

5-Day Devotional: God's Way Through the Storm

Day 1: When God's Plan Looks Different

Reading: Acts 7:54-60

Devotional:

Stephen's story doesn't end the way we expect. No miraculous escape, no angel intervention—just faithful obedience unto death. Sometimes God's "better plan" doesn't mean comfort or rescue; it means conforming us to Christ's image. Like Stephen, we may face moments when God's way seems confusing or painful. Yet even in his darkest hour, Stephen saw Jesus standing—ready to welcome him home. When your circumstances don't align with your expectations, remember: God's definition of "good" is making you more like Jesus. His presence in the storm matters more than removal from it. What situation are you facing where you need to trust God's different-than-expected plan?

Day 2: God With Us in the Mess

Reading: Psalm 23:4; Matthew 28:20

Devotional:

Following Jesus doesn't guarantee a pain-free life. The early church experienced imprisonment, beatings, and death—yet they never walked alone. From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible's central message is "God with us." Emmanuel didn't come to eliminate suffering but to enter into it with us. When you're walking through the valley, when questions outnumber answers, when grief feels overwhelming—God can handle your frustrations and doubts. He doesn't promise explanations for every hardship, but He promises His presence through every one. The couple who lost their father to suicide, the believers facing persecution—none walk alone. Where do you need to recognize God's presence with you today, even without all the answers?

Day 3: Persecution and Purpose

Reading: Acts 8:1-4; Acts 1:8

Devotional:

What looked like the church's darkest hour became the catalyst for God's global mission. For six years, believers stayed comfortable in Jerusalem despite Jesus' command to go to Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. Persecution scattered them—and the gospel spread. God's purposes advance even through opposition. What seems like devastation in your life might be divine redirection. The "ravaging" of the church by Saul (who would become Paul) actually fulfilled Christ's final command. God wastes nothing. Your setback may be His setup for

greater kingdom impact. Are you facing a difficulty that God might be using to move you toward His purposes? How might this hardship be part of a bigger story?

Day 4: Becoming Like Jesus

Reading: Romans 8:28-29; Philippians 3:10

Devotional:

We often misunderstand Romans 8:28. "Good" doesn't mean comfortable, wealthy, or problem-free. God's definition of good is you becoming more like Jesus. Every trial, every heartache, every unanswered prayer—God uses them as tools to shape you into Christ's image. Stephen's final moments mirrored Jesus perfectly: committing his spirit to God, forgiving his murderers. That transformation didn't happen accidentally; it came through faithful endurance. The question isn't "How will this make me comfortable?" but "How will this make me more like Christ?" Consider your current struggle through this lens. What Christlike character—patience, compassion, faith, forgiveness—might God be developing in you? How does this shift your perspective on your circumstances?

Day 5: Your Death Changed Everything

Reading: John 12:24-26; 2 Timothy 2:11-13

Devotional:

Stephen's death was the most important death in church history after Jesus—it changed everything. One grain of wheat fell into the ground, and a worldwide harvest followed. Your life, surrendered to God's purposes, has eternal impact beyond what you can see. The question isn't whether following Jesus will cost you something—it will. The question is whether you believe the cost is worth it. Stephen died, but the gospel spread. The church was persecuted, but thousands came to faith. God's kingdom advances through faithful sacrifice. What is God calling you to lay down—comfort, reputation, control, unforgiveness? What "death to self" might God be inviting you into today? Remember: what you surrender to Him, He multiplies for eternity.

As you complete this devotional, reflect on how God is shaping you through both blessings and trials. His presence is constant, His purposes are sure, and His love never fails.