

Devotions: 12-14 to 12-19

Monday: He Has Plans

1 Peter 5:8 (NASB) - Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Jesus knows the plans He has for us, plans to prosper us and not to harm us, plans to give us hope and a future. This promise provides a feast of encouragement; offering us prosperity, hope, and a blessed future. Because the world is so fractured and full of pain, people tend to think dark thoughts and feel hopeless about the future. Unless we stay, we are vulnerable to such thoughts and feelings, too. This makes us easy prey for our adversary, the devil, who prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Jesus gave His body on the cross to provide eternal nourishment for us, but the evil one wants to devour us! The contrast is crystal-clear, and the stakes are immeasurably high.

Mankind has a voracious appetite for finding out what the future will bring. Astrologers and fortune-tellers capitalize on this lust to peer into secret things; things that belong to Him. However, to feast on Him we must live in the present moment. This is where we can encounter Him and enjoy His Presence. As we come to the table of His delights, be sure to bring our forks of trust and our spoons of thankfulness. Take plenty of time enjoying Him and our souls will delight in the richest of fare.

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

Tuesday: Hope

Romans 12:12 - Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Hope is a golden cord connecting us to heaven. This cord helps us hold our heads up high, even when multiple trials are buffeting us. Jesus never leaves our sides, and He will never let go of our hands. But without the cord of hope, our heads may slump and our feet may shuffle as we journey uphill with Him. Hope lifts our perspective from our weary feet to the glorious view we can see from the high road. We are reminded that the road we are traveling together with Christ is

ultimately a highway to heaven. When we consider this radiant destination, the roughness or smoothness of the road ahead becomes much less significant. He is training us to hold in our hearts a dual focus: His continual Presence and the hope of Heaven.

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Wednesday: God's Love

Romans 8:38-39 - For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,^[a] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nothing can separate us from God's Love. Let this divine assurance trickle through our minds and into our hearts and souls. Whenever we start to feel fearful or anxious, repeat this unconditional promise: "Nothing can separate me from Your Love, Jesus."

Most of mankind's misery stems from feeling unloved. In the midst of adverse circumstances, people tend to feel that love has been withdrawn and they have been forsaken. This feeling of abandonment is often worse than the adversity itself. Be assured that Christ will never abandon any of His children, not even temporarily. He will never leave us or forsake us! His Presence watches over us continually. He has engraved us on the palms of His hands.

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Thursday: Righteousness

Ephesians 4:22-24 - You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds;²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Wear Christ's robe of righteousness with ease. He custom-made it for us, to cover us from head to toe. The price He paid for this covering was astronomical, His own blood. We could never purchase such a royal garment, no matter how hard we worked. Sometimes we forget that His righteousness is a gift, and we feel ill at ease in our royal robe. He weeps when He sees us squirming under the velvety fabric, as if it were made of scratchy sackcloth.

Jesus wants us to trust Him enough to realize our privileged position in His kingdom. Relax in the luxuriant folds of our magnificent robe. Keep our eyes on Him, as we practice waling in this garment of righteousness. When our behavior is unfitting for one in His kingdom, do not try to throw off our royal robe. Instead, throw off the unrighteous behavior. Then we will be able to feel at ease in this glorious garment, enjoying the gift He fashioned for us before the foundation of the world.

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Friday: Thankfulness

1 Thessalonians 5:18 - give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Thankfulness opens the door to Christ's Presence. Though He is always with us, He has gone to great measures to preserve our freedom of choice. He has placed a door between us and Him, and He has empowered us to open or close that door. There are many ways to open it, but a grateful attitude is one of the most effective. Thankfulness is built on a substructure of trust. When thankful words stick in our throats, we need to check up on our foundation of trust. When thankfulness flows freely from our hearts and lips, let our gratitude draw us closer to Him. He wants us to learn the art of giving thanks in all circumstances. See how many times we can thank Him daily; this will awaken our awareness to a multitude of blessings. It will also cushion the impact of trials when they come against us. Practice His Presence by practicing the discipline of thankfulness.

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Saturday:

Receive Christ's Love

James 4:7-8 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Open our minds and hearts; our entire being; to receive Christ's love in full measure. So many of His children limp through their lives starved for love because they haven't learned the art of receiving. This is essentially an act of faith: believing that He loves us with boundless, everlasting Love. The art of receiving is also a discipline: training our minds to trust Him, coming close to Him with confidence.

Remember that the evil one is the father of lies. Learn to recognize his deceptive intrusions into our thoughts. One of his favorite deceptions is to undermine our confidence in His unconditional love. Fight back against these lies! Do not let them go unchallenged. Resist the devil in His Name, and he will slink away from us. Draw near to Him, and His Presence will envelop us in Love.

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