

## FRIDAY

### “THE PRESENT — OUR DAILY GIFT TO GOD”

#### SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 29:11-14; Proverbs 23:17, 18;  
1 Corinthians 3:21-23

“Gratitude looks to the past — lust and ambition look ahead . . . and love looks to the present.”

Does this mean we should not think of the future? No, it means we must not live for the future, for this often leads to unrealistic dreams that leave us shattered and embittered if they do not come true as *we* dreamed them. Both future and past will rob the present of our energy and imagination if we live in them.

God intends us to live in the present. It is the only area we can do anything about, and when we are committed to it, the successful Present becomes the satisfactory Past — and before we know it, we have moved on into the fulfilling Future we dream of — for we will have been creating this Future as we have been working on our Present today . . .

There can be no successful future without the successful now — yet how often we forget today, hoping for a miracle tomorrow.

How taken up are you with what you are doing now, right where you are whether you like it or not? When you are to look back on these years, will they seem wasted? Will you feel remorse, regret, shame that you did not see the potential in them?

*Prayer: Lord, help me to face each day with courage, trusting you to guide me, to strengthen me and to grant me the fulfillment of my todays that will insure a tomorrow that will be as you desire it. AMEN*

## SATURDAY

### “DESPERATION VERSUS HOPE — SATAN VERSUS GOD”

#### SCRIPTURE:

Isaiah 40:31; Philippians 3:12-16

The desperation which comes from failing in our efforts to be our best can be one of the most dangerous and Satanic threats to the Christian life. How delighted Satan would be to see us turn in exhaustion and disillusionment from The Way!

An Olympic marathon runner one day was asked what the hardest thing was for him in competition. He said, “The frightening urge to simply fall down and pretend exhaustion when I know I am not going to win. Sometimes this temptation is almost overwhelming, but I lick it by remembering that every time I overcome this urge, I do reach the tape; each time my endurance becomes greater. Now I no longer think of my fatigue. I remember my goal.”

This was the secret of Paul’s amazing endurance. He ran with the Goal in mind — not his own perfection but the fact that he was running for his Lord and was committed to the race.

So often we fail because we have disobeyed — not always but usually if we trace back our failure we find that we have:

1. Slackened in our praying.
2. Neglected spiritual nourishment.
3. Or become too concerned with other runners and our position to them.

*Prayer: Lord, I know you never throw obstacles in my way but that Satan is dedicated to making me fall. Help me not to give up but to look up and out to your love, your strength, and the prize which you hold for me. AMEN*

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2023

### “DETOURS THAT LEAD TO TRAPS”

#### SCRIPTURE:

Proverbs 1:23-33; 16:25

There are many seemingly harmless “detours” in daily life that are not as harmless as they seem for they often lead to habits, attitudes, and principles which eventually threaten our relationship with Christ and our actual direction in life. The more innocuous they are, the more danger they can bring: we seldom fear that which looks innocent.

For instance: have you fallen into the habit of procrastination, or putting things off until later? We often talk about being quick to follow God’s leading. If you put things off in daily living, you are sure to put off obeying God until later, and then usually it is too late.

Have you become a doubter, sneering or skeptical of most everything? How will you react should you decide to pray for something . . . with belief that God can do it if it is best for you? Or with doubt that prayer is even real?

Have you become a white-liar? Did you know that this often reaches into our ability to be truthful with ourselves and therefore in our relationship with God? We may keep reassuring ourselves that all is well — when actually we are a long way from God’s will for us.

Look to the habits you are forming now, no matter how old you are.

*Prayer: Lord, give me the courage to see my present habits and attitudes as you see them. I commit them now to thee. AMEN*

## TUESDAY

### “BEWARE THAT ENEMY”

#### SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 13:36-40; I Peter 5:8, 9; James 4:7, 8;  
Supplement reading: Matthew 13:24-30

Numerous times in Scripture Jesus warns his people of the enemy, Satan. Today this is a subject most people — including the churches shy away from. Why? In the first place, no one likes the idea of there being a real, conscious spirit of evil who very literally opposes and cunningly undermines whatever Christ wishes to accomplish here, who actually waits for us to move away from the will of God, out of the shadow and protection of his love into that area of disobedience and rebellion where Satan can reach him.

We would much rather think that we are free to do whatever we like, with no need to be either for God or against him; that we can disobey and not be siding with Satan.

But Christ says, “He who is not with me is against me.” There is no half-way house. If we are not positively and consciously living our lives for God, then we are putting them into the hands of Satan.

Therefore this knowledge of the struggle between Jesus and Satan for the souls and lives of men is important for the Christian to understand. Once we understand that either we serve God or Satan, that there is no in-between, the entire business of youthful disobedience, adult indifference becomes a sobering issue.

*Prayer: Lord, I know that you leave the choice of whom we follow up to us. Help me to commit myself more openly to you and your way. AMEN*

## WEDNESDAY

### “FEAR — THE STRAIGHT-JACKET OF HELL”

#### SCRIPTURE:

I John 4:15-18; Proverbs 28:1; II Timothy 1:7

God is Love, and perfect love casts out fear — and in reverse, fear casts out trust. Therefore, Satan will do all he can to create fear in us . . .

He does it through many ways:

1. Anxiety over the future: this is particularly treacherous because we cannot argue either for or against the future; man simply does not know. If he chooses to worry about it, no amount of logic or reason will talk him out of it. He will be bound by fear.

2. Ignorance of God’s promises for us: the man who does not know God’s plan for our forgiveness is fearful of everything — and well he might be. Eternity is a long time- and nothing is more frightening than the unknown. So the man who has not read God’s divine plan for his life, both now and in eternity, lives in fear of dying, of failing, of being alone, and of being forgotten.

3. Rebellion: a child who knows he has disobeyed is filled with fear. And so is the man or woman who knows somehow, eventually, his disobedience must be reckoned with. Most of these people keep putting off the day when they will begin obeying — and so they live in fear of “retribution” before they have had time to “change.”

So Satan uses these three areas to keep us in fear rather than in trust.

Are you held by any of them?

*Prayer: God, fear is so unnecessary in your plan for us. You have provided a way for us to be free of it, and we do thank you, Lord, for prayer. AMEN*

## THURSDAY

### “WE ARE WHAT WE GO THROUGH”

#### SCRIPTURE:

II Corinthians 6:16b-7:1

So often today we think of our attitudes as being unimportant to our development as people. We think we can be one thing one year and something else the next. We talk of going through “phases” — rebellion, disobedience, laziness, indifference, or negativism. And sometimes these are mere puddles we walk through on our way to becoming people.

But have you ever stopped to think how some adults became the way they are today? Somewhere along the line, they stopped too long in that puddle of nastiness, bad temper, coldness, or skepticism and they have taken on the stain and hue of that attitude.

Be very careful to take stock of the attitudes you adopt from time to time. Make sure they do not actually become *you*. Our minds and spirits are very absorptive and, like sponges, take in whatever they are pressed against for any length of time.

Each evening, let God empty you — press out the impurities of your life, so that none of the things which you pick up along the way can be absorbed and become part of you.

*Prayer: O God, I take life so casually, putting off so many things that I should be taking care of today. May I never forget that today I am becoming the person I will be tomorrow. Lord, I thank you for the second chance you give, for prayer, for forgiveness and for strength to be better. AMEN*