



# Living Generously

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Seven Bible  
devotions for  
a mindful life

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**Seven Bible devotions  
for a mindful life**

**'For where your treasure is, there your  
heart will be also.' (Matthew 6:21)**

We live in a commercial world. How we earn, spend, invest and share resources impacts others internationally as well as ourselves. In this devotional, we explore this idea broadly to consider our role, as God's people, in systems of finance and consumerism.

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## DAY ONE:

# Called To Be A Co-Creator



**Being a co-creator with God gives our lives and work on this earth dignity and responsibility. Understanding ourselves as co-creators highlights the natural impact our lives have on others and our world and serves as a reminder that partnering with God aligns with his design and purpose.**

**Genesis 2:15** 'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.'

**Ephesians 2:10** 'For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.'

**1 Corinthians 3:9** 'For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.'

You are more than a consumer, you are a co-creator with God.

There is a lyric from the popular musical, Hamilton, that is true and convicting: 'Every action is an act of creation.' Every interaction can either help create empathy or disengagement in our society. Every purchase has creative force—as that product enters into our daily life, and as we support a brand's ethics, sustainability and messaging with our dollars. In the beginning, God gave Adam the responsibility of naming the animals, and humanity the task of working with

God's creation to glorify God and provide for humanity and all of earth's creatures (Genesis 2:15). From the beginning, we've been co-creating, not just consuming.

As the world's pace speeds up and our supply chains become more complicated, we can feel less and less connected to where our food is grown, how our clothes are made and where our waste goes. We can feel helpless as we passively participate in this modern, globalised consumer culture. Despite this, it is still true that God created us in his image as his co-creators, destined for the good works he prepared in advance.

When thinking about this, we can find comfort in the concept of dependent responsibility: we're responsible for our actions and commitment to living as Jesus' loving ambassadors of reconciliation and advocates for justice. We're called by God to carry out His vision, embodying His heart for humanity; but at the same time, we're fully dependent on the grace, provision and guidance of God. Every purchase and action we make contributes to shaping the world we desire to see. However, without God's empowerment and blessing, our efforts lack sustainability and enduring impact.

It's likely that one word or the other of this phrase resonates with your spirit here. Perhaps you need to be reminded that you have responsibility—a deep God-given purpose. Or maybe you need a reminder that you don't carry this alone, that Jesus goes before you and equips your every need, and that his commitment to the restoration of all things will not be thwarted. Rest and connect with God about whichever of these truths you need to be reminded of today.

## Reflect:

- 1** Humans create because God designed us to be like him in that way! In what other ways can you see God's character imprinted on us?
- 2** Do you think of yourself as having co-creative power? What could change in the way you lived if you became more aware of this?
- 3** How might recognising that creativity extends beyond conventional ideas of 'creatives'—such as artists or writers—reshape our understanding of ourselves as co-creators?



## Prayer:

'Father of all, thank you for making me a creative being in your image. Please give me thoughts, words and actions that fit in with your mission of restoration. Amen.'

## DAY TWO:

# God's Wonderful World



**We all reflect God's image and care toward all of creation. It positions us rightly as caretakers of God's world rather than rulers over it ourselves.**

**Romans 1:20** 'For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.' (NLT)

**Psalms 65: 8-9, 12-13** 'The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders; where morning dawns, where evening fades, you call forth songs of joy. You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly . . .

The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;  
the hills are clothed with gladness.  
The meadows are covered with flocks  
and the valleys are mantled with grain;  
they shout for joy and sing.'

Have you ever felt a sense of perspective and awe when looking at a mountain range, or the beauty and abundance of a rainforest or garden in spring? Have you been silenced by the power and mystery of a thunderstorm or ocean waves? Have you felt nourished by a healthy meal or the sun on your skin?

The Bible teaches us that God has chosen to communicate and witness to

humanity through creation. Through the beauty, power and mystery of creation, God is saying, 'see and praise me for my grandeur, abundance, power and provision.' Some Christians can be heard saying that while it's important to care for the planet, it's perhaps less vital work than sharing the gospel. However, when we read scriptures like Romans 1:20, we see the flaw in this simplistic dichotomy. Scripture asserts

that creation itself points people to Jesus. Therefore, when we degrade or neglect that creation, are we actually getting in the way of the gospel?

All of creation was designed to communicate and glorify God. The very fields and streams themselves were designed to sing praises with gladness to God. So when a river runs a toxic synthetic blue colour because of a denim factory upstream; or an abundant forest is felled to make space for more plantations; and the oceans teeming with exotic life are now on track to have more plastic than fish by 2050—we have to wonder, how well are they able to fulfil their purpose in their current states of degradation and overuse?

