**Leading in Joy: 21-Day Devotional for the Spirit-Led Leader**

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**INTRODUCTION**

 **This devotional is being written as a result of a prophetic word that was spoken over me immediately following the release of my first book "Leading in Joy: Finding Fulfillment as A Spirit-Led Leader". Since that time my readers have asked for "something" that could compliment the book and help them stay motivated and encouraged in a more tangible way. Proverbs 29:2 (msg) says "When good people run things, everyone is glad, but when the ruler is bad, everyone groans". We need our Spirit-Led leaders to be good; mentally, physically and spiritually. This devotional is designed to inspire, motivate, and strengthen leaders as they lead their teams. Each day you will find scriptures and quotes along with prayers that will touch on the challenges that leaders face on a daily basis. In addition, there will be space to write your thoughts, affirmations, challenges and solutions.**

 **As leaders, we have an opportunity to start anew and set the tone for the day. Why not start by being connected to the one who gives us the strength to endure and continue to be Spirit-Led.**

***DAY 1***

***THE POWER OF PRAYER***

***“In the morning when I rise, give me Jesus”***

***\* Reverend Jacob Knapp\****

I Chronicles 16:11 (NIV) tells us to *“Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always”.* Why is starting your day with prayer so important? Because spirit-led leaders should look to the Lord for understanding each and every day to ensure that our actions are in line with His plan and not ours. We understand that it is God that guides our footsteps. We offer praise and thanksgiving for the blessings and seek guidance and strength for life’s challenges. In addition, we can go the Him on behalf of others. What are the challenges that your team(s) may be facing? Has a team member come to you with a need that only prayer can resolve? Ask God for wisdom as you navigate those challenges as you provide the support that your team needs.

I like to start my day by reading a scripture and prayer. Then I have my “conversation” with God. This practice gives me a sense of peace because I have established my connection to the Creator who gives me everything I need to face the day. Scripture tells us in Matthew 6:33-34 (TNT) “So above all, constantly seek God’s kingdom and his righteousness, then all these less important things will be given to you abundantly. 34) Refuse to worry about tomorrow, but deal with each challenge that comes your way, one day at a time. Tomorrow will take care of itself”.

Not sure where to start? Let’s say this prayer together:

*Father, in the name of Jesus, we come to you this morning with praise and thanksgiving in our hearts. We thank you for your many blessings. We thank you for life, health and strength. We thank you for your grace and mercy that’s brand new each and every day. Now Father, we ask for your divine guidance for today. Lead us in the way that you will have us to go. Provide wisdom and clarity as we navigate today’s challenges. Give us the right words to say so we don’t offend anyone because we understand that words have power. Fill us with compassion when needed and strength when necessary. We pray for those that you have given us charge over. Touch their lives as they deal with any hardships that they may be facing for we know that you are able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we could ever ask or think. And we ask all these things in your name, Jesus. AMEN.*

***PRAYER REQUESTS***

***What are your needs? What are you specifically asking God for?***

***What are the needs of your team? Be specific.***

***NOTES***

***DAY 2***

***AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE***

***“16) Let joy be your continual feast. 17) Make your life a prayer. 18) And in the midst of everything be always giving thanks, for this is God’s perfect plan for you in Christ Jesus”.***

***I Thessalonians 5:16-18 (TPT)***

I love the Passion translation for this scripture. The NIV version tells us to rejoice always; that we should be filled with joy as we offer praise and thanksgiving unto God. It goes on to say that we should pray continually. Our lives should show that we are always connected to the Father. Lastly, no matter what is going on around us, it is God’s will for us to always give thanks. Scripture tells us in Psalm 100:4-5 (NIV) to “Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. 5) For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations”.

Being grateful acknowledges that we haven’t done anything ourselves. We acknowledge that we see God at work in our lives and the lives of our family members. We have so much to be thankful for, including being a spirit-led leader. When you have an attitude of gratitude, it’s hard to focus on the negative. Remember, there is always someone who is worse off than you. So, be thankful for all things big and small and praise God for it!

