

FRIDAY

*"I DON'T WANT TO GIVE UP MY WILL!"*

SCRIPTURE:

John 6:35-39; Luke 9:23-26

A young man had resisted God for years and when his closest friend — a young Christian doctor asked him why, he said, "I know when I finally do decide to follow him, I'll have to obey him and I don't want to give up my own will."

This is one of the oldest problems known to man. We fight submission to God — for some strange reason convinced that once we give in to him, we lose more than we gain.

This is illogical. The God who created nature so lavishly and fashioned man so marvelously, is not going to destroy the man who comes willingly to him in love and trust. Whatever God touches, he blesses.

When we give ourselves to God, we are no more destroyed than the clay which is held in the potter's hands, or the plane which yields to the pilot. It is for this we were made, to be fulfilled by God, released and freed by him to the ultimate in all things.

What we do lose is uncertainty and guilt, indecision and fear. What we gain is the peace of God, vitality and wisdom, eternal life and his constant presence.

*Prayer: O God, forgive me when I hold back from you. Forgive me for not taking time to know you, to understand your heart, to try to find your will for my life. Give me firm trust in you, I pray. AMEN*

SATURDAY

*"THE UNDERLYING BASIS  
FOR SUCCESS"*

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 10:34-39; John 17:20-26

Today there is great emphasis put upon the intellectual and emotional compatibility of two people planning marriage. This seems to be the safest guarantee of a successful marriage.

Yet this is not what Christ places first. He puts love for God first. Why?

First of all, no husband or wife can ever live up to the other's ideal for him — and in this there can be deep disappointment and disillusionment. Secondly, our love for each other undergoes changes and adjustments as life goes through various phases. Some married love becomes stronger, while another may be weakened or threatened as the marriage goes on.

However, our love for God — once established — should continue to grow, making us more godly as we mature, enabling us to withstand more pressure, more crises than we otherwise could stand.

Furthermore, love for God motivates us, gives us *reason* for all we do.

You can do almost anything if you love enough; you can withstand humiliation, hurt, disillusionment and even shame *if* you love enough. When we love God like this, our marriage becomes a gift to him, sometimes a sacrifice for him. But always, if we remain committed, it brings fulfillment and success in the real sense of the word.

*Prayer: Lord, in everything I do, may I learn to do it as unto you. In this way, all of my life becomes an offering to you, and my love will grow. AMEN*

Daily Family Devotions

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

**MONDAY, MARCH 20, 2023**

*"CAN IT BE POSSIBLE?"*

SCRIPTURE:

Mark 10:26, 27; Acts 9:10-18

"With men these things are not possible, but with God, all things are possible."

Have you ever met a man you doubted even God could help? Have you some friend who seems impervious to God's Spirit and his love?

So often we limit God by seeing only the sin or the resistance of the person to God — forgetting that what may seem impossible to us is not impossible for God.

We must learn not to be defeated by circumstances or the apparent impossibility of a situation.

Don't look at your friend's resistance to God; remember God's persistence in your own life.

Don't look at the extent of your friend's sin; remember the extent of his mercy when you fall short.

Don't be frightened at how far your friend has gone from God; remember how close God always is to you when you turn to him again.

Sometimes our timidity, our lack of faith is God's greatest obstacle to overcome. It can be a greater barrier than the sin of a friend.

*Prayer: Lord, forgive me when I give up hope in your power to love and to forgive men. So often I judge a situation by my own limitations. As the days go by, show me how I may learn to trust people to your love and wisdom. May I never weigh a possibility but simply put it in your hands, knowing that with you — all things are possible. AMEN*

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## TUESDAY

*“HE WHO GUARDS HIS MOUTH,  
PRESERVES HIS LIFE”*

SCRIPTURE:  
James 3:3-5 - 5:9-11

“You ought to make it one of your chief duties to keep a restraint upon the words of your mouth to regulate your tongue. . . to keep silence as a security.

“ . . . silence allows our thoughts to rest with God, spares us many foolish words, and avoids much danger to ourselves and injury to our neighbor . . .

“Silence humbles the mind, and detaches it from the vain concerns of life; it also affords a great addition to our time for you will have your own thoughts at liberty many times even in the midst of company, and you may be in a situation where you are obliged to mix much with society; still if you cannot give whole hours to God, fail not to give him half-hours, even minutes . . .

“ — and this fidelity to him, in all you can spare from the calls of this life, will (even in its smallest portions) be as acceptable in the sight of God . . . as if you devoted whole hours to him from a life of more leisure — and more free from the claims of the world.”  
*Fénelon*

*Prayer: Lord, I know it is the quality of my love for you and not always the quantity that counts. Father, may each moment I turn to you be sincere and wholly trusting and committed. May I learn that a moment with you even under pressure is better than an hour with wise men. May my words more and more express my inner conversation with you and beautify my life. AMEN*

## WEDNESDAY

*“REVERSE FORGIVENESS”*

SCRIPTURE:  
Mark 11:24-26; Matthew 6:7-15

It is not always we who are guilty of wronging another. Often it is the other person who should be asking our forgiveness. Yet Christ, in this passage, says, “If you have anything *against* anyone — forgive . . .”

One of the easiest things in the world to do is to nurse a grudge — often it is a seemingly rightful grudge against someone who has done something nasty or unkind to us. We know we have been wronged; it is not *our* duty to make the first move —

Christ says it is our duty. Why? Because anger or resentment — for any reason — poisons the heart, hardens the spirit and makes communication between us and God difficult.

This is the strange quality of the human soul: it is a delicately balanced thing, designed to fly upward toward God, but so delicately balanced that the slightest weight of anger or guilt, resentment or rebellion hinders its flight.

Perhaps this is God’s way of keeping our souls clean; of keeping the frost of old resentments from icing up our wings; of keeping our spirits riding high on the winds of his Spirit.

Let us remember, then, that it is our duty to make the first move, hard as this may be . . . whether the original injury was our fault or not.

*Prayer: Almighty God, help me to learn that the only freedom worth having is complete freedom with you — freedom from anger, hatred, resentment, and a freedom to accept and love others. AMEN*

## THURSDAY

*“THE HARDEST THING IN THE WORLD”*

SCRIPTURE:  
Matthew 5:23, 24; Psalm 34:18 and 51:17

Asking God for forgiveness is nothing compared to asking another human being for the same favor! Somehow the act of admitting we are wrong or petty, vindictive or jealous, is one of the most difficult things we must do.

Yet, Christ says before we offer our gift of prayer, and remember that our brother has something against us, we must first be reconciled with him and then come to prayer.

Could this be the thing which has been blocking the freedom of your prayer life? Perhaps for too long you have rationalized the sin, believing that once confessed to God, it can be set aside. But unless your friend is aware that you are sorry — that you recognize your error — this friend will still be antagonistic; there will be strained relations between you — and also between you and God.

And after all, asking forgiveness is not so hard when you actually get down to it: true humility is so rare that it is one of the most disarming qualities in the world. Your friend will be amazed and touched, and you will be lifted in his sight — as God intends that we should be for his sake. As his witnesses, we must through all things, strive for the highest and the best in human qualities.

*Prayer: O God, so often things I dread the most are those which bring the greatest rewards of spiritual maturity and grace. If I believe that you are able to help, then surely your grace will help me in this difficult gesture. Prepare the way for me, Lord. AMEN*