

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH DEVOTIONAL SERIES



STEPS THAT MATTER

Drawing Closer to God
in Joyful Simplicity

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PREFACE

This booklet was compiled from a series of devotionals I wrote to share with my Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp contacts. I wanted to encourage those within my social circles by sharing insights I gained during my personal meditations on God's Word. These insights were not from any formal Bible study. They were simply my reflections based on what I believed were promptings from the Holy Spirit as I read the Scriptures.

Since I was sharing these thoughts using my smartphone, I was confronted with two challenges. First, the small screen and even smaller keypad made typing and editing each devotional quite a task. Secondly, I was very conscious that my contacts would be reading them on small screens. As a result, I had to condense each devotional to its most salient truth to minimize the length. Even with such challenges, my reflections began to resonate with others.

I was encouraged early on to compile the devotionals into a book. If I did that, the chapters would be concise since each devotional was already stripped down to its most essential idea. However, it was in this conciseness that I found inspiration: there's simplicity in our relationship with God. Connecting with our Heavenly Father does not need to be complicated. We talk to God, and He talks to us. That is the crux of our communion with Him. And the simplicity of that connection is what I want to share with you.

The following chapters are not padded with illustrations, quotes, and stories. They present core ideas on how we can connect with our Heavenly Father in specific areas of our lives. I focus on 12 Steps That Matter: Drawing Closer to God in Joyful Simplicity. The steps are not listed in order of importance; they simply represent the insights I gleaned during my time in God's Word. I hope these reflections inspire you as they did me. In the busyness surrounding our lives every day, we need moments of uncomplicated reflection to restore and reinvigorate us. To me, the best way to experience this is by drawing near to God in joyful simplicity.

Blessings,
Pastor Carl E. Naitram

INTRODUCTION

“In character, in manner, in style, in all things, the supreme excellence is simplicity.”

—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Life can get complicated very quickly. One phone call, doctor’s visit, e-mail, or staff meeting can change the most ordinary day into a chaotic, stress-filled mess. As we sit with our faces in our hands trying to figure out how we are going to survive the unexpected and unwanted chaos, there rises a longing in our souls for a simpler life:

“If I didn’t know so many people, I wouldn’t have to deal with these relationship issues all the time.”

“If I didn’t have a job with so many responsibilities, I would have the time to make healthier lifestyle choices.”

“If I didn’t have so many family commitments, I would be in a better financial position.”

The thought of having to deal with fewer issues is an attractive alternative amid complex and chaotic days. There is a calmness and clarity that simplicity brings to our lives. At a time when many enjoy bragging about the busyness of their schedules, there is much to be admired in a life that is lived with the joy of a singular purpose.

Proverbs 29:18 cautions us: “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” In other words, when God’s revelation is neglected, people will lose their way; but those who obey His Word will enjoy their lives. There is nothing complicated about that. There is joy in obedience and confusion in disobedience. The choice of how we want to live then is a simple one: do we want joy or confusion? God has nothing to gain by confusing His children regarding His purposes for their lives. He makes our choices as straightforward as He possibly can: “See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil (Deuteronomy 30:15).”

We must pursue the joyous simplicity of choosing God’s way in the daily movements of our lives. It will take determination and effort, but never complexities and complications. We either want Him, or we do not. When we do find ourselves in the throes of confusion and frustration in our spiritual obedience, it is not because God has chosen to complicate His will. In some way, we are looking for more than what God is offering. Retreating to a place of simple quietness will allow us to hear that still small voice that clearly speaks: “This is the way, walk ye in it (Isaiah 30:20-21).”

STEP 1: MAKING OUR WORSHIP MATTER

“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 4:23-24 (KJV)

One of the most controversial issues facing many churches is that of worship. Many Scriptures are manipulated to justify what is practiced as worshipping God. John 4:23-24 states that we should worship God in spirit and truth because God wants such worshippers in His presence. Just before this, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman at the well that the location of worship is not even an issue for our Heavenly Father (John 4:21).

