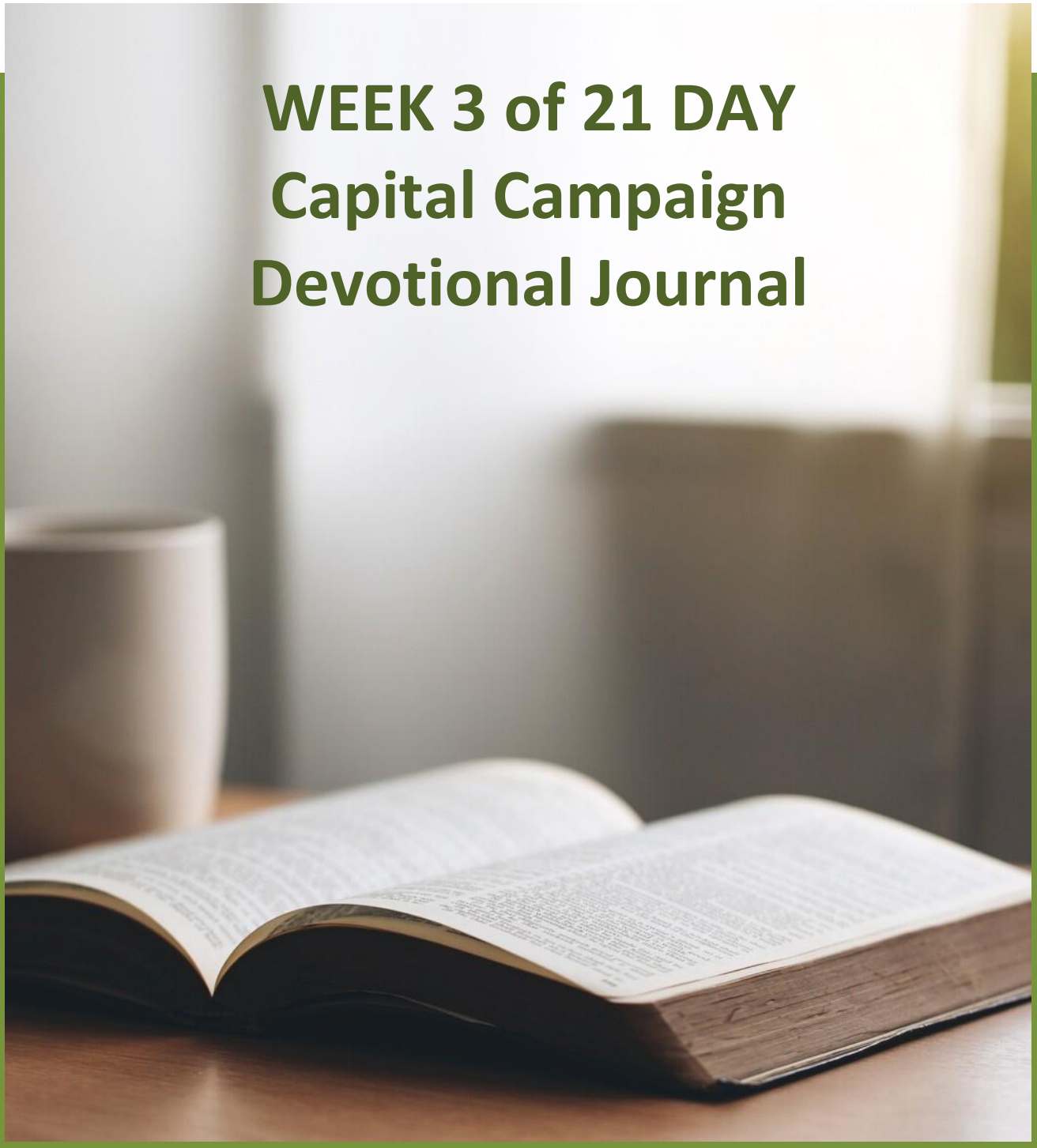
WEEK 3 of 21 DAY Capital Campaign Devotional Journal



Written by Scott McKenzie, PhD

BUILDING FOR ALL
Welcoming Spaces for Everyone

KIRKWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Kennesaw, Georgia

Day 15

...but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isaiah 40:31

In our family, we all understood that if we went to a restaurant and the line was long and the wait more than a few minutes, we were not going to stay. We might spend an hour driving to different places but we weren't going to wait fifteen minutes just to get a seat at our favorite restaurant. I wonder how many good meals we missed just because we refused to wait?

In our current day of microwaves, 24-hour news, remote controls and drive-through windows, our ability to wait seems almost non-existent. I want it right now, and if you can't get it for me right now, I'll find someone who can.

But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Perhaps the most important task of the stewardship journey is to wait upon the Lord. Waiting upon God can take many different forms. One man turned his evening walk with his dog into his prayer and waiting time. Of course, after his potential pledge had more than doubled his wife told him, "Please stop taking the dog for a walk! I'll walk him from now on."

