

5 Devotionals to

Encourage

Your Ministry Team

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Devotionals are valuable tools for encouraging the members of your team to embrace your ministry's vision as well as their own personal calling to fulfill the gospel. Use these devotionals to inspire and encourage during your next team meeting.

Devotional #1 Have Courage, Even If You Don't Have Confidence

Courage and confidence are not the same thing, but one gains confidence when one exercises courage. In our spiritual lives, lots of us simply wait for feelings of confidence, before we exercise courage. The Bible shows us countless examples of those who had no confidence in the flesh, but, they mustered up their courage and did what brave believers do - step out!!

Do you think Abraham felt confident when he climbed Mt. Moriah with no sacrifice? Did Jacobed feel totally confident when she laid her sweet baby Moses in a basket to float down the river? We can all identify with how grown-up Moses wore his own lack of confidence on his sleeve when God asked him to confront Pharaoh - he stuttered his way through all his insecurities.

God doesn't require confidence. He only asks for courage.

If we only wait for a feeling of confidence to settle in before we step out, we can get into a rut and grow stagnant in our walk of faith. We must be willing to get out of our comfort zone. When we do, we find amazing confidence. Yes, a confidence in God and in His promises.

When I step out and trust Him, kiss my comfort-zones goodbye, then I gain confidence. And so will you! Sisters, God did not give us the spirit of timidity. No, He promised us that we can do all things through Christ. (Phil 4:13)

So step out! Don't let a minor identity crisis keep you from walking by faith. Don't wait to feel confident in order to exercise courage. God has given you all you need - live like it!

Key Verse: For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5: 7 NASB

Devotional #2 Give Honor to the Player

As you reflect on your role in women's ministry, consider yourself as a musical instrument. God is the masterful player. Your role and responsibilities may place you in the limelight. Perhaps, you are the person behind the scenes - seldom seen or heard.

Regardless of where you serve or how much (or little) attention you might receive, remember, you and I are the guitar. God is the author and musician. He is the player of the song. We are instruments to be strummed as He pleases and for His glory and not our own.

We are the instruments He plays

We are the songs He loves to sing,

With His skillful, gentle ways

Each song becomes a lovely thing.

So give honor to the Player

For He plays a blessed song,

To applaud this old guitar

Is simply not where praise belongs,

Praise the Author of the song.

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**Key Verse: Be exalted above the heavens, Oh God; Let Your glory be above all the earth.
Psalm 57:11 NASB**

Devotional #3 Does Meek Mean Weak?

Meek sounds a lot like weak. Doesn't it. A doormat. A wimp. Who wants to be weak and powerless?

Meek and Mighty

When the Old and New Testaments were written, meekness was a greatly desired virtue. In the Near East and ancient Greco-Roman world, it was not uncommon for a king to describe himself as meek and mighty in the same sentence.

Whatever contemporary culture may say, meekness is neither weakness nor passivity. It's twofold action: the vigorous embracing of life's circumstances and the ability to wisely see a bigger picture. Meekness is personal strength submitted to Ultimate Strength...God.

Superman in a Skirt

The meek woman is not a human mouse who is afflicted with a sense of her own inferiority. In fact, she may be as bold as a lion and as strong as Superman in a skirt, but she has stopped being fooled about herself. As A. W. Tozer puts it, he has accepted God's estimate of his own life.

Look at J. B. Phillips' paraphrase of Paul's words: "Don't cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance, but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given you all." (Rom. 12:3-4) The truly meek woman is one who rightly perceives herself in light of her relationship with her God.

Tamed and Submitted

When the word "meek" is applied to animals it's translated "tame." A tame stallion isn't weak. He's the picture of strength under control. In fact, his strength is maximized by his submission to his bridle. Without meekness, his strength and will would be destructive. The untamed stallion runs through fields, chases mares, and fights with other stallions. Tamed and submitted to bit and bridle though, the stallion races for great prizes, leads charges in battle, rounds up cattle, bears vital messages and carries riders into canyons and up high ridges. With meekness he's useful, without meekness, his great potential and strength are wasted.

Without meekness, our strength and potential are wasted also. But when we're meek, when we submit our strength to God, we become useful. Even our weaknesses are harnessed and made strong under submission to God. So, does meek mean weak? Far from it! The most powerful, Christ-like and wise choice you can make today is to be meek. In doing so, your life becomes a place for God's strength to shine.

