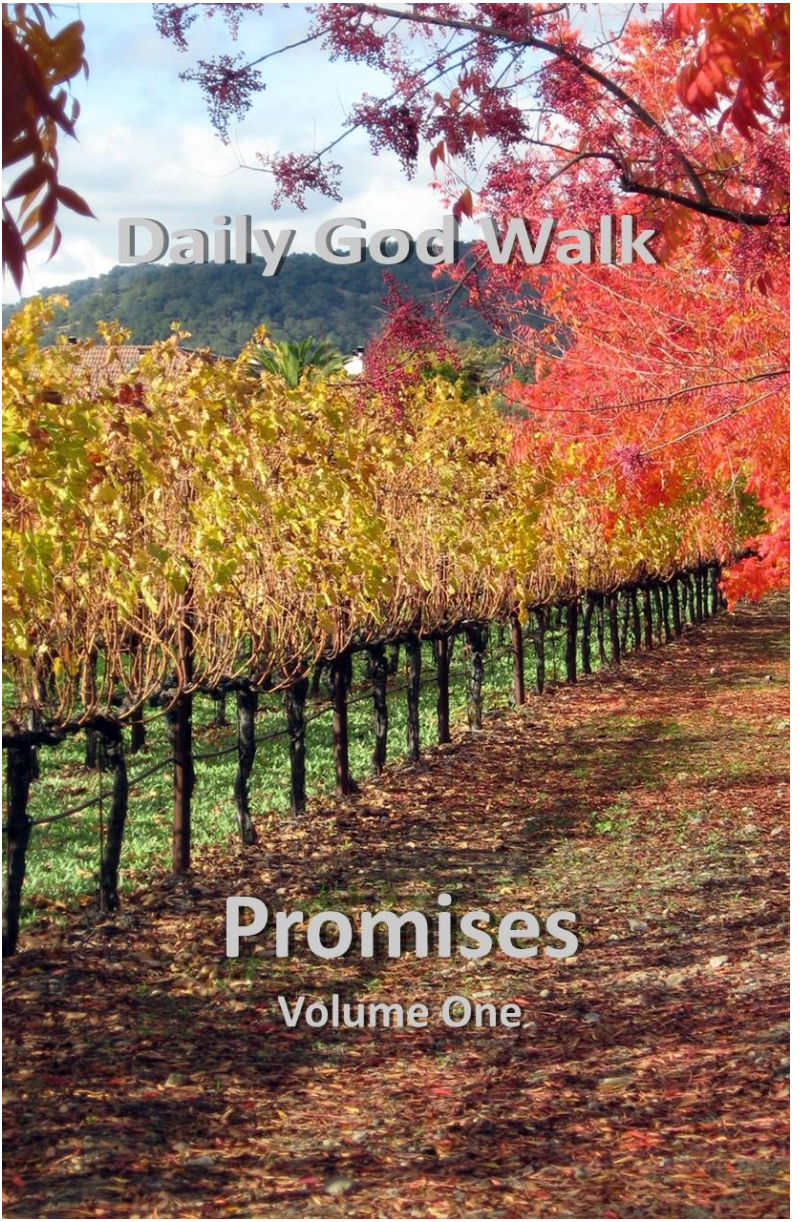
Daily God Walk
Promises
Volume One

Daily God Walk

Promises Volume 1

Another Day in Your Journey of Faith

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All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV). All other translations used will be credited using these abbreviations:
(KJV) – King James Version
(NKJV) – New King James Version
(TLB) – The Living Bible
(TM) – The Message

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Daily God Walk - Promises Series

In this series of the Daily God Walk devotional we are looking at the promises in the word of God and the hope they give us in our daily walk. There are 12 books of devotions in this series. A book a month.

When we look at the world around us we can easily see hopelessness on the rise. In the county where I live there is high unemployment and 21 percent of the people are addicted to drugs, alcohol, or both.

There have been so many empty promises given by politicians that people no longer believe in them. The economy is in the tank. With the divorce rate hovering around 50 percent people have lost confidence in even the oldest institution mankind has known.

What does all of this mean? It means that if we don't find something to hope in mankind is doomed to a desperate existence living lonely, confused and hopeless lives.

That is why we are looking at the hope contained in the promises of God during this year. It is our hope that you will find something to live for and that you will discover God's plan for your life.

In Jeremiah 29:11 God says, "I know the plans I have for you. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

We pray that the devotions for this year will reveal God's faithfulness and give you hope for the future.

Have you considered hosting a Small Group Bible Study?

The Daily God Walk is written with a dual purpose. First it is a devotional tool that helps the reader grow in their walk of faith. But, a second purpose, is to be a tool to be used in leading a small group. For that purpose we offer a Study Guide Edition.

In the Study Guide Edition each devotion has a second page which has a dual purpose. It helps the reader deepen his faith walk and it gives material suitable for use in small groups Bible Studies.

The second page of each devotion in the Study Guide Edition

✓ There is a section that focuses on the message brought out in the devotion. This section is an excellent tool for beginning a discussion about the devotion.

✓ The message section is followed by an affirmation. The affirmation is good to be used in prayer and meditation. When we personalize the principle by affirming it in prayer it becomes a part of us.

✓ The reflection section provides some very good material for discussion. This section usually gets to the heart of what is being taught in the devotion and contains statements or questions which help stimulate discussion.

✓ Finally, there is a section where the reader can share their thoughts on the devotion. This section is a very good tool to help the reader begin to journal on a regular basis. It is also good for a person to record their comments and questions about the devotion so they can bring them out during the small group discussion time.

For more information on how to use the Daily God Walk in the small group setting visit the website below: www.dailygodwalk.org

Have You Heard of the Take A Knee Challenge?

The idea was inspired by watching coaches of sports teams tell their players to "Take a Knee" when they have something important or inspirational to share with them. You will also notice that many of the professional sports teams will take a knee after a game to offer thanks.

This is a 30 day challenge for followers of Christ to do two things:

First, is the challenge simply to make a purpose to "Take A Knee" every day at least once a day. We are simply challenging believers to bend their knee before the Lord every day for a short time to give thanks, ask for guidance for the day, wisdom to act appropriately in every situation and the power of Holy Spirit to be an effective witness for Christ.

Second is the challenge to invite 5 of your friends to accept the challenge. We all have at least 5 friends who would be willing to accept this challenge.

Everyone who accepts the challenge gets a free book of devotions. You will get a book of 30 devotions on prayer when you join the challenge and each of your friends who join the challenge will also get the book.

Our goal is to enlist 1000 Prayer Warriors who will pray daily for:

1. Renewal and Revival in the Body of Christ
2. A Spiritual awakening in our local communities
3. Another Great Awakening in America

For more information go to:

http://www.take-a-knee.org

Day One

The Lord Is Your Companion

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. – Hebrews 13:5 (KJV)

It is interesting that when the Lord is giving us the promise that He would continue to be our constant companion, He also wants us to be content with what he brings into our lives. Is He saying that we should be content with what we have because in all of it He is walking with us and will guide us?

The instruction, "Let your conversation be without covetousness," is talking about our attitude toward others and about things. We should be content with the things God brings into our lives and not to desire the blessings of others.

Covetousness comes to us from the original sin in the garden. When Eve saw that the fruit of the tree was desirable, she desired it. It was forbidden, but that didn't stop her. The result is that the basic human nature which desires what it should not have and is not content with what it does have was born into the human race.

