



Made to Love

The Binder Co. Devotionals September 2019

www.emilyfurda.com/thebinderco

*Emily
Furda*

Welcome to The Binder Co. Devotionals, a free, monthly, printable eBook for women of all ages who desire to grow deeper in God's Word on a daily basis.

About The Binder Co. Devotionals

Every aspect of The Binder Co. is run by volunteers. Once a month, we release a free printable eBook with daily devotionals, corresponding scriptures, and daily challenges to help you put your faith into action. These daily devotionals are free to read, download, and print. You can print each eBook and place it in a three ring binder or use an eReader. If you use a digital copy, be sure to have a journal or notebook handy. You can use them for yourself, your small group, friend group, or church group! You can access the free archives of eBooks at emilyfurda.com/thebinderco and in our Facebook Group.

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Write for us: Most months we accept submissions from guest writers. To learn how you can be a guest writer, visit our Facebook Group. You don't need to be a blogger or author to submit. It's open to any woman from teenagers and up.

A Note From the Director

When I was 11 years old, my worship dance teacher gave all of the dancers a small hot pink booklet of devotionals for Christmas. That was my first devotional, and I fell in love with studying God's word and learning how to apply it to my life. I've rarely been without a daily devotional since then.

The Binder Co. Devotionals (originally called Her Binder Project) was started in 2014 by Morgan Harper Nichols. It has grown more than anyone could imagine. You can learn more about Morgan at morganharpnichols.com. I started as a writer in 2016. This ministry and the women who read every day captured my heart. The more I became involved as a writer, editor, and project manager, the more it became a part of my heart.

In 2018, Morgan asked me if she could give me The Binder Co. Devotionals. I was speechless, which rarely happens. It was not an easy decision for either of us or one made lightly. My joy comes when I see women come alive as they study. I'm learning along with you. Today, thousands of women are joining this project each month, and I am so grateful for each one of you!

-Emily Furda Director, Editor In Chief emilyfurda.com instagram.com/emilyfurda

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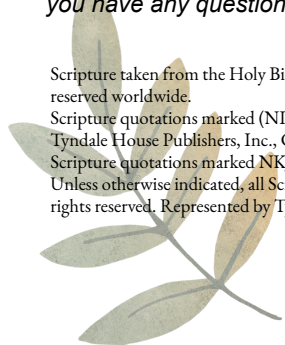
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Made to Love: The Binder Co. Devotionals September 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 Matthew 22:37-39 What happens in our lives when we focus on loving God with our whole heart instead of just doing the right things? Journal your thoughts.</p>	<p>2 1 John 4:19 Listen to "The God I Know" by Love & the Outcome. youtu.be/Px_aCjR5ZFZA</p>	<p>3 Matthew 6:33 Write out today's Scripture in your own words.</p>	<p>4 Jeremiah 33:2-3 Why does God want you to learn how He speaks to you? Journal your thoughts, and journal about ways you know He speaks to you.</p>	<p>5 Mark 8:34-38 Listen to "Lose My Soul" by TobyMac feat. Kirk Franklin & Mandisa. youtu.be/coHKdhAZ9hU</p>	<p>6 Colossians 3:23 Make a list of tasks you do on a regular basis that you dismiss as unimportant. How does realizing they can be an act of worship change your opinion of them? Journal your thoughts.</p>	<p>7 Lamentations 3 See today's devotional for today's daily challenge.</p>
<p>8 John 1:3 How does seeing what God has created draw you closer to Him? Journal your thoughts, and during the week write down things you see that He made. At the end, journal about how it changes you.</p>	<p>9 Psalms 9:1 Write or make God a Thank You Note telling Him why you love Him and what you're thankful for that He has done or is doing for you. Be specific. Think of something personal or even seemingly small.</p>	<p>10 Hosea 6:6 Listen to "How He Loves" by John Mark McMillan, youtu.be/bLvggqZvLZk and journal about what it means to you to love God with all of your heart.</p>	<p>11 Ephesians 3:16-19 Why is it important to love yourself? Do you love yourself, why or why not? If you could grasp how much God loves you, how would it change how you love yourself? Journal your thoughts.</p>	<p>12 Luke 12:24 Write today's Scripture in your own words.</p>	<p>13 Micah 7:18-20 Listen to "Drops in the Ocean" by Hawk Nelson. youtu.be/bZH13wFGffg</p>	<p>14 Psalms 23 Make a list of at least 15 things that refresh you. Then, every day for the next week, do at least one thing on your list. If you need to, write it in your schedule or make a note to do it as a reminder.</p>
<p>15 2 Corinthians 12:9 Listen to "I'm Not Alright" by Sanctus Real. youtu.be/E5oY2oYKHFY</p>	<p>16 Psalms 8:3-5 Write today's Scripture in your own words. Then, journal about how it changes your perspective on loving yourself.</p>	<p>17 Proverbs 31:30 Listen to "Control" by Tenth Avenue North. youtu.be/kFfztu8-bBQ</p>	<p>18 Psalms 103:13-14 Write out today's Scripture in your own words or memorize it. How does it impact your view of yourself? Journal your thoughts.</p>	<p>19 Malachi 3:16-18 Listen to "Remind Me who I Am" by Jason Gray. youtu.be/QSIVjiY8Ou8</p>	<p>20 Zephaniah 3:17 How has your view of loving yourself changed over these last ten days? Are you able to love yourself more? Journal your thoughts.</p>	<p>21 1 John 4:10-12 Listen to "Live Like That" by Sidewalk Prophets. youtu.be/GfosSggwQSO</p>
<p>22 John 17:25-26 How does knowing God is the one who enables you to love impact how you feel about loving others? Journal your thoughts.</p>	<p>23 Isaiah 53 What can you do to show someone, even a stranger, that she matters today? Keep your eyes open for an opportunity and do it.</p>	<p>24 Romans 12:18 Write out today's scripture in your own words. Also, journal and pray over your friendships. Are there any where you need to ask for forgiveness or give someone space?</p>	<p>25 Galatians 6:2 What do you think about receiving love as a way to show love? Do you have a hard time knowing how to show or receive love? If you do, why is that the case? Journal your thoughts.</p>	<p>26 Colossians 3:12-14 Listen to "Forgiveness" by TobyMac feat. Lecrae with Nirva Ready. youtu.be/xfkhqpl81NA ..</p>	<p>27 Matthew 5:44 How can you love someone who has deeply wounded you? Does loving enemies always mean having a relationship? Journal your thoughts and pray, asking God what He wants to show you about loving enemies.</p>	<p>28 Matthew 5:14-16 Listen to "Human" by Natalie Grant. youtu.be/ZCljrxXWNYU</p>
<p>29 Psalms 71:14-18 Do you feel as if you can use parts of your story encourage others? Journal your thoughts and pray, asking God to show you how He wants you to use your story to show love.</p>	<p>30 Matthew 11:28-30 Write out this month's this month's theme verse, Matthew 22:37-39, in your own words. Also, listen to "Made to Love" by TobyMac. youtu.be/cFJ5qCmvPkY</p>					

Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'
Matthew 22:37-39 NIV



Sunday, September 1 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Matthew 22:37-39

When Jesus came, the Jewish people were under the soul crushing weight of commandments and rules dictating their every action, including what they could eat, what they could wear, and how many steps they could walk on the Sabbath. It was a heavy burden to show their love for God. For some, it likely even made it difficult or impossible to even love God.

Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was. What He said both simplified everything and made it much harder at the same time.

Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Matthew 22:37-39 NIV

This month, we'll be focusing on all three parts of who we are to love: God, others, and ourselves. For the first part of this month, we'll be talking about what it means to love God with all of our heart, soul and mind and how we can do that. In this verse, "heart" can mean the very center of who we are, "soul" refers to our identity or who we are as a person, and "mind" refers to our thoughts.

In just a few sentences Jesus took away the burden of perfection. The focus is no longer on what we do; it's about who we are and who we love. God is calling each of us to a deep relationship with Him. When we love God with all of our heart, the rest of our life changes as well. We live our lives naturally showing how we love God. He wants what we do to not come from obligation but to come from a deep unshakable love for Him that consumes every part of us. The question is, will we simply go through the motions doing the right things, or will we choose to give Him every part of who we are?

Daily Challenge

What happens in our lives when we focus on loving God with our whole heart instead of just doing the right things? Journal your thoughts.

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Monday, September 2 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read 1 John 4:19

Yesterday, we talked about how God wants us to love Him with everything we are, but that leads to a question: Why should we love God? If we try to somehow make ourselves love Him, at best it feels like one more obligation we have to live up to, and that's the exact opposite of what Jesus was teaching.

Today's verse simplifies it all. Loving God is a natural response to the immense love He gives us. When we experience His love, we can't help but love Him in return. On days when all is going well experiencing His love feels easy, but what about the average days when we're just going about our normal routine. What about the days when we don't know how to make it through because our pain is so great?

It's in those days we must remember to look for His love. He is constantly showing us His love, we just often miss it. When we're lying awake at night because we can't sleep, He's there with beautiful moonlit sky. When we're running late and our hands are full, He's there when a stranger holds the door for us. When we're stuck in traffic or the carpool line, He's there when an encouraging song comes on the radio.

The more we look for Him, the more we will find Him, and the more we will know His love for us. When that happens, loving Him in return will come effortlessly.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "The God I Know" by Love & the Outcome.
youtu.be/Px_aCjR5ZFA

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Tuesday, September 3 2019

Devotional written by Danielle Nicole
Read Matthew 6:33

We all have hopes and dreams. While it can be easy to dream up all these ideas, doing them isn't always as simple. We will run into dead ends, see doors close, and become low on strength. We need to seek God's kingdom first and love Him more than anything we hope or dream about, so we may ask Him for help on this journey.

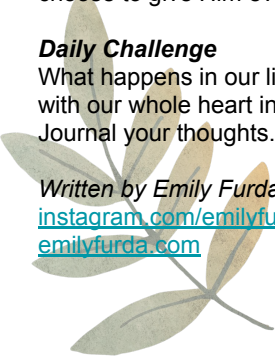
Whether we are trying to start a new goal, work towards a new dream, or change something in our lives, when we make God first and love Him more than what we're trying to achieve, we will see more growth and more answered prayers than we would without Him. In today's scripture we are told that if we seek His kingdom first, we will be given the things we need. In every situation and season we walk through, this truth will not fail us. Putting God first everything will surely change the outcome in whatever we are doing.

Not only will we see dreams become reality, and goals reached, but having God a part of our plans will help us see how our plans can be a part of His glory. Our eyes will be opened to how we can use these dreams to change our world.

Daily Challenge

Write out today's Scripture in your own words.

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Wednesday, September 4 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Jeremiah 33-2-3

Have you ever heard someone talking, and even though you couldn't see her, you knew exactly who was speaking? When you take time to get to know someone, you learn the tiny nuances of how she communicates. When you love someone, you make it a point to learn how she communicates from the tone in her voice to the way she raises her eyebrows. The same is true in your relationship with God. While you might not be able to audibly hear His voice or physically see His body language, he has a unique way of speaking to you.

