

VOL.11

BETWEEN THE
LINES

a frontline devotional

DEDICATION

This devotional is
dedicated to all those
who choose to follow
Matthew 6:33 every day.
“Seek First The Kingdom
of God.”

Thank you to our faithful
Youth Staff who, by the power of the Holy
Spirit, poured out of themselves to
complete this amazing devotional as a tool
to equip the body of Christ through
the power of the Word!

...taking it by FORCE!
Paulie & Nikki



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PREFACE

The importance of daily devotions can't be said enough.

It is the Holy Word that speaks to us from God so that we can live!

The power of the Word can be experienced daily as you read it, receive what it says, and apply it to your own life.

The Scriptures give us direction, hope, and health. The Word of God brings us into the knowledge of who God is and all that He has for us as believers! A lot more can be said about the Word, but I encourage you to read, receive, apply, and find out for yourself!

Walk with the King....

Nikki

"CONQUER BY THIS"

“WHEN HE HAD DISARMED THE RULERS
AND AUTHORITIES [THOSE
SUPERNATURAL FORCES OF EVIL
OPERATING AGAINST US], HE MADE A
PUBLIC EXAMPLE OF THEM [EXHIBITING
THEM AS CAPTIVES IN HIS TRIUMPHAL
PROCESSION], HAVING TRIUMPHED OVER
THEM THROUGH THE CROSS.”
- COLOSSIANS 2:15

In 312 AD, Constantine the Great, on the eve of a major battle against Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge, saw a vision of the Chi Rho, which is a picture of the first two letters of Christ in Greek. In the vision he heard Jesus tell him to “Conquer by This.” This then became the symbol of the army, an insignia placed on the flag, and each time they marched under the standard of the cross they had a victorious battle!

We, as Christians, have Jehovah Nissi, our Banner of Victory, to go before us in our daily battles. Jesus, the King of Kings, has defeated the enemy for us. This gives us the confidence that we will have victory in the battles we face each day. We can hold our Standard, the Word of God, up over ourselves as we go. Holding up the Standard by speaking what the Word says over our situations and knowing we will win each battle we face! The Word tells us that we who are born of God are victorious and we are overcomers (1 John 5:4). God is for you today, so no matter what may be coming against you, know that God is for you (Romans 8:31)! Start out by being thankful to Jesus, the One who goes before you, stands besides you, and is always over you (1 Corinthians 15:57).

What challenge are you facing today?

What does the Word say over that situation?

Walk with the King...
Nikki

TIME WITH GOD - "THERE'S AN A.P.P. FOR THAT!"

If you know you should be spending time with God, reading His Word, and listening for His voice but you're not quite sure how to start-here's an "APP" for spending time with God.

Attend to God's Word. Proverbs 4:20 says, "...attend to My words, incline your ear unto my sayings." It's so important to for us to set a time aside every day to read God's Word. I strongly encourage you to keep a physical copy of the Bible instead of using your phone or tablet. (Reading from a physical copy will help keep you from being distracted by notifications.) As you read, highlight the verses that are meaningful to you so you can find them again. Just as we wouldn't go a day without food for our physical body, we should never go a day without food for our spirit from God's Word. Set aside the same time every day to attend to God's Word. Doing this at the same time each day will help you to be consistent.

Pray. Philippians 4:6 (NLT) says, "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done." Prayer is simply talking to God. If we were to spend just 5 minutes a day in prayer, that adds up to 2.5 hours in a month and 30 hours in a year! How much do you think your life would change if you were to spend 30 hours with God this year? Being consistent in our daily time with God will be life changing.

Pay attention to His voice. John 10:27 says, "My sheep hear My voice....and they follow Me." If you knew you were going to receive a text message from God, would you pay attention to your phone? Of course you would! You'd keep your phone with you and you would be completely focused on it. You would let nothing distract you until you received that message. God really does have a message for us each day and it's found in His Word and in His presence. Pay attention! Be deliberate about listening for His voice as you read your Bible and pray. Make a heart decision to be consistent in your time with God. Pick a time to do it and stick with it!

Be salt and light,
Miss Dawn

THE GREATER ONE

**“YOU ARE OF GOD, LITTLE CHILDREN, AND
HAVE OVERCOME THEM, BECAUSE HE IS WHO
IS IN YOU IS GREATER THAN HE WHO IS IN
THE WORLD.”
- 1 JOHN 4:4**

ADDITIONAL READING: JOHN 14:15-17

What is the Holy Spirit doing in you? Is the Holy Spirit just a spiritual hitchhiker that hitchhikes a ride through life with you? Or maybe He's just some excess baggage for you to carry around through life? No, the Holy Spirit lives within you to be a help to you, to comfort you, and to bring abundance to your life!

The Greater One lives in us. There is not even the shadow of a contest between Him and our defeated adversary, the devil.

When you know who you are in Him and understand how much greater He who lives within you is than he (the defeated one) who is in the world, you will step out boldly in faith and confidence, knowing that the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5) lives big in you to defeat all of life's challengers.

Your confession should be:

I believe that the Greater One lives in me.

I believe that the Greater One is greater than the devil.

I believe that the Greater One is greater than any tests or trials I may face.

I believe that the Greater One is greater than any problem or circumstance in my life.

I believe that the Greater One is greater than sickness, disease and lack.

I believe that the Greater One is greater than anything and everything.
THE GREATER ONE DWELLS IN ME!

Stay Connected
Mr. George

I AM EQUIPPED AND CONFIDENT

“ALL SCRIPTURE IS INSPIRED BY GOD AND IS USEFUL TO TEACH US WHAT IS TRUE AND TO MAKE US REALIZE WHAT IS WRONG IN OUR LIVES. IT CORRECTS US WHEN WE ARE WRONG AND TEACHES US TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT. GOD USES IT TO PREPARE AND EQUIP HIS PEOPLE TO DO EVERY GOOD WORK.”

- 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

ADDITIONAL READING: HEBREWS 13:20-21

I think everyone that is reading this can admit that life is full of first-time experiences. And most of us can admit even the most confident of people find first time experiences rather frightening, or at least intimidating. This is normal, but those little nerves that you have are fine as long as you have God on your side! I have experienced tons of first-time events throughout my life, and even though I can be slightly nervous of the unknown, I knew that I was in the will of God and therefore I know He wouldn't let me down! God knows that we feel less than ready to embark on new endeavors, whether it be switching classes for the first time, going off to college, maybe starting a new job, or buying a home. That is why God sent His Son, this is why He sent His Holy Spirit, that is why He sent His Word, because He wants nothing more than to equip His people with the confidence to succeed. The Bible is full of blessed wisdom and guidance to equip you spiritually, emotionally and professionally. When you regularly invest your time in God's Word and with Him, His Holy Spirit will grow you up and make you ready for your next first time anything!

I want to encourage you as you live righteous lives before Christ, He has equipped you with the armor of God to fight any battle and to overcome any fear! Yes, life is filled with first time experiences, but the next time you face one, know that Jesus is inside of you and the Holy Spirit is surrounding you and guiding you as you walk towards that new life event! Be excited! God's new blessings are right around the corner!

Think about what fear or trouble engulfs you when you embark on new first-time experiences and find scripture to battle it... and remember, being nervous is normal but all good things work out for those who serve the Lord!

God is good... all the time... all the time...

Joey

NO FEAR HERE (PART 1)

“FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US A SPIRIT OF FEAR, BUT OF POWER, AND LOVE, AND A SOUND MIND (SELF-CONTROL).”

