

2024

WOMEN'S BUILD

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Prepared By: Teri Ussery



**"THEREFORE
ENCOURAGE
ONE ANOTHER
AND BUILD ONE
ANOTHER UP,
JUST AS YOU
ARE DOING."**

1 Thessalonians 5:11

CALLED TO BUILD

Welcome to the 2024 WMU of Texas Women’s Build. *Called to Build* is an opportunity for you to contribute your time, energy, effort, and heart to a family in great need. You may think you’re just building a house. But in reality, you’re building so much more.

As we walk through the week, please spend some time each day with the Lord. This is truly His work, requiring His empowering.

Each team will follow the devotional for their particular week.

Week One Team will begin with Day One on Sunday, ending with Day Six on Friday.

Week Two Team will begin with Day One on Thursday, ending with Day Six on Tuesday.

Glad you are a part of the team because you are *Called to Build*.

Teri Ussery
Adult Strategist, WMU of Texas

CONTENTS	
DAY 1	4
DAY 2	6
DAY 3	8
DAY 4	10
DAY 5	12
DAY 6	14

DAY ONE – WALK IN THE LIGHT

Read: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

As much as I would love to teach the prophecy packed into this passage, I will suffice with gleaning insight into the principles Paul lays out.

The first three verses talk about the timing and the questions surrounding the return of Christ. While believers in Paul’s day felt Christ’s return was soon, believers today can be confident that His return is now even sooner! This should motivate all of us to share the Gospel with urgency!

Paul is reminding these Thessalonian believers that discerning the timing isn’t as important as the posture of our waiting. He says that the thief comes in the cover of darkness, at an unknown time, yet he follows that with the analogy of giving birth. Anyone who has experienced childbirth knows that the moment is unknown to everyone except God, but the nearness of the experience can be anticipated by the timing and intensity of the birth pangs. In contrast, the thief, if he’s any good at what he does, comes when he is least expected.

We know the time is soon given the evidence of the world around us, yet the moment is unknown.

So how should we live in the midst of this dichotomy?

As a believer, we should live ready. We do not live in the dark. We are fully aware that time is short, and we need to make the most of every moment to walk in obedience and share Christ with those we encounter.

*“You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.”
1 Thessalonians 5:5*

Today, as you begin the journey of *Called to Build*, consider how God may be calling you to reflect Jesus, who is The Light.

How can you shine your light to pierce the darkness?

God has invited you to join the *Called to Build* team.

What experiences do you have that God wants to use during this week?

Spend some time praying for your purpose this week. Consider the people on your team and those who you will encounter during the build. Perhaps you have some trepidation about what you will be doing? Maybe God has laid something on your heart, and you are staying alert to how and when He wants to use you to share?

Journal your thoughts below.

Pray for this week. Psalm 37:4 says to *“delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desire of your heart.”*

What are your heart’s desires for your experience this week?

Spend some time delighting in the Lord and listening as He leads you.

DAY TWO – THE SOURCE OF YOUR LIGHT

Since we talked about being the light in darkness yesterday, I want to stay on that subject and see what Jesus had to say about the light.

Read Matthew 5:14-16.

If you have a red-letter Bible, you know clearly that Jesus is speaking these words.

Who does Jesus say is the light of the world?

What do we do with the light?

What should people see that is illumined?

Why is this important?

As you begin work today, you are definitely doing the “good deeds” Jesus points out. While the “good deeds” are visible to others, Jesus points to the purpose, giving us the all-important why.

What does Jesus say about the purpose of others seeing our “good deeds”?

He tells us to be the light of the world. However, we don't shine our own light. The only True Light we have is from Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit fell as “*tongues of fire*” (Acts 2:3) on the believers at Pentecost. The light. Jesus says, “*I am the light of the world*” (John 8:12). Revelation, chapter one, gives a picture of Jesus walking among the lampstands. He tells John that the lampstands are the churches. The lampstand doesn't

create the light. It simply holds the light to illuminate what surrounds it. The source of The Light isn't *from* the church, The Light is *held by* the church.

And who is the church? We are. So, the Light we shine is the Light of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

As you work this week, doing good deeds, remember that you are the light-bearer. You carry within you the Light of Christ.

I challenge you to keep in mind this week that although *what* you do is important, perhaps *how* you do it takes priority. This is God's house we are building. He has called you to come and be a part. I do believe that the walls will go up, the doors and windows will be installed, the sheetrock and greenboard will all be in place.

But the most important thing for us to remember is that as we complete the task, there is a light we shine.

I remember the words of one of our early build homeowners. He shared in a video for **I Am Texas Missions** about how he came to faith in Jesus because of watching the women and how well they loved. He pointed to each woman. She's a Christian. She's a Christian. And I see how they love each other, and I want that for myself. And yes. If memory serves, that was our first family to come to faith in Christ as a direct result of the women on the build.

