

# 5 Day Devotional

## Day 1: Building Bridges, Not Walls

### Devotional

When we think about sharing our faith, it's easy to fall into the trap of creating barriers instead of connections. Paul understood this principle deeply. He didn't force his way into communities; instead, he used his background as a rabbi to gain access to synagogues where he could naturally share about the Messiah.

The difference between the Golden Gate Bridge and the Great Wall of China is profound - one connects while the other divides. In our relationships, we have the same choice. We can build walls through judgment, criticism, or aggressive confrontation, or we can build bridges through genuine love, shared interests, and authentic relationships.

Consider how Jesus himself built bridges. He ate with tax collectors, spoke with Samaritans, and met people exactly where they were. He didn't compromise truth, but He led with love. When we approach others with curiosity about their lives, genuine care for their struggles, and patience with their journey, we create pathways for the gospel to travel naturally into their hearts.

Building bridges takes time and intentionality. It means listening more than speaking, serving more than being served, and loving without conditions. This approach doesn't guarantee immediate results, but it creates the foundation for authentic relationships where Christ's love can be genuinely experienced and received.

### Bible Verse

'So they, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant.' - Acts 13:4-5

### Reflection Question

What bridges could you build this week with someone who doesn't know Jesus, and what shared interests or experiences might create natural opportunities for connection?

### Quote

You win people by building the bridge. You're going to love them right where they're at as they're drowning in sin.

# Prayer

Lord, help me to be a bridge-builder in my relationships. Give me wisdom to connect authentically with others and create pathways for Your love to reach their hearts.

## Day 2: When Problems Reveal God's Power

### Devotional

Life has a way of throwing curveballs when we least expect them, especially when we're trying to follow God's calling. Paul's missionary journey wasn't a smooth sailing adventure - it was filled with difficult terrain, uncomfortable conditions, and unexpected obstacles. Yet these very problems became the stage for God's power to be displayed.

When we encounter difficulties in our faith journey, our natural response is often to question whether we're on the right path. But what if problems aren't a sign that we've missed God's will, but rather an opportunity to experience His power in ways we never could during easy times?

Think about it - a problem-free life never gets to witness God's miraculous intervention. It's in the midst of challenges that we discover God's faithfulness, His provision, and His ability to work all things together for good. Paul faced situational problems that tested his endurance, but each obstacle became a testimony of God's sustaining grace.

The key isn't avoiding problems but learning to see them through the lens of God's greater purpose. When we shift our perspective from 'Why is this happening to me?' to 'How might God use this for His glory?', we position ourselves to experience His power in remarkable ways. Problems don't disqualify us from God's mission - they often qualify us to see His power more clearly.

### Bible Verse

'And we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.' - 2 Corinthians 1:8

### Reflection Question

What current problem in your life could become an opportunity to experience and testify to God's power?

### Quote

A problem free life does not experience the power of God. And the testimony that says, I know my God is real.

### Prayer

Father, help me to see my problems as opportunities to witness Your power. Give me faith to trust You in difficult circumstances and to find hope in Your promises.

# Day 3: Facing Spiritual Opposition

## Devotional

Paul's encounter with Bar-Jesus, the sorcerer, reminds us that spiritual opposition is real and often comes when we're making the greatest impact for God's kingdom. This wasn't just a disagreement between two people - it was a spiritual battle for the soul of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul who was seeking to hear God's word.

Spiritual opposition can be subtle or overt, but it's always strategic. The enemy doesn't waste time opposing things that don't matter. When you're building bridges for the gospel, when you're stepping into God's calling, when you're making a difference for His kingdom, expect resistance. This opposition isn't a sign that you're doing something wrong - it's often confirmation that you're doing something right.

Paul didn't back down when faced with this spiritual enemy. Instead, he confronted the opposition with God's authority and power. The result was dramatic - Bar-Jesus was temporarily blinded, and the proconsul believed when he saw God's power displayed. Sometimes our greatest breakthroughs come immediately after our greatest battles.

