

THE BEYOND INITIATIVE

FAMILY DEVOTION GUIDE



The Beyond Initiative | Family Devotions

How to Use This Guide

Our church is beginning a process to Go Beyond and we would love for your family to join us. The end goal is to fulfill the mission of the church, “To love God with all that we are while making disciples who make disciples.” We want God to be glorified in our church and our individual lives so that the world sees a reflection of who God is and what He is doing.

The Beyond Initiative is an opportunity for your family to learn more of what it means to live dependently on God for everything in life. The heart of these devotionals is for everyone to gain a bigger view of who God is, sense the Spirit’s leading in response to God, and commit as individuals and families to walk in obedience.

Each of the 14 daily devotionals will have:

- **Scripture** – If you have children in your home, it is a good idea to let them take turns reading the verse or verses for the day. It is important that children be participants and not just spectators in the things of the Lord.
- **Application** – Give the application, then ask your family how they think this truth can be applied to their lives.
- **Quote** – Read the quote for the day and call on a family member to explain what he or she believes it means.
- **Prayer** – End with a simple prayer asking God to help each family member receive and apply the truth they have learned that day. Use this time for prayer requests and include prayer for your church and its leadership.

Note - A few days will have a helpful story to engage kids in devotion.

- **Story**– Share the illustration and talk about it.

Choose a time of day when your whole family can gather together with the least number of distractions and interruptions. Make this an interesting and fun time for your family. Teach your children by example that spiritual things are to be both taken seriously and enjoyed. Also, let them know that what your family and what they, as individuals, are doing are important to the future of our church.

1 Samuel 12:22, says, “For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name’s sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you a people for himself.” As we Go Beyond into what the Lord has set before us, we want to honor Him with every step we take. As we do, we are asking Him to meet our needs and to let His blessings fall on Wellspring for the glory of His great name.

Day 1

The Scriptures:

John 8:12

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴ You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

The Application:

Say: "What people who don't know Jesus think of him will usually be determined by what they think of those of us who do know Jesus."

First, ask each family member if they think that this truth should affect the choices they make each day and how they live their lives. Take the conversation a level deeper into specific scenarios.

Second, ask each family member if they can think of a time when they had the opportunity to do the wrong thing but chose to do the right thing instead. Explain that these are examples of obeying what Jesus said in Matthew 5:16 and celebrate that faithfulness as a family.

The Quote:

"Do all the good you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as you can." *John Wesley*

The Prayer:

"Father, help us to always remember that the people in our world are watching us every day and that what they see in us will influence what they think of You."

Day 2

The Scriptures:

John 13:34-35

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

1 John 4:8-12

⁸ Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹² No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

The Application:

Say: “God calls us to love and care for others. To help them when they fall down, tend to their hurts and make them better, link arms with those who have fallen, and encourage each other to keep on trusting in the Lord’s care and love for them.”

Ask each family member when someone has shown them love and care when they were hurting. What impact did that have on their life?

Ask each family member to share something they can do this week to show God’s love to someone they know.

The Quote:

“Loving like Jesus means you must value others the way Jesus values you.” *Rick Warren*

The Prayer:

“Father, please help each of us care about others the way you do and show we care by the way we live our lives.”

Day 3

The Scripture:

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

The Story:

Corrie ten Boom, a great woman of faith who was the only member of her family to survive a Nazi concentration camp during World War II, told the story of addressing a church in Munich, Germany in 1947. She had come from Holland to speak to the German people about the forgiveness of God. That evening she told the crowd that anyone who is willing to confess their sins can be forgiven and have their sins cast into the deepest sea by God and remembered no more.

Corrie said that the service had just concluded and people were filing out when she saw a balding, heavyset man in a gray overcoat working his way to the front of the room. The instant she laid eyes on him the horrible memories of Ravensbruck came flooding over her.

The man making his way toward Corrie had been one of the guards in the concentration camp, one of the most cruel of all the guards. The man stuck out his hand to Corrie and said, "A fine message, Fraulein. How good it is to know that, as you say, all sins are at the bottom of the sea."

Corrie said that even though she had just finished speaking on forgiveness, she pretended to fumble in her purse rather than take his hand. The man evidently didn't remember her from Ravensbruck, but she remembered him all too well.

