

5-DAY *Devotional Guide*



THE BEAUTY OF THE CROSS

Day 1: Be Honest With God

Have you ever tried to hide something from someone who already knew the truth? It is exhausting, and it never really works. The good news is that with God, you do not have to pretend. He already knows everything about you, and He loves you anyway.

Honesty with God is not about informing Him of something He missed. It is about dropping the mask and choosing to be real with the One who sees you fully and loves you completely. That kind of honesty is actually freeing. When we stop performing and start being truthful, something shifts in our relationship with God. We move from distance to closeness.

Self-examination is not meant to make you feel ashamed. It is an invitation to draw near. Think of it like a conversation with a close friend. You do not hide the hard stuff from people you truly trust. You bring it into the open because the relationship is safe. Your relationship with God is the safest place there is.

Today, take a moment to pause. Ask God to bring to mind anything that has been creating distance between you and Him. You do not need to have it all figured out. You just need to be honest. That is where real communion with God begins, and it is a beautiful place to start.

Bible Verse

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." - 1 John 1:8-9 (English Standard Version (ESV))

Reflection Question

What is one area of your life where you have been less than fully honest with God, and what might it feel like to finally bring it into the open?

Quote

"The first word today is honesty. Be honest."

Prayer

Lord, thank You for knowing me completely and loving me still. Give me the courage to be honest with You today, and help me trust that Your love is a safe place to bring everything I have been holding back. Amen.

5-DAY *Devotional Guide*



Day 2: You Do Not Have to Earn It

One of the hardest things to accept is a gift you feel you do not deserve. Most of us are wired to earn our way, to prove ourselves, to make things right before we ask for anything. But forgiveness from God does not work that way, and that is actually the best news you will ever hear.

Yesterday, we talked about being honest with God. Today, we take the next step: receiving what He has already provided. Forgiveness is not something you have to convince God to give you. It is something He already made available through Jesus on the cross. Your confession does not change God's mind about you. It simply opens the door for you to walk into what He has already prepared.

Think about that for a moment. Every failure, every regret, every thing that came to mind when you paused yesterday, it is already covered. Not because you said the right words or felt bad enough, but because of what Jesus did. His sacrifice was complete. His love was decided long before you ever made a mistake.

You are not approaching a disappointed judge when you confess. You are coming home to a Father who has been waiting with open arms. Receive that today. Let it sink in. Forgiveness is yours, not because you earned it, but because He gave it.

Bible Verse

"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, He broke it, and said, 'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'" - 1 Corinthians 11:23-24 (English Standard Version (ESV))

Reflection Question

Is there something you have been withholding from God because you felt you needed to fix it first before coming to Him?

Quote: "He already did everything necessary on the cross to demonstrate that he loves us."

Prayer: Jesus, thank You for doing everything necessary on the cross so that I do not have to earn my way back to You. Help me receive Your forgiveness fully today, without conditions and without shame. Amen.

5-DAY *Devotional Guide*



Day 3: Keeping a Short Account

Healthy relationships require honesty and regular communication. When something goes wrong between two people who love each other, the longer it goes unaddressed, the more distance it creates. The same is true in our relationship with God.

Over the past two days, we have looked at honesty and forgiveness. Today, we explore what it looks like to live in ongoing communion with God, not just in big moments, but every day. Confession is not a one-time event. It is a rhythm, a habit of keeping the relationship close and the lines of communication open.

This does not mean you are constantly focused on your failures. It means you are constantly focused on the relationship. When something comes up, you bring it to God quickly. You take responsibility, receive His grace, and take a step of obedience. That cycle, repeated over time, is what a deep and growing relationship with God looks like.

God is not waiting to catch you doing something wrong. He is inviting you into closeness. Every time you come to Him honestly, you are saying, "I trust You with the real me." And every time you do, He meets you with the same faithful love He always has. That is the kind of relationship worth pursuing, not perfect, but honest and close.

Bible Verse

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." - 1 John 1:8-9 (English Standard Version (ESV))

Reflection Question

In what practical ways could you build a habit of keeping a short account with God throughout your daily life, not just in formal moments of prayer?

Quote

"If we want to have communion with God, we have to keep a short account with God, just like we would a friend or someone we love deeply."

Prayer

Father, help me stay close to You not just in big moments but in the everyday rhythms of life. Teach me to come to You quickly, honestly, and with a heart that trusts in Your faithfulness. Amen.

5-DAY *Devotional Guide*



Day 4: Come As You Are, Not As You Wish You Were

There is a temptation many of us face: waiting until we feel good enough to come to God. We think we need to clean ourselves up first, get our act together, and then approach Him. But that way of thinking actually keeps us from the very thing we need most.

We have been building toward this all week. Honesty opens the door. Forgiveness walks us through it. Keeping a short account keeps us close. And now, humility is what allows us to stay at the table. Humility is not thinking less of yourself. It is being truthful about who you are and choosing to come to God anyway.

You do not have to be perfect to approach God. You just have to be honest. Coming with humble hands means you are not pretending, not performing, and not waiting until you have it all together. It means you are showing up as you are, trusting that He is enough to cover what you are not.

This is actually a posture of great courage. It takes strength to stop pretending and to come as you truly are. But when you do, you find that God has been there all along, not waiting to correct you, but ready to welcome you. Come to Him today, not perfect, but honest. That is all He has ever asked.

Bible Verse

"For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, He broke it, and said, 'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'" - 1 Corinthians 11:23-24 (English Standard Version (ESV))

Reflection Question

What would it look like for you to stop waiting until you feel "ready" and instead come to God with humble and open hands right now?

Quote

"Not perfect, not perfect, but with humble and clean hands and a pure heart."

Prayer

Lord, I come to You not as I wish I were, but as I am. Thank You that Your table is open to honest hearts, not perfect ones. Help me walk in humility today, trusting that You are more than enough. Amen.

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Day 5: Go and Proclaim

All week, we have been on a journey inward: being honest, receiving forgiveness, keeping a short account, and coming with humility. But the journey does not end there. It moves outward. What God does in us is always meant to flow through us.

Examination and participation at the table lead to proclamation in everyday life. And proclamation does not have to look like a grand gesture or a public speech. It can look like the way you treat the person in front of you today. It can look like a step of obedience you have been putting off, or a kind word offered to someone who needs it. It can look like gratitude, simply living with a thankful heart because of what Jesus has done.

You carry something powerful with you. You have been honest with God, you have received His grace, and you have come to Him with humility. Now, let that shape how you move through the world. Let it change how you speak, how you serve, and how you love the people around you.

This is the rhythm God invites us into: examine, participate, and proclaim. Not as a religious checklist, but as a way of life rooted in gratitude. You have been given so much. Go and let it show. The world around you needs to see what grace looks like when it is lived out loud.

Bible Verse

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." - 1 John 1:8-9 (English Standard Version (ESV))

Reflection Question

What is one specific, practical way you can proclaim what God has done in your life this week, through your words, your actions, or your attitude toward someone around you?

Quote

"May we walk away from here knowing that we've gone through the process of examination, participation and now we go out and we proclaim with thanksgiving what you have done with gratitude."

Prayer: God, thank You for the grace You have poured into my life this week. Help me carry it outward with gratitude, and may the way I live today point others to Your goodness and love. Amen.