*Dear God, I come to you this morning with a heart full of gratitude. I thank you for waking me up this morning and allowing me to see another beautiful day. I am grateful for the opportunity to praise your holy name. Thank you for my family and friends. Thank you for your provision of food, clothing and shelter. Thank you for your many blessings, big and small. Thank you for trusting me to lead your people. As I begin this day, I thank you for leading and guiding me as I lead them. You are a faithful God and you are worthy of all of my praise! In Jesus Name. Amen.*

***GRATITUDE LIST***

***What are you grateful for today? Keep a running list.***

***NOTES***

***DAY 3***

***ENCOURAGE YOURSELF!***

***“I repeat, be strong and brave! Do not yield to fear nor be discouraged, for I am YAHWEH your God, and I will be with you wherever you go!”***

***Joshua 1:9***

We live in a world where everyone has an opinion about something. Unfortunately, those opinions are often negative. As leaders, our character is often attacked when decisions are made that others do not agree with. Our superiors may feel that we are not capable, and our team members rally against us. How do we keep going when words are spoken that cut deep? We can turn to people we trust for comfort and support, but when that is not an option, we must turn to God and let his word help us encourage ourselves. We know that God has put us in this leadership position for a reason to fulfill a unique purpose. Don’t doubt yourself and remember what God says about you! You are a masterpiece made in His image!

*God, I come to you today with a troubled heart. I have been under attack from all sides. But I know your word tells me in Philippians4:6 to not be anxious for anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present my request to you. So, I pray that your word washes over me and gives me the strength to withstand the opposition. Help me to drown out the naysayers. I will stay focused on you and who you say I am. In Jesus Name. Amen.*

***AFFIRMATIONS***

***What does God say about you? Write your “I Am” affirmations below.***

***Example: I Am Amazing***

***NOTES***

***DAY 4***

***YOUR YES!***

***“For we walk by faith, not by sight [living our lives in a manner consistent with our confident belief in God’s promises].***

***2 Corinthians 5:7 AMP***

What does it mean to say “Yes” to God? It means putting your trust in Him when there is something he has asked you to do. I know this is easier said than done because his “ask” is usually something so big or out of the ordinary that you stop and question: “Did I hear that right?” You might even say “Why are you asking ME to do this?” or “I am not equipped for this task”. That’s when fear and hesitation set in. Now, imagine how Mary felt when the angel came to her and told her that she would carry the Son of God. Where would we be if she didn’t say “Yes”? Imagine how Moses felt when God told him that he would be the one to lead the people of Israel to freedom. Where would they be if he didn’t say “Yes”? Scripture tells us in 2 Timothy 1:7 KJV *“For god hath not given us the spirit of* *fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*”. So, what is God asking you to do today? Give God your “Yes”. Even if you can’t see it. Even if you don’t understand it. Don’t worry; God’s got this! Surrender to the Lord and trust His will for every situation in your life. Remember, all things work together for your good!

*Dear God, I awoke this morning with my heart totally surrendered to you. As I give you my “Yes”, I ask that you equip me for the task that is before me today. Give me wisdom, strength and courage to face any obstacles that are put in my path. I put my trust in you for you know what’s best for me. Thank you for choosing me to fulfill this assignment. Thank you for choosing me to be a Godly leader. In Jesus Name. Amen.*

