



Devotions



A book of devotions to help you "grow strong in the Lord." Eph. 6:10



Our Mission

"...grow strong in the Lord..." Eph. 6:10

GO to people in need in Greater Cincinnati neighborhoods.

CREATE safe places.

DEMONSTRATE God's love in practical ways.

DECLARE the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit.

DEVELOP disciples of Jesus Christ.

ENCOURAGE self-responsibility.

Welcome Note

Let me begin by offering thanks for your support this year. Your prayers, time and generosity are so greatly appreciated.

As we come to a close of 2021 we wanted to give a little something back to you. What better gift can we give than the mission we live out ever day... to help others... to help you... "grow strong in the Lord." Eph. 6:10.

We decided, instead of a traditional newsletter, to offer you this book of devotions.

Some of the devotions were written exclusively for this booklet, others taken from our bi-monthly e-newsletter. Some devotions will even offer you a direct challenge to take what you've read and put in into action.

Hopefully this little booklet does indeed grow you in your walk with the Lord. We also hope that it is something you will keep and revisit in years to come.

As always we want to take an opportunity to ask you to continue to support Lord's Gym Ministries. First and foremost, we need you to pray. Next, please come visit us. We have so many wonderful volunteer opportunities waiting for you. If you'd like to give, at the back of this booklet, you'll find instructions on how to do just that. Thank you. Stand Firm.

- Scott Bowers
Executive Director

Praizr by Nature

Lynn, 43, came to Lord's Gym Ministries several months ago. He is the chaplain of our mobile ministry — STreet OutReach Ministry (STORM) that serves women trapped in human trafficking. Lynn has a creative side. He writes and partakes in spoken word, the oral poetic performance art. Here is one of his pieces.



*by Lynn
Woots*

Please, will you please not talk about my praise
The way I dance the way I sing, these holy hands I raise
You might go to church on holidays but anyways let me inform you
This praise that I have has nothing to do with you
But everything to do with HIM cause HE's my friend it's a personal thing
And I make no excuses for the way I bless my KING
My everything my all and all, HE picks me up when I fall
Many are the afflictions of the righteous but GOD delivers them from all
Just like Apostle Paul, there's deliverance in my praise And my praise is
contagious like a fire I'll start a blaze That will burn cause its my turn I'm the next
in line
This battle is the Lord's so victory is mine!
Now I'm not Einstein but my poetry atomic Catastrophically my poetry is more
the bomb than chronic
Let's get hooked on phonics cause I want you to understand
The Word of God is quick, HE upholdeth me in His HAND
So I stand, fast cause CHRIST has set me free
No longer entangled in bondage, I walk in liberty
Now liberally tranquility brought me to a place of security
With humility I humbly submit to God so HE gets the glory
Now you don't know my story all the things that I been through
And I don't have time in 30 lines to stand here and tell you
But GOD will never fail you and that alone deserves a shout
I could of chose many paths but there was only ONE route
The church couldn't figure me out cause my praise was radical
It just didn't add up, it wasn't mathematical
Can't be systematical God made me this way
I'm a praizr by nature, it's embedded in my D-N-A!!!!

The Power of Prayer

"For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."
Mark 11:23-24

Christian evangelist George Müller is best known for his work with orphans in Bristol, England. He is also widely known as one of the greatest prayer warriors in the history of Christianity. In the journals he kept, Müller had more than 50,000 specific recorded answers to prayer. Of those prayers, 30,000 he said were answered the same day or the same hour in which he prayed them.

Müller not only believed that God answered prayers – he had hard core evidence. As do each of us if we think about it. Müller trusted that God would always answer His prayers. Some days, it was as if God literally provided from hour to hour.

One day, for example, the orphanage had run out of food. About 300 children sat waiting for their breakfast. Müller, not only prayed, but he thanked God for the breakfast that they were about to eat, confident that God would provide food for them.