- 2 TIMOTHY 1:7

Fear was once Adam's faith. When Adam bowed his knee to God's enemy in the Garden of Eden, the faith of God that had been his as a son of God was twisted into fear. The first thing Adam said after his sin was, “..I heard Your voice in the garden and was afraid..” (Genesis 3:10). All that Adam had been given by God was taken by Satan and perverted (twisted). Love became hate, prosperity became lack, and life and health became sickness and death. Also, Adam's authority in the earth was given over to Satan (Luke 4:6).

But when Jesus was born and later went to the cross as our substitute, He destroyed the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8 says, “For this purpose the Son of God was revealed, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” All of the works of the devil are based in fear. But the good news is that Jesus destroyed the works of the devil and delivered mankind from his fear and death. Fear is no longer natural to the born-again child of God. We have been completely delivered from it, reborn into a Kingdom of power, love, and a sound mind. So fear must come from the outside and be received for it to gain a foothold.

When a fearful thought - a lie of the devil - comes against the mind of a blood-bought, blood-washed, born-again child of God, unless the fear is received, meditated on, and spoken, it has no power to steal, kill, or destroy. Words of fear allow it into your life. Proverbs 18:21 says, “Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”

Pray Out Loud: “Heavenly Father, reveal to me the areas of fear in my life that need correcting, and I will replace them with faith. I am a believer, not a doubter. I am not a worrier, instead I meditate on what The Word of God says. Satan, you cannot have my mind.”

FEAR TOLERATED IS FAITH CONTAMINATED!

Hugs

Miss Lois

SUPREME AUTHORITY

“I BIND MYSELF TO GOD’S AUTHORITY, ACKNOWLEDGE
HIS SUPREMACY AND DEVOTE MYSELF TO HIS GLORY
AND SERVICE ALONE.”
- PSALM 63:11

Recently I have been confessing that I am necessarily connecting myself and every part of my day to God’s authority. It is becoming habit to recognize His sovereignty over everything, both the predictable and unpredictable events that I experience. By putting my thoughts and considerations FIRST on God’s supremacy over it all, I find a place of rest and assurance that both humbles me and builds my spiritual confidence.

Supremacy: Highest in rank or authority; paramount; sovereign; chief; of the highest quality, degree, character, importance, greatest, utmost, final.

As believers, we have the utmost authority within us and around us. All other forms of power (Ephesians 6:12) are forms that we are able to stand against and resist. We can stand firmly in our place wearing the complete armor of God (verse 13), never falling prey to the enemy’s schemes and wiles. There is no principality, power, or ruler of darkness that can stand against the supremacy of God which is a constant, changeless, matchless reality. We engage with this supernatural principle as we speak and confess the Word of Life and rely not on our own abilities but rely on the resurrection power of Jesus Christ that has defeated every foe, led captivity captive, and led away a train of vanquished adversaries (Ephesians 4:8). This fact does not change. Colossians 2:15 says that “God disarmed principalities and powers that were ranged against us and made a bold display and public example of them, in triumphing over them.” We devote ourselves to God’s glory and service, and we taste and see that He is good, faithful and sure. He is the chief over our physical, mental, emotional and social well-being. Let’s remind the enemy that He and His demons have been publicly triumphed over, disarmed in a bold display! Let’s keep first things first today, and keep God’s paramount authority bound in our hearts and minds. We stay in this place and experience victory through what Jesus accomplished!

Your sister in Christ,
Niki

ARMOR UP

“...BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT. PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD THAT YOU MAY BE ABLE TO STAND AGAINST THE SCHEMES OF THE DEVIL.”
- EPHESIANS 6:10-11

God has not left us defenseless against the attacks of the enemy, but instead He has provided spiritual armor to wear in this spiritual battle. The message of the armor tells us how to take our place and maintain it against the devil (Ephesians 6:10-18).

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...”
The girdle of the truth is a clear understanding of God’s Word. It holds the rest of the armor in place, like a soldier’s belt.

“And having put on the breastplate of righteousness”
The breastplate of righteousness has two meanings: (1) Jesus is our righteousness, so we put Him on; (2) The breastplate represents our active obedience to the Word of God.

“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace”
This is the faithful ministry in proclaiming the Word of God.

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, where with you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked”
This is complete safety by faith in the blood. No power of the enemy can penetrate the blood!

“And take on the helmet of salvation...”
This is the covering of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God”
All the other parts of the armor are for protection (defense). This one is to be used offensively against the enemy.

Now you know what God has provided for you to use to protect yourself with spiritually. Ephesians 6:12 says, “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against...spiritual wickedness.”

Is daily life a battle, are your standards being attacked? Is Satan constantly finding ways to try and tear you down? Do you feel you are not good enough (THAT IS A LIE), you must fight to maintain your purity.

Confession for today: “Lord help me to put on the Full Armor of God today that you have provided for me, and allow me to boldly take possession of all of it today in Jesus Name!”

Stay Connected
Mr. George

IDOLATRY

“YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME. YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF AN IMAGE IN THE FORM OF ANYTHING IN HEAVEN ABOVE OR ON THE EARTH BENEATH OR IN THE WATERS BELOW. YOU SHALL NOT BOW DOWN TO THEM OR WORSHIP THEM; FOR I, THE LORD YOUR GOD, AM A JEALOUS GOD, PUNISHING THE CHILDREN FOR THE SIN OF THE PARENTS TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION OF THOSE WHO HATE ME, BUT SHOWING LOVE TO A THOUSAND GENERATIONS OF THOSE WHO LOVE ME AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.”
- EXODUS 20:3-6

According to Merriam Webster, idolatry is the worship of a physical object as a god, or immoderate attachment or devotion to something. As Christians, idolatry is something a little different. Idolatry is when we put anything before our relationship with God. In Exodus 20:1-6 we can see the first two commandments. Both of the commandments involve putting God first. God says, “I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.”

Jealous means intolerant of rivalry or unfaithfulness. Basically God is saying that He comes first, no ifs ands or buts. The Israelites were not only creating physical idols, but they were setting up idols in their hearts. Read Isaiah 44:6-23 to see what the Israelites chose to worship over God.

Now you may say, I don’t worship those actual idols, but we do have other gods. What “gods” have people in our culture shaped for themselves? Celebrities, money, friends, school, sports, church, family, religion, etc. Why do you think that people might be attracted to these idols? They let them live their lives, and it doesn’t require anything of them.

When we engage in idolatry, we are committing adultery in our relationship with God. During Biblical times, adultery was one greatest sins you could commit. You might say, “Well I am most definitely not an adulterer; I’m not cheating on God.” Here is an illustration for you. We are the water bottle, and the food coloring is the times we choose something over God. We decide we’re going to a football game and not church, one drop. Even after one drop we are no longer clear, that decision bleeds into our entire lives. Then we say, "Well I have to study, so I’ll read my Bible later." That’s another drop. Eventually we are so far from where we started that we become un-recognizable.

There is a plus side, we can go back. Jesus has taken the burden for us and we now we have grace because of it. If we apply Matthew 6:33 and Luke 10:27, we can overcome idolatry. We can also ask our helper, the Holy Spirit, to help us rid ourselves of the idols in our lives.

Love and Nuggs,
Amanda

WHERE IS YOUR F.A.I.T.H? (PART 5)

“GOD—YOU’RE MY GOD! I CAN’T GET ENOUGH OF YOU!
I’VE WORKED UP SUCH HUNGER AND THIRST FOR GOD,
TRAVELING ACROSS DRY AND WEARY DESERTS.”

