

Daily Devotions

Monday, Jan. 25: *It's Time to Take a Stand*

Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you.

Jeremiah 1:17

“The gospel alone is sufficient to rule the lives of Christians everywhere. Any additional rules made to govern men's conduct added nothing to the perfection already found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” John Wycliffe

Eric Liddell, known as the "Flying Scotsman," was an Olympic runner—and a minister of the gospel. He took a strong stand when he refused to compete in a race because the meet was held on a Sunday. Rather than running, Eric was at church preaching as the games continued without him. He was faithful to what he knew was God's will in his life.

Since that day in 1924 his testimony has ministered to thousands of people, young and old, as they have struggled to determine the right thing to do in similar circumstances to those Eric faced. Eric later went on to be the winner of the 400 meter race at the 1924 Summer Olympics held in Paris—he chose to honor God with his decisions, and he was blessed with success. His passion for running was evident, but his love and commitment to Christ, who gave him the ability to run, was foremost in his heart and mind.

When you know God's will in a specific area of your life, do you obey? Do you receive the blessing He has for you?

PRAYER:

Father, I am not always quick to obey. Help me to see the wisdom and experience the riches of living for You! In Jesus' Name, I pray, Amen.

Tuesday, Jan. 26: *Effective Prayer*

Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.
John 11:41-42

How can you be faithful to those around you? One of the best things you can do is pray for them and the challenges they face.

The word for “intercession” means to appeal to God on behalf of someone else. Perhaps today you are sensing the Holy Spirit’s leading to pray for someone who is unable to pray for himself, for a novice believer who simply doesn’t know how to pray effectively, or for a government leader whose spiritual condition and unwise decisions are negatively affecting masses of people.

In other words, you feel called to assume an intercessory position and to focus your prayers toward a specific individual or situation.

When this is the case, it will be easier for you when first made sure your own heart is clear of clutter to pray for others free from any selfish agenda or wrong attitude. Evangelist D. L. Moody wrote, "All through the Scriptures you will find that when believing prayer went up to God, the answer came down. Pray faithfully for others, and you just might see big things happen in their lives. And let them know you're praying for them, and you'll certainly lighten their load."

Pray that God will give them wisdom. Pray that they will be filled with joy. That they will find the strength they need to keep going. Pray for someone who could use a fresh dose of encouragement today.

PRAYER:

Father, in Jesus' Name, thank You for the gift of prayer. Thank You for the effect it has on our lives and the lives of others.

Today I come to You thanking You for the Holy Spirit who leads me and guides me into all truth. Your Word is filled with promises that meet every need in my life.

Thank You for directing me to find Your promises that apply to the specific situations in my life right now and others. Holy Spirit, once You have enabled me to find those promises, I purpose in my heart to come to the Father in confidence and assurance as I submit specific, detailed requests to the concrete needs I am facing in my life .

You have commanded me to ask that I might receive and that my joy would be made full. From this point onward, I commit myself to honor You with specific requests when I pray! AMEN!!

Wednesday, Jan. 27: *The Word Works*

We couldn't be more sure of what we saw and heard—God's glory, God's voice. The prophetic Word was confirmed to us. You'll do well to keep focusing on it. It's the one light you have in a dark time as you wait for daybreak and the rising of the Morning Star in your hearts. 2 Peter 1:19

The main thing to keep in mind here is that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of private opinion. And why? Because it's not something concocted in the human heart. Prophecy resulted when the Holy Spirit prompted men and women to speak God's Word.

W. Tozer wrote: "God's word in the Bible can have power only because it corresponds to God's word in the universe. It is the present Voice, which makes the written Word all-powerful.

Some Bible teachers have suggested that we should read the Bible each time as if we have never read from its pages before. For many, easier said than done.

Passages from Scripture are embedded in our culture and have been infused with certain imagery and emotions, an effect compounded if you grew up in church. But the point is, behind the words of the Bible beats the heart of God, and we should strive to encounter His message and meaning in a fresh way every time we open our Bibles.

