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INTRODUCTION

Healthcare in the 21st century can be a struggle for everyone involved, from those seeking care to those providing it. A flurry of obstacles to excellent, compassionate care at times cripples our best intentions, leaving us frustrated and unfulfilled. Yet, most of us in healthcare are caregivers at heart. We genuinely want to help others, and we recognize that caring for people is a fountain of life. Mahatma Gandhi said, “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” I have found this to be true.

As physicians, nurses, dentists, counselors, chaplains, therapists, Hospice workers, and caregivers in various fields, most of us have tried to meet people’s needs while running on empty, and discovered it doesn’t work. Exhausted, we minister with depleted souls and on our own strength rather than out of Christ’s abundance and in the power of the Spirit. At times we may wonder, where is the rest Christ promised? How can we love and serve as He does?

There is hope for us! When we walk with Jesus *while* caring for others, we learn to give from His abundance rather than our emptiness. Staying close to Him, we begin to love others out of the overflow of our own full hearts. We love as we actively receive His love (1 John 4:19). We give because He gives Himself to us.

We now have something precious to give.

In this devotional Bible study for healthcare professionals and caregivers, we will walk through the entire Gospel according to Luke one short segment at a time. Personal stories and reflections on the biblical text will help us learn to follow Jesus rather than minister to hurting people on our own.

I pray that this book will become a companion to help you begin each day with focus and become more intentional in making prayer and Scripture a *constant* part of your day. My hope is that, as you care for others,

prayer will become as natural as breathing. I also pray that you will experience a new sense of purpose as a Christian caregiver who, staying close to Jesus, shares His love, mercy, and grace with those in need.

After the exodus from Egypt, the Israelites spent forty years in the desert. God had promised that if they obeyed Him fully, out of all nations they would be His “treasured possession.” So the Israelites replied with one voice, “We will do everything the Lord has said” (Exodus 19:8).

They didn’t. They couldn’t. They grew impatient when God took a bit too long with Moses up on the mountain. Yet, Moses prayed boldly, pleading, “If your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here” (Exodus 33:15). God answered his prayer and continued to lead His people as they learned to follow *only* Him.

To those entrusted with caring for souls as well as bodies, God’s presence is a necessity. We must share Moses’ resolve not to take a single step without God. Alone, we are lost. On our own, we have no power to heal. Without God, we cannot minister to hurting bodies and souls with overwhelming needs.

Walking with Jesus in Healthcare is the result of my yearning to abide in Jesus as I care for people. In the uncertainties and anxieties of patient care, we need an anchor to keep us steady and a rudder to steer us to wisdom and compassion. The answer is Jesus. His love and wisdom must be the foundation of all we do.

In John 21:19, Jesus shared with Peter the only way to accomplish what He calls us to do. He said, “Follow me!” Today, Jesus looks upon each of us—God’s treasured possession—and says, “I Am Immanuel, God *with* you. *Follow Me.*” Jesus’ footsteps paved the path for us, His servants in healthcare, and He longs to lead us to His abundance so we may minister with His heart. As we love and serve His people, we love and serve Him.

Come. Walk with me, Dr. Luke, and our Healer, for only the love of Jesus can transform us into genuine disciples. As we follow Jesus, may our struggles shape us, may all suffering purify us, and may our hearts be filled with the joy of the Lord as we choose to love!

What Makes This Book Unique

I chose the Gospel according to Luke as the basis for these devotions because, like us, Dr. Luke was in healthcare. A physician by trade, he traveled with Paul, sharing in active ministry and in the spread of the good news of Jesus. The Gospel he penned focuses on Jesus' ministry while paying close attention to the many details that would likely intrigue us as well.

For instance, Jesus used eye contact, touch, and prayer when healing the sick. He healed up close and from a distance, and even His words had healing power. Once, He spit on the ground and made mud with His saliva to heal a blind man! (John 9:6). Why?

At times, Jesus said things like, "Receive your sight; your faith has healed you" (Luke 18:42). When a woman was accused of a sin worthy of death, Jesus calmly saved her from the condemning crowd, reassured her of His forgiveness, and invited her into higher living. He said to her, "Go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:1-11). To embrace the salvation He offered, she would have to head in a new direction through different choices.

Clearly, there is more to healing and wholeness than formulas and medication. By watching how, why, and when Jesus healed, we can learn what no other book or mentor can teach us. Dr. Luke portrays Jesus not only as our Savior, but also as the ultimate expression of what it means to be fully human in God's eyes. As we learn from our Healer, we will become more whole by embracing the saving grace He offers all of us.

Scripture Readings

Do not neglect to read the daily Bible passage. "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12,13). God's Word accomplishes a deep work in our souls. As we ponder its meaning, the

Holy Spirit's revelation often moves us to a new level with God. His Word is living, active, and powerful, and God sent it with a purpose.

“As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10,11).

God assures us that the purposes intended in His Word will be accomplished in us, but we must read, study, and meditate on it. By the end of this book, we will have studied the entire Gospel according to Luke. Volume II of *Walking with Jesus in Healthcare* will be based on the book of Acts (Luke's sequel to this Gospel). Let us be men and women of the Word. Our reward will be Jesus Himself.