- PROVERBS 3:5-6

Focus - a center of activity, attraction, or attention

Action - the accomplishment of a thing usually over a period of time

Inseparability - seemingly always together: very intimate

Trust - assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something

Hunger - a strong desire

Have you ever been outside on a hot summer day and found yourself extremely thirsty? Maybe you were going for a run or walking to a friend’s house and suddenly that sun beating down on you felt even hotter than earlier. In that moment, all you can think of is how thirsty you are. The first thing you will do when you get to where you’re headed is grab a glass of ice-cold water and quench that thirst. Maybe you have experienced a day where you didn’t have time for lunch, and all the way home on the bus you were thinking about what you would eat when you got home. Those are natural examples of a hunger or thirst. These are strong desires that don’t go away without action on our part. In Psalm 63:1 it says, “I’ve worked up such a hunger and thirst for God, traveling across dry and weary deserts.” In life, our daily responsibilities can cause us to feel weary because we are out in a world that is as dry as a desert. Sometimes, when we are around people who challenge our choices and disregard our beliefs, we work up a sweat. Our faith in God may start to feel depleted, weak, and in need of replenishment. In these moments, what’s the answer? Psalms 63:2-4 says, “So here I am in the place of worship, eyes open, drinking in your strength and glory. In your generous love I am really living at last! My lips brim praises like fountains. I bless you every time I take a breath! My arms wave like banners of praise to you.” God gives us everything we need in His presence. In this moment, right now, He is filling you up. You are drinking in His strength and glory to get you through this day! God never leaves us empty. He never leaves us broken. When we submit to Him in His presence He can freely refill our hearts.

Find peace in His embrace,
Jasmine

THE GOD WHO FULFILLS

AND JESUS REPLIED, “I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE.
WHOEVER COMES TO ME WILL NEVER BE HUNGRY AGAIN.
WHOEVER BELIEVES IN ME WILL NEVER BE THIRSTY.”
- JOHN 6:35

ADDITIONAL READING: PSALM 63: 1-5

A term that comes to mind when I see the struggle of this world is that the world is unfulfilled. Unfulfilled is defined as: not carried out or brought to completion. This is what the world feels, they never feel complete. Maybe some of you at times feel the same way. I am here to let you know that through God you can feel complete and fulfilled to the utmost and overflowing! Think about what makes up the word fulfilled - which is what we should be in Christ. Filled is the key word within fulfilled. God wants nothing more than you to be filled with His power, love, joy, and peace each day! When we are filled with God, we can become fulfilled in life! Think of it like this, most of us have been in cars and know when the gas light comes on it is a warning sign that we need to fill the car up. But there are people who like to challenge the accuracy of this light! Think of this car as your spiritual life, and the gas tank as your fulfillment. How many times has God wanted to fill and fulfill you during the day and we ignore the warning signs; that we are running on spiritual fumes and eventually will trip up, slip, maybe fall and make mistakes? Even worse, because of you running on fumes you feel the anxiety and worry of the world of not being fulfilled. This occurred because we chose not to heed the warning signs that we are running on fumes spiritually.

How many of us live each day on fumes, just skimming by and barely being fully fulfilled by God? We let work, family, school and the business of life slowly crowd out our time with God. When we run low on spiritual fumes, our sinful desperate nature will entice us to fill up with things that will never fulfill us. Figuratively, it's like filling our gas tank with water or soda instead of car fuel. When we read the Word of God and spend time with Him each day, this keeps our tank filled and our life fulfilled. God will overflow our hearts and souls with the right fuel, and when we are fueled up we are ready for our mission. When we fulfill that mission, we find completion. Heed spiritual warning signs and fill your tank daily! Make sure you are continually filling up with God each day, He wants nothing more than to fill you and fulfill you in life! Not to mention it is a great feeling driving around with a full tank of gas!

God is good... all the time... all the time...

Joey

NAIL IT TO THE CROSS

“BUT JESUS TURNED AWAY FROM PETER AND SAID TO HIM, GET BEHIND ME, SATAN! YOU ARE IN MY WAY [AN OFFENSE AND A HINDRANCE AND A SNARE TO ME]; FOR YOU ARE MINDING WHAT PARTAKES NOT OF THE NATURE AND QUALITY OF GOD, BUT OF MEN.”
- MATTHEW 16:23

Christ was a good example when it came to temptation. Like Jesus, we can't be all willy nilly with it. When we have a weakness or tendency to fall into a particular sin, we can't mess around. If we don't deal with it fiercely, it will deal fiercely with us. It will take over and destroy our lives. We've got to nail it to the cross by depriving it of our participation! Nail it to the cross by denying it any access to our lives!

By now, most of us know the ideal circumstances under which we give in to sin, so let's deny it access by denying it the opportunity of us being under those circumstances. Jesus wasn't nailing Himself to the cross. He was nailing our sins in the hope that we would do the same. Sin is not worth the cost of its participation. Follow along with this parallel of Matthew 27:21-25. It's a simple dialogue between God and us when we're dealing with temptation.

“God, I have a really strong desire to give in to temptation, but my spirit wants to do your will. So which of the two should I do, God?”

“Do the right thing,” He answered.

“What should I do then, with these desires, this flesh that's pulling me away from You?”

God answered, “Crucify it! Nail it to the cross!”

“But God, I can't let it go! I want it so bad!” But God only shouted louder, “Crucify it! Die to your flesh and nail it to the cross!”

So I saw that I wasn't getting anywhere in my reasoning with God, but instead the temptation was growing worse. I plead the blood of Jesus over myself.

"I am innocent of this sin, God, by your son's blood. I'm free from it! Now it's your responsibility! Take this away from me Holy Spirit!"

Then I did the right thing, and handed my sin over to be crucified.

So how do we really die to our flesh? By recognizing our weakness! Jesus said, "When temptation comes, run!" Run from any setting that enables you to sin. Literally, get up and move yourself away from it.

When we die to sin like this, the Word says the Holy Spirit, who raised Christ from the dead, will breathe new life into our "dead" flesh (Romans 8:11). In other words, we give up satisfying our desires the way we want and allow Him to satisfy them the way He wants. The way He originally intended to.

Pursue your purpose in Him,
Anthony B.

YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN

“HOW PRECIOUS AND WEIGHTY ALSO ARE YOUR THOUGHTS TO ME, O GOD! HOW VAST IS THE SUM OF THEM! IF I COULD COUNT THEM, THEY WOULD BE MORE IN NUMBER THAN THE SAND.”

- PSALM 139:17-18

What an encouraging thought, that the creator of the universe thinks about each one of us so much so that it's compared to sand! Have you ever been to the beach and picked up a fist full of sand and let it fall through your fingers? Just the small amount that we can fit in our hands doesn't even come close to the thoughts that our God thinks towards us. And not only do we come to His mind, but this verse says that His thoughts are precious and weighty. They have depth and significance.

The word precious in the Greek is *yaqar*, which means valuable and rare. So how significant we must be in order for the creator of the universe to think of us this way! Unfortunately, we may come across situations and people throughout our lives that make us momentarily forget that. We will be overlooked, under-appreciated, bullied, left out and forgotten. But let this verse be a reminder of your real value! What the Lord thinks of you is the truth of who you are.