Worshipping God is a personal action that must be done in spirit. A particular day on which to worship is not mandatory. Specific musical instruments and special choruses and hymns are not necessary. Specific movements or hand gestures are not required. Words are not even needed. Why? Worship must originate from within our spirits. Does this mean all the above should be excluded from our worship times? On the contrary, they can be vital components in many of our worship experiences. But they are not the final determiners that God is being worshipped.

Worshipping God must also involve the truth. The Psalmist declares: “Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom (Psalm 51:6).” There is an intellectual component to our worship that must be governed by the worshippers’ honesty and God’s wisdom.

Worship that makes a difference is not about going into a building and following a set pattern of actions or activities. It is about our submission to God with no pretenses and patiently waiting for Him to guide us into His presence. They that worship God must do so in spirit and truth. Otherwise, our actions, words, songs, and rituals will all be in vain.

OUR PRAYER...

Heavenly Father, thank you for the privilege of worship. Help us experience the true meaning of worshiping You in spirit and truth. Teach us not to focus on external items, habits, and rituals that may support a form of godliness, but in the end, deny us Your true power. Lead us to a place of sincerity, honesty, and submission that will make our worship pleasing to You and meaningful to us. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask these things, Amen.

STEP 2: MAKING OUR SECURITY MATTER

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 10:28 (KJV)

There are many beautiful promises in the Scriptures, but very few surpass the promise our Lord Jesus Christ gave to us in John 10:28. There, He promises eternal life to all who believe in Him. He presents Himself as the grantor of this beautiful hope and as its guarantee. He gives it, and no one can take it away because He also secures it.

The believer's eternal security is one of the most important truths in the Bible. Many well-intentioned Christians have debated its veracity, but the Doctrine of Salvation demands belief in our eternal security. How can believers lose their regeneration (John 3:3), their imputed righteousness of Christ (Romans 4:23-24), or their justification (Romans 5:1) when none of these things were in their power from the start? And these are just three of the many components that make up the Doctrine of Salvation in the Bible. Nothing in salvation, the giving of it or the keeping of it, depends on you or me.

Our responsibility comes when we strive to live in light of this beautiful hope. It is easy for us to get caught up in the temporary and uncertain aspects of our lives – being healthy one day and then sick the other, enjoying the company of friends one day, and then mourning the death of a family member the other. Such uncertainties bring frustration to life. But there is no uncertainty about the promises of God. The Apostle Paul tells us: “For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us (2 Corinthians 1:20).” Praise God we can sing the old hymn with joyful confidence:

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine
O what a foretaste of glory divine
Heir of salvation, purchase of God
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

OUR PRAYER...

Heavenly Father, thank you for the beautiful promise of Your eternal security. Forgive us when we allow our doubts and fears to distract us from experiencing the joy and comfort this hope brings. As we face the insecurities and uncertainties of each day, help us remain steadfast in the hope You have given us. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask these things, Amen.

STEP 3: MAKING OUR SHEPHERD MATTER

“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.”

PSALM 23:1-3(KJV)

What a blessed comfort and assurance it is to know the Lord is our Shepherd. He is not just any lord. By using the definite article, King David clarifies he was referring to the Lord God – the only Lord who truly matters. This Lord is the same One who spoke to Moses, saying, “I AM THAT I AM (Genesis 3:14).” He is the ever-present, self-existing, and self-sufficient One.

In His divine sovereignty, the Lord has given Himself to us, for He is our Shepherd. This means the relationship we have with Him is personal. There are no intermediaries or agents between Him and us. He is there for us exclusively. And He is (continually) our Shepherd. He was our Shepherd yesterday, He is our Shepherd today, and He will be our Shepherd tomorrow. He will forever be our divine, personal, and continual Shepherd.

As our Shepherd, He is the One who leads, protects, and provides for those who are under His care. Shepherds are not butchers; their duty is not to hurt the sheep. So too, the Lord’s relationship with us is meant to help us and not harm us.

Let us face our current circumstances with the hope that our Shepherd is always with us. Remember that He is the Lord God who loves us and has committed Himself to be with us despite our needs or the pains we suffer. He will provide all we need to fulfill His plans for blessing and growth in our lives. Let us be quiet enough to hear Him and humble enough to follow Him.

OUR PRAYER...

