



# DAILY DEVOTION

week 5

Hey, North Ridge Family! Here are this week's Daily Devos. You'll notice we've broken up the thought-starters into Heart, Hard to Reach, Home, and Hurting. These are the 4 H's of our FOR Asheville movement. Our hope is that you will process each of these demos according to how you can respond and love on these areas of our city: your personal heart, everyday strangers and friends who don't know the Lord, your family's home, and those around you who are struggling.

## DAY 1

In the Good Samaritan, Jesus tells a story that is just as relevant today in a pandemic and with racial strife as it was then. He asks us to see ourselves and our neighbors as: the Jewish victim, Priest, Levite, the Samaritan, and the often-overlooked innkeeper. We see differences in circumstances, social status, and ethnicity, but most importantly we see differences in heart response. No matter our circumstances or those we come in contact with, we are called to "go and show mercy."

### READ LUKE 10:25-37

**HEART:** Meditate on Luke 10:25-37. Put yourself in the shoes of each of the characters in the story. Who are you in the story? Pray to be the person God wants you to be in the story.

**HARD TO REACH:** In today's headline, the victim may be the person with, or in fear of, COVID. The Priest, Levite, and innkeeper may represent the upper, middle, and blue-collar class in our culture. The Samaritan represents someone of different race or ethnicity. The hard-to-reach are found in each of these groups. As you go about your day, find ways to engage with everyone you meet, no matter their situation.

**HOME:** You and your family may be struggling to deal with the pandemic and the idea of social distancing (something the Priest and Levite had no problem with) or it may be the black-white racial strife we see on the news, which in the story is represented by the strife between Jew and the Samaritan. With your family, discuss our current issues in the context of the story of the Good Samaritan.

**HURTING:** People are hurting and afraid, regardless of whether it is due to the pandemic or racial issues. Reach out to someone today who is a victim of the pandemic (either because of illness or fear) or someone of different race and listen to their story.



## DAY 2

Jesus is in a hurry, and it's life or death, but He literally stops in the middle of the road because someone touches him. And it's not just any person, but a woman with a disease—two taboos against physical contact. Now let's put this in our current perspective during the COVID pandemic. How many of you have felt judged because you are or aren't wearing a mask, because you did or didn't keep 6 feet distance, or you coughed or sneezed in public? All of these have become taboos depending on your viewpoint in light of the COVID pandemic. But Jesus met a need in the middle of the road. He served the person in front of Him (or in this case behind Him) despite cultural taboos and inconvenience.

Would you go and do likewise?

### READ LUKE 8:40-48

**HEART:** In James 1:2-4 we are reminded that trials and fears are a fact of life, but that God uses them to grow our faith. What fears are you facing that God may be using to grow you?

**HARD TO REACH:** Many people leave the church because they do not feel the church has been there for them in their trials; their fears. Invite someone new to your Community Group. Show them by example how we are FOR them in times of fear.

**HOME:** Our children are especially susceptible to the fearmongering that we see in the news, making them feel afraid and uncertain. Spend time with your family recognizing the reality of their fear, but also discussing how we "cast our fears on God."

**HURTING:** When you see someone say, "I am afraid," help them move to, "I shall not be afraid," Sharing how God

## DAY 3

Wait a minute Jesus is showing compassion for a religious leader. One of those people who crossed to the other side of the road, who will reject Him and arrange for him to be crucified, and Jesus doesn't just heal her, He raises her from the dead. How often have we been like the religious leader, crossing to the other side of the road, rejecting Jesus call to help someone who may be sick, or has had loss of job or loved one because of the pandemic. Jesus has shown us extravagant, undeserved mercy by raising us from the death of sin just as he raised Jarius' daughter from physical death. Because of this extravagant mercy we are called to go and do likewise.

### READ LUKE 8:40-42, 49-56

**HEART:** In Ephesians 2:1-10, Paul shows us just how dead we are in sin and how extravagant God's grace and mercy are that bring us back to life. Spend time with God today understanding this extravagant gift and why we have received it.

**HARD TO REACH:** Face it—we don't give our best when trying to reach people for God. No wonder we do such a poor job. Consider the extravagance with which Jesus reached out to you. Whether it be with time or resources, be extravagant with someone who is far from God.

**HOME:** Spend time with your family today looking at how you use your time and resources for yourselves. Plan ways that you as a family can be extravagant with your time and resources with someone in your lives that needs to see Jesus' mercy and compassion in action.

**HURTING:** There are so many hurting personally or financially because of the COVID pandemic. Find a way to love on

## DAY 4

Before we jump to the conclusion that Jesus was a racist, understand that the Canaanites, like the Samaritans, were historic enemies of the Jews. In Mark's version of the story, Jesus has just been dealing with the Pharisees, their rules and restrictions, their tribalism, and the fact that they don't recognize Jesus as the Messiah. Now, He goes to be with a Gentile who recognizes Him and believes. And before we turn away from this story, understand that we, like the Jews, Samaritans, and Canaanites, are hard-wired to be tribal—we are the birds that flock together. No matter your race, ethnicity, religion, or even your sports team, it's hard to deny that our patterns are tribal. Just like the Jews, we all have our Samaritans and Canaanites. But we can't just stay with our tribe, our church, our friends, or our team. It's about crossing the road, leaving your comfort zone, and spending time with someone who looks different, thinks different, and has a different view of the world.

### READ MATTHEW 15:21-28

**HEART:** Read and meditate on Galatians 3:28. See how God is calling you to see all our neighbors as one in Jesus.

**HARD TO REACH:** Racial and ethnic preconceptions often hinder us from reaching the hard to reach. Spend time with someone of different race or ethnicity today getting to know their story and perspective on race and faith in our country.

**HOME:** Take time today as a family to talk about race. Discuss honestly the racial discrimination of our past, including that in the church. As a family spend time with someone of a different race or ethnicity.

**HURTING:** Our country is hurting today because of real and perceived racial issues. Cross the racial divide to those who are fearful and hurting and share the extravagant, undeserved mercy and love of Jesus.

## DAY 5

David says these words while still in danger. He has confidence that God hears and has the power to deliver. David's call to trust God is our call to trust Jesus, the light of life, the word made flesh, the One who has delivered us from death, taken our judgment for sin, died in our place, and risen from the dead, so you and I can walk with God in the light of life. We have all turned from God, but we have not been left alone. Jesus has come so that we might turn from our sin and follow Him.

Afraid? Remind yourself, 'God is FOR me!'

### READ MATTHEW 8:5-13

**HEART:** In Acts 10, we see God bringing the first Roman family into his new covenant, and it just happens to be a Roman Centurion. Meditate on the reason God would have chosen this man and his family and the implications for the spread of the Gospel.

**HARD TO REACH:** We live in a divisive time. First the pandemic, now racial strife. As you meet your neighbor who may be hard to reach find common ground and stay away from divisive issues until you have developed a relationship.

**HOME:** As a family discuss the viewpoints of both our black community and our police officers. If possible, have someone from both speak to your family. Find a way to reach out and support both groups.

**HURTING:** There is hurting in our black community over real and perceived injustices at the hands of police. Our police officers and their families are hurting as they are unfairly dishonored and demonized as a group. Make time to talk with those on both sides to understand their viewpoints and determine how you as a follower of Jesus can bridge the divide.