

## LETTERS TO MY DAUGHTERS PODCAST DEVOTIONAL

### Podcast Manuscript | Module 1, Week 1

#### MODULE 1: LET'S TALK ABOUT THE INTERSECTION OF FAITH AND ADVOCACY

##### Welcome:

Welcome to the *Letters to My Daughters* Devotional Podcast. My name is Rev. Camille Henderson-Edwards, director of Economic, Health, and Gender Justice here at the General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church. And this is your weekly guide to developing a spiritual practice at the intersection of faith and advocacy.

Before we start, I'd like to take this time to share how grateful I am for each and every one of you joining in on this journey. I hope to know more of who you are as we progress throughout the study. I also owe a great deal of gratitude to Ms. Alina Saucedo, who is a student at Wesley Theological Seminary here in Washington, D.C. and is serving as a theological intern with Church and Society this summer. She's done a considerable amount of work in helping us to flesh out the theological focus for each devotion. I'm very grateful for her and her ministry. I'm also eternally grateful to Mr. James Kang who serves as our Senior Specialist of Communications at Church and Society and in the one responsible for editing this podcast.

I'd like to begin by setting the intention for this devotion. As you'll hear me share in the virtual sessions, this is a time of exploration and discovery for us all. My primary goal is to invite you into this space where faith and advocacy intersect. I view this as my own way of "Pastoring in the Public Square." As any pastor would do, I am here to serve as your guide and am praying that you have an encounter with God that is clarifying and transformative for you.

Over the course of this study, you can expect a weekly devotion – no more than 15 to 20 minutes – every Wednesday morning. Each episode will have a brief grounding moment, followed by an introduction to the text or sacred passage that we'll explore, followed by a quick devotion and closing prayer. For *Letters to My Daughters*, I wanted to include this weekly devotion in the form of a podcast for several reasons:

The first being that, as a pastor, part of my calling is to journey alongside you as you develop your own spiritual practices. My prayer for you is that you won't have to separate your prayer life from your public witness, but that you develop a practice of meeting God at the intersection of faith and advocacy.

The second is to create a sense of community through this new medium. I love a good podcast! Whether you're listening to this in the car. Or at the start of your youth group.

Or maybe in your office as you prepare for your next sermon or bible study. My hope is that you be able to use this as a starting point for further conversations you might facilitate around this intersection.

So, with all that said.... Let's begin.

### **Grounding:**

Our starting point for this devotion is the body.

Our bodies allow us to be co-creators with the Divine.

God speaks to us through our bodies.

God works in us through our bodies.

So... won't you take this time to become aware of your body.

Whether you are starting, in the middle of, or ending your day – take a moment to pause.

Sit in your body.

Take notice of your breath.

Inhale deeply... and exhale.

Inhale deeply... and exhale.

The God who has given you the breath of life is the same God that is with you right now. Take notice of God's presence.

The God who is present with you right now, is the same God that is preparing you to do a great work. Take notice of how God is equipping you.

### **Introduction:**

Within the United Methodist Church we have what are called The Social Principles. These are a collection of social teachings grounded in Methodist theology and hold a long history of social concern. It is often noted that, while the Social Principles are not church law, these statements are a prayerful and thoughtful effort for the Church to speak to present day issues from a sound biblical and theological foundation. (Note: If

you have access to the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, you can find the Social Principles at the very front of the book.)

In addition to the Social Principles, we also have what's called the Book of Resolutions. This is a companion piece to the Social Principles, which carries resolutions (or "calls to action") for the topics listed within the Social Principles.

One such resolution is Resolution #3203 – entitled Maternal Health: The Church's Role. This resolution affirms that "God calls us to respond to the suffering in the world and to love our neighbor throughout the world. As followers of Christ, we are members of the same body. The loss of one member is a loss for us all."

The resolution continues to name some of the social and political barriers that contribute to poor conditions of maternal health. We, as the body, are called to "eradicate systems of oppression and marginalization that inhibit women's well-being."

We talk more about what this resolution includes in session 1 of the virtual study, but for the purposes of this devotion I'd like us to focus on this metaphor of the body.

Over the course of the next few weeks in August, this devotion will explore the One Body metaphor in four functions:

1. Remembering
2. Naming
3. Resisting
4. Acting

This week, we'll focus on knowing.

Hear now the Word of God as recorded in 1 Corinthians 12: 1 – 7 (NRSV)

### **Scripture Reading – 1 Corinthians 12:1 – 7 (NRSV)**

Now concerning spiritual gifts,<sup>[a]</sup> brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be ignorant. <sup>2</sup> You know that when you were gentiles you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. <sup>3</sup> Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4</sup> Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit, <sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of services but the same Lord, <sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

## Devotion

I want you to remember your baptism (and if you haven't been baptized, maybe now's the time to talk to your pastor about taking the necessary steps to be baptized... and if you don't have a pastor, reach out to me – I'd love to talk with you about it).

Baptism is important here because, in 1 Corinthians, Paul is reminding the people of Corinth that there's a new way of being because of their baptism and their faith in Christ. This means a new understanding of how we relate to each other.

Remembering your baptism is important because I think it's easy for us to forget that being baptized represents for us the mark of a new beginning. Our hearts change, our thoughts change, and how we see the world is different. At the time of our baptism, we place our faith in God and express our willingness to follow Jesus and his teachings.

Included in this is also a new understanding of how we view the life around us and what it means to ensure that everyone is able to flourish. This new understanding helps us to define our relationship with our brothers, sisters, and siblings in Christ while also allowing us to recognize ourselves as part of one body, where each member is endowed with gifts of the Spirit.

If we acknowledge and embrace this way of being as people of faith, it challenges us to not only see ourselves as the subject of our faith walk, but to also see those around us as the subject as well. As Paul says in the text, we are each given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Thus, when talking about Black maternal health and the social conditions that restrict its flourishing, it's striking to consider how this has happened and why there's been little to no conversation about the severity of this crisis. Have we dropped the ball in employing our spiritual gifts for the common good on this issue?

Do you recognize yourself and others in this One Body of Christ as the bearers and channels of the same Spirit that give life?

Can you recognize Black Mothers as bearers of this living Spirit that come from the same God?

How are you ensuring the gifts given to you and others are being placed and used where needed to ensure another's flourishing?

We invite you as members of this one body in Christ to think on these things throughout the course of this week. Use these questions as your starting point.

Let's pray...

**Prayer:**

Let's pray:

Oh, Holy Spirit, granter of life and will  
Oh, Holy Spirit, granter of love, mercy, and gifts  
Breath over us  
Pour your grace in our hearts, in our minds, and in our hands  
For your grace so we can see and recognize each other in the same Spirit and created  
by the same source that is God  
Spirit of grace, go before us  
Move us to be you who you have created us to be,  
Move to care and speak up for the part neglected of this One body, so we can be One.  
In Jesus' name, we pray,

Amen.

**Closing Announcements:**

Thanks so much for taking the time out for this weekly devotion of Letters to My Daughters. As always, please feel free to reach out to me via email with any questions or general experiences from the study you may have! I can be reached via email at [chedwards@umcjustice.org](mailto:chedwards@umcjustice.org).

Until next time, go in grace and peace.