

Week 29 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

Matthew 22 ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. ¹⁶ They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. ¹⁷ Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?" ¹⁸ But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, ²⁰ and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?" ²¹ "Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." ²² When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

Reflect

Jesus's statement "Give to Caesar, what is Caesar's" is clear: It affirms the general principle of submission to political authority. But Jesus doesn't stop with Caesar; He takes it a step further and says, "Give to God what is God's." So, what is it that we owe God? Let's go back to the idea of the image. Who's image stamped on the coin? Caesar's. Whatever Caesar's likeness was on, was to be given back to him. So where does God have his likeness? What is his image stamped on? It's on you and me! His image is stamped all over us!

Being made in the image of God means we can reflect His character in our love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness.

Respond

Ask God to show you ways you've fallen short in reflecting his character. Confess those shortcomings to him and ask him to give you victory in those areas. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to cultivate good in the world around you.

Day 2

Read: Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf: "Be reconciled to God." 2 Cor. 5:20

Reflect: In this verse, Paul refers to believers as ambassadors for Christ. He's telling us: we're to think of ourselves as an official representative, and God is making his appeal to the world through us. Your success in this life will not be judged by how popular you are in this world, but by how faithful you are to represent the God who reconciled you to Himself and made you His ambassador. You see, we bear His mark, and this is no small task! Bearing God's image, giving our lives for His glory, makes it possible for us to engage our current cultural environment in ways that honor Christ and allow us to be salt and light to the world around us. Let us make sure that our message, methods, and motives are right, so that our work might be lasting and might stand the test when we stand before Him.

Respond: Ask God to show you if there is anything you've been doing that is reflecting poorly on Christ and ask him to help you change. Purpose in your heart that today you will be an ambassador for Christ!

Day 3

Read:

1 Timothy 2:1-4 CSB

First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Reflect:

Sometimes it can be hard to pray for people or groups we don't like. Take a political party that doesn't line up with your values and beliefs. Now answer the following question honestly. When they make a statement or present a policy that you disagree with, how do you respond? Are you quick to right them off as idiots? That's not how Paul is urging us to react in our passage; he says we should pray and intercede for them. Remember where Paul is coming from when he wrote these words. Nero was the emperor, and his resentment was growing towards Christians. Paul was keenly aware of the deteriorating political atmosphere. And what does he do? He urges prayer for the salvation of all men, but especially rulers. Praying for people we don't necessarily like or agree with can be a hard thing to do at times. But if we're going to be Christ's Ambassadors, we've got to do it.

Respond:

Ask God to help you be more aware of your emotions today. When you're watching the news or reading an article, and you feel your blood pressure begin to rise, stop! Use those feelings as a warning light that's directing you to pray. And then pray—pray for that person or group; pray that they would come to the knowledge of Christ. Remember that our fight is a spiritual one. Your prayers matter!

Day 4

Read

Philippians 1:27 CSB

Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I will hear about you, that you are standing firm in one spirit, in one accord, contending together for the faith of the gospel,

Reflect

As followers of Jesus, we now have a dual citizenship. We're citizens of an earthly nation and a heavenly Kingdom, with the latter taking precedence. Paul understood this well. He was a Roman citizen, with all of the rights and privileges that come with his citizenship. He recognized that, as a Christ-follower, he was a citizen of the kingdom of God, a kingdom that would never end and a kingdom that he owed his ultimate allegiance. He knew he was a citizen of Heaven, and God was at work. Paul's single goal was to magnify Christ! He put Christ and the Gospel ahead of everything else, and he encourages us to do the same by standing firm in the spirit and contending together with other believers for the faith. We can never forget that being a citizen of Heaven carries a hefty price of which Christ Jesus paid in full. He is our King, the one we give our lives for, the one we long to see in His glory!

Respond

Take some time today and think about your citizenship of Heaven. Think about the privileges and responsibilities that go along with that citizenship. What does standing firm in one spirit, in one accord, and contending together for the faith look like for you? Then be still and ask God to speak to you.

Day 5

Read

Philippians 2:14-15 CSB

Do everything without grumbling and arguing, 15 so that you may be blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world,

Reflect

Most people tend to gripe, especially when we look around and see others not doing what we think they should be doing. In fact, we may even feel like we have a legitimate gripe with an issue or a person, which only causes us to voice our opinion even more. Then it's downhill from there. It makes the subject or person get under our skin even more so. All this does is cause us to whine and complain—we get tagged by others as being a griper! The problem with being a griper is that no one wants to be around you. Gripping tends to pull everyone involved down, and the next thing you know, everything gives us a reason to gripe. I think there is even a physical aspect to it as well, gripe all the time and you tend to be run down and lifeless.

If you're a believer and you're known as a griper and complainer, that's a bad thing. It only hurts the cause of Christ; it pushes people away rather than drawing them to Christ. You don't have to live this way, you can stop, and by God's grace, you can experience the peace of God.

Respond

Paul's words are pretty straightforward. Use this verse as a reality check for yourself. It's pretty direct—it doesn't need a lot of commentary. It tells you how you're to work out God's good purpose concerning your daily living. Don't be a griper! Get out there and find ways to bring light. Find ways to demonstrate God's love to those who may even be ideologically opposed, enemies. It may be something as simple as a common courtesy towards them, but in doing so, you'll stand out in the world. Live today as children of the light! Make it your goal to shine like a star to the world where God has placed you. This is pleasing to the Lord of heaven.

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:

Philippians 4:4-8

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things.