This is what we mean by stewardship: We are called to care for, and be sustained by, God's gift of creation in a way that reflects his purposes. We are to wisely steward the earth's resources to practice God's provision and care for humanity in a sustainable, respectful way and protect the earth's ability to provide for future generations.

You are a valued steward. You're not here to take and extract. You're here to care for and tend to the garden and enjoy its fruits! Together, we're invited to be part of the choir of creation, alongside hills and meadows, singing with gladness for all that God has done for us.

## Reflect:

- 1** Can caring for the environment be an act of worship?
- 2** What do you think God intended true stewardship of creation to look like? How are we going compared to this vision and what's your part to play?



## Prayer:

'Heavenly Father, you created all things and the world belongs to you. Please give us hearts that long to honour you the way as we live in it, and the impact we others. Amen.'

## DAY THREE:

# Standing In The Gap



**Through advocacy, we actively participate in God's movement towards justice, working towards a world where everyone experiences dignity and respect, as God's image-bearers.**

Advocacy serves as a crucial tool in creating a better world by amplifying marginalised voices, addressing systemic injustice, and promoting a society where all can flourish as intended by God. Sometimes described as 'standing in the gap' or 'amplifying the voices of the marginalised,' both these metaphors describe how advocacy is actually an act of grace that symbolises what God does for all of us—generously providing that which we can't provide for ourselves.

**Psalm 82:3-4** 'Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.'

**Isaiah 1:17** 'Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.'

Your voice, actions and influence can contribute to a better world for all, but the work of creating a better world is a marathon, not a sprint. We need to proceed with endurance and creativity—using our efforts and voices in multiple ways to bring about sustainable change. We can all be advocates.

Jesus advocated for those living in poverty, just as we're called to do today, and when we read passages of scripture

that highlight God's vision and heart for a just world, we're reminded of the need for patience. As Martin Luther King, Jr. once stated, 'the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.'

As we look to Jesus, we recognise that we're surrounded by the 'great cloud of witnesses' spoken of in Hebrews 12:1; followers of Jesus who throughout history have had courage to speak truth to power and interrupt systems of injustice.

Our dearly held forebears in this faith can inspire us to continue in that calling. God equips us uniquely for our part in this work as opportunities arise, driven by Christ's love and empowered by the Spirit to remain steadfast. Having been given the gift of living in Australia at this point in history, we believe we're not mere spectators in the grand procession toward societal change. Instead, we believe we have unique opportunities to participate by influencing decision-makers and powerholders. We also direct resources to where they might be most effectively used for good by raising our voice, and keeping it raised in whatever area God directs us. While we can achieve a lot as individuals, we believe that in advocacy, like in so much of life, we're better together. So, we're committed to harnessing the collective will and energy of many followers of Jesus so that our advocacy efforts might be multiplied and sustained.

Having been empowered by the Holy Spirit, who goes with us and is already at work in the world, we know we walk alongside the author of all creation, and are filled with courage to continually speak up, and out for what is right.

## Reflect:

**1** What characters in the Bible or history of the church model faithful advocacy? What can we learn from them?

**2** There are many mentions in scripture regarding the need for advocacy on behalf of 'the fatherless and the widow'; this is reflective of those most on the margins of society at the time those scriptures were written. Who do you think are the equivalent people living on the margins of our society today?

**3** Is advocacy a task requested of every follower of Jesus? Or only those gifted for the task? Reflect on the injustices you feel your heart stirred by. What might be stopping you from using your voice and taking your unique opportunities to advocate for vulnerable people?



## Prayer:

'Dear God, give me courage and a bold heart to stand up for what is right. Help me to be ready to 'stand in the gap' for others and thank you, Jesus, for advocating for me. Amen.'



## DAY FOUR:

# Shining Ambassadors

Being an ambassador means representing Christ and his values in our words and actions to those around us.



**1 Peter 2:12** 'Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.'

**2 Corinthians 5** 'We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.'

**Matthew 5:14-16** 'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'

As a follower of Jesus, you're an ambassador of Christ. You represent your values and your faith in your everyday actions and decisions—those that are deliberate and those that are unintentional.

If you're outspoken about your faith, that puts you in a meaningful position. When people notice the decisions you make and ways you interact with the world, they might say to themselves, 'So this is how a Christian acts!' If our faith permeates our lives and worldview, then everyday choices

and activities can be made sacred as we model the love of Jesus and seek to draw near to him in all things.

