Consider writing these on a 3x5 card or memorizing these and other promises so that you can speak God's truth to yourself when you're tempted to give up running the race of the Christian life.

- **Jeremiah 29:11**– *“For I know the plans I have for you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you an expected end.”*

- **Psalms 84:11**– *“For the Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.”*

- **Isaiah 40:13**– *“For I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, “Fear not, I will help thee.”*

- **Galatians 6:9**– *“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”*

Day 3

Running with Enthusiasm

Read Psalm 100

According to this chapter, what kind of attitude should we have as we serve the Lord? _____

ENTHUSIASM has been defined as “a strong, urgent desire or interest.” Some have said that enthusiasm is the compelling power that overcomes all obstacles. It enables one to do the work that his heart desires. Even though the word *enthusiasm* is not found in Scriptures, the concept is woven throughout. When we think about enthusiasm, we may also think of words such as “zeal, eagerness, willingness, or readiness.”

- Read *Titus 2:11-14*. In vs. 14, the Lord describes His people as “p_____”, and says that they should be “z_____ of g_____ works.”
- In *Hebrew 12:2*, who is our example? _____

When we have zeal or enthusiasm to do good work, we are being like Christ! One cannot read the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) without noticing that Jesus served people with a willing heart. Though the Gospels contain many healings and miracles of Jesus, it records only a small sampling of what Jesus did for others in His time on earth.

John 21:25 says that the “_____ itself could not contain the books” if everything was written down!

Interestingly, our English word *enthusiasm* comes from the Greek words “en-” (in) and “theos” (God). The combination of these parts gives the original meaning of the word *enthusiasm*—“in God.” A born-again believer

who follows the leadership of the Holy Spirit dwelling within him will have an enthusiasm about what he does for God.

When most people think of enthusiasm today, they picture an energetic person with a bubbly personality, often called the “life of the party”. But serving the Lord enthusiastically isn’t just for extraverts! Anytime you love something or someone enough, this enthusiasm will just be a natural response...like a sports enthusiast cheering their team on during the Super Bowl! In the same way, a person who loves the Lord will develop an enthusiasm about reading His Word and hearing it preached.

- *Acts 18:24-25* describes Apollos as being “_____ in the Scriptures,” “_____ in the spirit,” and “taught _____ the things of the Lord.” Though his teaching was incomplete at this point (he didn’t realize the Messiah had come!), Apollos was mentored by Aquila and Priscilla and God used His enthusiasm for the Scriptures to disciple many people.
- *Romans 12:11* instructs us not to be “_____ in business, but _____ in spirit, _____ the Lord.”

The word *fervent* means to be “hot, boiling.” It comes from the Greek word *zelos*, from which we get the word *zeal*. This zeal is an internal motivation that comes from God living in us.

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 on how zealous or enthusiastic you are about the following events:

- _____ Watching your favorite team play a sporting event
- _____ Listening to the Scriptures preached at church
- _____ Eating at your favorite restaurant
- _____ Having God and I time at camp or at home
- _____ Memorizing verses
- _____ Having a snow day at school
- _____ Hearing that a friend accepted Christ as their Savior

_____Hanging out with friends/going shopping

Your ratings probably make you realize that it's much more natural for us to be enthusiastic about things that really don't matter in eternity. Unsaved people are also excited about sports, eating good food, and free time. However, as Christians, we should be more excited about eternal things! We have been saved from a life of sin and have a relationship with the God of the universe! Now that's something to be enthusiastic about! As you get to know your God through Bible reading, preaching, prayer, fellowship with believers, and going through trials, you will begin to be more enthusiastic about things that matter in eternity.

In Revelations 3:15-16, why does God want to spue them out of His mouth?

Because they are _____.

Have you ever had a craving for a cold drink? Yes No

Have you ever had a craving for a hot drink? Yes No

Have you ever had a craving for a lukewarm drink? Yes No

You see, cold and hot drinks are useful for refreshment or soothing us, but none of us would probably ever prefer a lukewarm drink! Ew! In the same way, God wants our lives to be useful by being "sold out" for Him, not apathetic or lukewarm.