Hearing His voice is something you may spend your entire lives learning, but it begins by loving Him enough to spend time with Him. That includes prayer, worship, and reading Scripture. Sometimes, God can seem far away but listen for His voice. It might not be audible, but you may feel a little nudge inside. You may be worried about something, and a song comes on the radio reminding you of how God cares for you. When you're praying about a decision often something just seems to feel right in a quiet, unexplainable way about making a certain choice even if logically it doesn't make sense.

When we keep seeking God because we love Him, God will keep lovingly speaking to us in ways we can understand. The more time we spend intentionally learning how He speaks, the easier it will be to hear Him.

God longs to speak to each of us individually every day. You are capable of knowing what God is speaking to you. Be intentional about learning how He speaks to you, and you will hear His voice.

Daily Challenge

Why does God want you to learn how He speaks to you? Journal your thoughts, and journal about ways you know He speaks to you.

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Thursday, September 5 2019

Devotional written by Danielle Nicole
Read Mark 8:34-38

Who we love and what we love affects our lives. We can choose to love God more than anything else, or we can choose to love the things of this world. We can easily get into the habit of putting things or people in His place. With all of the distractions that our world brings, we need to remember to keep God our focus and our first love. We need to keep Him as our dwelling place.

Some of the biggest distractions our world puts in front of us are money, jobs, clothes, people, relationships, and other people's opinions. These easily take our focus away from God. We might worry about not having enough of these things or fear what other people are thinking about us. When these thoughts come to our minds, we shouldn't allow them to be our main concerns. God has already told us that He will provide all we need.

Choosing to make God your focus requires you to love Him above the things of this world. It means to love Him with all of who you are and to desire to make Him first. It may mean pushing aside many distractions, but we will never be satisfied with the world. We will only be satisfied with Him.

This world is only temporary. It will pass away, along with everything in it, but God lives forever. If you choose to love God above all other things, then you will live in His dwelling place. Making God your first love changes your life, for He will become first in everything you do.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "Lose My Soul" by TobyMac feat. Kirk Franklin & Mandisa. youtu.be/coHKdhAZ9hU

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Friday, September 6 2019

Devotional written by Danielle Nicole
Read Colossians 3:23

We can use our everyday lives to worship God and demonstrate our love for Him. Maybe you're thinking about how you don't do the most interesting things, or your life just isn't good enough to be a way to worship. Well, in today's scripture we are told that whatever we do we should work at it as if we were working for Him. When we are doing our everyday tasks and jobs, we can be doing it for God. In this way, we are using our lives as a way to worship.

When you are working at your tasks and jobs, you must work at it with all your heart. It's not simply doing the chore or activity that brings honour and worship to God, but doing it with a good attitude, and without complaining. It's then you are wholeheartedly and lovingly worshipping through your work.

With everything you do, you can be doing it for God. You don't have to have the most fascinating job to worship, and you don't have to be the busiest person you know. You can be cleaning your house, going for a walk, or doing your job and honour God with worship while doing it. It's not about what you are doing but about your heart while you do it.

So, know it doesn't matter how small the job you're doing is, when you are wholeheartedly, doing it for God, it's worship. It's not about the task, but about your attitude and heart.

Daily Challenge

Make a list of tasks you do on a regular basis that you dismiss as unimportant. They could be things such as packing kids' lunches, holding a door for someone, or making it a point to compliment someone. How does realizing these things can be done as a loving act of worship change your opinion of them? Journal your thoughts.

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Saturday, September 7 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Lamentations 3

What have you learned about being made to love this week?
Journal, draw, write a poem, or write a prayer about it below.

Sometimes, life is more painful than we could imagine. It can feel as if God is out to destroy us instead of living us. When it feels as if God isn't loving towards us, it's naturally hard to feel like loving God. It often feels taboo to admit you don't want to love God or even to admit you question if you love God, but we all have moments when we feel like that.

In today's scripture Jeremiah was passionately lamenting what happened to him and how he felt. This wasn't some scripted prayer with walled off emotions. He said exactly what was on his mind without holding back.

Then, he stopped. He knew what he had been through, and what he was still going through. Even in the overwhelming heartache, he knew there was more. Jeremiah said this:

Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. Lamentations 3:21-22 NIV

Jeremiah spent 20 emotional verses detailing the anguish he was in, then he was able to remember the love God has for him. His perspective changed. Yes, horrible things happened to Jeremiah, but he was able to see God's loving presence in it all.

If the great prophet Jeremiah can passionately pour out his anger and pain, so can we. Sometimes, we just need to get it out. We don't always even know what we're feeling until we start to talk or journal. Once we do, once we allow ourselves to remember and feel the pain, we find healing. We remember God does love us and is always caring for us. We're able to love Him even in the pain. Loving God, even in the middle of overwhelming pain, is a sweet sacrificial kind of love binding us even closer to His ever-present. loving care.

Daily Challenge

Can you relate to the kind of emotion Jeremiah felt? If you feel if you feel ready, set aside time to journal and let out your feelings. You can take time if you're not ready. It may not happen all in one day. Then, ask God to show you what you can remember about Him to give you hope and a renewed love for Him. Also, listen to "To Know You" by Nichole Nordeman. youtu.be/qB-U8KsayxE

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Sunday, September 8 2019

Devotional written by Diane Marie
Read John 1:3

Consider the universe; it stretches far beyond what we can see. God has placed every planet, moon, and star exactly where He wants it to be. Consider the earth and all that comes from it. He made copper and iron, silver and gold, diamonds and rubies, water, and air. He made every living thing, from single-celled amoebas to His most beloved creation, you.

