

# 5 Day Devotional

## Day 1: The Center of Our Universe

### Devotional

We live in a world that constantly tells us to put ourselves first. From social media feeds to career advancement, everything seems designed to make us the star of our own show. Yet there's a profound truth we must face: self-centeredness is wired into our hearts from birth. When we see a group photo, who do we look at first? Ourselves. When we pray, how often do our requests revolve around our wants, our needs, our plans? This isn't necessarily wrong, but it reveals something deeper about our nature. We naturally assume we're the center of the universe, and everyone else should orbit around our desires and dreams. But what if this default setting is actually keeping us from the abundant life God has planned for us? What if our greatest breakthrough comes not from getting more of what we want, but from learning to want what God wants? The journey toward spiritual maturity begins with recognizing that we've been sitting in a throne that was never meant for us.

### Bible Verse

"Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. "What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." - Matthew 20:20-21

### Reflection Question

In what areas of your life do you find yourself expecting others to revolve around your preferences and plans?

### Quote

Self centeredness is a default setting of the human heart.

### Prayer

Lord, help me recognize the ways I've made myself the center of my universe. Give me the courage to step down from a throne that was never mine to occupy.

## Day 2: When God Says No

### Devotional

Sometimes the greatest mercy God shows us is not giving us what we ask for. James and John thought they knew exactly what they wanted - positions of honor and power in Jesus' kingdom. They had no idea they were essentially volunteering for torture and crucifixion. Their limited perspective couldn't see the full picture of what Jesus was about to endure. How often do we do the same thing? We see one piece of the puzzle and think we understand the whole picture. We pray with passion and certainty, convinced we know what's best for our lives, our families, our futures. But God sees what we cannot see. He knows the consequences of our requests that we're blind to. Looking back, can you think of prayers God didn't answer the way you wanted? Perhaps a relationship that didn't work out, a job you didn't get, or a door that remained closed? Often, these unanswered prayers become our greatest blessings in disguise. God's wisdom far exceeds our understanding, and His love for us is so deep that He's willing to disappoint us temporarily to protect us eternally.

### Bible Verse

"You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father."  
- Matthew 20:22-23

### **Reflection Question**

Can you think of a time when you were grateful that God didn't answer your prayer the way you wanted?

### **Quote**

We have one piece of the puzzle and we think we have the whole picture figured out. But the reality is Jesus sees our little peace, but he also knows the entire picture.

### **Prayer**

Father, thank You for Your wisdom that sees beyond my limited perspective. Help me trust Your 'no' as much as Your 'yes,' knowing that Your love guides both.

## **Day 3: The Division Self-Centeredness Creates**

### **Devotional**

When James and John made their bold request for the best seats in Jesus' kingdom, something predictable happened - the other ten disciples became furious. What had been a unified group of followers suddenly became divided by jealousy, anger, and competition. This is always the fruit of self-centeredness: it destroys relationships and creates conflict where peace once existed. Think about the relationships in your life that have been strained or broken. How many of those conflicts can be traced back to someone (perhaps you) insisting on having their way, being right, or getting recognition? Self-centered living makes healthy relationships impossible because it treats others as supporting actors in our personal drama rather than as people with their own hopes, dreams, and needs. When we demand that life revolve around us, we inevitably collide with others who have the same expectation. The beautiful thing about following Christ is that He offers us a different way - a path where we can find true fulfillment not by demanding our rights, but by laying them down in service to others.

### **Bible Verse**

'When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers.' - Matthew 20:24

### **Reflection Question**

How has self-centeredness created division or conflict in your relationships, and what would it look like to choose humility instead?

### **Quote**

Self centeredness creates division. Where there was harmony, it creates murmuring. Where there was peace.

### **Prayer**

Lord, show me where my self-centeredness has hurt others. Give me the grace to choose unity over being right, and peace over getting my way.

## **Day 4: The Upside-Down Kingdom**

### **Devotional**

Jesus turned the world's definition of greatness completely upside down. While earthly leaders lord their authority over others and use their power for personal gain, Jesus taught that true greatness comes through serving others. This isn't just a nice suggestion - it's the fundamental principle of God's kingdom. The path to becoming great is to become less, to take the lowest position rather than fighting for the highest one. This challenges everything our culture teaches us about success and significance. We're told to climb the ladder, promote ourselves, and make sure we get the credit we deserve. But Jesus modeled a different way when He, the King of kings, washed His disciples' feet and ultimately gave His life for others. Humility isn't weakness - it's the strength to put others first even when we have the power to put ourselves first. It's choosing to serve even when we could be served. This kind of humility doesn't diminish us; it actually reveals the character of Christ within us and opens the door to the kind of greatness that lasts for eternity.

### **Bible Verse**

'Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave.'" - Matthew 20:25-27

### **Reflection Question**

What would it look like for you to pursue greatness through serving others rather than promoting yourself?

### **Quote**

The way that we become great is to become less.

### **Prayer**

Jesus, help me embrace Your upside-down kingdom where greatness comes through humility. Give me opportunities to serve others and the heart to take them.

## **Day 5: Living for an Audience of One**

### **Devotional**

There's a question that cuts to the heart of our motivations: Would I do this if no one were watching? So much of what we do is performed for human applause rather than divine approval. We give generously when others can see, serve enthusiastically when we'll get recognition, and live righteously when it enhances our reputation. But Jesus calls us to a different standard - living for an audience of One. When we pray, give, or serve in secret, we discover what truly motivates us. Are we seeking God's approval or human recognition? The beautiful truth is that God's private praise is infinitely more valuable than public recognition. He sees every hidden act of kindness, every secret sacrifice, every moment when we choose His way over our own. When we live for His approval alone, we're freed from the exhausting performance of trying to impress others. We can serve without needing credit, give without expecting recognition, and love without demanding appreciation. This is the freedom that comes from knowing our identity is secure in Christ, not in what others think of us.

### **Bible Verse**

'Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven... But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.' - Matthew 6:1-4

### **Reflection Question**

What motivates your acts of service and generosity - God's approval or human recognition?

### **Quote**

God's private praise is more valuable and important than public recognition.

**Prayer**

Father, help me live for Your approval alone. Free me from the need for human recognition and help me find joy in serving You in secret.