This might feel overwhelming, but it serves as a reminder that every choice we make holds significance. Whether it's how we react to being cut off in traffic or our choice to support small fair-trade businesses when buying birthday or Christmas presents, these actions reflect how Jesus is shaping our character. And Peter 2:12 reminds us that all of our choices have the potential to bring God glory.

Jesus rebuked greed, pride, and worry and calls us to follow suit; not out of obligation or guilt, but because of the gift of unconditional love! What a blessing! The Spirit empowers us to discern a path of freedom that leads to peace.

Being an ambassador looks like living confidently as well as ethically, revealing Jesus through our speech, actions and priorities. 'Let your light shine before others, so they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven' (Matthew 5:6).

## Reflect:

**1** Both 1 Peter and Matthew highlight that seeing another person's good deeds can point someone towards God. Have you found this to be true? Is there someone whose faith in action inspires you?

**2** Why would a perfect God choose imperfect people as his ambassadors?



## Prayer:

'Father, thank you for calling me to be your representative. Please help me hold this role with humility and courage so that others will see the way I live and know you are the one to follow. Amen.'







## DAY FIVE:

# Part Of God's Purpose

God has a plan for our lives. He has gifted us with the resources, money, time, and talents for his good purposes.



**Genesis 45:5-7** 'I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.'

God has given many of us resources to bless others.

A child might ask, 'Why was I born with so much, while kids around the world have so little?'

We can ask ourselves the same thing. Why do I live in suburban comfort with plenty to eat, while 828 million people are hungry? Is life a game of chance, randomly dealing out comfort for some and terrible hardship for others?

The story of Joseph in the Bible teaches us to think differently. Up until Genesis 41, Joseph's life is full of chaos. His brothers sell him into slavery and he is taken to Egypt, falsely accused by his employer's

wife, and sentenced to jail. Only when we step back do we see that God has orchestrated everything perfectly. While imprisoned, Joseph wins Pharaoh's trust by predicting seven years of famine. Wise and resourceful, he is put 'in charge of the whole land of Egypt' (Genesis 41:41) and creates food reserves so people don't starve when the famine begins.

Then along comes Joseph's brothers, seeking grain from Egypt so their families back home won't starve. When they discover who holds their fate, they are ashamed and terrified.

But Joseph offers hope with these surprising words: 'it was not you who sent me here, but God' (Genesis 45:8).

Though the brothers tried to harm Joseph, God had better plans. He saw his people in desperate need, and as their Provider, God cared for them—even when they didn't deserve it. And God did all this through Joseph, placing him at just the right time and place to provide his family with food, pastureland, and livelihoods (Genesis 47:1-6).

Joseph didn't know it at the time, but his actions had eternal consequences. God wasn't just feeding a hungry family; he was keeping his promise to grow a kingdom that would one day bless all of humanity. Survival from this famine meant thousands of years later, Joseph's descendant, Jesus, would bring an everlasting deliverance. At just the right time and place, God sent Jesus to die for our sins, giving humanity the gift of eternal life.

Life is not a game of chance. The same God who had plans for Joseph has plans for us. We are 'created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do' (Ephesians 2:10). Joseph could have turned his treacherous brothers away, but he chose to provide for their needs. Jesus didn't use his position for gain, but willingly laid his life down to serve. As God's dearly loved children, are we using the things he has given us—our resources, money, time, and talents—for his good purposes?

While we may never know why the world displays such inequality, we can trust that no matter who we are or where we live, God has placed each of us at this time and place on purpose, and for a purpose. And so, together we ask—how can we use what God has given us to be a blessing to others?

## Reflect:

- 1 Take some time to thank God for all the blessings you enjoy, both physical and spiritual.
- 2 Why do you think Joseph could act so graciously to his brothers?
- 3 How can you be a blessing to others—especially those in need?



## Prayer:

'Dear God, you are our Provider in all things—food to eat, support for our families and eternal life through your Son. Please provide for those who are hungry, so they can enjoy fullness of life. Thank you for your gifts and for placing us at the right place and time, for a purpose. May we bless those in need. Amen.'



## DAY SIX:

# Grateful & Generous

**Jesus' sacrificial love for us and his desire to provide teach us to model the same. We are to extend generosity toward others as he would toward us, with true grace and humility.**



**Mark 12:44** 'They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.'

When you give, is it out of generosity, or obligation? Take a moment to read the story of the widow and her offering in the context of Mark 12:34-44. What do you notice?

