

## **Devotions: 8/31 to 9/5**

### **Monday:** Abiding In Him

This morning's scripture is Ephesians 5:8 – "You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord, so live your life as children of light."

The Lord wants us to live close to Him, seeing things from His Perspective more and more. Walk as children of Light, for His radiance is all around us and also within us; it transforms us inside and out. Remember that we were once darkness until His Spirit quickened us to Life, empowering us to live in His holy Presence. Dwell on this blessed remembrance until gratitude for His glorious grace wells up within us.

Trust Him to lead us step by step through each day. He provides sufficient Light for only one day at a time. If we try to look into the future, we will find ourselves peering into darkness: His Face shines upon us only in the present! This is where we find His gracious Love that never fails us. Live ever so near Him, flourishing in His transforming Light.

Stay safe, stay healthy, take care and God Bless! Pastor Mary Lou

### **Tuesday:** His Love

This morning's scripture is Ephesians 3:19 – "I ask that you'll know the love of Christ that is beyond knowledge so that you will be filled entirely with the fullness of God."

Jesus' Love for us is unquenchable. It is even stronger than the bond between a mother and her baby. Though she may forget the baby at her breast, He will not forget us! We are so precious to Him that He has engraved our names on the palms of both His hands. So, forgetting us is out of the question. Not only does He remember us constantly, He also has compassion on us continually.

He wants us to really come to know; practically, through experience, his Love, which far surpasses mere knowledge. The Holy Spirit, who lives in our inner most being, will help in this amorous quest. Ask Him to fill us up completely with

Christ's fullness so that we may have the richest measure of the divine Presence: becoming the bodies wholly filled and flooded with Him! Thus we can experience His Love in full measure!

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**Wednesday:** Sorrow

This morning's scripture is John 16:22 – "Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you."

When we are feeling sad, Christ wants us to anticipate feeling joyful again. This takes the sting out of our sorrow, because we know it is only temporary. Sadness tends to duplicate itself along the timeline, convincing us that we will always be unhappy. But that is a lie! He urges us to turn away from the lie, choosing rather to trust Him and all He has promised us. The truth is, all His children have infinite Joy ahead of them: reserved in heaven, guaranteed throughout eternity! No one can take this away from us.

While we are journeying toward heaven, our earthly path has many ups and downs. Though our down times are uncomfortable, they are not worthless. Pain and struggle can be highly productive when we trust Him in the midst of suffering. Our anguish is comparable to a woman enduring labor pains: Her suffering is very real, and she may wonder how much longer she can bear so much pain. However, all this agony produces a wonderful result; a newborn baby. The mother's memories of her suffering retreat to the background of her mind as she focuses on this joyous gift. While we labor through our earthly afflictions, keep our eyes on the promised reward: boundless Joy in heaven! Even now what is happening, there is fullness of Joy to be found in His Presence.

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**Thursday:****Joy**

This morning's scripture is 2 Chronicles 16:9 – "For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war."

What the Lord searches for in His children is an awakened soul that thrills to the Joy of His Presence! However, we are often subjected to a slumbering soul: taking for granted our lives with all their blessings, being overly focused on negative things buying into the world's version of the good life. He wants to help us break free from these worldly weights so our souls can soar in the heights with Him.

Yearning for an awakened soul is half the battle. Many of His children view devotion to Him as a duty, and they look elsewhere for their pleasures. They fail to understand that the Joy of His Presence outshines even the most delightful earthly joy.

Of course, it is not an either /or situation. We do not have to choose between enjoying Christ or enjoying the many good gifts He provides. It is simply a matter of priorities: He wants us to treasure Him above all else.

The more fully we enjoy Him, the more capacity we have to appreciate the blessings He shows upon us. As we delight in Him, He is free to bless us bountifully. If we keep Him first in our lives, His good gifts will not become idols. Delight yourself in Him, and He will give you the desires and secret petitions of your heart.

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**Friday:****Trust**

This morning's scripture is Romans 8:6 – "The attitude that comes from selfishness leads to death, but the attitude that comes from the Spirit leads to life and peace.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and mind, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your path straight. Such complete and utter confidence in Him has been your goal for years, but you continue to struggle with this. The main culprit is your mind's ravenous

appetite for understanding, fueled by a strong desire to feel in control of your life. You want to trust Him wholeheartedly, but you feel stuck.

Beloved, your desire to rely on Him wholly is a worthy goal. Now also believe that He is providing training through your life experiences, and that many of the difficulties you encounter are designed to help in this endeavor. Allow Him to do this supernatural work in your heart.

The Holy Spirit will help you think trusting thoughts, but He requires your cooperation. Instead of relying on your understanding to help you feel in control, ask the Spirit to control your mind. Then, wait confidently to see results. As you look to the Lord, trusting Him, talking to Him, He straightens out the path before you.

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**Saturday:** Condemnation

This morning's scripture is 1 John 3:20 – "Even if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts and knows all things."

Whenever our hearts condemn us, call out to Jesus: "Jesus, Help Me!" Our hearts and minds are battlefields: targets for the evil one's flaming arrows of accusation. In order to extinguish those fiery missiles, we must use our shields of faith skillfully. When we cry out to Him for help, we demonstrate genuine faith and He joins us in the battle. He reminds us that He has already paid the full penalty for all our sins.

It is crucial to understand that our consciences are imperfect. Many of their accusations are based on lies. We need to listen less to it and more to Him through His Spirit and His Word. We will continue to sin till we leave this world, but He has provided an effective way of dealing with sin, godly sorrow. This growth-promoting sorrow is motivated by love and concern for all those whom we have hurt including Him. It is a work of the Holy Spirit, and it brings real repentance that leaves no regret.

When our hearts condemn us, remember that He is greater than our hearts and He knows all things. Come confidently and gratefully into His loving Presence.

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