Confession for today: “Lord I come to You today with any feelings of insignificance that I have in my heart. There have been times when I've been bullied and overlooked and it's affected how I view myself. I know that this is a lie from the enemy and I lay those feelings down right now. I thank you Lord that Your word tells me how much You love me and how significant I am to You. I confess that what You think of me is the truth of who I am and that my worth and value is found in You. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

Let your light shine,
Bre

NO FEAR HERE (PART 2)

“FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US A SPIRIT OF FEAR, BUT OF POWER, AND LOVE, AND A SOUND MIND (SELF-CONTROL).”

- 2 TIMOTHY 1:7

The devil can't do anything apart from fear. When you think about a lie and speak fear, it activates the lie in your life. Do not allow yourself to receive the thought and then speak it! Jesus said in Matthew 6:31, “Therefore, take no thought, saying, “What should we eat or drink or wear?” When a negative thought of evil comes against your mind, CAST IT DOWN – OUT LOUD! (2 Corinthians 10:5). Because satan cannot hear your thoughts, only your spoken words, you must fight thoughts with words. You cannot fight thoughts with thoughts. (Mark 11:22-24).

Speak against the fear and cast it down. Then speak God's WORD over the situation, and rejoice in the truth. Do it until your mind is renewed to the truth of what God has to say about it. There is no fear in God's love. Fear connects us to satan the same way faith connects us to our Heavenly Father. Jesus bought and paid for your freedom from fear. God has given you the Spirit of power, and love, and of a sound mind – the very same mind that He has.

Pray Out Loud: “I am free from fear because God has not given me a spirit of fear, but I have the Spirit of power, love, and a sound mind. I have the mind of Christ, and the wisdom of God is in me. I am a child of faith, not of fear. I am the redeemed of The Lord. He is on my side, therefore I will not fear. He has opened the door of righteousness (right standing with God) and I have walked in.”

FEAR TOLERATED IS FAITH CONTAMINATED

BTW: Since I can remember having a favorite verse in the Bible, this has been, by far, my favorite. It has seen me through many trials where fear attempted to overtake me but Praise God, His Word is powerful and true and I walk and live without fear because of what Jesus did for me!

Hugs
Miss Lois

S.T.A.N.D.A.R.D

**SALVATION-TRUST-APPLICATION-NON-COMPRISING-
DISCIPLE-ANOINTING-RESPONSIBILITY-DAUNTLESS**

“ALL SCRIPTURE IS GOD-BREATHED [GIVEN BY DIVINE
INSPIRATION] AND IS PROFITABLE FOR INSTRUCTION,
FOR CONVICTION [OF SIN], FOR CORRECTION [OF
ERROR AND RESTORATION TO OBEDIENCE], FOR
TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS [LEARNING TO LIVE IN
CONFORMITY TO GOD’S WILL, BOTH PUBLICLY AND
PRIVATELY—BEHAVING HONORABLY WITH PERSONAL
INTEGRITY AND MORAL COURAGE].”
- 2 TIMOTHY 3:16

The Word of God is our Standard; our gage by which we determine all things by and how we measure what is right and wrong, what is holy or unholy, what is truth or what is a lie. As we study the Word and live by it, when situations arise you are already set with what your Standard is (what you stand for, what your check points are and what you believe). Standard by definition is: the basis by which we determine as acceptable or unacceptable, a goal set, a place of refuge, safest route.

Today we will start to look at the acronym for the word STANDARD. Let’s start with S-Salvation.

- 1-Everyone needs salvation: Romans 3:10-12
- 2-The price or consequence of sin is death: Romans 6:23
- 3-Jesus Christ died for our sins; He paid the price for our death: Romans 3:24-25
- 4-We receive salvation and eternal life through faith in Jesus: Romans 10:9-10, 13
- 5-Salvation through Jesus Christ brings us into a relationship of peace with God: Romans 5:1

Each of us is able to gain salvation through faith by God's grace, and once we do this we have benefits of salvation. Can you remember when you, by faith, asked Jesus to come into your heart as Savior? At that moment your walk with the Lord began, and this is a relationship you should be building on which will increase deeper each new day. In salvation we come into a place as a child of God where we are joint heirs with Jesus. The Holy Spirit of God dwells inside of us now, and we are always loved unconditionally. This is one family tree that will grow until eternity. As part of this family, we are guaranteed our heritage which is of a sinless spiritual nature, and we can have holiness as our go to attitude!

Our prayer for you is to walk in the full knowledge of your salvation, and the assurance that you are a child of God, operating in the power that is in you as you allow the Holy Spirit to stir up the gifts inside you!!! Today, be confident in who you are and whose you are, because you are saved!!

Walk with the King...

Nikki

WISE AS A SERPENT

“BEHOLD, I AM SENDING YOU OUT LIKE SHEEP IN THE MIDST OF WOLVES; BE WARY AND WISE AS SERPENTS, AND BE INNOCENT (HARMLESS, GUILLESS, AND WITHOUT FALSITY) AS DOVES.”

- MATTHEW 10:16

ADDITIONAL READING: GENESIS 3:14, 1 PETER 5:8,
2 CHRONICLES 1:7-13

When you first read Matthew 10:16 you might say, ‘Ewww! God wants us to be like a serpent? Aren’t serpents and snakes evil because of the Garden of Eden?’

No, snakes and serpents are not evil; they are a part of God’s creation. But because of the role they played in Genesis 3, ‘Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.’ Let’s be honest, serpents have it pretty rough. They have no arms or legs, they eat dust in order to smell, they have horrible eye sight and hearing, they get stepped on all the time by people and other animals, and they always get cast as villains in movies!

Because of their present circumstances, snakes have been forced to cultivate wariness and wisdom in their day to day lives. Snakes will always enter a new environment tentatively, keeping to the outskirts as they assess their surroundings, never rushing into a decision or situation. They trust their instincts over their senses because they know that they are always vulnerable to danger, especially when they are eating or shedding their skin. Every choice that they make, and its timing, is potentially life altering and bares a great weight. That is why they are very cautious and particular about how they conduct themselves... daily.

How do WE conduct ourselves daily? Do we blindly and carelessly rush into situations and conversation at school, at work, or online? Or do we think about our actions and words before we act or speak? Do we weigh first the possible consequences of our decisions, and their timing, before we choose a course? Each choice that we make in life, from who we choose to spend time with to what we allow into our eye gates and ear gates, is potentially life altering to us in both the natural and in the spirit!

God wants us to use wisdom as we are led daily by His Holy Spirit. Wisdom comes from spending time with God, in prayer and His Word! Wisdom is necessary in order to know the schemes of the enemy, and to learn to be on guard and wary of the dangers in this world that would try and step on and crush the plans and purpose that God has for our lives! Like Solomon in 2 Chronicles 1:7-13, ask God for wisdom above all else, and He will be faithful to give you that and more in order to accomplish all that He has planned for you to do!

Fight the good fight of faith!
Jamie

I'LL NEVER GIVE UP ON YOU

“I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU AS ORPHANS [HELPLESS]...”
- JOHN 14:18

No one really seems to know what the Bible means when it says a “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit” will not be forgiven (Matthew 12:31), because the Bible also says that Jesus has forgiven our sins: past, present, and future (Romans 5:10 , Hebrews 9:26). So if that’s true, how is it possible for us to “blaspheme the Holy Spirit” and not be forgiven? Pastor Paul has speculated that this “blasphemy” is referring to people who constantly reject the Holy Spirit throughout their entire lifetime, up until they breathe their last. Based on how God forgives people in the Bible, that doesn’t seem far from the truth. Speculation aside, what we do need to understand is this: blasphemy is not referring to us sinning or failing over and over again.

