

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Big Picture

WEEK 5

WHEN YOU CAN'T SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE, CHOOSE TO FORGIVE.

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”

ROMANS 12:18 NIV

DAY 1

Live at peace with everyone. Is that even possible? Your rude neighbor, that annoying younger sibling, the coach who always yells at you, that kid who picks on everyone? You have to live at peace with *them*? As Paul puts it here, as much as it depends on us, we have to live at peace with *everyone*—even those who make peace feel impossible at times! But we don't have to do it on our own. When we follow Jesus, He begins to work in us, helping us to choose things like peace, forgiveness, and love. Because of Him, this kind of peace—a peace that exists in our hearts—is possible. This week, make an effort to pursue peace in even the most difficult of relationships or circumstances.

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.”

COLOSSIANS 3:15 NIV

DAY 2

Think about the way the human body works. Your heart, your lungs, your brain—everything about your body was designed with a purpose. Each part works together, making sure that your body functions just the way it's supposed to. If even one part begins to struggle or fail? Well, the rest of the body suffers! The same is true in the body of Christ. When even one person—one believer in Jesus—doesn't pursue peace, everyone else struggles as a result. But when we all allow God to work in our hearts to make peace a priority, then we begin to show the world the bigger picture of who God is—the picture of peace. This week, pray that God will help you make peace a priority.

**“They must turn from evil and do good;
they must seek peace and pursue it.”**

1 PETER 3:11 NIV

DAY 3

When you pursue peace, you do everything you can to get it. You run hard and fast away from the things that don't bring it and toward the things that do. But unlike a childhood game, peace isn't something that's difficult to catch. You don't have to run in circles, or wait for your turn to be "it," or even look for it as it's hiding. To pursue peace, all you have to do is look to the One who gives it: God. He will not only work in you to bring you peace, but He'll give you the strength to keep pursuing it in every area of your life. To remind yourself to pursue peace this week, try memorizing this verse or writing it somewhere you'll see it often.

**“Do not let your hearts be troubled.
You believe in God; believe also in
me.”**

JOHN 14:1 NIV

DAY 4

When was the last time your heart felt truly troubled? Was it when you failed a test? Got caught in a lie? Hurt your best friend's feelings? Found out someone you loved was sick? Lost a family member? The reality is that, in this world, we will face troubles like these all the time. But even though that may be true, in God, we find the One who can ease our troubles simply by walking with us through them. That's the bigger picture! So today, grab a piece of paper and write down a few things that worry or trouble your heart. Then, underneath your list, write this verse as a reminder that God is with you in each of those things.

**“You will keep in perfect peace those
whose minds are steadfast, because
they trust in you.”**

ISAIAH 26:3 NIV

DAY 5

It's easy to let your mind wander. With so much going on around us—music to listen to, movies to watch, YouTube to stream, people to talk to, homework to do, chores to keep up with, friends to see—it's easy to get distracted and overwhelmed. But this verse promises us that if we keep our minds on Jesus —if we keep Him in our thoughts—we'll find the cure to what distracts and overwhelms us so easily. With our eyes on Him, we'll find peace. Our hearts and minds will be at rest because they'll be focused on the bigger picture of what God is doing in our lives. Talk to your Small Group Leader this week about what it looks like to keep your mind on God.