As we learn to wait and listen for God's still small voice, strange things begin to happen. We begin to experience renewal and strength, joy and peace. Waiting upon God can renew marriages, as couples wait upon God together. Career paths change as people seriously consider the question, "God, what do You want from me, not just financially but with my entire life?"
Waiting may not be easy. Waiting may require finding a specific time, perhaps in the car with the radio off, perhaps in the shower, perhaps taking an evening walk. Remember...

> *But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*

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Questions to Consider

Am I willing to wait upon God?

What are some of the barriers in my life that prevent me from waiting on God?

Is there a special time that I can devote to waiting upon God?

Prayer

Dear God, forgive me for always being in such a hurry. Teach me to slow down. Teach me to wait. Teach me to listen. In my waiting and listening, Oh God, bring renewal to my heart, my life, my family and my church, Amen.

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Day 16

I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.

Psalm 130:5

James loves to tell the story of a time when he went bow hunting. He was sitting under a majestic oak tree, and the sun was cresting over the ridge and beginning to warm his chilled body.
As he waited, his eyes became heavy and soon he was sound asleep, the bow on his lap. Suddenly, he was startled awake to find himself nearly nose to nose with the largest buck he had ever seen. He's not sure who was more frightened, himself or the buck. The buck bounded away while James could only sit and wonder, "What if? What if I had been awake and alert?"

Yesterday's devotion spoke of waiting. The truth is we can wait in many different ways. We can wait with expectation and hope, or we can wait convinced we are waiting in vain with little or no expectation of anything happening. The result? We fall asleep, like James, beneath the oak tree and miss the glorious opportunities God has in store for us.

I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.

As we learn to wait upon God we need to ask ourselves what do we expect? Do we wait with the hope that God will speak to us? Do we wait with the expectation that God will lead us and guide us, or do we perhaps wait like James asleep under the oak tree? If we wait with hopeful expectation we will not be disappointed.

I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.

Questions to Consider

What do I expect as I wait upon God?

Do I believe that God can and will speak to me, lead me and guide me in my decision-making?

What keeps me from waiting upon God with hopeful expectation?

Prayer

Oh God, forgive me for the times I have fallen asleep beneath the oak tree and missed opportunities to serve and love You. Help me to find ways in the midst of my busy life to wait on You. Help me, Oh God, to wait on You with faith, hope, and anticipation, Amen.

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Day 17

..."Be still, and know that I am God!..."

Psalm 46:10

We blast TV or radio on the morning run. Video game sounds have become normal background noise in our daily lives. Many of us are "connected" all day long in our jobs. Our computers, TVs, iPods, cell phones are all constantly providing the white noise of our lives. Moment after moment, day after day, we are surrounded by a cacophony of sound.

..."Be still, and know that I am God!..."

Silence! What, in the name of heaven, is silence except a long forgotten memory? Yet perhaps the psalmist knows a secret.

..."Be still, and know that I am God!..."

As we strive to be open to God, as we strive to wait upon God, perhaps we need to be silent and still. People who are busy, (and who isn't?) often say, "but I have no time to be quiet and still." I promise, if you want to find an oasis of peace and quiet you will find it. Perhaps, we could turn off the radio in the car and drive in silence. Perhaps, we could turn off the TV while exercising. Go for your jog or walk without the headphones. Ask God to speak, take the time to listen and you may just be surprised.

..."Be still, and know that I am God!..."

His name is Paul. Paul took the call to wait on God seriously. His shower time became his prayer time. As he wrestled with the soap and washcloth he was wrestling with God and what God wanted for his life. After Paul went from a capital campaign pledge of $12,000 to nearly
$30,000, his wife threatened to cut off the hot water. Paul listened and God spoke.

..."Be still, and know that I am God!..."

Questions to Consider

What is it that may prevent me from listening to God?

What specific time could I devote to listening to God?

What do I want from God?

Am I willing to listen and obey?

Prayer

Gracious God, forgive me for my failure to take time to listen and be still. Forgive me for filling my life with everything but You. Teach me, speak to me, help me to listen and give me the faith to obey. In Christ's name, Amen.

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Day 18

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

2 Corinthians 9:11-12

Generosity and gratitude, gratitude and generosity, these words somehow are nearly inseparable. Can one really exist without the other? Stewardship stories told during campaigns often include the sharing of what people plan to give but, more importantly, why they give. In nearly every instance one of the words that jumps to the fore is gratitude. A husband and wife standing in front of their church family, tears streaming down their cheeks as they speak of the love, support and strength given by God through their church when they experienced the tragic loss of their child. Such gratitude inevitably leads to generosity.

A young man whose entrepreneurial skills have led to considerable wealth at a relatively young age, speaks movingly of gratitude to God. He knows that everything he has and everything he has accomplished is a gift -- a gift from God. He tells his church family that their faith in him gave him the courage and faith to do more than he could have dared dream. Gratitude and generosity.

In our culture we are continually told to "pull ourselves up by our bootstraps." We are told we have to "make it on our own." Do any of us really make it on our own? I think not. God, parents, friends, teachers, youth leaders, pastors, Sunday school members, all have a part in our development. The only true response can be gratitude followed by generosity.