Of course, we know God made everything, but how often do we take it for granted? How often do we look around us but fail to see the wonder of all that He has made?

If you take a few minutes every day just to think about God's wondrous creation, worshiping Him as you do, you will find that you start to see things differently. Every time you take notice of His glorious work, you will find that you are drawn even closer to Him and your love for God will grow.

Consider, even, the miracle that is you, for you are fearfully and wonderfully made. Nothing exists apart from Him. His fingerprints are everywhere. He is maker of all things!

Daily Challenge

How does taking noticing God has created draw you closer to Him and make your love for Him grow? Journal your thoughts, and throughout the week write down things you see that He made. At the end of the week, journal about how this changed you.

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Monday, September 9 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Psalm 9:1

When a friend does something nice for us or gives us a present, we naturally thank her. Often, we talk about it to our other friends or post about it on social media. We sometimes even send a thank you note, not only to say "thank you" but to also say why her gift means something to us. We're excited because she loves us, and she showed it to us in a meaningful way.

God does even better things for us, but we often don't take time to recognize it. Sometimes, we tell God we love Him or say a general "thank you", but we often don't stop to tell Him why we love Him. We say we're thankful for God, but why? What has He done for us to show His love in a way that is unique to each of us?

Remember, God isn't after some grand gesture from you to show your love and thankfulness for what He does in your life. Think of how a child draws a barely recognizable picture and gives it to someone she loves. It is a priceless gift because it's a pure expression of love. That kind of simple, but heartfelt expression is what God wants from you too. It doesn't have to be perfect. It just has to come from your heart.

Daily Challenge

Write or make God a Thank You Note telling Him why you love Him and what you're thankful for that He has done or is doing for you. Be specific. Think of something personal or even seemingly small. You can write a letter, write a poem, draw something, or anything you can think of. If you're stuck for an idea, think about what you would do if you were a little girl and had no pressure to make it "acceptable." Then, do that.

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Tuesday, September 10 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Hosea 6:6

As we've learned about loving God, we've seen it isn't about what we do or say. It's about why we do it. God is after our hearts. The kind of love God desires from us requires everything we are. Like everything else, God doesn't ask something from us because He's on a power trip. He also wants to give us something. Today's verse tells us:

I want you to show love, not offer sacrifices. I want you to know me more than I want burnt offerings. Hosea 6:6 NLT

The almighty, all powerful God, who created the universe, wants you to know Him. He wants a personal relationship with you. He wants to spend time with you just like you'd spend time with a friend. He sees you as an individual. Even in the middle of a crowded sea of people, He sees you.

When we begin to grasp even a little of how much we mean to God, loving Him comes naturally. As we get to know God, and experience his love for us, we naturally love Him more.

Every day, from now until eternity, is a chance to experience God's limitless love for you.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "How He Loves" by John Mark McMillan, youtu.be/bLvgggZvLZk and journal about what it means to you to love God with all of your heart.

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Wednesday, September 11 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Ephesians 3:16-19

Today we start a brand-new section about love: loving ourselves. At first it may seem out of order to talk about loving ourselves before we talk about loving others. It's often seen as selfish when we choose to do something for us, but Jesus made it clear in our theme verse that we are to love ourselves. In just a few words He explained why.

“Love your neighbor as yourself.” Matthew 22:39 NIV

The only way we can love others is if we love ourselves. If we're honest, loving ourselves is hard at times. For some of us, we may have never fully loved ourselves. We put up scriptures, make playlists, and do all we can think of to remind us to love ourselves, but we can't do it on our own.

God sees us and knows all of our weaknesses and frailties, yet He loves us anyway. In today's scripture, Paul prayed that the people in Ephesus would be able to grasp just how much God loved them. When we accept God's unconditional love for us, it's easy to love ourselves the same way.

Daily Challenge

Why is it important to love yourself? Do you love yourself, why or why not? If you could grasp how much God loves you, how would it change how you love yourself? Journal your thoughts.

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Thursday, September 12 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Luke 12:24

Never confuse your perception of yourself with the mystery that you really are accepted." (Brennan Manning, The Ragamuffin Gospel)

How do you perceive yourself? What kinds of thoughts do you whisper to yourself when no one is listening? Are you thinking about how much God loves you and all the amazing things He sees in you, or are you berating yourself with a list of reasons why you'll never measure up? Do you want to move forward, try something new, or even express your thoughts, but feel like you can't?

Many times, we don't need others to make hold us back or make us feel inferior. We do an amazing job at that all by ourselves. Often, our perceptions of ourselves don't line up with how God sees us. Today's reading tells us:

Look at the ravens. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds! Luke 12:24 NLT

How does that verse line up with what you think about yourself? Do you think you're valuable? You are loved by God and are allowed to love yourself. Even on the days you feel forgotten, you're not.

You are His precious, beloved creation. There is no exception, no matter what you think about yourself. You are free to love yourself because God loves you God. He made you a one of a kind creation kind because this world needs you. You belong here.

Daily Challenge

Write today's Scripture in your own words.

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Friday, September 13 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Micah 7:18-20

If you've ever tried to skip rocks into a lake, you realized how, even though they felt big in your hand, they were small compared to the vastness of water. They quickly disappeared beneath the surface never to be seen again.

How often do we carry weights with us that feel like those rocks? For some reason, even when we ask for forgiveness, we have a hard time believing we have received it from Jesus. We hold onto shame like rocks. One by one, those rocks both small and big, that we hold on to cause us to sink. Instead of swimming in the ocean of God's love and loving ourselves, we're drowning in self-loathing.