***REFLECTIONS***

***Make a to-do list of all the things that you have put off doing.***

***Now, list what is preventing you from moving forward.***

***What do you need in order to say “Yes”?***

***NOTES***

***DAY 5***

***STIR UP YOUR GIFTS***

***“God gave you a talent. He gave you a gift. Are you using it? If not, start.”***

\*[***www.YouBetterPreach.com***](http://www.YouBetterPreach.com)\*

What are your gifts and talents? All of us have something that we are naturally good at. However, once identified, it is up to us to nurture that gift and use it to fulfill our purpose here on Earth. As leaders, God has given us a special talent for leading people. Some of the gifts that come with being an effective leader are humility, compassion, wisdom, knowledge, etc. However, whatever the gift is, it’s not effective if you are not putting it to use. 2 Timothy 1:6-7 MSG *says “And the* *special gift of ministry you received when I laid hands on you and prayed – keep* *that ablaze!* When you find yourself in a slump and have lost your passion for leading, I encourage you to rekindle the flame and recommit to serving your team with all the gifts that God has given you.

*Father God, show me what my gifts and talents are. Fill my mind with ideas and visions. Show me how I can use those gifts to serve your people so that you get the Glory. Thank you for blessing me with the gift of leadership and trusting me to lead your people. In Jesus Name. Amen.*

***SPIRITUAL GIFTS***

***Do you know what your gifts are? List them below.***

***NOTES***

***DAY 6***

***STAY HUMBLE***

***“A man’s pride and sense of self-importance will bring him down, But he who has a humble spirit will obtain honor”***

***Proverbs 29:23 AMP***

Chapter 3 in my book talks about serving with humility. Each time I have taught classes on leadership; students have indicated that humility is an important characteristic for a leader to have. Why? Because prideful, arrogant leaders will soon fall flat. They are so busy worrying about themselves that there is no space for them to focus on their teams. As a result, they will not receive honor and respect from their teams or from God. This will eventually lead to disastrous results! Today, as you go before God in prayer, ask him to search your heart and remove any pride and arrogance that may exist. You want to be a servant leader and not a “Boss” who esteems himself more than others. You want to lead like Jesus because He was the perfect example of a humble leader.

*“Lord Jesus, I thank you for this day. For this is the day that you have made, and I will rejoice and be glad in it. Father, I ask that you create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit in me. Remove any pride, arrogance or boastfulness that is within me, oh God. Help me to lead my team with humility, meekness and respect. Help me to communicate in a way that does not offend but uplifts and encourages for my desire is to be more like you, Jesus. I ask all these things in your name. In Jesus Name. Amen.*

***HOW TO CALM THE “BOSS” IN YOU***

***Humility is a characteristic that can have a profound impact on your effectiveness as a leader. Recognizing that it can be tough to be humble in a world where most leaders are only concerned about power and ego. So how do you practice being humble? Below are a few examples taken from the article “23 Best Practices to Become More Humble” by Taylor Rochestie and Ali Garbacz***

1. ***Accepting Your Limitations (What does that look like for you?)***
2. ***Appreciating Others (How would you do that?)***
3. ***Appreciate What You Have (Make a list below)***

***NOTES***

***DAY 7***

***PREPARE TO SERVE***

***“26)Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27) and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – 28) just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”***

***Matthew 20:26-28***

In Chapter 3 of Leading in Joy, it states that when Jesus began His ministry, He set about doing the work that he was assigned to do. He assembled His team of disciples, trained, mentored and served them. It goes on to say that Jesus was among people during His entire ministry on earth. Jesus had a servant’s heart. Whether it was in a synagogue or on top of a mountain, His ministry was all about how he could serve the people he encountered. As a leader, it’s important for you to understand that your team needs you to not only lead, but also provide feedback, impart knowledge, coach and mentor them. This is how you can effectively serve them. Today, let us pray that God will give you the capacity to provide the support that each member of your team needs in order to be successful.

