

A close-up, warm-toned photograph of a person reading a book. The person's face is partially visible, looking down at the open book. A white mug filled with dark coffee sits on a light-colored, textured surface next to the book. The background is dark and out of focus, with some bokeh light spots.

STEP ONE

Devotions for people
who don't do devotions.

Nathan Weselake

DAY ONE

It's pronounced 'Dee-voh-shun-ull'.

Mark 1-2

This is intended to be a devotional booklet for people who have never had a devotional life before.

Which means I should explain the word “devotional” because you may not know what I am talking about. The word “devotions” is used by Christians to describe the personal time they take to get to know Jesus better. That's it.

So when you hear someone say “I did my devotions today” or “I have neglected my devotional life” they are referring to the time they personally spend getting to know Jesus better. In the case of the first person, it happened today. In the case of the second, it has been happening infrequently or not at all.

You reading this means that you are “having devotions!” Congratulations! Especially if this is your first time. Hopefully, sometime soon the topic comes up (maybe you can steer it this way) and you can casually mention something you learned in your devotions. Eyebrows will raise. People will nod approvingly. You will feel like you have arrived as a Christian!

I'm kidding.

But, as ridiculous as that last paragraph is, there is still something helpful there. Namely, it shows us how easy it is to miss the point of devotions. You don't do it to impress. You don't do it to feel like you accomplished something. You don't do it to earn favor with God. Although, He does enjoy the time spent with you.

No, your primary motivation is to become like Jesus. To learn how to follow him better. To learn how to be a disciple.

It is important then, here at the beginning, to ask yourself “Why do I want to become like Jesus?” Might seem obvious, but it is one of those elementary questions which is so basic it often isn't asked or articulated. What is it about Jesus that you admire? What characteristics of his are you lacking that you wished you possessed? Those questions are where we are going to start

Get out a sheet of paper, or better yet, get out a journal! Journaling is next level devotions and you might as well start with a bang. Go ahead, put the date on the top of the blank page and then under that, write out what you admire about Jesus.

Maybe at this stage, since you are just starting out, it is tough to really nail down. Maybe you don't know enough about him to be impressed by the things he says and does because you don't know much of what he says and what he does. You are stuck forming your list based on what you can remember from the handful of sermons you have heard that you can actually remember.

Don't feel bad for not being able to remember sermons.

I preach them all the time and can barely remember them a week or two later. Do note, however, your tendency to forget what you hear in a weekly sermon is part of the reason you need to begin to have devotions daily. You can't really grow spiritually if you are eating once a week.

As you feed yourself daily you will not only grow, but you will also have more to add to your list of what you admire about Jesus. For now, write as many characteristics of him as you can think of, you'll be doing this every day and different things will come to mind day by day.

During this devotional, you are going to be reading through the Book of Mark in the Bible. Make sure you read it in an easy translation. If your translation is hard to read, look online for "The Message" or New Living Translation - they are much easier.

As you progress chapter to chapter you'll find much to admire, and your list will grow.

This will be helpful for your list, but most of the time your reading in Mark will have nothing to do with the daily snippet I am writing. This devotional is not to help you understand Mark, but to train you learn how to do daily devotions.

Here is how that will happen each day:

- There will be a snippet I write about becoming like Jesus.
- Two chapters of the Book of Mark to read. It will take you about 10 minutes.
- A journal activity (these will progress day to day)
- A calibrating prayer for the day.

And for today, the snippet is done! All that is left is for you to do is read Mark 1 & 2 and start your list about what you admire about Jesus.

Journal:

1. Start a list of what you admire about Jesus.

Calibrating prayer:

Jesus, I don't know you like I want to know you. I want what I sense others have and maybe developing a devotional life is the way to get it. I thank you for how you will meet me in new ways as I reach out to you in this new way.