Today's reading tells us God takes our sins and throws them into the sea. He wants to be the living water that washes away all the dead weight we're carrying. You're not meant to hold onto those rocks weighing you down. He's calling to you today, asking you to hand Him not just your sin, but also the shame you're carrying. No matter how heavy your shame seems, He wants to throw it so far away that it can never be found again. Dive deep into the ocean of God's forgiveness. You're meant to let Him love you and to love yourself.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "Drops in the Ocean" by Hawk Nelson.
<https://youtu.be/bZH13wFGffg>

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Saturday, September 14 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Psalm 23

What have you learned about being made to love this week?
Journal, draw, write a poem, or write a prayer about it below.

When it comes to loving ourselves, we often fail to allow ourselves time to rest. Sometimes all we see are deadlines, dirty dishes, and others who depends on us. We forget that we also to ourselves. We need to allow ourselves time to be cared for. Somehow, we often mistake self-care as selfish, but it couldn't be farther from the truth.

Psalm 23 show us the way a shepherd cares for his sheep and how God cares for us. During biblical times, sheep were kept outside and had to move from field to field to find rest and nourishment. Many times, the paths from one resting place to another were filled with danger.

Often, on the journey of our lives, the path feels narrow, rocky, and we never know what kind of predator is lurking in the shadows. Just like sheep, we have a Shepherd who looks after us. He cares for us on our journey, and part of caring for us is making sure we can rest.

The shepherd knows sheep need a safe spacious place to rest. A green field provides food, a safe and soft place to rest, and even ground where they can walk without fear of what's hiding in the shadows. When Psalm 23 was written, shepherds spent every moment with their sheep, they even slept where the sheep slept. A shepherd could lovingly tend to his sheep better when they had a safe place to rest.

Sheep are also easily scared, much like we are. They cannot drink from swift moving water. They need calm water and a calm place to rest, eat, and sleep for survival. So, a spacious field and still water not only physically sustains them, but also meets their emotional needs.

Taking care of ourselves and looking for the open fields and serene water that refresh us are vital for all parts of us, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Our bodies need rest and so do our minds. We also need time to spend in the presence of our Shepherd where he can lovingly tend to us. When we ignore these parts of our lives, we become weary, anxious, angry, and unable to be even a fraction of who God made us to be.

When life takes us through unsteady paths filled with danger, we can be sure our Shepherd is guiding us. He also knows where refreshing waters flow and soft places to lay our weary head are. He calls us to embrace not just the journey, but also rest and refreshment.

Daily Challenge

Make a list of at least 15 things that refresh you. Include things that take only a few minutes and things that take more time. Include everything from drinking a cup of tea or coffee, reading a book, listening dancing to a favorite song, painting, exercising, time in nature, or even a weekend trip. Your list will be unique to you. Then, every day for the next week, do at least one thing on your list. If you need to, write it in your schedule or make a note to do it as a reminder.

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Sunday, September 15 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read 2 Corinthians 12:9

Have you ever felt the need to hide your inner imperfections and brokenness? You worry what others will think if they knew what is going on behind closed doors or in your heart and mind. How would other moms look at you if you admitted you didn't know how to handle a situation with your child? Would people think you're still a Christian if you admitted to struggling with sexual sin? Would you be looked down upon if they knew you struggled with addiction? Would you be removed from the worship team if they knew you struggled with an eating disorder or self-injury? It's hard to love yourself when you feel as if you have to hide your struggles.

In today's reading the Apostle Paul says he did something interesting when it came to his weakness: he talked about them! Our hidden weaknesses are usually the last thing we want to talk about, but when we're open and honest, that's when God can heal our brokenness. Paul knew the more he admitted how weak he was, the more the power of Christ would be at work in His life.

Instead of hiding how weak you feel today, you can choose to love yourself by being open about it. Pray, and let the Lord know all of your feelings. Ask the Lord to guide you to safe friends who will pray with you. You may just find they have weaknesses they thought they had to hide. You don't have to put it on social media for everyone to see. When you realize your brokenness isn't something you have to be ashamed of, it naturally makes it easier to love yourself.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "I'm Not Alright" by Sanctus Real.
youtu.be/E5oY2oYKHFY

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Monday, September 16 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Psalm 8:3-5

Do you ever tear yourself down for all the things you think you're not?

Life does take a toll on us. Between expectations from family, friends, coworkers, and teachers, it's overwhelming. Then we add the expectations we place on ourselves. We want to be thinner, curvier, be more successful, serve more, exercise more, finish the 837 Pinterest projects we've started, and so many other things. The list is never-ending. When we look at all the things we're not, it's no wonder we struggle to love ourselves.

What if we stopped looking at all of the things we're not, and look at who we are instead? Look at Psalm 8:5 from today's reading:

"You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor." NIV

Being crowned with glory and honor sounds so much better than the trendiest hairstyle or even the most expensive tiara we can find, and we don't have to pay anything to receive it.

Those expectations you've laid on yourself and others have laid on you, it's time to lay them down at the feet of Jesus. Stand up tall without their crushing weight. Instead, stand up tall knowing you are worthy of love simply because God created you. You are enough.

Daily Challenge

Write today's Scripture in your own words. Then, journal about how it changes your perspective on loving yourself.

