

## Renew Series Week 9 Devotions

Our devotions for the coming week were written by Grace Ravengai, an adult leader at Encounter Youth. Each day of the coming week you will explore an aspect of the routines building block for champion thinking and acting we learnt about on Sunday in our Renew Series as you read God's word, think about it, get challenged and spend time in prayer.

### DAY 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF ROUTINES

**Scripture:** "Keep all my decrees by putting them into practice, for I am the Lord who makes you holy." (Leviticus 20:8)

**Read:** A routine is a sequence of actions regularly followed. It is common tasks, chores, or duties that must be done regularly or at specified intervals; typical or everyday activity - something like habits. Believe it or not, it takes twenty-one days to create a habit, good or bad. In the beginning, it is quite easy to lose focus, and forget about a daily routine, when your day is full of dozens of tasks and personal obligations. It is human nature to forget. I, sometimes forget to read my bible or devotion in the beginning of the day, and late at night, I find myself making excuses – like I'm tired, I'll do two chapters in the morning or I'll set an alarm to wake up and do a task I've forgotten to do.

It's easy for us to feel trapped by our daily routines when we can't see a larger purpose. Anything can become monotonous but good habits or routines come from the heart – when you do not put your heart in a task, it's quite hard to do. The Lord says in Leviticus, that we should put into practice all his commands or decrees, and when we do that he can make us holy. In 1 Corinthians 9:26, Paul says he doesn't run like someone running aimlessly, basically like a chicken which is headless. Our routines have to be purposeful; and they become like that when they are personally linked to our personal goals and where we want to get to in life.

How you can maintain your routines is if you have a **good** daily morning routine, that jumpstarts the day, and puts you in a good mood, giving you positive energy? I find that, a way to uplift my spirit is to have a scripture I read early in the morning and just meditate on it, the whole day. Sort of like how, Mary Jane has a quote she reads every day in the morning. I use the Holy Bible app, and every day at seven in the morning, a verse is on my notification screen waiting for me to read. Including Jesus in your daily routines, makes them meaningful.

**Challenge:** I challenge you to read verse a day, and mediate on it, then see how that verse will manifest in your life. A good verse to start at is, "The Joy of the Lord is my strength." (Nehemiah 8:10) I also challenge you to include God in every aspect of your life, like washing a car, or watching a movie.

**Prayer:** "Thank you for this beautiful day you have created and giving me the gift to enjoy it. I pray that you are with me, every step of the way. Lord, give me a heart of flesh, so you can

write your words on my heart, and I may draw closer to you. May you give me the zeal and passion to do every task, as if I'm doing it unto you. In Jesus' name, Amen."

## **DAY 2: ROUTINE HELPS WITH CONSISTENCY**

**Scripture:** "So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless." (1 Corinthians 15:58)

**Read:** We spoke about how things take up to twenty-one days to become a habit or routine. I've been trying to do small exercises, so that I can at least have a good and healthy body – but I've found that, I can skip a day, maybe even a week without exercising, even when my phone reminds me. Maybe you have something you've been trying to do, or you've been trying to read the bible and you've started, but never finished. Now you want to try something again, or create a better habit, and you're ready to jump into it. You tell yourself that, 'No, this time I'm really serious, the last time was a trial run, and I'm going to get it done,'. When you find yourself losing focus, think about all the 'trial runs' that never did become permanent, maybe you were doing it half-heartedly, this time around, put your heart into it. Do it as if you are doing it for the Lord, until it becomes like second nature. When we are consistent we are training ourselves to be disciplined, and that in turn leads us to greatness.

**Challenge:** Choose a new routine you want to commit to. Mark the day you want to start and write down the steps it will take for you to master your routine. Create rewards for yourself that you earn along the way. Maybe set an alarm to remind you when you need to put time towards your goal and track your progress. Most of all, put your heart in everything you do.

**Prayer:** "Lord, may you help me to be consistent in everything that I do. Be it my studies, reading your word or talking to you. May you give me the motivation to do every task and may you give me an internal alarm, or a gentle reminder to continue with my daily tasks. I ask all these things in Jesus' name, Amen."