God is very capable of being all that we need, and he has promised to stay with us through all of life's struggles. But the question becomes, do we trust him to do what he has promised? If you find yourself being a bit jealous of what others have, either in things or position, then it just may be that the root of that jealousy is a lack of trust in God to provide his best for you.

Prayer: Lord, I ask you today to grant me the grace of trusting you to be my constant companion and to accept what you bring into my life as your way of working your divine purpose in me. In Jesus name. Amen.

The Lord Is Your Companion

Message: The instruction, "Let your conversation be without covetousness," is talking about our attitude toward others and about things. We should be content with the things God brings into our lives and not to desire the blessings of others.

Affirmation: I know that my Lord will never leave me nor forsake me, therefore, I am content with what he gives me.

Reflection: What are some conversations that you can imagine which would indicate being covetous of others? What would you consider to be the root of coveteousness?

My Thoughts:

Day Two

The Holy Spirit Is Your Strength

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. – Ephesians 3:16

Have you ever felt weak? Or maybe you have been week and failed in your attempts at righteousness. It is only human to have times of weakness. In fact, it seems we all lack the strength to be what we ought to be and do what we ought to do at times. That is the human condition.

Paul addresses that issue in Romans seven: "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do." We tend to have the desire to do right, but not the will to carry it out. At least that is the way we are in our natural state.

On the night of His arrest Jesus went with His disciples to a place to pray. He left the disciples asking them to pray while he went off to pray alone. When he returned he found them sleeping. It was in that setting that He said to them, "The spirit is willing, but the body is weak" (Matthew 26:41). That may be the case for all us. We want to be "spiritual" but we lack the ability in our own strength.

In this passage Paul introduces another idea. It is the hope of being strengthened by His Spirit in our inner man. He is speaking to the idea of being born again – born of the Spirit with spiritual power. Notice that Paul places the hope just where it should be. "That He would grant you, *according to the riches of His glory*." The secret of success in being strong in righteousness is to rely upon His ability rather than our own. In our weakness He is shown to be strong (2 Corinthians 12).

Prayer: Father, help me remember that it is not my strength which gives me righteousness but it is the strength of your righteousness in me. In Jesus name.

The Holy Spirit Is Your Strength

Message: The secret of success in being strong in righteousness is to rely upon His ability rather than our own. In our weakness He is shown to be strong. Trust Him - He won't let you down. (2 Corinthians 12).

Affirmation: I have learned that the more I trust Him the more He shows himself to be faithful.

Reflection: In our Scripture passage today the writer speaks of the "inner man." What was he talking about there? Is our hope in the inner man, or in the strength of God which inhabits our inner man?

My Thoughts:

Day Three

Relax, God is Your Refuge

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms; He will thrust out the enemy from before you. – Deuteronomy 33:27

The Christmas season is one of the most stressful time of the year. You would think that the time when we celebrate the birth of Christ would be a time of peace and harmony. But, unfortunately, the pressure to get just the right present for everyone and then walking on pins and needles at family gatherings to keep from offending anyone, produces stress.

In the midst of all the hustle and bustle there are a couple of things we should remember. The first is that we are actually celebrating the birth of the one who would be called the Prince of Peace. Is it fitting to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace by creating stress?

And the second thing we should remember is that the God of heaven has promised to be our refuge. When you are in the mall rubbing shoulders with other anxious shoppers remember to take refuge in Him. You will be amazed at how calming it can be, even in the midst of chaos, when we just relax in our refuge.

Many are the enemies of our soul and they are constantly attacking us through self-doubt, fear of failure, fear of rejection, insecurities and always wondering if we have done enough. We must remember that when we are assaulted by these enemies we do have a refuge.

We must remember that He is always there with arms wide open ready to take us into Himself and give us comfort and peace. When the stress starts building up on you, take a time out and remember His everlasting arms that are our refuge.

Prayer: Lord, I ask you to give me a consciousness of your presence ever with me and that you are just looking for an opportunity to show your love. In Jesus name.

Relax, God is Your Refuge

Message: Many are the enemies of our soul and they are constantly attacking us through self-doubt, fear of failure, fear of rejection, insecurities and always wondering if we have done enough. We must remember that when we are assaulted by these enemies we do have a refuge.

Affirmation: I am trusting God to thrust out the enemy before me and to be my refuge in times of stress and anxiety.

Reflection: Dealing with stressful situations is never easy. Practice making God your refuge when facing stressful and anxious times. Ask yourself, "How do I do that," then pursue the answer.

My Thoughts:

Need Direction? He Will Direct Your Paths

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. – Proverbs 3:5-6

I can't tell you how many times I have gotten a good idea and ran off to try it out only to have it fall flat and causing me to be embarrassed and a bit confused. When I complain to the Lord about it he will usually impress me with this question; "Was this your idea or my idea?"

The problem most of us face is that we to often try it our way then become confused because we thought God would help us out. Many times I have heard people say, "Why would God let this happen to me?" when all the time they were reaping a harvest from the seeds they had sown.

God simply says "Trust me. Do not lean on your own understanding and I will direct your paths." That's it. Confusion is about not knowing where you are, not knowing how you got there, and not knowing how to get to where you want to be. God answers all of that by teaching us to trust him and wherever we find ourselves we know he is in control.

As we surrender our lives to him he gives us purpose and direction. There is no confusion in trusting him. I know, that is easier said than done, but as we begin to practice trusting him instead of our own understanding our faith grows. Not only does our faith grow but the hand of God guiding our paths becomes ever more obvious.

I may not know exactly where my path will lead, but I do know that God is guiding me and when I get there I will be exactly where He wants me to be.

Prayer: Lord, I need to learn to trust you instead of running off to do my own thing. My ideas may be good, but they aren't always the way you would have me to go. Lead me in your ways. I ask in Jesus name. Amen.

Need Direction? He Will Direct Your Paths

Message: As we begin to practice trusting him instead of our own understanding our faith grows. Not only does our faith grow but the hand of God guiding our paths becomes ever more obvious.

Affirmation: I practice trusting God in every situation and particularly so when it is a desperate situation.

Reflection: Give some thought to the times you launched out into a good idea that was not directed of God and the outcome was less than you expected? We may be good, but He is better and his ways are always best.

My Thoughts:

Do Not Let Your Heart be Troubled

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. – John 14:27

When I was a teenager the small transistor radios were the rage. Everyone had one. Remember those earplugs we used to use? They are different now and we call them "ear buds." Times change.

I remember going to bed at night with my little radio tuned to a station that had a human voice talking. If I woke up and the station had gone off the air (yes, most stations would shut down during the wee morning hours then), or if music was on the station I would turn the dial until I found a real human voice talking.

Why did I do that? I was afraid of what might happen in the night and I needed the comfort of hearing another live human voice. I was a Christian, but I didn't understand the benefits of believing in Christ.

Jesus gave us hope for peace in our verse for today. His promise is that even though he is not physically with us he has sent his Spirit to comfort us and give us peace. Trust his peace to calm your troubled heart.

He said that He gives us peace, but the peace he gives is not like the peace the world gives. The world's peace depends upon how others respond and if they are in the right mood today. God's peace doesn't have anything to do with the way others act toward us. It is God's gift regardless of what the world around us is doing.

