

BB

CHRISTY WRIGHT'S

7-Day
Devotional



— TABLE OF CONTENTS —

DAY 1 Assume That You Can

DAY 2 There's Room for You Too

DAY 3 Focus on Who You're Going With

DAY 4 Take the First Step

DAY 5 Do the Work

DAY 6 Where to Look

DAY 7 Shine

Day 1

ASSUME THAT YOU CAN

I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

— **Philippians 4:13 (NIV)**

My junior year of college, I signed up to go on a three-week class trip to Europe with my friend Katie. I am terrible at history, and I was pretty excited that I was going to receive three hours of Western Civilization course credit for gallivanting around Germany, Hungary and Austria. A week before we left for our trip, we got our complete itinerary and saw that we were going have a nine-hour layover in Chicago. I could not believe I was going to get to see Chicago as a bonus to this whole trip!

I immediately called my friend Katie to share the exciting news with her. “Guess what?! We have a nine-hour layover in Chicago! That is going to be so fun! We can go into the city, eat at cool restaurants, go shopping . . .”

Katie interrupted my enthusiastic rambling and said something that caught me completely off guard.

“We can’t do that.” She said.

“Why not?” I responded confused and deflated.

“Because I’m just sure that we can’t do that. We have to stay with the group. We can’t leave and go run around a big city by ourselves in the middle of the class trip.”

I still wasn’t getting it. “But we’re 21 years old and paying for this trip. This isn’t youth group. Why can’t we?”

“We can’t,” she replied—and that was that. I let her have the last word, but I knew that my behind would be exploring Chicago even if it meant I was doing it alone.

When we actually got to the airport, everyone did exactly what I expected. Everyone on the group started talking excitedly about everything they were going to do in the city. Katie finally asked permission from the group leaders and then—and only then—would she go along with it.

That moment taught me that there are two types of people: those that assume that you can and those that assume that you can't.

In any situation where the rules aren't clear and the path isn't marked, you have two choices. You can assume that you can't. You'll get in trouble. It's breaking some rule somewhere. It's not allowed. Or you can assume that you can. You don't know if you don't try, and what's the worst that can happen? Someone corrects you and tells you no?

I've always been a person that assumes that I can. I'm an optimist to a fault, and I see rules as suggestions to be followed *most* of the time.

Katie has always been more of a rule follower. People with this type of personality assume that they can't—not because they don't believe in themselves or want to have a good time, but because they are cautious, detail-oriented, and respect policies and procedures. Those are good things.

But regardless if you're a careful rule follower (like Katie!) or you throw caution to the wind (like me!), you can do infinitely more if you just start assuming that *you can*.

Many times, we use *can't* as excuse to cover up what is actually fear holding us back. But don't lean on the crutch of *can't*. Philippians says we can do *all things* through Christ who strengthens us.

All of the things I've ever achieved in my life happened because I had the nerve to ask for it and go for it. Make waves, ruffle feathers, put yourself out there, build your business, and believe that you can. I promise you, you'll go further in life when you start assuming that *you can*.



Day 2

THERE'S ROOM FOR YOU TOO

That means we will not compare ourselves with each other as if one of us were better and another worse. We have far more interesting things to do with our lives. Each of us is an original.

— Galatians 5:26 (The Message)

People have a hard time saying no. Do you?

I totally do. I speak on this all of the time because I have such a hard time doing it. Since this seems to be a struggle for so many of us, a few years ago, I decided to create a free download for my website titled 25 Ways to Say No. It's organized by situations in which you'd want to say no but can't easily do so. It's like a cheat sheet for those times when you need a little help practicing this difficult skill.

I first wrote this list in the summer. In the months after that, I worked to perfect it with the help of marketers, editors and graphic designers. Then, one week before I was ready to launch it, I saw something on Twitter that stopped me in my tracks. It was a tweet posted by a well-known author who I follow and admire. She wrote a (very good) piece about how to say no.

I couldn't believe it. It was in the exact same format as the one I had written months ago. It was even categorized by situations just like mine.

I read through the examples as a mix of emotions came over me. *This person is a much more experienced writer than I am. She has significantly more influence than I have and is respected by hundreds of thousands of people (including me). Someone has already done what I was trying to do.*

Everything in me wanted to give up. While I knew I wasn't copying this author, nor was she copying me, posting it now seemed silly and pointless. The timing seemed to be mocking me as I had been working on this list for months. And in just one tweet, it was already done—by someone else.

Maybe you've been through this same dream-shattering panic. Maybe there's a calling on your life and a passion in your heart, but you're discouraged because someone else is doing it faster or better or with more influence than you are. And maybe, like me, you want to give up.

Here's why we can't give up: Even in the midst of my fear, doubt and intimidation, God assured me, "There's room for you too."

You see, God doesn't put a message or calling in our hearts by accident. You and I may perceive the world as a place of limits and scarcity, but God doesn't. God is infinite. And He has a place for your unique voice and passion and talent. He has a plan for the dream that He gave you.

