

5 Day Devotional

Day 1: Wisdom Over Rules

Devotional

Not every decision in life comes with a clear right or wrong answer. Some choices live in the gray, and that is where a lot of us get stuck. We look for a rule to follow, a list to check, or someone to tell us what to do. But what if the better question is not whether something is right or wrong, but whether it is wise or foolish?

Jesus faced constant demands. People needed healing, teaching, and hope. Every moment was filled with something good and urgent. Yet He did not simply say yes to everything. He used wisdom to filter His decisions, and that wisdom came from time spent with His Father.

We all have filters we use to make decisions. The question is whether our filter is shaped by pressure, insecurity, or the voice of God. When we slow down long enough to ask, "Is this wise?" instead of just "Is this allowed?" we start making decisions that align with what God actually has for us.

You do not need a perfect rulebook. You need a relationship with the One who has perfect wisdom. That starts with being willing to pause, ask the right question, and trust that God will guide you.

Bible Verse

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed." - Mark 1:35

Reflection Question

What filter are you currently using to make decisions, and is it shaped more by outside pressure or by time spent with God?

Quote

"Maybe a better question for us to ask instead of, is it right or wrong is, is it wise or foolish?"

Prayer

Lord, give me the wisdom to ask better questions when I face decisions that are not simply black and white. Help me to seek Your voice above the noise around me. Amen.

Day 2: Even Jesus Needed a Break

Devotional

Mark chapter one reads like an exhausting day. Jesus taught, cast out a demon, healed Peter's mother-in-law, and then spent the evening ministering to an entire town gathered at His door. He was fully human, and the weight of all those needs was real.

And yet, before the sun came up the next morning, before the crowds returned and the disciples were even awake, Jesus slipped away to a quiet place to pray. He did not wait until things slowed down. He made the time.

If Jesus, in the middle of the most important ministry the world has ever seen, needed to step away and recharge, what does that say about us? We are not superhuman. We were not designed to run on empty. Our bodies need rest, and our souls need space to breathe.

You are not failing when you step away. You are following the example of Jesus. Rest is not laziness. Solitude is not selfishness. They are acts of obedience that prepare you to love people well and serve with a full heart. Give yourself permission to rest today.

Bible Verse

"That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was." - Mark 1:32-34

Reflection Question

When was the last time you intentionally stepped away to rest, and what has been stopping you from making that a regular rhythm in your life?

Quote

"He was fully human church. And I could imagine that the demands of the people, they're asking, hey, Jesus, help me, please, Jesus, heal my brother, please."

Prayer

Jesus, thank You for modeling rest and showing me that stepping away is not weakness. Help me to honor my limits and trust You enough to slow down. Amen.

Day 3: Solitude Is Not Isolation

Devotional

There is a big difference between solitude and isolation, and it matters more than most of us realize. Isolation is pulling away from everyone, closing yourself off, and making decisions with no one to speak truth into your life. When you are isolated, you become your own sounding board, and that is a dangerous place to be.

Solitude is something different. It is intentional, temporary, and purposeful. It is stepping away from the noise so you can hear God's voice clearly, then returning to the people and responsibilities He has placed in your life. Jesus lived in community. He had disciples, close friends, and people He trusted. But He also carved out time alone with the Father.

We need both. Community keeps us accountable and grounded. Solitude keeps us connected to God and clear on His direction. Without solitude, we drift. Without community, we hide.

If you have been pulling away from people lately and calling it self-care, it might be worth asking whether that is solitude or isolation. God designed you for both connection and quiet. You do not have to choose one or the other.

Bible Verse

"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed." - Mark 1:35

Reflection Question

Are the times you pull away from others genuinely helping you reconnect with God, or have they become a way to avoid accountability and community?

Quote

"Isolation is a lifestyle choice where we disconnect from everyone but self, usually as an act of self preservation."

Prayer

Father, help me to know the difference between healthy solitude and unhealthy isolation. Draw me close to You and to the people You have placed in my life. Amen.

Day 4: Saying No to Good Things

Devotional

One of the hardest parts of following God is not choosing between good and bad. It is choosing between good and better. When the disciples found Jesus praying and told Him that everyone was looking for Him, He did not rush back. He already had direction. He knew it was time to move on to other towns, even though there were still people in that place who needed Him.

No matter how much you do, there will always be something left undone. Someone will always need more. And if you are not careful, the pressure to meet every need will drive every decision you make.

Solitude creates the space to hear what God is actually asking of you. It helps you discern what deserves a yes and what needs a no, even when both options are good. Saying no to something good so you can say yes to something greater is not a failure. It is wisdom.

You are not responsible for doing everything. You are responsible for doing what God has called you to do. Let Him be the one to sort out the rest.

Bible Verse

"So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons." - Mark 1:39

Reflection Question

Is there something good in your life right now that might be crowding out something greater that God is calling you toward?

Quote

"A lot of times, church, it's not about saying yes and no to something bad or good. What usually the hard part is we're typically having to say, you know, no to good things so we can say yes to greater things."

Prayer

God, give me the courage to say no to good things when You are calling me to something greater. Help me to trust Your direction more than the pressure I feel around me. Amen.

Day 5: Your Soul Depends on It

Devotional

A full calendar is not the same as a full life. Many of us stay busy because productivity feels like purpose, or because being needed scratches an itch that we cannot quite name. But no amount of activity will fill what only time alone with God can.

When we skip solitude, we do not just wear ourselves out. We drift. We start making decisions without God's input. We run on fumes and wonder why we feel empty. And the people closest to us, our families, our friends, our coworkers, they feel it too.

Jesus modeled something powerful. He did not just show us how to love people and serve well. He showed us that rest and solitude are just as necessary as any act of ministry. They are not optional extras. They are the foundation that makes everything else sustainable.

If your schedule has no room for quiet time with God, something needs to change. Not because you are failing, but because you are worth more than burnout. Your soul needs it. And the people you love need the version of you that has actually spent time with God.

Bible Verse

"Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them." - Mark 1:30-31

Reflection Question

If your calendar reflects what is truly important to you, what does your current schedule say about how much you value time alone with God?

Quote

"Our lives are too busy not to take intentional time in solitude."

Prayer

Lord, I do not want to run on empty anymore. Help me to make time with You a priority, not an afterthought, and remind me that my soul depends on it. Amen.