

Daily Family Devotions

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

FRIDAY

“TO ASHES, OR STEEL”

SCRIPTURE:

Malachi 3:1-4

There is a difference, as we have said, between tempting and testing . . . Satan tempts — God tests.

When a Christian is in God’s hand, truly committed every hour of the day, things which would tempt other men, only give the Christian a chance to test his faith; he is closer to God, a better man, when it is over.

There is a difference between burning up, and tempering. To burn up is to destroy or consume; to temper is to refine or make purer.

Things which would destroy most men or literally consume them, temper the Christian — make him finer, more able to withstand.

What spiritual stuff are you made of? When a crisis comes, do your intentions burn up like sheets of paper, scattering ashes and debris all over?

Or, like Damascus steel, does your life take on a glow and radiance, reflecting the fact that God is testing your mettle, tempering your “metal?” — leaving you purer, stronger, more fit to serve Him?

A crisis never makes a man something other than he was. It can only reveal what he is made of.

Are you a paper man — or one made by God?

Prayer: Lord, it is so easy to resist the fires of this life — to run from them, fearing destruction and ruin. O Father, grant me trust in Thy wisdom, in knowing that Thou wilt never test me beyond my strength. AMEN

SATURDAY

“LEST WE LOSE SIGHT OF THE GOAL”

SCRIPTURE:

I Corinthians 3:11-15

A boy and his father entered a hiking contest, the goal of which was to reach a village high in the mountains before anyone else.

The father found a path with signs pointing the way, and he set off at a steady stride. The boy, however, refused to go on the path, choosing instead to pick his way through the thorns, and brambles, hidden ravines and rocky areas of the raw mountain slopes.

The first day, they had to stop early because the boy was so sore and so bruised he could not go on, so the father stopped and attended to the exhausted lad. In the morning, they set off again, but still the boy refused to take the path. “I want to blaze my own path! I don’t want to use someone else’s. I want people to know I found it alone.”

His father said, “You’re forgetting the goal, son. The goal is to arrive at the village first and safely. This is not a contest to see who can blaze the best trail.”

And God’s goal for us in this life is not to see which of us can “blaze a trail to Him,” but who can follow the Way He has provided. It was Christ’s mission to “blaze” our trail; our goal is to reach God safely and quickly so that this life can be one of effortless vitality in the enjoyment of a world God has provided for us. Those who refuse to accept God’s way will be torn and bruised, exhausted long before the end.

Prayer: Lord, I thank Thee for preparing a path before me. AMEN

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2022

COMFORT IS A CLEANSSED HEART”

SCRIPTURE: Psalms 51:1-12

Have you ever done something wrong and then have had a friend tell you not to “feel bad” — it wasn’t really wrong at all?

Is this comfort? Not really, because inside you know it *was* wrong.

How often have you given this kind of “comfort” to someone? Why did you do it? Because you were afraid to lose their friendship? Because your sense of right and wrong is twisted?

A true friend desires the best for his friend, desires him to *be* the best. It takes a great deal more courage to tell someone you love that he is wrong than it does to try to “comfort” him in doing wrong.

True comfort is that which soothes, but a man who feels guilty, can never be at ease, or feel “soothed.” In fact, he often turns most bitterly against those who do not have the integrity to tell him he is wrong.

God never grants His comfort to a man who continues to do wrong — who refuses to repent or admit he is at fault, and without the assurance of divine comfort, comfort from others will never be enough. We constantly keep seeking more assurance, more comfort, more support. Do you know someone like this? Are you one of them?

Prayer: Dear Lord, I know my heart can never know real comfort unless I am free of the bitterness, anger, or nagging guilt I may have. Lord, grant me Thy comfort, Thy peace—Thine assurance, I pray Thee. AMEN

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TUESDAY

“FROM SMALL VICTORIES TO LARGE”

SCRIPTURE:

II Peter 1:3-11

A hometown philosopher once said, “The major crises determine events — the minor ones mold the man.”

This is true in the Christian life too. We can usually remember the major decisions we have made that have affected our future — which college, job, group of friends — but seldom do we pay much attention to those “minor crises” which arise daily, silently molding us into what we are.

Every decision we make leaves us either stronger or weaker, a better person or a lesser one than we were. And the course by which you make a minor decision will be the same pattern you use for a major one.

But sometimes it is only as you face a major crisis, that you are revealed to others and to yourself as what you really are.

What has become your pattern if you are faced by a “crisis?” Do you ask someone else? Choose the easiest way — follow the crowd? Or do you ever try to see the situation from an outside viewpoint — as God sees it, determining what it is He may desire from you at this time?

Without a real sense of God in your life, any crisis can be a terrifying ordeal: you are afraid to go on and yet you cannot remain indecisive. And it can be a time of danger; too, should you make the wrong choice.

Prayer: I ask Thee, Father, for wisdom in daily living. Make me aware of how important even “small” decisions can be in my witness, in my relationship with Thee. Guide me, I pray. AMEN

WEDNESDAY

“COMFORT IS KNOWING GOD IS THERE”

SCRIPTURE:

Isaiah 40:1, 2; II Corinthians 1:3-7

What *is* comfort? Probably the closest word to it is “ease.” When we comfort someone, we ease their hurt or sorrow.

Throughout the Bible, we read of God “comforting” His people, and usually this was by reassuring them of His love, His presence among them, His *knowing*, His understanding.

Comfort does not always mean the removal of the cause of the hurt; it cannot always change the situation — and we must remember this. When we go to comfort people, they do not ask us to change the world, or that we do the impossible . . . merely that we understand their grief and assure them that God still stands beside them, though they cannot see Him through their tears.

And this is the comfort God promises us. This was what Isaiah's prophecy meant: “Comfort ye my people” And so our Lord God came among us, to ease the hurt, lighten the load as only He can. He did not change things around us, but His presence beside us has made the difference.

We can do no more than God did for us: offer our Lord, the comfort of His love and tremendous understanding, to those who suffer. The greatest and only real comfort we can give each other is the assurance of God's presence.

Prayer: God, may I learn to understand the meaning of Thy comfort, the deep strength and abiding peace it gives to us who need it. Lord, make me an instrument of Thy comfort. AMEN

THURSDAY

“THE COMFORT OF ANOTHER'S STRENGTH”

SCRIPTURE:

I Samuel 23:15-18

How often have you been comforted by the strength of a friend? We all have times when our own strength has failed — when we cannot seem to pray for ourselves or someone very dear to us, when we have grieved so long, or worked so hard, that our strength is gone.

It is at times like these that the strength of a friend is like the hand of God—when his words are like oil on our raw, quivering spirits — when his hope and encouragement is like a light in a dark hall.

Yet, there is that added quality, which even the strength of a friend must have if it is to be lasting . . . the knowledge that that friend is in turn offering to us that which he has found in God; that which is authentic and not merely vain or pacifying efforts which have no real root in any truth.

It is strange, but only God's assurance can wholly still our fears; David would not have been comforted by Jonathan's words if he had not realized that God Himself had revealed His plan to Jonathan. But when both men were committed to God, then each had more to offer the other.

Never offer less than this to one who needs you. Let God be your assurance before you offer assurance to a friend.

Prayer: Dear God, You come to us in so many ways — through friends, through a verse of Scripture, through prayer, even through the quietness You grant us in times of greatest need. Thank You. AMEN