

# Daily Devotions

## Monday, Feb. 1: Acceptance

***Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.***

Romans 12:15

“If God accepts me as I am, then I had better do the same.”

We live in a competitive world where it is difficult for many people to find joy in the success of others. How do you feel when a friend gets a promotion? When someone else in the company wins the award? When a classmate gets the top score on a test? When a sibling gets an incredible return on an investment? Do you feel instant joy or pangs of resentment and jealousy?

We are often much better at comforting someone in their times of sorrow than sincerely celebrating their moments of triumph.

Learning to respond with appropriate emotions is very important. A sullen frown during a time of rejoicing is not appropriate. A laughing and light-hearted spirit is often not appropriate in a room that is filled with brokenness and grief. As believers, we need to be sensitive to the needs of those around us, allowing the Holy Spirit to show us how to respond to the emotional climate in which we find ourselves. If we respond properly, we can be a blessing. But if we respond inappropriately, we can hurt people's feelings and either dampen their joy or deepen their sorrow. Let the Holy Spirit be your Teacher and show you how to emotionally respond to the various situations of life. He knows exactly what response is needed and will make you a master of appropriate responses in every situation of life.

The answer is simple but difficult: we must first realize our own success is measured in the eyes of God - not in comparison with others. When that sinks into our hearts and minds, it is so much easier to rejoice in the success of others. Sincerely.

PRAYER:

*Father, Thank You for defining success in my life. I ask You to help me know how to respond appropriately to those who are around me. When they rejoice, help me put aside my own struggles and problems and enter into rejoicing with them. Holy Spirit, Thank You for blessing me and for blessing those around me. Amen*

## Tuesday, Feb. 2: *Serving God*

***Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters. The person will hate one master and love the other, or will follow one master and refuse to follow the other. You cannot serve both God and worldly riches."*** Matthew 6:24

José Ortega y Gasset said this: "Tell me to what you pay attention, and I will tell you who you are."

Where we spend our money, what we focus our attention on, and how we spend our time tells a lot about who we are. Unfortunately, often our "things" take priority over relationships, prayers, or even our worship of God.

This is not to say that all material things are bad; in fact, God often blesses us with material things so we can be generous to others. Instead, we need to understand this as a matter of the heart. What are we cherishing above all else? What are we giving value to?

So who are you? Do your actions show that you are attempting to serve two masters? Are you idolizing your things and your money, while still trying to declare God as the only one worthy of praise?

PRAYER:

*Father, thank You for Your provisions in my life. Thank You for Your blessings. Lord, I am running to You! I want to be as close to You as I can possibly be! I don't want even the smallest hint of worldliness in my life. I want to be like You, to think like You, and to please You in every part of my life — my family, my job, my relationships, and my finances. Holy Spirit, if there is any part of me that has been influenced wrongly by the world, I ask You to please show it to me and help me get it corrected. Please help me to remember to appreciate and worship You, the Giver, instead of idolizing the gifts themselves. In Jesus' Name, I pray, Amen.*

## Wednesday, Feb 3: Expectation

Are you expecting the works of God to be displayed in our nation? Then take your place now in prayer; for it is prayer that will produce the spiritual awakening our nation so desperately needs. God is moving and America will be saved if God's people who are called by His name will seek first His righteousness and pray in the light of His Word.

***"Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you My message." So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.*** Jeremiah 18:2–4

R.C. Sproul wrote, "The Spirit brings order out of chaos and beauty out of ugliness. He can transform a sin-blistered man into a paragon of virtue. The Spirit changes people. The Author of life is also the Transformer of life."

This year, The United States of America will celebrate 255 years of American history. Thank God for the foundation of "liberty and justice for all" that our nation was built on!

Pray that America would remain a place of freedom and justice for the oppressed, and that the American people would turn to God our Father in times of plenty as well as in times of need.

You see, the potter must remake his vessels when there is a flaw in the clay that will cause it to crack later or when the color smears and he cannot get it to blend perfectly. He knows his craft and he knows when to take it down from his wheel and start all over to remake it into a fine vessel that will appeal to customers and serve the one who buys it.

In the same way, God knows us intimately - He did create us, after all - and knows how to shape us into who He created us to be. He uses different ways - often tests and trials - to make us more like Jesus. The process is lengthy and often painful, but we will be amazed by God's handiwork in the long run if we simply submit to His loving hand.

### PRAYER:

*Lord, sometimes I get scared. I feel unable to meet the challenges in front of me. Help me remember that You are working in and through me. Father God, I realize that it is better to obey You than man. As we face the days ahead of us — when laws passed by high courts may conflict with the law of God — give us the courage to stick by Your law and do what You say. This will take great strength of will, so I ask*

*You, Holy Spirit, to give me the inward fortitude to do what is right, regardless of what the world around me says. In Jesus' Name, I pray, Amen!*

## **Thursday, Feb. 4: Love and Devotion**

***But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*** Romans 5:8

If we want proof of God's love for us, then we must look first at the Cross where God offered up His Son as a sacrifice for our sins. Calvary is the one objective, absolute, irrefutable proof of God's love for us.

You may know that God cares for you and loves you, and that He demonstrated His love for you by dying on the cross for you, but do you believe it? It is one thing to know about the love that God has for you, but another thing to actually believe it in your heart.

What do you think God wants most from you? Acts of obedience and service, or your devotion and love?

The Bible tells us God lavished His love on us before we did anything to deserve it by sending us His Son. Charles Finney wrote, "God commends His love towards us in order to win our hearts to Himself, and thus get us ready and fit to dwell forever in His eternal home."

God wants our obedience, true. But He wants obedience that flows out of our love for Him, which flows from His love for us.

God made the first move in His relationship with us by showing us He loved us.

