

## **Devotions:**

### **Monday:** Discover God's Grace

This morning's scripture is 2 Corinthians 1:12 – “We have conducted ourselves with godly sincerity and pure motives in the world, and especially toward you. This is why we are confident, and our conscience confirms this. We didn't act with human wisdom but we relied on the grace of God.”

Is God's grace really sufficient in times of trouble? Can it sustain us in the midst of life's storms?

Yes! But to be honest, sometimes it's hard for us to rely on God's grace instead of ourselves. We think we have to grab control of our lives, and we believe the responsibility for shaping our future must be in our hands.

When troubles come, therefore, we resist them instead of depending on God to see us through. Alexander Maclaren, the distinguished British preacher once wrote, “What disturbs us in this world is not trouble, but our opposition to trouble.” Put God to the test when troubles come. He won't let you down. In the midst of a painful illness Paul begged God to intervene and take it away. But God replied “My grace is sufficient for you (2Corinthians 12:9). It was sufficient for Paul, and it will be for you.

### **Tuesday:** Rest in the Lord

This morning's scripture is Mark 6:32 – “So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.”

In Mark 6, the disciples are returning from an evangelism explosion. Through Jesus' name and in His power, they've been casting out demons, healing the sick, and calling sinners to repentance. They speak of their service as physicians and caregivers. “Mission Impossible” has become “Mission Successful,” and they are elated. They are also exhausted.

IN the middle of this progress report, more people arrive, looking for healing, teaching, or just lively conversation. Jesus and His friends have no time even to eat

a meal. But Jesus knows what to do. He always does. He says, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest” (Mark 6:31), thus directing His disciples to three priceless gifts: His presence, a place to rest, and peace. And what did His followers do? They got into the boat and sailed away to a solitary place.

Sometimes and sometimes may be many times during our lives we find ourselves at the end of our rope. If so, Jesus may be saying to each of us, “Come with Me by yourself to a quiet place and get some rest.” Let Jesus lead you to a select place. Sit quietly with Him. Once you’ve rested in the Lord’s presence, you will be renewed.

In Philippians 4:19, the Lord promised us the He would meet our every need according to His glorious riches. We can find rest as we lean on His everlasting arms.

**Wednesday:** God is for Us

This morning’s scripture is Romans 8:31 – “What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?”

If God is for you, who can be against you? Child of God, listen for God is assuredly for you since you are his follower. Of course, this doesn’t mean that no one will ever oppose you. It means that having God on your side which is the most important fact of your existence. Regardless of what happens in your life, you are on the winning side! Jesus has already won the victory through His death and resurrection. He is the eternal Victor, and you share in His triumph; no matter how much adversity and no one can prevail against you because you belong to Christ forever.

Knowing that your future is utterly secure can change your perspective dramatically. Instead of living in defensive mode; trying desperately to protect yourself from suffering; you learn to Follow Christ boldly, wherever He leads. He is training you not only to seek His Face and to follow His lead, but to enjoy this adventure of abandoning yourself to Him. Remember: God is your ever-present Help in trouble.

**Thursday:** Generous Sowing

This morning's scripture is 2 Corinthians 9:6 - "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously."

The concept of sowing and reaping is pretty simple. If you want a garden filled with colorful flowers, you start by planting seeds. If you want a large, fruitful garden, you've got to sow lots of seeds!

Blooming flowers attract people with their colorful petals and fragrant aromas. Well-kept gardens draw us in with their tasty variety of fruits and vegetables. Do you want to attract others to yourself and the God you serve? Want them to recognize the "fruit of the Spirit" residing in you? Want to win them with your fragrant aroma? Then sow seeds!

What seeds have you planted today? Kindness? Joy? Gentleness? Self-control? Goodness? If you drop those seeds into fertile soil and what soil is more prepared than those you care for, work with or see on a daily basis? God will cause them to spring to life.

As you begin each day, ask the Lord to show you which seeds to plant and how. Follow His lead. Then watch the blossoms of a fruitful life spring forth!

Do you want to bear fruit in your life? Do you want others to be drawn to you so that you can effectively minister to them? If so, than ask God to help you to plant good seeds and to show you when and where to do the planting so that the harvest will be plentiful!

**Friday:** Hope and Future

This morning's scripture is Jeremiah 29:11 – "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

The Lord has good plans for each of us: He offers each hope and a future. Many people fear the future, but ultimately ours will be glorious, beyond anything we can

imagine! Knowing that we are on our way to heaven is immensely important to our well-being. This knowledge can help us every day, every moment of our lives. Though our residence in paradise is in the future, heavenly Light transcends time and shines upon us even in the present.

Because the Lord paid the penalty for our sins, He is our Hope and He will never let us down. No Matter what is happening in our lives, it is still realistic to hope in Him. If we persist in trusting in Him no matter we will again praise Him for the help of His presence. Moreover, we can anticipate, via faith, the blessing that is ahead of us and start praising Him even in the dark. As we keep looking to the Lord in hope, His heavenly Light shines more brightly in our hearts. This is the Light of the knowledge of His Glory.

**Saturday:** Forever Love

This morning's scripture is Romans 8:35 – “Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean He no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?”

What does it take to make you doubt God's love for you? Financial difficulties, poor health, or job loss? A sick child, Alzheimer's, or cancer? The death of a parent, spouse, or child?

In Romans 8:28, Paul declares that God makes all these things work for our good because He uses them to mold us into the image of His Son. But when we experience these things, it can feel as though God has forgotten us. Satan would have us believe that God withdraws His love from us in order to punish us. So we draw back from loving Him; we build walls against the hurt of rejection and betrayal.

But God never promised to keep us or our loved ones from trouble. He loves us with an everlasting love. We are never out of His thoughts. He has graven our names on His heart and His hands. In troubles, God reveals Himself.

In *My Utmost for His Highest*, Oswald Chambers said, “Either Jesus Christ is a deceiver and Paul is deluded, or some extraordinary thing happens to a man who

holds on to the love of God when the odds are all against God's character...Only one thing can account for it – the love of God in Christ Jesus.”

We should pray to our Heavenly Father, that our love for Him grow stronger in the trials, knowing that His love never fails. Amen.