"You mentioned Ravensbruck in your talk," he said. "I was a guard there. Since that time I have become a Christian. I know God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from the lips of someone who was there. Fraulein, will you forgive me?" The former guard put out his hand again.

Corrie said that she stood there, a person whose sins had been paid for by the Lord Jesus, a person who had been forgiven, but yet, who could not forgive. She had watched her sister die in that horrible place. Could this man possibly erase her sister's terrible death simply by asking? Corrie said forgiving would be the most difficult thing she had ever had to do, but she knew she must.

Since the end of the war she had run a home in Holland for victims of the Nazi brutality. Over and over she had seen those who forgave their enemies return to the outside world and rebuild their lives. She had also seen those who refuse to forgive become bitter and emotionally crippled.

"Jesus, help me!" She prayed silently. "Help me lift my hand." Corrie said that as she thrust out her hand, not because she wanted to or felt like it, but only in obedience to God, something incredible happened. She said it was as if healing seemed to wash over her whole body and tears immediately came to her eyes.

"I forgive you, brother!" She cried. "With all my heart, I forgive you!" For a long time the two grasped each other's hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. Corrie ten Boom said that she had never known God's love so intensely as she did at that moment.

The Application:

Say: “If we have been forgiven by God, then we must forgive others. Forgiveness is part of what it means to know who God is and show the world what God is like. We must also be willing to ask for forgiveness when we have offended someone else. There are six words we must make a part of our vocabularies and practice using every day. Those words are, ‘I was wrong, please forgive me.’”

Ask your family members to describe a time when they were forgiven by others. How did asking for and receiving forgiveness impact their life?

Ask your family members to then explain how forgiving others and asking others to forgive us shows the world what God is like.

The Quote:

“If we have the true love of God in our hearts, we will show it in our lives.” *D. L. Moody*

The Prayer:

“Father, please help us be willing to ask for the forgiveness of others when we are wrong. Help us also forgive others just like You have forgiven us in order that we may show the world what You are really like.”

Day 4

Supplies

- *Lit candle*
- *Clean Mirror*
- *Dirty Mirror*

The Scriptures:

2 Corinthians 3:18

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 11:1

Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

The Application:

Say: “Christians are not the source of light, but we are to light up this dark world by reflecting the glory and light of Jesus. Paul followed Jesus so closely he was able to tell others that through imitating his own lifestyle they would look like Jesus.”

Next, hold up a small hand mirror in front of a lit candle. Say: “Just like a mirror reflects light, our lives are to be like a mirror which reflects the light of Jesus (the candle) to our world.”

Now hold up a second mirror that has been smeared with soap in front of the candle. Say: “When our lives do not imitate Jesus, it affects the way we are able to reflect light to the world around us.”

Ask your family members about a time when their choice to sin gave an imperfect picture of who God is.

Ask your family members what opportunities they have to reflect the glory and light of Christ in the darkness around them.

The Quote:

“It is a great better to live a holy life than to talk about it. Lighthouses do not ring bells; they just shine.” *D. L. Moody*

The Prayer:

“Father, the people in our world need to see You. Please help our lives to clearly and accurately reflect what You are really like.”

Day 5

The Scripture:

Philippians 2:3-11

³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Application:

Say: “Philippians reminds us that the greatest act of humility and service was seen in Jesus. He is God, yet came and served people humbly, even to the point of giving his life for us. If we are going to show the world what God is really like, then we must have the same humble attitude that Christ demonstrated in his life here on earth.”

Ask your family members of the opportunities they have to serve people around them, counting others as more important than themselves.

The Quote:

“We are never more like Jesus than when we are serving Him or others. There is no higher calling than to be a servant.”

Nancy DeMoss

The Prayer:

“Father, please give us a heart for people who need to know what You are really like. Help us see others through Your eyes and love them with Your love.”

Day 6

The Scriptures:

Colossians 3:2

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

2 Peter 1:3

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,

Ephesians 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

The Application:

Say: “If we are going to give the world an accurate picture of what God is like by the way we live our lives, then we must first know who God created us to be. Second, we must learn to live as God created us to live. These scriptures remind us that God has placed the Holy Spirit in our hearts to live life for His Glory. God has already planned good works for us to do in His name, and He empowers us to do them.”