There was a knock at the door and the local baker was standing outside with all kinds of bread. He told Müller: "God woke me up in the night and told me to bake more bread than usual and to take it to the orphanage."

Müller thanked him and took the bread inside for the children. Soon, there was another knock at the door, and this time it was the milk man. A wheel on his cart had broken outside the orphanage. He didn't want to leave the cart and go and get what he needed to fix the cart, as he said the milk would get stolen. So, he had decided to give the milk to George for the children instead. Breakfast was provided!

Why not start a prayer journal. You can write daily prayers or keep it simple and write requests with the date and as God answers your prayers, go back and put the date they were answered. If you do the work, within a year you'll have some beautiful written evidence of God's work in your life.

Think You Can

“For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.” 2 Corinthians 8:12

The classic children’s tale *The Little Engine That Could* provides a wonderful life lesson. But have you ever thought of the spiritual aspect of the book? Think about it. The three engines we meet before the little engine are representative of attitudes we may encounter from others in life – even sometimes, ourselves.

In the story, a train is carrying a bundle of goodies to little boys and girls over the mountain. The goodies include an assortment of fun toys and delicious foods. Tragedy strikes when the engine breaks down and is unable to complete her mission. The only hope is that another engine will take pity and pull the heavy load up and over the mountain.

The first engine that comes along is a passenger engine – he carries important people who “rest in the parlor and have waiters bring them whatever they desire.” With the company he keeps, he considers himself much too important to pull the likes of the broken engines heavy load. So, he puffs on by. Many people have this attitude, and their hearts are made glad with status.

The next, a freight engine, also seems himself as too important and busy. His work defines him. He has far important things to do than to help pull the broken engine’s load. The next engine that comes by is very old and rusty. He’s just too tired to pull the heavy load or even try. This is representative of those who feel their time is over. They’ve done their work and can now rest. Truth is, your work is not done until you leave this earth.

The last engine to come by is very small. She does not carry passengers or other materials. She simply is used for maneuvering railroad cars inside a rail yard in a process known as switching.

She is compelled by the need of the broken engine and little boys and girls on the other side of the mountain. She takes on the mission. Chanting the famous “I think I can, I think I can, I think I can,” while chugging up and over the mountain, and she makes it! She represents those willing. They may not have all the qualifications, the status, or most “important” job. They are willing. When you are willing, God is able.

Be There for Them

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

Raising your grandchildren alone is tough. Despite the difficulties, Theresa is there and loving these children every day. "I'm trying to make things good for my grandchildren," she said. "They deserve good things."

All children deserve good things. They are a blessing from the Lord. They represent the heart and faith we should have. In Mark 10, Jesus tells His disciples: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Theresa has also sought support for her grandchildren outside the home. She's enrolled them into the Lord's Gym Panthers Football program. During games and practice, you'll see Theresa on the sidelines cheering on Gannicus, 5, and Kaydence, 8. According to Theresa, she knows her children are loved. "They are cared about at Lord's Gym," she said.

The football program is comprised of dedicated coaches - many of whom are volunteers from Price Hill. They want to see Theresa's grandchildren and other kids in the community have an opportunity to experience something positive. Something that very well could change their lives.

It's not so much the thrill of the game or even the lessons learned, but the dedication of the volunteers. It's them living out the example Jesus set for us in Matthew 19: 13-14: "Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them. Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.' When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there."



8 Things

“For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.” 2 Corinthians 8:12

1. **I will answer you** – “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” Jeremiah 33:3
2. **I am for you** – “What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” Romans 8:31
3. **I will not fail you** – “God never fails.” Joshua 21:45
4. **I will provide for you** – “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are ye not much better than they?” Matthew 6:26
5. **I will give you rest** – “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30
6. **I will strengthen you** – “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” Isaiah 41:10
7. **I will be with you** – “I will be with you always even unto the end of the world.” Matthew 28:20
8. **I love you** – “This is how God showed His love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” 1 John 4:9-11

Give Your All

"Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.'" Mark 12:43-44

Anette or "Auntie" as she's known at Lord's Gym is quite a lady. She doesn't have much but what she does have she'll share. She has time, she'll give you that whether it be in the form of sitting and chatting at the Price Hill Family Activity Center or traveling by bus to downtown Cincinnati to make sure her "less fortunate friends" have something to eat or the resources they need.

