

Week 43 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

Romans 12:1 Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. ²Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God. (Christian Standard Bible)

Reflect

In the first eleven chapters of Paul's letter to the church at Rome he outlined the essence of the gospel.

Our problem: sin

God's solution to our problem: Salvation

Our purpose: Sanctification (become like Christ)

Our hope: God's Sovereignty: God's purposes will prevail

Now, beginning in chapter twelve he begins to give the "life application" of the Gospel truth. The shift begins with the word "therefore" and is centered on the phrase "God's mercies." "God's mercies" sums up the gospel. The word is plural, in Christ we have been shown God's mercies. His mercy to pursue us. His mercy to forgive us. His mercy to transform us. All his mercies are summed up in the single word...gospel. The "good news" that Jesus died, Jesus rose, Jesus will return.

Respond

It is common for us to feel like we are entitled to God's love. God is the "adult" we are the "children", he has to "put up" with us. However his forgiveness is a mercy not something he has to give. We are forever "at his mercy." Today, you live "at his mercy." Contemplate your utter dependence on God. Thank him for his mercy.

Day 2

Read

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. ² Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (New International Version)

Reflect

In the Old Testament animal sacrifices were made to God as part of Israel's worship. The bodies of animals were laid on the altar and the animals perished to make atonement for Israel's sins. Paul uses the word "Soma" (Bodies) to describe our offering to God. We are to offer our bodies continually on the altar as living sacrifices to God. Our living sacrifices are not to atone for sin, Christ did that by giving his body on the cross. Our living sacrifices are offerings of gratitude. The animals did not give a "part" of themselves they gave their all. The same is true with Christ's sacrifice. The implications are clear, we don't give God a "portion" of our lives to him, we offer all to him. We may give a tithe of our income, or a portion of our time in service to others...but in fact everything in and of our lives belongs to him.

Respond

What is a practical application of the fact that your entire life belongs to God as a living sacrifice? Think and pray this through. What attitude are you "keeping for yourself?" What about your words or your spending or your time use? Do you see some of it as being "yours?"

Day 3

Read

12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (English Standard Version)

Reflect

The phrase "spiritual worship" combined with "present your bodies" is demonstrating that this is no "physical us" that is less than the "spiritual us"...we are spiritual/physical hybrids. We belong to God body and soul. The worship we offer God is not detached from our everyday lives. So Paul could write in 1 Corinthians 10:31 that "whatever we do, whether we eat or drink, we do for the glory of the Lord." If things as mundane as eating and drinking are to be done for the glory of God, then surely every single part of our lives is to be an act of worship.

Respond

Today, think about your routines. Eating, drinking, talking, working, breathing. Practice seeing every single aspect of your life as an act of worship. Since your body is a living sacrifice, an offering of gratitude in worship, then everything you do with your body is a part of that worship.

Day 4

Read

Romans 12:1 So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you. (The Message)

12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (English Standard Version)

Reflect

"The Message" is a paraphrase of the Bible. This means it is not a direct translation (word for word, or thought for thought) it is a rephrasing of the Bible to attempt to give the original intent in current word and thought. A paraphrase such as "The Message" should not be your only or primary version of the Bible you read but it can be useful to help in understanding the original intent of a passage.

Respond

Read the two translations side by side and think about why the author of "The Message" used the words he did to make his translation of this passage. What did you learn that helps you better understand the passage? What did you learn that helps you better apply the passage?

Day 5

Read

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (New King James)

Reflect

Conformed is a word that means to "squeeze into a shape" while transformed is a word that involves becoming something different. So cookie dough would be conformed to the cookie mold but an acorn would be transformed into an oak tree. The key in this passage to being transformed rather than conformed is the renewal of our minds. The ideas, beliefs, values we allow to settle in our minds is what will shape our lives. We must continually choose to shape our minds by the truth of God's word. This is hard work but it is harder work to live life not being shaped by the truth. The work of "not" being shaped by the truth is the unhappy work of dealing with a life that is out of line with the will and ways of God.

Respond

What thoughts have you allowed to shape you the past week or months? Perhaps they have been true and good thoughts and you can see the impact in your life in positive ways. Perhaps they have been untrue and not so good...can you see the impact of those thoughts? Spend some time contemplating this verse...

Phil. 4:8 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.

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.