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Tuesday, September 17 2019

Devotional written by Heather Golden Horton
Read Proverbs 31:30

When we glance at ourselves in the mirror, it is difficult not to look the reflection through the world's lens. We may pose silent questions. "Am I pretty enough? Am I smart enough? Will I ever be enough?" As these questions echo in our minds, they begin to invite our souls to compare ourselves to visions of perfection on social media or those fostered from within our communities. Occasionally, we may even become fixated on the applause of the world rather than pleasing our maker, God. These are the crucial moments that we must lean in close and breathe in a fresh understanding of God's Word and allow God to become our priority again.

As children of God, we need Him to reset our vision, to help us value what He values. There is no shame in outward beauty that grabs the world's attention. Having a magnetic personality can also be a beautiful thing; however, God views our yielding to Him and our relationship with Him as paramount. Our youthful, exterior may fade away as we age. Our glittering charm may be dulled by the stresses of our journey in life. Thankfully, a life surrendered to God and reliant upon His will, is a life that is valued in His kingdom.

If we have a healthy fear, or awe, of our creator God, we begin to see ourselves in ways that He views us. We learn how to love ourselves. We can also begin to be formed more every day into the image of our Creator. Very little in life could be more praiseworthy than being a person whose highest purpose is to bring honor to her God.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "Control" by Tenth Avenue North.
youtu.be/kFfztu8-bBQ

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Wednesday, September 18 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Psalm 103:13-14

When you think of dirt or dust from the ground, what comes to mind? Is it something you're constantly trying to clean off your floor or get your child to stop eating? It's often something we often see as useless or even bad and try to wash off. Sometimes, we even think of ourselves as worthless dirt, especially when we sin or horrible things have been done to us. What if dirt wasn't so useless?

Without dirt we wouldn't have flowers, trees, plants, or people. Yes, people.

Psalm 103:14 tells us: "for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust." NIV

This verse isn't an insult about our worth; it's a reminder of our humanity and how loving God is. While we are called to live a life of righteousness, God also knows we're going to make mistakes. He remembers He created us from the dust and dirt of the earth. He took something we often think of as worthless and gave priceless life to it. He saw dirt and knew it could be used to create someone priceless and worthy of love. When you see yourself, do you see yourself as worthless dirt or as a priceless creation worthy of love?

God has great compassion for you. He loves you enough to see you are priceless and worthy of love, even when you can't. If a perfect God can see your value, maybe you can too.

Daily Challenge

Write out today's Scripture in your own words or memorize it. How does it impact your view of yourself? Journal your thoughts.

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Thursday, September 19 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Malachi 3:16-18

Have you ever admired a beautiful jewel? When you walk into a high-end jewelry store the jewelry is usually in a locked display case. It is beautiful and meant to be seen. Its beauty also makes it valuable. So, it's carefully protected. When you think about the value of a priceless jewel, does it remind you of yourself? Perhaps it should, because that's how God sees you.

"They shall be Mine," says the Lord of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them"
Malachi 3:17 NKJV

Jewels don't start off beautify cut, sparkling and clean. Jewels are often mined. They're found underground in the dirt where it's dark. It takes hard work to find those jewels, and unless you know what you're looking for, it's easy to miss them. After they're taken from the dirt and darkness, they have to be cleaned. Even then, the color can be seen, but they still don't look that impressive. It takes an expert jeweler to know how to carefully cut out the perfect jewel from the gemstone. He knows there is beauty inside, where to find it, and how to best bring it out. He knows no matter what it looks like in the moment, it's priceless. He doesn't treasure it less because it's not display case ready.

Often, all we can see is ourselves looking dull and covered in dirt. When we see ourselves that way, no wonder it's hard to love ourselves. Just like an expert jeweler can see the value of a gemstone long before it's perfectly cut, God sees the value in us.

You belong to God, and you are His precious jewel. What you think about yourself cannot change how He thinks about you. Today, ask God to show you how He sees you and choose to embrace your priceless value.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "Remind Me who I Am" by Jason Gray.
youtu.be/QSIVjiY8Ou8

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Friday, September 20 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Zephaniah 3:17

As we've spent time studying how and why we can love ourselves, we've seen one important theme: our worth and value come from God and His love for us. When we base our worth and self-love on what we do or who we hope to be, we will always fall short and never be able to fully accept ourselves.

Today's scripture tells us God sings over us. Can you imagine loving someone so much that you start singing like in a fairytale movie? That's exactly how He feels about you. He celebrates who you are.

When we choose to see ourselves the way God sees us, it's easy to love ourselves. It's not because we're perfect or better than anyone else. It's because we know our value is too great to be measured.

Loving yourself isn't prideful. It's a celebration of God's precious creation, you.

Daily Challenge

How has your view of loving yourself changed over these last ten days? Are you able to love yourself more? Journal your thoughts.

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Saturday, September 21 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda

Read 1 John 4:10-12

What have you learned about being made to love this week?

Journal, draw, write a poem, or write a prayer about it below.

Today we come to the last section of learning about love: loving others. So far, we've learned that loving God is a natural response to receiving His love. We've also learned loving ourselves comes from knowing our worth in Him and how much He loves us. Just like loving God and loving ourselves, we love others as a natural response to the love God gives us.

Loving others also isn't something we can do on our own.

There will be days when we don't feel like showing love. Sometimes people irritate or annoy us, but if there is one thing we have learned, it's that God's love is vastly different from our love. Loving like God does isn't about actions or putting on a show. It's about loving from our hearts and sharing God's love with others. He alone will give us the strength to love, even when it's hard. When we're confident and sure in the love God has given us, we're able to live a life full of love towards others.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "Live Like That" by Sidewalk Prophets. youtu.be/GfosSggwQS0

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Sunday, September 22 2019

Devotional written by Heather Golden Horton
Read John 17:25-26

Love can seem distant. Extending love to a shouting world can seem daunting. We may wonder if we have enough love to forgive, bless, encourage, or try again in the face of difficult people. We may begin to believe the lie that our love could never resemble God's love; however, we can be positive that as Christ-followers this powerful love that comes from God resides inside us.