The Holy Spirit once spoke to me saying, “I’ll never give up on you or your family. So please, never give up on Me, for I haven’t given up on you.” For whatever reason, some of us may need a little more time before we can really “get it” and move past certain shortcomings. Meanwhile, the enemy (or a little voice in our head) will try to beat us down for taking so long to get past the issue. So many times the Holy Spirit has come to bear me up under such harassment, encouraging me with the above quote, or sending someone my way with a word of knowledge, where the person had details about my situation which I had not shared with them or anyone close to them. While I won’t glorify the specific issue I was having by sharing its name, I will say it took me years to mature to a point where I stopped beating myself up about it. And I mean YEARS. But by the Holy Spirit’s constant strengthening I was able to move forward out of the rut I was in. Thanks to Him it’s an almost non-existent issue.

We don't always remember what caused us to have a particular issue in our lives, but Jesus shared a parable in Matthew 13:25 about a man and his wheat field. While the man was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the healthy wheat and went on his way, leaving no other evidence that he had been there. Verse 26 says that as the healthy wheat sprouted, the weeds cropped up too.

The enemy attempts to plant weeds in our lives, often while we're young, hoping those weeds will choke out the Word when we get older. But like the man in the parable, the Holy Spirit possesses the wisdom to remove those weeds from our lives, which many times are patterns of thought that lead to spiritual regression. But He hasn't given up on you. So don't give up! He still loves you and will do everything necessary to sanctify your mind and heart through and through!

Pursue your purpose in Him,
Anthony B.

BEHAVE YOURSELVES

“BUT AS HE WHO CALLED YOU IS HOLY, YOU ALSO BE
HOLY IN ALL YOUR CONDUCT.”
- 1 PETER 1:15

ADDITIONAL READING: PSALM 119:9-16, 1 JOHN 1:5-10

Do you remember when you were little, how you'd be getting ready to go somewhere and your parents would give you reminders to behave yourself? Maybe they told you not to touch anything or not to run around. Maybe they'd remind you to say, "please" and "thank you." Your parents did that because they knew that's the right way to behave. Your parents love you and they wanted to be sure that you were doing what was right. It's also because they knew that if you didn't behave, people would think that your parents didn't know how to teach you what's right. Your behavior is not just a reflection of you. It can also be a reflection of your parents.

In this verse, Peter was telling those who follow Jesus, "Behave yourselves! God has called you to be His children. As God's child, you should act like your Father and He is holy." Holy means to be pure and right. If we are God's children, the things we do and say should be a reflection of God our Father. How do we make sure that our behavior is pure and right? By spending time in God's Word. God's Word will teach us how we should live, and it will strengthen us so that we will want to choose to live in a way that is pure and right.

If there is an area of your life where you know you are not doing what's right, and you want to change, be sure you are spending time in God's Word every day. Seek out someone who will pray with you and encourage you to do what's right.

As Pastor Paul has said, “it’s easier to uproot an acorn than an oak tree.” Don’t give sin a chance to grow. Instead, spend time in God’s Word daily and you will grow in the things that reflect the nature and character of your Heavenly Father. Matthew 5:16 says, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” We have a wonderful Father in Heaven! When we live our lives in a way that is pure and right, we give Him the glory He deserves.

Confession for today: “Father God, thank You for loving me. Thank You for accepting me as Your child. I want to do what is pure and right. Show me the areas in my life that are not pleasing to You. Help me to grow and change so that I live in a way that reflects who You are and gives You the glory You deserve.”

Be salt and light,
Miss Dawn

INSTRUMENTS OF RESTORATION

“SING TO GOD, SING PRAISES TO HIS NAME, CAST UP A
HIGHWAY FOR HIM WHO RIDES THROUGH THE DESERTS
- HIS NAME IS THE LORD - BE IN HIGH SPIRITS AND
GLORY BEFORE HIM!”

- PSALM 68:4

I love how this scripture paints the picture of our praises emitting a highway upon which our Lord rides through the deserts. It is interesting that it does not say He rides through the pasture, the mountain, or even the wilderness. Our praises enable the Lord to ride through the dry and arid places of life; and not just our own lives, but the desert places in the hearts of the people around us. This scripture tells us to BE in high spirits and glory before Him. It doesn't say to talk in high spirits, or act in high spirits, but to be (exist, live, continue, remain). Glory as a verb means to rejoice proudly, or exalt in triumph.

Let's consider our praises and exultation in how they can impact the people around us. As we cast up a highway for Him who rides through the deserts, we are enabling God to move. Verses 5 and 6 describe some of the arid and dry places that people experience: the fatherless, the widow, the lonely, the desolate, and the prisoner. Although we are not and never should act as “the fixer” or “the solution” for others, The Fixer and The Solution can use us to impact brokenness. These verses describe The Lord as the father to the fatherless, a judge and protector of the widow, He places the lonely in families, gives the desolate a home and provides for the prisoner. People can be prisoners in more ways than the obvious. They can be captive to the flesh, to an addiction or habit, to a generational curse, or a deceptive mindset.

As we set a spiritual atmosphere that continually cultivates praises, an avenue is made for the Lord to ride in on and restore what is broken in people's lives. At times He leads us to encourage, pray and talk with others about the Truth. Either way, the environment can be impacted by high spirits, and a sincere and proud exultation of who God is and all He has done. Let's believe together that people would be quickened by their Heavenly Father, Protector, Provider and Companion as we cast up a highway within the dry and arid places that are desperate for Living Water.

Your sister in Christ,
Niki

FIRST FRUITS

“HONOR THE LORD WITH YOUR WEALTH AND WITH
THE FIRST FRUITS OF ALL YOUR CROPS (INCOME);
THEN YOUR BARNS WILL BE ABUNDANTLY FILLED AND
YOUR VATS WILL OVERFLOW WITH NEW WINE.”

- PROVERBS 3:9-10

The first fruits offering is something that I took a class on a long time ago at Harvest Church. It was one of those teachings that was hard to swallow because it required so much. The first fruits offering is sacrificial by origin and costs the giver a great deal. It always occurred during the beginning of harvest time. This offering occurred after the harvest had already come, after the farmers had sowed and worked the ground. The work had been done and the Lord blessed their land with a harvest. The first fruits offering was exactly as it sounds: an offering of the first crops of the harvest that was given to the church in order to sustain the work of the Lord.

I was recently listening to Ted Shuttlesworth Jr. and he said something that stuck out to me and immediately I thought of all of you young people. He was actually talking about setting aside your morning to spend time with God in prayer, the Word, and worship. He called it a first fruits offering of your time since you would get up early to give God the first minutes of your day. This is especially important when many of you don't have jobs and money to actually tithe and you may ask yourself, “what can I actually give to God?” This is the perfect solution!

Pastor Ted went further and said that actually, if we considered tithing our time to God it would total to 2 hours 24 minutes per day that we should be giving to God as a 10% tithe daily. Whoa, right?!

That is a huge chunk of time.

The challenge I am embracing for myself here, and I am encouraging you with as well, is to get as close to this 2hr 24min daily tithe of time as possible. Some ways could be prayer, reading the word, listening to worship music, listening to a podcast, watching a sermon. The idea is not that you have to sit down for a solid 2hr 24mins and do nothing else during that time, although that would probably be amazing for your walk with God! The idea is to spread these activities out throughout your day; worship instead of listening to secular music, listen to a podcast while you are getting ready for school, read the word on the bus.

