

Daily Family Devotions

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

FRIDAY

"PRIDE IS A HIGH WALL"

SCRIPTURE; Genesis 4:1-16
Psalm 51:15-17
Ephesians 2:12-22

Perhaps if Abel had been the farmer and Cain the shepherd, things might have been different; yet in the passage, we get the impression that it was Cain's *attitude*, not his offering which was the problem.

Instead of his retorting, "Am I my brother's keeper?" had Cain replied, "God, what did I do wrong? Show me - " God's heart would have been touched, for he does remonstrate with Cain in verse 7: "If you do well, Cain, you will be accepted, too - I am not playing favorites; I am showing you what will work in reconciliation."

But God goes on to warn him, "Whenever you don't succeed, Cain, your pride tends to stiffen you, and Satan is always on hand to try to use his pride against our reconciliation. You *must* master it!"

Yet Cain, still angry and rebellious, turns and takes out his revenge on his brother - and so begins his flight through life, away from God, from society, from happiness.

But even in this, God puts a measure of protection upon him: "No man shall take vengeance on Cain!"

Today there are still two kinds of people; those (like Cain) proud and willful, demanding their own terms even if it means separation from God, and those who want to be with him so much, pride is no longer a factor.

Which are you?

Prayer: God, today we put such a premium on our pride - as though this can protect us. Yet how vulnerable it is, God, and how defenseless against loneliness. How much better to come into your arms as children and learn of you. AMEN

SATURDAY

"I AM NOT READY TO DIE!"

SCRIPTURE:
Proverbs 6:16-19
II Timothy 4:6-8

A powerful, much-hated business tycoon of the past century lay dying in his great mansion, his family around him weeping, waiting for the end.

Suddenly, he began to moan, his body began to thrash and heave, and then to their astonishment, he became fully conscious. Through parched lips he whispered, "I can't - I'm not ready to die!"

Miraculously, he gradually came back to health and strength, but as his strength returned, they noticed a change in him. Once a driving, domineering man, there was now a serenity and sensitivity to those around him that had not been there before. The servants, his family, the activities of his neighbors became important. The lines of his face softened and a new twinkle warmed his eyes. Each afternoon he spent hours writing letters to people all over the world - life-long enemies, business rivals. One by one they made a pilgrimage to his home and left, astonished at the change.

To each one he said the same thing: "In one crushing moment eternity opened before me and I stood on its brink with empty hands and a shrunken soul. Behind me lay the remnants of beautiful gifts God had given me which I had used for my own profit. Nothing for him, nothing for others. It was his grace which has permitted me this second chance. Only he could have believed my shame"

Prayer: Lord, I may not be so fortunate to have this second chance to serve you. Help me to live with the knowledge of what you have given me in eternal life. Without your Son, even this would not have been possible. Thank you, Father. AMEN

MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2024

"WHEN IT'S TIME TO STEP ASIDE"

SCRIPTURE: I Samuel 1:9-28; 2:1;
Mark 9:19-24; 10: 26-27

A mother came into her minister one day, completely distraught and defeated. For several years she had done all she could to bring her son out of his rebellious attitude. She had taken the entire weight of his guilt upon herself and husband, had engaged the services of an analyst, had pled with the boy, begged him, wept, and at eighteen years of age -- if anything - he was worse than before.

The priest looked at the frantic woman and said, "Do you believe in the power of our Lord?" She nodded wordlessly. "And you've prayed continually for your son's life?" Again she nodded. "Then, when," he asked gently, "will you step aside and give God *his* chance?"

For several moments she looked at him speechlessly. Then she cried, "He is my son, my responsibility!" The priest corrected her. "He belongs first to God. You committed his life to him years ago. Now you must honor that. Besides, the priest said with a warm smile, "let him argue with God for a while. It may make a man of him."

It is so hard to let go and let God take our children. Usually it is the last thing we do, not the first.