## **DAY 3: ROUTINE HELPS WITH CONTROL**

**Scripture:** "A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls." (Proverbs 25:28)

**Read:** When you have a routine, like Daniel who prayed three times a day, (he definitely did this with his whole heart), this gives you somewhere to direct your attention to so you are not distracted by the crowds or internal direction – which is calmness, peace and control over what you are doing and how you are doing it.

Romans 12:2 says, do not conform to the ways of the world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Having a routine actually helps you stay focused and not be influenced by your external and internal environments. My brother runs, at the end of three

or six months, there's always a race, i.e. Comrades and he is always running, in and out of season. It's a routine or hobby that he has taken upon himself to discipline himself and make sure his mind and spirit are in sync.

One of my close friends, he is in his final year of varsity. To keep himself focused, and not let things like clubbing 24/7 and drinking yourself to death, or maybe behaving in promiscuous way, he gyms. It keeps him occupied, keeps his vision clear and it is a good and daily routine that pumps adrenaline into his body, such that he can have a good and productive day.

We have a lot of things that can hinder us from doing purposeful things in life, and living our lives in a way that God would be proud of. It is wise to have a routine to keep you in track. It doesn't have to be running, maybe it can be dancing, writing, singing, and meditating on God's word. Don't let the enemy catch you off-guard.

**Challenge:** Formulate a routine you can follow, or a hobby to do. Keep your eyes on God and meditate on His word. I always keep my time by reading very good novels. Find something that you would enjoy doing. Be like Daniel who did not let the external environment sway him from focusing on God.

**Prayer:** "Dear Lord, in this wicked world, may you protect my mind with the helmet of salvation. May you give me the strength to have self-control and may you lead me and guide me in every single aspect of my life. I ask all this in Jesus' name, Amen."

#### **DAY 4: ROUTINE HELPS WITH CONCENTRATION**

**Scripture:** "Until I get there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them." (1 Timothy 4:13)

**Read:** I know someone who has a pretty disciplined life. He wakes up at five, and has an hour with God; that includes praying, meditating on God's Word and a time to listen to what God has said. Have you ever tried that? Maybe not, but here's where it gets interesting. He wakes up, and has a one on one time with God, invites God into his day, then he has a cold shower, every single day. He has breakfast and is out of the house by seven-thirty, every single day. By the time he gets home, he makes sure all he has to do, is done and completed and by ten o'clock at night he is asleep. If he steps one foot out of his routine, his day is ruined. How cool is that?

In this modern day and age, we get so preoccupied with life; being on social media, studying, work, going out with friends and maybe falling asleep whilst reading a book, watching a movie or on your phone. Often enough, we never have time to sit back at the end of the day, and reflect on what you have learnt, reflect on the word and have time for God. You tell yourself, 'God will understand, I was just so busy,' thing is, He doesn't.

Having a routine, is not just to keep your life disciplined, but it helps you to minimize the amount of information you consume. Routines make everything easier to do, though they are hard to create. Even when we lose focus, we have to train our brain to refocus – and

routines help us to do that. When we include God in our routines, we can focus on Him even when doing other things and he can help us to carry a heavy burden.

**Challenge:** Think about three things that went well; two things that you can do better and one thing you have learnt about yourself. Create time at the end of the day, to just reflect on your day.

**Prayer:** “Lord, may you help me to focus on my daily tasks, and may you be with me every step of the way. May you protect me from the ways of the world, and guide me in all of your ways. Help me to live a disciplined life, in such a way that I will not be swayed from my environment. In Jesus’ name.”

## **DAY 5: GOD FIRST**

**Scripture:** “As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomes him into her home. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord’s feet, listening to what he taught. But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, ‘Lord, doesn’t it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me.’ But the Lord said to her, ‘My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.’” (Luke 10:38-42)

**Think:** What does this scripture tell you about your priorities when it comes to having obligations you feel you must do? Dig deep and let it come to you. What is your priority list like? What is at the very top? Be honest with yourself, no one is there to hear what you are thinking about. In life you must have priorities and keep your priorities straight. Do not waver from them, but then again, you must have the right priorities. Above all the things that are important to you, be it family, friends, school and work, God must always be first. God is a jealous God and He will remove whatever you put first in your life, just so He is first but he will not force you. As children of God, we should be like Mary and have our heads at the feet of God, and seeking a relationship with Him. As humans we tend to do what we feel is the most important, in our lives. Is God important to you? Be honest with yourself. No one is there to judge you.

