

Renew Series Week 7 Devotions

Our devotions for the coming week were written by Grace Alexander an adult leader at Encounter Youth. Each day of the coming week you will explore an aspect of your emotional life by reading God's word, thinking about it, hearing a challenge and asking God for help you think and act like a champion no matter how you are feeling in any situation.

DAY 1: FEELINGS

READ: *Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* (Psalm 139:1)

THINK: We were made with feelings, but we learned that in the process of emotioning [yes, that's a very descriptive, made up word ;)] or reacting, it is important to (1) Touch - understand what our emotions are feeling, (2) Pause - control our emotions and our reaction in response to how we are feeling, and (3) Engage - use what we are feeling to get through what we need to do. Why is it so important to understand what we are feeling? Because then we are emotionally aware (as we learned we should be in week 1), and can understand how what we are feeling will, or is, effecting our behaviour, speech, and performance. Why is it important to pause and control our emotions? Because our bodies are designed to react faster than they are designed to wisely respond. Our reactions are not always what's best in a situation and so we need to pause and allow ourselves time to choose a wise response. Why is it important to then engage with our emotions? Our emotions tell us what we are feeling inside, how things around us affect us and influence us. If we just cut them off it will create a dam of squashed down emotions that will eventually leak out somehow. Rather we should learn to use the emotion we are feeling to help us get through the situation we are in.

CHALLENGE: This week, as you go through the devotionals and the things life throws at you, don't forget to touch, pause and engage with your feelings. We are emotional human beings, and if we learn how to better understand and control our powerful emotions, we will be one step closer to thinking and acting with a CHAMPION MINDSETS!

PRAYER: Thank You Lord that You made me to feel and made me with emotions. Help me to honour You with my feelings and to understand and control them more. I give this week to You and ask You to help me. In Jesus Name, Amen.

DAY 2: ANGER

READ: *My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.* (Joshua 1:19)

THINK: Do you ever have those moments where you literally think you could explode? As if the words you could spew would not be enough and the force with which you could storm off and slam the door would just not satisfy? I am sure each of us has had one of those moments of frustration, either acted upon or bubbling up like acid inside of us. The Bible tells us in Joshua 1:19 that we should be quick to listen and slow to speak and get angry. Hah! Easier said than done right?! But if you really think about it, how will getting wrathful help you? Sure, shouting and slamming about might bring some short relief, but will it solve anything? Nope! The Bible says in Proverbs 15:1 that a person with a hot temper stirs up strife, but someone who is patient calms the fight. We all like to prove a point and win an argument, but blessed are the ones who go first after peace (Matthew 5:9), rather than simply winning and being right.

CHALLENGE: The Bible says in Romans 12:19, that we should not avenge ourselves because vengeance belongs to the Lord and He will repay. This week, in your moments of frustration, look for opportunities to keep quiet, listen, and allow the Lord to work.

PRAYER: Thank You, Lord, that You fight for me and are my self-control when my frustration bubbles. Teach me to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. Thank You Lord. In Jesus Name, Amen

DAY 3: FEAR

READ: For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

THINK: Fear can be a debilitating, thief of all God wishes to do in us and through us. Fear of being rejected, fear of messing up, fear of not getting what we need, fear of breaking the mould, being let down, letting others down, etc - all of which hold us in a place of stagnancy, not moving anywhere. I used to struggle with fear in the area of dreams. To dream I had to be vulnerable, jump off the cliff and try, which meant a whole lot of opportunities to mess up and 'fail'. I couldn't tell you a single dream of mine if you asked me, but with a little work and prodding, God pushed this fear to the surface and I realized that I was missing out on so much life, so much fun, and SO many adventures; passing them up to become cynical and stagnant. God is love (1 John 4:8), and it says in 1 John 4:18 that there can be no fear in love, because perfect love casts out fear. 2 Timothy 1:7 says that God has not placed inside of us a spirit of fear, but rather the Spirit of Love Himself dwells within us, and so we have power, love, and a sound (or secure) mind. If fear is not of God, then it should be cast out as it holds no truth, but comes from the father of lies- the devil.

CHALLENGE: This week when you start to feel fears and doubts niggling at your heart, step back, take a breath and look for the truth. Break down those thought patterns of fear and doubt, and in their place, build thought patterns of truth, peace, and power mindsets!

PRAYER: Thank You Lord that I do not need to fear because you are with me and will never leave me (Deuteronomy 31:6). Thank You that in You I do not have to be afraid because fear is cast out in the presence of love. Invade the places of fear in my heart and take over. I love You Lord, Amen.

DAY 4: LOVE

READ: *But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

(Matthew 6:33)

THINK: Ah, love, probably one of the most distracting and consuming emotions of all when it comes around... When we are 'in love' it consumes our every thought, our actions, our hopes, conversations, dreams, and while it is fun to feel in love, it can also be pretty stressful and confusing. What should I say? Did I use the right wording? Man, I should not have said/done that! I bet they think I looked super weird! Our mind is overloaded with assumptions, fears, questions, and fluffy feelings, all leaving us just a little bit confused. In that moment I like to step back, distance my heart, and turn to the Father, who, like we said earlier, is Love Himself (1 John 4:8). I bring Him my questions, my fears, and my confusion, lay them at His feet and look into His eyes for what I should do. Matthew 6 speaks about not worrying about the things of this world or the things of tomorrow, because the Lord is more than capable of providing for us, and in verse 33 it says that as we seek God's Kingdom first all the other things will be given to us as well. This makes our task simple - seek to live in alignment with God's Kingdom and all the wisdom and provision we need will be given to us as well. God created us and knows our hearts as well as the hearts of the people we should one day be with. He has it all under control!