Trust Him in the midst of the storm and he will give you peace.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, too often I look to others to give me the peace that only you can give. I ask for the grace to trust you alone to calm my troubled heart and give me peace in the middle of the storms of life. In Your name I ask. Amen.

Do Not Let Your Heart be Troubled

Message: The world's peace depends upon how others respond and if they are in the right mood today. God's peace doesn't have anything to do with the way others act toward us. It is God's gift regardless of what the world around us is doing.

Affirmation: I live in and practice the peace Jesus gives. The peace of this world is but a fleeting hope but His peace is lasting.

Reflection: Give some thought to the things you used to do to have inner peace. Could any of those things bring true, lasting, inner peace? Think of some ways the peace Jesus gives is different from the peace the world gives.

My Thoughts:

Stewardship Produces Plenty

He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart... And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. – 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Paul Gives us an interesting perspective on giving in this passage. He is using the principle of sowing and reaping to present the concept of stewardship and how God looks at our giving.

At first glance it looks like he is just talking about giving money, and he does make a good case for that. According to verse eight it appears that generous giving releases a greater measure of grace (God's favor) upon us.

Before you get into the "it's all about money," routine, Paul isn't just talking about money. Notice he speaks about abounding in all good work. The principle of sowing and reaping is not limited to money – it applies across the board to our entire life. If most of our efforts are for this temporal world then we will reap temporal benefits. If most of our efforts are for the eternal world then we will reap eternal benefits.

I have a book about Christianity in China and I have found it interesting that there is little said about the physical hardships and poverty suffered by millions there. Rather I read how they hungrily pursue spiritual objectives.

Maybe if we in the west endured comparable hardships we too would pursue spiritual objectives over material.

Maybe we should take another look at stewardship.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to measure out my life as if it was only about me and mine. Help me to see that my greater responsibility is to you and your kingdom. Amen.

Stewardship Produces Plenty

Message: The principle of sowing and reaping is not limited to money – it applies across the board to our entire life. If most of our efforts are for this temporal world then we will reap temporal benefits. If most of our efforts are for the eternal world then we will reap eternal benefits.

Affirmation: Sowing my time, talent and resources into the Kingdom of God produces Kingdom results.

Reflection: The point of this devotion is that where we sow our lives is where we will reap a harvest. Think of some ways you can sow that will produce an eternal harvest.

My Thoughts:

Speaking God's Word Releases Power

Since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak. – 2 Corinthians 4:13

Truth does not exist because we speak; the truth simply *is* - whether we speak it or not. The truth becomes powerful to us when we find it, believe it and speak it.

Paul gives us the pattern of the effect that truth has on us in Romans 10. In verses 13-17 he explains that first there must be one sent to preach the word of truth. Then there must be hearers of truth. Those who hear the truth begin to believe it. It is this believing that releases the power of the truth.

In verse 17 Paul writes, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." We hear the word of God, then believe the Word of God and believing releases the power of faith and the truth becomes powerful to us.

Some people get the cart before the horse and say, "I spoke it therefore it is truth." That is a faulty statement. Something is not made true by our speaking it, but when we do speak God's truth spiritual power is released.

"I believed and therefore I speak." When we have believed the word of God then we release the power of the word by speaking it.

God calls us to believe his word and trust his promises to be true. When you read a promise in the Word of God that applies to yourself, speak it out loud. Release the power of faith by speaking the Word of God.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to find your promises that apply to my life and confess the truth of them to you and to the world. Grant me faith to believe your Truth. In the name of Jesus I ask. Amen.

Speaking God's Word Releases Power

Message: When we have believed the word of God we then release the power of the word by speaking it. God calls us to believe his word and trust his promises to be true. When you read a promise in the Word of God that applies to yourself, speak it out loud.

Affirmation: After hearing God's word I believed it and now I confess the word I believe and His power is released to fulfill His word.

Reflection: Can you explain the difference between, "I spoke it therefore it is truth," and "I believed and therefore I speak?"

My Thoughts:

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Day Eight

The Lord Is Your Example

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

– Ephesians 5:1,2

How can we be imitators of God? How can we, who are mere mortal, imitate the almighty immortal one? This seems to be a tall order. It would seem that to be imitators of God that we would love as he loves. His love, as demonstrated by Christ is an offering and a sacrifice, a sweet-smelling aroma.

Is it possible to love like that? Yes, it is, by his grace. We have the example of countless men and women who have loved like that and have made their life a sacrifice to God for the benefit of the kingdom of God.

One writer gives this application: Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. Mostly what God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that.

We can only love the way Christ loved by submitting to his lordship in our life. We can imitate God only when He makes himself alive in us. We can love like Jesus loved, but we must be born of God (born again) to do that.

Let us indeed love Him as he loves us and love others as he loves them.

Prayer: Father, teach me the secret of imitating you. I know that in my natural ability I cannot do it; I need divine intervention. I want to love as you love and share my life, yes, even give my life for the kingdom. Amen.

The Lord Is Your Example

Message: We can only love the way Christ loved by submitting to his lordship in our life. We can imitate God only when He makes himself alive in us. We can love like Jesus loved, but we must be born of God (born again) to do that.

Affirmation: It is not hard to imitate God when it is God living in me. I can love like Jesus loved because it is His love living in me.

Reflection: Do some self-examination to discover whether you truly love as Jesus loved. His love drove him to make great sacrifice - what is your love causing you to sacrifice for Him and His kingdom?

My Thoughts:

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Day Nine

His Word Will Last Forever

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words shall not pass away. – Matthew 24:35

We live in a fluid society. Everything is about the now – "how can I benefit now" becomes our mantra. Government leaders change with the wind, society determines right and wrong with no more basis for their choices than "do I feel good about it right now," and, "If it feels good, do it."

Products we buy are made to become obsolete in a short time. It is cheaper to throw something away and buy a new one than to fix the old one. Get it; use it; throw it away. That is the American lifestyle.

Everything is changing and in order to keep up with the changes we have to be willing to ride with the tide and go with flow.

In the middle of all this people are unsatisfied, discontent, and nothing seems to be working out for them. Just when they get it figured out someone changes the rules. They are frustrated with lack of stability in their life.

Then Jesus declares, "My Word will not pass away." He never changes; His Word never changes; His promises never fail – He is the only constant that we can depend upon in this world, and His Word is the way he manifests his constancy.

Not only will his word not pass away but he has promised that he will never leave us or forsake us. We can trust his word to stand and we can trust him to stand with us.

We find great stability in the Word of God.

Prayer: Lord, I've been looking in all the wrong places to find a hope that is enduring and will last through the changes in this world. I know your promises make my hope secure because your word never changes. Amen.

His Word Will Last Forever

Message: Jesus declared, "My Word will not pass away." He never changes; His Word never changes; His promises never fail – He is the only constant that we can depend upon in this world, and His Word is the way he manifests his constancy.

Affirmation: Everything in this temporal world is changing and may not be dependable tomorrow, but God's word is never changing, it is ever the same.

Reflection: Which has the most influence on your life; the promises made by this world or the promises in God's word? How has that affected your life?

My Thoughts:

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Day Ten

You Can Only Serve One Master at a Time

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

–Matthew 6:24

Beginning in verse 19 of this passage Jesus is talking about where we put our trust. The question is, do we trust the things we see, those things that are temporal, or do we trust those things that are eternal?

