



COACH DEVOTIONAL BOOK

Adapted from Evangelism Explosion,
D. James Kennedy, Evangelism Explosion International, Inc.

PSO Devotions

SEASON THEME: *The Good News: Accepting God's Great Grace Gift!*

Dear Coaches and Devotional Leaders,

One of the greatest privileges of participating in Prestonwood Sports Outreach is the opportunity we have to build the physical and spiritual lives of the boys and girls on our teams.

To help you intentionally speak truth into the lives of our kids and build their ideals and character, we put together this devotional packet. Each week of the 10-week season has a lesson.

Take a few minutes to prepare by using the weekly outline and the weekly devotional. The outline is for you to organize your thoughts. Your PSO Director will advise when the devotionals will take place for your team, maybe before a game or practice.

Please be intentional about doing these devotions. Each week's lesson builds on the previous ones, and they are meant to inspire our kids to grow and mature with God's good gifts. Thank you for all your commitment to our kids. God bless you and your words to our teams!

PSO League Directors



Weekly Outline

1. Heaven is a free gift.

- Romans 6:23 – *For the payment of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

2. It can't be earned or deserved.

- Ephesians 2:8–9 – *For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast.*

3. All have sinned and are separated from God because of this.

- Romans 3:23 – *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

4. God is holy and just and can't overlook sin.

- Matthew 5:48 – *So then, be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*
- Exodus 34:7 – *... But he by no means leaves the guilty unpunished.*
- Ezekiel 18:4 – *Indeed! All lives are mine – the life of the father as well as the life of the son is mine. The one who sins will die.*

5. God doesn't want anyone to be separated from Him.

- 2 Peter 3:9 – *... God is being patient with you. He doesn't want ANYONE to be lost. He wants EVERYONE to change their ways and stop sinning."*
- 1 John 4:8 – *... God is love.*
- Jeremiah 31:3 – *... I have loved you with an everlasting love. That is why I have continued to be faithful to you.*

6. Jesus is God: the perfect God/man.

- John 1:1 – *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God.*
- John 1:14 – *Now the Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We saw his glory – the glory of the one and only, full of grace and truth, who came from the Father.*

7. Jesus takes our sin and pays our debt and buys our ticket to heaven.

- Isaiah 53:6 – *All of us had wandered off like sheep; each of us had strayed off on his own path, but the LORD caused the sin of all of us to be laid on him.*

8. We can accept Jesus' gift by putting our whole trust in Him.

- James 2:19 – *You believe that God is one; well and good. Even the demons believe that – and tremble with fear.*
- John 3:16 – *God loved the world so much that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him would not be separated from Him, but would live with Him forever.*
- John 14:6 – *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life – no one comes to the Father except through Me.*

9. Have you opened the door?

- Revelation 3:20 – *Listen! I am standing at the door and knocking! If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into his home and fellowship with him, and he with me.*

10. We are all champions in Christ.

- Romans 10:9 – *If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*
- Romans 6:9–10 – *Christ rose from the dead and will never die again. Death no longer has any power over Him. He died once for all to end sin's power, but now He lives forever in unbroken fellowship with God.*
- Romans 8:37 – *We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.*

Week 1

Heaven Is a Free Gift

I have some good news for you! Well actually, it's *great* news. Now, the fun about this news is that it's going to take us 10 weeks to get it all. So let's go.

This week, I want us to think about heaven. When you think about heaven, what comes to mind? (*Maybe they will say clouds, angels, rest, being with God, peace.*) Yes, heaven is a beautiful place.

It's true! God is preparing a place for us to enjoy – homes and fields, mountains and beaches. A place of peace and joy, no more sickness or pain, no tears. It's a place where we will be with (and enjoy) the God of the universe. We'll also be with many of our own loved ones and friends. No more death, no more mourning.

He's preparing a beautiful city with walls made of precious gems and streets made of gold. It's a place where there will be no bad things or bad people. Just joy – a joy so full we can't even put it into words.

Sounds unreal right? The Bible says that no one can even imagine how beautiful and fulfilling and enjoyable a place it will be.

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind can imagine what God has prepared for those who love Him. —1 Corinthians 2:9

Now, here's what's even more unbelievable and great: the ticket to get into heaven costs you nothing! It's a gift. What? Yes, it's free! Here's what the Bible says about that:

... the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. —Romans 6:23

Yes, that gift was paid for by God's Son, Jesus Christ. We'll learn more about how He paid for it as we move through these devotions.

