

# Daily Family Devotions

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

FRIDAY

*"LONELY WHERE NO ONE CAN REACH"*

SCRIPTURE:  
Psalm 139: 1-12

The city orphanage was having its annual Christmas party and all the children, but one, seemed to be having a hilarious time. The one small boy sat quietly by himself, looking almost desperate. One of the men who had come to help, knelt down beside him and said, "Is anything wrong?"

The boy hesitated, then shook his head. "No, not with the party. It's just with me . . . inside." The man, a sensitive person, nodded. "I know," he said; "You're lonely down deep inside where no one can reach."

All of us, at some time, are lonely down deep where no one — not even a friend or parent, a crowd or activity can reach. This loneliness is real — a tangible, aching emptiness familiar to young and old alike.

It is to this loneliness — the individual separateness in each of us — that God comes. And all that is involved in realizing his presence, is by believing he cares, by telling him the things we hesitate even to admit to ourselves: that we are less than we want to be, not nearly as strong as others see us, nor nearly as confident or self-sufficient or able to sail through life without stumbling —

We all long to be children again — comforted, encouraged, loved, forgiven, strengthened.

This is the gift of Christ.

*Prayer: Father, it is not your will that we should ever be lonely or be without you. Please grant me this miracle of your presence. AMEN*

SATURDAY

*"THE BLINDNESS OF INGRATITUDE"*

SCRIPTURE:  
Numbers 11:1-11, 23

Are you disgruntled and unhappy in your present situation? Could you be exaggerating the tedious and overlooking the blessings?

In the passage above, we find it hard to understand how the Israelites could possibly be so discontented, for they had just been freed from a four-hundred year period of slavery, something they had prayed for generations. Even now they were not hungry, merely bored with the monotony — and in their boredom, completely blind to the miracles God was performing daily in their behalf: feeding two million people in a desert wilderness!

How often have you been like this, having prayed for God to deliver you from one situation — only to forget how miserable you once were, from what you have been saved?

When you begin to feel like this — stop and set your complaints aside a moment; begin to remember the things God has already done for you, all the things for which you are thankful. No matter how small or insignificant, try to imagine life without them and gradually, you will see how cushioned our lives really are with blessings that are merely too familiar to be valued anymore.

Thank God for them — and then see how desperate your situation really is. If you still seek a change, pray about it and ask God's will in the matter.

*Prayer: Dear Lord, help me to see in the right perspective those things I am upset about just now. Make me always more and more aware of what I have to be thankful for because of you. AMEN*

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2023

*"DO WE REALLY WANT A FATHER?"*

SCRIPTURE:  
Hebrews 12:5-11  
John 14:21

Isn't it strange how readily we accept the love of God, and how quickly we react to his discipline? We are so much like our own children in this regard — "Love me, Father — but don't discipline me."

Today the world is clamoring to be carried into the "household of God"—not so much as sons, but as tourists to enjoy the advantages. Many spiritual sects say they want to experience the love of God, want inner peace and happiness. Seldom are they willing to accept as well, the discipline of God, to recognize the obligation of obedience inherent in this kind of relationship. They may seek his blessings, but they shun his commandments.

"Whom God loves he chastens," and the youth or adult who shrugs off God's commandments and his discipline will also be denied his love and mercy. For the Father-child relationship naturally assumes not only the joy of love, but also the privilege of discipline and the loving response—in trust to that discipline.

Search the Bible. How often do we find the word 'happiness'? And how often is it directly related to obedience and faithfulness?

*Prayer: Lord, may I be more interested in finding joy, that inner peace which comes from commitment to you—than I am in seeking merely happiness. Lord, in all I do make me eager to do your will, quick to accept correction, grateful for your love which desires the best. AMEN*

TUESDAY

*“THROUGH THE SON — A PICTURE OF  
GOD, THE FATHER”*

SCRIPTURE:

Isaiah 54:11-14

Luke 9:28-36

John 14:8, 9

The chaplain of a large penitentiary said without the person of Jesus Christ, he knew of no way through which he could show crime-hardened, cynical men the love of God the Father. “To get these men to come willingly to God as their Father is asking the impossible. Most of them have no conception of fatherly love; they know only disillusionment, rejection and hostility. They hate society — and fear God, for to them God is only a judge, the hangman, the enemy.

“Only through the suffering, empathetic life story of the Son of God, do they begin to tentatively venture toward any relationship at all with either God or men. But as they hear of Jesus’s disappointments, his betrayal by friends, his trial, his suffering and his incredible selflessness and understanding love of the human soul — as well as his aloneness, I can see them begin to comprehend a new kind of God — one who demands purity — but is just as swift to forgive a sincerely repentant man. With Christ, they reach out in hope”

This is true. Without Christ having lived as we must live in this society so sickened by sin, with its groping, stumbling masses, we would never trust God to understand or be able to resolve our problems or our heartaches.

*Prayer: Lord, help me never to forget Christ’s example of humility and trust. His lack of bitterness in the midst of life and its anxieties. Give me a portion of his faith in you, I pray. AMEN*

WEDNESDAY

*“HE NEEDS A FATHER!”*

SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 27:7-11; 68:5, 6

Hebrews 1:5

I John 3:1-3

A woman, whose husband had deserted her and their three sons, was describing the difficulty she had had at first rearing these boys without a father. Time and again she had been called to the principal’s office for something one of them had done. Finally, the principal who was a Christian man, said, “Your boys need the love — and the firmness of a father . . .” to which she retorted, “I know that! But they HAVE no father!” The man replied, “They do have a Father — but it will be up to you to show him to them.”

She said, “After that, I read everything I could find in the Bible about God as a Father; but especially I read the life of Christ. As I read, I began to notice that he never went to men for advice; it was always to God. And though Christ did have a father on earth, it was to his heavenly Father he turned.

“So I prayed that somehow God would make himself real to my sons as I began to try to tell them about him — and the most miraculous things began to happen! They would accept his word from the Bible more readily than my own little ‘laws’. They would say — ‘Is that what our Father said?’ Or does our Father really expect us to be like that?” Between the example of his Son and the words we read in that wonderful Bible, our boys found love and security they will never lose.

*Prayer: O God, help us to know that you are always sufficient for every need. Help us to trust you for that. AMEN*

THURSDAY

*“BECAUSE HE IS MY ELDER BROTHER”*

SCRIPTURE:

Romans 8:28-32

The same woman, whose sons had experienced such a deep relationship with God as Father, also told of the similar relationship they felt toward Jesus as the Elder Brother.

She said, “They understood that there was a difference between their relationship with God, and Jesus’s — but they accepted it easily. Jesus was God’s only begotten, or very own Son — but that did not keep God from adopting others into his family. They began to understand that adoption was one of the specific things Jesus had come to accomplish: to bring as many people as possible into his Father’s household.

“This brought them to a very intimate relationship with Christ as well as a new attitude toward other people. They absorbed everything I read about him— what he taught the multitudes, what he shared with his disciples . . . if Christ suffered, they suffered . . . like Peter, they were incensed when the soldiers took Jesus; they cried because he stumbled under his cross . . . they clapped their hands when he rose and the Romans and Pharisees became frightened. They followed him after his Resurrection — and when he ascended they said, ‘Someday we’ll go, too.’

“I am constantly in awe of what Jesus Christ has done for our shattered family. He has made it whole”

*Prayer: God, may we see Christ truly as our Brother— one whose example in all things is so perfect and strong. Give us a measure of his obedience as we enter your Household, we pray. AMEN*