

Devotional – Maximum 400 words

The devotional is judged *primarily* on the basis of its writing strength. Scripture must be included somewhere in the devotional, and it will be included in the word count. The devotional must support that scripture.

All entries are original and unpublished.

Score out of 90	Devotional
_/5	Format: Double spaced, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman, 12
_/10	Hook: Title and opening pulls reader into the devotional.
_/10	Voice/Style: Engaging voice; holds attention to the end.
_/15	Main Idea/Unity: The writer shares his main idea or opinion near the beginning and carries it all the way through. The devotional is focused on one idea. All supporting details such as stories, personal life experiences, news, events, quotes, and so on, are all there to explain and expand the main idea. In a devotional there may be room for only one anecdote, but in any case, it must support and explain the main idea. The reader can easily summarize the point of the devotional into ONE sentence.
_/10	Authority: Scripture must be included somewhere in the devotional. Does the devotional support the scripture, or does the devotional have little or nothing to do with the scripture presented? Is the author’s challenge to the reader based on scripture? Do his ideas and opinions affirm the truth of scripture? In addition, authority may be established through personal experience stories, events, or situations from around the world, researched quotes, anecdotes, common fact, and so on. The reader feels that the author knows what he is talking about, and he trusts the author. The author proves his authority by his proper handling of scripture and his supporting details. The message should clearly name God, whether as God the Father, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit, rather than just talking about good, moral principles.
_/10	Relevance: The author raises a real-life, relevant topic. The devotional discusses a universal need. The author may use either a serious or lighthearted approach, but either way the reader should be left feeling that this is a significant issue for his life today.
_/10	Word Choice: Devotionals are short so each word and sentence counts. Whether powerful or ordinary, they are used in a fresh, creative way that brings the writing to life. The vocabulary is not too flowery, too technical, or clichéd. Words evoke emotion and pictures in the reader’s mind. If idioms, slang, or fragments are used, it is on purpose and is effective. A variety of words are used, rather than the same words being used over and over, unless as a deliberate form of repetition.
_/10	Literacy: Author has strong control of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and sentence structure. The reader is not distracted by improper grammar. Occasionally this writer may play with grammatical rules but in such a way as to add to the style and effect of the piece. Even difficult words are correctly spelled. Little or no editing is needed to correct errors.

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Application: The reader should be nudged in some way to apply the lesson. The challenge may be to stop and think or discuss the issue, or to praise the Lord, or to take a stand for or against an issue, or to change their lifestyle in some way. Whether the author is bold or subtle, serious or lighthearted, does the reader feel challenged or moved in a specific way?