Did you notice that word "mammon" in the verse above? It is an interesting word. It generally means riches, or sometimes simply money, but in this context it represents more than just dollars and cents. It represents what you are looking to for security; it represents what drives you to serve, and who you are serving.

Too many of us serve things. Oh, I know you don't bow down before your things and worship them, but I would ask you; what part of your life are you laying down for the "things" of this world?

One test of who, or what, we serve is to take a look at our checkbook. Where have we been spending our money? Far too many of us are investing much more in comfort and recreation than we are investing in the eternal kingdom.

Bob Dylan the song writer and singer used to sing, "You're going to serve somebody," and we are serving somebody or something. Who do you serve?

Prayer: Lord, I am guilty of getting my eyes off you and of taking solace in the things of this world. I ask you to grant me the grace to refocus on you and serve only you, trusting you to be all that I need you to be. In Jesus Name. Amen.

You Can Only Serve One Master at a Time

Message: One test of who, or what, we serve is to take a look at our checkbook. Where have we been spending our money? Far too many of us are investing much more in comfort and recreation than we are investing in the eternal kingdom.

Affirmation: I have committed my time, talent and resources to serving the only one who will always come through for me.

Reflection: How much trust have you put in this world system? How much trust have you placed in God and His kingdom? What is the evidence of your trust?

My Thoughts:

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Day Eleven

Is Faith Measured by Humility?

I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. – Romans 12:3

The Apostle Paul gives us an interesting perspective on faith in this passage. We tend to think of faith in terms of releasing God's glorious blessings through our confidence in his promises. Paul is making a little different application in this passage.

Paul is addressing the concept of having a faith that makes us secure enough to stay in our place and not try to step beyond our gifting. The kind of faith he is speaking of is the kind that gives us the grace to allow others to abound beyond what our own gifting and calling allows for us.

What does it mean to think more highly of ourselves than we ought? One application may be that we should wait for others to recognize our talents and abilities rather than feeling that we need to convince them of how good we are.

Another application is that we would prefer others above ourselves. That means when we make a sober assessment of who is best qualified it may mean that someone else fits the need much better than us and we should recognize that.

This is the kind of faith that causes us to humbly submit to God's plan for our life. It is also the kind of faith that knows whatever blessing, task or achievement he leads us into He will perform through us, just as he has promised.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the humility to accept your gifting in others as well as your gifting in myself and to soberly submit to your will. In Christ's name I ask. Amen.

Is Faith Measured by Humility?

Message: The kind of faith Paul is speaking of in our scriptural passage is the kind that gives us the grace to allow others to abound beyond what our own gifting and calling allows for us.

Affirmation: I am committed to trusting what God has imparted to others as well as the gifts of ministry He has placed in me.

Reflection: What does faith have to do with humility? Does faith inspire us to be humble enough to accept others whose gifting is different than ours?

My Thoughts:

Day Twelve

God is Our Peace in the Midst of Grief

For the Lord has comforted His people, and will have mercy on His afflicted. – Isaiah 49:13

Grief comes on the occasion of many kinds of loss, but it takes on one primary form. When we grieve we lose our inner peace and we have no inner comfort. Grief comes at the loss of a loved one, but it can also come at the loss of something we treasure; our marriage or our employment.

Whatever the cause of our grief it is very real to us. Even when others don't think we should feel so deeply about a particular loss, God doesn't feel that way. He feels our pain and grief whatever the cause.

Isaiah encourages us that when we are grieving the Lord will extend comfort to us. In another place Isaiah tells that Jesus is our comfort and our Prince of Peace. Share your hurt, even your anger over the loss, with Him and he will comfort you and grant you mercy.

It is not always easy to trust God in the time of loss, or in times of difficulty, when we haven't trusted him in the good times as well. There is a tendency to take the credit ourselves when times are good and to neglect our commitments to God, then, when we face difficulty we turn quickly to Him and ask, "Why?"

We must remember to trust Him in the good times and give Him the glory when things go well. Then, when things are not going so well, or we have suffered a loss, it is easier to trust His sovereign grace even in difficult times.

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted," and in the same passage blesses the meek, the poor, the merciful and those who hunger for righteousness. We must trust him in the good times and the difficult times.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you have given us hope that in the middle of our grief you will be our comfort. I ask you, Prince of Peace, stand by my side and comfort my troubled heart. In Christ's name I ask. Amen.

God is Our Peace in the Midst of Grief

Message: Whatever the cause of our grief it is very real to us. Even when others don't think we should feel so deeply about a particular loss, God doesn't feel that way. He feels our pain and grief whatever the cause.

Affirmation: I am not dependent upon circumstances for my inner peace. My peace comes from God and even in the midst of grief and suffering I have peace.

Reflection: It would be good to consider if you have been allowing external circumstances to determine whether you have inner peace.

My Thoughts:

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Day Thirteen

Husbands and Wives Submit to One Another

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord… Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it… So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. – Ephesians 5:21-28

Paul is addressing a very important matter within the body of Christ. He is addressing proper respect and honor that is to be given among all persons of faith, but particularly to those in the marriage relationship.

We should notice that the husband is not asked to "bring his wife under submission." Rather he is to respect her as his own body and to make her comfort and safety the first priority in his life. I have noticed that when a wife has a husband that she trusts to put her needs and desires above his own she has no problem with submitting to his leadership in the home.

I had an interesting thought recently when meditating upon this passage. I remembered James 4:7. In that passage James says to submit to God then resist the devil and the devil will flee. As I thought on the idea of submission to God, and the idea of submitting to one another, I suddenly realized that the core question is whether I am submitted to God.

If I am submitted to God I will have no problem submitting to others because God has established the order and if I am submitted to God I am submitted to His order.

I've never known a man who tried to make his wife submit to him who was himself truly submitted to God. And, I have never known a woman who was not submitted to her husband who was herself truly submitted to God. The only way we can be submitted to one another in a proper manner is to first be submitted to God.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to think of my spouse in terns of what I get from the relationship, and I know that is wrong. Grant me the grace to look at my spouse through your love and be more interested in pleasing than in being pleased. In Jesus name. Amen.

Husbands and Wives Submit to One Another

Message: The only way we can be submitted to one another in a proper manner is to first be submitted to God. I've never known a man who tried to make his wife submit to him who was himself truly submitted to God. And, I have never known a woman who was not submitted to her husband who was herself truly submitted to God.

Affirmation: Submitting to others is not in my nature, but when I am submitted first to God then submitting to others is not difficult at all.

Reflection: Give some thought to what it means to be submitted to others as we are submitted to God.

My Thoughts:

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Day Fourteen

Jesus Is Our Savior

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, though the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. – Titus 3:5-6

Ever since mankind lost relationship with God in his fall from grace in the Garden of Eden he has struggled to find a way back to God. The problem is that man's efforts to find God often lead him away from God instead of to him.

What I mean by that is we tend to get an idea of who, or what, God is then we build a religion around that idea. Our idea of finding God usually revolves around what we can do to impress him or get his attention. To do that we perform good deeds or righteous acts.

Paul in his letter to Titus reminds us that we are reconciled to God and gain right standing with Him, not by our works of righteousness, but by the Holy Spirit through the work of Jesus Christ our Savior.

It is ironic that we may try with all our strength to become righteous in the eyes of God and we will always fall short – it is only through the righteous sacrifice of Christ that we are saved.

