



DAILY JOURNAL

 **WHY A DEVO JOURNAL?**

You are going to experience a lot this week in Mexico! You are in a different culture. You will try new things. You will meet new people. You will eat different food. You will give and receive love. You will be challenged. And most importantly you will see, feel, and experience God’s presence.

Our days will be packed with leading activities, playing with kids, and doing work projects. It would be easy to get wrapped up in doing things without taking the time to be with God. This journal is designed to help you be intentional in taking time to reflect and process your experiences. This will help you understand what God is doing here in this place for you and through you. It will help you hear God’s voice and calling. Finally, spending time in reflection will enrich our group times together in the evenings so that we can learn from each other, support each other, and grow together as a community of faith.

Take 5-10 minutes each day to go through the daily journal page. Go at your own pace and focus on the parts that connect with you the most. Bring this journal with you to our group meeting times each evening and share anything that you feel led to share!

Enjoy your time with God!
Hank, Walker, J-Mac

**MONDAY: MORE THAN THIS**

**REFLECTION**

1. Traveling to Mexico was …
2. A highlight for me today…
3. What was it like arriving at the orphanage?
4. What was similar or different to what you expected today to be like?

**DEVOTION**“Come and follow me!” Jesus selected twelve average men that most considered unworthy to be his closest and most trusted followers.

How many of the 12 disciples can you name? *(No looking in the scripture below for answers!)*

Chances are you struggled to name all twelve. Although some were more well-known than others, each disciple played an important role in the group and the ministry. Jesus picked each one for a reason. Jesus trained, equipped, and empowered each of the disciples to minister to others and lead the church.

**Matthew 4:18-22**

*18As Jesus walked alongside the Galilee Sea, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew, throwing fishing nets into the sea, because they were fishermen. 19“Come, follow me,” he said, “and I’ll show you how to fish for people.” 20Right away, they left their nets and followed him. 21Continuing on, he saw another set of brothers, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father repairing their nets. Jesus called them and 22immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.*

Jesus is saying “There is **more than** this. **More than** fishing. **More than** the family trade. Follow me, and I will show you!”

WHAT THINGS MAKE UP YOUR NORMAL DAILY LIFE? Write them on the lines below. The more time you dedicate to this, write it in bigger letters.

1. How do you feel about your list?
2. What do you think needs to change – become bigger or smaller or be added or removed from the list?
3. If Jesus walked up to you while you were doing one of the things above and said “Follow me?” would you drop what you were doing and go? Why or why not?

Mission Trips offer a wonderful opportunity to step out of our normal routine. Although for only a few days, mission trips give us an excuse and a reason to let go of the normal things in life and participate in the **“more than”** life. Jesus said “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” This is a **“More Than”** life where our focus is on following Jesus more closely and we are aware that we are a part of God’s work in the world.

1. How do you hope being on the Mexico Mission Trip will help you to follow Jesus?
2. How do you hope this experience changes you and your life?

**PRAYER***Loving God,
Thank you for the opportunity to live and serve at the Benito Juarez Children’s Home this week. Help me to recognize and appreciate “More Than” moments this week. Open my ears and heart that I can hear you speak to me this week. Amen.*

**NOTES**

**TUESDAY: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE**

**REFLECTION**

1. How did it feel to wake up in Mexico today?
2. A person in our group who I have met is…
3. A high point for me so far on this trip has been…
4. I have experienced God …

**DEVOTION**

Have you ever heard the phrase “**More than** meets the eye?” This means that there is some hidden value or quality in someone or something that is not easily seen. Throughout the Bible, God chooses seemingly ordinary people to do extraordinary things. Nehemiah is one such person.

Nehemiah was the cupbearer for the king. It was Nehemiah’s responsibility to assure the king’s drinks were safe from poison. Nehemiah’s position required that he be trustworthy and loyal. He must guard the king at all costs, even if it meant putting his life on the line by tasting the king’s drink first to ensure it was not poisoned. Nehemiah had some great qualities and had an important job, but God was calling him to an even more important mission – to rebuild the city walls around Jerusalem. With the king’s blessing, Nehemiah went to Jerusalem to take on this monumental task.

