

## Renew Series Week 4 Devotions

Our devotions for this week are going to help us grow in our understanding of who we are in Christ. They were written by Jeff Bethke, the spoken Word guy that you can check out on YouTube and are taken from the book of Ephesians. Remember we learnt on Sunday that confidence is a healthy sense of identity that comes from the inside where you know exactly who you are, what your mission is and what you have to contribute - so the more you can understand who you are, the more confident you will be!

### DAY 1: CHILD OF GOD

#### READ:

"Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure." (Ephesians 1:4-5)

#### REFLECT:

I think sometimes when we read we've been "adopted" by God we don't really let the depth of that sink in. I heard something quite awesome the other day that blew me away: There are a few states in the United States that have adoption laws and protections specifically for kids who've been adopted and their adoptive parent dies. When a parent writes a will, they can later on write their biological child out of the will, but if it's an adopted child they cannot. The state actually gives more protection and security to the adopted child. I thought this was a beautiful picture of us with God. Paul is trying to give a big picture look at our walk with Jesus in this passage, and one thing he centers in on is that we were set to be adopted before we even knew it. How beautiful is that? How does that thought help your confidence in Christ?

#### PRACTISE:

Thank God that he adopted you into His family and that you have a new identity in Christ. Remind yourself throughout this week that you are a child of the creator of the world!

### DAY 2: WITH HIS POWER

#### READ:

"I pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honour at God's right hand in the heavenly realms." (Ephesians 1:19-20)

#### REFLECT:

A wave only a meter high can make you feel like a rag doll. The amount of power in the wave is amazing! Paul in this passage of Ephesians speaks about God's power and how remarkable it is. In fact he says that God and His "immeasurable greatness of power" is towards us who believe. That means we have access to God's power. That power is on our side. That power is a person and He knows us and loves us. How would your day be different if you experienced God's power in your life?

#### PRACTISE:

Think back on the **Power Statements** you wrote on Sunday morning - they are statements that are true, that are taken from God's Word and that you repeat to yourself throughout your day. If you did not include one that refers to God's power available to you, then consider writing it now and using it in the coming days.

## DAY 3: IT'S ALL GRACE

### READ:

"But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. (Ephesians 2:4,5,8,9)

### REFLECT:

As a parent now I am starting to see things differently. One thing that I've noticed about it is just how much I love giving my daughter gifts. Either things I've made, a flower from my walk home, or a big gift like on Christmas day. One thing that makes this so special is to see her face when she gets the gift. To see how much she loves it, makes me love giving the gift even more! It makes me light up. Imagine though if I gave her a gift, and instead of being excited she looked at me and asked how much she owed me for the gift. I would be devastated. I think sometimes we don't realize that's us every time we try to repay God. Every time we try to earn His love. No it's freely given as a gift and we have that because of Jesus. And being joyful and thankful about that gift is what God wants from us most! Do you believe that? Why do you think it's hard for us to sometimes trust what Jesus did was a gift? How can you be more thankful for that gift today?

### PRACTISE:

We learnt on Sunday that one of the keys to confidence is watching our **Self-Talk** - during this week, listen to the things you say to yourself and make sure they are positive and reflect what you are learning through these devotions and readings from the book of Ephesians. Remind yourself everyday and throughout the day who you are in Christ by repeating your Power Statements!

## DAY 4: ONE FAMILY

### READ:

"So now you are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit." (Ephesians 2:19-22)

### REFLECT:

When we knew we were becoming parents we started asking other parents for advice. One mentor of mine mentioned how when his kids fight it's one of the most devastating things to him. Imagine what God feels like when His children fight. When we are bitter, unforgiving, and hurtful towards others. This passage though gives us hope because it says that when Jesus died He didn't just die for us, but He also died to unite us. To make a new family. There is no dividing wall between who makes more money, who has more accomplishments, etc. It all depends on faith in Jesus and everyone is family and completely equal. Do you believe every Christian is a family member of yours? How would things change if you did?

### PRACTISE:

We learnt on Sunday that one of the keys to confidence is building a **Support System** - having people in our lives (like a boxer has in his corner) who build us up and remind us of who we are in Christ. List 3 people who you need in your corner and be more intentional to listen to the words they speak into your life.

## DAY 5: GOD'S VISIBLE WISDOM

### READ:

"And this is God's plan: we who believe the Good News share equally in the riches inherited by God's children. We are part of the same body, and we enjoy the promise of blessings because we belong to Christ Jesus. By God's grace and mighty power, we have been given the privilege of serving him by spreading this Good News. God's purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord." (Ephesians 3:6-7,10-11)

### REFLECT:

I think sometimes we get too caught up in the abstract definition of God. I think we think lofty, and abstract, and have trouble defining what that looks like when God already told us and showed us. Paul makes it clear that Jesus is God and if you want to know what God is like look to Jesus. He came down and lived among us and we now know what God is like. And to take that further Paul says the church, the family of God, following Jesus, is the revealed wisdom of God. We are the active display of God's redemptive purposes in the world. How would your behavior change if you really believed that today? What can you do to show the wisdom of God as the Church today?

### PRACTISE:

We learnt on Sunday that one of the keys to confidence is **Body Language**. From what you have learnt in this devotion today, how do you think God wants you to carry yourself? After all, you reflect God and show his wisdom to the world? Go though your day with a posture that matches your identity: feet firmly on the ground, arms unfolded, chin up, eyes up and shoulder back. When people ask you who you are, confidently tell them that you are a follower of Jesus Christ. Don't forget to repeat your Power Statements as they will help you build you confidence in Christ.

## DAY 6: WALKING DAILY

### READ:

"Imitate God in everything you do because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God." (Ephesians 5:1-2)

### REFLECT:

When you go for a walk in the sun, and if you go fast enough it can be a pretty intense workout and you are soon drenched in sweat. One thing I love about Paul's letter is Him telling the Ephesians to "walk in love" as Christ loved us. A lot of times we believe in love, we know what it is, but until we are walking in it it's not real. Walking involves active obedience and trust. Actively showing love. And the best part is we don't have to guess how to do that. Paul said we are to walk in love because Jesus has and offered himself as a sacrifice for us. What sacrifices can you make today that actively show God's love? How can you walk in love?

### PRACTISE:

We learnt on Sunday that one of the keys to confidence is **Past Performances**. Think back on the changes that God has made in your life and how you are seeking to be more and more like Jesus each day. Think of what you were and all that you are becoming and that will fill you with confidence that God is at work in you!

## DAY 7: IN THE BATTLE

### READ:

"Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere." (Ephesians 6:10-18)

### REFLECT:

I played sports my whole life and one thing I learned through playing sports is you don't just show up and play with no goal, preparation, or determination. If you just showed up and played a game and your opponent had been practicing all week they would probably win. Same with our Christian life. We are in a cosmic battle. And the best part is we have already won. Jesus has dealt the decisive blow. But we must play that out and act as if that is true in our lives. We must be ready. On guard. Trusting in Jesus. And notice how in Ephesians there is no armor for your back. It's all for your front. We have to be on guard facing our opponent to be protected. Pretending there is no battle and turning around just leaves us exposed. What part of the armor of God do you think you struggle to put on most? Do you trust in Jesus that He has already dealt the victory blow?

### PRACTISE:

We learnt on Sunday that one of the keys to confidence is **Preparation**. Make it your goal for the next week to wake up each morning and prepare for the coming day by praying and putting on the armour of God and be ready for any temptations that the evil one will bring your way.