Ask each family member what it means to have an identity in Christ.

Ask your family member what it practically looks like to live with an identity in Christ.

The Quote:

“A person ought to live so that everybody knows he is a Christian.” *D. L. Moody*

The Prayer:

“Father, we need to live like what you have created us in Christ to be, so the world will know You for who You really are. Please give us the desire to keep our hearts, eyes and minds on You every day.”

Day 7

The Scripture:

Romans 10:14-15

¹⁴How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

The Story:

Edward Kimball was concerned about one of his young Sunday school students who worked at a shoe store in town. One day Kimball visited him at the store and found the student in the back stocking shoes. Mr. Kimball led the boy to Christ then and there. Dwight L. Moody was the boy’s name and he eventually became one of the greatest preachers and evangelists of all times.

Moody, whose international speaking took him to the British Isles, preached in a little chapel pastored by a young man with the imposing name of Frederic Brotherton Meyer. In his sermon Moody told an emotionally charged story about a Sunday school teacher he had known in Chicago who personally went to every student in his class and led every one of them to Christ.

That message changed Pastor Meyer’s entire ministry, inspiring him to become an evangelist like Moody. Over the years, Meyer came to America several times to preach. Once in Northfield, Massachusetts, a confused young preacher sitting in the back row heard Meyer say, “If you are not willing to give up everything for Christ, are you willing to be made willing?” That remark led J. Wilbur Chapman to respond to the call of God on his life.

Chapman went on to become one of the most effective evangelists of his time. A volunteer by the name of Billy Sunday helped set up his crusades and learned how to preach by watching Chapman. Sunday eventually took over Chapman’s ministry, becoming one of the most dynamic evangelists of the 20th century. In the great arenas of the nation, Billy Sunday’s preaching turned thousands of people to Christ.

Inspired by a 1924 Billy Sunday crusade in Charlotte, North Carolina, a committee of Christians there dedicated themselves to reaching that city for Christ. The committee invited the evangelist Mordecai Ham to hold a series of evangelistic meetings in 1932. A lanky 16-year-old sat in the huge crowd one evening, spellbound by the message preacher, who seemed to be speaking directly to him. Night after night the teenager attended and finally went forward to give his life to Christ.

The teenager’s name was Billy Graham, the man who has communicated the gospel of Jesus Christ to more people than any other man in history.

The Application:

Say: “Our Scripture reminds us that people need to hear the good news of Jesus. As Christians, we are sent out to preach that message. Remember the man named Kimball? He wasn’t rich or famous. He wasn’t a preacher or an evangelist or a missionary. He was simply an ordinary man who cared enough about a boy to take the time to share Jesus with him. By sharing what he had to give with others, the gospel went forward and he was part of changing the world. Millions of people have had their lives transformed over the years, and millions more will continue to be touched by the gospel because of Edward Kimball. God wants us to share what we have and make a difference in our world.”

Ask your family to share their personal testimonies of coming to faith. Even if the stories are known, it is worth remembering and celebrating. If someone in your family has never made the decision to follow Jesus, use this as an opportunity to talk through the gospel.

Ask your family what they can do tomorrow to share the good news of Jesus with the people around them.

The Quote:

“Everything in Scripture is either preparation for the gospel, presentation of the gospel, or participation in the gospel.” *Dave Harvey*

The Prayer:

“Father, help us love lost people the way You do and please show us practical ways to demonstrate that love every day.”

Day 8

The Scriptures:

Colossians 3:23-24

²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Matthew 6:1-4

¹ Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. ² Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

The Application:

Say: “If we are going to share with others and serve them the way Jesus would, then we can’t be concerned about who gets the credit. Everything we give and everything we do should be as if we are giving it to, and doing it for, the Lord. He and He alone is deserving of praise. Our goal should not be to call attention to ourselves, but to turn people’s attention to God.”

Ask your family members why there is a desire in people to receive credit and recognition.

Ask your family members if they can think of a time when they shared something of theirs (time, money, possessions, food, etc...) with someone who needed help, and no one else knew but God.

The Quote:

“Our high and privileged calling is to do the will of God in the power of God for the glory of God.” *J.I. Packer*

The Prayer:

“Father, please help us to remember every day that in all we do, we are to honor and bless You. Help us to bless others in Your name.”

