



LETTING GO

A 7-Day Devotional by Author C.E. White



DAY 1: LETTING GO OF THE DESTINATION

“Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

- John 14:5-6 ESV

Many of us ask this question every day. *Lord, what do you want me to do? Where do you want me to go? How can we know the way?*

And the answer is always the same—to follow Him. *He* is the way.

We use the words “follow Jesus” all the time but seem to forget that following inherently means we don’t know where we’re going. We follow Him because *He does*.

Sitting at Jesus’s feet (Luke 10:42), abiding in the Vine (John 15), allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us (Isaiah 30:21), and searching the Word (2 Timothy 3:16) will give us the guidance we need as we grow to understand more of Him, His will, and His purpose (Romans 12:2).

“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). A lamp doesn’t show us our route all the way to the end. It isn’t like punching a destination into your GPS. It shows you your next step, then the next, and then the next.

This doesn’t mean we can’t make plans or have goals. It means we make those plans and goals prayerfully and hold them loosely—ready to change direction at the prompting of the Holy Spirit instead of barreling forward because we’ve already decided where we’re going.

We don’t have to know where we’re going to know we’re following Christ. He doesn’t want us to punch in the destination. He wants to *be* the destination. He wants us to walk with Him and trust that He will not lead us astray.

Take your next steps in confidence because if you’re a Christian, you DO know the way. You know Jesus, and He is the Way. Follow Him in all things great and small, and you can’t go off track.

DAY 2: LETTING GO OF TIME

“My times are in your hand....”

- Psalm 31:15 ESV

I never have enough time is a phrase we’ve all heard often and probably said just as much.

I used to clutch my time dearly in my tight-fisted hand. I didn’t want God to touch my agenda; my to-do list was sacred. After all, I was trying to be efficient, get everything done, stay on top of my obligations. I like deadlines, and I like meeting them. I also like being on time.

One day, I was at a conference doing my morning devotion, and God gave me a word to share that seemed meaningful and relevant. I thought, “I’ll do it later,” as I needed to get ready for my first session. But God pressed. The message was for now...not later.

So I crafted my post and shared it, thinking I would be late. Afterward, I picked up my phone for the first time that morning and realized it was the only one of my devices that had changed automatically to the conference time zone—one hour earlier than the time my computer showed.

I wasn’t late at all. I was *early*. It felt like God had turned back time and given me an extra hour.

I’ve realized since that God doesn’t disappear when something interrupts my agenda.

He knows about every interruption. He is not shocked or frustrated when that interruption means you won’t get X, Y, or Z done today. He is the God of time. If you are following the Lord’s lead, there is *always enough time*. That doesn’t mean you will accomplish everything you set out to that morning, but it does mean you can accomplish all *God* meant for you to when you started your day.

When your child screams during your quiet time, your car breaks down, the hot water tank springs a leak, or your boss piles last-minute work on you...God knows. And He’s still there.

I look at interruptions differently now. I ask, “God, what are you doing in this interruption? How can I meet you here? How can I bring you to the people around me?”

Let go of your agenda and hang on to God. Every interruption is an opportunity to cling to Him and bring Him into the interruption with you.

DAY 3: LETTING GO OF STRIVING

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.”

- John 15:4 ESV

A branch doesn't work and strain at creating the fruit it produces—it simply remains connected to the vine—but so many of us forget the parallel in our own lives. We try to create the fruits of the Spirit by sheer acts of personal will rather than by staying connected to Jesus.

There is no context in which I could successfully create a fruit. My best would just be an imitation made by working hard at studying, carving, and painting. I could manufacture a few fruits, set them on the table, and maybe even fool a few people until they tried to eat one.

That's where the likeness would end. No one could actually *eat* my fake fruit; it would serve no purpose.

The same is true of the fruit of the Spirit. The best we could ever produce with our greatest human efforts would be nothing but an imitation.

Just like that manufactured fruit, our fake spiritual fruit may fool some people—it may even fool *us* for a time—but it won't actually be nourishing. It will leave us—and those around us—hungry and exhausted.

We too often skip the only vital thing—spending time at Jesus's feet and in the Word. Only that will change us and produce fruit from the inside out.