Heavenly Father, thank you for being our Shepherd. Even in Your glorious majesty, You give Yourself to us in such a nurturing and protective way. Help us not be afraid if our way seems unclear or our needs feel burdensome. May we always remember that we shall never want with You as our Shepherd. You will never leave us or fail to protect us. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask these things, Amen.

STEP 4: MAKING OUR COMMITMENT MATTER

**“Though he slay me, I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.”
JOB 13:15 (KJV)**

Do not give up. Life is full of mysteries. It is not always easy to understand why certain things happen the way they do in our lives. We strive to live as righteous as possible, but sometimes the promises accompanying righteous living do not appear to attend our ways. Please, do not give up. Like Job, we must seek to maintain our ways before God. We must keep trusting in Him with all our hearts. The time will come when we will understand and experience how God can work all things together for good. But it will not come to pass if we give up.

The hymn writer Fanny Crosby was no stranger to suffering. She was blinded by medical malpractice at the age of six. Her only child died in infancy, and she suffered from a severe heart condition. Yet, she wrote these lyrics in the hymn, Never Give Up:

Never give up, never give up,
Never give up to thy sorrows,
Jesus will bid them depart;
Trust in the Lord, trust in the Lord,
Sing when your trials are greatest,
Trust in the Lord and take heart.

Do not give up. Let us give our Heavenly Father a chance to prove Himself in our lives. God moves in mysterious ways, but it is so He can perform wonders in our lives.

OUR PRAYER...

Heavenly Father, help us not to give up. When our pain feels more real to us than You are, and our failures cause us to feel worthless, help us not to give up. When our hard-fought efforts to change our circumstances and rebuild our lives fall to nothing at our feet, help us not to give up. When our fractured relationships with family, friends, and co-workers cause us to feel unloved and undervalued, help us not to give up. May we trust in the God who loves us and has promised to deliver those who put their trust in Him. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask these things, Amen.

STEP 5: MAKING OUR CHOICES MATTER

**“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?
Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”
THE GOSPEL OF MARK 8:36-37 (KJV)**

The value we place on the things of the world will determine how much we enjoy our lives. There is much the world has to offer: possessions, power, pleasures, popularity, and prestige. These all come with tremendous benefits. However, they can also bring severe drawbacks when we fail to see them from the correct perspective.

It is no secret that the more stress we feel, the more our quality of life diminishes. How can we enjoy our new house if we are constantly at odds with our spouse? How can we appreciate our recent job promotion if our working conditions are poor? How can we relax on our vacation abroad if our dearest friend is terminally ill? How can we celebrate our status if those closest to us are not excited about our accomplishments? Even our most outstanding achievements can be marred by unfavorable circumstances that diminish our pleasure and enthusiasm.

Jesus Christ came to give us life and give it more abundantly (John 10:10). To experience this abundance means we must choose to live the lives Christ gave us and not the lives we want to build for ourselves. This Christ-oriented focus can significantly de-stress our lives by providing an indispensable guide for determining where our abundance truly lies. We learn to cherish what God cherishes and reject what He deems harmful or unnecessary.

To put God’s value system ahead of our own in no way means we will suffer lack. Indeed, Jesus tells us the opposite is true: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you (Matthew 6:33).” We can then agree with the words of the hymn writer:

Seek ye first, not earthly pleasure,
Fading joy and failing treasure,
But the love that knows no measure
Seek this first. Seek this first.

OUR PRAYER...

Heavenly Father, thank you for the countless blessings You have bestowed upon our lives. Forgive us for focusing on the things we do not have instead of being grateful for all we have. Teach us how to value the things You love and reject the things that displease You. May the pursuit of Your kingdom and righteousness be our priority, and submission to Your will our satisfaction. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask these things, Amen.

STEP 6: MAKING OUR JOURNEY MATTER

Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 8:23-26 (NKJV)

Following Jesus can lead His disciples into unexpected places, like a boat. Following Jesus can lead His disciples into unexpected situations, like a storm. Following Jesus can lead His disciples into unexpected reactions, like despair. But following Jesus can also lead His disciples into unexpected blessings, like witnessing a miracle.