As we pray and speak the Word out in our lives we receive victory over sin and all other temptations.

Praying, reading, receiving – that’s how it works!

What do you plan on changing about your daily habits so you can get closer to God?

Believing with you,
Yvonne

DON'T BE OUTWITTED

"IN ORDER THAT SATAN MIGHT NOT OUT WIT US, FOR
WE ARE NOT UNAWARE OF HIS SCHEMES."
- 2 CORINTHIANS 2:11

We cannot allow ourselves to be ignorant of satan's devices and how he operates. We must identify his attacks at the onset so we can prevent his attacks from happening more than once. As a Spirit filled believer, you will not be tricked by the enemy's schemes against you, you are not misguided or in the dark. You walk in the power and authority of Jesus' name and you must answer each attack with the Word of God stating who you are in Jesus!!

Here are a few scripture references that you can apply to your life to combat against the attacks the enemy may be throwing at you.

You belong: Romans 12:5

You are sanctified: 1Corinthians 1:2

You have eternal life: 1 Corinthians 15:22

You stand firm: 2 Corinthians 1:21

You are made new: 2 Corinthians 5:17

You are a child of God: Galatians 3:26

You are blessed with spiritual blessing: Ephesians 1:3

You are God's handiwork, created with a purpose: Ephesians 2:10

You are called to live holy: 2 Timothy 1:9

You have God's divine nature in you: 2 Peter 1:4

You have been freed from a sinful nature: Colossians 2:11

You are made complete in Christ: Colossians 2:10

You are identified as belonging to God: Ephesians 1:13

If you apply God's Word to your life each and every day you will have all the confidence you need to be confident in who you are in Christ and who He has called you to be!

Confession for today: "Lord, help me to know what Your Word says about me and who You have called me to be each and every day so I can confidently walk through every trial the enemy may throw at me."

Seek Him First!

Paulie

TRUST

“TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND
LEAN NOT ON YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING; IN ALL
YOUR WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, AND HE SHALL
DIRECT YOUR PATHS.”

- PROVERBS 3:5-6

The story of Job gives us an example of how to trust in God no matter what. Everything Job had was taken away, and in spite of this, Job never gave up on God. He never placed his trust in his possessions, or wealth, and especially not his friends. In the end, even though he became angry, and in despair – really who wouldn’t have...he displayed amazing faith to trust God even though he couldn’t understand everything he went through. The results in the end for his trust in God – Job was blessed and rewarded greater than he was in the beginning.

When our life is going smoothly, trust is easy. The test of trust always comes when life stops making sense. In the verse above, to "lean on" is used in the sense of relying upon or trusting someone or something for help or protection. Think of a cane; we trust it to support us. If it didn’t, we would fall and most likely get hurt. So when we rely on our own understanding, it is like that cane that can’t support us and lets us fall. In the end, trusting our friends, abilities, experiences, or knowledge likely will let us down.

Acknowledging the Lord in all our ways means keeping Him in mind in everything we do. He wants us to remember to trust and obey Him, so He can guide our lives in everything we do. “He shall direct your paths,” suggests that God will "smooth" or "make straight" the road of our lives. This is a promise that God will go before us and remove all of the obstacles from our path.

Confession for today: “Today, Jesus, I place my trust in You no matter what circumstances I may face. I acknowledge You in all that I do, and that You go before me in making a path, removing any obstacle, so I’m blessed and have success in all that I do.”

Living for Today,
Mr. Tom

DEEP WELLS OF SALVATION

“SURELY GOD IS MY SALVATION; I WILL TRUST AND NOT BE AFRAID. THE LORD, THE LORD HIMSELF, IS MY STRENGTH AND MY DEFENSE; HE HAS BECOME MY SALVATION. WITH JOY YOU WILL DRAW WATER FROM THE WELLS OF SALVATION.”

- ISAIAH 12:2-3

There are days in life that can bring us to a place of frustration, weariness, fear, and an array of negative emotions. As I am writing this, I can think numerous challenges over the past month that have caused me to have moments of frustration, weariness, fear, and anger. But through all of this I have joy, peace, and strength that has been drawn from a deep well. This deep well began the moment I asked Christ into my life. From that moment, the Word of God was building up on the inside of me; even when I was too young to realize what was being sown into my heart. As I was sitting in Sunday school, weeknight service, prayer, and youth services, my reserve of the Word was growing deeper. Now as an adult, I have chosen to intentionally add to that reserve through devotions, prayer, and worship. In hard times, I have everything I need to stand strong with the help of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. My spirit and flesh are encouraged as I speak the Word through every difficult or seemingly impossible situation. Isaiah 12:2-3, talks about the joy that would come forth when Jesus entered the scene. That joy, strength, trust, and protection that is described in this passage is still relevant today. It is relevant in your life and mine. It is the power and authority that was freely given to us on the day Jesus gave His life on Calvary. It is the good life that you can choose to walk in today. So, if you are feeling frustrated, weary, fearful, or angry; draw from your well of salvation. Everything we need has already been given to us, we just have to put it into action.

Find peace in His embrace,
Jasmine

PERSISTENT PRAYERS

“ALSO JESUS TOLD THEM A PARABLE TO THE EFFECT THAT THEY OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY AND NOT TO TURN COWARD (FAINT, LOSE HEART, AND GIVE UP).”
- LUKE 18:1

In verses two through eight, Jesus is telling the disciples a story to encourage them to be persistent in their prayers. The widow is in need and begging for justice to an ungodly judge who does not care how his actions affect the people around him. The only reason he finally answers the widow is because she keeps on asking and asking and asking. He refers to her as an intolerable annoyance. At the end of the story, Jesus poses a question to those listening: verse eight says, “I tell you, He will defend and protect and avenge them speedily. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find [persistence in] faith on the earth?”

Take a moment to ask yourself this question: How persistent are you in your prayer life? Do you ask once and give up, or do you continue asking until you receive your answer? The judge in this story does not care at all about the widow, but our God deeply cares for you and wants to speak directly to you and give you the answers you are seeking.

Jeremiah 29:13 says, “Then you will seek Me, inquire for, and require Me [as a vital necessity] and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.” Seeking God with all our heart may mean asking and asking and asking again. But we can have confidence that when we ask our heavenly Father for something, He will answer us. Not out of annoyance like the ungodly judge, but out of the great love that He has for us.

Take time today to get before the Lord in prayer for something that you’ve given up on. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you pray with confidence and persistence as you bring your thoughts, concerns, needs and questions before the Lord. Remember, He sent His son to die on the cross so that you could have a relationship with Him. You are not annoying Him! He wants you to seek Him with all your heart.

Let your light shine,
Bre

DISCOVERING YOUR WEALTH

"CLOTHE YOURSELVES THEREFORE, AS GOD'S OWN CHOSEN ONES (HIS OWN PICKED REPRESENTATIVES), [WHO ARE] PURIFIED AND HOLY AND WELL-BELOVED [BY GOD HIMSELF, BY PUTTING ON BEHAVIOR MARKED BY] TENDERHEARTED PITY AND MERCY, KIND FEELING, A LOWLY OPINION OF YOURSELVES, GENTLE WAYS, [AND] PATIENCE [WHICH IS TIRELESS AND LONG-SUFFERING, AND HAS THE POWER TO ENDURE WHATEVER COMES, WITH GOOD TEMPER]."

