

The  
ONE  
YEAR

# DEVOS

Susie Shellenberger

for teens 2



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## WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO GOD?

The Bible tells us that someday every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. We're also told that every single one of us will stand before God on a great Day of Judgment. Have you ever wondered what that will be like? What will God be concerned with? What will he ask? Let's think about that for a moment.

- God won't ask what kind of car you drove, but he might ask how many people you drove who didn't have transportation.
- God won't ask how big your house was, but he might ask how many people you welcomed into your home.
- God won't ask about your social status, but he might ask what kind of class you displayed.
- God won't ask what your highest salary was, but he might ask if you compromised your character or his will to obtain that salary.
- God won't ask how many promotions you received, but he might ask how you promoted others—how you encouraged them and considered them more important than yourself.
- God won't ask how many material possessions you had, but he might ask if they dictated your life.
- God won't ask what neighborhood you lived in, but he might ask you how you treated your neighbors.

God is concerned with the status of your heart. He's also concerned about your actions. And the truth is, our actions usually reflect our heart. Are your actions representative of Christ? It all starts with your heart. Is your heart totally dedicated to him? Are you more concerned about becoming all he wants you to be than seeing how much you can get? Let that be your goal this year. Instead of thinking, *How can I become more popular? How can I get so-and-so to notice me?* focus instead on, *Whom can I help who can't give back?*

Ask God to transform your thinking from *How can I make the most money? How can I be the most successful?* to *Dear Father, where I can serve you best? What can I do to help build your Kingdom?*

When your heart has that kind of focus, your actions will reflect Christ himself.



January 1

### BREW IT!

God commands that we imitate him (see Ephesians 5:1). How's your imitation coming? Remember, it all begins in the heart. This week, do something for someone who can't return the favor. Is there an elderly shut-in from your church you can visit? Contact your pastor about someone in your church who has specific needs that you can meet: perhaps someone who's short of cash and needs groceries, a child from a single-parent home who needs some extra attention, or someone who's handicapped who needs help with chores.

### POUR IT!

Drink in the flavor from the following Scriptures:  
1 Corinthians 13; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ephesians 5:1-2.

### SAVOR IT!

Ask God to break you and reshape you in his image. Tell him you want to focus on making a difference for eternity.



### **BREW IT!**

Spiritual discipline, like physical discipline, is a process. Your muscles don't take shape overnight. Consistency is the key! Determine to take your spiritual training seriously.

### **POUR IT!**

Drink in the flavor from the following Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 3:14-21; 1 Timothy 4:8.

### **SAVOR IT!**

Ask God to help you discipline yourself daily to his authority. Ask him to bring to light anything in your life that's hindering your spiritual fitness. And when he does, be willing to commit that area to him.

## **SPIRITUAL IRON**

Maybe you're familiar with the Ironman Triathlon. It's a grueling athletic event held each fall in Hawaii that involves running, swimming, and biking. Here's how it began: In 1978 Navy commander John Collins wanted to settle an argument about who was more fit—runners or swimmers.

He combined the three toughest endurance races: a 2.4-mile rough-water swim, a 112-mile bike race, and a 26.2-mile run. Competitors would start at 7 a.m., and the first to finish would win the title of Ironman.

Only fifteen participants showed up at the first triathlon. Commander Collins finished the course, but he didn't win. The Ironman title went to a Honolulu taxi driver.

Today more than 1,600 athletes compete in Hawaii's Ironman Triathlon each year, and more than 100 million people watch the event on TV. It takes 7,000 volunteers, 600 bottles of sunscreen, 100,000 gallons of fluids, and 12,825 bananas to make the annual competition a success.

God wants to mold you into a spiritual iron man. Think of him as a heavenly coach who wants to help you get into top spiritual shape. How can you develop spiritual muscles?

