

Daily God Walk

A landscape photograph showing a field of tall grasses and small white and pink flowers. In the center, there is a bare, leafless tree with several thin branches reaching upwards. The background is a clear blue sky. The overall scene is bright and natural.

Promises Volume Three

Daily God Walk

Promises

Volume Three

© 2016 by Paul Smith – New Hope Ministry Resources

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission by the author.

All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV). All other translations used will be credited using these abbreviations:

(KJV) – King James Version

(NKJV) – New King James Version

(TLB) – The Living Bible

(TM) – The Message

New Hope Ministry Resources

PO Box 852 - Lucerne, CA 95458

www.nhmresources.org

paul@nhmresources.org

Day One

Our Life is Hidden in Christ

Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God... Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed. - Colossians 3:1-5

Paul is explaining the concept of our life being submitted to Christ in this passage. When we receive Christ we are taking on the nature of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is at war with our earthly nature so the only way He can live in us is for us to subdue our earthly nature.

We have proven many times over that we do not have the ability to subdue our earthly nature - so what is the answer? It is this: our life must be hidden with Christ in God. When our minds are set on things above, and our focus is on our life in Christ, then the desires of our sinful nature are "put to death," as Paul states it.

He is telling us how to do that. "Set your hearts on things above" and "Set your minds on things above," is the secret. As long as we are feeding the desires of our earthly nature we will be struggling with our faith walk. When we set our mind and heart upon Christ and things of eternal value then we become "hidden with Christ in God."

Make it a purpose today that you will submit your life to Christ, take control of your mind and heart, put to death the desires of the flesh and focus upon Holy Spirit and what he would have you to be.

Prayer: Lord, I am too easily distracted by the desires of my earthly nature. Grant me the ability to set my heart and my mind upon you and your way so that I will be hidden in Christ. In Christ's name. Amen.

Message: When we set our mind and heart upon Christ and things of eternal value then we become "hidden with Christ in God." As long as we are feeding the desires of our earthly nature we will be struggling with our faith walk.

Affirmation: I have chosen to set my heart and mind on things above and as I do that my life becomes hidden with Christ in God.

Reflection: We are instructed to set our heart and mind on things above - How are we to do that? A part of that process is to "put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature." Give some thought to how you can do that.

My Thoughts:

Day Two

Empowered To Be A Witness For Christ

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. - Acts 1:8

There is some discussion as to whether this passage is talking about the power to be a witness, or that our witnessing will be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Whatever side of that discussion you fall on you will agree with this statement; we are commissioned by Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a witness to the gospel.

God has made this most incredible gift of eternal life available to all who would believe, receive and act upon it. That is our opportunity, but when we take advantage of this opportunity we are also accepting a responsibility. The responsibility is to be a witness for Christ.

In Romans 10 Apostle Paul explains how one comes to believe. He asks, “How can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them” (v14)?

We who have received the Spirit of Christ are not only to be witnesses of what Christ has done, but we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that our witness has power.

One gospel singer used to sing a song that had these words in it, “How will they know if we don’t go.” We have been empowered to witness - let us not let the power go to waste.

Prayer: OK Lord, I have been enjoying the benefits of salvation but I haven’t taken seriously the responsibility of sharing the good news with others. I ask you today to grant me desire and sense of responsibility to share this life changing message. In Jesus Name. Amen.

Message: We who have received the Spirit of Christ are not only to be witnesses of what Christ has done, but we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that our witness has power.

Affirmation: I purpose to live a Spirit filled life so that my witness will be infused with Holy Spirit power.

Reflection: If followers of Christ are to be filled with the Holy Spirit, which comes with power, why are so many believers powerless over sin? And why is there no power in their witness? How should a person live to insure that he has Holy Spirit power?

My Thoughts:

Day Three

Jesus Is The Name of Deliverance

And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues. - Mark 16:17

Some years ago a gospel song writer wrote a song about Jesus. One of the lines in that song was, "Jesus, there's just something about that name." And there is something about that name. Paul wrote that, "God has highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name" (Philippians 2:9).

God has vested all of heavens resources in the name of Jesus - and Jesus has in turn given the authority and power of heaven to those who would believe. Jesus told us that those who believe in Him would do miraculous signs and wonders.

Your name, and my name, carries very little power and authority, but the name of Jesus carries with it all the authority of heaven and earth. If we can accept that truth then it is not hard to believe Jesus meant what he said when he told his followers they would do great miracles in his name.

Many believe that today the church is re-entering an era in which signs and wonders will be common place and that the name of Jesus will be heralded world wide as the name that releases all the resources of heaven to earth for the benefit of those who would believe.

Those who believe, and who are called, will be a part of this great move of God - will you be a part?

Prayer: Lord, I want to be a part of what you are doing and are planning to do in this time. Grant me faith to move in with you as you lead people into your grace. In Jesus name. Amen.

Message: God has vested all of heavens resources in the name of Jesus - and Jesus has in turn given the authority and power of heaven to those who would believe. Jesus told us that those who believe in Him would do miraculous signs and wonders.

Affirmation: There is power in the name of Jesus and I trust him to empower me to do the works he has done through his wonderful name.

Reflection: If you are among those who believe there will be a renewal of signs and wonders in these times many consider the last days, how do you see that working in your life? How can you be prepared for God to use you in that way?

My Thoughts:

Day Four

The Bible Is A Manual For Life

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. - 2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed. The very breath of God expressing his will and his plan for man. Could this God breathing be the same "wind" that Jesus spoke of in John 3 when he compared the Spirit to the wind? Could it be the same wind that was heard and felt on the day of Pentecost?

As God breathes upon man his will is revealed. Men who felt the very breath of God moving them to write have given us a manual for life. Paul said this God-breathed Scripture is to be used for teaching and training others in the way. It is to be used for correction to keep people in the way and when necessary it is to be used as a rebuke.

This God-breathed instrument is not to be looked at as just another good book with some good suggestions - it is meant to be our guide for life, giving us specific instructions on what to do and what not to do. It also warns of the consequences of not submitting to its direction.

A blessing of the Scripture is that we don't have to guess at God's will - He has made it plain to us. Proverbs 6:23 says, "These commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life." The light is there, but it's up to us to follow it.