Nehemiah 2:16-20
*16The officials didn’t know where I had gone or what I was doing. I hadn’t yet told the Jews, the priests, the officials, the officers, or the rest who were to do the work. 17So I said to them, “You see the trouble that we’re in: Jerusalem is in ruins, and its gates are destroyed by fire! Come, let’s rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that we won’t continue to be in disgrace.” 18I told them that my God had taken care of me, and also told them what the king had said to me.
“Let’s start rebuilding!” they said, and they eagerly began the work.
19But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and made fun of us. “What are you doing?” they asked. “Are you rebelling against the king?”*

*20“The God of heaven will give us success!” I replied. “As God’s servants, we will start building. But you will have no share, right, or claim in Jerusalem.”*

Nehemiah faced opposition from the enemies of the Jews as well as some quarreling among his own people. However, he was able to inspire and lead the people to rebuild the walls in only 52 days. Everyone worked hard and sacrificed. They even put their lives on the line to defend the builders from attack.

Nehemiah was moved by the destruction of his city – God’s city. He knew the city had to be rebuilt and the people restored to right relationship with God. Nehemiah did not sit around and wait for someone else to lead. Although he lacked experience and training, he jumped in and led his people to a great accomplishment.

1. Have you ever stepped up like Nehemiah?
2. Where are you leading now?
3. Where do you think God is calling you to lead in the future?
4. How can you inspire and lead others this week into doing great things for others and for God?

**PRAYER***Awesome God,*

*Thank you for the gift of life and health. I am called to use my mind, strength, and heart to love and serve You and others. Give me the wisdom to know when to step up to lead and when to follow. Fill me with the courage to lead confidently. Help me to always use my position and power as a leader to serve others and to lead with integrity and love. Amen*

**NOTES**

**WEDNESDAY: MORE THAN YOU KNOW**

 **REFLECTION**

Today I feel… (Circle all that apply and write your own)

Tired Excited Content Happy

Anxious Joyful \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

A highlight for me the past 24 hours was…

My biggest challenge or struggle has been …

**DEVOTION**

On a scale of 1-10 how much do you love each of the following? (10 being the highest)

Pizza \_\_\_\_\_ Mom and dad \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Siblings \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Being here \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Church \_\_\_\_\_\_ Summer \_\_\_\_\_\_

Best friend \_\_\_\_\_\_ Sports \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ My school \_\_\_\_\_ And of course, Jesus \_\_\_\_\_\_

It is common to use the word “love” to describe an affinity for a certain food, song, or piece of clothing. Saying “I love French fries!” or “I love the show The Walking Dead!” are common.

But do we really love these things?

What about people who are important in your life? How would you describe your love for them?

It is hard to comprehend how much God loves us. It is **More Than** we can imagine or understand. In the book of Romans, Paul writes to Christians living in Rome. The church was founded by Jews who came to believe in Jesus and spread their faith upon their return to Rome. Paul had yet to visit them, so he writes them a letter of encouragement and support and tells them all about what it means to live as a follower of Jesus. He writes…

**Romans 8:37-39**

*No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
Paul knew that these believers would all face challenges to their faith and obstacles that would seek to separate them from God. He assures them that nothing – nothing – can separate us from God’s love.

On each of the lines below, write a word that you think describes God’s love for you?

What things are barriers between you and God?

What does it mean that God loves you “as you are, not as you should be?”

Because God loves me…

How does God’s love compare to our love?