Prayer: Lord, forgive our reluctance to relinquish our children to you. We know it comes from the fear that we may not have done enough. May we learn to step aside so that your divine arms can encompass our loved ones, so they can hear your voice and know your wise chastisement and at last have the privilege of responding to you as we have done. May we no longer fear to let them go when underneath are your arms. AMEN

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TUESDAY

"HEAR IT FIRST-HAND - FROM HIM"

SCRIPTURE:
Matthew 17:1-8

All of us want to know the truth and we know that what men say is not always truth, no matter how intelligent or persuasive they may be.

Do you ever wonder what Jesus said in similar situations - what truth he spoke? For his own word, read those books which quote him directly - the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke & John. The more you read the words of Christ, the deeper your understanding will be of true Christian faith.

A friend can describe another person to you - in detail - but somehow, until you meet that person, hear him speak, watch him in action; you really do not know him. The same is true regarding Jesus Christ.

But you will find that as you read about our Lord, and hear his words in your heart, the Holy Spirit will make him come alive for you. This is a promise - the reality of Christ with us.

Read what he said, follow his word and put yourself in his presence; answer in your own mind the same questions he asks his disciples and Pharisees; listen to the parables; pay attention to what he says about heaven, and hell, about Satan and eternal life.

Nothing in the world can give you greater understanding, greater hope - or more lasting assurance than these words from the very Son of God.

Prayer: Dear God, open my heart, widen my vision, deepen my faith and multiply my understanding as I read those words your Son spoke. Make them live for me so I may know the truth. AMEN

WEDNESDAY

"FOR STRENGTH TO GO ON"

SCRIPTURE:
Luke 22:39-45
Romans 8:37-39

It has been said that one of the greatest "strengtheners" is certainty that you are right. If we believe in what we are doing, nothing will stop us from going on.

When Jesus knew he must die on the cross, naturally he wanted to be absolutely certain that this was still the will of God for his life. Note Jesus's honesty in asking that "if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

Then almost in the same breath, the words, "Nevertheless, not my will but yours be done." And even as he prayed God was reassuring him He was right.

It is also possible that Christ - in asking for reassurance - was seeking added strength to fulfill his job. See how quickly God sends an angel to minister to him, to give him strength. God never fails *us* in our need when we are doing his will.

From that moment on, Jesus never again questions, hesitates, or falters in his obedience to his Father. During that long, long night he is completely sustained by certainty - and by God.

When you find your faith faltering or your certainty wavering - drop to your knees and ask for reassurance - for strength as your Lord once did. It will come. He has promised.

Prayer: God, there is not a single thing we do for you that we cannot ask help and strength to accomplish. Help me to learn early that the pattern you gave through your Son is just as workable in my life, too. Thank you, Lord, for this. AMEN

THURSDAY

"DIRECTIONS FOR THE USE OF"

SCRIPTURE:
Psalm 119:9-24
II Timothy 2:15-17a

Every instrument and every complex tool comes with directions for its use. A concordance serves this purpose, in a way, to the reader of the Bible.

Every Christian should have at his fingertips one of these "manuals", for until you become familiar with Scriptures - are able to go at once to any verse you need, this concordance will be a significant help.

A Christian wants to know what God has to say, not just about his own affairs, but regarding world activities and relationships to people. And even for those who are familiar with their Bible, there are always additional or amplifying verses to add to their understanding.

When you do turn to a reference, do not merely read the isolated verse. Go back and read what has preceded it and beyond to what follows. Only as a passage is taken in context can its entire meaning be revealed.

This is one of the advantages of your daily Bible reading. Each day you can come away richer in the knowledge of God's Word. Even days when his Word, that day's meditation, seems to have little meaning for your life, invariably you will find that you will have need of it at some future time. God has a way of supplying us beforehand for future demands and needs.

Prayer: Dear Lord help me truly to be a follower of yours, one who can handle your Work with wisdom and accuracy so that people may be drawn to you as Lord and God. AMEN