Prayer: Lord, you know that far too often my will seems better than your will and it is hard to give in. Grant me the grace of faith in your revealed will. In Christ's name, amen.

Message: This God-breathed instrument is not to be looked at as just another good book with some good suggestions - it is meant to be our guide for life, giving us specific instructions on what to do and what not to do. It also warns of the consequences of not submitting to its direction.

Affirmation: I am committed to following the God-breathed instructions in the Bible because they are my guide for life.

Reflection: To what extent should you rely on the Bible to be a guide for your life? Should some of the teachings in the Bible be updated to be relevant to this generation? If you think some things should be changed, what would you change?

My Thoughts:

Day Five

Believers Have Passed From Death Into Life

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. - John 5:24

This is hope folks. We who are still in this body of flesh all share in common the problem of imperfections, occasional failures and the condemnation that accompanies those failures. There are times when we feel that we have lost it all and there is no hope for us. But hold on, this passage gives us hope in the most despairing of moments.

Rest assured, this passage means exactly what it says. We have passed from death into life. When we have received the gift of redemption through faith in Christ, we are born into the family of God and have been given the promise and the hope of eternal life.

Oh, I know there are a lot of “what ifs,” “I can’t’s” and fear that comes out of our own insecurities. But, in the middle of all that we are given the God-breathed promise that we are passed from death into life.

It is the job of the enemy of our soul to sow seeds of fear in our heart and cause us to feel condemnation when God no longer condemns us - Jesus has taken all of that condemnation and nailed it to the cross.

Paul reminds us that “there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1-2). Thank God - we have passed from death into life.

Prayer: Thank you for the comfort of this promise. I know you have redeemed me from death and I live in the hope that knowledge allows. Amen.

Message: Paul reminds us that “there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1-2). Thank God - we have passed from death into life.

Affirmation: Through faith in Christ I have passed from death unto life and there is now no condemnation in me because the law of the Spirit of life has set me free.

Reflection: Jesus told us that those who hear and believe in him, and in He who sent him, has eternal life and will not come into judgment. Give some thought to what that means to you. And, what does it mean to pass from death to life?

My Thoughts:

Day Six

Running Low On Confidence

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God and God is in him. In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. - 1 John 4:17-18

I have a friend whose past haunts him daily. When things aren't working out as he had hoped it becomes clear to him that God is judging him for something he has done. His problem is not in what he has done but in his lack of accepting God's love.

We must understand that God loves us based upon who he is not based upon who we are or what we have done. He has chosen to extend his grace to all who will come to him in faith and that should give us confidence.

It is faith in him that releases his loving acceptance to us and that gives us "confidence on the day of judgment." It is the presence of his love that drives out the fear of punishment and leads us to confidence in what he has done for us.

When God's love is perfected in us we will no longer be fearful of death or judgment because we know that he has already secured our hope in him.

Our past is not always those days of years ago; sometimes our past is just yesterday when we had that failure, or it could be today. God's love rescues us from our past.

Prayer: Lord, I tend to become a bit fearful when I consider my past. Help me to realize and fully accept that you have already forgotten my past and have prepared a wonderful future for me. I pray in Jesus name. Amen

Message: When God's love is perfected in us we will no longer be fearful of death or judgment because we know that he has already secured our hope in him. It is faith in him that releases his loving acceptance to us and that gives us "confidence on the day of judgment."

Affirmation: I have no fear of death and judgment because His love is being perfected in me and His perfected love drives out all fear.

Reflection: Our past, even as recent as yesterday, can haunt us if we are not living in His perfect love. Does your past sometimes cause you to worry about God's love? Surrender your past to Jesus and receive his loving grace.

My Thoughts:

Day Seven

Turn Loose of the Rope

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. - Isaiah 41:10

How many times have we looked at the circumstances and realized “I’m done for”? We’ve all been there. Just what do you do when you realize that you are at the end of your rope and you still aren’t even close to being able reach solid ground?

I was talking to a man once who felt he was at the end of his rope. He didn’t know what to do so I told him that conventional wisdom is to tie a knot and hold on, but my advice was to turn lose of the rope and trust God - after all he is the one in control anyway.

You see, as long as we are trusting in our resources (the rope and the knot at the end) we limit what God can do for us and through us. In this passage Isaiah is teaching us that God will be there for us, not according to our will and purposes, but according to his will and purposes.

Walking in faith demands that we take steps beyond what we can see in our own abilities. If we can see it with our natural vision faith is not required, but if we can’t see the outcome then we must take a step of faith. If you are walking in

faith, just turn lose of the rope and He “will uphold you with [His] righteous right hand.”

Prayer: Okay God, I’ve held on to this knot at the end of my rope for far too long. I am turning lose and trusting you. I can’t make it alone; I trust in you the only source of my strength. In Christ’s name. Amen.

Message: Walking in faith demands that we take steps beyond what we can see in our own abilities. If we can see it with our natural vision faith is not required, but if we can’t see the outcome then we must take a step of faith.

Affirmation: I know God will uphold me with His righteous right hand because I have turned loose of the rope and I am trusting Him.

Reflection: The concept of turning loose of the rope is about trusting God to do what He said he would do. What areas of your life do you need to turn loose of and trust God in?

My Thoughts:

Day Eight

The Temple Of God

You are...members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

- Ephesians 2:19-22

God is building a temple, a place for his holiness to dwell. This temple is not one hewn from stone, or built from wood taken from the forest - it is the temple of the heart; God is building his temple, the place where He abides, in the heart of mankind.

Let that thought process for a moment. The almighty God himself calling you and I His temple, the place where He lives. Man has built many beautiful edifices which he calls the house of God, but the temple where He lives on earth today is the temple of the heart.

Paul writes that this temple is built upon a certain foundation. It is the foundation of the prophets - those who came before and told of one who would come as savior of the world; and the foundation of the apostles - those to whom the message of Christ, the anointed redeemer, was entrusted.

They laid the foundation, we joined the body, and the Holy Spirit is building a house where God dwells. We are that house. Keep God's house holy and separated from the spirits and attitudes of this world.