**PRAYER**

*Father God, I come into your presence so aware of my human frailty and yet overwhelmed by your love for me. I thank you that there is no human experience that I might walk through where your love cannot reach me. If I climb the highest mountain you are there and yet if I find myself in the darkest valley of my life, you are there. Teach me today to love you more. Help me to rest in that love that asks nothing more than the simple trusting heart of a child. In Jesus name, Amen*

**NOTES**

**THURSDAY: MORE THAN BIRDS**

**REFLECTION**

In one of our meetings, we discussed our purpose in coming on this trip by writing down on a big board answers to “Why are you/we going to Mexico?”

Our answers were:

* To Help Build a Future
* Play with Kids
* Spiritual Renewal
* Have Fun
* To Serve
* Share the Love of Christ
* Change Lives
1. How have you fulfilled one or more of these purposes this week?
2. Where have you fallen short or gotten off track?
3. How has God worked through you or others to help us live our purpose in coming to Mexico?

**DEVOTION**

People worry a lot. We worry about money, grades, relationships, and more. You may lose sleep or even have health problems caused by worry. Worry leads to stress, which can lead to all sorts of problems.

A recent survey found the top worries among teenagers to be:

1. School and Time Commitments
2. Appearance and Fitting In
3. Love and Sex
4. Living up to Expectations

**What do you worry about?**

Jesus knew that we worry. Jesus saw that the root of many of the worries of his disciples was a lack of faith. Jesus knew that if they would trust in him and have faith in God, many of their worries would be lessened or disappear altogether.

**Luke 12:22-24** -
*Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Therefore, I say to you, don’t worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear.There is more to life than food and more to the body than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither plant nor harvest, they have no silo or barn, yet God feeds them. You are worth so much* ***more than*** *birds!*

God takes care of every living thing – flowers, ants, trees, and even birds. Jesus reminds us that if we understand that God takes care of these things, isn’t it silly to think that God will not take care of us?

1. Do you worry… too much just right not enough
2. One thing I worry most about is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Why does this cause you worry?

1. How are faith and worry related?
2. How can remembering God’s love for you and that God cares for you help you deal with worry?

*Be anxious nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Phil 4:6-7)*

**PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus, please forgive me for allowing worry and anxiety to take root in my life. By worrying, I have displayed an obvious lack of faith. And without faith it is impossible to please You. Father, please forgive me for living from a worldly perspective rather than Your eternal perspective.*

*Your yoke is easy, and Your burden is light. I give You the weight of the world that I have taken on my shoulders, and I place it in Your hands; I cast all my cares upon You, because You care for me.*

*Father, in the name of Jesus I bind anxious and worrisome thoughts out of my life. I take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. And in its place I loose the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, that would guard my heart and mind through Christ Jesus.*

*Father, you promise to keep me in perfect peace, if I keep my mind on you, and if I trust in you. I make this my declaration: I will fix all my thoughts on You because I trust in You. AMEN*

**NOTES**

**FRIDAY: MORE THAN YOURSELF**

**REFLECTION**

1. Something I have missed since I have been on this trip is…
2. Something I have not missed is …
3. What words best describe the Benito Juarez Children’s Home?
4. If you had one minute to tell someone about this place and this trip, what would you say?

**DEVOTION**

Have you ever had some really great news you could not wait to share with someone? Maybe you won an award, made an awesome grade, or got a date to prom. You could not wait to tell everyone.

I went to St. Louis many years ago with Amy – who was my girlfriend at the time. We went to attend her best friend’s wedding. It was a great day of celebrating. That night back at the hotel I asked Amy to marry me. Amy said “Yes!” It was well past midnight, but guess what Amy did. She got on the phone and called her mom and dad. She could not wait to tell the news. The next day Amy called all her friends and relatives. (I called a few of mine too.) We were meeting her newly married friend and her husband at the Cardinals baseball game. Amy could not wait to surprise her friend with the news.

We all have good news to share! The Gospel that Jesus lived, died, and rose again so that we might be in right relationship with God and have eternal life is the best news of all. We are God’s witnesses to the world.

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven, he left the disciples with these final words.