Virtually every major religion teaches a moral code that adherents are to aspire to, but Christianity is the only religion which admits that man can never become righteous by his own efforts and that he must be saved from his unrighteousness.

It is the washing of regeneration which frees us from the nature of unrighteousness with which we were born into this world and gives us a new nature of righteousness which is the Spirit of Christ.

We are showered with abundant righteousness through our faith in Jesus Christ our Savior. Our spirit has been renewed and we have been born into the kingdom of righteousness.

Prayer: Lord, I have been trying real hard to become good enough for you, but now I realize that I can never measure up. So, I appeal to your grace – grant me favor through faith in what Christ has already done. Amen.

Jesus Is Our Savior

Message: It is the washing of regeneration which frees us from the nature of unrighteousness with which we were born into this world and gives us a new nature of righteousness which is the Spirit of Christ.

Affirmation: I am freed from my sinful nature, not by my efforts to be righteous, but by the work of Holy Spirit in me as he renews me in the righteousness of Christ.

Reflection: Every major religion in the world has one similarity; what is it? How is Christianity different in the way it deals with that issue?

My Thoughts:

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Day Fifteen

Jesus Is My Lord!

If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. – Romans 10:9-10

One of the earliest confessions of faith in the Christian church was simply this; "Jesus is Lord." This confession was more than just giving mental assent to an idea – it was (and is today) a faith commitment to Jesus as the Lord of our life.

Some have not understood the meaning of "confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord.'" They think the magic is in the words, "Jesus is Lord," but it is not the words it is the condition of the heart which prompts the confession. Just reciting the words does nothing if a person has not truly believed upon Jesus Christ as Lord of their life.

What that means to us is that we have recognized that he has given us access to God by the sacrifice of his own life and that we submit our will and our way to his will and his way. By submitting of our will to his we are confessing that he is Lord of our life.

When we take that step his spirit becomes joined with our spirit and we are "born again." No, our physical body is not born again, but our spiritual person is born again. We become new on the inside. We are literally made a new creature on the inside (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Every religion calls man to righteous living, but only Christianity allows for the very Spirit of God himself to join with our spirit and give us a whole new approach to life. When we proclaim that Jesus is Lord of our life we are literally born of God into His family – Hallelujah!

Prayer: Jesus, my Lord, thank you for providing the way by which we may have access to God. Thank you for giving me the grace of salvation – that wonderful gift. Amen.

Jesus Is My Lord!

Message: What the statement, "Jesus is my Lord," means to us is that we have recognized that he has given us access to God by the sacrifice of his own life and that we submit our will and our way to his will and his way. By submitting of our will to his we are confessing that he is Lord of our life.

Affirmation: I confess that Jesus is my Lord. I have submitted my life to His will.

Reflection: "Jesus is my Lord," and "I've been born again," are two very well known phrases in our faith. What do those sayings mean to you personally?

My Thoughts:

Day Sixteen

The Bible Is Your Guide For Life

My son, keep your father's commands... Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; when you awake, they will speak to you. For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light.

– Proverbs 6:22-23

Have you ever looked at a road map and couldn't make sense of it because you didn't know where you were on the map? Many of us have had that experience.

Life is like that. We may have a pretty good idea of where we want to go, but we don't know how to get there because we aren't sure where we are now.

The Bible is not only our guide to get us to where we want to be, it is a mirror that tells just who we are and where we are now. The Bible points out our shortcomings, then shows us how to make it right.

I like the imagery of this passage in Proverbs. Wherever we are going the Bible will lead us; When we sleep it will protect us; and when we need comfort it will comfort us.

It is a real comfort to know that when we have purposed to walk in the path which is illuminated by the Word of God that He will protect us. When the day darkens and the night comes on us we have the confidence that His word is watching over us even as we sleep.

Thank God for this road map we call the Bible.

Prayer: Lord, I know that your word is a guide, but a guide must be followed to be effective. Give me a heart to follow your Word; grant me the grace to submit to its teaching and allow it to lead me into all righteousness. In Jesus name. Amen.

The Bible Is Your Guide For Life

Message: When we have purposed to walk in the path which is illuminated by the Word of God, He will protect us. When the day darkens and the night comes on us we know that His word is watching over us even as we sleep.

Affirmation: The Bible is my guide for life, therefore I will study it as I would a road map so that I will be consistent in my journey of faith.

Reflection: Some see the Bible as a rule book, others see it as a book of doctrines and theology and still others see it as a guide book. How do you see the Bible?

My Thoughts:

Day Seventeen

What To Do When You Are Sick

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. – 1 Peter 2:24-25

When Jesus allowed himself to be a sacrifice to remedy the effects of sin he died for all of the effects of sin, not just some of them. Sickness is one of the effects of sin.

One of the purposes Jesus gave for his coming was to "heal the blind eyes" (Luke 4:18). We can extend that statement to apply to physical maladies because that was what Jesus actually did when he was here.

It was that hope of healing that drew large crowds to follow him. We have that same hope today. God has promised to be our healer and helper in this struggle against the effects of sin in the world today.

It is true that Christ was wounded for our healing, but we shouldn't be narrow about how we receive that healing. I once had some church members who believed that if a person went to a doctor they were trusting the doctor and not God and because they were not trusting God he would not heal them.

When God heals he uses all that he has created for the healing, even doctors and nurses. God, in his sovereignty, heals with no outside influence at all, and he also uses the medical profession to heal. Receive healing however it comes and give him praise for it.

Prayer: Lord, I know your word says that we were healed by your stripes, but I have trouble keeping my faith strong. I ask you to grant me the gift of faith to believe that I am healed and that I am being healed. In Jesus name. Amen.

What To Do When You Are Sick

Message: God, in his sovereignty, heals with no outside influence at all, and he also uses the medical profession to heal. Receive healing however it comes and give him praise for it.

Affirmation: God has provided healing for believers through the suffering of Christ. I am healed, and I am being healed by His wounds.

Reflection: Are we trusting God for healing when we go to the doctor? Can a doctor have hands that are anointed to heal through the use of medicine? Think about it.

My Thoughts:

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Day Eighteen

Answers For Relationship Problems

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. – 1 Peter 1:22

Healthy human relations are most challenging. I have a Dachshund who truly knows how to love. When I am sick, he is there. When I am lonely, he is there. When I need someone to wag their tail and look up at me with those eyes that say, "I don't care what anyone else thinks, I love you," he is there.

It's people I have trouble with. If people would just let me show affection whenever I wanted and ignore them whenever I wanted I think I would get along with them much better. Unfortunately, people are more than animals and those I want to treat me well are also expecting me to treat them well.

If we could only love each other unconditionally like our pets love us this world would be a better place. I think one of our problems is that we want others to love us like our pets do, but we are not willing to love others that way. We want others to forgive us when our humanness shows through, but we have many good reasons why we should not be expected to forgive them.

Jesus told his followers that others would know that they are his disciples because they love one another. The reality is that far too many of us have not been very loving to our fellow disciples, and the world sees that before it hears our message. It is time for us to love like Jesus taught us.

Being able to love one another from the heart is preceded by having our hearts purified by Holy Spirit. As we seek Him his love flows from us to others.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to want others to love me as you do, but I have trouble loving them in that way. Grant me the purity of heart to love others as you have loved me. Amen.