Daily Reflections

While reading a book about Mother Teresa, I was deeply moved by a photograph of her feet. When her sandals broke, she'd continually mend them rather than accept a new pair. To me, her frayed sandals are a symbol of the inward and outward self-denial needed to follow Jesus. May her feet become a symbol unto us of the changes that are needed within ourselves to become servants who love God by loving people.

I've included short reflections, questions, or quotes at the end of each devotion to help us dive deeper with Jesus and learn to see the people we care for, the world, and ourselves through God's eyes. My prayer is that these devotions, prayers, and our time together in the Scriptures will transform us from healthcare professionals into willing servants in healthcare.

Prayer

Each day we will meditate on a portion of Scripture from Luke, read a devotion, and pray. As you pray for groups of people like medical students and missionaries, the Holy Spirit will guide you to pray for individuals in your life as well. Follow the Lord's leading as you pray; I simply offer some starting points.

Pray daily for the people you will care for and for your healthcare team. Pray for yourself, your family, and your work family. Pray continually (1 Thessalonians 5:17) and you'll never leave God's presence. Pray!

Share this book with your friends, colleagues, and healthcare team. Soon, we will have communities praying for each other and focusing on their God-given purpose as caregivers rather than the frustrations of modern medicine.

I recently heard Dr. Ben Carson speak to a group of physicians at Florida Hospital. The world-renowned neurosurgeon from Johns Hopkins inspired us to seek God in prayer as our guide, trusting Him to lead the way each day. As he shared his story, God's leading was palpable, and he gave all glory to Him for his accomplishments. Dr. Carson encouraged us to stay close to God and to use our God-given talents to help others. And what better place to start than on our knees, seeking wisdom, love, and everything we need from God as we begin each day.

Today's Song

I often include a song for the day that will help reinforce the message in the Scripture passage or in the devotional material. Consider listening to the song at the beginning or end of your prayer time. You can also replay it throughout the day to help keep your eyes fixed on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2). Additionally, the songs can serve as a welcome rest, a five-minute oasis to refresh your heart and soul as you move through your day.

*“My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and make music.
Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn.
I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations;
I will sing of you among the peoples.
For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.”*
Psalm 57:7-10

Special Prayers

In Colossians 4:12, Paul described Epaphras as a servant who was “always wrestling in prayer” for others. “Be joyful always,” he added in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, “pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” And in 1 Timothy 2:1-2, he further said, “I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.”

Beyond the short prayer included each day, I sometimes add a special prayer for the day. This is an opportunity to expand our scope by praying for special groups, such as students in training, residents, government officials, and other decision-makers and leaders in healthcare.

While praying for these groups, God may show you where to invest your gifts, energy, and resources to become more actively involved in improving healthcare to our nation and the world. Follow His leading as He reveals your specific gifts and calling.

Going Deeper

Each day provides opportunities to go deeper with God. As you let this format become a daily habit, you will begin to walk with Jesus more intentionally. Follow the Holy Spirit’s leading as you pray from the heart and answer the *Heart Steps* and *Footsteps* questions at the end of each day. Let the songs expand the day’s theme to help you worship God throughout the day. And, as Paul urged, let us pray without ceasing for one another, and the peace of God will guard our hearts—in healthcare and beyond!

Day 1 – Read Luke 1:1-4

A Physician Shares Christ

Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you... (v.3)

Dr. Luke begins his writings by assuring us that he's done his research. His account of Jesus' life is not speculative, but based on careful, conscientious research by a man of science. Luke sets out to report the truth and nothing but the truth.

Does that stir your soul as much as it stirs mine? The Holy Spirit inspired *a physician, a caregiver*—someone like you and me—to share Christ with the world. As we read the Gospel according to Luke, we will watch Jesus grow up into a man of prayer, action, and pure devotion. We will learn that His only agenda can be summed up with two compelling words: obedient surrender. As Jesus traveled resolutely to fulfill His destiny on a lonely cross, we will notice that He walked with His Father every moment of every day.

Can we do that in healthcare? Beyond simply getting by each day, can we resolve today to follow Jesus where He wants to take us, wherever it leads? Is it possible the Holy Spirit longs to inspire each of us to share Christ with the world one person at a time?

Let us give this day to Jesus as an act of worship and a fresh start on our journey with Him. As we pray and reflect on the Gospel according to Luke, let us bring to Jesus our frustrations, doubts, and fears. Let us bring our lack of sufficiency as well as our hopes, dreams, and God-given talents. As we get to know and follow Jesus, I pray that we will share Luke's certainty that Christ's story is not only real—it is what life is all about. Let us trust Jesus with our work, our lives, and our hearts. He is with us to stay.

GOING DEEPER

Picture Jesus' footsteps as He walked steadfastly to fulfill His destiny, taking one step after another, one day at a time. Let that inspire you to do the same, beginning today.

Thank You, Holy Spirit, for inspiring Luke to write all about Jesus so that I may know Him better. Fill me now with power as I resolve to follow Him today and every day.