The Lord calls us to follow Him. Sometimes the only information we will have is our present circumstances and the conviction that the Lord wants us to be somewhere else. We will not know how long the journey will take. We will not know every turn or the condition of the road. All we need to know is that the Lord will lead us in paths of righteousness. There is no journey without turns, but when we follow Jesus, turns become opportunities, not setbacks. This is part of the excitement in following Jesus. His journeys are never mundane or predictable. He will be with us to see us safely to our destination through His miraculous power.

Never be afraid to keep following Jesus Christ. Anticipate the excitement. Embrace His presence. Witness His miracles. Celebrate His Power. Therein is the joy of our journeys. Ernest Blandy put it best in his hymn, Where He Leads Me:

Where He leads me I will follow,
Where He leads me I will follow,
Where He leads me I will follow,
I'll go with Him, with Him all the way.

OUR PRAYER...

Heavenly Father, thank You for having excellent and exciting plans for our lives. May we never doubt Your ability to lead us to the places You have chosen for our growth and service. Give us strength for the storms, peace in detours, hope in the stops, grace in the turns, and joy in the destination. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask these things, Amen.

STEP 7: MAKING OUR JUDGMENTS MATTER

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your eye?”
THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW 7:1-3 (NKJV)

One of the easiest sins to commit is to judge the intentions and actions of others wrongfully. We can be too quickly suspicious of the credibility and integrity of those around us when their actions do not match our perceptions of their character. We take pleasure in the lie that we are the best evaluators of right and wrong. Therefore, we can control whom we will let influence and impact our lives. It is a sin grounded in pride.

Jesus cautions that if we choose to take upon ourselves this type of unholy judgeship, we set ourselves up to be judged by that same standard. The business of judgment is always a two-way street. Since none of us are without imperfections, any action performed can be misinterpreted, misconstrued, and misunderstood, as will the motives that undergirded the action. Since our natural tendency is to minimize the seriousness of our failures and rail against the faults of others, we are never entirely fair in our assessments. Jesus’ solution is to be humble and prioritize self-examination and confession before questioning the integrity and sincerity of others.

Let us take extreme caution before judging others. Let us be careful to check and clean ourselves before making any accusations. Remember, the same measure of judgment we pass on others will be levied back on us. If our concerns about the actions of others happen to be validated, let us seek to be encouragers unto good works before being judges unto condemnation. We are here to serve one another, not serve up one another. However, we can only do so when we have allowed the Spirit of God to search us and cleanse us. Humble and holy hearts make hope and healing their priority, not judgments and condemnations.

OUR PRAYER...Heavenly Father, teach us to have restraint in our judgments of others. Help us remember that judgment starts in our hearts, where self-examination and confession should be our priorities. Allow us to help others by showing love and encouraging them to faithful living. May we be those who speak the truth in love and restore those who have fallen. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask these things, Amen.

STEP 8: MAKING OUR FOCUS MATTER

“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”

HEBREWS 12:2-3 (KJV)

Being distracted can cause costly mistakes. A distracted driver can cause a fatal accident. A distracted doctor can prescribe the wrong medications. But being distracted is such an easy mistake to make because it is so reactive and instinctive. A loud noise, a flash of light, a bright color, and even our thoughts can break our focus from what we are doing.

That we are commanded to keep looking unto Jesus implies we are prone to take our focus away from Him. Many situations in our lives become like loud noises or bright colors, distracting us and taking our attention away from Christ. It may be a financial need, sickness, grief, or a broken relationship, and when they happen, we reactively and instinctively turn our attention to them.

The problem is that when we focus on our circumstances, it does not yield the same benefits as when we focus on Christ. As the author and finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ provides the strength and wisdom necessary for us to remain steadfast in God's purposes for our lives. Without Him, we will drift, losing our way and ourselves into some activity or attitude that disorients us and disrupts our lives.

We must stay focused, looking unto Jesus as our Helper. We must stay focused, looking unto Jesus as our Example. We must stay focused, looking unto Jesus as our Rewarder. We must stay focused, looking unto Jesus Christ!

OUR PRAYER...

