

Daily Family Devotions

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

FRIDAY

"DEAD END -- OR OPEN DOORS?"

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 25:14-30; Revelation 3:8

A group of young people from a rural part of the country were visiting a much-publicized metropolitan area, one often condemned for many inadequacies and poverty, reacted in an unexpected way.

For several minutes they stood on a street corner, looking around. Then one of them said wistfully, "I do not see the lack. They have so much - so close! Stores and theaters, buses and parks - so many people to meet. What fun it would be to have so much."

He lived in an isolated hogan in a desert reservation: his family had to draw water from a well a mile away, he walked five miles down a dusty hot road to church; walked three miles for a school bus that took him to a single room schoolhouse. The only store was a trading post. There were no theaters, parks, libraries, soda fountains, nor gymnasiums and only a handful of people his own age.

Although he had seen the more affluent part of the city, to him even that "condemned metropolitan area" was not a dead end of poverty but an open door to opportunity. He saw it from a greater need, a different point.

Do we look for the open doors within our lives or do we too often glance up quickly and dismiss a circumstance as a dead end rather than seeing it as an open door to new life?

Prayer: Dear Lord, grant me the ability to see doors in any situation and to explore all of life, knowing that in your providence there are no dead-end streets in a life committed to you. AMEN

SATURDAY

"HAVING EYES, THEY SEE NOT"

SCRIPTURE:

Mark 8:18-26

II Corinthians 3:12-18

A man blind from birth, was given an operation that restored his sight. On his first day out of the hospital, he walked for hours through the crowded streets of the city, out along a cool park, back into the hospital.

When he returned, the nurses were shocked to see tears streaming down his face. They asked him what had happened and he said, "It's the people - they walk as blind men with hopelessness and despair on their faces. They *have* eyes - yet they cannot see."

Jesus said these same words: "Have you eyes and see not?"

Why? What makes us like this? Many times our own problems are like spiritual cataracts, forming a thin film over our spiritual and conscious sight: we see nothing distinctly, are closed within our own misery, so people, seeing our vacuous gaze, pass on - still looking for something or someone to fill the hunger and need for love.

When people pass you on the street, or glance at you in the office or at school - what do they see? Eyes alert and responsive, ready to smile? Or the glazed, unseeing look of one too enclosed by his own misery to notice?

Prayer: Dear God, you have given to me the precious gift of sight and insight. Please help me to use both as extensions of your compassion as your Son did. So let men see Christ in me. AMEN

MONDAY, APRIL 22, 2024

"TODAY IS POWER.

SCRIPTURE:

Luke 12:13-31; I Corinthians 4:16-18

The present is all we have to manage. The past is irrevocable. The future is uncertain; nor is it fair to burden one moment with the weight of the next. Sufficient unto the moment is the trouble thereof.

So in looking forward to future endeavors, remember that we are not to sustain all its toil, to endure all of its sufferings or to encounter all of its trials at once. One moment comes laden with its own burden, then flies on, and is succeeded by another, not heavier than the last. As one is sustained, so shall the next one be.

In looking forward to a single day the spirit may sometimes faint simply from dreaded anticipation of what is to come, and this is unjustly laying upon one moment that stress which is meant to be spread over a thousand moments. This is unfairly testing God's promise to give his power to us according to our needs: God has promised power *as* the circumstance is met - but not before.

Furthermore, when we anticipate a problem, energy which is intended for today, is dissipated on that problem of tomorrow's which we can do nothing about, and we are left more debilitated to meet the future.

Trust your future to God. As the days dawn, so will your strength then be born.

Prayer: Dear Father, forgive me for not trusting you to provide whatever strength I need day to day. Help me to grow in patience and trust. AMEN

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TUESDAY

"HOW DEAD OR ALIVE ARE YOU?"

SCRIPTURE:

II Corinthians 5:17
John 11:30-36

One of the most important characteristics of being alive is the ability to respond to stimulus.

The most interesting people in the world are those who are "alive" to stimuli; people quick to laugh, swift to help, alert to loneliness, sadness or discouragement. These people never seem bored. How could they be? Everyone they meet causes them to respond in some way; each moment, every hour is as varied as a kaleidoscope.

How alive are you? As a person are you responsive, or have you some areas that are nearly dead to stimulus?

Most of us are only partially living. We walk through a day, barely aware of the people we pass or work along with, dead to the possibilities of the day or the presence of God.

Has your life settled into a numbing routine? Are you tired of all the same people, the same office, freeway and house, the same friends? Come alive! Let Christ step into your place for a day. How would the people, places and things appear to him? Would he see something you missed - a person hungry for God, a student lost in uncertainty, an associate afraid of the future, a friend hiding behind a mask of arrogance because he cannot face a void in his life? Because Jesus was alive to every stimulus, he was wholly effective as an instrument of God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, create in me a new sensitivity to people and life. Make me alive to the needs of others AMEN

WEDNESDAY

"MORE THAN ENOUGH"

SCRIPTURE:

I Chronicles 29: 14-18
John 10:10

Jesus said, "I come that you might have life and have it more abundantly!"

There is something so characteristic in the word "abundantly" for God has a way of doing everything in such abundance: not merely one kind of tree or flower or bird but thousands - all shapes, colors and sizes.

He has made the potential for our lives just as abundant. None of us need be satisfied with monotony if we long for variety and profusion. We have imagination, intellect, talents, dreams and memory. We have moods, days that vary like the tides of the seas, now rushing and full of power, now receding, ebbing, quiet. No two days are the same, no two people identical, no two events exactly alike. We have the gay and the sad, the bright and the dim and we have the rhythm of living that makes us appreciate joy, sharpens our senses in grief.

As Christians, we should reach out for this abundant life our God offers to us - not just the shallows, the identical, the monotonous - but those storms, too, with deeper cadence, and stronger colors; for each experience teaches us more of God, and every one we go through with him makes us that much more certain of his amazing power and sufficiency.

Prayer: Teach us ... the man with his eye on the ground, the bird that does not venture from a nest, and the man who fears to embrace all of life within the palm of your hand will never know the abundance of what life can bring. AMEN

THURSDAY

"THE SPINNING WHEEL, THE SLIPPING GEAR"

SCRIPTURE:

Isaiah 30:15
Micah 6:6-8

Many people seem to cultivate the reverse of the "peaceful life"; they are always in a hurry - always hustling, always rushing, as though any moment not in perpetual motion were somehow wasted.

Then if all does not go according to plan, if there is some hitch in the day which keeps things from going smoothly, they fuss and fret, making matters worse, involving those around them, exhausting themselves until an ordinary day is suddenly plunged into chaos and confusion; energies can be dissipated, tempers frayed, and even personal relationships, destroyed for want of Christian peace.

Rarely do these people accomplish the maximum, for what they may build up on the one hand they pull down on the other. They forget that "in quietness and confidence shall be their ever-present strength."

There is no inherent power in unbridled excitement. Like the spinning wheel of a car on ice or a motor whose gear has slipped, the amount of noise has nothing at all to do with the resulting action.

What kind of person are you? Does God supply the energy for your life or do you waste your time? Do what you can, and what you cannot, leave to God.

(From H. Bowman)

Prayer: O God, give me the power of a peaceful heart - a life which runs without the distracting irritability of a fretful will. May people find a place of refuge in my home. AMEN