God loves us. He's creating a place for us, and He wants everyone to be there with Him. Heaven is a gift He's giving us. Now that's some really good news, right?

Let's pray: *Heavenly Father, thank You so much for Your gift of heaven to us. Helps us to think about that amazing gift this week and dwell on the remarkable extravagance You're preparing for us. Amen.*



Week 2

This Gift Can't Be Earned or Deserved

Who remembers what we spoke about last week? Heaven. That's right! How much does it cost you to get into heaven? It's free! How unbelievable is that? The ticket into the greatest place ever is free. Well, the Bible tells us that's true. This entry ticket is *free*. It's a gift.

What do you think about when you think of gifts? Maybe Christmas or birthdays. How many of the gifts that you received for either one did you really deserve? Maybe some. How many did you earn? I mean, did you earn the money to pay for those gifts? Usually, a gift is something that you get from the giver for free. You usually don't earn it ... and sometimes you don't deserve it.

Here's an example. Let's say I know something you really like – such as an awesome soccer ball or a cool practice jersey. Let's say I like you so much that I go out and buy it with my own money, wrap it up, and give it to you as a gift. What do you do? Sure! You open it and love it! What would I do if you said, "Here, let me give you some money for this." Or, what if you offered to come over and mow my grass in return for it, or wash my car, or do something else to pay for this gift? I'd probably say, "Hey! No way! This is a gift from me to you – I don't want something in return! All you need to do is to take it and enjoy it."

That's just like God's gift of eternal life to us. It is not something we can earn. And it is not something we deserve. There's nothing we can do to work hard enough to earn this gift or be perfect enough to deserve this most wonderful gift in the universe. This is a gift of God's grace to us. *Grace* means "getting something great even though you don't deserve it and you didn't earn it."

Here's what the Bible says:

For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it. —Ephesians 2:8–9

We can't work enough to get this gift. We can't be good enough to deserve this gift. It's free from God, and paid for by Jesus Christ, God's Son.

Let's pray. *Thank You, God, for your most awesome gift of grace through Jesus Christ! Help us to accept it! Amen.*

Week 3

The Bad News

Who remembers what we talked about last week? Yes! Gifts. Gifts and grace. Does anyone remember what grace is? "Getting something great that you didn't earn and don't deserve." A gift – a "grace gift" – is something you don't earn or deserve.

Remember in Week 1 that I said I had some good news to tell? Well, this week I have some bad news to tell. It has to do with each one of us. The truth is, we *really* don't deserve God's wonderful gift of heaven and eternal life. The truth is, we deserve to be separated from God. If we're honest, we all know that we do things and think things and say things that make God sad: lying, gossiping, getting angry – and maybe even stealing and killing. These things are called "sin."

A lot of people believe they are living a "good life." They may even be trying their hardest to be good, but even at what we think is our very best, we are not perfect; we are all guilty of sin. The Bible tells us:

... None is righteous, no, not one. —Romans 3:10

When we sin, we push God away, and can't be close to Him. Our sin keeps us separated from God. And the bad news is that we *all* have sin.

Here's what the Bible says:

For all have sinned and fall short of God's glory. —Romans 3:23

But what if someone says, "I'm not a sinner. I'm a good person." The Bible also says,

*If we say we have no sin, we're lying to ourselves ... and we're calling God a liar.
—1 John 1:8,10*

The truth is, we have a sin problem that keeps us away from our God, who really wants to give us His grace gift. But with sin, it's as if a giant canyon sits between God and us. What now? ... Come back next week as we learn more about what Jesus did to help us bridge this canyon!

LET'S PRAY: *O God, help us to see our sin and be sorry for it. Please fill that canyon so we can get to You! Amen.*



Week 4

God Is

What did we talk about last week? Right – the bad news. We talked about the canyon between God and us because of our sin.

We don't want that canyon there, and God doesn't want that canyon there. But it's there. It's there because of our sin. But it's also there because of who God is. What? Yes. That gap between us and God is there because God is holy. *Holiness* means "absolute purity." It means that God cannot sin, and He cannot be with sin. The Bible says that God is holy. He's so holy that when Isaiah saw Him sitting throne, the angels proclaimed it three times in a row: "*Holy, holy, holy!*" (Isaiah 6:1-3). God is holy, and because He is completely holy *we* need to be completely holy to be with Him.

