

fresh

A 31-Day Student Devotional



Russell St. Bernard

Fresh: 31-Day Student Devotional

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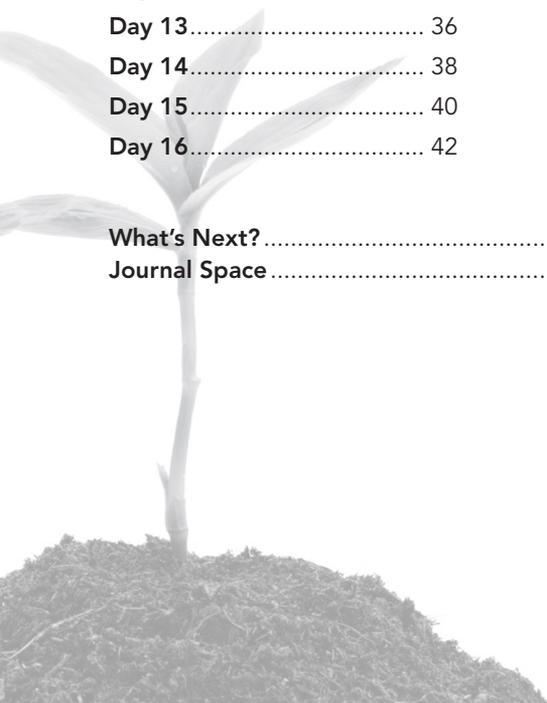
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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the patriarch of my family, my grandfather Emanuel St. Bernard, whom I call “Dad” because he has been a great father and leader to me. I love you, Dad, and thank you for all that you have poured into my life, both as a man and as a father.

DEDICATION

About the Author



Russell St. Bernard is an anointed, gifted, and passionate preacher of the Gospel. He has been equipped with a challenging and insightful Word for people, both young and old. Rev. Russell's focus is to help God's people realize and obtain their God-given purpose and call.

Rev. Russell was born in Brooklyn, New York, and was raised on the rough streets of Brooklyn's Bedford Stuyvesant (Bed-Stuy) borough. After graduation from high school, Rev. Russell wanted a change, and he found it at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland. From Morgan, he received a Bachelor's of Science in Business Administration.

Before accepting Christ and his call to ministry, Rev. Russell was a well-known party promoter on Morgan's campus, as well as in the greater Baltimore area. However, after receiving Christ and acknowledging the call on his life, he chose to promote Christ to everyone in which he came in contact. After accepting his call, he received his Masters of Divinity from Howard University School of Divinity, where he graduated with honors.

Rev. Russell began serving as the Minister to Teens at Empowerment Temple A.M.E Church in Baltimore, Maryland, under the awesome pastoral leadership of Rev. Dr. Jamal-Harrison Bryant. Russell took the lead in a bi-weekly youth services, called "Teen Temple", where more than one hundred young people used their gifts and talents to worship God. Many of those teens participated in youth dance

and drama teams, were DJs, and did so much more during “Teen-Temple” worship.

Under Rev. Russell’s leadership at Empowerment Temple, youth were sent to Jamaica on Missions trip and participated in weekend conferences featuring special guests and artists. He also held youth services inside youth detention centers and ministered to those who were locked up, but not locked out, of the Kingdom.

After leaving Empowerment Temple A.M.E. Church, Rev. Russell became the Pastor of Student and Young Professional Ministries at The Fountain Ministries in South Florida, under the pastoral leadership of Pastor Wayne Lomax. At the Fountain, he equipped young people for all areas of service in order for them to change their lives and the lives of those in their communities. Under Rev. Russell’s leadership, the HYDRO (Youth) Ministry started “The Saturday Night Remix”, a youth service where young people worshipped God in a way that made sense to them. During the first year of “The Remix”, over 80 young people joined the ministry and came to know Christ.

While at The Fountain, Rev. Russell was also blessed to be published under The American Bible Society’s student magazine “Elementz of Life”, as well as by The Urban Youth Workers Institute’s National Youth Ministry Training “Reload”. Currently, Rev. Russell is the Minister to Youth at Reid Temple A.M.E. Church in Maryland.

Rev. Russell is the very proud husband of Mrs. Erica St. Bernard, with whom he resides in Maryland.

Why Fresh?