- COLOSSIANS 3:12

From kindergarten to second grade, I attended a private Christian school. In the third grade, I changed schools to a public school for the first time and I was extremely nervous. I can remember a specific instance during my first week of gym class. It was the good ol' days when dodge ball was still played in my school. We were all lined up and the gym teacher picked two team captains. The captains were down to the end of the line and the teacher realized that there was an odd number of students. No one picked me, and when the teacher asked which team wanted me, no one even flinched. I felt so embarrassed. As the weeks went by, I made friends and eventually I wasn't chosen last in gym class. As insignificant as a game of dodge ball is in the grand scheme of things, that same feeling of neglect or worthlessness can try to creep into our lives today. How easy is it to try and determine our worth based on the praises of others, what we have, or even our relationships? Those things are all good, but if we define our worth in them when they are gone, our own view of our worth dissipates.

Colossians 3:12 says that we are God's chosen ones, His own picked representatives. This means that we were deemed worthy by God and that He chose us to be His spokespeople to the world. If God calls you worthy, you definitely are; if God chose you, it doesn't matter who didn't. The rest of verse 12 says that not only are we chosen, but we are to walk in that fact. It says to clothe ourselves as His chosen, and to behave as such. Once we accept that we are chosen by God, there is never a reason to feel less than. After the realization that we are made worthy through God's love, we simply need to choose to love Him back and be a representative of that love to those around us.

SIN OF COMPARISON

"WE DO NOT COMPARE OURSELVES WITH THOSE WHO THINK THEY ARE GOOD. THEY COMPARE THEMSELVES WITH THEMSELVES. THEY DECIDE WHAT THEY THINK IS GOOD OR BAD AND COMPARE THEMSELVES WITH THOSE IDEAS. THEY ARE FOOLISH."

- 2 CORINTHIANS 10:12

The sin of comparison is the first sin that was committed and it is something we can fall into daily. This is when you look at another and compare what they have against what you have. Satan was the first to do it in heaven when he challenged God, and look what that got him! Eve was another one who listened to the enemy and thought that she could have more if she challenged God and ate of the fruit of the tree of good and evil. We must make sure we don't do this as well so we won't fall into this trap the enemy sets for us on a daily basis.

Take a second and think about your day. How and what did you think of about others around you? Did you think you were smarter than someone in class, or maybe you are better looking than someone else in school? Maybe you think you have more game than a team mate and you should be playing more than you are. We live in a world today where we are constantly comparing what others are doing compared to us... this is not wise!!!

When we choose to go down the path of comparison, we start down a pathway of deception. We begin to judge by our own perspective, views, and opinions. Comparison is the first step towards insecurity and inferiority. The problem always starts when we take our eyes and focus off God and off His Word. Remember today who you are in Jesus and who He is in you!!!

Confession for today: "Holy Spirit help me stay focused on who I am in You so I don't compare myself with what everyone else is doing around me."

Seek Him First!

Paulie

ROCK CLIMBING

“THIS HOPE [THIS CONFIDENT ASSURANCE] WE HAVE AS AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL [IT CANNOT SLIP AND IT CANNOT BREAK DOWN UNDER WHATEVER PRESSURE BEARS UPON IT]—A SAFE AND STEADFAST HOPE THAT ENTERS WITHIN THE VEIL [OF THE HEAVENLY TEMPLE, THAT MOST HOLY PLACE IN WHICH THE VERY PRESENCE OF GOD DWELLS].”

- HEBREWS 6:19

Rock climbing is an activity in which participants climb up, down, or across natural rock formations or artificial rock walls. The goal is to reach the summit of a formation or the endpoint of a usually pre-defined route without falling.

We can compare free soloing to living our life without heeding the Holy Spirit. Free solo climbing, also known as Soloing, is a form of free climbing and solo climbing where the climber performs alone and without using any ropes, harnesses, or other protective equipment, relying entirely on his or her ability instead. Unlike in bouldering, soloists typically climb above safe heights, where a fall would always result in serious injury or death.

When we free solo, we ascend alone: without equipment, companions, or any secure protection. We depend on our own skill and capacity. We do it for the thrill of living on the edge with high risk. It is done despite the probability that in time we will fall and be seriously injured or lose our life. We are likely to face the challenges and temptations of life without the security of following the commandments of God, guided by the Holy Spirit.

When we choose to ignore the Holy Spirit, we are climbing above safe heights without any protection. We make our climb much harder than it needs to be. We don't always reach the top. Everything that we know about and how to live with God comes from the Bible. Without it would be like trying to climb our mountains without any knowledge of what it entails.

In modern aid climbing, by contrast, the leader places tiny wedges, hooks, and other devices in cracks in the rock to use as anchor points. Having placed a piece of gear, he clips a short webbing ladder called an etrier to it and steps into it, using the ladder to gain enough height to place another piece of gear. He repeats this process until he has passed the difficult section or until he reaches the end of the pitch.

When we choose to heed the Holy Spirit, we are using aid climbing and trusting the Holy Spirit to be our Anchor. Like it says in Hebrews 6:19, We can always use the Holy Spirit as an anchor because like the amplified says, “it cannot slip and it cannot break down under whatever pressure bears upon it.”

Sometimes the mountain of life seems impossible to climb. We must remember that the Holy Spirit makes overcoming possible. Nothing is too difficult for us with the power of God working in our lives. Romans 8:26 tells us that God’s Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. When we follow God’s plan, things work, and when we don’t, things fall apart.

Love and Nuggs,
Amanda

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

“DON’T LET ANYONE LOOK DOWN ON YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE YOUNG, BUT SET AN EXAMPLE FOR THE BELIEVERS IN SPEECH, IN LIFE, IN LOVE, IN FAITH AND IN PURITY.”
- 1 TIMOTHY 4:12

The world needs to see good examples. Your friends and family need to see good examples. They need to see Christians walk in love and purity and faith in their homes, in their schools and on their jobs.

The Apostle Paul encourages us in Romans 12:17 to live above reproach in the sight of all people. Other scriptures teach us to avoid all appearances of evil. So, when you go after God, don’t walk on the edge, trying to see how much you can get away with. Conduct yourself in a way that will put to rest any question about whether or not you are Christian. Let the people around you see your love, faith and purity in every situation.

Your example will go a lot further than your words. Your friends might forget some of the Bible verses you’ve told them about or act like they’re not interested in the things of God...but they will not forget your example through the way you act, speak, and live.

Don’t let little sins and spiritual compromises cast a shadow over your example. When you are talking about God to your friends one minute and then talking badly, or criticizing your other friends or family another minute, it sends a confusing message to them. Instead, live and talk in a consistent manner according to the Word of God and let the light of Jesus shine brightly through you.

Confession for today: “I set an example for others in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” (1 Timothy 4:12).

Hugs,
Miss Lois

OPINIONS

“FOOLS FIND NO PLEASURE IN UNDERSTANDING, BUT
DELIGHT IN AIRING THEIR OWN OPINIONS.”
- PROVERBS 18:2

In a world where social media is so valued, voicing your opinions couldn't be any easier – just post it on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or Yelp. When it comes to Twitter, Facebook or Instagram, how easy it is to form an opinion of someone, good or bad? The best part of all of this, you may never have to say a word directly to that person, place or thing you are commenting on. Think about it, companies pay big money to have people run their social media accounts and help weed out any damaging publicity. What about opinions on hotels or restaurants? They are there, and probably will determine if you stay or eat there. I even found reviews on churches – check out some of them...

“1” star - “Because everyone on the worship team wore flannel.”

“1” star - “Because the worship leader looked like he just mowed his grass.”

