

Daily Family Devotions

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

FRIDAY

"BE READY FOR THE VALLEY"

SCRIPTURE:
Job 33:22-30

Why is it that after we have had a "mountaintop" experience or have known a time of joy and exhilaration, our moment of truth, that we plummet down into a valley of lethargy, doubt and an overall letdown?

By definition alone, a mountain is a raised portion of land surrounded by valleys or lowlands. And this can be just as true spiritually and emotionally. Many times we have experienced difficulties, valleys of decision, days of monotony before we are brought up into the "highlands". And conversely, just as surely, we will again descend into the ordinary, the everyday, at some time following these "mountaintops".

So the Christian who experiences these ups and downs must learn not to be depressed by them. They are a natural rhythm of life, for a journey is not meant to be traveled on peaks alone; the swiftest and most direct progress is made in the lowlands.

So when your mountaintops come, be grateful, enjoy them without restraint, and remember them. Let the effect of their beauty and the vision you glimpse there, become a part of you -- a part that lingers to beautify the ordinary and keeps you going toward other high moments to come.

One of the most exciting things about life with God is the unexpected variety he brings. Let us learn to accept it all.

Prayer: Lord, give me patience to accept my valleys. Keep me from despondency and lift my eyes to you from whence my strength comes. AMEN

SATURDAY

"SATAN WORKS THE VALLEYS"

SCRIPTURE:
Psalm 23:4-6; John 17:15;
I Peter 5:8, 9

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow ... I will fear no evil."

How well David knew the dangers that lurk in the spiritual valleys; they were as real to him as the valleys he had walked as a shepherd.

We seldom encounter dangers when we are on the spiritual mountaintop for up there we are intensely aware of God's presence, his love, his omnipotence. We are held firm.

But in the valleys, where sometimes we can see no farther than the next step, where the shadows seem to blot out the assurance of God's love, where we seem to walk alone toward a canyon that is closing in on us -- it is here that the real danger lurks -- for Satan works the valleys. He will not attempt to compete with God on those mountaintops: he is no match for divine love and truth. He bides his times for our inevitable descent into the valleys, down to his level, to the ordinary, the everyday.

It is here that he begins to whisper from the shadows, begins stalking us, raising doubts, destroying our confidence, overwhelming our enthusiasm. Watch for him; expect him when you leave your mountain. Jesus, after his forty days with the Spirit, met him in just such a way and came to know firsthand the insidious, terrible tempting of this valley devil.

Prayer: Lord, as David said, 'I will fear no evil for you are with me.' I ask that you will come to me in those valleys of mine. Make me feel your presence, help me to trust you, and to know that you are always near. AMEN

MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2024

"NO OTHER SIGN WILL BE GIVEN MEN"

SCRIPTURE:
Matthew 12:38-41; Acts 17:30-31;
I John 4:9 (Job 19:25, 26;
Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:1-3)

If ever there was a time when people wanted to believe in a living God, it is now. There are many, who are openly searching for such a God, and despite the fact that others say that God is dead, they still go on searching for him, knowing deep in their souls that God, being God, has always been, is now, and always will be. No one can take away this tenacious search of the soul for its fulfillment

Yet we seek proof, a sign. They did in Christ's time, too. "Give us proof" And he said, "Even if a man should rise from the dead, you would not believe!" They didn't, they still don't,

However, if you do seek a personal God, look again at Easter. For the Christian and the skeptic, it is the yearly challenge and command to re-evaluate our faith. *Could* God care enough to do such a thing? This personalness, this divine concern is one of the most difficult things to accept: that the Creator of the world, Spirit of spirits, Life of life, functions on this uniquely personal level.

And yet unless our God is such a God, what need have we of him? Unless he is Love seeking and searching for every man's heart, reaching out in forgiveness and love, offering power to be the people we long to be, why seek communication with him at all? (Luke 16:31)

Prayer: Father, I thank you for this day, this proof that you are a God for your people. AMEN

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TUESDAY

"THOSE THINGS I WOULD NOT DO – I DO"

SCRIPTURE:

Romans 7: 15-25

What a poignant passage this is! The wretched cry of a man who wants to do God's will, who longsto be a better man but continually fails and fails and fails.

This was the great Apostle Paul -- the man through whom God wrote the greater part of the New Testament. It should give us hope.

It seems that the closer we come to full Christian commitment and the higher we set our sights, the farther short we seem to fall. Our inner man soars in dedication to God; in our hearts we see ourselves perfect for him.

And then we move out into the daily life, among men, and no one would dream of those noble and lofty vows we made, no one can imagine how much better we would like to be. Men see only the imperfections of our spirit filtered through the corrupted flesh, they see only the ordinary, ordinary man: the human us.

How fortunate that God looks on the heart! How humbling to know that he at least knows what we would desire to be for him. And he knows, too, that we cannot continue to submerge ourselves in him without at last becoming more like him. As the soul is purified, so the outward life begins to glow, and the sanctification soon becomes apparent even to the world.

Prayer: Lord, often the more I look into your face, the greater my discontent with my life becomes. Teach me not to be discouraged but to wait for your perfecting of me for your sake. AMEN

WEDNESDAY

"THIS DEAD BODY OF OURS"

SCRIPTURE:

Romans 7:24-8:5

In certain prisons during Paul's time, prisoners were shackled together for the duration of their stay. If one man died, the other was forced to live with this body shackled to him. He was unable to get rid of it but had to drag along the unbearable weight of this dead body until the body simply disengaged itself eventually through natural processes.

This is what Paul is probably referring to in this passage: once we have given our lives to Christ, have been cleansed and rejuvenated, we think all is accomplished! We are free. And yet for a time, like the dead and decaying body, our former selves are a constant reminder and fact, clinging to us,

However, God knows that this unpleasant aura, this unlovely presence is not us. Already we have been granted pardon and it is now only a matter of time before we will be completely free of the former self and living unfettered, freed, and whole.

Don't despair. God understands. Our Lord stands beside us, and soon the time of confinement will be at an end.

(II Corinthians 5:17)

Prayer: Lord, it is so easy to allow this former self, these past failures to drag me down to despondency. Help me to realize that the past really is dead and has no further influence upon my life as long as you have given me your love and pardon. I thank you for the promise that in you, I am a new creation. AMEN

THURSDAY

"THE DISCIPLES -- AFTER EASTER"

SCRIPTURE:

John 16:4-15; Acts 1:6-8; Acts 4:8-12

It is a strange and wonderful phenomenon that God continues to touch his people with the identical power and presence with which he blessed the earliest Christians in Acts. In years past the mere mention of such activity, this reality of "God-With-Us" used to make people squirm.

Many today see society as collapsing at such an alarming rate, that hatred, immorality, greed and rebellion are so rampant, that people are finally reaching out for the one power big enough to cope with it all — they are reaching for a personal God.

What was this "Power" that came to the early Christians and is coming again to us today? It is what Christ had promised his disciples: He called this power "The Counselor". It was the presence of God, touching men of obedience and belief — and filling them with the love and power which Christ had received from his Father. Christ promised it only to his people, those who believed in him, who accepted him as Lord. (John 17:8, 9, 20)

Astonishing? Yes, and yet how like God to match the cataclysmic warring of Satan with his own indestructible plan. Like a powerful neutralizer, divine love can change a world full of corrosive acid of hate quietly — and surely.

Prayer: Lord, I know this power has been promised to those who love you and believe in you. Grant that I too, may be an instrument by which you come to others. AMEN