(Message to Student)

Dictionary.com defines “fresh” as, “new or not previously known.” The Bible says in, Isaiah Chapter 43 and verse 19, “See, I am doing a new thing”. The Hebrew word for “new” in this verse (note: the language is Hebrew because it’s the Old Testament. The New Testament was written in Greek and Aramaic, just in case you were wondering) is “Chadash”, which means to renew, repair, or restore. The reason why “fresh” is the designed name for this devotional for you as a student is because God wants to make you “new”. God wants to “renew” you. God’s desire is to “repair” whatever has been broken, or made loose, in order to “restore” you in God’s image and likeness (Genesis 1:27). This 31-Day devotional was created for you to start “fresh”, no matter what you have been through, no matter what you have done. We serve a God of another chance, and the prayer is that this devotional will assist you in your “fresh” start.

Now, here are the ground rules, or really just a one-word rule: **Commit**. If you start this devotional, **commit** to working on it every day for the next 31 days. Don’t skip a day and try to add it to the next day’s reading. **Commit** to a dedicated time to read this devotional. That may be before you start your day, after you finish your homework or it may be during your ride to school or work. Just **commit** to a consistent time and place to read this devotional for the next 31 days. Lastly, **commit** to want to be changed, to want to be different. After these 31 days, God will have designed you to grow. FRESH is your start!

Ok that is it. Now, read the overview and let’s get started!!!

Why Fresh?

(Message to Youth Leader or Parent/Guardian)

First, thank you for considering this devotional for your student. We all know that, at one point in our lives, there was a deciding moment where we started to get “serious” with and for God. It is my prayer that this devotional is the beginning of that process for your student. Whether you are the youth pastor or youth leader, and you use this devotional for the students that make “new” decisions for Christ in your youth ministry, or you use it for your student leaders, it is my prayer that it will serve them as they GROW in Christ. If you are the parent or guardian, you, too, know about the time in your life when you started to really make God a priority in your life and you needed a spark to help get you there. It is also my prayer that this devotional will serve your son, daughter, niece, nephew, grandson, granddaughter, or other family member as they begin to start “fresh” for Christ.

Whether you are the youth leader or parent/guardian, it is great that you have purchased this resource, however, it doesn't just stop once you hand it over to them. I would suggest that you read through the days, as well, and that you follow-up with them. Have a dialog about the lessons (maybe just once a week). This will help motivate them, and it will keep them on track, as well as show you where they are with the reading. As you know, ALL meaningful growth happens in a community, so allow this devotional to start a growing community between you and your student(s).

Also please check out www.AfterTheMusicStops.org for more ministry resources, articles, and tools.

Overview of Format

- **SCRIPTURE** – Daily Bible readings will come from the NIV translation. Each will be shortened to 1 to 4 Bible verses in order to help you get through your readings.
- **SAY WHAT?** – Translations of the scripture into simple sentences to help you focus on the key point(s).
- **BREAKDOWN** – The devotion for the day that relates the scripture to everyday life to foster growth for you as a student.
- **LIVE IT OUT** – Practical instruction of what you can do today to fulfill the scripture and purpose covered in each individual devotional.
- **PRAYER** – Short prayer for you to ask for God's help with the instruction of the day.
- **REFLECTION** – Journaling space to write down what the day's passage means to you, and/or how it has impacted you.

The word "fresh" is written in a large, bold, lowercase serif font. A thin, dark grey line is drawn horizontally through the middle of the letters. From the left end of this line, a wavy line extends downwards and to the left. From the right end, a wavy line extends downwards and to the right, ending in a small arrowhead pointing towards the right.

A 31-Day Student Devotional

DAY 1

SCRIPTURE:

“Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance.”

— Proverbs 1:5 NIV

SAY WHAT? Wise people listen and learn from what they hear.

BREAKDOWN: Start today, this new beginning, out right by listening more than you talk. Here in the book of Proverbs, written by Solomon (called the richest and wisest man to ever live), we hear this same advice. As a young person, ideas and thoughts may come to you quicker than your parents, or brothers and sisters, but there is still something important about listening more than talking. You only have two ears and one mouth, and that might be a sign that God built us to listen twice as much as we talk. The Bible says we add to our learning, and, one day, we will be able to cash in (get paid) on all of the listening. But also as you listen, the verse says that we should also get guidance (that’s understanding) that everything we hear won’t always make sense. There will be some things in life that, no matter who you are, will need to be explained to you. However, you have to admit you don’t know everything, (this is a good lesson to learn even at your age), and then go get the guidance.