Answers For Relationship Problems

Message: If we could only love each other unconditionally like our pets love us this world would be a better place. Being able to love one another from the heart is preceded by having our hearts purified by Holy Spirit. As we seek Him his love flows from us to others.

Affirmation: I consistently seek God for a pure heart so that I might be able to love others as Christ loves me.

Reflection: Have you had a pet that loved you even when you neglected it? Why do you think pets can love in that way and we humans have such a difficult time of it?

My Thoughts:

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Day Nineteen

What the Bible Says About Hope

Hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us.

– Romans 5:5

Hope does not disappoint us. Oh, but you say I have hoped for many things and have been disappointed when I didn't get them. That is not the hope which is mentioned here.

The hope which disappoints is like hoping for that special gift at Christmas. It is hoping that another person will give us attention. It is hoping that we'll finally win the lottery. Hope based upon assumption and unrealistic expectations will nearly always disappoint us.

Paul is speaking about the hope which comes through having placed our faith in Christ. The reason this hope does not disappoint us is that it didn't come from our own wishful thinking. This hope comes from the eternally faithful word of God.

This hope rises up from faith based upon our relationship with the God of hope. It is hope that will not disappoint or make us ashamed.

In Romans 5 Paul writes in verse two, "we have access by faith... and rejoice in the hope." Then he relates that as we experience trials in our relationship with the Lord we gain patience; patient serving produces experience; and our experience of his grace produces Hope – and this hope will not disappoint or make us ashamed.

Hope born in the Spirit of redemption becomes an anchor for our soul (Hebrews 6:19). When our hope is fixed on nothing less than Jesus Christ and his promises we can rest assured that he will fulfill his promises every time.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, sometimes my focus gets off of what you have done and what you have made available to us through faith. Grant me the grace of great faith and hope in you for the future. In your name I ask. Amen.

What the Bible Says About Hope

Message: Hope born in the Spirit of redemption becomes an anchor for our soul (Hebrews 6:19). When our hope is fixed on nothing less than Jesus Christ and his promises we can rest assured that he will fulfill his promises every time.

Affirmation: My faith in Christ is a hope which anchors my soul and does not disappoint me.

Reflection: How does the hope we have in Christ compare to the hope we have in the things of this world? Can you explain the difference between the hope of faith and the hope of wishful thinking?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty

God Promises to Answer Prayer

Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. – Matthew 18:19

This promise sounds good, but there is more to it than meets the eye. First, Jesus mentions, "if two of you shall *agree*." This is an interesting word. It is translated from the Greek, *sumphoneo* and it is the word from which we get our common word for a musical composition, a *symphony*.

There are some interesting parallels between two coming together as in this scripture and the work of a symphony. First, there is a common music for all of the instruments in an orchestra. Two or more musicians do not come together to play music and then each one plays from another piece of music. That doesn't work. They must play from the same music if there is to be harmony.

When two or more have come together in agreement, as in a symphony, and they are agreeing on the same script – the Word of God – they can do whatever the Word of God says they can do.

The challenge we face today is finding two or three who have the kind of agreement that is found in a symphony. Our problem is that we are too often not looking at the same music, or if we are we are on different pages.

We come together with our own agenda and wonder why others can't come into agreement with us. We can only be in agreement when we find common ground in God's word and submit to what He is teaching us. Having a good idea is not the same as having the mind of Christ and when we have the mind of Christ we will have agreement.

Prayer: Lord, help me to come into agreement with you, your word, and others who agree with your word, that we might accomplish your will on the earth. In Jesus name. Amen.

God Promises to Answer Prayer

Message: We can only be in agreement when we find common ground in God's word and submit to what He is teaching us. Having a good idea is not the same as having the mind of Christ and when we have the mind of Christ we will have agreement.

Affirmation: When I am in agreement with God's word, and another person is in agreement with me, then we have the promise that we will be given what we ask for.

Reflection: Give some thought to what it means to be in agreement in the way Jesus was talking about.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty One

The Bible Is The Authority for Your Life

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. – 2 Timothy 3:16

I think one of the reasons there is so much chaos and confusion in the world is because everyone thinks they are the authority. No one person or system of belief is held up as the standard.

When there is no standard against which to compare conduct then there is no standard for justice because then every man becomes just in his own eyes. No society that has held such views has remained morally strong, neither has it survived long without falling victim to one who preys upon their weakness.

For those of us who believe, however, there is a standard by which we can judge our lives. There is a code of conduct and a source of justice for us all. It is justice never changing neither is it affected by the whims of society. It is the eternal word of God that is as good for instruction, correction and discipline today as it was 2000 years ago.

The scripture is history, philosophy, and law. Each page is sprinkled with truth and covered with mercy and grace. It is not only a guide for righteous living it is also light which leads to redemption when we have failed.

We can have confidence that this holy book which has withstood 2000 years of assault upon its validity is still the best standard for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. Read it – love it – live it!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, changing mores of society make it difficult to know what is best – That is why I need you. Grant me the grace of understanding your word and how to apply it to my life that my walk may be pleasing to you and consistent with your word. In Christ's name. Amen.

The Bible Is The Authority for Your Life

Message: The scripture is history, philosophy, and law. Each page is sprinkled with truth and covered with mercy and grace. It is not only a guide for righteous living it is also light which leads to redemption when we have failed.

Affirmation: Holy Scripture is the authority for my life and Holy Spirit is my guide and teacher in understanding God's word.

Reflection: A major contributor to chaos in any society is either not acknowledging an absolute authority or having a variety of value systems that are not compatible. Can you think of any examples?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Two

Hope Turns Mourning Into Gladness

Then maidens will dance and be glad, young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow. I will satisfy the priests with abundance, and my people will be filled with my bounty, declares the Lord. – Jeremiah 31:13-14

There was a time when Israel was taken out of their homeland and relocated in a foreign country. They felt empty and abandoned. It seemed that nothing was working for them and they were near giving up.

Then, Jeremiah begins to speak about a time of fullness and joy. A time when all Israel would know the joy of the Lord and they would be satisfied with the fullness which God brought them into.

Have you been going through a time of disappointment when things just aren't working out the way you thought they would? Are you struggling with being dissatisfied with who you are and where you are in life? I think all of us go through those times occasionally.

If you are there now, I want to encourage you to take hope. Remember the promise, "My people will be filled with my bounty." That says two things: first, his goodness is sufficient to bring fullness into our lives; and second, when our trust is in him his goodness is enough for us.

Even when our trials are the result of our own behaviors, God still is standing in the wings just waiting for us to call upon His name so that he can shower us with the bounty of his love.

Prayer: Lord, there are just a bunch of circumstances of life that are causing some concern in me. Grant me the grace to look beyond the present and see your plan for the future. Grant me a spirit of thankfulness for your goodness. In your name I ask. Amen.

Hope Turns Mourning Into Gladness

Message: Even when our trials are the result of our own behaviors, God still is standing in the wings just waiting for us to call upon His name so that He can shower us with the bounty of His love.

Affirmation: My hope is in God's ability and desire to provide for me and not in my own ability. I embrace the promise that He will provide for all my needs.

Reflection: God promises to turn our mourning into gladness. All he asks is for us to trust Him and follow His leading. How do you get His guidance?