**Acts 1:8**
*Rather, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

Jesus tells his closest followers that they will be his witnesses. They will witness to those closest to them, to those in surrounding areas, and even to those in the farthest reaches of the world. But Jesus reminds them that they do not do this alone. The Holy Spirit goes with them. The Spirit will give them the power to get through tough times. The courage to speak boldly. The wisdom to make good decisions.

You are called to share the good news of Jesus with the world. But you do not have to do this alone. You have your church, your youth group, and you have the Holy Spirit to guide you. So speak confidently. Live boldly. Share the good news. Someone needs to hear it!

1. If you had one minute to share the Good News with someone, what would you say?
2. How have you experienced the Holy Spirit in your life?
3. Who is someone you know who needs to hear the Good News?

**PRAYER***Dear Lord, I have friends and neighbors who do not seem to know you. They struggle, just like I do, but they only have their own strength to get through each day. I know you love them and that you could help them beyond all they can hope or imagine at this moment.

I want my friends to know you. They need to know Jesus Christ as their Lord. They need to follow the one who gives eternal life to all those who come to him.

I ask you to strengthen me to be a faithful witness so that I can help them come to know you as their Savior. Open for me an opportunity to love them and to share with them the good news of your grace. Prepare their heart to listen and to receive your message, the message that gives life to all who receive it. Help me to be loving, bold and wise.

Open my mouth, in the right time and way, to share my faith with those I love. I look forward to seeing you do amazing things through my life and witness for Christ.

In the precious name of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, I pray. Amen.*

**NOTES**

**SATURDAY: MORE THAN THESE**

 **REFLECTION**

1. I am looking forward to …
2. This trip has taught me ….
3. How has God used this experience to make an impact on you?
4. What difference do you think this experience will make in your life?

**DEVOTION**
Jesus is crucified and put in the tomb. Jesus then fulfills his claim by rising from the dead. He appears to the disciples who have gone fishing. Why they return to their old pastime is unclear. Maybe they needed to clear their heads. Perhaps they did not really believe. Or it could be with all that had happened, they sought to find comfort in something they knew and understood.

Then Jesus shows up. Jesus sits with them around the fire cooking fish and eating. When breakfast was over Jesus turns to Peter.

**John 21:15-16.**
*Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me* ***more than*** *these?”*

These. What are “these?” The fish? Do you love me **more than** fishing? **More than** this easy comfortable way of life? Do you love me enough to remember that you are no longer called to fish the seas but to fish for people?

Jesus asks Peter three times if Peter loves him. Peter, who only a few days before had denied Jesus three times now has the opportunity to declare his love three times. Jesus forgives Peter. Jesus restores Peter. And Jesus calls Peter. Peter’s occupation has changed from fisherman to evangelist. Peter would lay down his nets one more time to go follow Jesus – to be “the rock” upon which the church was built.

1. How do you think Peter felt when he first saw Jesus along the shore that morning?
2. Why does Jesus come back for Peter – who denied him three times?
3. What is your “fishing boat?” Where are you comfortable that may get in the way of following Jesus?

**PRAYER***Write your own prayer to God.*

What’s Next?

The mission trip is over, but the mission is not! You can stay involved in serving through the Benito Juarez home every day. Here are some ways you can stay connected.

1. Write Letters or Send Cards to the Kids: You can mail to Mark Russell at:
Mission to Mexico
119 West Gore
Pharr, TX 78577
2. Host a Drive. Collect things that the orphanage needs. Some ideas include: children’s books, art supplies, sports equipment.
3. Send Money. The orphanage relies on funding from churches and people who have served at the home. Set aside some money each month and pledge to give the money to the home. They make every $1 count!
4. Pray! Pray daily for the kids, the staff, and Mark. Pray they remain safe and healthy. Pray they receive their needed finances. Pray that new groups will come on mission trips there!
5. Tell your friends. Your friends might go to churches looking for a new mission opportunity. Tell them about your experience and maybe their church will become interested in serving at the orphanage!



*Mexico Mission Trip - Daily Journal*

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