Prayer: Father, I cannot fully grasp the concept of Almighty God dwelling in me, but I rejoice at the opportunity to be a house for your Spirit to dwell. Thank you for your grace. In Jesus name. Amen

Message: God is building a temple, a place for his holiness to dwell. This temple is not one hewn from stone, or built from wood taken from the forest - it is the temple of the heart; God is building his temple, the place where He abides, in the heart of mankind.

Affirmation: God has chosen to make His temple in the heart of every believer. I believe, therefore I am the temple of God and I will live accordingly.

Reflection: What does it mean to you to be the temple of God? How does that affect the way you live? Or, does that concept affect the way you live? How do we keep our temple holy?

My Thoughts:

Day Nine

He Fulfills the Desires of Those Who Fear Him

The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.

- Psalm 145:18-19

God promises to be near to all who call on him - but he puts a couple of conditions on that promise. The first condition is, "all who call on him in truth." The second condition is, "those who fear him."

Many people call on the Lord when they get in trouble. We call those folks, "fire escape" believers. That is, as long as they can handle things themselves they ignore God, but when it gets really bad they cry out, "Lord, help me."

The Lord will hear that cry if it comes from a heart that is surrendering to him. If you only want to be lifted out of the current situation so you can go about our business as usual, then he probably won't answer your cry because it isn't according to his revealed truth.

If our desire is not for God, but it is for the things of this world and we cry out to God concerning those desires, we are not promised that he will answer because our desire is not according to his truth, but it is motivated by our own sinful nature.

But, when our desire comes out of a heart that fears and has respect for the Lord then he will hear the cry of that desire and answer it. If the desire of our heart is to continue in our own ways, God will probably not answer that cry.

The answer? Seek him according to truth; respect him and he will hear you. When our desires come from him and are based in truth then we know he hears our cry.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to reach out to you according to your truth, and to allow you to set the desires of my heart according to your will. Here me I pray. In Jesus name. Amen.

Message: When our desire comes out of a heart that fears and has respect for the Lord then he will hear the cry of that desire and answer it.

Affirmation: I have heard the truth of God and obey it because I revere Him and he hears me when I cry out to Him.

Reflection: What are the two conditions put on the promise to hear and to save those who cry out to Him? Will God answer all of our desires, even when those desires are opposed to His will? Give some thought to the question of whether God will answer any cry or are there conditions he puts on those who cry out to him?

My Thoughts:

Day Ten

Jesus Is Your Shepherd - Protector

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me - just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep... My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. - John 10:14-15, 27-28

There are times when we just need a protector. It seems that on every turn there are enemies waiting to devour us. At times it even seems that our friends have forsaken us. At those times we must realize that Jesus is our shepherd protector.

Most of this tenth chapter of John is about Jesus as our shepherd. He starts off by talking about the sheep pen and that those who come into the sheep pen must come through the shepherd. All who come by any other way are thieves and have come to rob, kill and destroy (verse 10), but he contrasts himself with the thief by declaring, "I have come that they may have life; and have it to the full."

Do not forget there is a destroyer who seeks to prevent you and I from the abundant life God offers through faith in Christ. Our Shepherd realizes the danger and will protect us as long as we stay in the sheep pen.

He fights our battles, destroys the destroyer and keeps us secure in his protectorate. He is the

Day Eleven

The Word Of God Endures Forever

You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, “all men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.” - 1 Peter 1:23-25

Everything we can see around us is perishable. Erosion changes the face of the earth; once fertile land is now barren; some buildings have lasted for centuries, but the evidence of decay and ruin are beginning to show - everything in this earth is perishing.

But Peter tells us that we have been born of a seed that is imperishable and *that* seed has been given us through faith in the living and enduring word of God. The one thing that can be trusted in this entire world is the revelation that God has given to us through His word - His written word and His living word - Jesus Christ.

All the glory that man claims is like the grass and the flowers of the field - in a short while they become only a memory of the way it was - But there is a place where we can put our trust that will not change; its glory will not fade and its promises will not disappoint.

It is not hard to be carried away by the hopes and dreams inspired by the world around us. We see things we want and are told that whatever we

want we can have, whatever we can imagine we can receive. Even if we did get those things, what would we have? Hope that fades and dreams that fail - but “The Word of the Lord stands forever.” God never fails!

Prayer: Thank you Father for giving us your enduring word. The written word and the living word, Jesus the Christ. Grant me the grace to trust in the imperishable as the world around us crumbles and decays. In Christ’s name. Amen.

Message: We see things we want and are told that whatever we want we can have, whatever we can imagine we can receive. Even if we did get those things, what would we have? Hope that fades and dreams that fail - but “The Word of the Lord stands forever.” God never fails!

Affirmation: All that is in the world and all that appeals to the desires of my flesh, will pass away - But God's word will stand forever. I choose to follow God's word.

Reflection: Have you noticed how this world and its systems appeal to the comforts of our physical person? Why would that not be good for us? Read 1 John 2:15-17 and be able to explain what it means to love God more than the world.

My Thoughts:

Day Twelve

Replace Worry With Thankful Petitions

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 4:6-7

Life is not as simple as it used to be. My folks migrated to California during the dust bowl years of the 1930's. They lived in a tent and worked the crops. Life was simple. It was hard, but very simple.

As time went on they bought a truck and became produce truckers. Then they bought land and began to build houses, bought more trucks and pretty soon life wasn't so simple anymore.

As we become more involved in the things in this world that seem to be vital to our success we tend to become more stress prone and anxiety builds; we worry about this thing or that thing and we are constantly afraid it isn't going to work out. Our focus changes from survival to keeping what we have gained.

A challenge we have is balancing a desire for the blessings of God with being content with what we have been given. We can only be thankful in our petitions when we are content with God's answers to our requests.

This is just what Paul is writing about in the passage for today. He says, “Don’t be anxious about things - trust the Lord to work it out. Make your concerns known to Him and He will give you the peace that He will work it out.” All He asks is that we trust him and follow His direction.

Prayer: Lord, I do my best then worry that it isn’t enough. Grant me the grace to not worry about things that I should be submitting to you. I will trust you to be my provider. Amen.

Message: We can only be thankful in our petitions when we are content with God’s answers to our requests. Make your concerns known to Him and He will give you the peace that He will work it out. All He asks is that we trust him and follow His direction.