God is holy. He also is just. *Just* means He *always* does the right thing. *Justice* means if someone is guilty of a crime that they get what they deserve. Imagine if you are standing in the lunch line and a couple of kids butt in front of you. Is it right for them to skip the line and cut in front of you? No! They broke the rules and didn't wait their turn. When the teacher comes and sends them to the end of the line – the teacher is being just. She is doing the right thing. The guilty people got what they deserved.

God is the same way. He is just, and will always make sure that in the end, the right thing gets done. Here's what the Bible says,

(God) will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. —Exodus 34:7

Because God is holy and just, He makes sure that in the end, the guilty get what they deserve. That is a good judge – a judge who always judges fairly. A judge who always punishes the bad and always rewards the good. And that's our God. He is holy. And He is just.

But wait, last week we learned that we *all* have sinned, which means we all deserve to be separated from God. That's a *big* problem. Who can do something about that problem? Here's a hint – only one person can bridge that canyon between us and a holy God. We've already been talking about Him. Come back next week and we'll look more closely at the problem.

Let's pray: *O God, thank You for being holy. Thank You for being just. We need Your help to come to You! Help us, O God! Amen.*



Week 5

God Wants Everyone to Be with Him

Does anyone remember what we talked about last time? Yes, that God is holy and just, completely pure and completely fair. Only pure things can be with God. Anything that is not pure cannot be with God. We also remembered that *everyone* has sinned, and that separates us from God. This is a *big* problem.

Do you think God knows about this problem? *Of course He does!* Remember that big canyon of sin that sits between us and God? God knew He needed to build a bridge over it so we can make it across to be with God. He doesn't want us to be separated from Him. He created us so that we could all be with Him and live with Him forever. He created a perfect place for us to live with Him in the beginning, and He has a plan to get us back to Him in a new, perfect place called heaven in the end.

Here's what the Bible says:

... God is being patient with you. He doesn't want anyone to be lost. He wants everyone to change their ways and stop sinning. —2 Peter 3:9

God is patiently waiting for each one of us – each of *you* – to turn around from doing things your own way and come back to Him. You know how we said that God is holy and only holy people could be with Him? You know how we also said that God is just and won't let the guilty go unpunished? Well, the Bible also says that

... God is love. —1 John 4:8

and His love lasts forever:

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!
—Psalm 107:1

Did you hear that? God's love lasts *forever!* God loves us so much that He doesn't want to be separated from us, so He came up with a plan to solve the *big* problem of our sin. It's part of His free "grace gift" He wants to give us. How does it work? Come back next week!

Let's pray: *Heavenly Father, thank You for Your never-ending love for us. Thank You that You did not leave us without a plan to get back to You! Help us to hear that plan and turn back to You. Amen.*

The top of the page features a photograph of four wooden blocks spelling out the word 'LOVE' in capital letters. The blocks are resting on an open Bible, with the text of the pages visible in the background. The lighting is warm and soft, creating a serene atmosphere.

Week 6

Jesus Is God and the Bridge to God

Who remembers what we said about God last week? Right. God is *love*. God loves us and doesn't want *anyone* to be separated from Him. Remember that big canyon of sin that sits between us and God? God loves us so much that He wants to build a bridge over that canyon so we can get back to Him.

God had a plan from the very beginning to solve our *big* problem with sin. He came up with a way for us, who have sinned and deserve punishment, to be with Him, who is holy, just and loving. He made a way for us to avoid the punishment for *all* our sins! He did that through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus paid for our sins Himself, so we would be free to be with God.

We've mentioned Jesus through these devotions, and we've said that He is God's Son. But here's more about Him. He left His home in heaven and came to earth many years ago in Israel – God's special country. Do you remember that He was born in a manger in Bethlehem? He grew up to be a great teacher, kind and good. But more than that, He is God Himself!