DAY 2

SCRIPTURE:

“How long will you simple ones love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?”

— Proverbs 1:22 NIV

SAY WHAT? Simple folk do simple stuff all the time, but this way of living is wrong. After all, fools don't like to learn.

BREAKDOWN: Change. Whether it's at school this week, at home today, or how we act in private when we think no one is looking or listening, we all know we have some things in our lives we need to change. Solomon is trying to get what he calls “simple” people to change. Are you simple? Have you taken the easy way out of life, always doing what your peeps do without really applying yourself? Today that ends. Don't be like the simple ones, or like the mockers who mocked the religion, or like the fools (great word choice) who hate knowledge. Change. Change and take everything to the top level. Be true to God's ways, and get knowledge as you go.

DAY 3

SCRIPTURE:

“For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them;”

— Proverbs 1:32 NIV

SAY WHAT? The ways of simple people can kill them, and not wanting to **move forward** can destroy your future.

BREAKDOWN: “Wayward” is an old word we don’t use much. In this scripture, the wayward people Solomon refers to are the simple people who turn away from God (go a different way), and how doing so will kill them. Solomon also says that being complacent (being happy with not trying to do your best or achieve a higher level) will destroy them. Kill and destroy what? Kill and destroy your dreams, your future, what God has lined up for you to do, all because you wanted to take it easy. It’s important that you try your hardest. As they say, “aim for the stars.” Don’t be foolish and risk destroying what God designed for your life. The key in the verse is that if you’re not wayward, meaning that you focus on God and what God has for you, then you can’t be complacent because God won’t allow you to be so.

DAY 4

SCRIPTURE:

“But whoever listens to me
will live in safety and be at
ease, without fear of harm.”

— Proverbs 1:33 NIV

SAY WHAT? If you listen to God and follow what God says, you will not have to fear.

BREAKDOWN: We all listen to something, and sometimes we even act like we’re listening to someone when we really aren’t (you know, like you do in that class you have with the boring teacher?). In this passage, listening is being pointed out as an important quality to have, especially listening to God. I know you’re saying, *well, God doesn’t speak to me*, but is that really true? Or, is the truth that God is speaking to you all the time but you never take the time to stop, unplug (from the mp3, podcast, DVD, TV, etc.) and listen for God? It’s like having a two-way radio like truck drivers use that has many different channels. God is talking on Channel 3, but you’re on every other channel listening to your favorite songs, watching your favorite shows, or talking to a friend. But, it’s clear here that if we just listen to God then we would live in safety, be at ease, and wouldn’t have to fear any harm. In order for these things to happen, we must take time to listen to God, not just hear, but, listen. This means we are taking in what God is saying and processing it. (Note: Once you are “tuned in” to God, you will hear from Him in many different ways. You may hear God speak to you audibly, send you messages through the TV, or even highway billboards. God may also speak inside where you can “hear” him in your spirit. You will know God is speaking to you in this manner when everybody and everything else is saying the total opposite of what God is saying to you.)

FRESH: A 31-Day Student Devotional

One of the hardest things to do is to start a new “habit”, and starting something new and “fresh” is not an easy task. This is also true when it comes to starting a devoted life for Christ. This devotional is designed to help students (young and young at heart) to start “Fresh” by developing a closer relationship with God, regardless of their past issues and mistakes. Over the next 31 days, you will read through some verses in Proverbs, the book known as the “wisdom” book of the Bible. What better way to make a “Fresh” start than to read God’s wisdom and apply it to your life? For 31 days, you will read Bible verses that are broken down in a way that will make it easy for you to apply it to your life, and have space to journal everything God shares with you. Are you ready for your “Fresh” start? Good! Turn to the front of this book and let’s begin!

Help students (young and young at heart) to develop a closer relationship with God

ABOUT THE AUTHOR | Rev. Russ has been leading in youth ministry for over 10 years and has a passion to equip & train students, as well as leaders after the music stops.

www.AfterTheMusicStops.org



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