God was revealed to us, and our eyes were opened to who He is so that we could be filled with His love. Amazingly, it's the same love with which God loved Jesus. This love that fills up all of our emptiness is not a passive love. It is a love that sacrifices for others, extends a hand to those who are in need, and takes action on behalf of those who may be considered less valuable by society's standards.

This active love is the same kind of love that God extended to us while we were living in our disobedience. The love that originated from our Creator and Father, God, is the same love that is present within us. It gives us the ability to love beyond our feelings, and to behave with love despite our circumstances.

We do not have to live uncertain that there is enough love within us to share with a wounded world in the midst of angst. With God as our supply, we can be assured that God's love in us is more than adequate to equal the tasks He has set before our hands. His love is present in us in every place that we set our feet, because He is in us no matter where we may go.

Daily Challenge

How does knowing God is the one who enables you to love impact how you feel about loving others? Journal your thoughts.

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Monday, September 23 2019

Devotional written by Christine Perry
Read Isaiah 53

In a world of selfies and the pursuit of the happiness, remembering how Jesus came can cause us to reconsider our intentions and how we live. Jesus came in a way that wasn't a recognizable entrance for a King. He didn't summon servants, demand a red carpet, or arrive in style. He came humbly and lived as a servant.

Have you heard of pastors not telling strangers they are pastors because many people have preconceived notions about who they are? When Jesus came to earth, He knew many people had preconceived notions about the Messiah's coming. Yet, He still came in such a normal, human, and relatable way

It's so countercultural to not announce who we are and what we do. It's counter-self to choose a backseat at the dinner table knowing we might have amazing things to share. But how sweet it would be to God's heart if we decided to continually serve others through putting ourselves and even the things we might want to talk about second to someone else.

Let's make our goal to serve first and choose second. As the famous, but unattributed, quote says, "Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words."

Daily Challenge

What can you do to show someone, even a stranger, that she matters today? Keep your eyes open for an opportunity and do it. Can you compliment someone, let someone have the good parking place you want? Let someone else go ahead of you in line?

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Tuesday, September 24 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Romans 12:18

In any relationship we will inevitably make mistakes. When we've wounded someone, asking for forgiveness can sometimes be even harder than giving forgiveness. If you realize you have hurt your friend, go to her as soon as possible. If you're the friend who has been wounded, don't be afraid to tell your friend. She can't apologize if she doesn't realize she hurt you. No matter which side you find yourself on the longer you wait, the harder it will be to mend your relationship. Before you send a text message, ask yourself if this is something that can really be said via text. Text messages leave a lot up to interpretation that's often misunderstood. Oftentimes a phone call is better. Sometimes, it's best to meet in person, if it's possible.

We have to realize that sometimes we may not receive the forgiveness we seek, but we can't allow that to stop us from seeking to make peace with our friends. Today's verse tells us we're to do what we can to have peace in our relationships. We can't control what our friend will do. It may lead to a heartfelt conversation that makes your relationship stronger. If it doesn't, then you have still been obedient by doing all you can to seek peace. Keep in mind seeking peace still means having healthy boundaries. Letting someone hurt you over and over isn't healthy, and neither is making someone beg for your love.

Whether or not you have the outcome you desire, know God honors your faithfulness when you follow His commands. Don't let the fear of a bad outcome stop you from going to your friend.

Daily Challenge

Write out today's scripture in your own words. Also, journal and pray over your friendships. Are there any where you need to ask for forgiveness? Are there any where you have sought forgiveness and now need to give someone space?

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Wednesday, September 25 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Galatians 6:2

When we serve people, we show them love. We know it's important to help others, but what if it's important to let others help us? What if receiving a gift is actually showing love? It's a common cliché to hear "it's more blessed to give than receive." That can be a good reminder to not be selfish, but sometimes we take it too far. We push others away and never allow ourselves to be on the receiving end. More importantly, we don't value people enough to give them a place to add value to our lives.

We all have times when we need something. It may be financial help, someone's skills in a certain area such as home repair, someone to help us when we're sick, or someone to listen and pray when we're hurting. We can become so focused on not wanting to be a bother that we forget what God says about helping each other.

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2 NIV

If we're to carry each other's burdens, that means we have to let people carry ours. It's not a sign of weakness, it's obedience to God. It brings out the best in us when we help each other with genuine Christ-like love.

When we let others love us, we're saying to them that they and their gifts matter to us. When we accept love from someone else, we're also accepting them. We're telling them they matter and showing love in return without even realizing it.

Daily Challenge

What do you think about receiving love as a way to show love? Do you have a hard time knowing how to show or receive love? If you do, why is that the case? Journal your thoughts.

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Thursday, September 26 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Colossians 3:12-14

We all face times in our lives when we need to give forgiveness. Sometimes forgiveness is harder to give than others. It may not even be friends who hurt us. It can be people we don't even know. When people wound us deeply, we don't feel like forgiving, yet we know God calls us to forgive. The good news is we don't have to forgive in our own strength. Just like loving others flows from the love we receive from God, forgiveness comes from the forgiveness we receive from God.

You may be thinking "But you have no idea what happened to me!" That's true. Only you and God know the depth of your pain. In order to truly forgive, we have to face the pain and fully acknowledge what it is we're forgiving. When we're hurting beyond belief, forgiveness is the last thing we want to do.