God may want to use you to impact someone on the team. You may be the one who directly shares the Gospel with family members or friends who come to help on the build. God may even want to use you to make a difference in the life of one of our friends from Buckner who are helping on the build.

But remember the focus at the end of Matthew 5:16. *"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."*

Believe it or not, your goal this week is not just to build a house. It isn't just to make new friends. It isn't just to pray over a family. Your purpose this week is to let God use your good deeds to bring glory to Himself. That's where *life transformation* happens.

Spend some time in prayer. Ask God to show you how He wants to shine your Light. Ask Him to give you a word to focus on as you work today.

Journal your thoughts.

DAY THREE – LIFE TRANSFORMATION

Yesterday you may remember reading the words *life transformation* in the devotional. As we looked at how being the light-bearer allows God to be glorified as others see your good deeds, we mentioned that only through Christ can a life truly be transformed.

Today, I want to unpack what true life-transformation looks like.

Read Romans 11:33-36.

Journal what God shows you about Himself:

Ponder verse 36 for a moment. “For **from Him and through Him and for Him are all things**. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.” (emphasis mine).

Read Romans 12:1-2.

What does God ask us to offer?

What is the result of this?

God wants us to be a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to Him. He just told us that all things are from Him, through Him and for Him. That means all we have, all we are, all we do are His – for His glory. The result is true and proper worship. That tells me I don’t have to be a great singer to worship. I believe that, although corporate worship is definitely His will and purpose, we also worship as we live our lives.

Harold Best defines worship as --

*the continuous outpouring of all that I am,
all that I do, and
all that I can ever become
in light of a chosen or choosing God.*

I don't really know much about Harold Best, but I really do like this definition of worship. However, I would change the last line to read "*in light of the One True God, the Author and Perfecter of my faith.*" That tells me worship in any sense, corporate or personal, has the primary purpose of pouring out all that I am to glorify my Savior, Redeemer, and Lord.

All of this brings us full-circle to life transformation. It is only through the power of Christ that true transformation happens.

God longs for us to experience this fully. And we can't leave the subject without looking at the Greek word for transformation. That word is *metamorphoo*. Look familiar? This is where we get our English word *metamorphosis*.

Join me on a quick journey. Think of the caterpillar. Crawls on its belly. His only goal is to find food. Crawling around and eating. Then one day, a process begins where he finds himself wrapped up in a cocoon. Dark. Cramped. Unsure of what's happening. The struggle for freedom begins. Working. Laboring. Struggling to be free. Then it happens – a crack in the shell, and the little caterpillar sees a ray of sunlight. His struggle continues until he's out. He's free. But he's no longer a caterpillar that crawls on the ground looking for food. He emerges as a glorious, beautiful butterfly who no longer crawls on his belly, but soars to new heights. That *metamorphoo* or *transformation* has released what was inside the caterpillar all along, allowing him to be what he was created to become.

I love to think about this with people. God has created a purpose and passion within each one of us. I think we all begin life as a caterpillar with not a clue of what's really been placed inside of us. We begin life crawling on the ground and eating. We search. We may go through dark times when we don't understand. We may feel cramped and crowded by the struggles of life. But one day, there will be a ray of Son-Light. As we struggle to be free of those things that hold us back, and trust the Light, we will experience the fullness of what God has purposed for us all along. We experience the freedom to soar.

Perhaps this week will provide an opportunity for you to share with someone who needs to hear from you. Maybe there is someone who is struggling to be free from the past or something in their life that is keeping them captive.

As you pray today, ask God to show you someone to specifically pray for. Ask Him to help you know how to pray for them. Ask Him for opportunities to share.

DAY FOUR – BE AT PEACE WITH ONE ANOTHER

Today we will step back into the passage in Thessalonians. I want to look beyond our key verse for the week and see what else Paul has to share.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15.

What does Paul tell us in verse 13 about how to live?

What are the instructions he gives in verses 14 and 15?

This is a tough week. We work hard. We live tired. As for me, my physical limitations are stretched. Not to mention muscle-aches that only show up this time each year. We are working together. And sometimes there are frustrations. We may be redeemed but are still human and prone to human responses.

But we are admonished in this passage to live in peace.

Today's devotional is short. I want you to have time and energy to just focus on the Lord. Let Him fill you and encourage you. Let Him challenge you.

Look at the list you made from verses 14 and 15. Pray those words back to God. Let Him speak to you about how to apply those words today.

Journal what you hear from Him.

DAY FIVE – LIVING IN GOD'S WILL

As believers, I think we are often misguided in our understanding of “God’s will.” We are prone to be doers. And we tend to think that if we are *doing* what God wants us to do, then we are in His will.