Questions to Consider

How has God blessed me?

Have I been truly thankful?

Have I responded to God's blessings with gratitude and generosity?

Does my gift adequately reflect the ways God has blessed me?

Prayer

Forgive me, Lord, for sometimes thinking I am somehow self-made. Forgive me for not always being aware of how truly fortunate I have been. Help me, Lord, to have a heart overflowing with gratitude and hands reaching out with generosity. Help me make a gift that reflects all of the blessings that You have so richly poured out on me. In Christ's name, Amen.

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Day 19

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Luke 19:8-10

The look on her face was a combination of anger and utter amazement, "You expect me to do what?" she nearly shouted. "You want me to stand in front of people and actually tell them what we are going to give? No way!" In a slow and measured response I said, "No, I am not expecting or telling you to do anything, I am asking you to pray about the possibility of talking with people about your gift."

Isn't it amazing how in most of our churches we will talk about anything and everything except our money and finances? In our scripture today Zacchaeus meets the Christ and his life is changed forever. Because of this encounter, his response is to boldly declare his faith!

The gift, the amount, is really secondary. The primary issue is gratitude for a changed life. In telling a stewardship story, the first question is always, "How and where have I met Christ in my church?" How have I been blessed? How has my life been forever changed? And, with a heart overflowing with gratitude, I may then, with Zacchaeus, boldly say, "because of what God has done for me, this is what I am willing to do for God."

And, oh, by the way, the young woman at the beginning of our story, after much struggle and prayer, told one of the most beautiful stewardship stories I have ever heard. She spoke about how she met Christ through the people of her church. And then, with a grateful heart, she told them about the gift she was willing to give.

Questions to Consider

How have I met Christ in my church?

How is my life changed because of meeting Christ?

How is my life different because of Christ and the church?

Can I pray about sharing with others, privately or publicly, about my willingness to give as a grateful response to God's love?

Prayer

Oh, Giving and Loving God, remind me now of all the wonderful ways You have blessed me, touched me, and changed me. Give me the courage and boldness to share my story with others, through Christ our Lord, Amen.

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Day 20

Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Mark 2:4-5

Four friends moved by an overwhelming sense of compassion and love for their friend. Four friends willing to pick up their corner of the blanket and bring their friend into the healing presence of Jesus Christ. Four friends determined and unwilling to be stopped by crowds, unwilling to say, "Sorry, we can't do it, maybe next time."

As we begin to wind down our devotional journey of faith, some may be thinking, "I can never do what the people in these stories have done." And yet the common thread for each story is simply the willingness, the overwhelming desire, to do their share, to pick up their corner of the blanket and bring their church, their community, their friends, the world, into the healing presence of Jesus the Christ. Each of us has been blessed in different ways and to different levels. God simply asks us to pick up our corner.

A rather well-to-do woman approached her pastor and asked if her gift of $500 would be sufficient. The pastor's wise response was, "Does your gift represent the blessings God has given you?" The lady took the check back and departed without saying a word. A week later she returned with a check for $5,000 and asked the same question. The courageous pastor gave the same reply and once again she took the check back and left. The pastor wondered if he would ever see her or the check again. But the scene repeated itself the following week. This time the check was for $20,000. In response to her inevitable question, "Is it enough?" the pastor, swallowing the lump in his throat, gave his standard reply. This time with a smiling face full of joy, she replied, "Yes, pastor, this represents God's blessings to me."

She finally was willing to pick up her corner of the blanket.

Questions to Consider

Do I believe that my church, through Jesus Christ, has the answer for a hurting world?

Am I willing to go the extra mile and lay aside my excuses so that people will come to know the healing, loving power of Christ?

Does the gift I am considering truly and fully represent how God has blessed me? Am I willing to pick up my corner of the blanket?

Prayer

Oh Lord, thank You for friends who in the past have carried me into Your healing presence. I name them now…Thank You for all of the blessings You have so richly poured forth on my family and me. Help me to now give back, give me the courage to do whatever it takes for me to pick up my corner of the blanket. In the name of Christ, Amen.

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Day 21

They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road..."

Luke 24:32

Two disciples, walking along the road to Emmaus, discussing the many events of the previous weeks; the arrest and trial of Jesus, the crucifixion and burial, and now strange rumors of resurrection. Along the dusty road to Jerusalem they find themselves in the very presence of their Lord and Savior, the resurrected Christ. Even though Christ was unrecognized, the disciples reported that their hearts were burning while the Lord was talking to them on the road.

For some this stewardship campaign may have seemed like an endless walk on a long and dusty road. And yet, my hope and prayer for each of you is that at some place on this journey your heart has burned with the recognition that Christ is in our midst, that Christ is walking with us on this dusty road.

And so we conclude this devotional with the simple question. How have you met Christ on this journey? Has your heart burned with recognition that Christ is in our midst?

Prayer

Thank You, Lord, for the gift of this journey we call a stewardship campaign. Thank You for meeting us on this road. Thank You for the burning in our hearts that we recognize as You and Your love. Help us now to continue this walk always mindful that You are walking beside us. Thank You! Amen.