Stop trying to create the fruit by striving, and start sitting at the feet of Jesus, soaking in His Word, and falling more in love with Him like Mary did. Don't bustle around like Martha, anxious about whether you're doing enough and upset when others don't seem to be putting in as much effort.

Abiding in the Vine is freeing; it's not up to you. So let go of all the “shoulds” that weigh you down and leave you “anxious about many things” like Martha (Luke 10:40-41).

Rest in the Vine, and trust that He will produce the fruit through you as He nourishes your soul.

DAY 4: LETTING GO OF RESULTS

“So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”

- 1 Corinthians 3:7 ESV

We like goals. We want to see successful outcomes with measurable results. By these, we judge our accomplishment and decide if we're doing well.

At some point, I finally realized that *outcomes are not up to me*.

I can work hard with no guarantee of success. I can pour into a relationship with no guarantee of reciprocation. I can try to lovingly resolve issues with no guarantee of peace.

I can plant and water, but *God gives the growth*.

And with this realization, finally, I could relax.

Poor outcomes do not mean I am a failure, and good outcomes do not mean I am particularly special.

With one blow, this verse takes out my insecurities, takes out my pride, and has me more invested in following God because if success doesn't necessarily mean anything about how well I did and failure (by the world's standards) doesn't necessarily mean I did the wrong thing, then how will I ever know what I'm supposed to do if my eyes are not on Him?

Any success I have may be because someone *else* planted and watered. “One sows and another reaps (John 4:37).” And what looks like failure to me may be because I am doing the planting or watering, but the harvest will come later to someone else.

The world makes us feel that if our work is good, it will be recognized in worldly ways, but God's Word shows us something different. As Christians, our metric for success should not be based on measurable results or the world's response, but on whether we know we have sincerely followed the Lord's leading and been faithful to plant and water where God's placed us.

It's always worth it even when we don't see the results.

DAY 5: LETTING GO OF SELF

“He must increase, but I must decrease.”

- John 3:30

God has been helping me live the phrase *it's not about me*. A pillar of the Christian life is that we are to live sacrificially just as Christ did, seeking nothing for ourselves, but only for God to be glorified.

This feels like a hardship until you begin to do it in Christ's strength and discover that it's remarkably freeing.

You no longer have to be insecure about how people see you; the goal is for you to be invisible so they can see Christ. “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Galatians 2:20).

It no longer matters whether you get noticed by the world because your reward comes from God. “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 6:1).

It no longer matters if circumstances work out just the way you want because “I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need” (Philippians 4:11-12).

It's human nature to want to see the increase of our work, importance, reputation, and popularity—to name just a few—but the Christian life calls us to the opposite. We are to “set our minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth (Colossians 3:2).”

I long for this to be my constant attitude: “Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” (Galatians 6:14).

Turning inward (looking for my own increase) leaves me despondent and anxious. Turning upward (looking for the Lord's increase) leaves me hopeful and carefree.

DAY 6: LETTING GO OF BEING RIGHT

“Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”

- James 1:19-20 ESV

In this world, it feels like he who yells the loudest wins. It’s tempting to start shouting just to be heard.

But should we be trying to be right or trying to *bring righteousness*?

Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers...” and Romans 12:18 says, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”

It isn’t always possible to live peaceably, but we’re to do our best. We don’t have to respond when the outcome is not going to yield the fruit of the Spirit within us or someone else.

If I’m honest, I can usually tell when a discussion with an angry person is going to end in good results or not. In that instance, I can speak truth calmly and then simply stop engaging instead of allowing myself to be baited into proving my point or devolving into a hurtful argument.

Being a peacemaker doesn’t have to mean we agree (Ephesians 4:15). It doesn’t mean staying silent about what’s right or wrong. It means we engage others with truth, integrity, kindness, and compassion (James 3:17), just as Jesus did with the prostitutes and tax-collectors.

Did you ever notice the only people he was harsh with were the people claiming to be men of God—the white-washed tombs professing righteousness while only caring about what they looked like to men and lining their own pocketbooks?

We shouldn’t expect unbelievers to understand God’s laws or follow them. We should consider what will draw men to Christ and what will not.

