

## **Five-Day Devotional: Pressure Does Not Stop the Mission**

This 5-day devotional is from the sermon “Mission Focused” based on Acts 13–14 and James 1, explores what it means to be truly sent by God. Learn how divine direction, faithful obedience, active faith, and Christ-centered priorities shape a life focused on His mission, even through opposition and pressure.

### **Day 1: Sent by Divine Direction**

#### **Devotional**

Have you ever wondered what makes the difference between human ambition and divine calling? The church at Antioch shows us the answer. When the Holy Spirit spoke, calling Barnabas and Saul to missionary work, the church didn't hesitate. They fasted, prayed, and sent them out immediately. This wasn't about expanding their influence or growing their reputation - it was about obedience to God's voice. Too often, we confuse being busy with being obedient. We fill our schedules with good activities, thinking we're serving God, when He might be calling us to something entirely different. The mission doesn't begin with our plans or ambitions. It starts when we quiet ourselves enough to hear His voice and respond with immediate obedience. Being sent isn't just for missionaries or pastors. Every believer is called to be part of God's mission, whether that's in your workplace, neighborhood, or family. The question isn't whether you're called - it's whether you're listening and ready to respond when He speaks.

#### **Bible Verse**

'While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" - Acts 13:2

#### **Reflection Question**

What might God be calling you to that you've been avoiding because it doesn't align with your personal plans or comfort zone?

**Quote** The mission does not begin with human ambition. It doesn't begin in ourselves. It begins with divine direction.

#### **Prayer**

Lord, help me quiet my heart to hear Your voice above my own ambitions. Give me the courage to respond in immediate obedience when You call me to Your mission.

## **Day 2: Faithful Through Opposition**

**Devotional** Opposition isn't a sign you're doing something wrong - it might be proof you're doing something right. Paul and Barnabas discovered this truth as they faced rejection, persecution, and even being stoned and left for dead. Yet they didn't soften their message or retreat when things got difficult. We live in a culture that equates comfort with blessing and ease with God's favor. But the early church knew better. They understood that following Christ's mission often leads through valleys of difficulty, not around them. When we face pushback for living out our faith, when relationships become strained because of our convictions, when standing for truth costs us something - these aren't signs to quit. The key is remembering that our success isn't measured by how comfortable our lives are, but by how faithful we remain to what God has called us to do. Opposition reveals the strength of our conviction and the depth of our commitment to the gospel.

### **Bible Verse**

'Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.' - James 1:2-3

### **Reflection Question**

How do you typically respond when following God's call becomes costly or uncomfortable in your personal life?

**Quote** Sent people don't measure their success by the comfort of their life. They measure their faithfulness by their obedience.

### **Prayer**

Father, when opposition comes, remind me that You are worthy of my faithfulness. Strengthen my conviction so I won't retreat when the mission becomes costly.

## **Day 3: Active Faith in Action**

### **Devotional**

Faith that sits still isn't really faith at all. James reminds us that genuine faith moves us to action - it's not enough to simply hear God's Word; we must become doers of it. This truth transforms how we approach our daily lives as believers. Real faith shows up in the mundane moments: how we treat difficult coworkers, respond to family stress, or handle financial pressure. It's active when we choose forgiveness over bitterness, generosity over selfishness, and truth over convenience. Faith that only exists in our thoughts or Sunday morning worship isn't the faith that changes the world. The early church didn't just believe the right things - they lived them out in real circumstances with real consequences. Their faith was enduring, active, and visible to everyone around them. When we put our faith into action, we become living testimonies of God's power and love. Every day presents opportunities to move from passive belief to active faith. The question is: will we take them?

### **Bible Verse**

'Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.' - James 1:22

### **Reflection Question**

In what specific area of your life do you need to move from being a 'hearer' of God's Word to being a 'doer' of it?

**Quote** Don't just be hearers of the Word, be doers of the Word. It's not merely to be believed. It's not merely for us to listen. It's meant for us to act upon the things that we are hearing.

### **Prayer**

God, help me live out my faith in practical, visible ways. Transform my passive belief into active obedience that impacts those around me.

## **Day 4: Strengthening Others for the Mission**

### **Devotional**

After facing rejection and persecution, Paul and Barnabas did something surprising - they returned to the very cities that had opposed them. Instead of moving on to easier territory, they went back to encourage believers and appoint leaders. This reveals a crucial truth: mission focus isn't just about going and preaching; it's about building and strengthening others for the long haul. In our individualistic culture, we often think mission work is a solo endeavor. But God's design involves community, mentorship, and mutual encouragement. The mission succeeds when we invest in others, helping them grow strong in faith and equipped to continue the work. This might look like mentoring a younger believer, encouraging someone going through a difficult season, or simply being present for those who need support. When we strengthen others, we multiply the mission's impact far beyond what we could accomplish alone. The early church understood that sustainable mission requires building up the body of Christ, not just individual achievement.

### **Bible Verse**

'They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith.' - Acts 14:21-22

### **Reflection Question**

Who in your life needs encouragement and strengthening in their faith journey, and how can you practically support them this week?

**Quote** The mission focus is not just about going. It's not just about being sent. It's about building. It's about encouraging and about establishing others in the faith.

### **Prayer**

Lord, show me who needs encouragement and give me wisdom to strengthen others in their faith. Help me see beyond my own mission to invest in the growth of fellow believers.

## **Day 5: Christ-Focused Mission Priority**

### **Devotional**

What's currently competing for your focus over Christ's mission? This penetrating question cuts to the heart of our spiritual priorities. The early church didn't remain mission-focused because circumstances were favorable - they stayed focused because Christ was worthy of their devotion. In our daily lives, countless things vie for our attention: career advancement, financial security, family demands, personal comfort, and social approval. None of these are inherently wrong, but when they eclipse our commitment to Christ's mission, they become obstacles to our calling. Sent people understand that their primary identity isn't found in their job title, bank account, or social status - it's found in being followers of Jesus Christ. This perspective changes everything. When Christ is truly our focus and His mission is our priority, we can navigate pressure, opposition, and difficulty without losing our way. The mission of Christ hasn't changed, regardless of our circumstances. By God's grace and through His Spirit, we can remain focused on what matters most: making His love known in a world that desperately needs it.

### **Bible Verse**

'Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, "Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.'" - Psalm 2:1-3

### **Reflection Question**

What specific thing in your life is currently competing most strongly with your focus on Christ and His mission?

**Quote** The real question is, what is currently competing for my focus over Christ's mission?

### **Prayer**

Jesus, help me identify what's competing for my focus and give me strength to prioritize Your mission above all else. Keep my eyes fixed on You, regardless of circumstances.