Auntie is a sweet woman. A loving woman. She's had a tough go of things. Several years ago she lost one of her sons to the streets. That's why, she says, she does what she does. She spends her time helping others -- giving them all she has in hopes their lives will change.

Auntie's way of life is much like that of a widow woman that Jesus makes note of in Mark 12:41-44. The Scripture reads: "Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

"Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.'"

What an absolutely beautiful gift. This gift is truly from the heart because it's so self-sacrificing. It's also reminiscent of Jesus' sacrifice for us, as well as the sacrifice He calls us to make -- to live for Him. To live for Him means to follow His example to love and give selfishly of ourselves. Thank you Auntie, for the reminder.

A Friend's Value

"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up..." Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

It is very biblical to be in community. Man's first dilemma was loneliness. In Genesis chapter two, The Lord says: "It is not good that man should be alone."

So, the Lord created a mate for him. We are meant to be a TEAM (Together we Accomplish More, especially as believers.

This is a concept practiced every Monday night in Price Hill at Celebrate Recovery. Celebrate Recovery is a Christ centered, 12-step recovery program for anyone struggling with hurts, habits, and hang ups of any kind. The Price Hill chapter is available through a partnership between BLOC Ministries, Lord's Gym Ministries, Revive Church and a lot of volunteers.

Mark, 61, has been a part of Celebrate Recovery for a few years and started coming to the Price Hill chapter a few months ago. "It helps me stay sober," he said. "You're around sincere hearted people who want the same thing. I will fail if I'm around fake people not learning. All I've worked for will have been in vain. The people here are true people."

Zach, 33, who has also been coming for a few months appreciates the "integrity of the program and people he's surrounded by. I love that you're with those who've been through it. The accountability is awesome. You can reach out and get prayers when needed and there's no judgement. This group really walks with people and keeps Jesus at the center – that's the most important thing."

Look to the sky for further proof. When you see geese, they are always flying in a "V." That "V" stands for victory, and they reach victory together. The reason they're flying in a group, according to scientific studies, it conserves energy; it's easier to keep track of each other; they can go further together; they cheer each other on; they share responsibilities.

Friends are so valuable. They bring joy, help us grow and keep us accountable so we will do and be better for each other and ourselves... they help us in our walk with the Lord too. Proverbs 27:17 says: "As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend." God designed us to be a part of a body. 1 Corinthians 12:27: "Now you are the body of Christ..." Fellowship with your friends as often as you can.

God's Mercies

In Lamentations chapter 3, we learn that the Lord's mercies are new every morning because His compassion ceases to fail. We can rest assured at the start of each day that the Lord is faithful and with us. We will not be consumed by our struggles or any troubles that await us.

To keep yourself off to a great start – full of encouragement – why not read through these five verses every morning. They are a great reminder of God's love and His compassion and passion for us.

“Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:22-23

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” James 1:5

“Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” Luke 1:78-79

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.” Psalm 19:14

TransAm



Take-a-ways *by Scott Bowers*

The following thoughts are just some of the things I gathered from my three-month, 4,427-mile self-supported bicycle journey from Yorktown, Virginia on May 3 to Astoria, Oregon.

The spirit of God is at work, and He is listening in the remotest parts of the country. It is tempting to think of God's presence only in our own church or community. Perhaps we even get tunnel vision to where we think God is working. Yet, upon my arrival or traversing the countless small communities of bicycle route 76 across America, I was reminded daily of seeing God at work.

