

Week 17 Daily Devotional

I. Prayer to enter the Lord's presence:

Be still for a moment. "Lord, I give the day that is now past to you. It is yours. I give the day that is to come to you; help me to see where you are working and to join you there. Speak to me during these moments. I commit them and myself to you."

II. Prayer of Confession:

"Lord, you are faithful to forgive me and cleanse me of my sin when I confess it to you. I confess my sin(s) of _____. Thank you for forgiveness." (1 John 1:9)

III. Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Choose to be thankful, speak out loud of what God has done.

"Thank you, Father, for _____. Fill my heart and my mouth with gratitude throughout this day."

IV. Scripture Reflection

Day 1

Read

Heb. 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Reflect

The great cloud of witnesses were the people who had gone before who had lived for more than their own time. They lived in the present with the "long view." The long view is what empowers life in the short run. How do we live with this long view? By "throwing off things that hinder and the sin that trips us up." There are some things that are not sin but they are not helpful. If you want to run a race well there are some things you could do, it would be allowed, but you shouldn't do because it wouldn't be wise. You could run carrying a large stone, but if your goal is speed you shouldn't do that. So there are things in your life that may not be wrong but might not be best. Then in this race there are the things that are wrong, this is the sin that "trips us up" as we try to run. This is a verse about focused living. What do you want from your life? Do you want to be comfortable? Do you want to take the easiest path? Do you want to experience God in your life? Do you want the good and powerful path?

Respond

If you want to be left alone and comfortable, tell God that. But are you willing to ask him to help you become a person who doesn't want to be left alone? Do you want to experience God more fully in your life? Tell him that. But be aware that will mean you have to move into areas that are not going to be comfortable. You will be pushed.

Day 2

Read

1Cor. 9:24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. 26 Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. 27 No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Reflect

"Beat my body" is a figure of speech. Paul does not believe there is any real value in actually doing something like that. What he is communicating is the necessity of being the "boss of your physical self." For many people their physical desires direct their lives. They are like a dog taking their master for a walk. The dog drags the owner where the dog wants to go. Paul was a man who lived for his master, Jesus. His physical life was under his control as he was under God's. So, just like an athlete masters his own body for the sake of a prize, Paul says we must live with self-control in order to run for the eternal prize of the glory of God in our lives.

Respond

In what ways has your physical body become your boss? Repent of these things now. Submit yourself to the Lordship of Jesus. Then ask him to help you live your life making choices that reflect his Lordship. Think of specific ways you can do this...your words, your thoughts, your sleeping and eating patterns, your habits.

Day 3

Read

Matthew 26:36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Reflect

Jesus wanted relief from his terrible trials and asked God for another way if it was possible. This is something we would all pray, perhaps you are praying this even now. Yet Jesus submitted himself fully to the Father's will. This may seem like a prayer and a heart posture that is beyond the scope of "normal" people but it is not. You may not have any trials now but it may be that God is calling you to trust him more fully in ways that seem like a test or trial of faith. Will you surrender to him? If you are afraid to fully surrender what will happen if you "hold back"? Will you be safer? Will you be happier?

Respond

Do not be quick to pray "Not as I will but as you will." By all means do pray it, but first, consider what you are praying. Struggle with the implications. Maybe you could ask God for help in understanding more fully what it means to pray this prayer

Day 4

Read

Jeremiah 33:3 "Call to me and I will answer you and show you great and unsearchable things you do not know."

Reflect

Keep in mind that the context of this great promise is that it was given to a people who were going to lose everything they held dear. Their nation, their homes, their security it was all going to be lost. The people were going to go into Babylonian captivity. But God was not going to abandon them, he was still going to make himself known to them even there. He urged them to call on Him and see him show up in powerful ways in their lives. Are you afraid to truly say to God "I give everything to you, do with me as you will?" Are you afraid that he might do something terrible to you, or lead you into a lifestyle you would hate? If this is true you are misunderstanding God and what it means for you to live life as he has planned it for you. You also may be somehow believing that NOT surrendering your life to God will lead to a better life. This, of course, is not true.

Respond

Pray with courage..."God, do with my life as you will." If you cannot pray this honestly then don't. Just think about it today and we will revisit it tomorrow.

Day 5

Read

Psalm 8: 1 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. 2 From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. 3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? 5 You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: 7 all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. 9 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.

Reflect

Listen to this song carefully and prayerfully.

Respond

Pray, asking God for courage "God, take my life, it is yours. Do with it as you see fit."

V. Prayer for others:

Pray specifically for the concerns of your life and the lives of others.

VI. Prayer of commitment:

“Lord God, I commit to love you with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my strength and with all my mind and to love my neighbor as myself. Empower me today to love you and others with everything that I am.” (Luke 10:27)

This Month's Scripture Memory:

Ephesians 6:14-18

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.