Day 9

The Scriptures:

James 1:17

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

1 Chronicles 29:13-14

¹³ O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name! ¹⁴ But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you first gave us!

The Application:

Say: “God is sovereign over all. He owns and gives us everything we have. In giving us every good gift, God also asks that we use all that we have for His glory and fame. Do we ever act like God has no right to ask that of us? Do we ever act like all the money and possessions we have belong to us?”

Ask your family members why money is often something we struggle to share more so than our possessions, time, abilities, etc.

The Quote:

“Everything we have comes from (God’s) hands; even if we worked for it or earned it, He still gave us the ability and the opportunity to do it.” *Billy Graham*

The Prayer:

“Father, please help us to remember that we don’t have anything that didn’t come from You. Teach us to give as freely to You and to others as You have given to us.”

Day 10

The Scripture:

Matthew 25:40

I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.

The Story:

Miss Thompson was a school teacher who said the same thing to her students every year, “Boys and girls, I love you all the same. I have no favorites.” But that wasn’t completely truthful. Teachers are human. Sometimes they can have favorites. What’s more difficult, most teachers have students that are really hard to teach.

Teddy Stallard was a boy that Miss Thompson really struggled with, and for good reason. He didn’t seem interested in school. He wore a deadpan, blank expression on his face, and his eyes were glassy and unfocused. When she spoke to Teddy, he merely shrugged his shoulders. He didn’t listen well, he was unkind to other students, and Miss Thompson.

The students however, were not aware of some of Teddy’s background. Miss Thompson knew what his records said, but still struggled with Teddy in her class. The records read:

1st Grade: Teddy shows promise with his work and attitude, but has a poor home situation.

2nd Grade: Teddy could do better, his Mother is seriously ill. He receives little help at home.

3rd Grade: Teddy is a good boy, but too serious. He is a slow learner. His mother died this year.

4th Grade: Teddy is very slow, but well-behaved. His father shows no interest.

At Christmas, the boys and girls in Miss Thompson’s class brought her presents, piled them on her desk, and crowded around to watch her open them. Among the presents was one from Teddy Stallard. She was surprised that he had brought her a gift. Teddy’s gift was wrapped in brown paper and held together with Scotch tape. On the paper were written the simple words, “For, Miss Thompson. From, Teddy.” When she opened Teddy’s present, out fell bracelet, with half the stones missing, and a bottle of used perfume.

The other boys and girls began to giggle and smirk over Teddy’s gifts. Miss Thompson had enough sense to silence them by immediately putting on the bracelet and dotting some of the perfume on her wrist. Holding her wrist up for the other children to smell, she said, “Doesn’t it smell lovely?” The other children, taking their cue from their teacher, readily agreed. When school was over and the other children had left, Teddy lingered behind. He slowly came over to her desk and said softly, “Miss Thompson?” “Miss Thompson, you smell just like my mother and her bracelet looks real pretty on you. I’m glad you like my presents.”

The next day when the children came to school, they were welcomed by a new teacher. Miss Thompson had become a different person. She was no longer just a teacher, she had become an agent of God, committed to loving her children and doing things for them that would live on after her.

She loved and served all the children, even the difficult ones, and especially Teddy Stallard. By the end of that school year, Teddy showed dramatic improvement. He caught up with most of the students and was even ahead of some. Once the school year ended, Miss Thompson didn’t hear from Teddy for a long time. Then one day she received a note that read:

Dear Miss Thompson,

I wanted you to be the first to know. I will be graduating second in my class.

Love,

Teddy Stallard

Four years later, another note came:

Dear Miss Thompson,

They just told me I will be graduating first in my class. I wanted you to be the first to know. College has not been easy, but I have had a good four years.

Love,

Teddy Stallard

And, four years after that:

Dear Miss Thompson,

As of today, I am Theodore Stallard, M.D. How about that? I wanted you to be the first to know. I am getting married next month, the twenty-seventh to be exact. I want you to come and sit where my mother would sit if she were alive. You are the only family I have now. Dad died last year.

Love,

Teddy Stallard

Miss Thompson went to that wedding and sat where Teddy's mother would have sat, celebrating his life and life transformation.