A few questions to ask ourselves:

Where are our hearts when we respond? What is our goal when we react? Are we considering what will draw people to the righteousness of God?

DAY 7: LETTING GO OF RIGHTS

“For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.”

- Hebrews 10:34 ESV

Can you imagine having your home and everything inside unjustly taken from you...and joyfully accepting it? Most of us, upon imagining such a scenario, think about making a stand, fighting for our rights, or taking it to the Supreme Court. But not these Christians. They joyfully accepted it. How? Why?

Because they knew that, as Christians, we have something better coming. No matter what is taken from us here, how unfair it is, or how cruelly we are treated, this world cannot take away our eternity—our “better and abiding possession” that is eternity with Jesus Christ.

What if, instead of responding with indignation and anger when the world treats us unjustly, we responded with humility, compassion, and even joy?

What a testimony it would be to the great worth of the Kingdom of God instead of the things of this world! How people would marvel at our hope!

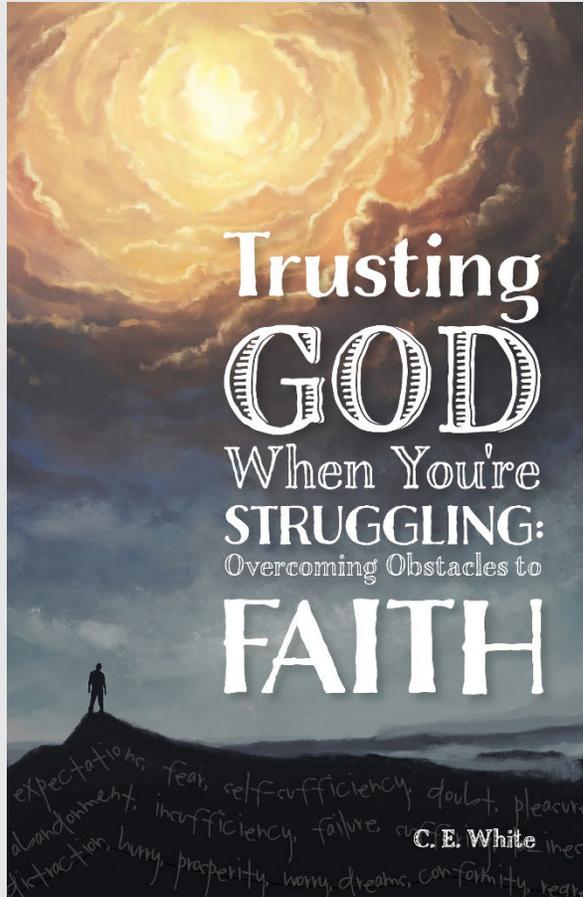
The first step to being able to respond this way begins here: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30). If we love him this way, there’s no room for the other things to build a stronghold in our hearts.

He will be our treasure, and “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). If He is our treasure and we truly love him with all of our being, then anything of this world can be taken from us without the destruction of our joy. We may be afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed (2 Corinthians 4:8-9).

When your worldly treasures are damaged, broken, stolen, or destroyed, ask yourself if that’s where your treasure lies, and consider how you can respond with joyful acceptance in the fruit of the Spirit.

Thank you for reading, and I pray that God uses these words to draw you closer to him!

If you've enjoyed this devotional, you may also enjoy my book
Trusting God When You're Struggling: Overcoming Obstacles to Faith
available on my website, www.cewhitebooks or on Amazon.



"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." - Matthew 11:28

The world is full of things that undermine our faith. Too often, we push and scramble through life, allowing our feelings to control our decisions, attempting to accomplish things in our own strength, and trusting in worldly wisdom rather than God. This leaves us frazzled, overwhelmed, and grumbling through every difficulty like the Israelites did in the desert.

But we don't have to live that way! The peace God promises is real and available to every believer.

This book tackles many of the obstacles we let come between us and God—things like fear, failure, insufficiency, and expectations. The biblical examples and truths explored will bolster your faith, calm your spirit, renew your strength, and shift your focus from the earthly to the eternal, freeing you to embrace God's rest in all circumstances.