Today's Song

"God With Us" by MercyMe



Heart Steps

God's word to me today:

Footsteps

How I will respond to God:

Day 2 – Read Luke 1:5-17

A Life of Purpose

“...and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.” (v.15b)

Dr. Luke begins his account of Jesus’ life by placing His family squarely in history. John the Baptist, Jesus’ cousin, was born “in the time of Herod king of Judea” (v.5) to Jesus’ aunt, Elizabeth, and His uncle, Zechariah. Although Elizabeth was barren, an angel of the Lord revealed to Zechariah that his wife would have a son who would do God’s work. Something extraordinary was coming, and they would play a role in it.

In a similar way, each of us was born on a certain day under various circumstances, and God had a plan for each of our lives. Psalm 139 assures us that we are not a mystery to God. The psalmist praises God, certain that his Creator knows him intimately and has a plan for his life. “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Psalm 139:13-16).

You have a purpose, and what you are doing now to serve God is no accident. He equipped you with gifts and talents for a reason, and He wants you to sharpen and use those gifts to His glory. Whether you’re a nurse, a phlebotomist, a doctor, a therapist, or the one who brings patients from room to room, your role is important. Love those on your path today, for that is why you’re here.

GOING DEEPER

Jesus said, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34).

Lord God, I thank You that You created me with a purpose. Infuse me with an awareness of Your presence and purpose for my life, and help me to fulfill it.

Today's Special Prayer

Pray for the custodial staff in your workplace and church,
and thank God for their service to you.



Heart Steps

God's word to me today:

Footsteps

How I will respond to God:

Day 9 – Read Luke 2:8-20

An Exam Room Transformed

When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. (v.17, 18)

Years ago, my frustration with modern medicine became unbearable, and I was ready to embrace a new approach to caring for souls while treating the body. With perfect timing, a colleague led me to a Saline Solution weekend seminar led by doctors. The curriculum was created to help healthcare professionals incorporate their faith into the care of patients. I left empowered to share the hope of Jesus with those seeking an anchor for the soul (Hebrews 6:19).

On my first day back at the office, a lady in her sixties named Sue came to see me. While I listened to her lungs and examined her arthritic joints, she shared her struggles with an adult son with autism and severe anxiety. She seemed depressed and hopeless, and I heard a cry for an anchor. Speaking from the heart, I shared about my weekend. I told her that, although I'd never prayed with a patient, I would love to pray with her if that was okay.

“Okay?” she replied, her eyes suddenly beaming with hope. “That would be great!” Right there by the exam table, we prayed to God with simple words, and He answered. No longer merely doctor and patient, we were two human beings, vulnerable and real, sharing the hurts of a broken world before a mighty God. As we shared the burden, it lightened, and so did our hearts. Our *Amen* marked the end of my time alone in medicine and the beginning of a journey of learning to follow and proclaim Jesus.

Praying with patients when led to do so by the Spirit has turned my work into a ministry. As I share Christ's love, I live into Him more, and He continues to guide my steps. No longer alone in practice, I have greater wisdom, joy, and peace, all thanks to our faithful God.

GOING DEEPER

“Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.” (Theodore Roosevelt)

*Heavenly Father, empower me by the Holy Spirit to share Jesus with those
You bring to me today and every day.*

Today's Special Prayer

Pray for Christian mentors in all fields of healthcare to walk closely with God and have the courage and discernment to guide others to do the same.



Heart Steps

God's word to me today:

Footsteps

How I will respond to God:

Day 58 – Read Luke 9:51-56

Servants in Healthcare

*As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven,
Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. (v. 51)*

Jesus was born to fulfill God's mission. He came to die on the cross for sinners, to redeem the world. Jesus knew His unique mission and fulfilled it by staying in communion with His Father, focused squarely on God's purposes. His Father was His all.

As doctors, nurses, therapists, and caregivers, what is our mission? What are we focused on each day as we care for people? At times, my work as a doctor leaves me spent. Beyond the challenge of diagnosing and treating with empathy, skill, and knowledge while keeping the staff encouraged and striving to stay on time, we have administrative and medico-legal concerns. Paperwork, computer crashes, constant interruptions, and psychological factors like denial and fear all add to the mix. Frustrating as this can be, it all comes with the territory.

But a paradigm shift has changed my practice. I no longer see myself as a healthcare professional but as a servant in healthcare. I am not at work to fulfill my agenda but to focus on people's needs and what God is doing in their lives. As I focus on God and His plan for the day, I discern His voice better. I am easier to guide and teach. I have more patience, compassion, and love. And I have more joy.

When I lose my focus on God and His mission, I now recognize it more quickly and regain focus by stopping to pray. As I call on God right there while listening to someone's lungs, my experience is transformed. I am no longer in the middle of a work day but aware of standing in God's presence, before His throne, seeking His help to fulfill my God-given mission. What a gift!

GOING DEEPER

“Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all’” (Mark 9:35).

*Lord Jesus, though You are God, You became a servant
and poured Your life out for us (Philippians 2:5-11).
Help me to learn from You how to serve like that.*

Today's Song

“I Refuse” by Josh Wilson



Heart Steps

God's word to me today:

Footsteps

How I will respond to God: