



I Have Decided - The Devotional

This devotional is designed to go alongside the 'I Have Decided' videos. These videos are all available on Youtube and on the I Have Decided app, which is available to download on all app stores. In addition, each daily video will be linked at the top of each day of the devotional. We would recommend that you watch the video first and then read the devotional second. In this devotional, we will recap what we have learnt in each video and leave some questions/actions for us to think about arising from what we have watched and the scriptures we have read. We hope that this devotional, alongside the videos, will help you to understand more about the decision you made to follow Jesus and kickstart this exciting journey you are about to embark on.

I Have Decided – The Devotional

Who Is God?

Matthew 28:19

Genesis 1:3

1 John 4:8

Today's video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zqm5-k0aUVs>

1. Who Is God?

How incredible is that God is so big that we can't even begin to comprehend! He created the universe and set the planets in motion, yet he is also so intimate and relational that he makes himself known personally to us. He knows how many hairs there are on our head and he cares about every thought that is going on in our minds.

We learnt today that scripture helps us understand the scale of God by referring to Him with many different names. Often these names help us to understand an element of His nature or character. You may have heard some of them before: God, Jesus, Father, Holy Spirit, Lord etc. Even though the list goes on for quite some time, it is important to remember there is only one God. Christianity is a strictly monotheistic religion. How can one God have so many different names?

In the video today we learned a bit more about who God is. Remember, understanding this is a conversation that could go on forever so don't panic if you don't fully understand it! This video is an introduction and as we read our scriptures and spend more time with God, we will get to know him more and more.

At its core, we need to understand this: The Bible is very clear that there is only **one** God. However when the Bible speaks about who God is, it talks about **three** persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (just as we see in Matthew 28). This strange paradox is often referred to as God being 'the Trinity': God is one God in three persons. From the video, we learned that from the beginning of time to the end of time, these three expressions of God are all present, yet scripture is clear – it's all one God. Has your mind melted yet? Don't worry. Remember that we were made in God's image, he wasn't made in ours – so it's important for us to never try to box him to our understanding.

Let's try and think about this in its simplest terms, by using ourselves as an (imperfect) analogy. I am a human being by nature, but I also have a person (my name is Ben). I am both one being (human) and one person (Ben). God, on the other hand, is one being yet with three persons (Father, Son and Spirit).

What can we learn from God being one in three? One of the key takeaways is that God is all about community. He is, Himself, a community. It is in His nature. From the very beginning, God was in community with himself, The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, all loving one another. When we understand this, we start to understand how God can literally be love. It's simply WHO He is.

The Holy Spirit is the one person of God that sometimes is hardest to relate to. We can relate to God the Father because we understand what a human father is (even if we did not have a good example of it in our own lives). We can relate to God the Son because Jesus became flesh and walked on this earth – providing a tangible model for us of God's character and demonstrating His love for us through His death and resurrection on the cross. If you want the clearest picture of who God is, you can just look at Jesus. The Spirit is harder to grasp. The Holy Spirit is God, just as the Father and Son are. He powerfully brings the eternal purposes of God to reality on earth, revealing Jesus to a broken and lost world. Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit comforts us, guides and directs us and transforms us into the image of Christ. The Spirit empowers the everyday Christian life, and He is with us always.

Have a think today over 1 John 4:8 –
What does it mean that God is love? And what does this mean for your life?

Prayer:

"Thank you God that you're so vast, so big, you created the universe and yet you still care so intimately for me. Help me as I continue to read your word to understand more of who you are each day."

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Why Did Jesus Come?

John 3:16

Today's video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcx0kx8hGno>

2. Why Did Jesus Come?

In today's video, Robby teaches us that the reason Jesus came to earth is much bigger and more spectacular than just to open a way for us to get into heaven. Jesus came to complete God's great story, to fulfil God's plan for humanity and creation and to establish the Kingdom of God here on earth.

We learnt that when God created humanity, he created us to be his image-bearers on the earth and to be sub-rulers over the creation, under God. However, we also learn that human beings failed in that duty and sinned. In other words, they rebelled against God, his commands, and his created order. Instead of being under God and obeying him, humanity decided to do things its own way. God is a loving God and he loves us so much but we must also understand he cannot bear sin. God is perfectly loving but He is also perfectly just. He cannot stand sin because not only does it corrupt us, his beautiful creation, but it also falls short of God's perfection and holiness. Light and darkness cannot dwell together. It's because of sin and the evil behind sin (pride and selfishness) that the things that we often blame God for happen, things like: war, sickness and disease, addiction, crime etc. These are not ways of God punishing us but they are a result of humanity thinking we know better than God, turning our back on him and doing things our own way. Our broken world is the result of doing things contrary to God's perfect ways.

Because God is a loving God and a God of constant second chances, he didn't sit back and allow us to be destroyed by the consequences of our own sin. He kept pursuing us. We learnt today that throughout the Old Testament, we see lots of men and women pop up whom God starts to use as part of his cosmic redemption (redemption) plan. Robby taught us how God chose a people group (Israel) whom he would save and show himself through in the hope that the world would see God through them and turn from their ways and back to God. The problem was that Israel were unable to remain faithful in that relationship (covenant) with God and the plan wasn't successful because there was still that inclination in fallen humanity toward sin time and again; to turn away from God. It had become a plague which man could not escape from.

So, Jesus came. He was sent by God to redeem humanity and restore creation. God 'took on human form' and dealt with sin himself by being the ultimate sacrifice, paying the price for our rebellion that we could never pay. He took on all sin, past, present and future, died on the cross and then rose again three days later, conquering death and defeating sin once and for all.

In the next couple days, we will see what Jesus achieved and what that means for us.

In your thoughts and prayers today, why not think about and thank God for the second chances he has given you, for his love and for the fact that he never ever gave up pursuing a relationship with you.

Have a think today over John 3:16 –
What does this mean for you?

Prayer:

"Heavenly Father, I thank you for sending your son Jesus down to earth so that sin could be dealt with, thank you for the endless second chances, I'm sorry when I've done things my own way and have let my own pride and selfishness get in the way, Holy Spirit guide me as I continue on this new journey I'm on."

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What Did Jesus Achieve?

Romans 6:22-23

Today's video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrpZKbjog7E>

3. What Did Jesus Achieve?

In today's video, Robby taught us what Jesus accomplished on earth and how he overthrew evil (sin, our own pride and our selfishness). We learnt that he accomplished this through his death on the cross and his bodily resurrection from the dead.

Robby taught us that while he was on earth, Jesus taught about the kingdom of God and a new way of living. He re-presented God's way of life back to humanity and demonstrated how we were always created to live as God's creation. Jesus healed the sick, raised the dead and cast demons out of people. He didn't do this to just perform some sort of magic trick but rather to demonstrate that God's Kingdom was breaking into the world. In Jesus' Kingdom, sickness, death and decay cannot exist. Jesus revealed that the kingdom of God was arriving through himself. He was inaugurating the start of something new. He would sit and eat with anyone (the lost, sinful and marginalised) showing that he was prepared to reconcile anyone (who would simply admit they needed him) back into relationship with God. We see that Jesus started to gain a following and he appointed twelve disciples (followers) who would later lead that following, which would eventually become known as the Church. As Christians today, we live in the Kingdom that Jesus started.

But why did Jesus have to die?

Jesus died to deal with the problem of sin and to reconcile us back to God. He took on the enormity of sin which, in its devastation, had blocked us from having a relationship with our Holy God. In both his justice and in his mercy, God dealt with sin by taking on problem onto His own shoulders. The reason Jesus had to die was because he (a) was the only one who could live a perfect human life, (b) was the only one who could fulfil the covenant that Israel could not, (c) was in complete obedience to God's will and therefore (d) was the perfect sacrifice to break the power of sin and death.

Because of Jesus, sin no longer separates us from God. We have been reconciled back into relationship with him, no matter what we've done. Past, present or future sin, Jesus dealt with it ALL when he died and rose from the dead. This is what he achieved. The only thing that now separates humanity from God is whether or not **we** choose to believe this and choose to follow Jesus – acknowledging our own shortcomings and making Him the Lord of our life. In tomorrow's devotional, we're going to look at what this now means for you and me.

Today, start reading one of the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John). I would suggest starting with either Luke or John. See for yourself what Jesus did while he was here on earth. In your prayers today, why not thank God for taking on your sin and for pursuing you to the very cross so that you would be reconciled back into relationship with him and restored back to your original identity. He loved you so much that He died for you. It's the scandal of grace.

Prayer:

"God I thank you for reconciling me back into relationship with you, as I start to read the bible today, I pray Holy Spirit that you would speak to me, in Jesus' name I pray Amen."

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What Does That Mean For Me?

Matthew 6:9-13

Matthew 28:19

2 Corinthians 5:20

Today's video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAi9K_RBTtc

4. What Does That Mean For Me?

Pulling together all that we've learnt about Jesus over the past couple of days... what does this now mean for you and me? What does it mean that Jesus is King, that the kingdom of God is here? How does it change my life? What changes now that I have decided to follow Jesus?

One of the first things Robby alludes to in this video is that we shouldn't expect to know everything! It's ok to not know some things, because God is God and we are not. Thank goodness! Some things are beyond our comprehension. We may not understand everything in this lifetime... and that's ok. This journey with Jesus is a marathon, not a sprint. Another thing to remember is that we have been restored back into God's image. We have become holy and blameless in his sight, because of what Jesus did. Jesus has reconciled us back into relationship with himself, not only so that we can know Him intimately but also so that we can get about the mission of Jesus: telling people about him and implementing the kingdom of God here on earth. We become Jesus' witnesses and ambassadors on this planet.

Just as God has loved us, we should aim to love people in the same way. Just as God loves us unconditionally, we are to reflect that and love the people around us in that same way. Just as we can't earn God's love, people shouldn't have to earn ours. Imagine what the world could look like if everyone started to live like this!

We already know that Jesus came to establish his kingdom here on earth and we now know that, as Christians, we are here to work for the advancement of that kingdom by loving and serving people as Jesus loved and served us. You may often hear the term "we are Jesus' hands and feet", meaning we are here to bring God's will and kingdom-culture to earth. We are to go out and tell the world about Jesus, we are to share the gospel, telling people the good news of what God has done, we are to help people realise that God is a loving God (not a distant or angry god!). We are to love and bring healing to

the world by meeting people in their brokenness, in their pain and in their suffering with the love of Christ. We have been commissioned to bring the answer to those that are searching. Just as you have received, now freely give!

The final thing we discovered today is that we don't have to do live this life alone. In fact, it's impossible to! First of all we have the Holy Spirit working inside of us, empowering us to outwork God's will and secondly, we have the Church community. As the Church, we can love people, serve people and demonstrate to them what a life following Jesus looks like.

Today, why not start with someone, maybe a family member, a friend or a co-worker. Whoever it is, why not pray that God would soften their hearts to hear the news you've got to share and then go and serve them, show them you love them and begin to tell them the good news of Jesus.

Prayer:

"Holy Spirit, thank you for using me to reach people, thank you for trusting me with your mission, to reach and save the lost. I ask today that as I speak to my friend/colleague/family member about you that you would give me the right words to say with the right heart to say it."

I Have Decided – The Devotional

What Is The Church?

Ephesians 1:23

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Romans 12:6-8

Today's video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHR9o2M5Ew4>

5. What Is The Church?

In today's video Ben explained how the Church came about in the New Testament and also suggested what the church should look like today.