The Application:

Say: "We can also be like Miss Thompson and share with others what we have to give. We can give them love, acceptance, encouragement, support, friendship, and hope. We help them to not only be encouraged, but to know and hear of the God who created them and loves them."

Ask your family members if there is a Teddy in their lives right now who needs love, encouragement, and hope. If there isn't, ask them to be actively looking for someone they can be a blessing to.

The Quote:

"There have been meetings of only a moment which have left impressions for life, for eternity. No one can understand that mysterious thing we call influence...yet...every one of us continually exerts influence, either to heal, to bless, to leave marks of beauty; Or to wound, to hurt, to poison, to stain the lives of others." *J. R. Miller*

The Prayer:

"Father, please help us to be sensitive to the needs of the people You place in our paths each day and show us how to help meet their needs with what You have given us to share."

Day 11

The Scripture:

Proverbs 3:5-6

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

⁶ In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths

The Story:

The story is told about a family who was awakened in the middle of the night by their smoke detector to discover that their house was on fire. The father ran into the upstairs bedroom of his children and carried his baby in his arms while dragging his four year old son by the hand.

They were halfway down the stairs when the little boy remembered that he had left his teddy bear in the bedroom. He broke free from his dad's hand and ran back into the bedroom to get his beloved bear.

In the confusion, the father didn't notice that his son wasn't with him until he got outside. By that time, the little boy was trapped by the flames and the smoke. As the smoke swirled around him he cried out from the upstairs window, "Help me, Daddy, Help me!"

His father yelled from below, "Jump out of the window, Andy! I'll catch you!" In the darkness and smoke, the little boy yelled back, "But Daddy! I can't see you!" His Daddy shouted back, "It's okay, son. I can see you! Jump!"

When you are afraid of the future and afraid of the dark, and can't see what lies ahead, God simply says, "It's okay. I can see. Trust in me and I will catch you."

The Application:

Say: "Andy's decision to jump had everything to do with who his dad was and what his dad was able to do.

As believers, you and I glorify God and bring Him joy by living lives of trust and obedience. But in order to obey Him, we must first know our heavenly Father is trustworthy, and we can't know that until we know Him."

Ask each of your family members if they find it easy or difficult to trust God in daily life.

Talk as a family about how you can all learn to know God more deeply.

The Quote:

"Faith is trusting God even when you don't understand his plan." *Unknown*

The Prayer:

"Father, please give us the desire to trust and obey You and then the strength to do so every day."

Day 12

The Scriptures:

Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 6:25, 31-32

²⁵ Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food or the body more important than clothes?... ³¹ So do not worry, saying, “What shall we eat?” or “What shall we drink?” or “What shall we wear?” ³² For even the pagans run after all these things, and your Heavenly Father knows that you need them.

The Application:

Say: “Jesus commanded us three times in Matthew 6:25-34 not to worry.”

Ask each family member to share the things that they worry about.

Say: “Jesus also asked the question in this passage, ‘Why do you worry...?’”

Ask your family to share why they believe they worry.

Ask your family how trusting God and believing Matthew 6:33 changes the way we think about priorities and the future.

Encourage your family to memorize Matthew 6:33 together.

The Quote:

“God has already worked out what you are worried about.” *Unknown*

The Prayer:

“Father, please show us ways to put you first in our lives and help us to trust You, and You alone, to meet our needs.”

Family Decision Guide

Instructions for the Family Leader

The purpose of this time together is for your family to seek the Lord, discuss what God would have the family to do as a whole, and to have each member of the family share what he or she believes God would have them do individually.

Help each person in your family understand, regardless of how young or how old they are, that their personal participation is what matters to God. What they do, or how much they give, is not nearly as important to God as learning to trust and obey Him.

How to Begin Your Discussion

Commitment Sunday is less than 72 hours away and it is time for our family to decide what we are going to do for The Beyond Initiative.

The Bible tells us that Jesus was the last dead sacrifice (Hebrews 9 & 10) and that because of Christ's death on the cross, God no longer requires those types of sacrifices. What God does require are living and holy sacrifices.

In Romans 12:1 we're told to offer ourselves as these living and holy sacrifices. It is the only appropriate response considering all He has done for us.

Psalms 116:12 says, "What can I offer the Lord for all He has done for me?"

