

Daily Family Devotions

The thought begins in the Bible verse;
please take the time to read it first.

FRIDAY

“THE HARDEST COMMANDMENT”

SCRIPTURE:

Exodus 20:12

Romans 13:1-7

I Peter 2:13-17

These words go straight against the grain of today’s philosophy . . . “My parents don’t live according to God’s law; why should I honor them? My country has abandoned Christianity’s principles; why should I serve? People are not worth the effort; why should I love them?”

Today we are very big on love . . . but something has happened to honor. Yet God always links the two together: it is impossible to please him without honoring and obeying. Disobedience, rejection, contempt, scorn are never the qualities he accepts, or desires from us. But today, many people hold themselves as judge and free agents – free to disobey, dishonor, reject.

Have we this prerogative, as followers of Christ? When these passages were written, people were living in slavery, in an even more corrupt time than ours, ruled by a despot – and what are they told to do? Their obedience puts our so-called piety to shame. The Christian then lived to exalt Christ, not his own ego; he lived so that people would recall how the Lord himself had lived – and died. To live beneath such authority and still be free was new then, too. *Can* people remember Christ as they see you react and live?

Prayer: Lord, I find myself defending my opinions, my ways so often. Help me to remember that I am first your witness to an unbelieving world. AMEN

SATURDAY

“SAY IT!”

SCRIPTURE:

Colossians 1:9-14

Proverbs 15:23; 25:11

“One of the saddest things about life is that with such boundless power to give cheer to others by our speech, most of us pass through the world in silence, locking up in our own hearts the thoughtful and helpful words which we might speak, and which if spoken, would minister so much strength and inspiration.

“Hearts are breaking with sorrow; men are bowed under burdens too heavy for them; duty is too large; battles too sore. On every hand and in every life, there is need for love’s ministry that men and women may not fail. Nor is it a large or costly service that is needed: kindly words often give all the impulse and inspiration required. And the feeling is always close at hand – wanting to be spoken where the struggle is going on.

“Yet many of us let the good will lie in our heart unuttered, and we stand by in silence while our brother goes down in defeat which one word of ours would have changed into victory. It is not the want of love that is our fault, but the penury which locks up the love, and will not let it out to bless others.”

J. R. Miller

Prayer: O God, help me not to worry so much about what to say, but let me be more aware of the need to say something, anything so that love may be felt. Lord, give me grace to step aside and let you minister through me – give me your love, perception, and patience. AMEN

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2024

“IT SHOWS IN YOUR LOVE”

SCRIPTURE:

I John 4:7, 8

II Peter 3:18

“Another mark of ‘growth in grace’ is an increase in charity.

*The man whose soul is growing,
Is more full of love every year –
of love toward all men*

*But especially of love toward his fellow believers his
love will show itself actively in a growing
disposition to do kindnesses,*

to take trouble for others,

To be good-natured to everybody,

To be generous, thoughtful, tender,

And considerate.

*A growing soul will try to put the best
construction on*

Other people’s conduct,

And to believe all things and hope all things,

Even to the end.

Would anyone know if he is growing

In grace?

Then let him look within for increasing charity.”

J.C. Ryle

Prayer: Lord, sometimes I become so involved with serving you, that I forget to look with love to those I serve. Give me an understanding and a love which gives freely and without question. May I see in each man the perfect creation you did create in him – and give me the wisdom, the love and the patience to coax it forth for you. We thank you, Father, for your infinite love for us. AMEN

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TUESDAY

“TAKE TIME TO ENJOY IT”

SCRIPTURE:

Nehemiah 8:9-13

John 15:7-11

A young scientist who had recently been assigned to work with one of the world's greatest nuclear physicists, arrived at his house one afternoon and was amazed to find that great man lying on the floor of his study, surrounded by half a dozen tiny kittens. He seemed completely absorbed in their play and watched in boyish delight their attempts to retrieve the balls of yarn from each other.

The youth watched, wondering how such a man could waste valuable time in so meaningless a pastime. Finally the older man rose, and reading the younger man's mind, he said . . . “You seek to learn the secrets of a wondrous universe, boy. Make sure that in your search to unlock those mysteries, you do not lose the joy in simply loving her.”

This is true of our faith, too – sometimes in our effort to know more about truth, wisdom and God, we forget simply to take time to enjoy and become part of him. And in our eagerness to make Christ known to another, we may forget to take time to be with him ourselves.

One of the things our Lord wants for us is to have joy in life. Reach out for it; take time for it; enrich each day with it.

Prayer: Lord, a joyful heart is one of the things you bring. Teach us to yield to it as easily as children – to put aside troubles for a time, to leave them with you when they are too burdensome. Thank you, Lord. AMEN

WEDNESDAY

“BREAK THE VICIOUS CIRCLE”

SCRIPTURE:

Titus 2:1-10

Today so much of life seems to be a vicious circle . . . the sins of one generation causing rebellion in the second generation – leading to a reaction of the third generation which has had to grow up under their rebellion and hatred. And so it goes . . . the sins of the fathers visited upon their children and added to their individual sins.

But there is a way to break this ancient circle, straighten it out into a direct and powerful current for any generation. Christ gave us the answer and the example: what he did was not triggered or directed by others' actions. He did not react: He responded to God's will for him. This works for us, too.

Your father may be antagonistic – toward you or God or life; rather than building your resentment against his, God can reveal to you the reason for his anger and give you a desire, not to reject but to love. Your mother may be an alcoholic; as God reveals to you why her life is empty, you'll reach out to help her find him, and break the chain of despair, failure.

In every relationship we can really break the vicious circle by the transforming power of God's love toward other people. As God's love becomes a buffer between action and reaction, so his love through you can continue to be a buffer.

Prayer: Lord, the chain of sin is so heavy it seems to threaten us all. May I seek understanding, comfort and love from you and by so doing break my own circle of reaction and resentment, and turn it into a life for you. AMEN

THURSDAY

“TO WHOM ARE WE RESPONSIBLE?”

SCRIPTURE:

I Samuel 3:10-18

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

John 17:6-8

This story could have been written today: Eli, a man of God, priest of the temple, a failure as a father. Why a failure? Because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them – not because he did not love them, or was too restrictive, or “forced” religion upon them. God condemned him because he failed to stand for God, even if it meant standing against his sons in this matter.

Today's parents are restrained on every hand, by psychological philosophies that say, – “Never superimpose your belief on your child.” By educational ethics which state, “What was true for father is not necessarily a truth for son. “By moral demands which belittle a mother's standards: “Times have changed. You cannot expect your daughter to hold the same principles as you held toward chastity.”

Where do we find this deviation in our Book? Where do we find Christ diluting the essence of purity? Why do we, then, as Christians, follow the edicts of men? Why have we permitted ourselves to be shamed into submission, robbed of our God-given place as spokesmen for him? We *are* to be the symbols of authority in a home: God says so. We are responsible for our children honoring him while they live under our roof. And we are supposed to live our lives which exemplify The Higher Way.

Prayer: Lord, give me the wisdom, love and strength to serve you before my children. Help me to remember that I answer only to you when life is over. Make me faithful, Father. AMEN