Affirmation: I am thankful and content with what God has provided. When I ask for something it is seasoned with thanksgiving what he has already done for me.

Reflection: It is easy to become stressed out over the circumstances we face in life. How can we deal with our challenges responsibly without being stressed out?

My Thoughts:

Day Thirteen

Struggling With Self Will

Where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness. - James 3:16-18

Ambition is a good thing, but when a person is ambitious there are a couple of questions that need to be answered. What are you ambitious to achieve? And, what is the motivation for your ambition?

The answer to those questions can be found by looking at the fruit of your ambition. What fruit have your ambitious efforts produced?

God given ambition will produce peace and will be submissive to the needs of the greater body. It will be filled with mercy and will be impartial and sincere. The fruit of godly ambition is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control (Galatians 5:22-23).

Seeds planted with godly ambition will produce a harvest of righteousness and all concerned will be blessed beyond measure.

It is good to ask yourself about your ambition. Determine the source; is it coming from your ego or selfish desire to achieve and acquire things? Or,

are you ambitious solely for the purpose of accomplishing God's will?

Prayer: Lord, I have found it difficult to determine the motivation behind my ambition. I ask you to show me where I need to make changes. In Jesus name. Amen.

Message: God given ambition will produce peace and will be submissive to the needs of the greater body. It will be filled with mercy and will be impartial and sincere.

Affirmation: My greatest ambition is to do the work of God as He reveals His will to me and my hope is that my life will have the fruit of godly ambition.

Reflection: It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between where God is leading and where our own ambition is leading. How can we tell the difference? What is the fruit of godly ambition?

My Thoughts:

Day Fourteen

When You Are Sick

Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. - James 5:14-15

Man was created in the image of God and it was God's intention that man should live forever. He put the tree of life in the Garden of Eden to give man eternal life.

We all know that man doesn't live forever - so what happened? Man sinned, and as a result, sickness entered into the earth. Just as sin was never God's plan for man, so sickness is not God's plan for man.

When we approach God concerning our sickness we should also throw in any sins we've committed. James in the Scripture for today links sickness and sin. That doesn't mean that every time we get sick it's because we have sinned, but it does imply that sin, as a condition of humanity, is the root cause of original sickness.

Have you ever wondered what would have happened if Adam and Eve, instead of hiding from God, would have fallen on their face before him and pled for forgiveness and submitted themselves to following wholly after Him?

The next verse in this passage in James says, “confess your sins.” As we do that and come to God with a clean slate we open the door of blessing even wider.

Prayer: Lord, I’m sick all too often, and when I look inside myself I see that I sin all too often too. I confess to you my tendency to sin, and the sickness that is in my body and ask your forgiveness and healing. In Your name. Amen.

Message: When we approach God concerning our sickness we should also throw in any sins we’ve committed. Sin, as a condition of humanity, is the root cause of original sickness. It is good to repent of being sinful when we approach God on any issue.

Affirmation: I confess that it is in my nature to sin so I constantly confess my sinful nature to God when I approach him for sickness or any other issue.

Reflection: Why do you suppose James connected sin to sickness in this passage? When we are sick does that mean we have sin in our life? Give some thought to the idea that the root cause of sickness in the world is original sin and the sinful nature of man.

My Thoughts:

Day Fifteen

Sinful Mind vs. Spiritual Mind

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. - Romans 8:6-8

The problem with the human way of thinking is that our perspective is so limited. We think in terms of our experience and what we can expect based on that experience. The Spirit of God that wants to guide us leads from the perspective of eternal truth and eternal effect.

Paul wrote in another place, "We see through a glass darkly." What that means is that we see through the filter of our earthly experience, but God wants to open our understanding to see and think through the Holy Spirit's understanding.

That is the struggle Paul was describing in today's Scripture reading. Our mind based on human experience and expectation is resisting the mind of the Spirit which leads from the perspective of eternal experience.

As long as we walk in the wisdom of our own nature we will always come up short of what God has planned for us. When we submit our mind to the way of the Spirit of God and walk according to His guidance, we will walk in life that is abundant and full.

Now is a good time to make the conscious choice that we will follow Christ wholeheartedly.

Prayer: Father God, I struggle with confusing my human reason with the way the Spirit would lead. Grant me the grace of being able to surrender my will and mind to your will and your mind. In the name of Jesus I ask. Amen.

Message: As long as we walk in the wisdom of our own nature we will always come up short of what God has planned for us. When we submit our mind to the way of the Spirit of God and walk according to His guidance, we will walk in life that is abundant and full.

Affirmation: I purpose to daily walk in the Spirit so my mind will not be controlled by my sinful nature.

Reflection: In our Scripture for today Apostle Paul is giving us a contrast between the mind controlled by our sinful nature and the mind controlled by Holy Spirit. How can a person determine whether he is motivated by his own mind or by the mind of God?

My Thoughts:

Day Sixteen

Jesus Delivers Us From the Effects of Sin

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

- Luke 4:18-19

The primary reason Jesus came was to bring deliverance to mankind from the effects of sin. He came to break the bondage to the flesh and its desires and to restore man to his original state of being in the image of God.

All of us are spirit beings held hostage in a temporal body. The flesh part of our person is very demanding, and if followed will lead us into bondage that is difficult if not impossible to break in our own power.

We all have our prisons of habits and addictions that were set in us from a very young age. Our life was formed after the way of the fleshly, temporal man, and all that is of the flesh leads to death and destruction.

Jesus came to introduce us to another way. The way of the Spirit of God. In this way there is a new life that Jesus called being born again - and it is very much that. We are born again on the inside. The new person living on the inside of every

believer will lead us into freedom from sin and the effects of sin.

Jesus addresses freedom in four areas of our life: Economic, physical, emotional and spiritual. He breaks the hold of sin in each of these areas. He makes provision for the poor; He comforts the broken hearted; He frees people from the bondage of undesirable behavior.

And in all of this he is declaring the year of God's favor.

Prayer: Lord, I accept your deliverance from my past behaviors and rejoice in the freedom that comes through you. I ask in Jesus name. Amen.