However, today’s devotional may challenge that notion. Let’s see what today’s passage has to say about God’s will.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

List the three things Paul tells us:

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

Reflect on those three things. Are these doing words or being words? By that I mean, is it about completing the task of rejoicing, praying, and giving thanks? Or is it more about an attitude? What if God is more concerned about our heart than He is about our hands?

Maybe He would rather us focus on how we do what we do rather than just doing what we do?

Rejoice always. Rejoicing is not an activity but a way of life. And this verse says to do it how often? Only when things are going well? Only when we feel good about life? Only when all is well with the world? Paul says that rejoicing is an *always* activity regardless of how things seem. I see it as an attitude of the heart instead of an activity of the mind.

Pray continually. While purposed, personal, private prayer time is essential to our relationship with the Lord, it sets us up to be obedient to this particular command. And all three of these verses are imperatives in the original language. That means they are not suggestions. They are commands. God tells us we are to live our life in an attitude of prayer. God doesn’t just speak to us when we are on our knees. He speaks to us as we are going. Remember Moses. He wasn’t having a quiet time when the Lord spoke to him in the burning bush. God interrupted his normal, everyday, day with the greatest calling of his life.

Give thanks in all circumstances. This is a tough one. And I know people try to spiritualize this. But for me, it all comes down to trust. Do I believe that God is faithful? Does He have a plan for my life? Does He mean it when He says He will never leave me or forsake me? If I believe the answer to those questions is yes, then I can trust Him and that's where I find the courage to give thanks in all circumstances. Living with an attitude of gratitude reminds me that no matter the circumstance, God is working out His purpose in my life, and providing grace sufficient for that circumstance.

As you work today, remember these three commands.

Journal what is God speaking to you today.

DAY SIX – HONORING GOD ON THE JOURNEY

As your time on the build is drawing to a close, I hope you will hold the experience in your heart. As you were *Called to Build*, my prayer for you is that you have built much more than a dwelling for a deserving family. Over the years, we have heard from Buckner the power of having a safe, comfortable home. While most of us likely take such things for granted, the stories of the families through the years have brought nothing but encouragement to teams highlighting the value of providing a house for a family.

While walls and a roof may not seem like much, what happens inside those walls and underneath that roof have been life changing for the occupants. A son who was set to run away from home as a young teen found the home we built provided a place for him to thrive and not only graduate high school, but attend and succeed in college. A family destined for divorce found restoration and healing within the walls. A baby who would have been placed in foster care because their previous dwelling kept the baby chronically ill was able to maintain custody because a safe environment was provided behind sealed windows and doors that would close.

We could probably fill an entire book with the stories of WMU of Texas and Buckner International providing a home over the last fourteen years. And we are only one of the partners who build during the year. Buckner shares that entire communities have been transformed because Christ-followers have invested in the lives of families.

A home sets a family on a trajectory to succeed. Unemployed parents have found good jobs as Buckner has trained and equipped them with job skills. Financial chaos has found order as families have learned how to budget and save. Families have been strengthened through parenting and life skills classes provided by Buckner.

But most importantly, eternities have been forever changed as husbands, wives, children and whole families have come to accept the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

WMU of Texas is committed to being disciple-makers who multiply. What God has done through the experiences on the border have been exactly that. As families have come to faith in Christ, they have become disciples who make disciples, sharing their faith through Bible studies in their homes and activities for children to learn about the love of Jesus.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:19-24.

One thing I value about prophecy passages in scripture is that I am reminded of the Main Thing. While we tend to see things in the here and now, it is important to realize that each day takes us one day closer to meeting Jesus face-to-face.

I'm challenged to evaluate my days and moments based on the truth that this life is short. There will be a day of accounting before the Bema Seat for every Christ-follower.

What am I doing with the time God has given me?

The passage we've read today begins with an interesting admonition. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 states *"Do not quench the Spirit."*

When we accept Christ as our Savior, there is an amazing, supernatural transaction that occurs. We are immediately filled with the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity (Acts 2:38). He is our seal for the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13-14). He is our counselor and teacher (John 14:26). He is our empowering to live the sanctifying Christ-life (Acts 1:8).

The Holy Spirit fire burns within every believer, and His role is to guide and empower the believer. However, God never removes our free will, and we are able to choose whether or not we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit within us. Paul teaches that we need to keep the Holy Spirit's leading clear in how we live, embracing what is good and rejecting what is evil.

You have made a difference in the life of a family this week. You have made a difference in the lives of those on your team. You have likely made a difference in ways you don't even recognize.

As you return to "normal" life, take this truth with you –

"May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Thank you for giving the gift of yourself to the Lord this week.

"The One who calls you is faithful and he will do it."

1 Thessalonians 5:24



The Women's Build Project is made possible by your gifts
to the Mary Hill Davis Offering® for Texas Missions.
Learn more at iamtexasmissions.org.