Here's the best part of this news: The job God has for you, the calling on your heart, and the dream that keeps nagging at you—it's a job that only you can do. No one else has your unique voice, style, perspective and experience that you bring to the work that you do. Galatians says that you are an original. There may be other people doing something similar, but that doesn't take away from what God wants to do through you.

So don't give up on your calling—and don't ignore your passions and talents just because you've been distracted by someone else stepping into theirs. Instead, press on. And do what God has given you to do.

There's room for you too.



Day 3

FOCUS ON WHO YOU'RE GOING WITH

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

— Deuteronomy 31:8 (NIV)

For eleven and half years, I had an amazing, beautiful and perfect Bernese mountain dog named Jackson. Jackson passed away just before my second son was born, but Jackson was in many ways my “first baby.” One of the many things I loved about Jackson was how much he loved to be with me. It didn’t matter where we were going or what we were doing, he loved to be wherever I was.

If I was about to leave the house and I grabbed my keys, he would start getting excited—hopeful that he might get to go with me in the car. On the occasions that he did get to go and I let him come out to the car with me, before I could even fully open the lift-gate of my Jeep, he was already flying mid-air into the back.

He didn’t know if we were going to the dog park or the vet. We could’ve been going on a hike, or I could’ve been taking him to stay at someone’s house because I was going out of town. He had absolutely no idea where we were going, but he would fly into the car with every ounce of enthusiasm that he had.

One day when I was taking him somewhere, he had such momentum from running and jumping in the Jeep that he slid all the way to the front and crashed into the front seats. And then the very next second, he turned around and looked at me smiling and panting expectantly like, “Well, come on! Let’s go!”

I laughed at just how excited he gets every single time that he gets to go somewhere with me.

And in the most unexpected, random moment, I heard God speak to me:

Christy, what if you trusted me that much? What if you didn't ask where we were going or question my plans for you? What if you completely trusted where I was taking you and were excited just because you got to go with me?

The lesson was so clear.

Jackson didn't ask where we were going before he would take a step toward the car. He didn't try to approve of the destination before he would jump in. He wasn't skeptical about my plans when I grabbed the keys. Every time we went somewhere, he jumped into my old Jeep, overflowing with excitement.

Because his concern wasn't where we were going. All that he cared about was who he was going with.

Deuteronomy 31:8 says, "The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you wherever you go." Not only does that mean God is always with us, but He also goes ahead of us—and He knows *exactly* where we are going.

My prayer for us is that we would trust like Jackson. Let us "jump in the Jeep" of God's plans without worrying about where He is taking us—and instead focus on trusting and enjoying who we're going with.



Day 4

TAKE THE FIRST STEP

Does he not see my ways and count my every step?

— Job 31:4 (NIV)

I love setting goals. I love how goals motivate us to do more and be more and try new things. I love how they encourage us to make bold plans and to act on our dreams.

And probably one of the biggest benefits of specific and measurable goals is that they hold us accountable to make better choices, do the work that's required, and take real steps toward achieving the results we want. There's only one problem with all of these *plans* and *steps* and all this *accountability*. Sometimes, I just don't feel like following through.

Maybe it's raining or my back hurts or I'm tired. I can come up with 1,000 excuses on any given day, but the bottom line is this: I just don't want to do it. I want the end result of course—a clean house, a bigger savings account, more impact through our brand, or a healthier body. But some days, I just don't feel like doing the work required to get there.

So recently I've tried something new that helps me follow through on my plans—even when I don't feel like it.

I just take the first step.

Instead of thinking, *I have to clean the entire house today*, I tell myself, *I'll just put the laundry away*. Or instead of feeling overwhelmed about getting up for going to the gym, I convince myself, *I'll just put on my workout clothes*.

And you know what? It works. I follow through with the rest of the steps to reach my goal.

For example, after I put the clothes away, the progress I've made gives me energy to tackle another load of laundry. And while I'm at it, I might wash the sink full of dirty dishes. Before long, I've cleaned the whole house without even meaning to!

The same goes for exercising. The steps involved in getting ready and going to the gym may seem like more than I'm up for in the moment, but as soon as I commit and follow through on the first step, it gives me the momentum I need to take the next step.

I never put on my workout clothes and then go sit on the couch. That just never happens. That's because taking that simple first step is like knocking down the first domino in a series. Once you do it, the rest fall down that much easier. Sometimes moving the tiniest bit in a new direction is all you need to keep going in that direction, even when you don't feel like it.

A small first step may seem insignificant to you. But it's always the first step that *makes every other step possible*. What tiny, "insignificant" step can you take toward your dream today? Job says, "Does he not see my ways and count my every step?" God sees every step you take and every effort you make.

And whether you realize it or not, one step could be the catalyst God uses to do something in your life that is more than you could ever ask for or even imagine. All you have to do is take the first step.