Take the Meriweather Lewis challenge. Merriweather Lewis, on his 31st birthday in 1806, while leading the Discovery Corps to navigate a northwest passage through and beyond the newly acquired Louisiana Purchase, was being contemplative and reflective. As a result, he wrote that he needed to do more to serve mankind. As such, he stated that he was resolved to do more upon his return from his exploration status. His comments really challenged me as I experienced part of the trail and rigors along the same route as his Discovery Corps.

Furthermore, one of the cyclists I rode with in my second week, David, a fellow believer, reminded that effective people understand that they cannot change anyone – only themselves. At best, we can influence others. So, we should strive each day to ask God to help us be controlled by the Holy Spirit and make us more Christ-like.

Go Tell It

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

Floyd is a big man. At first glance, his presence can be a little intimidating. But once you hear that jovial belly-shaking laugh and see that angel smile, you know he's a man of God.

Floyd has been coming to the Covington Lord's Gym for a year now. He's a regular and a big help at the gym. Floyd loves the gym and encourages everyone there in their walk with the Lord.

According to Floyd, the Lord's Gym is God's place. "When I first came in here, I said 'Wow!' I could just feel the Spirit. This is the place to be cause this is where God is." And that's just where Floyd wants to be -- walking with the Lord. His zeal is infectious. Floyd is a living and breathing example of Jesus and He said he wants to be more like Jesus everyday. He's getting there for sure. And here's three things we can learn from Floyd's walk with the Lord.

1. Seek and You will find. Floyd a man in his senior years, said he thought he knew it all. Until God, "I found out I didn't know a thing. God's been teaching me." The top thing he's learned is that when you need help... ask! "The Lord is always willing to help us. He is the Shepherd Who takes care of His flock."
2. Put your love into action. Floyd said another thing He's learning is to express "love for your brother and sister, not just with words, but action."
3. Tell everybody. Finally, Floyd said the Lord wants him to "tell everybody" about His love. "Jesus' love is the most important thing."

What are you waiting for? Seek the Lord, put His love into action and tell everybody about the love of Jesus!

Compassion

"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd." Matthew 9:36

Amanda sat on the Lord's Gym STORM bus on a Friday morning. She was dressed casual, hair pulled back and sporting a welcoming smile. She also had on her favorite pair of shoes, a pair she had just gotten.

It's funny all the simple things that are so often taken for granted like just getting a new pair of shoes and ones you love to boot! But Amanda, doesn't take it for granted because there was a time she didn't even have shoes. She had nothing. Everything was lost due to drug abuse. Her life was a mess, to say the least.

About that time she started building positive relationships with those at Lord's Gym. She came to know God and her life was completely changed.

Fast forward several years and Amanda is on the Lord's Gym STORM bus serving women trapped in drug addiction and human trafficking. She's there because she was once in their shoes.

Throughout her time on the bus this day, she offered hugs and prayers. Then, the Lord told her to do more. One woman came up on the bus without shoes. She was a mess. She had lost everything.

Amanda greeted her with a warm heart. Then the Lord spoke. "Give her your shoes."

In her heart, Amanda asked: "My shoes, are you sure Lord, I love my shoes..." before the thought was completely expressed she removed her shoes and gave them to the woman.

Amanda's selfless act is inspiring. She gave her shoes, something precious to her to someone who needed them much more. More importantly, she obeyed the Lord's call. She showed Jesus' love in a simple practical way that will impact that woman in need her entire life. Have compassion.



Our Vision

Transforming lives by changing individuals, families, neighborhoods, and generations for the glory of God.

You can make a difference. Please consider donating to Lord's Gym Ministries to help us continue serving the Cincinnati and Covington communities. Fill out the form below and mail it back to us or donate at www.LordsGymMinistries.org. Monthly support is greatly appreciated.

I would like to contribute to the following program(s):

☐ Lord's Gym ☐ STORM ☐ Family Activity Center ☐ As needed

We accept major credit cards: ☐ Visa ☐ Master ☐ Disc. ☐ AmEx

Name _____ Exp.: _____ Card #: _____ Sec. code: _____

Pay 3% Fee? Y or N (circle one)

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