

# Daily Family Devotions

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

## FRIDAY

### "HAVING GONE BEYOND PENANCE"

#### SCRIPTURE:

Hebrews 10:11-18; John 19:28-37  
(See Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20-22)

How much importance do you put upon penance? Does it help your feeling of guilt? Do you think it actually removes the guilt?

Penance is a token gesture, usually man-made, by which we somehow feel we have had a part in our own forgiveness. But it has no other importance, or power. It does not gain forgiveness for us. We are no closer to being forgiven than we were when we began. Why?

Before Christ came, man had no other way. He had to make a token gesture toward repentance, and it was counted toward his desire to be right with divine law. But even then, it did not *heal* or actually wipe clean the infection of sin. Penance was like a liniment; it made men feel better for a while, but it did not enter the bloodstream where the poison lay.

Then Christ came, taking into Himself the full dosage of evil, without being destroyed, and now offers it to all men as the antidote for the power of evil in their lives: forgiveness that goes straight to the spirit, *into* the "bloodstream" of our guilt-laden weary souls. Once this kind of cleansing takes place, there is not even a need for penance.

During seasons of Lent, don't be content with a surface kind of forgiveness. Ask God for the real healing; know the vitality of really being forgiven and reconciled with Him.

*Prayer: God, many times I have chosen to do something for Thee, instead of permitting You to do in my life what needs to be done. I lay aside my pride, now, Lord. AMEN*

## SATURDAY

### "YOUR PORTRAIT FOR GOD"

#### SCRIPTURE:

Ephesians 4:20-24;  
Exodus 34:29;  
II Corinthians 3:2, 3

A famous painter won great acclaim for a portrait he painted of a woman. She was not a young woman, but in her age she was radiantly beautiful. There was warmth and humor, compassion and grief etched in the lines of her face.

The artist was asked why he had selected such a model instead of a more youthful one. He replied, "Youth is unmolded clay. A face like Madame's is a work of art created by one who has learned how to live."

It has been said that the face we have at six, is the one God gives to us. The face we have at sixty, the one we give to Him.

There is in Christian commitment and faith in our Lord, that element or alchemy by which even the cruelest acids of grief or disappointment can be neutralized, so that they cannot corrode our spirits but rather more finely etch and beautify them.

Examine your face in the mirror - not merely the surface, but into the eyes, the tilt of the mouth, and the planes into which your face relaxes when you are quiet. Has the mixture of divine love been rich enough to neutralize the corrosive action of life upon your face? It is not too late to correct it, even now.

*Prayer: Lord, in Thy love and compassion Thou has provided a sweetener for all of life, if we will but reach out for it during our times of trials and pressure. Thank you, Lord. AMEN*

## MONDAY, MAY 9, 2022

### "THE SPIRIT UNATTENDED"

#### SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 130;  
Psalm 23

We take it for granted that a violin must be tuned, an artist's brush must be dipped, and a battery must be recharged; yet when our spirits show signs of being out of tune, painting dry, or running down we panic: "Something must be wrong with me!"

Each night we lie down to sleep - and our body regenerates itself. Periodically through the year we stop our work (or should) and our mind is released from the day-to-day pressures to find recreation and respite.

But our soul - how demanding and ignorant we are of its needs! Yet it carries more weight than the other areas put together: into it go the refuse of guilt, the poisons and residue of substandard behavior, disobedience and emotional havoc. This sensitive instrument seldom receives the care it needs - the regeneration, the food and re-creation God meant it to have. Once a week to church - maybe. A quick refresher of prayer daily - maybe. A snack from God's Word every day - or perhaps not: and we wonder why the depression sets in, the mood persists, and life becomes chaos.

We are three-dimensional people - body, mind and soul and unless each portion is nourished, our life will give under the stress and collapse.