"Before we make our commitment, let's ask a couple questions"

1. What has the Lord already done for us? *(Let each member list all their blessings: Spiritual, Physical, Material, etc.)*
2. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:14, "The love of Christ compels us..." *(In other words, the great love of Christ and what he has already done for us should motivate us to respond faithfully to what God calls us to do).*

How does the love of Christ motivate you to sacrifice and faithfulness?

Say: "The Beyond Initiative is a very special time in our church that involves reaching a financial goal. But, more importantly than that, our church wants to learn to trust God more and obey Him completely. Love, trust, and obedience should also be the goal for our family.

It is important to understand that what we choose to do will not be done to win God's acceptance based on how much we give or what sacrifices we choose to make.

When we give our lives to Christ and trust Him to save us, the Bible says that God places us 'in Christ,' and being 'in Christ' makes us acceptable to God. No matter what we do or don't do, nothing can ever change that fact.

Our commitment is simply about a way for us to say 'thank you' to God, and to show the world what a great and awesome God we have."

3. In response to all God has done for us, what can we do to show Him our gratitude?

Principles We Need to Remember:

- **Do what we can.**
 - God wants us to do what we can with what we have. He only expects us to give back to Him what He has already given to us, He expects no more.
- **Do much.**
 - “Only one life to live will soon be past, only what’s done for Christ will last.” *C.T. Studd*
- **Do it now.**
 - Psalm 95:7 says, “Oh, that you would listen to His voice today...” There will never be a better or an easier time to step out in faith alongside a community of believers. If we are ever going to do it, the time is now.

Prayer Time

Ask God to reveal to each member of your family what He would have them personally do during this time in the life of Wellspring. Lead them to ask God for direction and clarity in their lives. Allow plenty of time for silent prayer, prayer together, and for God to speak.

Day 13

The Scripture:

Galatians 1:10

Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

The Story:

An ancient story is told about a father and his son who were walking along a road one day with their donkey. Soon they met a man who told them how foolish they were to walk when they had a donkey that could be ridden. So the father and son hopped on the donkey's back.

They hadn't gone very far when another man criticized them both for riding on the donkey. He said they were too heavy for the donkey and were being inhumane. So the boy got off.

It wasn't long before a third traveler accused the father of being inconsiderate because he made his son walk while he rode. So the father and the boy switched places.

Soon they met a fourth man who charged the boy with not being thoughtful of his father who was much older than he. When they were last seen, the father and son were trudging down the road carrying the donkey.

The Application:

Say: "The temptation to please other people so they will like us is a battle that we will all fight for the rest of our lives. We must learn that the only acceptance and approval we need in this life are God's. If we belong to Him, then we have already been accepted by God because of what Jesus accomplished through his life, death, burial, and resurrection. When we know that we are loved and accepted by God, we live with a greater trust in Him. The more we trust Him, the less acceptance and approval of others will matter."

Ask your family members if they can think of a time when they tried to please people instead of pleasing God and what they learned from that experience.

The Quote:

"Happiness is obedience to God." *C. H. Spurgeon*

The Prayer:

"Father, give us the desire to trust and obey you, regardless of what others think, and give us the grace to allow You to be the greatest influence in our lives."

Day 14

The Scripture:

Hebrews 4:15-16

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

The Application:

Say: “The Bible tells us that Jesus came willingly to this earth to take on the difficulties of this life so that he could identify with our pain and understand our problems.”

Here are some of the ways the Bible teaches the humanity of Jesus:

- Jesus had friends that betrayed him
- Jesus wept over friends that had died
- Jesus became tired, hungry, and thirsty
- Jesus worked hard
- Jesus enjoyed family
- Jesus had siblings
- Jesus had people reject him and hate him
- Jesus died

Ask each family member if Jesus taking on flesh and humanity makes it easier for them to trust God to meet their needs. Why or why not?

Ask your family how the life of Jesus encourages us to show compassion for others.

The Quote:

“Christ’s love is like a river that never stops flowing.” *Jonathan Edwards*

The Prayer:

“Father, we thank you for sending Jesus to earth, not just to be our Savior but to identify with all our hurts. Thank you that we can trust a Savior who understands to care about, and to meet, all our needs.”