*Dear God, I thank you for waking me up this morning and giving me another opportunity to praise your holy name. Today, I ask for wisdom and strength as I prepare to serve my team. Give me a heart that has the capacity to serve them in such a way that they will be built up and equipped for any task that is put before them. Lord help me to not grow weary as I pour into them. Now Lord, I ask that at the end of the day, you refill me so that I am ready to do it again the next day. I ask these things in your name. In Jesus name. Amen.*

***REFLECTIONS***

1. ***Take a moment to reflect on how having a servant heart could benefit your team. Make a list of things that you can do to better serve your team.***
2. ***All managers have someone in the organization that they are accountable to. Take a moment to reflect on the needs of your superiors and make a list of how you can better serve them.***

***NOTES***

***DAY 8***

***LEADING THROUGH CHALLENGES***

***“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”***

***Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV***

Challenges are a part of life for today’s leaders. Whether it’s a work assignment, conflict among your team or a difficult colleague, leaders have to find ways to overcome these obstacles. One way to prevent that feeling of defeat is to lean on God. The above scripture tells us that the Lord goes before us and is with us. It also tells us not to be afraid or discouraged. No matter the obstacle, we can be confident that God will see us through it. Now, facing opposition is not an easy thing and often times we feel like burying our heads in the sand or giving up altogether. That’s why the second half of that scripture tells us not to be afraid and not get discouraged. This reminds me of another passage of scripture found in Joshua 1:9 NIV which says *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”* As leaders, we don’t back away from challenges. Instead, we look to God for wisdom and strategies to help us tackle them head on. So today, let’s pray for wisdom and courage to face whatever challenges you may face today**.**

*Father, I come to you today seeking your strength and wisdom. Things have been chaotic at work lately and I am feeling defeated. Help me to stay strong and courageous. I need your guidance as I find strategies to deal with the challenges that lie ahead. Most importantly, I need your strength, so I am not tempted to give up. I stand on your Word in 2 Chronicles 15:7 AMP that says, “But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded”. So, I will press on and continue the work that you have assigned me to do. In Jesus Name. Amen.*

***STRATEGIES***

1. ***What challenges are you currently facing? Make a list.***
2. ***What strategies will you use to overcome these obstacles. Make a list.***

***NOTES***

***DAY 9***

***FINDING THE BALANCE***

***“Never get so busy making a living that you forget to make a life”***

***\*Dolly Parton\****

I’m sure every leader can relate to this topic. Family, work, ministry, hobbies; how do you handle it all without being overwhelmed? Early in my career it seemed impossible to juggle everything at once. When you are new to leadership, you spend a lot of time figuring things out. You have a new job with new task and a new team which adds another layer of responsibilities. As a result, you may find yourself spending more time at work than you would like. You then arrive home exhausted but somehow find the energy to take care of your family. In addition, if you have a hobby or ministry commitments you enjoy, you find the time to squeeze that in only to do everything all over again the next day. You can see how easy it is to become overwhelmed if you don’t find a way to manage it all. Here are a few tips that helped me:

1. Make a to do list for the day and prioritize 3 or 4 of the most important tasks. This leaves room for those unexpected tasks. If you can get more done, great. If not, carry the rest into the next day.
2. Don’t overcommit! Learn to say “No” and be okay with it.
3. Give yourself a hard stop at work and then LEAVE! Exceptions should only be urgent matters that absolutely cannot wait until the next day.
4. Do your best not to take work home so you can give your full attention to your family or other activities.

*Dear God, as I start my day, help me not to be overwhelmed by all these responsibilities. Ecclesiastes 9:10a AMP says “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might;”. I get great joy out of the work that I do and therefore have a hard time saying no when I should. Help me to prioritize and not overcommit so that I can do all things in excellence unto you. In Jesus name. Amen.*

***THE JUGGLING ACT***

***Let’s put into practice today’s suggestions.***

1. ***Make a to do list for today’s tasks.***
2. ***Make a list of the top 3 or 4 in order of priority***
3. ***What time is your “hard stop” for today?***
4. ***Enjoy the rest of your day!***

***NOTES***

***DAY 10***

***GOD’S GRACE***

***“For out of His fullness [the superabundance of His grace and truth] we have all received grace upon grace [spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing, favor upon favor, and gift heaped upon gift].”***