What areas of your life are keeping you from being "hot," enthusiastic, or "sold out" for God?

Not being sure I'm saved My entertainment choices

Being too busy Not praying

Not reading my Bible Being unfaithful to church

Friends Bitterness

Others: _____

Do you see how these same issues are also the obstacles keeping you from

running with endurance? Don't let these areas slow you down and limit the impact you have for Christ! You have a choice! — Continue as you are or take steps to improve these areas?

Remember—*If you always do what you've always done, you'll always be the same person you've always been!*

Enthusiasm is contagious! People are attracted to those who do things with a sense of urgency and interest.

1 Corinthians 10:31 Our goal in everything we do is to “do all to the _____ of _____”

This means that we should make others see the greatness of our God by how He empowers us to live our daily lives. No unsaved person is going to be drawn to Christ by an apathetic, dead, cold Christian. With this attitude, how in the world would you expect your unsaved friends to believe that you are a child of the Almighty God?! Having a relationship with God and knowing Him better each day is the ultimate thing to be excited about and that gives us peace and satisfaction, unlike anything or anyone in this world!

Name some Christians who have influenced you because of their enthusiasm for the things of God.

Would any of your friends write your name down? No Hopefully

If so, who? _____

Name some friends or siblings that you should be influencing by your enthusiasm for the things of God.

In what specific ways can you start having this influence?

Day 4

Running Without Encumbrance (Weights), Lap #1

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Imagine yourself in Tokyo, Japan watching the 2021 Summer Olympics. You're in the grandstands as the runners are stretching and warming up for the race, wearing lightweight Under Armor shirts, track shorts and shoes, representing their respective countries. You notice a slight chuckle sweeping across the crowd. You look around to see what's going on and something strange catches your eye. It's 70° and a runner lines up at the starting line with a long-sleeved shirt, camouflage pants with bulging pockets, and black army boots. As if this is not enough, he is also wearing a backpack that's so full it could hardly be zipped. You stare in disbelief, wondering if this guy actually signed up for a race or is starting his hike up Mt. Everest!

According to 1 Corinthians 9:24, what is the goal of each runner that participates in the race? _____

In an effort to win the race, runners put away every encumbrance (restriction) to their racing movements. *Hebrews 12:1* mentions two different things that must be laid aside in order to run more effectively:

1. _____
2. _____

- Lay Aside **WEIGHTS**

We can see the detrimental effects sin has in running the race, but what does *Hebrews 12:1* mean when it tells us to “lay aside every weight”? What are these weights?

Considering the opening illustration, would you choose the guy with the backpack and army boots to win the race? _____

Why not? _____

Is there anything sinful about what the runner was wearing? _____

Perhaps you are thinking, “Hey, if the man wants to run the race with his hiking gear on, that’s up to him!” But when considering the race of our Christian life, do you want to be a runner that wins or a runner that constantly struggles because of the life choices that slow them down? Instead of only asking yourself, “Is it wrong?”, also ask yourself “Does it help me *run*?”

· *1 Corinthians 9:24-25* instructs us to “run that ye may _____” (or win!) and that we should “strive for the _____.” God doesn’t want us just to “get by!”

· *2 Corinthians 5:15* tells us that since Christ died for us, so “they which live should not live unto _____, BUT unto _____ which _____ for them, and rose again.”

When you accept Christ as your Savior, you are telling Christ that He is now your Master (Lord). If this seems like a negative thing to you, then you need to get to know your God! He is completely powerful and unconditionally loving... who would you rather have controlling your life?!

Paul says in *1 Corinthians 9:27* that running the Christian life requires you to bring your body “into _____” (under control), lest that by any means, you “should be a _____” (worthless).

Paul declined from doing anything that would slow him down spiritually or ruin someone’s view of God and the gospel message.