Maybe a good first step is to slow down. Emphasize small portions of Scripture rather than long passages. Go over the words more than once, even out loud if you like. And let their meaning penetrate your heart.

The important thing is that if you've not established the regular practice of reading God's Word, get started! As you read, realize that God is speaking directly to you.

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for Your inspired Word. Give me grace and understanding to allow it to go deep into my life. I am amazed at the power of Your Word and what it can do in the life of anyone who will read it, believe it, and apply it to his or her life. Every answer I need for life is in the Bible, whether it is for healing, deliverance, marriage, children, health, business, or success. Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us the Word of God. Please forgive me for the times I've let it sit on my shelf instead of reading it, meditating on it, and incorporating it into my life. Thank You for helping me break the pattern of being on again, off again in reading my Bible. I thank You that by Your grace, I will become a consistent reader and applier of God's Word to every part of my life! In Jesus' Name, I pray, Amen!

Thursday, Jan. 28: Are You Happy?

“Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.” -James 5:13

All our life is a celebration for us; we are convinced, in fact, that God is always everywhere. We sing while we work . . . we pray while we carry out all life's other occupations.

In every life a little rain must fall. Sometimes things go wrong. But sometimes things go right. And when they do, James says, we should praise God.

What's going right in your life today—what is making you happy? Is there a relationship in your life that's thriving? Do you have the simple blessings of a job and reliable transportation to work? Have you found an activity or service opportunity that brings you joy?

You might have to do a little looking around and count your blessings; sometimes those little reasons for joy and gratitude get overlooked. But when you find something to be happy about, be happy.

When we find ourselves in trouble, we need to turn to God for help and strength. But when things are going well, we again need to turn to God. He deserves our thanksgiving for the good things He gives us.

PRAYER:

Father, in Jesus' Name, I thank You that Your joy is my strength. You have given me so many reasons to be at peace. Today I want to express my joy as praise to You. Father, today I am asking You to forgive me for the times I've talked to people about my problems more than I've talked to You. I confess that I have leaned on people more heavily than I have leaned on You when facing difficult situations that required solutions. Now that I realize what I have done, I am making the decision to change the way I respond to challenges. I thank You, Lord, for the friends You have given me who I can trust and confide in, but I know I will only find my real help and most permanent solutions as a result of being in Your Presence.

Therefore, today I purpose to run to You first whenever the problems of life try to assault me. Only after I have received comfort and direction from You, my primary Source of help, will I consider turning to others whom You have given me for support. In Jesus' Name, I pray, Amen!

Friday, Jan. 29: God Is With Us

Nevertheless He saved them for the sake of His Name, that He might make His power known . Psalm 106:8

Aren't you glad God chooses to make His power known through us?

By saving us from our sins and giving us a clean slate, He demonstrates the awesome wonder of His name. I'm glad that the natural outpouring of God's power and majesty is salvation for sinners like you and me! It demonstrates the joy we can experience when God, the Master Creator, puts His hand on our lives.

In the book of Isaiah, God Himself assures the Israelites, through the prophet, of His presence and His guidance: *"For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you"* (Isaiah 41:13).

And then these wonderful words of assurance: *"See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands . . ."* (Isaiah 49:16).

In fact, from the very first book of the Bible until the last, we are reminded again and again of God's love for us, His pursuit of us, and His longing to develop a relationship with each one of us.

Even in the midst of our sin, God comes seeking us, to reconcile us to Himself, and to strengthen that relationship. In Genesis 3, we read that God came looking for Adam, even as he hid from Him. *"But the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?'"* (vs. 9).

Fast forward to Revelation, the last book of the Bible, where Jesus says: *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him, and he with Me"* (Revelation 3:20).

Any and every relationship between God and man can be initiated only by God. That's why He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to take on the penalty for our sins, so that the broken relationship between God and man could be restored. During His time on earth, Jesus often reminded His hearers of that fact. On one occasion, He told the Jews who were grumbling about Him: *"No man can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him . . ."* (John 6:44).