Day 5

DO THE WORK

*For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid,
but gives us power, love and self-discipline.*

— 2 Timothy 1:7 (NIV)

Everywhere you look, there are quick fixes. There are headlines that claim to save you from your money problems in an instant, help you lose weight rapidly, and make your career take off overnight. Then there are countless articles and books with endless steps teaching you how to make these changes happen.

We would all love a magic pill to fix our problems without having to actually do anything about them. But I can tell you in three words what these books and articles drag out for thousands of pages.

If you want to change your life, there's only one thing you have to do: *Do the work.*

Put on your tennis shoes, show up at the gym, and do the work. Stop spending money you don't have, start saving more of the money you do have, and do the work.

That's it. Everyone who wants to lose weight knows it comes from eating healthier and exercising. Anyone who wants to get out of debt knows they have to stop using their credit cards and spend less in order to pay them off.

We have no lack of information, but we have a severe lack of discipline. My friend Christine Caine says, "Vision will inspire you, but discipline will get you there." The Bible refers to "discipline" in almost every instance as a form of correction, like a father would correct a child. And 2 Timothy 1:7 says, "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline." I love this verse because our spirit controls our actions. And the great news is that we have powerful and disciplined spirits. We just need to use them.

We often search for quick fixes and exert our efforts in all of the wrong places. We want the results of our plans and goals, but then we spend all of our energy trying to bypass the very thing that produces the results: hard work.

The people who actually make these changes get it. They know it won't happen overnight—and they know it's going to be really, really hard. But they also know that *doing* the work is the only thing that will *truly* work.



Day 6

WHERE TO LOOK

*And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,
fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.*

— **Hebrews 12:1–2 (NIV)**

My son does the most amazing thing.

Granted, I know that all babies do this so that may make it seem a little less amazing to some people—but not to me, of course, because he’s mine.

He’s done this for a long time, but I’ve noticed it more often as he’s becoming much more aware of sounds, facial expressions, and his surroundings. When something is happening around him that is new, different, loud or frightening, he looks at me.

When the mail carrier rings the doorbell and my dog goes ballistic, Carter gets scared and looks at me. When a storm is rolling through and the lightning cracks and the thunder shakes all around us, he gets scared and looks at me. When either my husband or I sneeze, he is alarmed by the weird sound and he looks at me.

Anytime something alarms him, my son looks at me. When he looks at me, his eyes are searching my face for the answer to this question: “Is everything okay?”

Is everything okay, Mom? Are we safe, Mom? Am I going to be alright, Mom? Have you got this under control, Mom?

And the moment we lock eyes and I smile and assure him in a sweet, confident, and happy tone that everything is going to be okay, all of his fears are swept away. I’ve got this—and most of all, I’ve got him.

This happened again recently: The garbage truck was going by and made a loud banging noise outside, which then set my dog into a frenzy. Carter looked at me for reassurance once again. And as I picked him up and comforted him with my

words and smile and embrace, I felt God say to me, *That's how you know that things are okay, Christy. You don't look at the scary things around me, you look at me.*

I'm amazed every day at how much I learn about God by being Carter's mom, but I knew this reminder from Him is not just for me. It's for all of us. Hebrews says, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith."

So when the rug seems to be pulled out beneath you, you feel like you're hanging on by a thread, and you've got fear cornering you from every angle, remember where to look.

Look at the face of the One who will smile and comfort you, the One who will embrace you and remind you that it's going to be okay—because He's got this, and He's got you.



Day 7

SHINE

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

— Matthew 5: 14–16 (NIV)

There are some moments in life when I can't help but see God. It's the feeling I had when the doctor placed my son in my arms for the very first time, and it's the same feeling I have when I see an incredible sunset or a bird building a nest on my back deck. I know you've experienced these kinds of moments too: You're watching something perfectly normal, and you can't help but see God. Everything about that created moment points to the Creator.

A few weeks ago, I was sitting in church during the worship time and it happened again. I couldn't help but notice a woman who was singing in the band. She was beautiful, her voice was beautiful, and her worship was beautiful. As she shined on stage, I couldn't help but see God. In that moment, she was using the gifts God gave her, and it was a blessing to me and everyone in church. You couldn't look at her and *not* see God!

It was a perfect example of one of my very favorite verses in Matthew. It says, "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Do you get that, friend? When you step into your gifts, when you serve people, when you shine, people see God. So when you sing or dance or bake a beautiful cake, you're not only offering the world your talent, but you're also worshiping the Giver of those gifts when you use them.

I don't know about you, but that helps me step into my gifts with less hesitation, doubt, and fear and a lot more passion, confidence and conviction. Because, for me, it's not just doing another speaking event or writing another blog; it's an opportunity for me to worship, but it's also an opportunity for people to see God. And it's not just a product, service, craft, hobby or talent for you; it's an opportunity for God to show Himself to the world through you.

So push past your fear, shake off the haters, and get over your doubts—and get on to the things God created you to do. Because you're not only serving people with your gifts, you're showing God to them. And business or hobby, paid or unpaid, I can't think of more important work that we could be doing. So get out there, use your gifts, and shine!

