



LESSON 4 DEVOTION 1

**BUT EAGERLY DESIRE THE GREATER GIFTS. AND NOW I WILL SHOW YOU THE MOST EXCELLENT WAY . . . AND NOW THESE THREE REMAIN: FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE. BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.
1 CORINTHIANS 12:31, 13:13**

College and professional athletes have abilities that go way beyond the average person. Speed, quickness, hand/eye coordination, and power are just a few of the skills that define an elite athlete. But there are high school and college athletes who never made it to the next level despite possessing many of the same abilities held by the elites. Why? Despite a high level of talent these athletes lacked the heart or passion for their sport and were unable to move on in their careers.

There are Christians who have multiple spiritual gifts, incredible talent, and unique abilities yet they never affect the world for Kingdom of God. Why? Because they lack one thing: love for others. The Apostle Paul said that without love all our gifts and abilities will ring hollow in the work of the kingdom.

Instead of focusing on what you lack on the ability side, realize you have the greatest resource available to you when it comes to serving God: love.

Take a moment and pray that God will send you opportunities to show His love to others today.

LESSON 4 DEVOTION 2

As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on." Luke 21:1-4

Why are we convinced that the most important thing about what we do for God is how BIG it is? Could the problem be that our focus is on what we do instead of why we do it?

In Jesus' day, a lot was made of the amount someone put in the offering plate or the buzz that was created when the rich showed up to give a little money to God. Jesus instantly declared that the hero of this story was the poor widow because she gave all she had to the Temple treasury. The amount she gave was no big deal but the heart behind her gift is what Jesus was commending. Obviously, this woman gave out of her intense love for God, a love that was so great that she gave all she had.

So what's the next step?

- Check the WHAT and the WHY when it comes to the things you do to show love for others. Is your love convenient or is it sacrificial? Do you do things to be noticed or to make a difference in the lives of others?
- Always look at the love you show to others in Jesus' name through the lens of eternity. The bigness of what you do is not important. Everything, big or small, when done with the right attitude is pleasing to God.
- When you take on a ministry project or go on a mission trip ask yourself if what you are doing is all about you, or are you getting involved because you really want to show Jesus' love to others.

LESSON 4 DEVOTION 3

I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; before the “gods” I will sing your praise. I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word. Psalm 138:1-2

Depending on what version of the Bible you use, the word “love” is mentioned around 60 times in the Book of Psalms. Many times, when the word love is used in Psalms it’s preceded by the adjective “unfailing.” So the question is, why would the writers of all the psalms want to talk about God’s unfailing love? Here are a few possibilities:

- **Maybe it’s like using an exclamation point, a way to put a big emphasis on God’s love.**
- **Maybe it’s because of the writer’s life experiences. Maybe they had experienced a love from God that never failed them.**
- **Maybe because the distance between God and man seemed so great in the Old Testament, the idea of His unfailing love was a source of comfort.**

Fast forward to the 21st Century.

Today we live under the new covenant, and we have the joy of having a personal relationship with God because He lives in us. We know His love is unfailing in a big way and that is through His Spirit, which never leaves us.

We can love others with God’s unfailing love, which lives inside of us. As we close these lessons on Jesus and loving others, remember that we can love others because Christ first loved us.

Today say a prayer that your love will be pure, genuine, and that it will flow from God Himself who lives in you each and every day.