The story of this nameless and sacrificial widow—found in both Luke and Mark's Gospels—is as famous for its simplicity of purpose as it is for being the inspiration behind countless other acts of generosity. We know it as the story of the widow's mite or the widow's offering; that is, of the husbandless woman who dropped two meagre coins into the moneybox in the temple courtyard as Jesus, the Lord of the Universe, looked on.

Jesus had visited the temple during the busiest time of the year with his disciples, sitting on a bench, watching and pointing and lecturing on the quirks and qualities

of the people who passed them. That he noticed the woman at all reflects his heart for those who lived on the margins. That he then held her up as a model of generosity reveals more of his desire for our lives, that we hold onto nothing that might keep us from the service of God.

As one writer put it, 'The cash value of her gift compared to the gifts of the wealthy was hardly enough to notice, but the devotion behind it was another matter. That devotion, beginning there and spreading throughout the world, has built hospitals and helped the needy, fed the hungry and encouraged the imprisoned. Today, the world knows more about the poor widow than about the richest man in Jerusalem in her day.'

You see, shallow spirituality did not impress Jesus. A religious value system

that revolved around "dos and don'ts" didn't catch his attention. Neither did the wealth of those who had stopped by the treasury in the synagogue's courtyard. What did impress him was a shuffling, marginalised widow at the offering box, pausing to scrounge through her pocket. She did not find loose change there—she found all the money she had in the world. It was her savings, her retirement, her social security, her grocery account and her rent all rolled into one. And it was only two coins.'

She gave what would cost her everything, while the religious leaders of the time did not give anything that would make them uncomfortable. She held onto nothing, they held onto that which gave them convenience.

And Jesus noticed. Why? Because he would give all he had that we might become rich. He'd become poor, giving up everything, so that we could enter into the fullness of life through his amazing sacrifice on the cross. When he rose from the dead to offer us new life, he gave us new opportunities, empowered by his Spirit, to live out that generous life of devotion with him!

## Reflect:

- 1 After re-reading this famous story, how would you define true poverty and true wealth?
- 2 How does this widow's example speak to you today? Why do you suppose Jesus held her up as an example to his followers?
- 3 Because of Christ's sacrifice for you, what are some specific and creative ways you could consciously seek opportunities to give more generously?



## Prayer:

'Gracious God, giver of all good gifts, help me to let go of that which I cling to tightly so that I might live generously toward others, especially the poor, knowing you are my great provider. Amen.'

## DAY SEVEN:

# The God Of Restoration



Jesus has the power to restore all that was once lost; to turn what was intended to harm us for good. There isn't any brokenness he cannot heal.

**Genesis 37:19-20** "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams."

### Read Genesis 37:12-35

Joseph's story is one of injustice, hardship, and ultimately triumph.

Joseph was the youngest of Jacob's sons and his favourite. He doesn't hide it and gifts him with an extraordinary, multi-coloured coat. Joseph's brothers don't hide their jealousy and disdain either. Families are complicated.

At 17, Joseph had a strong prophetic gift, an insight his brothers lacked. Though he may have wielded it with a degree of immaturity, his 'predictions' all proved true in the end.

In Matthew 5, Jesus describes anger as the equivalent of murder, so as

it happens, Joseph was dead to his brothers from the moment his father gave him the robe. His brothers hated him even before he had wild dreams about them, and they hated him more when he shared those! Clearly, he didn't have a lot of respect for them either as we see when he told their dad about their behaviour. Families can be difficult. Joseph's brothers set out to remove him, and his dreaming, from their lives. And they took a cruel step when they resolved to sell their brother into slavery.

Discarded and despised, Joseph experienced a sharp turn. But if we read on, we see that God does not abandon Joseph. He was young, yet God had a plan for his long life. Injustice and exploitation stood in

the way momentarily—but God was always, and is always, at work.

Either from the bottom of a cistern, or tied to the Midianite caravan, Joseph could not have seen the future God had in store for him. He'd known betrayal and hopelessness—and a father's love—yet God used him at just the right time to save His people from famine.

When we look out at our world, young people are at risk and injustice seems to target children. But we call to mind the closing statements of the book of Genesis (50:20): 'You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good.' His plan is always for good, reaching to the generations to come.

## Reflect:

- 1 How did God use the harm Joseph's brothers brought on him for good?
- 2 Families are complicated. How is God working in yours? Or how do you hope He will?
- 3 How can you help the people in your community work for the good of others?



## Prayer:

'God of restoration, there is no brokenness so big you cannot heal. There is no harm you cannot turn into good. We look to you, believing that your plans for our broken world are always good. Amen.'











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