Forgiveness doesn't always mean reconciliation. We need to maintain healthy boundaries, but we can still forgive. God can change our hearts to love like He does and see people the way He wants us to see them.

When forgiveness is hard to give, ask God to change your heart. Author and speaker Marilyn Meberg suggested to pray this prayer when you want to follow God, but you also don't want to forgive: "Lord, make me willing to be willing to forgive." It takes courage to ask God to help you to want to forgive but choosing to ask God to make you willing to be willing to forgive, will lead to healing for your hurting heart.

When we acknowledge we want to honor God and we need help to even want to forgive, God can change us. His love for us wraps around us will change our hearts and bend our will to follow His leading. It takes a conscious choice to surrender to this love, but little by little, we will be able to extend the same forgiveness to others that we have received.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "Forgiveness" by TobyMac feat. Lecrae with Nirva Ready. [youtu.be/xfkhqpl81NA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfkhqpl81NA)

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Friday, September 27 2019

Devotional written by Diane Marie
Read Matthew 5:44

Love is a beautiful word. It makes us think of hearts and flowers, kisses and hugs, happiness and joy. We love our family, friends, and maybe even our favorite dessert. This is all well and good, but what are we to do about our enemies? Jesus makes this very clear. We are to love them!

At first, we might think we don't even have enemies. But think about it, we all have people in our lives who challenge us, hurt us, or just plain rub us the wrong way. There might be a coworker who takes credit for our hard work. There might be someone at school who likes to spread nasty rumors about us. There might even be someone at church with whom we just can't seem to get along. We might not see them as enemies, but when it comes down to it, we have to admit we don't exactly have the most loving feelings towards them. Then there are those in our lives who have seriously wronged us. Perhaps our father walked out on our family when we were young, or a drunk driver killed someone we loved. It doesn't matter the offense; we are always called to love.

Jesus didn't make any exceptions to the rule. We are to love our enemies. Period. He is our perfect example, and He loved each and every one of us enough to die for us and take the punishment for our sins. The first step to loving our enemies is to forgive them. Then, pray for them. Remember Jesus loves them and try to treat them as He would. Will it be easy? No. Will it be worth it? Yes. Jesus calls us to love our enemies, and we can never go wrong when we follow the perfect example of Christ.

Daily Challenge

How can you love someone who has deeply wounded you? Does loving enemies always mean having a relationship? Journal your thoughts and pray, asking God what He wants to show you about loving enemies.

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Saturday, September 28 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda

Read Matthew 5:14-16

There's no denying we live in a world where change is needed, where people desperately need love. We want to leave a mark and bring positive change, but sometimes it seems as if we're powerless to do anything that will leave a lasting impact.

What if we're not as powerless as we think? As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way."

We're all human and all need the same things. Simple things like holding a door, saying "thank you," or even a kind smile don't seem like much, but they mean something. They illuminate God's love in an often dark and lonely world.

Instead of thinking about what you can't do, find one small way you can shine your light and do it well. If we each one of us shined our lights one small act at a time, we could light up the world.

Daily Challenge

Listen to "Human" by Natalie Grant. youtu.be/ZCljrxXWNYU

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What have you learned about being made to love this week?

Journal, draw, write a poem, or write a prayer about it below.



Sunday, September 29 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Psalm 71:14-18

Do you believe your story matters? From social media to TV, you see stories highlighting people who've done something seemingly impossible. Sometimes it's encouraging. Other times it can make you feel as if you don't have anything to offer this world until you accomplish something else or until you are someone else. If you wait to share your story until something changes, you're devaluing your life and what God has done for you and diminishing what someone else is going through.

Often, the parts of our stories or the things we've gone through that we think will be boring or unimportant to others, are vital. We often think we're alone in what we feel or experience. The truth is, we only feel that way because no one else will talk about it. Sharing your story, whether you think it's boring or worry it's too dramatic, lets others know they're not alone. It encourages them.

You don't have to be a writer or gifted speaker to share your story. Some of the most encouragement moments come when one person says to another "I've been there too". Showing kindness and understanding, even without saying a word, because you recognize what a person is going through is you using your story to love others.

Your story has the power to change someone. What is common to you may be uncommon to someone else. She can learn from your experiences. If your story is similar to someone else's, she will realize she's not alone. When we embrace our story and encourage others, we show them love.

No matter how small it seems to you, the story of your life is important. Your story has power.

Daily Challenge

Do you feel as if you can use parts of your life's story to love and encourage others? Journal your thoughts and pray, asking God to show you how He wants you to use your story to show love.

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Monday, September 30 2019

Devotional written by Emily Furda
Read Matthew 11:28-30

Throughout this month we've seen some ways we can love God above all else, love ourselves, and love those around us. We know in all that God is here to help us. Yet sometimes, we're still prone to go it alone trying to prove just how much we love Him. It can feel constricting, as if we're trying to wear jeans two sizes too small or walk in high heels so tight we can't feel our toes. If you ever find yourself in that place, keep in mind Matthew 11:28-30

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." (The Message)

God wants us to live a life of freedom that feels light. We don't have to worry if we're loving Him enough. When we go to God and surrender our hearts, He will help us with everything, including opening our hearts to love more every day of our lives.

Love isn't something we do. It's the core of who we are. We are Made to Love.

Daily Challenge

Write out this month's theme verse, Matthew 22:37-39, in your own words expanding it to include what you've learned this month. Also, listen to "Made to Love" by TobyMac. youtu.be/cFJ5qCmvPkY

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