When we follow His lead by loving others, we and they are richly rewarded.

When you feel unworthy because you have just blown it for the umpteenth time, know and believe that your heavenly Father still offers you the gift of no condemnation. So come boldly to His throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace (see Hebrews 4:16).

Whatever your challenges today, abide in the Lord's love for you. Make a conscious, personal decision to major on His love for you instead of the negative forces against you. That's how you conquer the giants in your way!

**PRAYER:**

*Father, thank You for showing how You love me by sending Your Son to die. Help me to respond with love for You and love for others. How I thank You for loving me so much that You gave Your life to die on the cross at Calvary to pay the penalty for every sin I have ever committed, for Your full and free pardon, and for the gift of*

*eternal life for all who accept You as their personal Savior. For this I will be eternally grateful. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer. In Jesus's Name, Amen.*

## **Friday, Feb. 5: Contentment**

***I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.***      Philippians 4:12

Instead of focusing so much on what you don't have and what didn't happen, be grateful for what you do have. This doesn't come naturally to me, probably not for you either, and not even for the apostle Paul, who said, "I have learned to be content." Being content is a learning process.

We all have things in our lives that we can't change. They run a broad spectrum between minor annoyances, like a family member's persistent, annoying behavior, and real tragedies, like the loss of someone close to us.

But even in situations that are beyond our control, we can choose how we respond. The wisdom of St. Francis's "Serenity Prayer" reminds us that we can't change some situations and we can't change other people, but we can change ourselves.

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.  
Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as a  
pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have  
it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may  
be reasonable happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next.  
Amen

We can modify our own response to that annoying family member. We can adopt a positive attitude in sticky circumstances. In other words, we can choose joy. And even during those moments when we can't change our emotions, when grief overwhelms us, we can still choose God. When we do, we are accepting His promise to bring joy into our lives.

### **PRAYER:**

*Lord, I want to choose joy today. Fill me with Your Holy Spirit and give me wisdom to respond rightly to everything in my life. Please help me to find and know the peace that only You can give. Help me today and always to be ever ready to serve and glorify You in everything I am and do. No matter what setback happens to me,*

*whether it is my fault or that of another, please help me not to become bitter but better by using it as an opportunity to help me to grow and become the person you envision for me to be. In Jesus' Name, I pray, Amen!*

## **Saturday, Feb. 6: Are You Listening?**

***Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."*** Isaiah 30:21

Four-year-old Beverly was playing with her toys. Her mother, who was folding laundry across the room, noticed that Beverly's shirt was dirty and needed to be changed. She told Beverly to take it off and bring it to her so that she could wash it. After telling her twice with no response, her mother finally gave her the full three-name call: "Beverly Elizabeth Provost, did you hear me?" Beverly answered, "Yes, Mama. My ears did, but my legs didn't."

Sometimes we don't hear God's directions because we're simply too busy; we're not listening with our whole being. What is God calling you to do today? Are you ready to listen with your legs as well as your ears?

As a child of God, you don't have to try to hear your Father's voice. Your confession of faith should be, "I know the voice of my Father." Jesus also said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27). Believe you will hear Him as you ask Him for wisdom.

*"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). In reality, we "let" our light shine as an act of our will. It is our choice to obey God and His Word and to let our light shine. Today I want to encourage you to surrender yourself afresh to do the will of God, no matter what. If your will is strong and it is closed or opposed to God's will, it may take time for you to come to a place of surrender and total understanding. If that's true about you, just be real with Him and pray this from your heart:*

**PRAYER:**

*Father, help me to be still and listen to You so that I know what You want me to do. I ask You for Your grace to embrace the place where You have called me. As I do what You are asking me to do, I release my faith to believe I'll experience joy and victory and that my steps will be fruitful for Your glory. Father, open my eyes to see*

*Jesus in all His glory, beauty and love toward me. I am ready to receive an impartation of life and be transformed!" In Jesus' Name, I pray, Amen!*

## **Sunday, Feb. 7: We Are Overcomers**

***...In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*** John 16:33

It is true to say that God never changes. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever," Hebrews tells us (13:8). But that verse is referring to His nature: He is always good and holy and loving and merciful. It is also true to say that often what changes most when we pray, is us.

We ask God to change a situation and instead He changes us. He doesn't always make our burdens smaller; sometimes He makes us stronger.

But sometime our prayers convince God to intervene in a situation in a way He would not have had we not prayed. Because of the Hebrew children's flagrant disobedience, God intended to destroy them (Exodus 32:9).

But Moses prayed that God would not do so, and God changed His mind (vv. 11–14). Have you ever considered that you can convince God to act in a brand new way in a situation because He responds to the urgency of your heart and prayers? This in no way makes God less or smaller than He is. But it does show that He responds to the prayers of His children.

### **PRAYER:**

*Father, thank You for loving me so much that You take time to listen to my heart, my prayers, what's on my mind—and You respond! Father, I thank You that You sent Jesus — and that Jesus has overcome the world in every respect. Regardless of what the devil tries to do, Jesus has already overcome it. I do not have to lose heart or be discouraged. I can lift my head, throw my shoulders back, and rejoice, because Jesus has overcome the world and deprived it of its power to harm me. I am more than a conqueror through Jesus Christ, who has given me His overcoming power to make me triumphant in this life! Lord, I am so thankful that You have overcome the world and given me the power to overcome it! I am so sorry for the times I've allowed my flesh to whine and complain when I should have been digging in my heels and*

*latching on to the power of the Holy Spirit. I know that even though victory is mine, I must take it and make it my own. Please help me take charge of my whining, complaining flesh so I can reach out by faith to seize the power of the Holy Spirit — the very thing I need to make me a winner in my situation today. I thank You in advance for this inflow of power! In Jesus' Name, I pray, Amen!*