

Week 39 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. 3:7-19 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. ¹⁵ As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

Reflect

The backstory on this passage comes from the Exodus. Israel saw God provide over and over and yet when they encountered challenges or things that made them afraid they quickly moved to disbelief. Read these two passages and consider the cause and consequences of Israel not believing God. Reflect on the causes and consequences in your own life of not believing God. Remember...all sin is ultimately about disbelief.

Ex. 17:1-7 The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?" But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?" Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." The LORD answered Moses, "Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

Num. 14:20-23 The LORD replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked. Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth, not one of the men who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times — not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it

Respond

If there is an area in your life where God is asking you to believe him but you are holding back because of unbelief caused by fear, or a tendency to trust your own thoughts about what will make you happy? If so then turn to him in faith now. That turn begins in your mind and will be reflected in your practical choices.

Day 2

Read

Heb. 3:7-19 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. ¹⁵ As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

Reflect

"See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God." "See to it" is a proactive directive to take responsibility for your own heart. Heart in Scripture is the human command post. It is the thinking, choosing you...not merely the feeling you. To "see to it" that your thoughts and then your life choices don't fall into disbelief indicates that God has given us both the responsibility and the ability to ensure this doesn't happen. We are not merely leaves tossed about by wind and waves...he has given us power to live lives intentionally pointed his direction. We will fail to reach perfection in this life of faith but we need not and must not fail to live our lives pointing consistently in his direction.

Respond

Have you blamed others for things you are responsible for? Have you judged others for not doing enough to help you? Have you had thoughts of self-pity...falling into moods of feeling sorry for yourself? Perhaps you have good reason for these things or at least you believe you do. But you have better reason to "see to it" that your heart goes in a different direction. Locate these "self-pity" thoughts and submit them to "see to it" thoughts. Take all rogue thoughts captive to Christ.

Day 3

Read

Heb. 3:7-19 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. ¹⁵ As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

1 Cor. 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

James 1:13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

Reflect

We are given both the responsibility and the ability to "see to it" that our hearts do not fall into a state of unbelieving disrepair. Like a house, our hearts and minds need constant maintenance or they will begin to fall apart. You cannot simply live in a house and expect it to stay in "living" condition without ongoing maintenance. The same is true of the house that is your mind/body/soul. You must continually maintain your thoughts.

Respond

In addition to this time in God's word and prayer what other types of "heart maintenance" can you do today? How can you intentionally "see to it" that your heart remains soft towards God and others as you move through your day today? Perhaps you could a text to a friend right now asking for prayer in a specific area. Then plan to send a follow up text at the end of the day to let them know how it went. What are other ways you can be intentional to "see to it?"

Day 4

Read

Heb. 3:13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Rom. 15:4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Reflect

The word translated "encourage" in verse 13 is a word that shares a root with the word used for the Holy Spirit (Counselor) and the Scriptures (encouragement).

There are primary three weapons or tools of God in our faith journey...The Word of God, the Spirit of God, and the People of God. All three share the encouragement function in our lives. We may feel the need for many kinds of encouragement but the encouragement we need the most is encouragement to continue to believe God. Encouragement happens best when we, along with Scriptures and the Holy Spirit, "pour courage" into one another. The courage to continue to believe God when tempted to go our own way is essential. We need it every single day.

Respond

Pour courage to believe God into someone today. How will you do this? Decide now and then move on that decision.

Day 5

Read

Heb. 3:7-19 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. ¹⁵ As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

John 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.

Reflect

Speaking encouragement into one another's lives has a specific rather than a generic content to it. The specific content is "trust in Christ." In the context of Hebrews 3 the encouragement that keeps us from having hearts hardened by sin's deceitfulness is the encouragement to believe God. Jesus, when prepping his friends for the coming challenges (of which they were unaware) encouraged them to "Trust him." God's encouragement and challenge to us will always have at its base..."Trust Christ." The applications of this will vary but the essential message remains the same. "Trust me, in that...and that...and that."

Respond

Consider how to encourage someone in their faith. How can you use your own story to help someone else trust God? It could be the story of your own failure and God's restoration. The powerful stories don't have to be, and often are not, the ones where we "nailed it" but rather ones where we "failed Him." When you share of God's goodness, you grow in your own faith and awareness of God's goodness.

Philemon 1:6 "I pray you will be active in sharing your faith so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ."

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:

Hebrews 12:1-3

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. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.