My Thoughts:

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Day Twenty Three

Your Responsibility To Others

And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward. – Matthew 10:42

I'll never forget the day we started the feeding program for children in Haiti. We had expected to feed about 75, but by 11 Am there were already 150 children gathered to eat. We were concerned because we had bought enough food for about 75 and we wanted everyone to get one small piece of chicken. Now, there were too many. We began serving at about 3 PM.

I was counting the children being served because I knew that we did not have enough food for all of them. My count reached 150, then 175, and 200. Finally I counted that we had served 229 people with the food prepared to feed just 75 – and every one of them got a piece of chicken.

How did that happen? When we even give a cup of water the Lord blesses it, and when we feed the hungry he seems to multiply it.

How often do we neglect serving others because we do not think we have enough? I don't personally know of anyone who has given when they didn't have enough for themselves that have not had their own needs supplied.

One of the ways God made provision for the poor in Bible times was that land owners were not supposed to glean their fields after the harvest. They were to leave whatever the harvesters didn't get for the widows, orphans and aliens.

That is a principle God intends us to follow today. Invest your resources in those who can not fend for themselves and see the bounty of the Lord is released upon you.

Prayer: Father, help me to see others as you see them. Give me eyes that see beyond my own needs and desires and that see what others need, then give me the grace to allow you to use me to answer their need. In Christ's name. Amen.

Your Responsibility To Others

Message: A principle God intends us to follow today is to invest our resources in those who cannot fend for themselves and then see the bounty of the Lord released upon you. The principle: Give and it shall be given to you.

Affirmation: Giving to the needs of others releases God's abundant blessing upon me.

Reflection: I know it runs counter to our basic instinct, but giving to help others, even when we are in need ourselves, releases a special blessing of God's provision. Think about it.

My Thoughts:

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Day Twenty Four

God Convicts, the Devil Condemns

He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. – Psalm 103:10-12

I once heard a preacher say, "If we are convicted, that is from God; if we are condemned that is from Satan."

What he was saying is that God will convict us of sin to bring us to repentance, but Satan will use our sin against us and place condemnation on us telling us, "What's the use, you are doomed anyway."

Thank God for his Word. His Word declares, "As far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." When the devil brings condemnation on us for our failings and shortcomings just remind him that God has already dealt with the issue and his mercy toward us extends far into the heavens.

I remember praying in despair one time many years ago. I had a recurring sin in my life and I had become so discouraged about it that I felt like God could not forgive me again. But when I prayed I felt the comfort of the Holy Spirit as he assured me that he did still love me and that he does forgive my every sin, even the recent ones. That day I felt very special as God expressed his love to me.

The Word also declares that His mercies are new every morning. That means regardless of what the enemy of your soul tries to tell you, you are a new person every morning because his grace is sufficient for you.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for removing my burden of sin. Thank you for separating them from me so that I don't have to be separated from you. Grant me the grace of walking in forgiveness and renewal. In Christ's name, amen.

God Convicts, the Devil Condemns

Message: The Word of God declares that His mercies are new every morning. That means regardless of what the enemy of your soul tries to tell you, you are a new person every morning because His grace is sufficient for you

Affirmation: I may have sinned yesterday, but God has given me the gift of a new day and I commit this day to Him.

Reflection: Give some thought to the idea that God convicts of sin and the devil condemns us for sin. Can you explain the difference?

My Thoughts:

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Day Twenty Five

Don't Be Anxious – Trust God

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. – Philippians 4:6-7

The Greek word here translated *careful* is *merimnao*. It means to be anxious about something or to have a distracting care for something. An example of how it would be used would be the things that keep you awake at night as you worry about their outcome.

When Paul writes, "Be careful for nothing," he is actually talking about the anxiety which comes when we are trying to work things out ourselves and do not trust God to take care of it. That's why he tells us to take it before the Lord in the form of a petition and present it to Him with thanksgiving.

Trusting God and having a thankful heart, even in the middle of adverse circumstances, is a true test of our faith. He has promised to be faithful to those who are faithful to him. When you become a little anxious about something just remember that God is in control and he is working all things together for our ultimate benefit.

When we truly do that from our heart God will give us a peace that goes beyond what any human can experience on their own in the same circumstances. The peace that comes through trusting God and committing the circumstances to Him will give us peace of mind that will keep us steadfast in any adverse circumstance.

Prayer: Father God, there are so many times that I try to work out the tough situations on my own and it becomes burdensome to me. I ask you for the grace to commit those things to you and trust you to do the work. It is in Your name I ask. Amen.

Don't Be Anxious – Trust God

Message: When we truly trust Him from our heart God will give us a peace that goes beyond what any human can experience on their own in the same circumstances. The peace that comes through trusting God and committing the circumstances to Him will give us peace of mind that will keep us steadfast in any adverse circumstance.

Affirmation: I practice trusting God in every circumstance and I commit all my anxious moments to him.

Reflection: How can we fulfill the instruction to "be careful for nothing" without creating more anxiety?

My Thoughts:

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Day Twenty Six

The Bible Is the Word of His Grace

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

– Acts 20:32

There are some powerful concept words and phrases used in this passage; "Word of his grace," "build you up," and "sanctified."

Paul was going to Jerusalem and it had been prophesied that he would be bound and taken away. He was encouraging the people that he would be gone from them physically, but in the spirit he would still be present.

Then he encourages them that their hope is not in him, neither in his words, but their hope is in God and the Word of God. That is why, as he was about to depart he tells them, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace."

Paul knew that the only way that grace could be released into the lives of the believers; and that the only way their faith could be built up; and that the only way they could walk in sanctification, was by committing themselves to the word of his grace – The Word of God. Grace, strength and sanctification are found in His word.

We must remember that His word is the revelation of His good will toward all of us. His word is grace filled and when properly applied it will build us up and lead us into sanctification.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to focus on men because they are who I see daily. But men are human with human weaknesses and failings. Men move on and we loose touch. I need to place all of my faith in your word, not in those who proclaim your word. Only your word is eternal – grant me the grace to walk in it. In Jesus Name. Amen.

The Bible Is the Word of His Grace

Message: We must remember that His word is the revelation of His good will toward all of us. His word is grace filled and when properly applied it will build us up and lead us into sanctification.

Affirmation: God's word carries with it the power of his grace. As I obey his word more grace is released.

Reflection: Paul knew that in Jerusalem he would be bound and remanded to prison in Rome, yet he purposed to follow God's plan for him. If Paul had not sensed God's grace in trial he faced, and went to another place, we may not have a large portion of the New Testament that he wrote from prison. God's word is full of grace, even when it reveals trials to come.

My Thoughts:

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Day Twenty Seven

Be Slow to Become Angry

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. – James 1:19-20

We've all known people who were "quick to fly off the handle." They are not comfortable to be around because you don't know when something is going to set them off.

James is giving us three keys to controlling our anger; be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath.

What does it mean to be "quick to hear?" It means to listen carefully. Sometimes we can quickly take offense at a sentence we half heard or even of a thought that was not expressed adequately. Listen carefully and process what is meant by what is said.

Being slow to speak indicates that we don't just respond to what "we hear" but to what is meant by the one talking. To do that we have to think through our response. Sometimes the best response is to ask questions to get clarification before we respond.

The third key is simply to keep a lid on your anger. Don't let others control you by being able to manipulate you into becoming angry and doing something that will embarrass you.