PRAYER:

Father, in Jesus' Name, forgive me for being so negative and for talking so badly about myself after You have given me so much! I have no excuse for accepting defeat or low self-esteem as a way of life, because You have made me totally new! Help me renew my mind to the truth about who You have made me to be. AMEN!

Saturday, Jan. 30: Waiting

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23

“The fruit of the Spirit grows only in the garden of obedience.”

Finding just the right time to eat a banana can be tricky. If you wait too long, the fruit grows too soft and mushy. It's good for making banana pudding, but not for eating by itself. But if you eat it before it's ripe, the banana will taste and feel a bit like sandpaper in your mouth.

The key is having the patience to allow the banana to ripen all the way, without letting your fear of a mushy banana drive you to eat it before it's ready.

In our lives, so often we operate on the premise of fear that we'll miss out if we don't act. But there is a time and a season for everything (Ecclesiastes 3), and our Father knows what we need (Matthew 6:32).

Instead of letting fear drive us, we should learn a lesson from the banana and work at cultivating the fruit of patience in all areas of our lives.

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for taking care of me and for knowing exactly what I need. I acknowledge when You gave me the assignment I'm working on, You supplied everything that I would ever need to fulfill it! I thank You for sufficient grace, wisdom, ability, provision, help from others, and Your very own stick-to-it power! I come before You now and ask You to fill me full and afresh with Your Holy Spirit. I ask You to anoint me with fresh oil and to strengthen me with a fresh touch of Your power so I can allow patience to have its perfect work in me. I am not willing to let go, loosen my grip, or grow slack. I know that I am in the right place at the right time, and I refuse to budge for any reason! Holy Spirit, I receive Your help. And by the power of God's grace undergirding me, I will hold fast and see this assignment through to the end. You always do what's best for me, and I trust You with my past, my present, and my future. Help me to grow in patience as I trust Your timing. In Jesus' Name, I pray, Amen.

Sunday, Jan. 31: *Keep Your Light On*

Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church.
Colossians 1:24

Some time ago, I read the following quote from Vance Havner: "You and I are human post offices. We are daily giving out messages of some sort to the world. They do not come from us, but through us; we do not create, we convey."

Has your light been hidden in obscurity — whether through fear, complacency, or some hardship or test that has come into your life? I encourage you today to ask God once again to use you as a "lamp in His hand" in your sphere of influence and beyond. As you're faithful in the little things He asks you to do, He will surely increase your influence more and more and multiply the joy in your life that comes through serving others.

Please allow me to share what Oswald Chambers wrote about this: "The Christian worker has to be a sacramental "go-between," to be so identified with his Lord and the reality of His Redemption that He can continually bring His creating life through him. It is not the strength of one man's personality being superimposed on another, but the real presence of Christ coming through the elements of the worker's life. When we preach the historic facts of the life and death of Our Lord as they are conveyed in the New Testament, our words are made sacramental, God uses them on the ground of His Redemption to create in those who listen that which is not created otherwise. If we preach the effects of Redemption in human life instead of the revelation regarding Jesus, the result in those who listen is not new birth, but refined spiritual culture, and the Spirit of God cannot witness to it because such preaching is in another domain.

We have to see that we are in such living sympathy with God that as we proclaim His truth He can create in souls the things which He alone can do."

PRAYER:

Father, I ask for Your presence in me so that everyone I meet has a opportunity to see You. I am thankful that You believe I can be a light in someone else's life! So often I am reminded of my weaknesses and shortcomings, and I forget what a great work You have already done in me. Forgive me for not expressing my gratitude to You more frequently for the precious changes You have already brought about in my life.

Many people sit in darkness and struggle to find their way in life, and today I hear Your Spirit beckoning me to let my light shine before men that they may glorify You and so that I might have a godly influence on someone else's life. I accept the call of the Spirit, and I will do my best to let Your light in me shine forth to people who are seeking direction for their lives! In Jesus' Name, I pray, Amen!