1. *Establish a routine.* Each triathlon competitor has a consistent physical workout schedule. Do you have a regular spiritual workout with God? Devour his Word and talk with him. This will strengthen you spiritually.
2. *Make yourself accountable.* Training—whether physical or spiritual—is always easier with a partner. Grab a friend and set some spiritual goals together. Hold one another accountable to having a quiet time with God each day. Connect with your friend in person, through e-mail, or over the phone and pray with each other. Ask questions about what God is teaching each of you.
3. *Memorize Scripture.* There will be days when Satan tempts you to throw in the towel. When he does, memorized Scripture will provide ample ammunition against the enemy.

## INCREDIBLE PROMISE

Sixteen-year-old Rick Hoyt was watching the Ironman Triathlon on television with his dad. He was captivated by athletes with sculpted physiques biking 112 miles. Rick sat mesmerized as he watched the muscular competitors swim almost two and a half miles. He was glued to the screen as it displayed determined athletes running 26.2 miles.

Rick was so captivated by the entire event that he asked his dad, "Can I do that?"

His dad turned to him and said, "Yes. With my help, you can."

People who knew Dick Hoyt couldn't believe he'd make such an outrageous promise to his son. You see, Rick was a quadriplegic. He was born with cerebral palsy and couldn't walk or talk. The question he'd asked his dad wasn't verbal; his dad was reading his son's words on a computer screen. Rick had a special apparatus that allowed him to communicate via technology.

His dad had every reason to look at his son and say, "Rick, I'm so sorry. It's impossible for you to compete in a triathlon. You can't even speak. You can't control your tongue. When we feed you, the food falls out of your mouth. No. Son, you're handicapped. There's no way you can enter a triathlon."

Dick didn't say that. He was so full of love for his son that he determined to make the impossible possible. "Yes. With my help, you can. It's impossible on your own, but I'll make a way. I love you so much!"



January 3

### BREW IT!

God is crazy about you! Even though you're scarred and sinful, he has promised to make you whole. He loves you so much that he created a way for you to be forgiven of your sins. He gave his own Son to pay the price you couldn't afford.

### POUR IT!

Drink in the flavor from the following Scriptures: Romans 3:22-28; 10:10-11.

### SAVOR IT!

Thank God for loving you so much that he was willing to send his Son—God in human form—to die for your sins. Tell him you realize that you don't deserve that kind of love. Ask him to help you show your gratitude by a lifestyle of service and obedience to him.



### **BREW IT!**

Regardless of whether you have an earthly dad who's willing to do whatever it takes to help you win, you have a heavenly Father who so desperately wants you to win that he's willing to pedal you, push you, carry you, pull you across the finish line into victory. He willingly died for you so that you can experience victory over sin. Are you living in that victory?

### **POUR IT!**

Drink in the flavor from the following Scriptures: Romans 5:1-6; 1 Corinthians 1:8-9.

### **SAVOR IT!**

Have you confessed your sins to Christ and accepted him as your personal Savior? If you've never done that, you can do it right now! Talk to God as you would your best friend—openly and honestly. You can commit your life to him right now and begin experiencing spiritual victory.

## **WHATEVER IT TAKES**

Now that Dick Hoyt had promised his quadriplegic son entrance into the Ironman Triathlon, he had to figure out how to make it happen. It would be one thing to compete on his own, but how could he swim 2.4 miles, bike 112 miles, and run 26.2 miles carrying his son?

The first thing Dick had to do was learn how to swim! After completing his swimming lessons, he began running and training for the grueling triathlon. When he had readied himself for the challenge, he then had to figure out how to complete the event with his son, who couldn't move.

With the help of others, he was able to devise a special seat in front of the handlebars of his bicycle where Rick could sit while Dick pedaled. When he swam through rough waters, a rope was tied around his waist and attached to a raft in which Rick lay. And when he entered the marathon phase, Dick ran while pushing his son in a special wheelchair.

If you've ever seen the video clip of Dick and Rick's Ironman adventure, you've undoubtedly noticed the strain of muscles in Dick's legs, the bulging veins in his neck, and the determination on his face. It was an amazing feat!

The average finish time for the Ironman is eight hours. It took Dick and his son 16.4 hours to cross the finish line. But they made it! Rick experienced victory because he had a dad who was willing to do whatever it took to get him across the finish line.