Here is a prescription for lowering your blood pressure: Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. Try it! It really works.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to respond too quickly to a perceived wrong. Grant me the grace to be a careful listener and to be even more careful in what I speak. And, above all, grant me the grace to be slow in becoming angry, particularly over issues that can easily be resolved. In Jesus name I pray.

Be Slow to Become Angry

Message: Here is a prescription for lowering your blood pressure - and to avoiding unnecessary conflicts: Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. Try it! It really works.

Affirmation: I listen carefully to hear the motive behind what is said, speak only to encourage and lift up, and I keep a bridle on my anger.

Reflection: Practice listening to what a person is saying until you understand his intent before you respond. When you do respond, have encouragement as your motivation. When you do that you find that you have fewer occasions to respond with anger.

My Thoughts:

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Day Twenty Eight

Don't Give Up – Have Patience

Do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

– Hebrews 10:35-36

In the midst of circumstances it is easy to get impatient with God. When we can see nothing but a bleak future we can easily begin to believe that God doesn't see us or hear our plea. In those times we are tempted to try it without him because trusting him just doesn't seem to be working for us just now.

But wait, don't give up yet. We are told in this passage that there are two things we need to do; first, we must do the will of God and second we must have patience.

When we make a commitment to follow Him, wherever that takes us, we must keep that commitment fresh in our minds. There are times when it seems he has left us alone, but those times are a test of our commitment. Trust him – He will come through.

When we have committed to follow his will then patience becomes the issue. Our nature is to look at the circumstances and determine His favor by the way things are as we see them – but we must be patient. God is working according to the big picture and we can only see at best a very tiny thread in the entire fabric of our life.

Don't trade his promise for a hasty fix to uncomfortable circumstances. Have patience He'll come through just like he said he would do.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the grace of trusting you even when the circumstance seem to indicate that you aren't there. Grant me patience for the journey. In Jesus name. Amen.

Don't Give Up – Have Patience

Message: When we make a commitment to follow Him, wherever that takes us, we must keep that commitment fresh in our minds. There are times when it seems he has left us alone, but those times are a test of our commitment. Trust him – He will come through.

Affirmation: I am faithful to my commitment to follow Him, regardless of where that leads, even when it doesn't look good, I will trust him.

Reflection: The first phrase of our passage today, "Do not throw away your confidence," is addressing the issue of persevering. Think of time when you became impatient waiting on God and went ahead on your own. How did that turn out for you?

My Thoughts:

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Day Twenty Nine

Right Choices Build Faith

Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. – Romans 16:19

It is not always easy to make wise choices, and it is even more difficult to maintain innocence about what is evil, but when we do those things great faith is released in us. Great faith equates to great spiritual power.

Being wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil gives us confidence in our faith walk. Paul is telling the church that he is proud of their good reputation.

Paul points out two critical objectives in our walk. First, there is the quest for good. There are many good choices to make, but we must seek wisdom to make the right choice.

Then there is innocence concerning evil. The way we are innocent about evil is that we do not expose ourselves to it. We remain innocent because we do not "take a look just to see what it's about." We are not ignorant about evil being around us, but we are innocent in our personal knowledge of evil.

Some say, "It's too late for me to be innocent; I lost my innocence long ago." In answer to that I say, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness*" (1 John 1:9). What God has made pure is indeed innocent. Regardless of what we have done we are made innocent again by faith in the blood of Christ.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for restoring my purity. Give me the grace of wisdom about making right choices and an innocence about those things that are evil. In Jesus name I ask. Amen.

Right Choices Build Faith

Message: *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"* (1 John 1:9). What God has made pure is indeed innocent. Regardless of what we have done we are made innocent again by faith in the blood of Christ.

Affirmation: I know I have sinned, but I am equally convinced that God has forgiven me and cleansed me from all unrighteousness caused by me sin.

Reflection: Give some thought to how you can be aware of evil, yet not be tainted by it. How can one who has sinned have their innocence restored?

My Thoughts:

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Day Thirty

Faith Crushes Satan's Influence

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. – Romans 16:20

There is a time of ultimate defeat for Satan and at that time, according to Revelation, he is wrapped in chains and thrown into the bottomless pit. However, he is not there yet, but his influence has been destroyed by our faith in Christ.

In the devotion for yesterday we addressed the issue of being innocent toward evil when we had lost our innocence long ago. Our Lord has restored our innocence by the work of Christ and that is a crushing blow to the influence Satan used to have over us.

Notice Paul says, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan." We are sometimes confused about that because we talk so much about the "spiritual war" that we can't see the "peace" element in this effort. Notice he says God will crush Satan. It's not our battle it's his.

We have peace as we rest in faith that God has done the work of crushing Satan's influence in our lives. Our pursuit of good works, and our commitment to maintain innocence about evil, allows the peace of God to be upon us. When we are doing the right things in the right way we don't have to worry about Satan – God is taking care of business with him.

Remember what James said: Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you. When we walk in grace the influence of Satan is crushed.

Prayer: God of peace, thank you for crushing the influence Satan has had in my life. Grant me the grace to continue trusting you and to have the confidence that you will fight my battles. In Jesus name, amen.

Faith Crushes Satan's Influence

Message: We have peace as we rest in faith that God has done the work of crushing Satan's influence in our lives. Our pursuit of good works, and our commitment to maintain innocence about evil, allows the peace of God to be upon us. When we are doing the right things in the right way we don't have to worry about Satan – God is taking care of business with him.

Affirmation: God grace is upon me and goes before me crushing Satan and his plans to destroy me.

Reflection: How is the "spiritual war" that is being waged and we are to be involved in, consistent with the peace of God? Can we have war and peace?

My Thoughts:

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Day Thirty One

Kingdom Secrets Release Abundance

The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance.

– Matthew 13:11-12

Secrets. We all have them. The purpose of a secret is to keep those who should not know something from knowing it. Jesus was telling his disciples that he had chosen them to know the secrets of the kingdom.

Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables so that only those who were spiritually alert would hear the message. Then he explained the parables to those who were to understand the secrets.

Understanding the secrets of the kingdom will release God's favor. If we can hear the message of the kingdom, and understand the purposes of the "secrets" that he is revealing, then we will be able to walk in the fullness of his intended abundance.

Knowing and understanding the principles of the kingdom unlocks the door to God's favor; diligent obedience opens the door to abundance. God is not only calling us to understand and believe but he is calling us to diligent obedience to the principles so that he can release his best to us. His best is reserved for those who obey him.

Over the next few days explore some of the kingdom principles that Jesus called, "Secrets of the kingdom." Search the Scripture to find the secrets of kingdom life Jesus revealed while he was here on earth.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to use the understanding of men to accomplish the work of the kingdom. Grant me the ability to understand the message of the kingdom and the wisdom to live by those principles. In Jesus name. Amen.

Kingdom Secrets Release Abundance

Message: Understanding the secrets of the kingdom will release God's favor. If we can hear the message of the kingdom, and understand the purposes of the "secrets" that he is revealing, then we will be able to walk in the fullness of his intended abundance.

Affirmation: God's secrets concerning the kingdom of God are being revealed to me and his abundance is being released to me.

Reflection: Can you see the connection between understanding kingdom secrets and the abundance God has promised? God's available abundance is much like it is in the natural. You may have good things for your children, but if they are in rebellion against you those good things will not be released to them.

My Thoughts:

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