Message: The primary reason Jesus came was to bring deliverance to mankind from the effects of sin. He came to break the bondage to the flesh and its desires and to restore man to his original state of being in the image of God.

Affirmation: I have been released from bondage to my flesh and I am being restored to the person God intends me to be.

Reflection: Can you explain what it means to be born again? How do you see the Holy Spirit working in the four areas of our life this devotion mentions?

My Thoughts:

Day Seventeen

The Marriage Relationship

The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. - 1 Corinthians 7:3-4

The primary application of this Scripture is the marriage relationship in the bedroom, but the principles being applied go far beyond the bedroom.

I have counseled couples with a principle that, if applied, will make for a great marriage. It is simply this: in every aspect of your relationship ask yourself the question, "How can I help my spouse be more comfortable and more secure?" Then ask your spouse, "How can I help you."

The breakdown in relationship comes when we are thinking, "My spouse doesn't care about what I need or want, they just have their own agenda." As long as it is about "me" and what "I need," or what "I want," the relationship will be damaged.

Being married is about more than sharing a house and filing joint income tax returns. Being married means that I have become united to another person and whatever affects them affects me because we are one. We must give our spouse the same care and respect we would any other member of our body.

Purpose today to focus on the fact that your body, in fact your whole person, is not your own, you belong to another. Then ask how you can make the life of the other in your life better.

Prayer: This is a tough one Father. I have so many needs that I don't feel are being met that it is hard to look at the needs of my spouse. Grant me the grace to look through your eyes. I ask in the name of Christ. Amen.

Message: Being married is about more than sharing a house and filing joint income tax returns. Being married means that I have become united to another person and whatever affects them affects me because we are one. We must give our spouse the same care and respect we would any other member of our body.

Affirmation: I have learned to give my spouse the same respect, concern and consideration that I would like to have.

Reflection: Give some thought to what it would mean to you to ask yourself, "How can I help my spouse be more comfortable and more secure?"

My Thoughts:

Day Eighteen

Mystery Of The Kingdom Revealed

This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. - Ephesians 3:6

There are many mysteries in God and we will not understand most of them until we stand before him in eternity. Job 11:7 asks the question, "Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?" And, of course, the answer is that we can't - except where he has given revelation.

In our Scripture reading today Paul is revealing a mystery that was hidden through the ages. That revelation is that Christ has put into motion the plan of God which joins into one people all of mankind who will believe upon him.

The ancient mindset of Judaism was that there were two kinds of people on earth; Jews and everybody else. The Jews were God's chosen people and everyone else was no better than dogs. Jesus, the Christ, came to destroy that mindset and establish a new way of seeing the world. Now Jews and Gentiles are brought together as one in Christ.

What that means to us is that all of the promises in the Word of God, both Old Testament and New Testament, are made to this new, united and universal, family of God made possible by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

All of the promises belong to His united people, the body of Christ. In Christ there are no special people groups - we are all equal, joint-heirs with Christ and his entire body.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for the understanding that we have been born into your family and have become heirs to all that heaven has to offer. Grant me the understanding of all that this means to me in my walk of faith. In Jesus name. Amen.

Message: All of the promises in the Word of God, both Old Testament and New Testament, are made to this new, united and universal, family of God made possible by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Affirmation: All of the promises of God in both Old and New Testaments are for me because I have been born into the family of promise, the family of God.

Reflection: Why do you think God made Israel, in ancient times, a special group of people? Why do you think God has in this age united Jews and Gentiles into one family of God?

My Thoughts:

Day Nineteen

Prepare Your Minds for Action

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.

- 1 Peter 1:13-14

Our natural person is steeped in desires for self-satisfaction. The hope we have in our original state of being is that our natural cravings and desires would be satisfied. When we become born again that focus changes and our hope is in the grace God provides which enables us to be obedient to his will.

However, as long as we live in this body we will have times when our natural longings and desires begin to surface. That is when we need to follow the instruction of this passage and prepare our minds for action.

How do we prepare our minds for action? Peter gives two steps. First, be self-controlled. He seems to be saying that we should be intentional with our life. Don't just float along accepting whatever happens. The second is to set our hope on the grace of God.

We must get a focus on the hope that was instilled in us when we were converted. Peter says to, "Set your hope fully on the grace to be given

you.” The work of preparing our mind for action in the spiritual struggle is that we discover the thoughts that are drawing us away; we take those thoughts captive and we focus on thoughts that are in obedience to Christ. We focus on his way of thinking (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Prayer: Lord, I tend to drift back into old thought patterns and find myself looking at things in the old way. Grant me the grace of turning my focus completely upon you, your word and your way. In

Message: The work of preparing our mind for action in the spiritual struggle is that we discover the thoughts that are drawing us away; we take those thoughts captive and we focus on thoughts that are in obedience to Christ. We focus on his way of thinking (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Affirmation: I am becoming self-controlled as I practice taking captive every thought and making my thought processes consistence with the will of God.

Reflection: What are the two steps Peter gives believers to prepare our minds for action? How do you see yourself applying those steps in your own faith walk?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty

Strength for the Journey

Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. - Isaiah 40:31

The Hebrew word translated “hope” is qavah (pronounced kaw-vaw). Some versions translate this word as “wait,” and that is a good rendering, but it doesn’t give a very complete idea of what was intended. The word actually means “to bind together” as in twisting together - very much like how a rope is made. It is used figuratively as to expect, to look patiently for or tarry for.

What the prophet seems to be conveying here is the concept that when we are bound to the hope that God will intervene, we wait with expectation as we confidently look toward the fulfillment of his promises.

Jesus may have had this concept in mind when he told his followers to consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air when thinking about security and provision. God has positioned them to be recipients of all they needed to sustain themselves. Then He challenges them to seek His kingdom first and he would do the same for them (Matthew 6:25-34). Good things come to those who wait on the Lord.

It is this expectant waiting, this hoping in God’s promises, that releases God’s blessing, his strength

and his renewing. Truly, when we hope in Him He does renew our strength and we do soar like the eagles.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for your promises that give us strength to complete the tasks you have called us to complete. Grant me the ability to be bound to your promises and to the hope that has been given us through them. In Your name I ask. Amen.