Unlike common thought, the Church is not a building or an institution. It is in fact a community of people, united in mission and charged with this purpose: to be a witness to humanity of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The church is you and I!

The Church, then, is so much more than just a group of people meeting together. It is the vehicle through which Jesus has chosen to reveal himself to the world. The Church creates a picture of who Jesus is, through the way they serve and love people, and, when done well, the world will see it. It should be an attractive picture, a picture full of love and acceptance where anybody can walk in and be taken on the journey of the Christian life, being transformed more and more into the likeness of Christ as they continue to get to know him with the support of the people around them.

Each person within the Church brings their own strengths and weaknesses, yet each person is just as valuable as the next. The Bible describes the church like a body (with Jesus as the head!), each part so valuable in making the whole thing work. No one person is more important than the other. Within it, everyone is welcome, everyone is spiritually gifted by God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, used for God's glory (each gift listed in Romans 12: 6-8, and 1 Corinthians 12: 8-11) and every person has a part to play.

Life was never meant to be done alone, and the church enables us to do life together, united behind a cause much bigger than ourselves - the mission of Christ: To seek and save the lost. It's not a community that will point the finger at each other and pull one another down based on our flaws. No! Instead, it is a community of people believing the best for each other, forgiving each other, and serving one another in love.

Today, take a moment to thank God for being a part of his church. If you haven't already, make a decision to engage with the church. Maybe your next step to engage is to join a group or a team and be a part of a smaller community within the church. Find your people at Hillsong.co.uk.

Prayer:

"Heavenly Father, thank you for your church, thank you that I'm not alone, thank you for this community that is building me up and not dragging me down. I ask today that you help me keep the unity amongst the church and represent your church well to people not yet in it. In Jesus name I pray, Amen."

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What Is The Bible?

2 Timothy 3:16

Today's video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nl_tv9Ziu9c

6. What Is The Bible?

Remember in all of this: You are not on your own if you're asking "Why"? It's a great question to ask. Today, we asked the question: "Why should I read the Bible"?

With its age and size in mind, the Bible may seem intimidating at first. However, with a few simple tips, you can break it down and realise its power to transform your life. The Bible is actually something we can and should use in our everyday life. It's the perfect companion to the Christian walk.

In the video today, we learned that the Bible is not only the most powerful manual to life, but it also tells the story of God. Reading the bible leads us deeper in our relationship with God. It enables us to understand who He is and what he's done for us. We also heard that the Bible is living word of God, meaning that the words in it are full of life and have the power to offer everlasting life, while literally transforming you in the process. Although it may seem obvious, it's important for us to remember that God didn't physically put pen to paper and write the Bible. Instead, he wrote it through people. The Bible is the biggest selling book in the world, the most stolen book in the world, the most smuggled book in the world and the most famous book in the world. Yet, the Bible is actually not really "a book" but would be better described as a library of books - written by different authors, in different genres and places, over a span of about 1500 years. The Bible is a library! Yet somehow, and spectacularly, every book tells the same story - the story of Jesus. We have to begin to wonder that maybe, just maybe, through the work of the Holy Spirit, the touch of God is on these texts: Written by man, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

There are two main parts to the Bible, the Old and the New Testaments. Testament simply means "covenant" or "promise". The Old Testament, put simply, talks about God's character, will and the love he has for humanity and creation - a story which unravels over many centuries and mainly through one people group (Israel). It reveals to us how God dealt with humanity rejecting him from creation up until the birth and life of Jesus. The New Testament describes the life of Jesus and the impact of his

life on the people at the time and on us today. It also gives us a beautiful insight into the birth of the Church.

Ben concluded the video by explaining that there is no right or wrong way to read the bible and he gave us a helpful acronym to think about when reading the bible, detailed below:

S – Scripture

Read the piece of the scripture, this could be a whole chunk or a one verse that stuck out to you in particular.