Fill in the blanks with the hindrances mentioned in each verse (choose from words provided) that cause you not to run the Christian race as you should.

Use the following words: Priorities, People, Pleasures, Places, Possessions

A. *Proverbs 13:20*- P_____ who encourage apathy, tempt you to sin or blaspheme God's name.

B. *Romans 14:16*- P_____ that you go to that could hurt your testimony for the Lord.

C. *1 Timothy 6:10*- P_____ that you treasure more than heavenly things

D. *Ephesians 5:16*- P_____ that are sinful or simply restrict the time you give to God.

E. *Matthew 6:33*- P_____ that are out of order

Below are a few specific applications to these principles.

Which letter (beside the references above) corresponds to the following statements?

___ Missing church to attend a sporting event

___ Going to a bar to witness

___ Having a best friend that takes God's name in vain

___ Not tithing so you can buy new clothes

___ Watching too much TV, sometimes with questionable content

Pray that the Lord will help you get rid of anything and everything that restricts your ability to run freely and live a victorious Christian life. O that you would come to the end of your life and be able to say with Paul that you have "*fought the good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith*"! (2 Timothy 4:7)

Day 5

Running Without Encumbrance, Lap #2

Yesterday, we focused on the weights that slow us down spiritually. Things that may not necessarily be bad, but don't help us run! (like a backpack and hiking boots!) Today, we'll look at the other encumbrance mentioned in Hebrews 12:1- "...lay aside every weight and the _____ which doth so easily beset us"

- Lay Aside **SIN**

Most Christians understand that sin is a major encumbrance to running the race in which God has placed us. Read the following verses and jot down the clear commands:

Romans 13:12- "_____ the works of darkness"

Colossians 3:8- "_____ " anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, etc.

Colossians 3:9- "_____ " the old man with his deeds.

1 Peter 2:1- "_____ " all malice, guile, hypocrisy, envy, evil speakings

It is not a sin to be tempted, but it is a sin to give in to the temptation.

What temptations have you given in to in the last couple weeks?

- Sinful pleasure
- Complaining
- Selfishness
- Rebellion to authority
- Unkind words
- Self-pity
- Others? _____

It is important for every believer to realize that in the race of life we will constantly face the struggle of the weight of battling sin. The Apostle Paul himself constantly faced this battle.

Read Romans 7:21-25

Was Paul *living* in sin or *struggling* with sin? _____

According to verse 21, what happened when Paul attempted to do good?

Though some temptations may be unavoidable, some temptations could be avoided by having boundaries and listening to wise counsel. So often we ignore the red flags and wisdom that could have prevented us from being in the place of temptation that led us to the sin. Consider the following passages:

Matthew 26:41 tells us “_____ [be cautious] and _____, that ye enter _____ into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the _____ is weak.”

Proverbs 22:3 says that a “_____ man _____ the evil, and _____ himself; but the simple pass on, and are _____.”

Matthew 6:13 is part of the Lord’s prayer where He instructs them to pray, “And lead us not into _____, but _____ us from evil...”

If there’s a temptation you seem to continue to struggle with, think of a way you could avoid the scenarios that lead you to the temptation and triggers that sin. What sin do you keep struggling with? _____

What practical step could you take to avoid being in a place of temptation for that sin? _____

You probably need the accountability of a parent or mentor to help you with this! You won’t regret choosing to lay aside sin so you can run the race more victoriously!

Paul was an individual that was used by God and constantly battled his flesh, but he never gave up the fight!

Read 2 Timothy 4:6-8. What did Paul say at the conclusion of his life?

“I have _____ a good fight, I have _____ my
_____, I have kept the _____”

Like Paul we should never stop running/fighting in the race of life until that day when we see Jesus face to face. Then, and only then, will our race be complete and we will receive our ultimate prize of dwelling with Christ forever and knowing Him perfectly!

Keep Running the Race! Never Give Up!