Message: It is this expectant waiting, this hoping in God's promises, that releases God's blessing, his strength and his renewing. Truly, when we hope in Him He does renew our strength and we do soar like the eagles.

Affirmation: My faith is anchored in God's revealed will and. I am filled with expectant waiting because my hope is in the promises of a faithful God.

Reflection: Give some thought to the idea of being bound to the will of God and what that means in the context of hope in the Lord. How can you see this concept being demonstrated in the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 6:25-34?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty One

Comfort When You Feel Forsaken

Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me. - Isaiah 49:15-16

Every once in a while we get to feeling like we are on this journey alone. The prophet Elijah even had a time when he sat down and cried, "I'm the only one left serving you Lord." Sometimes friends don't understand us and sometimes family will reject us. It is during those times that we begin to feel all alone and in need of comfort and reassuring.

This passage comes out of a time when the people of Israel were feeling rejected and were crying out, "The Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me" (verse 14). The Lord hears their cry and answers, "I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands."

While writing this I suddenly had a thought (it is usually good to think while writing). When the Lord says, "I have engraved you on the palm of my hands," doesn't that cause you to think of Jesus on the cross? Could it be that God is telling the world that his love for them will be shown by the nail prints in his hands? Something to consider.

Even when it seems everyone else has left us, God says, "I am here. Hold on, have faith; I will be

your hope.” Circumstances don’t always reveal that He is with us, but when the day is done, He has been there beside us all the way. And, just like the poem *Footprints in the Sand*, when he is not beside us he is carrying us.

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for the promise that you will never forget us and that we are carved into your hand. Grant me the grace to accept that and not to become anxious when others walk away from me. In Jesus name I ask. Amen.

Message: Even when it seems everyone else has left us, God says, “I am here. Hold on, have faith; I will be your hope.” Circumstances don’t always reveal that He is with us, but when the day is done, He has been there beside us all the way. And, just like the poem *Footprints in the Sand*, when he is not beside us he is carrying us

Affirmation: When I am down I know I am not about to be out because He is there to lift me up and even carry me when I need Him to.

Reflection: Do you think the message of our name being engraved on His palm is related to the nail scars in the hands of Jesus? Can you remember a time when everything seemed so dark, then you felt the comfort of his abiding presence? Think about those times.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Two

Christ is Our Example Of Suffering

If you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.

- 1 Peter 2:20-21

Some folks have gotten the idea that once they receive Christ into their heart all of their problems are over. Now life is just a walk in the park and stopping to smell the roses. Then, in just a short while, they begin to realize that those roses have thorns.

The life of Christ is radical and runs counter to what is normal for a person. People often do not understand what has made you different, and when you try to explain it they can't see it. It is like you have entered another world that your friends and relatives are blinded to, and you have. You have been born again into the kingdom of God - you are a citizen of God's world.

Those who don't understand the life you now live will sometimes persecute you for your new found faith. In some cultures new believers are even subject to execution. This kind of persecution is not new to you, neither is it new to this generation. Christ suffered rejection, humiliation and crucifixion - He was our example in suffering, we should expect no less.

Most of us are not called to suffer as Christ and as millions of Christian martyrs have suffered, but he has called us to endure whatever we must to complete our journey of faith. To do that we must rely upon his grace.

Prayer: Father, I don't do suffering well. I ask that you grant me the grace to accept what trials come my way without complaint, remembering Christ is my example. In Your name I ask. Amen.

Message: Christ suffered rejection, humiliation and crucifixion. He was our example in suffering, we should expect no less. Most of us are not called to suffer as Christ and as millions of Christian martyrs have suffered, but he has called us to endure whatever we must to complete our journey of faith.

Affirmation: By God's grace I am prepared to endure whatever I must in service to my Lord.

Reflection: The concept of enduring persecution, and even death is difficult to accept, yet, this passage declares, "To this you were called because Christ suffered for you." How do you feel about that?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Three

Forgiving Others is Not An Option

If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. - Matthew 6:14-15

Have you ever said, "I'll forgive them but I'll never forget it?" I think we all have said that but if that is the way we feel about it have we really forgiven them?

What does it mean to forgive someone? The dictionary says it is to cease feeling resentment against an offender; to give up resentment of or claim to requital for an insult. When we forgive we are releasing any feeling of obligation on the part of the other party. We treat them as if it had never happened.

Scripture tells us that when God forgives us he remembers our sins no more. When we truly forgive someone we no longer carry around the memory of the offense. Oh, I'm not saying that we will never again remember what happened, but we will not remember it in the same way.

Jesus makes the point very clear; In order to have forgiveness we must accept a forgiving spirit. If we have forgiven we have given up resentment toward that person and we have no desire to avenge the offense. It's all part of the process of being restored to the image of God.

It would be good to ask this question: Who is affected when I carry unforgiveness? How does it affect the other person? Face it; unforgiveness only affects you. Forgive and get over it.

Prayer: Lord, there are many things that I thought I had forgiven, but when I remember them I still have those feelings of resentment toward the offender. Grant me the grace of being able to truly forgive those who have wronged me. In Jesus name. Amen.

Message: Jesus makes the point very clear; In order to have forgiveness we must accept a forgiving spirit. If we have forgiven we have given up resentment toward that person and we have no desire to avenge the offense. It's all part of the process of being restored to the image of God

Affirmation: God has given me the grace to forgive others their offences toward me, now I am trusting Him for the grace to forget the offence as well.

Reflection: If you have "forgiven" someone, yet you feel a bit of anxiety whenever you are around them, have you really forgiven them? How can we forgive and forget?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Four

The Righteous Live By Faith

I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel, a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written; “The righteous will live by faith.” - Romans 1:16-17

From the time that God began to reveal himself to mankind man has been trying to live out the divine purpose in his own abilities. God said, “Do this,” and man got busy trying to do it.

The problem we have all faced is that we would like to follow God, but the nature of our humanity is to fulfill our own desires. That causes an inner conflict; we want to do what is right but we are consistently drawn into a selfish motive - we wind up doing what is natural for man to do.

Paul reveals to us a new kind of righteousness. It is the righteousness that we cannot achieve on our own. It is the righteousness that comes from God through our faith in the gospel of Christ. It is the righteous nature of the Christ which is imputed to us when we are born of His Spirit.

