

Week 46 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

Acts 16:9-40 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us. Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her. When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice." The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family. When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace." But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out." The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. ⁴⁰ After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and encouraged them. Then they left.

Reflect

This passage tells the story of Paul planting the church in Philippi. This is the church that his letter, *Philippians*, is addressed to. The book of Acts is "descriptive" it is not "prescriptive." It tells us what did happen, it does not tell us what will happen. Certainly, God can and does continue to do miracles (signs) to point people to the gospel but the point of the signs is to point to something greater than itself. The thing greater than the signs and wonders is the gospel.

Respond

Paul was bold and confident in presenting the gospel to all he came into contact with. He was convinced that it is the power of God for the salvation of all that believe. Ask God to make you bold in the gospel. Ask him to make you confident in the gospel. Ask him to open doors and open your mouth to share the gospel.

Day 2

Read

Phil. 4:4-7 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.

Reflect

To rejoice is to take great delight in something or someone. The word Paul uses here indicates that we are to “keep on rejoicing.” To this Paul adds “always” then he repeats himself. With all this emphasis and repetition you can see how important Paul believes this simple truth is for our lives.

Respond

Take time to begin memorizing this passage. If you spend a few minutes each day you will have it down by weeks end. If you have already memorized it take some time to meditate on it.

Day 3

Read

Phil. 4:4-7 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.

Reflect

The word translated “gentleness” here is sometimes translated “graciousness, reasonableness, considerate.” Gentleness is not weakness it is controlled strength. Consider what “demanding” looks and sounds like. It is not “gentle” it is harsh, desperate, controlling. Gentleness here is a response to the reality that the “Lord is near.” He is near to us; we do not have to try and act like we are on our own. We must not live as people who demand that God, life, others...do as we want them to do. Our gentleness must become evident to all.

Respond

How are you a demanding person? All of us struggle with it. Some more aggressively, others in a more passive way. But we all struggle with demanding that God and others comply with our needs and desires. Repent of this. Continue to memorize the passage.

Day 4

Read

Phil. 4:4-7 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.

Reflect

Picture anxiety like you are a rubber band being stretched. You feel like you will soon “snap” and be broken. You feel like your life is under great tension. Perhaps you are not overly anxious but you can see that if circumstances were different you could be. Be honest, if you are not anxious it could be you are just not be tested yet. If so, it doesn't mean you are actively trusting God. Are you thinking and acting in ways that are making you more resilient? Are you preparing for being tested?

Respond

The “antidote” to being anxious here is to talk to God about everything all the time. If you do not have a habit/plan to pray through the day think through one right now. How can you actively pray your way through the day in front of you? Begin now...pray whatever comes to your mind...just start talking to God.

Day 5

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Phil. 4:4-7 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.

Reflect

The peace of God is a sense of well-being. Being absent this sense of well-being could have several causes. It could be physical or spiritual or relational or the result of wrong thinking patterns. It is likely some combination of several of those things. Even if the absence of peace has multiple causes one part of the solution is always...pray. Be in personal, communicative relationship with God. Don't turn from him when you don't understand what he is doing. That is exactly the kind of situation where you want to turn to him.

Respond

Do a 360 evaluation of your life. Are you giving little or no attention to one of the four pillars? Physical, spiritual, mental, relational. What is one thing you can change in each of those four things. Keep it small, doable. Make it scalable.... something you can slowly increase over time.

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:

Habakkuk 3:17-18

Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.