*Prayer: God, make me more aware of the importance and unseen power of my soul - the sensitivity of it as it responds to You; its ability to guide me and keep me in Thy way. Let me continually hold it before Thee for strengthening, I pray. AMEN*

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## TUESDAY

### "THE STORY BEHIND THE SCENES"

#### SCRIPTURE:

Hebrews 2:10-12;  
I Peter 4:1-2

A man who had been terribly burned in an accident, one day heard his sister say, "*We* never could have taken it as well as Harry. He's the strong one and he could take it."

Harry turned quietly to his friend and said, "Why is it that if you do not complain, people think it is easier for you than it would have been for anyone else?"

Harry's burns were as much a torture for him as they would have been for anyone; he simply didn't complain or resent the incident.

We must remember - that merely because we do not see the struggle and the heartache, the discouragement and despair of others, the trial and testing has not been difficult for them.

Few of us ever realize the story behind most successful people. All we see is the final triumph. Chances are we may never hear about their feeling of inadequacy, their fears, the dozen defeats behind each victory, the years of discipline and self-denial behind that poise and assurance now visible.

True courage is the silent acceptance and handling of a situation in a way in which others are spared the suffering. It is selflessness of the highest order. It is a Christ-like characteristic of those whose lives are in God's hands.

*Prayer: Lord, forgive me for the many times I have complained and added to the burdens of others. Give me grace to look to Thee for strength as Jesus Himself did; Thy strength is sufficient. AMEN*

## WEDNESDAY

### "PRIDE - THE BIGGEST BLOCK TO FAITH"

#### SCRIPTURE:

Psalms 103:10-18;  
Mark 10:13-16

Why are you so afraid to put out your hand to God? For fear of losing your "identity"? For fear of being a robot? For fear life will lose all its zest and interest and freedom?

What most of us fear is that which Adam and Eve feared - dependence on God. We want desperately to be independent, on our own; universal adults with no need for God in our lives.

Yet there is a truth we must face. We will always be children before God. No man can stand on a level or on par with Him. He is God Almighty. Is it so wrong to be beneath our Creator, our Maker?

A child is accustomed to reaching out for a helping hand or a boost up. Pride is no factor in his eagerness to get where he wants to go. He is secure in the love of his parents, in their wisdom and protection. Then as he grows older, this trust is transferred to trust in and need for God.

We do not change as we grow older in needing help to "know, touch, see and climb"; pride should not be the deterrent spiritually if we want to reach the ultimate of living, want it enough so that we will reach out our hands eagerly for God's guidance, so that beneath His wisdom we can more surely become wholly mature, all we are capable of being.

*Prayer: O God, make me not ashamed of my need for Thee. Grant me a trust in Thy goodness and a longing to be with Thee in all things. Thou art always my God, my Creator, my Father. AMEN*

## THURSDAY

### "THE KNACK OF COMMITMENT TO CHRIST: GETTING OUT OF THE WAY"

#### SCRIPTURE:

Galatians 2:20;  
John 14:8-21

A young woman of fiery disposition and known for her explosive and often cruel outbreaks became a Christian.

Soon, her friends noticed a change: she would start to retort in her usual caustic manner - then suddenly she would stop, often in mid-sentence, after which her answer was far different from what they had expected.

Curious, one of them asked, "Sylvia, why do you stop like that? Why do you do it?" She replied, "I have given my life to Christ but I keep forgetting to let Him live it. As long as I keep getting in the way, there is no room for Him to work. So I stop and say, 'Sorry, Lord. After You' And He steps in and shows me how."

She was learning that the first action in commitment is our *conscious* stepping aside for Christ. Eventually this becomes more effortless as we become conditioned to thinking of ourselves as "temples of God" or vessels through which Christ can be expressed.

In this way, Christ actually does take over; we become new people with new responses, new outlooks. God promised us this power. We must reach out and claim it.

*Prayer: Lord, after commitment, it is so hard to step aside. I am so afraid of letting go my own will. Yet, Lord, teach me that through it I learn wisdom; through practicing it, I move toward perfection, and by stepping aside from Self, I step closer to You. I thank Thee for Thy faithfulness to me. AMEN*