God revealed His will for us in the Law he gave Moses. What that law also revealed is that we do not have the natural ability to fulfill the requirements of the Law. That brings out the beauty of the gospel of Christ - The Law showed us

Day Twenty Five

The Word Of God Is Living And Active

The Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

- Hebrews 4:12

Have you ever been reading the Bible and all at once a Scripture that you have read many times just comes alive to you? It's like you read it for the first time and it penetrates to your heart. You are convicted by this living word and you are changed by this old, yet living oracle of God.

The book we call the Bible is just paper and ink, but the words are full of God's life and Spirit. There is not only instruction that we endeavor to follow, but there is also divine power in what it tells us to do. As we submit to its wisdom, and the revelation of God we find written there, we release his power to work in us.

The Word of God is expressed beyond what is written. There is the Word of the Spirit that comes to us in prayer and meditation. That Word of God judges even the thoughts of our heart and draws us to surrender our hopes and dreams into his care.

When Jesus spoke to the woman at the well in John four he said, "A time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth." Worshipping the father

in truth is living according to his word; worshipping the father in spirit is listening to how the Spirit speaks His word to our heart.

Prayer: Thank you for your living word dear Father. You have given us instruction that inspires hope and faithfulness. I ask you for the grace to hear what your word says and to allow the power of your word to live through me. Grant me the desire to obey your word even as it is discerning the very intent of my heart. I ask in Jesus name. Amen.

Message: The Word of God is expressed beyond what is written. There is the Word of the Spirit that comes to us in prayer and meditation. That Word of God judges even the thoughts of our heart and draws us to surrender our hopes and dreams into his care. Worshipping the father in truth is living according to his word; worshipping the father in spirit is listening to how the Spirit speaks His word to our heart.

Affirmation: I read the written Word to know God's truth. I listen carefully to the Spirit as he guides me in applying the truth.

Reflection: Give some thought to the difference between the written word and the Spirit of the word.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Six

Life is a Spiritual Struggle

Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. - Ephesians 6:10-12

Every day we face new battles in our faith walk. We war with our own fleshly desires. We war with spiritual forces that would destroy our faith. We war with the spirit of the world and all it has to offer. But ultimately, it is a spiritual war and we must be prepared to meet the struggle with all the tools available to us.

This passage in Ephesians gives some instruction on how to prepare for the battle by putting on the armor that God has provided for this struggle. It would be good to spend time praying and studying to see just what it means to you to put on the whole armor of God.

The purpose of this devotion is just to draw your attention to the fact that you are daily facing forces in your walk which seek to get you off the path of faith and back on the path of self reliance.

You are in a war - put on the armor and get ready for battle. No general sends his soldiers into war untrained and unequipped and neither has

God sent us to war without preparing us in the Spirit and equipping us with armor.

Prayer: Lord, I struggle with issues of the flesh and sometimes fall to temptation. Give me understanding of the nature of the struggles I have and give me the purpose of putting on the whole armor of God. In Jesus name. Amen.

Message: You are in a war - put on the armor and get ready for battle. No general sends his soldiers into war untrained and unequipped and neither has God sent us to war without preparing us in the Spirit and equipping us with armor

Affirmation: I am equipped and prepared for the spiritual war being waged around me because I have on the armor of God.

Reflection: Apostle Paul tells us the our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with spiritual powers. How do you see that we are to war against the rulers, the authorities, the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Seven

Encourage One Another Daily

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. -Hebrews 3:12-14

It is not at all unusual to grow weary in doing what is right and to begin to look around at the world with longing. There are times when the flesh, our natural desires, begins to creep in and we begin to lose our passion for God.

When we find ourselves in the condition of our desire for God beginning to cool we need someone to come along beside us to keep us encouraged. At the very center of this passage is the instruction to "encourage one another daily."

Being in fellowship with other believers who care for our spiritual well being is critical to walking consistently in our journey of faith. How often has it happened that we are having a bad day and a strong believer comes along to remind us of the goodness of the Lord giving us strength.

A few years ago while living in Springfield, Missouri, a group of us men from the church would meet for breakfast once a week. We weren't very religious at those breakfasts, but spiritual work took place just the same. I miss those times

together when we talked about sports, hunting, fishing and sometimes God.

We are told to care for one another to make sure that none of us become hardened by sinful desires.

Prayer: Lord, when I am struggling send me a friend to encourage me. And Lord, when I see my friends struggling help me to encourage them in their journey of faith. In Jesus name. Amen.

Message: Being in fellowship with other believers who care for our spiritual well being is critical to walking consistently in our journey of faith. We are told to care for one another to make sure that none of us become hardened by sinful desires

Affirmation: Staying in close fellowship with other believers and spiritual leaders helps keep me on the straight path.

Reflection: It is easy for our lives to get so full of activity that we neglect one of the most important to our journey of faith, and the journey of others. Give some thought to how you can encourage other believers daily and how you can receive encouragement from them.

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Eight

A Promise for Financial Blessings

All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God...The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. The Lord will make you the head, not the tail. - Deuteronomy 28:2-14

Sometimes we feel that we are living in obedience, but the blessings still aren't flowing, and we ask, "Why?" That is what Job's friends asked. They said, "Job, it is pretty clear; you are under the judgment of God. What have you done to offend Him so?" Nearly the whole book of Job is exploring that question.

So, what does it mean when we serve God faithfully and the needed blessings are not apparent? It means that God in his sovereignty and foreknowledge is arranging the circumstances of your life so that he can give you ultimate blessing when the time of the blessing will have the greatest benefit.

Look again at Job. When his time of testing was over he had double of everything he had lost. His continued obedience opened the door of blessing. Faithful obedience will be ultimately rewarded.

We walk by faith, not by sight and sometimes we cannot see the fruit of the promise we have

embraced, but we must hold fast for times of refreshing and blessing are coming.

Just a side note. He promised to "bless all the work of your hands." If we just "wait" for the blessing it will not come. We must be diligent in the work of our hands to be blessed.

Prayer: Lord, I need to look at the big picture and not just my situation now. I am trusting you and being faithful in service because I know that you are faithful. In Christ's name I ask. Amen.