Heavenly Father, forgive us for taking our focus away from Jesus Christ. Help us to not be so easily distracted by the unsettling and painful circumstances in our lives. Fortify our commitment to You that our relationship with Christ will always remain our priority. May we not seek to handle our struggles independent of Christ but in obedience to His desires for our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask these things, Amen.

STEP 9: MAKING OUR IMAGE MATTER

“But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

EPHESIANS 4:20-24 (KJV)

One evidence we have not entirely put off the “old man” is when we boast to others about our humility and integrity. Statements like: “I speak my mind” or “I’m not a hypocrite like some people” may sound noble, but when we see them as personal testaments to our goodness, it is a sign our old nature is alive and fighting for prominence.

We all have personality traits and life experiences that affect our attitudes and behaviors. This combination of internal and external factors helps form our individuality and makes us who we are. Yet, God wants to change us by conforming us to the image of His Son. He is not looking to eradicate our individuality but to let who we are shine with the radiance of Christ.

Whatever the causes for our attitudes and behaviors, they are not what we should exalt in our lives. God wants us to rise above our worst and go even beyond our best by putting on Jesus’ personality. This can only happen when we deliberately submit our wills to Him and walk in the Spirit. Do not brag about who or what you are. Put off the old nature and put on Jesus Christ.

OUR PRAYER...

Heavenly Father, forgive us for thinking more of ourselves than we should and ignoring Your plans for our holiness. Reveal to us the wrong in ourselves, so we will be ready to embrace the image of Christ for our lives. May we no longer seek affirmation in whom we think ourselves to be but in whom You desire us to become. Let Christ increase as we decrease. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask these things, Amen.

STEP 10: MAKING OUR DAYS MATTER

“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

PSALM 90:12 (KJV)

When compared to the eternity of our Heavenly Father, our lives on earth are but for a short time. In addition to this brevity of life, we must also face the uncertainty of its ending. Only God knows the exact days we will have on this earth and how those days will come to an end. With these two realities in mind, the Psalmist concludes that we must make our days matter.

Considering that the end of our lives on earth will mark the beginning of our lives in eternity, we must prepare for that coming day of transition. Our God, the righteous Judge, will call us to account for how we lived. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).”

We must apply our hearts to wisdom to make the right choices related to this coming judgment. Wisdom to respond correctly to the trials of life. Wisdom to forgive and reconcile with those we have hurt or who have hurt us. Wisdom to repent of our sins and pursue holiness at all costs. Wisdom to use the gifts and resources God has blessed us with for His glory. Wisdom to make each day we are given on earth matter for God’s glory.

OUR PRAYER...

Heavenly Father, this is the day You have made, and we will rejoice and be glad in it. Thank you for another day to apply Your Wisdom that we may grow in grace and impact the lives of others with that grace. Govern our thoughts and actions that each hour of this day is lived for Your honor and glory, not our gain or popularity. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask these things, Amen.

STEP 11: MAKING OUR THANKSGIVING MATTER

“In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 (KJV)

Our days can become consumed with trying to make ends meet, and fulfill family duties or work responsibilities that there is little time for anything else. With such a limited focus, it can be easy to think we are the ones making things happen. It can also contribute to the pressure we feel to get everything done because we believe everything rests on us.

Thanksgiving shatters that myth by reminding us that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves. When we give thanks, we admit how happy we are for all the things other people do for us. It reminds us that we are not alone and not responsible for making everything happen in our lives. The truth is that God is responsible for giving us the breath of life each day, and He has blessed us in so many other beautiful ways. He has given us spouses who provide us with physical and emotional support. He has given us jobs that allow us to use our abilities and earn money. He has given us churches that offer spiritual and emotional encouragement. And He has given us friends who provide camaraderie and belonging. Without these blessings, it would be impossible for us to survive. Giving thanks helps us put our lives in perspective by reminding us that what we have is not all because of us.

Let us take time to give God thanks for all He has done for us. Such a renewed perspective can be the doorway that leads us to victory the next time we feel as if everything depends on us. In his song, Give Thanks, Don Meon writes:

And now let the weak say, “I am strong.”
Let the poor say, “I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done for us.”
Give thanks.

OUR PRAYER...