***John 1:16 AMP***

Wow! What a God we serve. He is so generous with his blessings. Understanding that grace is a free gift from God that cannot be earned. And to think that he gives grace to us freely over and over again. Knowing that we as leaders make mistakes whether intentional or unintentional, we serve a God of second chances. How is it that we are able to receive His grace? According to the scripture, we receive His grace by faith (Roman 5:1-2). Hebrews 11:1 says, *“Now faith is confidence in what we* *hope for and assurance about what we do not see”*. Our confidence and faith in God allows us to enter into his presence and experience his grace. Why do we need God’s Grace? Let’s take a look at I Corinthians 15:10 TPT – “But God’s amazing grace has made me who I am! And his grace to me was not fruitless. In fact, I worked harder than all the rest, yet not in my own strength but God’s, for his empowering grace is poured out upon me”. His grace is the reason we are who we are. The gifts that he has given us to help others. The blessings that he has given us to bless others. I find this to be so humbling to be the recipient of his grace and favor.

How can we as leaders extend a measure of grace to those we are responsible for serving? We can be compassionate leaders. We can be empathetic leaders. We can show kindness and forgiveness when someone makes an error. We can give feedback and corrections with love and offer words of encouragement. Our teams should see the Jesus in us!

*Dear God, I thank you for loving me the way that you do. I thank you for your grace, favor and mercy that you shower upon me each and every day. I know that I wouldn’t be the person I am today without your love and grace. Thank you for loving me even when I messed up! Now Father, help me to be patient, compassionate and kind to those you have given me charge over. Help me to offer corrections with love along with words of encouragement. Help me to build them up and not tear them down. Allow me to see their strengths and coach them through their flaws. I ask all these things in your name. In Jesus Name. Amen.*

***REFLECTIONS***

1. ***Think about someone on your team that has made an error that needs to be addressed. How can you extend grace to them today?***

***NOTES***

***DAY 11***

***LEADING THROUGH CHANGE***

***“Leaders are – by definition – change makers. When you are called to lead, you are called to advance, move forward, and improve the situation”***

***\*Jonathan Michael Bowman, J.D.\****

If you have every had the task of making changes within an organization or team structure, you know how difficult it can be. You are instantly met with resistance, resentment and hostility. Let’s not forget that famous phrase that I’ve heard from every team I have managed; “Because we’ve always done it this way!” As much as it pains me to hear that, I understand that it comes from a place of fear. No one likes change. However, our job as leaders is to figure out how to navigate as we lead our teams through this time of transition. There is no greater example of this than the story of Moses beginning in Exodus 3:1. Moses was called by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. During that 40-year journey, Moses was met with opposition not only from Pharoah, but from the Israelite people. Why, because they were fearful. Several times they questioned Moses about why he brought them out into the wilderness, and they wanted to go back to what was familiar. However, Moses stayed focused on the task at hand and trusted God to get them to the Promised Land.

Another point worth mentioning is that you never want to disregard the processes that are already in place. Consider that the foundation: assess what is currently working and what could be improved. Then, you build upon that foundation. I have seen firsthand the damage that is done when leaders come in and completely dismantle a program down to the foundation to prove a point. Unfortunately, they are often ill-equipped to rebuild because they haven’t taken the time to understand how the current process works. Don’t be that leader! Learn everything you can from the team and create a culture of collaboration and communication, so everyone, including you, is able to embrace the changes.

*Dear God, today I have been tasked with introducing a new process to the team. I understand that change is hard. So, give me the wisdom to lead my team through this transition. Give me the words to say that will instill trust so we can move forward with confidence. Lord, if I stumble along the way, help me to learn from the mistake and continue on the journey. Your word says in Psalm 37:5 “Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass”. Lord, I put my trust in you. In Jesus Name. Amen.*

***CHANGE MAKER***

1. ***List 3 things that you have identified that need to be changed or tweaked.***
2. ***What strategies will you use to implement those changes?***

*NOTES*