Here's what the Bible says about Jesus:

Jesus existed before the world was created. Jesus was with God, and Jesus was God. Through Jesus, God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without Him. He is the source of life, and this life brought light to people.... He became a human being and lived here on earth among us and was full of loving forgiveness and truth. And (we) have seen his glory – the glory of the only Son of the heavenly Father!
—John 1:1–5, 14 (paraphrased)

Jesus is God; He became a man and lived a perfect life and showed us God's love. It is important that Jesus never sinned. The Bible says:

He never committed a sin and no one ever heard a lie come from his lips. (He) came to take away sins. There is no sin in Him. —1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5 (paraphrased)

While on earth, Jesus never sinned! He was holy, just and loving while He was here, just as God is holy, just and loving.

Because He never sinned, Jesus could be the bridge over the canyon of sin between God and us. He came to fulfill God's plan to make a way for everyone who trusts in Him to be reunited with God. How does that happen? Come back next week!

Let's pray: *Dear Lord Jesus, thank You for coming to earth to pay for our sins, show us what God is like, and show us how much You love us. Help us trust in You. Amen.*



Week 7

Jesus Pays for Our Sin and Buys Our Ticket

The Bible says that Jesus chose not to stay in heaven with His Father, but instead, He was willing to come to earth, become a man and live with us so that we could see how good, loving, kind and faithful God is (Philippians 2:6-8). But, Jesus didn't only come to be with us to show us God, He also came to solve the big problem of sin for us.

Sin is a heavy burden to carry. There is no way I can carry it. I'm stuck. The harder I try to carry these myself, to go my own way, the heavier the burden becomes. I'm getting crushed to death! That's what sin does. The Bible says,

The payment of sin is death. —Romans 6:23

Sin crushes us and keeps us from being with God. But God saw our struggle and sent His Son to help. The Bible says,

Every one of us has strayed away like sheep! We left God's paths to go our own way. Yet God laid the guilt and sins of every one of us on Jesus! —Isaiah 53:6

The Bible says Jesus takes my sins off of me and carries them Himself. Because He was guilty of no sins of His own, He could carry all of mine and yours and everyone's by Himself. By taking that crushing weight of the world's sins on His back, Jesus agreed to take our punishment for sin – which is death – on Himself.

The way Jesus paid for our sin was by dying on the Cross. The Bible says after many painful hours of suffering on the Cross, Jesus spoke His last words. He lifted His head, and in a loud voice shouted, "It is finished!" Then He died. By dying, He paid for every sin. Remember, death is the punishment for sin. His body was lowered from the cross and buried in a tomb. But here's the Good News – God's power was so strong that even death could not defeat Him! On the third day, He rose again! Jesus is alive! He not only defeated sin, but through His Resurrection, He defeated death, and made a way for everyone who accepts His gift to live forever!

By dying for us, Jesus paid for the sins of everyone in the world! His sacrifice made a bridge over the canyon that sin had made between us and God. Instead of death, we get life! Now, it's up to me and you to accept this wonderful gift of grace.

Let's pray: *We praise You, O God, because You suffered and bled and died to carry our sins Yourself! But hallelujah! You didn't stay dead. You're alive! Please make this real to us today. Amen.*



WEEK 8

Faith Is the Key to Accept God's Gift

In the past few weeks, we've talked about a great gift. Does anyone remember what it was? Sure, it was the gift of grace that Jesus bought for us when He carried our sins to the Cross and died for our sins. Do you know something interesting about gifts? A gift isn't yours until you accept it. You could have a hundred gifts at your birthday party, but until you pick them up and open them and accept them, they're not yours.

Jesus is offering you His gift of grace today. But, this gift is unique, it doesn't get put into your hands, it gets put into your heart. Our heart is where we keep our beliefs. That's where we keep the things most special to us, such as our feelings of love for our moms and dads, or our dedication to our country or favorite sports team, or best friends.

The only way we can accept God's great gift of grace is by opening our heart to it. We do that by believing that God will do what He said He would do. The Bible says,

God loved the world so much that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him would not be separated from Him, but would live with Him forever. —John 3:16

The key to accepting God's gift is by putting our complete, 100-percent, full-on belief and trust in Jesus' promise – to fully rely on Him alone for the forgiveness of our sins. This trust is called faith. Faith means we rely 100 percent on God's promise to save us and give us a place in heaven because of what Jesus did.