CHALLENGE: Philippians 4:19 says, "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus." When in doubt in a relationship, or even friendship, as to what to say/do, step back, breathe, and pray it out. Allow God to help untangle what you can't see, provide what you need and then move forward in clarity - He knows your hearts best!

PRAYER: Thank You Lord, that You know me best, You understand, and You are interested in every part of my life, even this part. I invite You in to give me wisdom and perspective as only You can. I love You Lord. In Jesus Name, Amen

DAY 5: PAIN

READ: *The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.* (Psalm 34:18)

THINK: Broken heartedness is something I am sure we can all relate to feeling at some stage. Feelings hurt, hopes crushed, identity attacked, we feel weak and down and hopeless. In moments like that sometimes all you can do is lie down and just think, just wait in the silence a bit, heart's pain so filling your mind and attention that you can't talk or just be normal. Other times it's just a niggling pain and an ocean of tears beneath a smile, just waiting for a prod to burst and unravel. Broken heartedness can often feel very lonely, like no one would understand, no one would care enough, and you don't have strength to try and understand it enough to tell someone. Psalm 34, however, speaks of how God is near to those who are broken hearted; He bottles every one of your tears (Psalm 56:8). Yes, God cares enough to bottle every tear you cry, your heart's feelings are important to Him! It says in 1 Peter 5:7 that we should cast our burdens to the Lord because He cares for us, and goes on to say in verse 10 that though suffering may last for a little while, the Lord will restore us. The place of sorrow is not dwelt in alone, but rather in that place comes the care, rescuing, and nearness of a Father who loves you enough to bottle every tear, to save you when you feel crushed.

CHALLENGE: When you feel alone, broken, hopeless, sad, or misunderstood, remember that the God of the universe loves you enough to come down into that place, bottle your tears, and save you! You are never alone in sorrow, so next time you feel upset, invite God into that place, invite Him to be the healing and care and listening ear your heart desires!

PRAYER: Dear Lord, come into my place of sorrow, catch my tears, and lift me up. The storm is dark but Your light is brighter. Be the comfort and rescuer I need. Thank You for all You are. Amen

DAY 6: ATTACK

READ: *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.* (Ephesians 6:12)

THINK: Do you ever feel like you are fighting a losing battle; like no matter what you do, someone is upset with you? I had that a little while ago, and remember fight after fight with a particular person, I would get more and more angry, and more and more hateful of their company. People would remind me of this verse, and how I should not be fighting against that person, but rather against the plan of the enemy that was working through them, but my eyes were blinded to this and all I could see was them attacking me! God worked on my heart, however, and eventually my eyes were opened to the fact that no matter how hard I tried, my words and shouting and insulting back was not helping at all, but instead was enflaming the argument more. With supernatural grace I was able to step back and return the insults with a quiet answer (Proverbs 15:1), a silent response, while inside I prayed against the spiritual attack on my heart that was happening through this person. It is so easy for us to get our feelings hurt and react against the

person, instead of coming against Satan who is seeking to harm us, we are fighting the wrong enemy. We let our emotions rule and react without using Touch, Pause and Engage; reacting in line with what we physically see and feel. What is God saying though, and where is the attack actually coming from?

CHALLENGE: When attack comes, decide to seal your lips and not react with emotions, but rather pray with your spirit. Guard your heart, see the truth (John 8:32), and remember to Touch, Pause, and Engage!

PRAYER: Lord, help me to guard my tongue, and understand that my enemy is not the flesh and blood I see, but the devil at work through their words/actions. Give me Your strength, Your wisdom, Your truth, and may I honour You. In Jesus Name, Amen

DAY 7: SUIT UP!

READ: *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.* (Ephesians 6:10)

THINK: The Bible tells us to suit up, to put on the full armour God provides us with to protect ourselves from the attack of the enemy. Our emotions can very easily be attacked- by a little fear, hurt feelings, a frustration to start the day with - which soon grows and builds until we write off the day as 'a bad day'. But Ephesians 6:10 calls us to take our stand against the devil's plans, and to do this we need to be equipped. Put on the belt of Truth, the breastplate of Righteousness, the shoes of the willingness to Gospelize, the shield of Faith, the helmet of Salvation, and lastly the Sword of the Spirit which is the WORD of GOD. When our emotions are attacked we are to protect ourselves with the Truth of God, our Faith and Trust and Obedience in Him, with our surety of our Salvation, our relationship in right standing with Him, and our testimony. Lastly, we are to defend ourselves with the Word of God, the Bible. How well equipped are you? Do you spiritually clothe and arm yourself with these things? Do you know what the Word of God says so that you can defend yourself with it? These are our tools and protection with which to, "take your stand against the devil's schemes," but do we know or use them?

CHALLENGE: This next week, as you choose what to wear each morning, decide to clothe yourself with the armour God has provided to protect your heart, protect your emotions. Start, too, to learn all the secrets and power within your weapon - the Bible. This is no dead tool, but mighty to protect your heart from the lies of the enemy.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, help me to clothe myself in the armour you have provided. Teach me to wear it daily and how to wield the Sword of the Spirit and understand its secrets. I love You Lord, and submit my emotions to You. In Jesus Name, Amen.