Message: We walk by faith, not by sight and sometimes we cannot see the fruit of the promise we have embraced, but we must hold fast for times of refreshing and blessing are coming.

Affirmation: I am strong in the faith, even in times of severe trial, because I know that God is working things out for my ultimate benefit.

Reflection: What do you think it means when you live a righteous life yet blessing and prosperity don't seem to be your lot? Can you see any parallels between the trials and ultimate blessing of Job and your own life?

My Thoughts:

Day Twenty Nine

About Loving One Another

If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. - John 14:10-12

There is something very powerful being taught in this passage. It is not just about loving one another - it is about a level of commitment to Him and to others that could, at some point, require the ultimate sacrifice.

Jesus is telling us that the condition of His love remaining in us is that we are obedient to His commands just as He is obedient to the Father's will. He is not ambiguous about what that means. In the next verse he says, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

When we love Him as He has instructed we will put nothing above Him: not our desires, our fears, or our will. He is first above all else. Then he calls us to love one another in the same manner.

James poses the question of how we should love one another by asking, "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well

fed,” but does nothing about his needs, what good is it?” (James 2:15-17)

We must surrender our will for the good of the other; we must sacrifice our desires to bless others. And yes, if need be, lay down our life for Him and others.

Prayer: Lord, I want to love as you have loved me, but I need your grace to love others as you have loved me. Grant me the ability to be others-centered not self-centered. In Jesus name. Amen.

Message: When we love Him as He has instructed we will put nothing above Him: not our desires, our fears, or our will. He is first above all else. Then he calls us to love one another in the same manner.

Affirmation: It is not always easy, in fact it is rarely easy, to love God and others above my own ambition and desires, but I am committed to that path.

Reflection: Jesus said, "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love." Does that mean if we don't obey Him He will not love us? Or, does it mean that if we are in disobedience the blessings of his love will be withheld?

My Thoughts:

Day Thirty

Faith In Action

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," But does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. - James 2:12-17

If the faith that we have received is all about what God can do for us, is it the same faith that Jesus taught? Some today want us to believe that serving God is like putting money in the bank; you make your regular deposits (into their ministry of course) and God sends you regular blessings. That isn't faith that's making a deal.

The faith Jesus taught was the kind that sent people out to serve others. Jesus himself was the example we are to look to. He said, "I didn't come to be served I came to serve."

The kind of faith which leads one to repentance and to being born again is the kind of faith that demands action. It drives us to good works so that we don't just send a brother on his way telling him to be warm but we provide a bed and a blanket to make sure he is warm.

It might be time to ask ourselves, "When was the last time I went out of my way to help someone else and sacrificed to see that they were comforted?" It

is easy to say, “Be warmed, be fed and be blessed,” but more than words are required to demonstrate the faith Jesus taught and the early believers practiced. Think about it.

Prayer: Lord, I am guilty of thinking of faith only in terms of what do I get from it. Grant me the grace of being able to see the needs of others and as a gesture of my faith offer gifts that answer their need. In Christ’s name I ask. Amen.

Message: The kind of faith which leads one to repentance and to being born again is the kind of faith that demands action. It drives us to good works so that we don’t just send a brother on his way telling him to be warm but we provide a bed and a blanket to make sure he is warm.

Affirmation: My faith demands action. I show my faith by serving others in the name of Christ.

Reflection: How does proving your salvation by serving others compare to being saved my grace without having to do any works? Which of those is correct; or are they both correct, but one talks about becoming saved and the other addresses how to act when you are saved.

My Thoughts:

Day Thirty One

Freedom From the Law of Sin And Death

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. - Romans 8:1-2

What a hope! “There is therefore no condemnation.” We were born into a world of sin and began to sin before we even realized what we were doing. We lived under the sentence of death as a human and eternal death as a sinner - then, without any merit on our part, Jesus paid the price for our redemption.

Therefore, because of what Christ has done, there is no condemnation to those who walk by faith in Christ. The law of sin demands death - and Christ paid that debt. Now we are free from the law that demanded death for our sins.

Because we understand that, we walk in faith, committed to Christ, so that we do not fall back into the sinful patterns that were driving us toward eternal death.

Paul, in this passage in Romans, goes on to relate how the law was powerless over our sin nature; it remedied our sin but could do nothing about our tendency to sin. Jesus not only forgave our sins but he freed us from sinning.

In another place Paul writes, “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free” (Galatians 5:1). We are not free to sin, but we are freed from sin.

Prayer: Father, I thank you for what was accomplished by Jesus on the cross. Thank you for the relief from condemnation that I was under before I found Christ. I ask you for the grace to continue serving Christ in faith. In Jesus name. Amen.

Message: Therefore, because of what Christ has done, there is no condemnation to those who walk by faith in Christ. The law of sin demands death – and Christ paid that debt. Now we are free from the law that demanded death for our sins.

Affirmation: I have received Jesus, the Christ, as my savior and Lord and He has freed me from the condemnation of the Law.

Reflection: "There is no condemnation." What a hope! Give some thought to 1) what it is that condemns us; 2) how we are freed from that condemnation.

My Thoughts:

Have you considered hosting a Small Group Bible Study?

The Daily God Walk is written with a dual purpose. First it is a devotional tool that helps the reader grow in their walk of faith. But, a second purpose, is to be a tool to be used in leading a small group.

Each devotion has a second page which has a dual purpose. It helps the reader deepen his faith walk and it gives material suitable for use in small groups Bible Studies.

The second page of each devotion includes:

- ✓ A section that focuses on the message brought out in the devotion. This section is an excellent tool for beginning a discussion about the devotion.

- ✓ The message section is followed by an affirmation. The affirmation is good to be used in prayer and meditation. When we personalize the principle by affirming it in prayer it becomes a part of us.

- ✓ The reflection section provides some very good material for discussion. This section usually gets to the heart of what is being taught in the devotion

and contains statements or questions which help stimulate discussion.

✓ Finally, there is a section where the reader can share their thoughts on the devotion. This section is a very good tool to help the reader begin to journal on a regular basis. It is also good for a person to record their comments and questions about the devotion so they can bring them out during the small group discussion time.

For more information on how to use the Daily God Walk in the small group setting visit the website below: www.dailygodwalk.org