Heavenly Father, thank You for all You have done for us. Thank You for the breath of life and the joy of a new day. Thank You for loved ones who care for us and bless us with companionship, support, and encouragement. Thank You for our jobs that provide financial support. Thank You for the food we have to eat, the clothes we wear, and the roofs over our heads. We may not have everything we want, but You have given us everything we need. Thank You that we are not alone. Amen.

STEP 12: MAKING OUR COURAGE MATTER

“Surely he will never be shaken; the righteous will be in everlasting remembrance. He will not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is established; he will not be afraid, until he sees his desire upon his enemies.”

PSALM 112:6-8 (NKJV)

Amid the troublers and troubles of life, the Psalmist reminds us that those who live righteously need not be afraid. He does not encourage us to have a fighting or vengeful spirit. Instead, he bases his exhortation on the God whom the righteous serve. This God is gracious and full of compassion (Psalm 112:4). When the righteous fix their hearts on such a God, they will not render evil for evil. They will seek to resist their enemies with truth and righteousness. The result of such living will be a heart that is courageous and never shaken by the worst of circumstances or the vilest of agitators.

Let us resolve not to be moved by the troublers or troubles in our lives. Let us fix our hearts on our Heavenly Father and live righteously despite those who threaten or oppose us. Maintaining this priority will serve as an anchor that keeps us stable during challenging circumstances. Remember, putting God first is not an act of cowardice or abnegation of our responsibilities. It simply means we are choosing to put our faith in Him to strengthen us in our time of opposition. The Psalmist writes: “Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the Lord (Psalm 31:24).” We can then agree with Norman Macleod in the words of his hymn, *Courage, Brother, Do Not Stumble*:

Some will hate thee, some will love thee,
Some will flatter, some will slight;
Cease from man, and look above thee:
Trust in God and do the right.

OUR PRAYER...

Heavenly Father, our hearts sink when challenged by those who appear stronger than we are. We feel fearful when situations around us seem beyond our abilities to overcome. Help us remember that the God we serve is greater than any person and predicament. May we yield ourselves to Your purposes for our lives. May Your Word be the standard by which our faith is grounded and our victory is secured. We will not be afraid of what man can do to us because our hope is in God. In Jesus' Name we ask all these things, Amen.

CONCLUSION

I understand that condensing victorious Christian living into twelve steps is impossible. The complexities of life invite many modifications and adjustments to our spiritual walk every day. However, I hope these thoughts were instrumental in helping you take one more step forward in your path to victorious Christian living. Ultimately, that is where the difference is made – that we are moving forward. Whether it is by one step or two, but always forward.

If you believe this resource would be helpful to others you know, please share it with them. As fellow believers, we are on this faith journey together. Let us take the time to be a blessing as much as we desire to be blessed. I close with a prayer that I trust God will answer for all who read this booklet and take to heart their commitments to be faithful to Him:

**The Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make His face
shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His
countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.**

NUMBERS 6:24-26 (KJV)

THE GRACE BIBLE CHURCH DEVOTIONAL SERIES is designed to help disciples of Jesus Christ build a meaningful and nurturing relationship with their Heavenly Father. Each chapter of this resource provides Scriptural references, devotional commentaries, and prayer guides to help its readers maximize their spiritual growth.

Drawing closer to God does not have to be complicated. In fact, it is in the simple things and smallest steps that we find our greatest joys. In 12 Steps That Matter, Pastor Carl E. Naitram highlights twelve points that when understood from a Biblical perspective, can draw us into a deeper relationship with our Heavenly Father. Whether it is the quality of our worship or the life-paths we have chosen to follow, it is vital we take these twelve steps in our relationship with God. Failure to do so will result in a life that loses its direction and ultimately, its meaning.



CARL E. NAITRAM is the pastor of Grace Bible Church (Paddock Road, Barbados), and has served as a missionary on the Caribbean islands of St. Vincent and Monserrat. He works with churches in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and has travelled extensively throughout Zimbabwe, Malawi, Rwanda, Burundi, and Mozambique to help national pastors and evangelists establish local churches and train ministry leaders. An avid golfer, Pastor Naitram enjoys his weekly rounds on the course and his early morning exercises on the beach.

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