Remember, the enemy may be real, but greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. You don't have to fear spiritual opposition when you're walking in God's will. Instead, you can face it with confidence, knowing that God's power is always greater than any force that stands against His purposes.

## Bible Verse

'But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.' - Acts 13:8

## Reflection Question

How can you better recognize and respond to spiritual opposition in your own life and ministry?

## Quote

The enemy is real, but greater is he that is in you than he that's in the world.

## Prayer

Lord, give me discernment to recognize spiritual opposition and courage to stand firm in Your power.  
Help me remember that You are greater than any force that stands against Your purposes.

# Day 4: When Friends Walk Away

## Devotional

One of the most painful experiences in ministry and life is when people we trust decide to walk away. John Mark's departure from Paul's missionary team wasn't just an inconvenience - it was a personal betrayal that left Paul and Barnabas to continue their mission with one less person they had counted on.

Desertion hurts differently than opposition because it comes from those closest to us. It's one thing to face enemies; it's another to watch friends give up on the mission you're sharing together. John Mark had his reasons - perhaps the journey was harder than expected, maybe he was homesick, or possibly he disagreed with the direction they were taking. Whatever his motivation, his departure created both practical and emotional challenges for the team.

Yet Paul's response teaches us something profound about following God's call. He didn't abandon the mission because someone abandoned him. He didn't let personal hurt derail God's purpose. Instead, he continued forward, trusting that God would provide what was needed for the journey ahead.

Sometimes the people we expect to stand with us won't make it to the finish line. This doesn't diminish the value of the mission or your calling to pursue it. God's purposes are bigger than any individual's participation, including our own. When friends walk away, we can choose to walk forward with God, knowing He will provide the strength and companionship we need.

## Bible Verse

'Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.' - Acts 13:13

## Reflection Question

How do you typically respond when people you trust don't support your God-given dreams or calling, and what would it look like to continue forward despite their absence?

## Quote

Don't give up. Don't run out. Don't bow out because there are problems relationally.

## Prayer

God, when friends walk away from the mission You've given me, help me to continue forward with You. Heal any hurt and provide the support I need for the journey ahead.

# Day 5: Keeping Your Eyes on Jesus

## Devotional

After facing situational problems, spiritual opposition, and personal desertion, Paul could have easily become discouraged and given up. Instead, he continued preaching with power and passion, focusing on the resurrection of Jesus and the hope it brings to all people. His secret wasn't avoiding hurt - it was maintaining perspective through the hurt by keeping his eyes fixed on Jesus.

When we go through difficult seasons, it's natural for our vision to become clouded by immediate circumstances. The problems feel overwhelming, the opposition seems insurmountable, and the pain of betrayal cuts deep. But Paul understood something crucial: the hurt doesn't define you, it's just part of your story.

The ministry and mission God calls us to will rarely match our expectations, but it might be even more than we expected because the Lord is in it. When we join God in His work, we're participating in something far greater than our individual lives - we're building His kingdom with eternal significance.

Paul's perspective was shaped by eternity. He knew that present sufferings couldn't compare to the glory that would be revealed. This eternal perspective didn't minimize his pain, but it provided context that helped him persevere. When we set our eyes back on Jesus - His love, His sacrifice, His victory, and His promises - we find the strength to continue forward despite whatever challenges we face.

Your calling matters. Your mission has purpose. Keep your eyes on Jesus.

## Bible Verse

'For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' - Romans 8:18

## Reflection Question

What would change in your current situation if you truly believed that you're participating in something far greater than your individual life?

## Quote

You are joining God in something far greater than your life, even your family's life, even your whole life. You are joining in building his kingdom and the legacy of his kingdom after your death.

## Prayer

Jesus, help me keep my eyes fixed on You when circumstances become overwhelming. Give me an eternal perspective that sustains me through every challenge and reminds me of the greater purpose You have for my life.