

**The Summer Devotional Series is written by a variety of different Jacob's Well staff members, overseers and leaders, based on their real-world experiences. May the broad perspective and style minister to you throughout these summer months! You can also find the Summer Devotionals on our website [jacobswellchurch.church](http://jacobswellchurch.church).**

### **Monday, July 1st**

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."* Psalm 119:105

Years ago, I found myself in a deep jungle....literally. Evening descends quickly in the jungle. Within minutes you no longer have sufficient light to navigate beyond a yard or two ahead. Black-out effect induces a tremor of concern as I can no longer see the leader on the path. Without a light source to guide, imagination creates multiple dangers. In truth, without my powerful flashlight my feet would have stumbled and strayed off the path and missed twists and turns of the path sending me in the wrong direction. That journey out of the jungle gave fresh perspective of Psalm 119:105.

In what ways does God's word illuminate?

What in your life lacks light?

How might the Holy Spirit reveal light to your path?

Read John 1:1-5. Ask God to reveal where in your life His life can bring light.  
Spend some moments in silence with Him.

### **Tuesday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>** (Contributed by Whitney Berthiaume)

*"He must increase, but I must decrease."* John 3:30

*"This is how we know we are in Him: Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did."* 1 John 2:6

Ravi Zacharias says, "Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay."

I challenge myself with these questions when I am faced with a choice to make:

What is God offering in place of what I am wanting right now?

Am I walking as Jesus walked?

Will this make me more like Christ or less like Him?

Will this help me get more healthy spiritually, emotionally, and physically?

Would the most spiritually mature person I know think this is a good choice?

Today, write down the top five biggest decisions you are faced with. Pray that God will speak his protective voice over you and help you know the difference between the truth you know and the lies you are believing.

### **Wednesday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>** (Contributed by Diana Peterson)

Recently our kids were all home. Everyone had errands, and we were meeting up for coffee. My youngest son and I finished early and had about an hour till we had to meet everyone. Looking at the clock, I said we might as well just go to the coffee shop early and get a table. He gave me a questioning look and asked if we should stop by the house for him to get his earbuds. I asked why he needed them, and he said, "So I can listen to a podcast while you're reading." I said I had no book. He glanced over and said, "Then what will we do for that long?" I said I thought we could just talk and catch up. Now with a worried look, he asked me what we could possibly talk about for an hour, since we did not have a lot of common interests. I just smiled, but he didn't look too convinced. We ended up having a great conversation.

I was amused and surprised he thought we could not find enough to discuss for an hour, but then I was reminded I do the same with God. Spending 15 minutes in prayer praising Him and presenting requests is easy, but the thought of an hour alone with Him causes some questions. What will we talk about? God already knows everything; does He really want me to repeat it all back to Him? And there is the worry—what if He asks me to do something that makes me uncomfortable? It's easier to plug into the busyness and go about my day.

God is a father who wants to spend time with His children. He has things he wants us to learn, and He enjoys hearing about our successes and failures.

*"For I know the plans I have for you . . . Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."* Jeremiah 29:11-13

*Heavenly Father, I want to enjoy time in conversation with You. I know you are interested in every aspect of my life, and I have a lot to learn from you. Help me to set aside time every week to spend catching up on life with You. Amen.*

### **Thursday, July 4<sup>th</sup>** (Contributed by Sean Kaiser)

*"<sup>27</sup> Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit,<sup>[e]</sup> striving together as one for the faith of the gospel <sup>28</sup> without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. <sup>29</sup> For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, <sup>30</sup> since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have."* Philippians 1:27-30

What does it mean to "conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel...?"

What do you see in the passage that might help define this?

What does verse 28 mean? Why is it important to recognize both aspects – belief with suffering?

What do you think the kind of suffering Paul is talking about means for us today?

What might God be inviting you to start, stop or continue doing? How is He meeting you today in this passage?

**Friday, July 5<sup>th</sup>** (Contributed by Laura Garry)

Typically, a plant's roots live below the surface of the ground, carrying nourishment to the plant by absorbing water and minerals from the soil.

*"<sup>15</sup> See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;"* Hebrews 12:15

In the life of a Christian, the root of bitterness can spring up below the surface of the soul. Rather than providing nourishment, the root of bitterness cultivates turmoil in the life of the follower of Christ and works to produce discord in every life they touch.

How have you seen the root of bitterness spring up in your life? What were the circumstances?

Each day we face situations in which bitterness has an opportunity to take root. It may come with the feeling we have not been understood, or that others have marginalized us in one way or another. If we allow bitterness to grow, we will spread its' poison. Bitterness is contagious and does not reflect the character of Christ.

In the moments we are tempted to let the root of bitterness take hold, we must invite the Holy Spirit into the situation. In God's Presence, we will not fail to obtain the grace of God and to learn to give His grace to others. The Holy Spirit will give us the strength to work through the process of forgiveness, as we remember we have been forgiven in Christ.

Consider Ephesians 4:31-32:

*"<sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."*

Maybe you realize today, the root of bitterness has set itself hard in your soul. You can feel its roots tightly entwined around your heart. Each day, as you depend on the Holy Spirit, starve the root of bitterness. Force it to loosen its grip through prayer and the process of forgiveness.

*Father, remind me of the forgiveness I have received in Your Son. Holy Spirit work to unroot the bitterness I have allowed to take root in my life. I realize it is slowly poisoning me and I see how it is at work to damage everyone around me. Untangle the roots of bitterness that have anchored themselves around my heart.*



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