Key Verse: Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Matthew 5:5 NIV

Devotional #4 Be An Overcomer

In early 1992, some remarkable passengers were cast overboard during a fierce storm in the North Pacific. According to Fox News, the brave little duckies began life in a Chinese factory and were being shipped to the U.S. when three 40-foot containers were washed overboard! Two-thirds of the castaways drifted south through the tropics, landing months later on the shores of Indonesia, Australia and South America. But 10,000 of the tenacious tub toys floated north and by the end of that year were off Alaska and heading back westward. On their journey, many of the little fellas were stranded in circulating currents, lots were blown ashore and some unfortunates were crushed by icebergs... It's tough being a little duckie in a big ocean!

Oceanographers predicted they would spend years trapped in the Arctic ice moving at the rate of only one mile a day and eventually land on the shores of Great Britain. By the time the survivors they landed, they would be bleached white by the sun and salt, ragged and torn, and certainly deteriorated. I assume the toys washed ashore as predicted and I bet those miniature mariners may lack their former luster. They are probably hardened and weathered. They may be less useful than when they were first created. But they are what we want to be... overcomers!

We don't really know where the current of God's plan will take us. Sometimes, like those water logged warriors, we find ourselves just trying to keep our heads above water when life's storms begin to roll. Sometimes our journey feels long, goes slowly and lands us on foreign shores.

So what does it mean to overcome? The, Greek, translation for the word overcome in 1 John 5:4 is "nikao" or "nikawv" which means to come off victorious.

To describe a Christ Follower as an "overcomer" is not to say they win every battle in life but to say they hold fast to their faith, even unto death. An overcomer endures temptations and perseveres through trial and persecutions. The one who rides the waves of this life, holding firm to their faith are those who are unwilling to quit. Overcomers persevere no matter what the journey is like. They are described in the book of Revelation this way, "And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death." (Rev. 12:11)

Someday we too will finally arrive on a distant shore and what matters is not how difficult the journey, but how beautiful the shore. Our victory isn't in eliminating the adversity; our victory is in faithfully finishing the journey. For those who overcome, a crown of life is promised. So, if you feel as if you are going under, being tossed about or just trying to keep your head above water... ride the waves, my friend. The tumult of your travels here cannot compare with the triumph of your arrival in Heaven someday. You will trade in your weary, worn, weathered sojourning suit for a glittering crown.

Key Verse: Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. James 1:12 ESV

Devotional #5 The Calling of Love

“Love makes the world go round!” “What the world needs now is love sweet love!” Love is everywhere on the radio, in commercials and it's the subject of talk shows, blogs and the plot of movies.

More importantly, it's the first fruit of the Spirit so let's explore what biblical love really is. Love appears in Scripture over 500 times! That's a whole lotta love! Do you know where love first appears in Scripture?

It isn't in the Garden of Eden. God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day and had sweet fellowship with them, but the word *love* doesn't appear. Adam and Eve consummated their marriage; but the word *love* wasn't used. Noah was faithful to God and God preserved him; but the word *love* doesn't appear in the amazing account. God made a covenant with Abraham and showed compassion to Lot by rescuing him from Sodom, but *love* is never mentioned in the telling of those stories.

The first place *love* appears is in Genesis 22 as Abraham is told to climb a mountain. God said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” (Gen. 22:2)

The first time *love* appears in Scripture, it appears in the context of sacrifice. It serves as a foreshadowing of God's love demonstrated through Christ. God's only Son, the Son He loves, He sacrificed for me and you. Love is sacrifice. Love isn't simply a feeling, it's an act. Love is obedience. It's not merely a sentiment. Love costs deeply so others gain undeservedly. As David Wilkerson penned, “Love is not something you feel. It's something you do.”

How amazing is our God?! How beautiful that He would introduce the word *love* on a mountain of sacrifice so we would see clearly what it really means. Love means we sacrifice to be patient and kind.

Love calls us to let go of envy and forego boasting. Climbing *love's* mountain means we forfeit our pride and reject any impulse to be self-seeking. Love surrenders the right to be angry and throws aside any record of wrongs that we may have scribbled on our way trudging up the peak.

Love doesn't enjoy evil but celebrates truth every obedient step of the way. It protects, even when it's costly; trusts, even when it's risky; hopes and perseveres until what once seemed like sacrifice is now privilege. That is love. That is our God — the One who taught us the truest meaning of love on Mount Calvary.

May we be willing to climb that mountain and learn love.

Key Verse: Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. John 15:13-14 NASB

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