**Challenge:** If God is not first in your life and routine, then I think its high time you rearranged your life and priorities. God deserves first place in our lives and when He is first, it becomes very evident in your life.

**Prayer:** “Lord, you promise to draw closer to us when we draw closer to you. May you draw closer to me God. May I be able to feel your presence dear father, to feel your love and to know that you are with me. Lord, may you reveal to me all your ways, and may you walk with me, as I strive to walk with you, all the days of my life. In Jesus name, Amen.”

## **DAY 6: SERVING**

**Scripture:** ‘For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as ransom for many.’ (Matthew 20:28)

**Read:** As you are going about your daily routines, just think about something...who exactly are you serving? Matthew 6:24 says that no one can serve two masters, that you will devote to one and despise the other. Therefore, if you answered the question with the two answers, then you need to dig deep and ask yourself again, who are you serving? Are your routines and what you are doing in life serving God? Or are they serving other things? You don't have to serve other wooden or golden idols, but even your phone can become something you serve. As we go about life, we need to be careful that you are serving only one supreme being – that being God. Do your routines honour God? Are your habits reflecting Christ? There's a lot to think about when you choose to be God's child. At the same time, as we serve God, we need to serve other people too. Our main purpose is to bring others into God's family, (serving God whilst serving others). Are the things you are doing reflecting God's perfect love? David is a perfect example of how he was a servant leader. David was also a man after God's heart. Are you going after God's heart? What are you doing to enlarge God's kingdom?

**Challenge:** I encourage you to forgive those you have hurt you and upset you and love them. God says to pray for those who persecute you.

**Prayer:** “Dear Lord, I praise you for who you are in my life and I acknowledge your place in my life. May you remain first in my life, and may give me a forgiving heart. May you create in me, a heart of worship and a heart that is loving, that even when I am busy, I never become too busy to serve you and do your work. I love you Lord, Amen.”

## **DAY 7: BALANCE YOUR LIFE**

**Scripture:** “Live your life with a due sense of responsibility, not as those who do not know the meaning of life but as those who do.” (Ephesians 5:15)

**Read:** You are responsible for the life and body that Christ gave you, so use it wisely. No one else is accountable for the things that you decide to do, or rather the way that you decide to live your life. Your life is important and our greatest asset in life is our mind. Our mind is our responsibility and what we let into it is our responsibility yet again. We should be aware of our external and internal environments whilst having our day to day tasks and duties. We should always be motivated and have the right attitude, as that influences how we live our lives. Be firm in your identity, know that you are a chosen generation, a holy priesthood and you are a holy nation. You are God's child, created in His image and do not let anyone tell you otherwise. Whilst studying, relaxing, reading the word, we should know what kind of energy or intensity level we should apply in the activity. When we lose focus on our goals, or step out on our routine, refocus, your mind does what you tell it to do, and so you can always refocus and shield yourself from getting distracted again. Do not let your emotions destroy you, but rather let them help you become your very best and portray yourself in

way that God will be able to say, “this is my beloved son or daughter, with whom I am proud of.” Jesus even used his anger, in a good way, to remove the sinners from the temple of God (as they were using His house, in a very unjust manner. Our mind can mentally rehearse things before they happen, and so when you do that, you are in a better mindset. I personally rehearse how my arguments will go, and by the end, I am much calmer and I can address people properly.

**Challenge:** Build routines as they help you to train your mind, discipline your mind and live responsibly.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord Jesus, I thank you for the mind that you have given me and I ask you to hold it in your hands, and shield me from the ways of the world. May you sanctify me, and continue to renew my mind each day. May you write your words upon my heart, so that the enemy does not catch me off-guard. May you come to my rescue, each time that I cannot carry a burden or handle a situation. May you help me to keep my emotions in check, to be slow to speak, and quick to listen. I love you Lord. In Jesus name, Amen.