Faith is the key that opens the door to heaven. I could have a key ring with many keys on it like this. You could try to unlock my front door with any of these keys except the right one and they would not open that door. No matter how hard you try or how deeply you believe that a different key will open the door, the fact is that only the right key will open the door. Jesus said,

I am the way, the truth and the life – no one comes to the Father except through Me. —John 14:6

The one and only key to heaven is 100-percent faith in Jesus.

Have you accepted this gift from Jesus? If you want to today, pray with me now: *Dear Jesus, I know I have sinned; I want to accept Your forgiveness of those sins. Please come into my heart so I can follow You forever!*



WEEK 9

Have You Opened the Door?

Who remembers what we talked about last week? That's right – the key to heaven. We call that key "saving faith." Saving faith means putting 100 percent of our trust in Jesus to bring us back to God.

Saving faith is different than just believing something. Do you know some people believe in Jesus just as they believe in George Washington or Queen Elizabeth or some other famous person? They believe Jesus actually lived and was a real person in history, but they are not trusting Jesus to do anything for them now. Saving faith in Jesus is different; it is not just believing that Jesus was a real person. It's believing that He is alive and is offering you His gift of grace, and you are accepting it. If all you do is believe that Jesus existed, you haven't accepted His gift.

Do you know that the Bible says that even the devils believe in Jesus? It's true! The Bible says,

Even the demons believe in Jesus and tremble. —James 2:19

Just because you believe He exists doesn't mean you have accepted His gift. The demons certainly haven't! Jesus said,

Look! I am standing at the door knocking. If anyone hears Me calling and opens the door, I will come in and fellowship with him and he with Me. —Revelation 3:20

Jesus says it is up to you to open the door to your heart. He won't barge in on His own. But if and when you do open your heart to Him, He will come in and have a friendship with you that will last forever. That's a promise.

Do you believe that promise? Have you accepted His gift and opened the door of your heart to Him? If you'd like to do that today, pray with me now: *Dear Jesus, thank You for dying on the Cross to take my sins away. I believe in Your promise to come into my heart and be my friend forever. Help me to turn to You and follow You with all my heart. Amen.*

Did you know that the Bible says all who put their trust in Jesus will be saved? His gift is for everyone who opens their door to Him. All people are included as long as they choose to open their hearts to Him.

And once we have accepted His gift, then we follow Him! That means that we learn more about Him through the book He gave us – the Bible – and we obey what He has told us to do. When we do that, we are proclaiming that "Jesus is Lord!"

Remember the good news I said I was going to tell you? This is it: Heaven is a gift. Jesus paid the precious price of His sinless life to unlock heaven for you. This grace gift is yours to take. Once you put your full trust in Jesus' promise, He also promises to be with you forever! That sure is good news!



WEEK 10

We Are All Champions in Christ

Congratulations to you two teams! You've made it to the championships! Do you know what a champion is? It's a person or a team who has defeated or surpassed all their rivals. Today we'll find out who will be the champion of this league.

There are champions in sports, but there are other kinds of champions as well. You can be a chess champion, a video-game champion, even a math or spelling champion. Anyone who has conquered his or her rivals is a champion. But, the most victorious champion of all time didn't win at sports, chess, math or spelling. This champion defeated sin and death. It is Jesus. When He took our sins to the Cross, He defeated the power that death had over us.

After He died on the Cross, the Bible says,

Christ rose from the dead and will never die again. Death no longer has any power over Him. He died once for all to end sin's power, but now He lives forever in unbroken fellowship with God. —Romans 6:9-10 (paraphrased)

When Jesus Christ rose from the dead, He conquered death. He defeated the one thing that would keep us from God. When we put our trust in Jesus, we are saved from being separated from God. The Bible says,

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. —Romans 10:9

And when we do that, the Bible says we join in Christ's victory:

We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. —Romans 8:37

This is the Good News, that through our faith in Christ, we all are champions and have victory over sin and death and hell. No matter who wins today, if you've accepted Christ's great gift of grace, you are a champion! This is great news that you can tell everyone!

Let's pray: *Lord Jesus, thank You again for your saving grace. Help us to share this great news with everyone! Amen.*

The mission of Prestonwood Sports Organization is to glorify God by introducing Jesus Christ to as many people as possible, using the vehicle of sports and fitness in order to reach out to those around us with the message of salvation in Jesus Christ.