O – Observation

What do you observe from the scripture you've just read? Who was writing it? Who were they writing to? What was going on at the time? What was the message trying to be conveyed?

A – Application

How can you apply that to your life and to your current situations?

P – Prayer

Here is your chance to process what you've just read and place it before God. You could pray something like this 'God help me to understand this and to do what it says'.

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What Is The Bible?

An example of this may look something like this:

S – 2 Timothy 3:16

'All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness'

O – I observe here that the Bible is from God, even though he may not have physically written it, the writer clearly wants it to be known that it is from God. He also tells us what it is useful for: teaching, correcting and training in righteousness.

A – As I continue reading scriptures in my life, I am aware that I'm listening to God's words. As I read them and apply them to my life, I will seek out the areas in my life that need correcting, rebuking or where I need to be taught and will allow God to move in my life.

P – *'Heavenly Father, thank you for bringing me to this verse today. Thank you for word and how it corrects, teaches and rebukes. As I continue to read your word, I ask you to point out areas in my life that may need to change in order to see your will be done here on earth. Amen.'*

Remember, reading the Bible isn't always something we should do alone. Talk about it with your friends, start conversations around what you've read and what God has been speaking to you about. It's amazing how much you understand when you start to bounce ideas and thoughts off each other.

Today, start (or continue) reading one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John) and write out your S.O.A.P. for a short passage. Start reading your Bible today and see how God will change your life forever. Ask any questions you might have to a friend in Church.

If you head to hillsong.co.uk/ihd we have collated different bible plans you and your friends can do together.

Prayer:

"God I thank you for your word, I ask that as I continue reading your word that you would continue to reveal yourself to me more and more each day."

I Have Decided – The Devotional

Prayer, Worship and Baptism

Matthew 6:9-13
1 Chronicles 16:23-24
Galatians 2:20

Today's video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9PqMieldhNk>

7. Prayer, Worship and Baptism

In our final video, Robby briefly explains three commonly talked about Christian topics: prayer, worship and baptism.

Prayer

Prayer, put simply, is a conversation with God. It is a conversation where we can be real, open and honest with him. It's interesting that although God already knows everything about you, because of his intimate, caring and loving nature, he still wants to have a chat with you. Your heavenly Father wants you to come as you are: Completely yourself. We found out today that through prayer we will find: peace, wisdom, comfort, strength, courage, guidance, direction, healing and more! All of this is not only for you but for the people you are praying for too.

Worship

The definition of worship is to give reverence or adoration to something or someone. When we worship God, it is a response to who He is, the position he holds in our lives, what he has done for us, and the fact that he first loved us when we did not deserve it. When we all come together and sing songs of worship, it does something in us because worship takes our eyes off ourselves and focuses them onto to God. We also learnt that worship is not just about singing songs but it's actually about our entire lifestyle. You can worship God through everything that you do. How are you going to worship God today?

Baptism

When we decided to follow Jesus, we acknowledged that we wanted to leave our old way of living behind and turn towards God. In this act of repentance (a word that simply means "changing your mind" and joyfully turning to Jesus, embracing Him and the life he offers us), we are completely forgiven and our sins are completely cleansed thanks to Jesus' finished work on the cross. When we get baptised, we're symbolising this inward transformation with an outward declaration, saying that our old self is dead in the water and we are risen into new life with Jesus

alongside our fellow believers. It's an outward sign of our commitment to Jesus. Baptism is a personal decision and is the physical symbol of the relational bond you have made with God, the equivalent (not a perfect analogy!) to a wedding ring in a marriage.

Have you been baptised? If not, maybe have a think about taking this next step in your walk with Jesus.

If you would like to be baptised head over to hillsong.co.uk/jhd to find the next baptism dates.

Prayer:

"Father I worship you today, thank you for who you are, thank you that through simple conversation with you, I can find peace, wisdom, comfort, strength, courage, guidance, direction, healing. Thank you that I can be completely myself with you, help me show people how much you love them today."