

# Building Up The Body

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A Worker-to-Worker Wellness  
**DEVOTIONAL RESOURCE**

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

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This devotional consists of contributions from LCMS clergy, church workers and church work spouses from across the United States. They gave of their time and talent to bring this resource to you, their fellow worker in the Body of Christ. Thank you to the writer, as well as the reader, for the work you do to build up the Body of Christ. All glory to the Father, through the Son and the Holy Spirit.

For more resources, visit The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Worker Wellness webpage at [lcms.org/wellness](https://lcms.org/wellness).

“We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 1:2-3).

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## INTRODUCTION

**T**oo much of our lives are spent *living in our heads* — examining our feelings, fears, hopes and dreams. The Lord bids us come away from this way of living by listening to Him instead of listening to our hearts. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Is. 55:8–9).

God bids us to leave the world of darkness, deception and lies. “[T]heir end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things” (Phil. 3:19). He calls us and gives us a kingdom (Luke 12:32). “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 13:11). “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth” (Col. 3:2). “Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me” (Ps. 50:15). “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows” (Ps. 23:5).

Through His many promises Jesus draws us to Himself, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt. 11:28–29).

Before you is a collection of 52+ devotions, written from one church worker to another. One beggar showing another beggar where bread may be found. They point to the “light of the world” (John 8:12) who graciously comes into your day. And He who is “the sun of righteousness

shall rise with healing in [His] wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall” (Mal. 4:2).

Much of your days are spent battling the world’s judgement. You are judged by your economic value. The world judges you by your body and what pleasures the world can get from you. Even in the church, some judge us by what we can give them or how we make them feel. That is not love. “Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord ... and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:17–18).

The following devotions call you to walk away from the world’s unloving lies and encounter the refreshing peace of God’s love. Luther said, “All the cunning of the devil is exercised in trying to tear us away from the Word” (Plass, *What Luther Says*, CPH, 1994, p. 396). Still, God’s Word comes to us. It creates faith, and we are made alive and whole and healthy. His Word bestows what it says, “for with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light” (Ps. 36:9).

The Lord’s blessing moves us into our calling and into our day: “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you” (John 15:16).

**Rev. Robert Zagore**

*Executive Director,*

*LCMS Office of National Mission (2018-2022)*

## SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

# Ongoing Responsibilities

*Stephen J. Carter, writer and teacher of the LifeLight Bible studies*

*“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).*

**T**he apostle Paul, near the end of his ministry as he lies chained in prison and faces execution by the Roman emperor because of his faith in Jesus and bold Gospel testimony, writes to the young pastor Timothy about the ongoing responsibility to be faithful. He loves Timothy and is counting on his Gospel ministry to prevail in a hostile culture. The whole letter tells the truth about God’s power, Satan’s attacks and the Gospel message in the sacred Scriptures. Paul also writes for you right now in your ministry.

Ministry can seem like a long haul. There are so many forces in the world, in your congregation, and within our own hearts that seek to lead those in ministry astray and discourage our efforts to be faithful to the Word of Christ.

Another translation of 2 Tim. 2:15 passage reads:

*“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (KJV).*

The Greek word for *study* means *to be zealous or eager, take pains, make every effort*. Paul suggests that being “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed” calls for continual and painstaking effort on the part of those in ministry to “rightly divide the word of truth.” The ongoing

task of preaching or teaching the Word, as well as sharing and caring through the Word, in the local church is a challenging one. Certainly, learning the Word as we grow, studying the Word alongside doctrine in college and/or seminary, lays a good foundation for faithful ministry. However, Paul is writing to Timothy as a young pastor already engaged in ministry. He suggests that ongoing study is necessary. Growing in the Word of Christ and its application to our own lives and the lives of the people we serve is a lifelong charge.

How easy it is for busy workers to become exhausted in ministry, involved in keeping schedules and appointments, putting out fires in the classroom and the parish, preparing and meeting budgets and many other duties. The Gospel for ourselves can be neglected. Workers can run dry spiritually and lose the focus on Christ alone for salvation and as daily bread for each day's problems. God's *daily* resources through Jesus Christ are readily available for you personally and professionally.

*Lord, thank you for Paul's words and also his example in ministry he shares with Timothy, and he shares with me. Help me remain faithful to Your Word each day and give me grace and guidance in the ongoing responsibility to be faithful. You are the savior of many, including me. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

For further reading and encouragement, the author recommends: 2 Tim. 3:14–4:8.

## RELATIONAL WELLNESS

# Families

*Dr. John Eckrich, founder of Grace Place Wellness Ministries and physician*

**W**hen we look at Scripture, we find functional as well as dysfunctional families. Rebekah guided her son Jacob to deceive his father, Isaac, to receive the blessing meant for Esau. Joseph's brothers decided to sell him into slavery in Egypt because they were jealous of the favoritism his father gave him. Eve convinced Adam to eat the fruit God had forbidden them to eat because she listened to the devil's lies. But we also remember Aaron and Hur's support for their brother, Moses, as he led the children of Israel out of Egypt. We think of Mary who encouraged Jesus to help out at a wedding feast when they had no more wine. We consider John who took Mary home to live with him at the request of his dying friend, our Lord Jesus.

The Bible says in Heb. 10:24–25:

*“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb. 10:24–25).*

God gave us the support of families to keep us grounded in faith and with whom to share an agape space, where we can be loved as our sinner-saint selves. In our families we stir one another up with devotions, discussion and time together in the Word or sharing what the Lord has done in our lives that day. Who makes up your family support? Even when families are imperfect, as they always are, they