“1” star - “For false advertising – the church actually has walls.”

“4 out of 5” stars - “Because there was no worship music after the sermon.”

What do you think the church review was for the woman who got kicked out before she even sat down because she had brought her dog with her, in her purse?

For our church lets have some fun...

“5” stars - “For that dope drummer” or “0” stars - “Because they sang the same song for 1 hour and I couldn’t drink my coffee.”

“5” stars - “Because as a mom, I can get up on Sunday, get ready for church, throw my kids into the van with their PJs on, and even get them fed pancakes when they get there.”

“Every week I show up the Pastor is preaching on Mark 4” – “1” star for sure!

Or, “if I knew I was going to run during worship, then I would have just worn my gym clothes. Plus I got very sweaty!” – “3 out of 5” stars.

Obviously a little silly, but the point is that you can form an opinion on anything. Every one has an opinion and your opinion may have validity, but it is what it is; it is just your opinion! In expressing our opinions, Paul pointed some things out (Romans 14:19 and 22), “make effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification,” and there are some things that you need to “keep between yourself and God.” God wants us to treat the people we are around everyday as if they are more important than us (Philippians 2:3). So when it comes to their opinions, assume that they carry more weight than ours. In the end, if you are in doubt about expressing your opinions to them, then just keep it to yourself, and decide not to quarrel over them (Romans 14:1).

Confession for today: “Jesus, help me to examine my thoughts and opinions in every conversation, so that I may not be quarrelsome. Help me to bring peace to every conversation that I may edify those I’m around and open doors to be a witness for your kingdom.”

Living for Today,
Mr. Tom.

SILENCING YOURSELF

“MANY PLANS ARE IN A MAN’S MIND, BUT IT IS
THE LORD’S PURPOSE FOR HIM THAT WILL
STAND.”

- PROVERBS 19:21

ADDITIONAL READING: ROMANS 8:5-8

During my third week of basic training at Fort Knox, we went through a wooded obstacle course. We were challenged with the task of climbing up a wooden tower that looked like an oversized version of Lincoln Log building blocks. The tower had four sides with each side having four log rungs that were about the size of tree trunks. Each rung was spaced about 4 to 5 feet apart going up. We were put into groups of four and not allowed to move from the obstacle until our whole group got to the top. All of the groups in my platoon flew through the obstacle except the last group. My drill sergeant called the rest of the groups back to cheer on the last group. When I got to the base of the tower, I saw all four of the soldiers in the group each struggling on their own to try to get up the tower. Finally, my drill sergeant had enough and explained to them that although the goal was to get to the top of the tower, the purpose of the training exercise was to teach us how to work together to complete a task. All of the other groups had used the taller soldiers to boost the shorter ones to the next level, and then had the shorter ones assist the taller ones by helping them up. This is a perfect example of how we can confuse our goals and plans with God's purpose. Proverbs 19:21 says, "Many plans are in a man's mind, but it is the Lord's purpose for him that will stand." When we try to figure out things on our own or make plans without including God in their formation, things just get more and more confusing and much more difficult than they need be. Our best made plans will fail without God's input, but His callings and purposes for our lives stand. Being solely focused on our own plans is the opposite of focusing on God. We must learn to seek the Holy Spirit and trust God's purpose in every area of our lives and not rely on ourselves.

Stay Strong and Carry On,
Carrington

INNOCENT AS A DOVE

“BEHOLD, I AM SENDING YOU OUT LIKE SHEEP IN THE MIDST OF WOLVES; BE WARY AND WISE AS SERPENTS, AND BE INNOCENT (HARMLESS, GUILLESS, AND WITHOUT FALSITY) AS DOVES.”

- MATTHEW 10:16

ADDITIONAL READING: JOHN 10:10-11, GALATIANS 5:22-23

God, as our Good Shepherd, wants us to realize that we are as ‘sheep in the midst of wolves.’ We need to be aware that as we go about our daily business, the enemy is always looking for an opportunity to steal us away from our Heavenly Father’s flock. What can we do, as His sheep, to prepare?

In an earlier devotional, we touched on being ‘wise as a serpent,’ and trusting in the wisdom of the Holy Spirit that comes from spending time with God, through prayer and in His Word. But even though God wants us to have some of the qualities of a serpent, He follows this by instructing us to also be ‘innocent’ (harmless, guileless, and without falsity) as doves. Doves, unlike snakes, don’t strike out, bite, spit, constrict, or poison others with their venom when they feel as if they are being threatened or attacked. So God wants us to approach the world as a wise serpent, but then to interact and react to the world as a dove. God describes doves here as innocent (free from moral wrong, without sin, no evil intent or motive), harmless (without the desire to do physical or moral harm or injury to others), guileless (sincere, honest, straightforward and frank), and then as if to address the role of a serpent in the Garden of Eden, God says that doves are ‘without falsity.’ So the definition of ‘honest’ is (honorable in principle, intentions and actions; upright and fair, respectable; having a good reputation). Wow! No wonder God chose a dove to represent how we should conduct ourselves in the world. How many of these qualities above can we honestly say that we have in common with the dove? I encourage you to circle or highlight the characteristics that you feel you may need to work on, in conjunction with cultivating wisdom into your life. Find scriptures to stand on that will encourage you to do so! Do this diligently in order to properly prepare, to confidently dwell and survive and thrive, ‘in the midst of wolves.’

Fight the good fight of faith!

Jamie

WALKING WITH JESUS

“AND HE SAID TO THEM, BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ARE HEARING. THE MEASURE OF THOUGHT AND STUDY YOU GIVE TO THE TRUTH YOU HEAR WILL BE THE MEASURE OF VIRTUE AND KNOWLEDGE THAT COMES BACK TO YOU - AND MORE BESIDES WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU WHO HEAR.”

- MARK 4:24

We as believers should not be afraid of the chaotic situations going on in this country right now, we need to put our complete trust in God. As you read in Matthew 14:22-32, look at Jesus as He directed His disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side of the sea. When evening had come, Jesus decided to go to His disciples in the boat. The sea was already very wavy from the blowing wind. Once the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, they were afraid. But immediately Jesus spoke to them saying, “Be of good cheer it is I, do not be afraid.” Peter said, “If it is you, Lord, command me to come,” and Jesus said, “Come.” Peter did walk on the water unafraid at first, but when he saw the waves he became afraid and started to sink. Peter cried out “Lord, save me.” Verse 31 says that Jesus stretched out His hand immediately and caught him. Jesus said to him, “Oh you of little faith, why did you doubt.” Peter had a short burst of faith as he started to walk on the water, but then he gave in to a second thought and started to doubt. You are going to need more than a short burst of Faith in these times, so don’t give in to second thoughts or doubts in your mind, You have the mind of Christ! I believe that after Jesus stretched out His hand, they both walked back to the boat, as Peter was no longer afraid. He was with the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, the Mighty God.

Remember, Jesus told them to go to the other side, so the way was already made for them, no matter what. Jesus said it! If you think that you are in that boat, and the wind and waves are rocking the boat, Jesus said, “go to the other side, be of good cheer and do not be afraid...” You can reach out and touch Jesus’ hand by reading God's Word and fellowshiping with Him for every situation that you are put into. Remember, Jesus said, “Come.” That’s what we have to do: come to Him with His Word in our hearts and not be afraid. The way has already been made for you. Let the Holy Spirit help and guide you. Read about Him (John 14:16-17, 26-27). The Word of God is all you need.

Stay Connected
Mr. George