

DEVOTION #1: A HOLY NATION AND ROYAL PRIESTHOOD

1 Peter 2:9–10 (ESV)

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Nehemiah 9:5–6 (ESV)

Stand up and bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. "You are the Lord, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you."

Illustration: Think of a sports team. When you put on the jersey, you represent more than yourself — you represent the team, the city, and the fans. In Christ, when we live out our identity as His people, we "wear His jersey" every day, showing the world who He is.

Grasp: In Christ, we belong to God. We are His chosen people, set apart to declare His greatness.

Reflection of God: He is the Creator, the Preserver of all things, exalted above all blessing and praise.

Recognition of Redemption: Once we were not His people, but through His mercy, we are now His children.

Rebellion: We often forget our identity, and as a result, we live like everyone else, chasing approval, comfort, or control.

Questions:

1. Gospel Reflection: What does it mean to you personally that you are God's possession and chosen in Christ?
2. Practical Step: How can you live differently this week because you belong to Him?

Story to Read: John 17; 1 John 1-5

Prayer: Lord, remind me today that I belong to You. Forgive me for living as if I don't. Thank You for calling me out of darkness into Your marvelous light. Align my life with Your will so I can reflect You to others.

DEVOTION #2

BROKEN AND CONTRITE HEARTS

Psalm 51:1–12 (ESV)

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Illustration: A cracked windshield starts with a small chip. If ignored, it spreads across the whole glass. Sin is like that; left unconfessed, it grows and damages more of our lives. Repentance is like getting it repaired; it may be painful, but it restores integrity before more damage spreads.

Grasp: We can't fix ourselves. Only God's mercy and forgiveness can make us clean.

Reflection of God: He is holy and just, yet full of steadfast love.

Recognition of Redemption: God washes us whiter than snow and restores the joy of salvation through Christ.

Rebellion: We hide our sins or excuse them, instead of bringing them into the light.

Questions:

1. Gospel Reflection: How does David's cry for mercy point you to the cross of Jesus?
2. Practical Step: What is one sin you need to bring into the light before God or a trusted believer this week?

Story to Read: 2 Samuel 11–12

Prayer: Father, have mercy on me. Create in me a clean heart and restore my joy in You. Thank You for the forgiveness found in Jesus. Align my life with Your ways today.

DEVOTION #3: RETURN WITH ALL YOUR HEART

Joel 2:12–13 (ESV)

“Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

Nehemiah 9:16–19 (ESV):

“But they and our fathers acted presumptuously and stiffened their neck and did not obey your commandments. They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them. Even when they had made for themselves a golden calf and said, ‘This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt,’ and had committed great blasphemies, you in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud to lead them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way by which they should go.”

Illustration: Imagine trying to breathe with only one lung or eat with only one bite of food a day. You wouldn't survive. In the same way, if we give some of ourselves to God, we get none of God. Loving Him with all our heart, soul, and strength is the only way to truly live.

Grasp: God calls us to return to Him fully, not halfway.

Reflection of God: He is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

Recognition of Redemption: God promises mercy for all who turn back and bear fruit that shows real change.

Rebellion: We often settle for shallow confession while keeping our idols close.

Story to Read: Luke 15:11–32

Questions:

1. Gospel Reflection: How does knowing God's mercy never runs out give you faith to give Him your all instead of just part of yourself, and how might the enemy use halfway faith to trick you into being ineffective?
2. Practical Step: What is one idol or habit you need to “return from” this week to give God your whole heart?

Prayer:

Lord, tear my heart, not just my outward habits. Let my repentance be real. Thank You for Your mercy that welcomes me back again and again. Align me to live in Your love.

DEVOTION #4: TRUE WORSHIP, TRUE FASTING

Isaiah 58:6–12 (ESV)

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, "Here I am." If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.

Matthew 6:16–18 (ESV)

"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

Illustration: Imagine a birthday party where someone brings a huge gift, but it's empty inside. The wrapping looks great, but there's no love or thought behind it. Worship without love for God and others is like that, it looks good on the outside, but it's empty. True worship gives from the heart.

Grasp: God desires worship that is real and leads to loving others.

Reflection of God: He is a God of justice, light, and healing.

Recognition of Redemption: Jesus frees us from empty rituals to love God and neighbor.

Rebellion: We can use religion for show instead of humbling ourselves and serving others.

Story to Read: John 4:1–42

Questions:

1. Gospel Reflection: How does Jesus show that true worship is about Spirit and truth, not outward performance?
2. Practical Step: What is one way you can serve or love someone this week as an act of worship?

Prayer:

Lord, let my worship be true. Free me from empty rituals. Thank You for Jesus, who makes my worship acceptable. Align me to love and serve others in Your name.

DEVOTION #5: GOD'S KINDNESS LEADS TO REPENTANCE

Romans 2:4 (ESV)

Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

John 8:1–11 (ESV)

But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

Grasp: God's kindness spares us from condemnation but doesn't excuse sin. His mercy invites us to a changed life.

Reflection of God: He is both merciful and just, full of patience yet clear in His call to holiness.

Recognition of Redemption: Jesus not only forgives but commands us to walk in newness of life.

Rebellion: We often take His kindness for granted, living as though sin doesn't matter.

Story to Read: Acts 9:1–31; Acts 26:1–32

Questions:

1. Gospel Reflection: How does Jesus' words to the woman, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and sin no more," show both His mercy and His call to repentance?
2. Practical Step: What's one area where you need to respond to God's kindness not with excuses but with a changed step of obedience this week?

Prayer:

Lord, thank You for showing me mercy when I deserve judgment. Forgive me for taking Your grace lightly. Help me to respond to Your kindness with a life that turns from sin and walks in obedience. Align my heart to Your mercy so others may see the freedom found in You.

DEVOTION #6: PREPARING OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

Hebrews 10:23–25 (ESV)

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Mark 2:1–12 (ESV)

And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic—"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

Grasp: Gathering with God's people is not just routine, it's a place where God's power is displayed, sins are forgiven, and lives are changed.

Reflection of God: He is faithful to keep His promises and powerful to forgive and heal.

Recognition of Redemption: In Christ, we are not only forgiven but made whole, and we get to share in the joy of bringing others to Him.

Rebellion: We often treat worship as optional or come half-hearted, missing the opportunity to be amazed by God's presence.

Questions:

1. Gospel Reflection: How does the healed man in Mark 2 point to the hope we all share when we gather around Jesus?
2. Practical Step: What can you do today to prepare your heart, and maybe even bring someone else, so tomorrow's worship is full of joy and expectation?

Prayer:

Lord, prepare my heart for worship. Forgive me for neglecting Your people or treating our gathering lightly. Thank You that You meet us with forgiveness and power. Align my heart with Your Spirit so tomorrow we come together in joy and amazement at what You will do.